

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR FORM SSA-581  
AUTHORIZATION TO OBTAIN EARNINGS DATA  
FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

**OMB No. 0960-0602**

**A. Justification**

1. Certain organizations and agencies, both public and private, need to obtain detailed earnings information about specific Social Security Number (SSN)-holding wage earners for business purposes (e.g.: pension funds, State agencies). Wage earners may also want to request their own earnings information for verification purposes. Section 205(c)(2)(A) of the *Social Security Act* requires SSA to provide this information when authorized to do so by the SSN holder in question. Respondents use form SSA-581, the Authorization to Obtain Earnings Data from the Social Security Administration (SSA), to 1) identify the SSN holder whose information they are requesting, and 2) provide authorization from the SSN holder, when applicable.
2. SSA will use form SSA-581 to 1) identify the wage earner in question and the period for which earnings information is being requested and 2) verify the wage earner has authorized SSA to release this information to the requesting party.
3. Because the *Tax Reform Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-455)* requires SSA to obtain a wet signature from the SSN holder, we cannot develop an electronic version of form SSA-581 under the Agency's Government Paperwork Elimination Act plan.
4. The nature of the information we are collecting and the manner in which we are collecting it preclude duplication. We do not use any other collection instrument to gather similar data.
5. This information collection does not significantly impact small businesses or other small entities.
6. If we did not collect this information, organizations and wage earners would have no means of requesting earnings data, which they are entitled to do by law. Since we only collect the information on an as-needed basis, we cannot collect it less frequently.

There are no technical or legal obstacles that prevent burden reduction.

7. There are no special circumstances that would cause this information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.5.
8. SSA published the Advance 60-day Federal Register Notice on March 26, 2008, at 73 FR 16087, and we did not receive any public comments. We published the 30-day Federal

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Register Notice on May 28, 2008, at 73 FR 30656. If we receive any public comments in response to the 30-day Notice, we will send them to OMB.

When we originally developed form SSA-581, we consulted multiple pension fund organizations, and they were satisfied with the form.

9. SSA provides no payment or gifts to the respondents.
10. We protect and hold confidential the information we request from respondents 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.
11. The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.
12. Approximately 33,000 respondents take 2 minutes each to complete form SSA-581, for a total burden of 1,100 hours. The total burden is reflected as burden hours, and we did not calculate a separate cost burden.
13. There is no known cost burden to the respondents.
14. The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$29,271.00. This estimate reflects the costs of printing and distributing the collection and personnel costs for processing the form.
15. The public reporting burden decreased from 2,000 to 1,100 hours, caused by a decrease in the number of respondents from 60,000 to 33,000. The decrease in the number of respondents is classified as an "Adjustment," since SSA did not take any actions to effect this reduction.
16. SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.
17. OMB granted SSA an exemption from the requirement to print the OMB approval date on its program forms. SSA produces millions of public-use forms, many of which have a life cycle longer than that of an OMB approval. SSA does not periodically revise and reprint its public-use forms (e.g., on an annual basis). OMB granted this exemption so that otherwise useable editions of forms would not be taken out of circulation because they expired. In addition, we avoid Government waste because we will not have to destroy and reprint stocks of forms.
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).

**B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

We do not use statistical methods for this information collection.

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