

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR VA FORM 26-1817,  
REQUEST FOR DETERMINATION OF LOAN GUARANTY ELIGIBILITY  
UNMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSES  
(2900-0055)

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Title 38, U.S.C. 3701(b)(2) (exhibit A), authorizes VA to extend home loan benefits to unmarried surviving spouses of veterans whose deaths (1) occurred either while serving on active duty or (2) were a direct result of service-connected disabilities.

The 30-day FRN indicated this was an extension, however the minor revision to the form makes it a revision. The expiration date is being added to the form.

2. Section 3702(c) of Title 38, U.S.C. states that any veteran may apply to the Secretary for a certificate of eligibility. A completed VA Form 26-1817 constitutes a formal request by an unmarried surviving spouse for a certificate of eligibility. Upon receipt of VA Form 26-1817 and the required documentation by Loan Guaranty personnel, the application and supporting documents are referred to the Adjudication activity via the Administrative activity for determination of the applicant's basic eligibility. Adjudication will then notify Loan Guaranty about the basic eligibility for issuance of the certificate of eligibility. The information collected on the form provides the essential information necessary for VA to make a proper determination.

3. VA Form 26-1817 requires very specific information that is collected from individuals. Use of improved information technology in gathering this information would be of limited benefit. The form requires the applicant to provide identifying information about the deceased veteran which may not always be contained at the time in VA data systems. Additionally, once the form is submitted to Loan Guaranty, it is usually referred to the Veteran's Service Center. In many cases that division must request military service records and manually review them in order to determine if the applicant meets the definition of an unmarried surviving spouse.

4. The information is not contained in any other VA records. The information contained in the form relates to an individual's eligibility status.

5. The collection of information does not involve small businesses.

6. The information collected is completed by applicants frequently with the assistance of a casualty assistance officer when an original claim for benefits is requested by an unmarried surviving spouse. This completed form is used to establish eligibility for loan guaranty benefits. The collection is generally conducted once per individual applicant.

7. There are no special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. The agency notice was published in the Federal Register on September 27, 2013, Volume 78, No. 188, pages 59772-59773. No comments were received in response to this notice.

9. No payments or gifts to respondents have been made under this collection of information.

10. Loan Guaranty Home, Condominium and Manufactured Home Loan Applicant Records, Specially Adapted Housing Applicant Records, and Vendee Loan Applicant Records - VA (55VA26) contained in the Privacy Act Issuances, 2001 Compilation.

11. No sensitive questions appear on the form.

12. Estimate of Information Collection Burden

a. Number of respondents is estimated at 5,000 per year.

b. Frequency of response is generally one time.

c. Annual burden is 1,250 hours.

d. The estimated response time of 15 minutes is based on informal consultations with staff personnel who have had actual experience in completing the form with the applicant.

e. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Average Hourly Earnings, the cost to the respondent is \$24, making the total cost to respondents an estimated \$30,000. (1,250 hours x \$24 per hour).

13. This submission does not involve any recordkeeping costs.

14. Estimate of Cost to Federal Government

\$ 22,700 Estimated Loan Guaranty processing cost for FY 2013  
(5,000 cases x 10 minutes per case x \$27.24 per hour (average Loan Guaranty field salary))

\$ 40,050 Estimated Veteran's Service Center processing cost for FY 2013  
(2500 cases x 15 minutes processing time by GS-4 (\$14.59 per hour) plus  
30 minutes processing time by GS-9 (\$24.74 per hour)

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\$62,750 Total estimated cost to the Government

15. There is an increase in burden hours. This is due to a rise in the number of service-connected deaths in relation to conflicts in the Middle East. VA Form 26-6393 is being revised to provide applicants with clearer direction on how to determine if they are married for VA purposes.

16. Information collection is not for tabulation or publication use.

17. We are not seeking approval to omit the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. There is no exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-1.

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.