

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission
Foreign Service Written Examination Registration Form
OMB Control Number 1405-0008
Form DS-1998E

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. The Foreign Service Written Examination Registration Form (FSWE) is the form used by all individuals who wish to register for the annual Foreign Service Written Examination. The collection of information is authorized by section 301(b) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended (22 U.S. C. 3941(b)), which provides that the Secretary of State "shall prescribe, as appropriate, written, oral, physical, foreign language, and other examination for appointment to the [Foreign] Service (other than as chief of mission or ambassador at large)." Information on race, national origin, and sex of applicants is collected in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended and Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunities Regulations (29 C.F.R. 1614.601). Collection of Social Security Numbers is done pursuant to Executive Order 9397, which required federal agencies to use Social Security Numbers "whenever [an agency head] finds it advisable to establish a new system of permanent account numbers pertaining to individual persons." Information on disabilities is collected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
2. The information will be collected by ACT, Inc, on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. ACT, Inc. will collect the information via electronic form transfer. As is the case regarding information received from the current collection, information collected will be used to register individuals for the Foreign Service Written Examination, to help improve future tests, and to conduct research based on the results of the examination for exam registrants, takers, and passers. The data collected will be used by the Department of State to collect generic applicant information.
3. The online registration form (DS-1998E) is submitted via electronic form transfer, in which case registration data would be transferred into the contractor's master database.
4. Form DS-1998E will be used for the express purpose of registering for the Foreign Service Written Examination. The information collected is not a duplicate of information maintained elsewhere by or otherwise available to the Department.
5. This collection does not impact small businesses or other small entities.
6. The collection of information through the Foreign Service Written Examination Registration Form is vital for the recruitment of new Foreign Service Officers. This is the only form that may be used to register for the Foreign Service Written Examination, which is the first of two examinations that must be passed, in order to be considered for employment as a Foreign Service Officer. The information collection is conducted only in preparation for administering the FSWE (currently

once per year). The need to administer the examination is dictated by the Department of State hiring needs.

7. There are no special circumstances regarding this information collection.
8. A 60-day notice soliciting public comments was published in the Federal Register. No public comments were received.
9. Not applicable. The Department of State does not provide any payment or gifts to the respondents.
10. The Registration Form solicits information pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Examiners under the Foreign Service Act of 1980 and is governed by the applicable sections of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a) and the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552) as amended.
11. Not applicable. This collection does not request information that would be considered sensitive.
12. Number of Respondents/year: 32,316
Estimated response time: 20 minutes (1/3 hour)*
Total Annual Burden Hours (20 min x 32,316):10,772 hours
Frequency of response: On occasion
*Note: This number was derived from a sample of 6 individuals. The average time it took these six individuals to complete this form was 20 minutes.
13. There is no cost to the applicant to complete this form because it is submitted through electronic submission.
14. Cost to the Federal government, Department of State:
The design of the Foreign Service Examination Registration Form and the development and administration of the Foreign Service Written Examination have been contracted out to ACT, Inc. The following costs are based on the statements that ACT, Inc, has provided The United States Department of State regarding the form.

The estimated total annual cost to the government is \$24,673.00. There was a one time cost of \$22,690.00 associated with heavily revising the online submission option. The annualized cost over the next three years would be \$7,563.00 (\$22,690/3). The estimated average annual cost for updating the registration over the next 3 years is \$2,920.00. The government pays a total of \$14,190.00 per year for four ACT employees whose salary averages \$62.79 per hour (including overhead and fees) to spend 226 hours to maintain the system and upload the registration data.

15. The average number of applicants has decreased over the last three years from 36,303 to 32,316 applicants, resulting in a decrease in annual burden hours from 12,101 to 10,772. This represents a program adjustment.
16. Not applicable. Publication of results is not planned.
17. Not applicable. The Bureau of Human Resources does not seek approval not to display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection.
18. Not Applicable. No exceptions to the certification statement identified in Item 19 are set forth.