

Supporting Statement for the Epidemiological Research Request
20 CFR 401.165
OMB # 0960-0701

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

Section 311 of the *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994* directs SSA to provide support to health researchers involved in epidemiological research that contributes to a national health interest. *5 USC 552a* and *42 USC 1306* of the *United States Code*; Section 1106 of the *Social Security Act*; and *20 CFR 401.165* of the *Code of Federal Regulations* require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide information regarding the vital status of study subjects. For instance, SSA must provide information as to whether study subjects are alive or dead for the purposes of epidemiological or similar research that will contribute to a national health interest.

2. Description of Collection

SSA collects the application information to determine if the requestor's health research has scientific merit that warrants providing vital status information on their study subjects. An evaluating team conducts a review of the application to determine if the scientific merit of the study or service allows SSA to process the request for vital status death information. SSA also uses the information to compute and collect the required payment for the service and to make sure the requestor's physical and access security meet SSA standards. Approved requestors can obtain vital status information for one year, and they can exercise an option to receive vital status information for an additional year. After the one year option, the requestor must submit a new application. The respondents are qualified health and scientific researchers who are applying to receive vital status information about individuals from Social Security administrative data records.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information

SSA posts the application requirements on the Internet and the requestor prints and mails their signed application to the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics. SSA also requires the applicant to send the application to SSA electronically. The url is: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/about/epidemiology.html>. We give this url to interested parties; however, the respondents can also find the url through a search on SSA's website. This is an application for service rather than a survey form. The requestor can complete the application online without any assistance.

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 SSA did not collect the information on the Epidemiological Research Request we would be in violation of Section 311 of the *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994*. Since 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 September 12, 2013 at 78 FR 56265, and we received no public comments. SSA published the second Notice on December 31, 2013, at 78 FR 79723. If we receive comments in response to the 30-day 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 25 requestors use the Epidemiological Research Request annually. We estimate it takes an average of 120 minutes for each requestor to complete the request for 50 annual burden hours.

Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Average Burden Per Response (minutes)	Total Annual Burden (hours)
State & Local Government	15	1	120	30
Private Entities	10	1	120	20
Totals	25			50

The total burden for this ICR is 50 hours. This figure represents burden hours, and we calculated a separate cost burden as shown in #13 below.

13. Annual Cost to the Respondents (Other)

SSA charges a minimal cost to the respondent for requesting this information. The current cost for this service is \$0.21175 per record (data supplied to identify one study subject) up to 25,000 records. We process additional records at a cost of \$0.03905 per record. The average annual cost per requestor is \$3,500. The total annual cost to the respondents is approximately \$87,500.

14. Annual Cost To Federal Government

The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$115,000. This estimate is a projection of the costs for maintaining the collection instrument and for collecting the information.

15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request

The burden change is due to a slight decrease in the number of annual vital status requests SSA receives. Since we are receiving fewer requests, the annual burden decreased.

16. Plans for Publication Information Collection Results

SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.

17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date

SSA is not requesting an exception to the requirement to display an expiration date.

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.