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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employment and Training Administration is soliciting comments concerning revisions to the collection of data contained in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) National Emergency Grant (NEG) application procedures and project oversight and reporting requirements (OMB approval no. 1205-0439, expiring 5/30/03).

OMB granted emergency approval for the use of the forms (ETA 9103, 9014, and 9106) for Trade Health Insurance Coverage Assistance NEGs. Those approved forms have been revised to enable their use for Regular, Disaster and Trade-WIA Dual Enrollment NEGs and two proposed additional forms have been added to this request.

Attached is a copy of the proposed application procedures and project application review process, and project oversight and reporting requirements for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) National Emergency Grants (NEG).

A copy of this information collection request, with applicable supporting documentation and application procedures, may be obtained by calling the Department of Labor. To obtain documentation contact Darrin King on 202-693-4129 or e-mail: king.darrin@doleta.gov.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the addressee section below on or before July 15, 2003.

ADDRESSEE: Shirley M. Smith, Administrator, Office of National Response, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5426, Washington, DC 20210, 202-693-3500 (this is not a toll-free number)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Authorized by section 173 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), as amended, National Emergency Grants (NEG) are discretionary grants awarded by the Secretary of Labor (the Secretary) intended to complement the resources and service capacity at the state and local area levels by providing supplemental funding for workforce development and employment services and other adjustment assistance for dislocated workers and other eligible individuals as defined in sections 101, 134 and 173 of WIA; sections 113, 114 and 203 of the Trade Act of 2002; and 20 CFR 671.140.

Funds are available for obligation by the Secretary under sections 132 and 173 of the WIA, and section 203 of the Trade Act of 2002. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis as the need for funds arises at the state and local level.

The provisions of WIA and the Regulations define four NEG project types:

- *Regular*, which encompasses plant closures, mass layoffs, and multiple layoffs in a single community.
- *Disaster*, which includes all eligible FEMA-declared natural and manmade disaster events.
- *Trade-WIA Dual Enrollment*, which provides funding to ensure that a full range of services is available to trade-impacted individuals eligible under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program provisions of the Trade Act of 2002.
- *Trade Health Insurance Coverage Assistance*, which provides specialized health coverage, support services, and income assistance to targeted individuals defined in the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002.

II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor is particularly interested in comments which:

- Evaluate 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;
- Evaluate 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;

- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- 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, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is announcing proposed application and reporting procedures to enable eligible entities to access funds for National Emergency Grant (NEG) programs under section 173 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), as amended. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis as the need for funds arises at the state and local level.

The application procedures, application review process, and project oversight and reporting requirements described in this notice are issued under the WIA regulations at 20 CFR 671.125.

Applications for NEG funds may be submitted at any time. The maximum allowable project performance periods are defined by the months remaining in the Program Year in which the grant award is made plus the subsequent two Program Years. The Program Year for these projects is the twelve month period July 1-June 30.

USDOL/ETA expects that the project performance period in any NEG application will reflect a time efficient approach to returning eligible individuals to appropriate employment consistent with the performance goals that apply to NEG projects.

Consistent with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, the information collection including the application and the reporting form is fully in an electronic format. Electronic applications are intended to provide ease of completion as well as timely processing. The information in the grant application collection will provide the grant officer with the necessary information during the application review process in order to be able to make consistent and objective funding decisions based on the stated funding request evaluation criteria. The quarterly reports information collection will assure accountability and measure actual project performance to date.