

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR
PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION
OMB Number 1405-0015, DS-234**

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Section 525 of Division J of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, Public Law 110-161, signed into law December 26, 2007, provided that Iraqi and Afghan aliens granted special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act shall be eligible for resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits available to refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program for a period not to exceed six months. Likewise, section 1244(g) of Subtitle C of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007), Public Law 110-181, signed into law on January 28, 2008, provided that Iraqis granted special immigrant status shall be eligible for the same resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits provided to refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program for a period not to exceed eight months. In order to elect the portion of these benefits administered by the Department of State, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants must submit information that will allow the Department of State to identify an appropriate resettlement site in the United States and correctly allocate additional services.

2. Under section 1059 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Public Law 109-163, up to 50 Iraqi and Afghan translators working for the U.S. military have been eligible for SIVs each fiscal year (FY). Public Law 110-36, which was signed into law on June 15, 2007, amended section 1059 by expanding the total number of primary applicant beneficiaries to 500 a year for FY 2007 and FY 2008 only. In FY 2009, the number of visas available for this category will revert to 50 annually. The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007, as amended by PL 110-242, provides up to 5,000 (Primary Applicant) Iraqis Special Immigrant Visas in FY2008 and up to 5,000 more in each of the following four fiscal years. There will be up to 12,000 Iraqis and Afghans eligible for the resettlement benefits each fiscal year by estimation. SIV applicants who qualify for and request resettlement support upon arrival in the United States must complete this form for each family member and submit it to the National Visa Center (NVC), along with the Resettlement Benefits Election Form. Both documents will be submitted via email as scanned attachments to the NVC.

3. Responses are requested to be submitted electronically to NVC, if possible, as the most efficient means of collecting and processing the data. The NVC will forward the forms to Refugees Processing Center (RPC) which uses the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) permitting faster dissemination of the information to the sponsoring agencies.

4. There is no duplication of collection. The information necessary for the processing of the Afghan and Iraqi SIV applications, is not available elsewhere.

5. The information collection does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Failure to collect this data would seriously impact the ability of the voluntary agencies to place Afghans and Iraqis in appropriate resettlement locations in the United States.
7. There are no special circumstances associated with this collection.
8. The State Department (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration) published a 60-day notice in the *Federal Register* on July 9, 2008 (73 F.R. 39368) to solicit public comments for this collection. One comment was received. After reviewing the comment, PRM determined that the comment was unrelated to the information collection and instead addressed the underlying statutory program mandated by Congress. The State Department has consulted with voluntary agencies who resettle refugees and they are satisfied that we are collecting the appropriate biographic information. Consultation with applicants, from whom we collect the information, is inappropriate because they are unaware of what information the voluntary agencies need that is relevant to resettlement.
9. Respondents receive neither payments nor gifts for providing their biodata forms. However, the level of resettlement benefits which SIV recipients will receive in the United States is based in part upon needs that are identified through a review of the data provided.
10. Respondents are notified that the information in their files is released to State Department personnel, officers of other federal agencies including Health and Human Services, the Department of Homeland Security, and voluntary agency employees on a need to know basis. Guidelines for the disclosure of information are attached to the cooperative agreements between the voluntary agencies and the State Department.
11. Information on religion and ethnicity is provided at the option of the respondent, but it can be useful in determining which voluntary agency or resettlement site is appropriate. For example, an individual can be placed in a community where there are established places of worship for members of his or her religion. This placement could not be assured if the applicant had not indicated his or her religion during the collection of biographical data.
12. The estimated burden time to complete the DS-234 is 20 minutes. The estimated number of annual respondents is 12,000. The annual hour burden based on these figures is 4,000 hours.
13. There are no costs to respondents associated with this collection.
14. RPC staff estimates devoting 10 minutes each to imputing information submitted by applicants. The total cost to the Federal Government at a \$43.17 hourly rate is \$86,340.
15. The burden change indicated is due to a better estimate of family members included with the primary applicant.
16. The Department does not plan to publish the results of this collection.
17. The Department will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection

18. Not applicable. There are no exceptions to this certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.