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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice and Request for Comments

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Housing Service (RHS) invites comments on this information collection for which approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will be requested. The intention is to request a revision an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the program for 7 CFR Part 3550, Direct Single Family Housing Loans and Grants and its accompanying Handbooks.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS FROM DATE PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be assured consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shantelle C. Gordon, Program Analyst, USDA Rural Housing Service, Single Family Housing, 1400 Independence

Avenue, SW, STOP 0783, Washington, D.C. 20250-0783, Telephone: (202) 205-9567,
Fax: (202) 720-2232. Email: shantelle.gordon@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub.L. 104-13) required 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 RHS is submitting to OMB for approval. 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: Jeanne Jacobs, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0742. 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.

Title: Direct Single Family Housing Loans and Grants

OMB Number: 0575-0172

Expiration Date of Approval: December, 31, 2013

Type of Request: Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The Rural Housing Service (RHS), through its direct single family housing loan and grant programs, provides financial assistance to construct, improve, alter, repair, replace or rehabilitate dwellings, which will provide modest, decent, safe and sanitary housing to eligible individuals in rural areas. To assist a customer, they must provide the Agency with a standard housing application (used by government and private lenders), and provide documentation to support the same. Documentation includes verification of income, financial information on assets and liabilities, etc. The information requested is comparable to that required by any private mortgage lender. To assist individuals in obtaining affordable housing, a borrower's house payment may be subsidized to an interest rate as low as one percent. The amount of subsidy is based upon the customer's household income. After receipt of this information, if the customer obtains a loan from RHS, they must update income information on an annual basis to renew the payment subsidy. The aforementioned information required by RHS is vital to be able to process applications for RHS assistance and make prudent loan underwriting and program

decisions. It includes borrower financial information such as household income, assets and liabilities and monthly expenses. Without this information, the Agency is unable to determine if a customer would qualify for any services or if assistance has been granted to which the customer would not be eligible under current regulations and statutes. The Agency also encourages its customers to leverage our mortgage financing with that of other lenders to assist as many customers as possible within our limited resources. In many cases, another lender will leverage and participate with RHS in assisting the customer. In these cases, RHS and the other lender share documentation, with the customer's consent, to reduce duplication. Through our work with participating lenders, the Agency keeps abreast of information required by other lenders to ensure that RHS is not requiring unnecessary information. The Agency continually strives to ensure that information collection burden is kept to a minimum.

As mentioned, these loans are made directly by the Agency. RHS also services these loans for their term (30, 33, or 38 years) and provides tools to assist the customer in becoming a successful homeowner. As discussed, payment subsidies are renewed on an annual basis. In addition, the Agency provides credit counseling and other services to its customers in an effort to assist them in becoming successful. The Agency offers many servicing tools including a moratorium (stop) on payments, modifications to payment subsidies to reflect changes in the customer's income, loan re-amortization, payment workouts, etc. To obtain this assistance, the Agency must require certain information such as updated income and financial information, etc., to ensure the customer qualifies for the assistance, and is provided with the correct benefits based upon their circumstances.

Direct Single Family Housing loans are only provided to customers who cannot obtain other credit for their housing needs and are required by statute to refinance with another lender when they are financially able. To ensure the Agency meets its statutory responsibilities, existing customers may be requested to submit updated income and financial information for the Agency to make a determination as to whether they can “graduate” to other credit. In addition, should a customer default on a loan which results in liquidation, the Agency needs updated income and financial information to settle any outstanding indebtedness.

With the implementation of EGOV in June 2002, individuals are able to make application on line. We have 64 eForms which the public can access and print for personal use. RHS is committed to automation and reducing the burden upon the public.

Estimate of Burden: Public burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .30 hours per response.

Respondents: Approximately 33,000 applicants seeking direct single family housing loans and grants from the Agency and approximately 256,000 existing customers who have active loans and grants under the Section 502 and 504 programs.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 289,000

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1

Estimated Total Number of Responses: 1,318,807

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents (hours): 366,931

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Jeanne Jacobs, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch at (202) 692-0040.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of RBS, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the RBS' 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 forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Jeanne Jacobs, Regulation and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, Washington, DC 20250-0742. 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.

Richard A. Davis
Acting Administrator
Rural Housing Service

August 29, 2013
Date

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