

September 22, 2003

TO: State Directors  
Rural Development

FROM: Thomas C. Dorr  
Under Secretary  
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Use of Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has issued a policy directive to implement the requirement for grant applicants to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003. Use of the DUNS number Government-wide will provide a means to identify entities receiving those awards and their business relationships.

This policy directive is part of the implementation of the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999, Pub. L. 106-107, which requires OMB to direct, coordinate, and assist departments and agencies in establishing an interagency process to streamline and simplify Federal financial assistance procedures for non-Federal entities. Under the Grants.gov Initiative, Federal agencies are in the process of developing an electronic grant application system using standard core data elements. The DUNS number is one of the data elements. The DUNS number will be used to link to applicant data maintained in a central Federal registration repository. This identifier will be used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information.

The DUNS number will be required whether an applicant is submitting a paper or an electronic application. The DUNS number does not replace existing numbers, such as the Employer Identification Number, the Tax Identification Number, or the State Application Identifier number, that are required by statute, Executive Order, or regulation.

EXPIRATION DATE:  
October 31, 2004

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:  
Administrative/Other Programs

Every application for a new award or renewal of an award, including applications or plans under mandatory grant programs, submitted on or after October 1, 2003, must include a DUNS number for the applicant. Unless an exemption is granted by OMB, an application will not be considered complete until the applicant provides a valid DUNS number.

This policy applies to all types of entities applying for Rural Development grants or cooperative agreements under discretionary and mandatory grant programs. Individual applicants who would personally receive a grant or cooperative agreement award from the Federal Government, apart from any business or nonprofit organization they may operate, are exempt from this requirement.

Organizations should verify that they have a DUNS number or obtain one as soon as possible. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line, 1-866-705-5711.

Rural Development programs that award grants or cooperative agreements must provide outreach and education to their applicant communities regarding the requirement for the DUNS number. Please encourage applicants, who anticipate applying, to obtain a DUNS number in advance of a specific application. Applicants are responsible for obtaining their DUNS number. OMB approval is not required to add a DUNS number field to previously approved forms.

Additional information regarding the OMB policy directive on the DUNS number can be found in the Federal Register dated June 27, 2003, pages 38402-38405. If you have any questions, please contact William Kenney of the Rural Development eGrants team, 202-720-1506.