

notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. Additionally, the U.S. Government will not pay for response preparation or for the use of any information contained in the response.

To inform the Federal government's decision-making and establish the Nation's guiding principles in the promotion of the Rural Energy Pilot Program, USDA now seeks public input on how U.S. Government action might appropriately support the expansion of a nationwide effort. To that end, responders are specifically requested to answer one or more of the following questions in their submissions.

Consortia responses are also encouraged.

1. How might distributed energy technologies, innovations, and/or solutions be deployed to advance environmental justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity?

2. What specific distributed energy technologies, innovations, and/or solutions are available or have the potential to advance environmental justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity through their deployment and/or development?

3. What type of assistance or incentive (made available through a Rural Energy Pilot Program) would encourage the development and deployment of such distributed energy technologies, innovations, and/or solutions?

4. How should USDA measure, assess, and analyze the impacts of distributed energy solutions on environmental justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity?

5. Who should be eligible to receive such assistance?

6. What types of technology and/or infrastructure should be eligible under such a Rural Energy Pilot Program?

- a. Generation;
- b. Storage;
- c. Controller/smart grid.

7. Should a Rural Energy Pilot Program incentivize efficiency, resilience, or some other value?

8. Should the Rural Energy Pilot Program include minimum standards for equipment? Or a recognized standard of development such as commercially available?

9. What types of efforts have proven to be effective to promote the deployment of distributed energy solutions or innovations that advance or have the potential to advance environmental justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity?

a. What are the technologies associated with these efforts?

b. Why and how do these technologies advance of environmental

justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity?

c. Should there be a minimum investment requirement?

10. If cost-sharing is required, what minimum level of cost-share (owner contribution) should be required of recipients of funding? What would you consider to be the most cost-effective level of cost-share while also supporting the objective of advancing environmental justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity?

11. What programmatic or administrative structures, policies, incentives, or requirements will support the advancement of environmental justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity through the Rural Energy Pilot Program? What structures, policies, incentives, or requirements might obstruct or otherwise undermine its advancement?

12. What programmatic or administrative and other barriers exist that may limit participation in the Rural Energy Pilot Program or the availability of program benefits? What should be done to ensure equitable program participation by those who would otherwise be unlikely to apply? What specific actions could USDA take to guide a transformation and/or expansion of a Rural Energy Pilot Program, in both the short- and long-term?

13. Given the objective, how should USDA measure the outcomes of the Rural Energy Pilot Program?

14. To what extent should current investments be required to accommodate future, anticipated technologies?

15. Please provide feedback on the effectiveness of any known distributed energy or rural energy pilot program of which you are aware.

16. From your perspective, how much post-award reporting is reasonable for recipients of funding?

#### Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA Programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA

(not all bases apply to all programs).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) *Mail:* U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or
- (2) *Email:* [OAC@usda.gov](mailto:OAC@usda.gov)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**Mark Brodziski,**

*Acting Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Housing Service

[Docket # RHS-21-SFH-0005]

#### Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comments requested.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's (RHS or Agency) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the programs under the Code of Federal Regulations.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by June 1, 2021 to be assured consideration.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Shannon Chase, Branch Chief, Single Family Housing Direct Loan Origination, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 0783, Washington, DC 20250-0783, Telephone: (515) 305-0399, Email: [shannon.chase@usda.gov](mailto:shannon.chase@usda.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Direct Single Family Housing Loans and Grants.

*OMB Number:* 0575-0172.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* July 31, 2021.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection.

*Abstract:* Through its direct single family housing loan and grant programs (specifically the Sections 502 and 504 programs), RHS provides eligible applicants with financial assistance to own adequate but modest homes in rural areas. The financing and servicing is provided directly by RHS. The Section 502 direct loan program provides 100 percent loan financing to assist low- and very low-income applicants purchase modest homes in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. The Section 504 loan program provides one percent interest rate loans to very low-income homeowners in eligible rural areas to repair, improve, or modernize their home or to remove health and safety hazards. The Section 504 grant program provides grants to elderly very low-income homeowners in eligible rural areas to remove health and safety hazards, or accessibility barriers from their home, often in conjunction with a Section 504 loan.

Applicants must provide the Agency with a uniform residential loan application and supporting documentation (e.g., verification of income, assets, liabilities, etc.) when applying for assistance. The information requested regarding the applicant and the property is vital in order for the Agency to make sound eligibility and underwriting decisions that comply with the laws and regulations that govern the programs. The information requested is comparable to that required by any public or private mortgage lender.

When servicing loans, RHS offers servicing options that are standard to the industry. In addition, RHS offers unique servicing options (e.g., payment subsidies and payment moratoriums) and is required to take unique servicing actions (e.g., review borrowers for their ability to refinance with private credit). Borrowers must provide the Agency with pertinent information when a

servicing option/action is requested/required in order for the Agency to make sound servicing decisions that comply with the laws and regulations that govern the programs.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .48 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Approximately 26,000 applicants seeking direct single family housing loans and grants from the Agency and approximately 222,919 existing borrowers who have active loans and grants under the Section 502 and 504 programs.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 248,919.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 2.5.

*Estimated Total Number of Responses:* 638,077.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents (hours):* 305,646.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Lynn Gilbert, Regulations Management Division at (202) 690-2682.

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent by the Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://beta.regulations.gov> and, in the "Search Regulations and Federal Actions" box, select "RHS" from the agency drop-down menu, then click on "Submit." In the Docket ID column, select 0575-0172 to submit or view public comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically. Information on using *Regulations.gov*, including instructions for accessing documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket after the close of the comment period, is available through the site's "User Tips" link. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All

comments will also become a matter of public record.

**Chadwick Parker,**

*Acting Administrator, Rural Housing Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Housing Service**

**[Docket Number: RHS-21-CF-0006]**

**Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection; Comments Requested**

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the Community Facilities Grant Program.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by June 1, 2021.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Robin M. Jones, Management Analyst, Regulations Management Division, Innovation Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 772-1172. Email: [robin.m.jones@usda.gov](mailto:robin.m.jones@usda.gov)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that will be submitted to OMB for extension and revision.

**Comments**

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) The accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including