

DECOR Study Notices

Form SSA-L-2765-C1 (Request for Self-Employment Information); SSA L-3365-C1 (Request for Employee Information); SSA-L-4002-C1 (Request for Employer Information)

OMB 0960-0508

Justification for Non-Substantive Change

Background

Each year millions of wage and Self Employment reports fail the identity matching processes of SSA and are placed into a special file known as the Earnings Suspense File (ESF). SSA has a variety of methods and procedures that are used to resolve the discrepancies in these reports. DECOR is one process whereby the earners or employers are asked to verify certain information to resolved errors in the reports. As many as eleven million letters are sent each year with marginal effectiveness.

The Office of Quality Performance, Division of Automated Solutions (OQP DAS) developed several processes to provide resolution to some of the reports that have remained in the ESF. We continue to review the files and analyze information in an effort to provide additional automation to improve the quality and quantity of earnings reports processing. We have designed a notice and two sets of questions to test potential changes that will allow expanded automation of the DECOR process.

Timeframe for DECOR Study

OQP will mail questionnaires to employers and individuals over a period of six months. We will send an equal number of letters to each group to determine compliance rates for each. The letters will request one or two pieces of new information that would lend itself to automated searches of SSA record systems.

Description of OQP Letter

The OQP letter is intended primarily as an introduction of the regional OQP representative handling the specific case. A minimal explanation of the study is included. The first page includes the following information:

- Introduce the employee and provide contact information
- Limited explanation of the source of our information and purpose of the study
- A brief explanation of the use of information

The second page of the OQP Letter contains the Privacy Act Statement. This statement is specifically designed for use with this study. It informs the respondent about the study and explains our authority for collecting the information:

- Provide specific authority for obtain information
- Explain the current program upon which this follow up is based
- Inform as to the potential to share information, particularly with other government entities
- Introduce the computer matching for which the information is intended

OQP Study Questionnaire

We created two questionnaires for use in the study. The first questionnaire is for the employer and we will use it to gather wage information. We intend to send half of the letters to employers. The second questionnaire is for the individuals, and contains language general enough to use for wage and self employment cases. The questionnaires will include the following information:

- Lead data on the questionnaires will propagate from the DECOR table (name, SSN, money amount, and EIN{wage cases})
- There are questions designed to correct errors of name or SSN
- We will collect new information that is not on the current DECOR letters
- Automation will come from the information the respondents did not previously submit
- We will not solicit recontact information (phone number)

Burden Information

We will mail approximately 5,000 letters during this study. We expect a 60% return rate from the respondents, with an estimated response time of five minutes to fill out each returned questionnaire. Therefore, we estimate a burden of 250 hours for this study.