

Type of Request: Intent to Seek Approval to Conduct an Information Collection.

Abstract: The Fruit and Vegetable Agricultural Practices Survey will be conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Survey data will be analyzed by the Food and Drug Administration as part of a pilot study on agricultural practices related to microbial food safety. Data on sources of microbial contamination on produce, including water; manure; worker, field and facility sanitation; and crop identification systems will be collected. These data will be used by the Food and Drug Administration to analyze current agricultural practices and to develop a baseline to evaluate changes in farm practices. The survey will be conducted in California and New York. This survey is in compliance with President Clinton's October 1997 directive entitled "Initiative to Ensure the Safety of Imported and Domestic Fruits and Vegetables." These data will be collected under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a). Individually identifiable data collected under this authority are governed by Section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. 2276, which requires USDA to afford strict confidentiality to non-aggregated data provided by respondents.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response.

Respondents: Fruit and vegetable growers and fruit and vegetable packinghouses.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1,000.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,000 hours.

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Larry Gambrell, the Agency OMB Clearance Officer, at (202) 720-5778.

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 to: Larry Gambrell, Agency OMB Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4162 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-2000. 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.

Signed at Washington, D.C., November 3, 1998.

Donald M. Bay,

Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This NOFA announces the timeframe to submit applications for section 515 Rural Rental Housing loan funds and section 521 Rental Assistance (RA) for new construction, including applications for the Nonprofit Set-Aside for eligible nonprofit entities, the set-aside for the 100 most Underserved Counties and Colonias (Cranston-Gonzalez Act), and the set-aside for Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/ECs). This document describes the methodology that will be used to distribute funds, the application process, submission requirements, and areas of special emphasis or consideration.

DATES: The closing deadline for receipt of all applications, including the set-asides, in response to this NOFA is 5:00 p.m., local time for each Rural Development State office on January 15, 1999. The application closing deadline is firm as to date and hour. RHS will not consider any application that is received after the closing deadline. Applicants intending to mail applications must provide sufficient time to permit delivery on or before the closing deadline date and time. Acceptance by a post office or private mailer does not constitute delivery. Facsimile (FAX), COD, and postage due applications will not be accepted.

ADDRESSES: Applicants wishing to apply for assistance must contact the Rural

Development State office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for rural rental housing to receive further information and copies of the application package. Rural Development will date and time stamp incoming applications to evidence timely receipt, and, upon request, will provide the applicant with a written acknowledgment of receipt. A listing of Rural Development State offices, their addresses, telephone numbers, and person to contact follows:

Note: Telephone numbers listed are not toll-free.

Alabama State Office, Suite 601, Sterling Centre, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3455, TDD (334) 279-3495, James B. Harris

Alaska State Office, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645, (907) 745-2176, TDD (907) 745-6494, Ron Abbott
Arizona State Office, Phoenix Corporate Center, 3003 N. Central Ave., Suite 900, Phoenix, AZ 85012-2906, (602) 280-8755, TDD (602) 280-8701, Steve Langstaff

Arkansas State Office, 700 W. Capitol Ave., Rm. 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3250, TDD (501) 301-3279, Cathy Jones

California State Office, 430 G Street, Agency 4169, Davis, CA 95616-4169, (530) 792-5800, Robert P. Anderson

Colorado State Office, 655 Parfet Street, Room E100, Lakewood, CO 80215, (303) 236-2801 (ext. 122), TDD (303) 236-1590, "Sam" Mitchell

Connecticut—Served by Massachusetts State Office

Delaware/Maryland State Office, 5201 South Dupont Highway, PO Box 400, Camden, DE 19934-9998, (302) 697-4314, TDD (302) 697-4303, W. Arthur Greenwood

Florida & Virgin Islands State Office, 4440 N.W. 25th Place, PO Box 147010, Gainesville, FL 32614-7010, (352) 338-3465, TDD (352) 338-3499, Joseph P. Fritz
Georgia State Office, Stephens Federal Building, 355 E. Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA 30601-2768, (706) 546-2164, TDD (706) 546-2034, Wayne Rogers

Guam—Served by Hawaii State Office
Hawaii, Guam, & Western Pacific Territories State Office, Room 311, Federal Building, 154 Waiianuenue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 933-3000, TDD (808) 933-6902, Abraham Kubo,

Idaho State Office, Suite A1, 9173 West Barnes Dr., Boise, ID 83709, (208) 378-5627, TDD (208) 378-5644, Roni Atkins

Illinois State Office, Illini Plaza, Suite 103, 1817 South Neil Street, Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 398-5412 (ext. 256), TDD (217) 398-5396, Barry L. Ramsey

Indiana State Office 5975 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278, (317) 290-3117, TDD (317) 290-3343, John Young

Iowa State Office, 873 Federal Building, 210 Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50309, (515) 284-4493, TDD (515) 284-4858, Bruce McGuire

Kansas State Office, 1200 SW Executive Drive, PO Box 4653, Topeka, KS 66604,

(785) 271-2721, TDD (785) 271-2767, Gary Shumaker
 Kentucky State Office, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, (606) 224-7325, TDD (606) 224-7422, Paul Higgins
 Louisiana State Office, 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302, (318) 473-7962, TDD (318) 473-7655, Yvonne R. Emerson
 Maine State Office, 444 Stillwater Ave., Suite 2, PO Box 405, Bangor, ME 04402-0405, (207) 990-9115, TDD (207) 942-7331, Dale D. Holmes
 Maryland—Served by Delaware State Office
 Massachusetts, Connecticut, & Rhode Island State Office, 451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002, (413) 253-4333, Donald Colburn
 Michigan State Office, 3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 337-6635 (ext. 1609), TDD (517) 337-6795, Philip Wolak
 Minnesota State Office, 410 AgriBank Building 375 Jackson Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-1853, (651) 602-7823, TDD (651) 602-3799, Mary Ann Erickson
 Mississippi State Office, Federal Building, Suite 831, 100 W. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39269, (601) 965-4325, TDD (601) 965-5850, Danny Ivy
 Missouri State Office, 601 Business Loop 70 West, Parkade Center, Suite 235, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 876-0990, TDD (573) 876-9480, Gary Frisch
 Montana State Office, Unit 1, Suite B, 900 Technology Blvd., Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 585-2515, TDD (406) 586-0819, MaryLou Falconer
 Nebraska State Office, Federal Building, Room 152, 100 Centennial Mall N, Lincoln, NE 68508, (402) 437-5567, TDD (402) 437-5093, Byron Fischer
 Nevada State Office, 1390 South Curry Street, Carson City, NV 89703-9910, (702) 887-1222, TDD (702) 885-0633 (ext. 13), William L. Brewer
 New Hampshire—Served by Vermont State Office,
 New Jersey State Office, Tarnsfield Plaza, Suite 22, 790 Woodland Road, Mt. Holly, NJ 08060, (609) 265-3630, George Hyatt, Jr.
 New Mexico State Office, 6200 Jefferson St., NE, Room 255, Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 761-4944, TDD (505) 761-4938, Carmen N. Lopez
 New York State Office, The Galleries of Syracuse, 441 S. Salina Street, Suite 357, Syracuse, NY 13202, (315) 477-6419, TDD (315) 477-6447, George N. Von Pless
 North Carolina State Office, 4405 Bland Road, Suite 260, Raleigh, NC 27609, (919) 873-2062, TDD (919) 873-2003, Eileen Nowlin
 North Dakota State Office, Federal Building, Room 208, 220 East Rosser, PO Box 1737, Bismarck, ND 58502, (701) 250-4771, TDD (701) 250-4794, Kathy Lake
 Ohio State Office, Federal Building, Room 507, 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2477, (614) 469-5165, TDD (614) 469-5757, Gerald Arnott
 Oklahoma State Office, 100 USDA, Suite 108, Stillwater, OK 74074-2654, (405) 742-1070, TDD (405) 742-1007, Patsy Graumann
 Oregon State Office, 101 SW Main, Suite 1410, Portland, OR 97204-3222, (503) 414-3350, TDD (503) 414-3387, Jillene Davis
 Pennsylvania State Office, One Credit Union Place, Suite 330, Harrisburg, PA 17110-

2996, (717) 237-2187, TDD (717) 237-2187, Gary Rothrock
 Puerto Rico State Office, New San Juan Office Bldg., Room 501, 159 Carlos E. Chardon Street, Hato Rey, PR 00918-5481, (787) 766-5095 Ext. 254, TDD 1-800-274-1572, Lourdes Colon
 Rhode Island—Served by Massachusetts State Office
 South Carolina State Office, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, 1835 Assembly Street, Room 1007, Columbia, SC 29201, (803) 765-5690, TDD (803) 765-5697, Larry D. Floyd
 South Dakota State Office, Federal Building, Room 210, 200 Fourth Street, SW, Huron, SD 57350, (605) 352-1132, TDD (605) 352-1147, Dwight Wullweber
 Tennessee State Office, Suite 300, 3322 West End Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203-1084, (615) 783-1375, G. Benson Lasater
 Texas State Office, Federal Building, Suite 102, 101 South Main, Temple, TX 76501, (254) 742-9760, TDD (254) 742-9712, Eugene G. Pavlat
 Utah State Office, Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building, 125 S. State Street, Room 4311, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0350, (801) 524-4323, TDD (801) 524-3309, Robert L. Milianta
 Vermont & New Hampshire State Office, City Center, 3rd Floor, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-6020, TDD (802) 223-6365, Russell Higgins
 Virgin Islands—Served by Florida State Office
 Virginia State Office, Culpeper Building, Suite 238, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Richmond, VA 23229, (804) 287-1582, TDD (804) 287-1753, Carlton Jarratt
 Washington State Office, 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW., Suite B, Olympia, WA 98512-5715, (360) 704-7707, TDD (360) 704-7760, Deborah Davis
 Western Pacific Territories—Served by Hawaii State Office
 West Virginia State Office, Federal Building, 75 High Street, Room 320, Morgantown, WV 26505-7500, (304) 291-4793, TDD (304) 284-5941, Sue Snodgrass
 Wisconsin State Office, 4949 Kirschling Court, Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-7620, TDD (715) 345-7614, Sherry Engel
 Wyoming State Office, 100 East B, Federal Building, Room 1005, P.O. Box 820, Casper, WY 82602, (307) 261-6315, TDD (307) 261-6333, Charles E. Huff

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
 Some States may have a loan limit that is lower than the National maximum (\$2.5 million) established in this Notice; therefore, applicants must contact the appropriate Rural Development State Office listed elsewhere in this Notice for funding limitations. For general information, applicants may contact Linda Armour, Cynthia L. Reese-Foxworth, or Carl Wagner, Senior Loan Officers, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250, telephone (202) 720-1604 (this is not a toll free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Programs Affected

The Rural Rental Housing Program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.415, Rural Rental Housing Loans. Rental Assistance is listed in the Catalog under Number 10.427, Rural Rental Assistance Payments.

Explanation of 60-Day NOFA Application Deadline

The Agency is using a 60-day application period so that the NOFA process will coincide with the time restraints placed upon our customers by participating lenders and State Housing Finance Agencies (SHFA). Participating lenders such as commercial banks leverage their funds with RHS funds. State organizations can provide Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME funds as another means of leveraging RHS funds. SHFAs have certain timeframes whereby applicants can apply for tax credits. Therefore, to assist as many of our customers as possible in obtaining leveraged funds and to participate with other funding sources, a 60-day application period is provided.

Discussion of Notice

I. Authority and Distribution Methodology

A. Authority

Section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1485) provides RHS the authority to make loans to any individual, corporation, association, trust, Indian tribe, public and private nonprofit organizations, consumer cooperative, or partnership to provide rental or cooperative housing and related facilities for elderly, handicapped, or disabled persons or families of low or moderate income as well as other persons and families of low income in rural areas. Rental assistance is a tenant subsidy available to very-low and low-income families residing in rural rental housing facilities with RHS financing, and is requested with application for such facilities.

B. Distribution Methodology

The total amount available for FY 1999 for section 515 is \$114 million. Of that amount, \$79 million is available for new construction as follows:

Set-Aside for Nonprofits	\$7,560,000
Set-Aside for Underserved Counties and Colonias	4,200,000
Set-Aside for EZ/EC	7,250,000
General Reserve	5,740,000

State Rental Assistance (RA)	
Designated Reserve	1,500,000
Regular Section 515 Funds ...	52,750,000

The General Reserve will first be used for hardships, emergencies, and cooperative housing requests. If funds remain, the Administrator may consider group home requests. Group home requests must be located in a designated place and must be submitted under this NOFA.

The remaining \$35 million will be available for repair and rehabilitation loans and for equity loans.

For fiscal year 1999, the Administrator has determined that it would not be practical to allocate funds to States because of funding constraints; therefore, section 515 new construction funds will be distributed to States based on a National competition, as follows:

1. States will accept, review, score, and rank requests in accordance with 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E.

2. The National office will rank all requests nationwide and distribute funds to States in rank order, within funding and RA limits. If insufficient funds or RA remain for the next ranked proposal, the Agency will select the next ranked proposal that falls within the remaining levels.

C. Eligible Prior Year Applications

The Rural Housing Service published a Final Rule, in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 67216, on December 23, 1997) outlining its application and review process for section 515 Rural Rental Housing new construction program. The implementation proposal for those regulations provided that some applicants who filed acceptable loan requests in prior years could proceed with their loan requests provided they were in compliance with the newly published regulations. The following States have applications on hand from prior years in designated places that will count toward the \$2.5 million maximum that a State may receive:

Alabama
Colorado

Applicants are advised to contact those States to ascertain the amount the State is eligible to compete for in the National NOFA.

II. Funding Limits

A. Individual loan requests may not exceed \$1 million. This applies to regular Section 515 funds and set-aside funds. The Administrator may make an exception to this limit in cases where a State's average total development costs exceed the National average by 50 percent or more. States may establish a lower limit than \$1 million.

B. No State may receive more than \$2.5 million from regular section 515 funds. Reserve funds, including set-aside funds, are not included in this cap.

II. Rental Assistance (RA)

New construction RA will be held in the National Office for use with section 515 Rural Rental Housing loans.

III. Application Process

All applications for section 515 new construction funds must be filed with the appropriate Rural Development State office and must meet the requirements of 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E and section IV of this NOFA. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be returned to the applicant. No application will be accepted after 5:00 p.m., local time, on the application deadline previously mentioned unless that date and time is extended by a Notice published in the **Federal Register**.

IV. Application Submission Requirements

A. Each application shall include all of the information, materials, forms and exhibits required by 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E as well as comply with the provisions of this NOFA. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include a checklist and to have their applications indexed and tabbed to facilitate the review process. The Rural Development State office will base its determination of completeness of the application and the eligibility of each applicant on the information provided in the application.

B. Applicants are advised to contact the Rural Development State office serving the place in which they desire to submit an application for the following:

1. Application information;
2. Any restrictions on funding availability (applications that do not conform to or exceed the State's limit on size of project or dollar amount will be returned to the applicant); and
3. List of designated places for funding new section 515 facilities.

V. Areas of Special Emphasis or Consideration

A. The selection criteria contained in 7 CFR part 1944, subpart E includes two optional criteria, one set by the National office and one by the State office. This fiscal year, the National office initiative will be used in the selection criteria as follows: In states where RHS has an on-going formal working relationship, agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State to

provide State Resources (State funds, State RA, HOME funds, CDBG funds, or LIHTC) for RHS proposals; or where the State provides preference or points to RHS proposals in awarding these State Resources, 20 points will be provided to loan requests that include such State Resources. No State selection criteria will be used this fiscal year.

B. \$7.56 million is available nationwide in a set-aside for eligible Nonprofit organizations as defined in 42 U.S.C. 1485(w).

C. \$4.2 million is available nationwide in a set-aside for the 100 most Underserved Counties and Colonias.

D. \$7.25 million is available nationwide in a set-aside for EZ/ECs.

E. \$1.5 million is available nationwide in a set-aside for the State Rental Assistance Program. These funds are available for States with viable State Rental Assistance Programs. In order to participate, States are to submit specific written information about the State RA program, i.e., a memorandum of understanding, documentation from the provider, etc., to the National office.

Dated: November 10, 1998.

Jan E. Shadburn,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

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COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

Procurement List; Proposed Additions and Deletion

AGENCY: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

ACTION: Proposed additions to and deletion from Procurement List.

SUMMARY: The Committee has received proposals to add to the Procurement List commodities and a service to be furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities, and to delete a service previously furnished by such agencies.

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE: December 15, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Crystal Gateway 3, Suite 310, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-4302.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beverly Milkman, (703) 603-7740