

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission  
Foreign Service Officer Test Registration Form  
OMB Control Number 1405-0008  
Form DS-1998

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

1. The Foreign Service Officer Test Registration Form is the form used by all individuals who wish to register for the Foreign Service Officer Test. 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 "[s]hall 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 Officer Test, to review their qualifications for selection as a Foreign Service Officer, to help improve future tests, and to conduct research based on the results of the test for test 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-1998) is submitted via electronic form transfer; registration data is transferred into the contractor's master database.
4. Forms DS-1998 will be used for the express purpose of registering for the Foreign Service Officer Test and review of qualifications for Foreign Service Officer selection. The revised DS-1998 will eliminate the present requirement for applicants to complete a DS-1950 Application for Employment prior to taking the Foreign Service Oral Assessment. 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 Officer Test 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 Officer Test, which is the

first of the assessments that must be passed to be considered for employment as a Foreign Service Officer. The information collection is conducted in preparation for administering the Foreign Service Officer Test (expected to be offered on a quarterly basis each year) and to review qualifications for Foreign Service Officer appointment. The need to administer the test 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 Secretary of State 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: 20,000  
Estimated response time: 3 hours \*  
Total Annual Burden Hours (3 hours x 20,000): 60,000 hours  
Frequency of response: On occasion  
\* Note: This number was derived from a sample of 44 individuals. The average time it took these individuals to complete this form was 3 hours.
13. There is no cost to the applicant to complete this form.
14. Cost to the Federal government, Department of State:  
The design of the Foreign Service Officer Test Registration Form and the development and administration of the Foreign Service Officer Test 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 \$52,000.00. There was a one time cost of \$66,000.00 associated with heavily revising the online submission option. The annualized cost to update over the next three years would be \$22,000 (\$66,000/3). The estimated average annual cost to update the registration form and system will be approximately \$13,200. Six ACT employees are involved in these activities, with estimated average salaries of \$130 per hour (including overhead and fees) to spend 400 hours to maintain the system and upload the registration data.

15. The average number of applicants is estimated to decrease from 30,000 to 20,000. As a result, the corresponding burden hours have decreased from 90,000 to 60,000 hours. This change 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.