

**Supporting Statement for  
Electronic Benefit Verification Information (BEVE)  
20 CFR 401.40  
OMB-0960-0595**

**A. Justification**

1. *The Privacy Act of 1974* requires that Federal agencies permit an individual to gain access to information pertaining to him/her. The Social Security Administration provides information to beneficiaries on the status and amount of their benefits by authority of *Section 205(a)* of the *Social Security Act* and *20 CFR 401.40(b)* of the *Code of Federal Regulations*.
2. The Social Security Administration (SSA) established the electronic benefit verification (BEVE) Internet service to provide our beneficiaries the convenience of requesting a benefit statement through the Internet. To obtain a BEVE, the requestor must identify what information from SSA records that he/she needs by selecting one or more check blocks on the electronic request form. The requestor must also provide his/her name and social security number (SSN) or claim number (the SSN they receive payments under; e.g., spouse's SSN) and several identifying elements required for authentication. A BEVE is often required by beneficiaries to obtain housing, food stamps or other public services. The information collected is to be used exclusively to provide the BEVE to the beneficiary, having verified the identity of the requestor. SSA ensures appropriate confidentiality by mailing the BEVE to the address in existing SSA records for the beneficiary. The information is not retained after collection. The respondents are Social Security Title II, Title XVI, and Medicare beneficiaries.
3. Consistent with the Agency goal of providing world-class service and the *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*, the objective of this form is to provide our beneficiaries with an optional, less burdensome method of requesting a BEVE. SSA created the BEVE as a fully electronic application available through SSA's Internet Website in March of 1999. Since the BEVE is accessible through the Internet, the beneficiaries can make a request at a time that is convenient and without any involvement of SSA employees.
4. The nature of the information being collected and the manner in which it is collected preclude duplication. There is no other collection instrument used by SSA that collects data similar to that collected here. There currently is no existing SSA form for the purpose of requesting a BEVE. However, the beneficiaries can request a BEVE by contacting a Teleservice Center (TSC) or Field Office (FO) and providing information needed to identify themselves (OMB No. 0960-0566, Privacy and Disclosure of Official Records and Information; Availability of Information and Records to the Public) to obtain a BEVE. The

information is keyed at a desk terminal, and a report is produced and provided to the requester, either at the time of the request if it is made in person or by mail if it is made by telephone.

5. This collection does not have an impact on small businesses or other small entities.
6. Failure to provide a BEVE timely may result in loss of services for the affected beneficiaries. Making the service available electronically saves the effort of phoning or visiting a SSA FO or TSC. Because the BEVE requests are initiated by the beneficiaries, they cannot be made more frequently. There are no technical or legal obstacles that prevent burden reduction.
7. There are no special circumstances that would cause the information to be collected inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.5.
8. The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on March 28, 2008, at 73 FR 16734, and SSA received no public comments. The second Notice published on May 28, 2008, at 73 FR 30656. There have been no outside consultations with members of the public.
9. SSA provides no payments or gifts to the respondents.
10. The information requested is protected and held confidential in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 402, 5 U.S.C. 552 (Freedom of Information Act), 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974) and OMB Circular No. A-130

SSA assures the confidentiality of the requester in several ways:

All electronic requests are encrypted using the Secure Socket Layer (SSL) security protocol. SSL encryption helps to prevent a third party from reading the transmitted data even if intercepted. This protocol is an industry standard, and is used by banks such as Wells Fargo and Bank of America for Internet banking.

The requester is given adequate warnings that the Internet is an open system and there is no absolute guarantee that others will not intercept and decrypt the personal information that they have entered. They are advised of alternative methods of requesting a BEVE, i.e., personal visit to an FO or call to the 800 number.

The BEVE is returned to the requester by U.S. mail to the address of record, rather than by way of the Internet (i.e., online).

Information collected by SSA from our beneficiaries is protected by the *Privacy Act of 1974*. In addition, SSA maintains a Privacy Policy for Internet services that ensures confidentiality of all information provided by the requester of a BEVE.

SSA's Internet Privacy Policy is:

- The public does not have to provide personal information to visit our site.
  - SSA collects personally identifiable information (name, email address, Social Security number or other unique identifier) only if specifically and knowingly provided.
  - Personally identifying information provided by the requester will be used only in connection with Social Security Online or for such other purposes as are described at the point of collection.
  - SSA sometimes performs statistical analyses of user behavior in order to measure customer interest in the various areas of our site. Disclosure of this information to third parties is only in aggregate form.
  - SSA does not give, sell or transfer any personal information to a third party.
  - SSA does not enable "cookies." (A "cookie" is a file placed on your hard drive by a Web site that allows it to monitor your use of the site, usually without your knowledge.)
11. The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.
  12. The BEVE is used by 314,974 respondents annually. The estimated response time is 5 minutes, for a total of 26,248 burden hours. The total burden is reflected as burden hours.
  13. There is no known cost burden to the respondents.
  14. Since the information collection process for the Request a Proof of Income Letter is completed online, there is no annual cost to the Federal Government for printing and distribution costs. It is not possible to determine the cost for upkeep of the Internet site or collecting the information, as these costs are combined with the upkeep of SSA's website as a whole.
  15. There has been an increase in the public reporting burden from 11,160 to 26,248 hours, as more users have been using the BEVE system.
  16. The results of the information collection will not be published.
  17. We are not requesting an exception to the requirement to display an expiration date.
  18. SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at 5 CFR

1320.9 and related provisions at 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).

**A. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

Statistical methods are not used for this information collection.