

**Supporting Statement for Form SSA-581
Authorization to Obtain Earnings Data
From the Social Security Administration**

OMB No. 0960-0602

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

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 (i.e., pension funds, State agencies). Section 205(c)(2)(A) of the *Social Security Act* requires SSA to provide this information when the SSN holder in question authorizes us to do so.

2. Description of Collection

SSA collects information on Form SSA-581 to identify an earnings record, verify authorized access to the earnings record, and produce an itemized statement for release to the proper party. The respondents are various private or public organizations, or agencies needing detailed earnings information. SSA sends the PDF file to the organizations via email or CDROM in effort to control and reduce unauthorized form use.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information

The *Tax Reform Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-455)* requires a wet signature from the SSN holder for SSA to release earnings data. SSA workgroups are performing planning and analysis to resolve the wet signature requirement and to automate the processing of form SSA-581. SSA did not create an electronic version of form SSA-581 under the agency's Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) plan because only 32,000 respondents complete the form. This is less than the GPEA cut-off of 50,000.

4. Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information

The nature of the information we are collecting and the manner in which we are collecting it preclude duplication. SSA does not use another collection instrument to obtain similar data.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents

This collection does not significantly affect small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently

If we did not use form SSA-581, organizations and wage earners would have no way of requesting earnings data to administer private pension programs, identify an earnings record, verify authorized access to the earnings record, or produce an itemized statement for release to the proper party. This would be a violation of regulations at Section 205(c)(2)(A) of the *Act*. Because we only collect the information on an as-needed basis, we cannot collect it less frequently.

There are no technical or legal obstacles to burden reduction.

7. **Special Circumstances**
There are no special circumstances that would cause SSA to conduct this information collection in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.5.
8. **Solicitation of Public Comment and Other Consultations with the Public**
The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on April 6, 2011, at 76 FR 19175, and we received no public comments. The 30-day FRN published on June 30, 2011 at 76 FR 38448. If we receive any comments in response to this Notice, we will forward them to OMB. We did not consult with the public in the revision of this form.
9. **Payment or Gifts to Respondents**
SSA does not provide payments or gifts to the respondents.
10. **Assurances of Confidentiality**
SSA protects and holds confidential the information it collects 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. **Justification for Sensitive Questions**
The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.
12. **Estimates of Public Reporting Burden**
Approximately 32,000 respondents take 2 minutes each to complete form SSA-581 each year. Accordingly, the burden is 1,067 hours. This figure represents burden hours only, and we did not calculate a separate cost burden.
13. **Annual Cost to the Respondents (Other)**
This collection does not impose a known cost burden on the respondents.
14. **Annual Cost To Federal Government**
The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$34,837.33. This estimate is a projection of the cost for printing and distributing the collection.
15. **Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request**
There has been a decrease in burden hours. The change in burden hours is due to a decrease in the number of respondents completing form SSA-581.
16. **Plans for Publication Information Collection Results**
SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.
17. **Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date**
OMB granted SSA an exemption from the requirement to print the OMB expiration date on its program forms. SSA produces millions of public-use forms with life cycles exceeding those of an OMB approval. Since SSA does not periodically revise and reprint its public-use forms (e.g., on an annual basis), OMB granted this exemption so SSA

would not have to destroy stocks of otherwise useable forms with expired OMB approval dates, avoiding Government waste.

18. **Exceptions to Certification Statement**

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**

SSA does not use statistical methods for this information collection.