

Supporting Statement for VA Form Letter 21-863
Request for Information to Make Direct Payment to Child Reaching Majority
(2900-0215)

A. Justification

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), through its Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), administers an integrated program of benefits and services established by law for veterans, service personnel, and their dependents and/or beneficiaries. 38 U.S.C. 1310, 1313, 1542, and 101(4) provide for payment of death pension or dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) to an eligible veteran's child when there is not an eligible surviving spouse and the child is between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school. Until the child reaches the age of majority, payment is made to a custodian or fiduciary on behalf of the child. An unmarried schoolchild who is not incompetent is entitled to begin receiving direct payment on the age of majority. Regulatory authority is found in 38 CFR 3.403, 3.667, and 3.854.
2. VA Form Letter 21-863 is used to gather the necessary information to determine a schoolchild's continued eligibility to VA death benefits and eligibility to direct payment at the age of majority.
3. The collection of information does not involve the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. VA Form Letter 21-863 is partially completed by VA with claimant-specific information before it is mailed to certain minor schoolchildren. To avoid improper use by claimants who are not required to submit this form, the form is not available on the VBA website for downloading. A faxed copy of a properly signed VA Form Letter 21-863 may be accepted if there are no questions as to its validity. Currently, there has been no consideration of using other information technology. The Department will reconsider using other information technology when the resources become available, and usage of this form increases.
4. Program reviews were conducted to identify potential areas of duplication; however, none were found to exist. There is no known Department or Agency which maintains the necessary information, nor is it available from other sources within our Department.
5. The collection of information does not involve small businesses or entities.
6. If the collection were not conducted, VA would have no means of determining a child's current address, marital status, and school attendance. Without this information, continued entitlement to death benefits and eligibility for direct payment at the age of majority could not be determined, and proper payment would not be made.
7. There is no special circumstance requiring collection in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.6 guidelines.

8. The Department notice was published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2008, 72FR12, page 3322. Field stations have not reported any difficulty on the part of respondents in using the form letter. No comments were received.

9. No payments or gifts to respondents have been made under this collection of information.

10. The records are maintained in the appropriate Privacy Act System of Records identified as 58VA21/22, "Compensation, Pension, Education and Rehabilitation Records - VA" as set forth in Privacy Act Issuances, 1993 compilation found in 42 Fed. Reg. 49726 (9/27//1977).

11. There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Information Collection Burden.

a. Number of Respondents is estimated at 20 per year.

b. Frequency of Response is one time for most beneficiaries.

c. Annual burden is 3 hours.

d. The estimated completion time of 10 minutes is based on review by staff personnel and previous usage of this form.

e. The total estimated cost to respondents is \$45 (3 hours x \$15 per hour).

13. This submission does not involve any recordkeeping costs.

14. Estimated Costs to the Federal Government:

a. Processing/Analyzing costs \$168

(GS-9/5 @ \$19.81 x 20 x 20 minutes = \$133)

(GS-3/5 @ \$10.41 x 20 x 10 minutes = \$ 35)

b. Printing and redesign cost \$275

c. Total cost to government \$443

15. The reporting burden has not changed.

16. The information collection is not for publication or tabulation use.

17. The collection instrument, VA Form Letter 21-863, may be reproduced and/or stocked by the respondents and veterans service organizations. This VA form letter does not

display an expiration date, and if required to do so would result in unnecessary waste of existing stocks of this form letter. This form letter is submitted to OMB every 3 years. As such, this date requirement would also result in an unnecessary burden on the respondents and would delay Department action on the benefit being sought. VA also seeks to minimize its cost to itself of collecting, processing and using the information by not displaying the expiration date. For the reasons stated, VA continues to seek an exemption that waives the displaying of the expiration date on VA Form Letter 21-863.

18. This submission does not contain any exceptions to the certification statement.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

The Veterans Benefits Administration does not collect information employing statistical methods.