

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

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 examinations for appointment to the [Foreign] Service (other than as a 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 Opportunity 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 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-1998E) is submitted via electronic form transfer; registration data is transferred into the contractor's master database.
4. Form DS-1998E will be used for the express purpose of registering for the Foreign Service Officer Test. 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 three times

annually). 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 (Volume 76, Number 18). No 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. This collection does not request information that would be considered sensitive.
12. Number of Respondents/year: 30,000*
Estimated response time: 2 hours **
Total Annual Burden Hours (2 hours x 30,000): 60,000 hours
Frequency of response: On occasion
*Note: The previous estimate was 20,000 respondents. However, a hiring surge with its subsequent recruitment efforts raised that number to over 28,000 in FY 2010. Although hiring will likely slow in the FY2011-2014 time period, we are erring on the side of caution.
** Note: The previous estimated response time of 3 hours was derived from a sample of 44 individuals whose average time to take this form was 3 hours. Since that time, several questions have been removed from the form, with a corresponding drop in the response time.

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 \$60,000.00 for three years. The estimated average annual cost to update the registration form and system will be approximately \$20,000. Six ACT employees are involved in these activities, with estimated average salaries of \$150 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 was projected to decrease to 20,000, but the hiring surge and subsequent recruiting efforts increased the number of respondents to 28,572. Despite the increase in respondents the net burden time has remained at 30,000 hours annually due to the removal of the following five questions from the collection instrument:

- In the Foreign Service you will confront challenging situations that require identifying the problem, collecting relevant information, and formulating creative alternative solutions that are practical and realistic to resolve the problem. Describe briefly how you have dealt with such a situation in your experience, drawing on your resourcefulness, judgment, and analytic ability;
- Describe a significant experience you have had with another culture, either abroad or in the United States;
- Describe a situation in which you used your communication skills (either in English or another language) to further an aim or achieve a goal;
- Describe a project you managed or helped to manage and how you sought to achieve the project's goals; and
- Describe how you have demonstrated leadership, either on one particular occasion or over time

16. Publication of results is not planned.

17. The Bureau of Human Resources does not seek approval not to display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection

18. No exceptions to the certification statement identified in Item 19 are set forth.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. In FY 2010, nearly 30,000 Foreign Service Officer Test Registration Forms were received. With the expected decrease in hiring, the number of registrants is also expected to decrease. The United States Department of State is only concerned with those individuals who submit the registration form; non-respondents are of no concern.

2. The U.S. Department of State uses the information from the registration material to assess the effectiveness of its recruitment process. Demographic data, schools and other registrant information are analyzed to assess the recruitment effort in the past year, as well as to project the recruitment effort that is needed for the future. This statistical analysis is critical to the ongoing development of the recruitment strategy and the assessment of the recruitment process to achieve the goals and objective of the United States Department of State Five Year Recruitment Plan. We have not had occasions requiring sampling procedures; all results of our data collected can be described as reliable data.

3. Non-response is not an issue.

4. Not applicable – policy procedures already in place and have been tested previously.
5. ACT, Inc. will be collecting the statistical data on behalf of the United States Department of State. The chief contact at ACT, Inc. on the statistical process is Sherry Swartzentruber, reachable at (319) 337-1000.