

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR
PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION
Foreign Service Officer Test Registration Form
OMB Number 1405-0008
Form DS-1998E**

JUSTIFICATION

- 1.) The Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) 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 examination for appointment to the [Foreign] Service (other than as 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 Opportunities Regulations (29 C.F.R. 1614.601). Social Security Numbers are not being used for the purpose of registering for the FSOT. The test administrator, Pearson VUE, assigns each candidate a unique ID during account creation for purposes of administering the test. The State Department's Recruitment Evaluation and Employment Tracking Application (REETA) uses SSNs to maintain candidates' records throughout the lengthy Foreign Service Officer Selection Process. The FSOT is the first step, followed by the Qualifications Evaluation Panel review, the Oral Assessment, medical (worldwide availability), suitability review, and security clearances (top secret) before a candidate is placed on a hiring register. Prior applicants are ineligible to register for the FSOT until 330 days have elapsed since the time they last registered. Prior applicants who have been found unsuitable for employment by the Department's Final Review Panel are ineligible to apply for Foreign Service positions for a period of two years from the date of the unfavorable suitability determination. Candidates often take the FSOT more than once. The SSN is the only unique identifier currently available to REETA to ensure that ineligible applicants do not reapply for Foreign Service positions within the time frames set forth above.
Information on disabilities is collected consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- 2.) The information will be collected by Pearson VUE on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. Pearson VUE will collect the information via electronic form transfer. As is the case regarding information received from the current collection of information, the 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. 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.) The State Department (Bureau of Human Resources) published a 60-day notice requesting public comments on May 20, 2014, in the Federal Register, Volume 79, page 28989. No comments were received.
- 9.) 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. There have been no other assurances of confidentiality.
- 11.) This collection does not request information that would be considered sensitive.
- 12.) Number of Respondents/year: 32,000
Estimated response time: 2 hours
Total Annual Burden Hours 2 hours x 32,000: 64,000 hours
Frequency of response: on occasion
- 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 Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) and its

subcontractor Pearson VUE. The following costs are based on the statements that HumRRO has provided the United States Department of State regarding the form.

The estimated annualized cost to the federal government is \$162,533. The initial cost to create the registration form is estimated at \$339,200. The estimated cost to update the registration form and maintain the system is approximately \$74,200 per year for the second and third years. Annualizing these costs equals \$162,533 ($\$339,200 + \$74,200 + \$74,200 = \$487,600 / 3 = \$162,533$).

- 15.) There has been an increase from 30,000 to 32,000 respondents registering for the Foreign Service Officer Test resulting in a corresponding increase in burden hours.
- 16.) The data gathered by this collection will not be published.
- 17.) The Department will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.
- 18.) The Department is not requesting any exception to the certification statement.

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. The Department of State is only concerned with those individuals who submit the registration form; non-respondents are of no concern.
2. The 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 to use sampling procedures; all results of our data collected can be described as reliable data.
3. Non-response is not an issue because the only way an applicant can take the Foreign Service test is to complete this test registration form.
4. Policy procedures already in place and have been tested previously.
5. HumRRO will be collecting the statistical data on behalf of the United States Department of State. The chief contact at HumRRO on the statistical process is Deborah L. Whetzel, project director, reachable at 703.706.5605.

