

Addendum
Pilot Program for Participating in Administrative Law Judge Hearings by
Using Privately Owned Video Teleconferencing (VTC) Equipment

20 CFR 404.936(c) & 416.1436(c)

0960-NEW

Pilot Background

The pilot is structured to begin with 10 private video sites expanding to 30 private sites after a six month evaluation period. There will be evaluations during both phases of the pilot. After analysis of the pilot results SSA will then make decisions regarding operating procedures for a permanent privately owned VTC program. SSA will seek OMB clearance of the permanent program in a separate request.

As background for the permanent program, SSA projects that 25% of the approximately 4,000 disability representatives belonging to the two major representative organizations will express interest and that by 2010 approximately one half of those expressing interest (500) will decide to purchase private video teleconference equipment for the purpose of participating in hearings. We estimate further that each participating representative will participate in 200 hearings per year for a total of 100,000 hearings per year by 2010.

OMB Clearance History

This ICR was originally submitted December 7, 2007, but OMB was unable to take action within their review period which ended on March 9, 2007. On March 14, 2007, SSA requested withdrawal of the ICR, at OMB's request. OMB assured SSA that it would receive clearance of the resubmitted ICR on an expedited basis. The original ICR was withdrawn from ROCIS on March 22, 2007.

In addition, OMB requested that as part of the resubmitted ICR, SSA was to provide additional information concerning how the pilot program will be evaluated (e.g. what criteria they will examine and what they would consider a "good" result and what they would consider an "unsatisfactory" result).

OMB also requested information on what security measures would be employed or required of the private office using the VTC equipment to assure that all information transmitted to SSA from the private office remains private and secure. The additional information is discussed below:

Pilot Program Evaluation Criteria: A Good Result will include hearings with private sites being held on schedule without major problems in scheduling, quality of sound or reception of video images; no major objections from the presiding judges about how the hearings proceed and their ability to control the proceeding; and no major objections from the private site about access to evidence, etc.

A Bad Result would include inability to connect to private site, dropped calls, poor reception, inability of the presiding judge to see or hear participants at the site or vice versa. The failure of a private site manager to fix video problems on the private site would also constitute unacceptable pilot results.

Additionally, the pilot program coordinator will maintain ongoing communication with the Hearing Offices participating in the pilot to monitor progress.

Pilot Security: Video transmissions are IP transmissions and as such run behind the SSA firewall. They are as secure as any SSA internal data network transmissions, even when we connect to an outside site we are connecting through secure gateways.