

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION  
FORMS WH-3 AND WH-3 SP  
OMB Control No.: 1235-0021**

This ICR was previously submitted for renewal in 2013 and was approved for a three year extension with a current expiration date of September 2016. On February 12, 2014, President Obama signed Executive Order 13658 increasing the hourly minimum wage paid to employees of contractors performing work on covered federal contracts. This ICR was submitted in conjunction with the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking published in the Federal Register as a result of that Executive Order on June 17, 2014 (See 79 FR 34568). On August 15, 2014, OMB issued a notice that continued the previous approval of the information collection under the existing terms of clearance and asked that the Department resubmit the information collection requests upon promulgation of the Final Rule and after consideration of public comments received.

**A. Justification**

**1. Circumstances Necessitating Information Collection**

This information collection provides a method for the Wage and Hour Division (WHD) of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to obtain information from complainants regarding alleged violations of the labor standards the agency administers and enforces. The law of most general application regarding wages and hours of work is the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. § 201 *et. seq.* FLSA section 11(a) provides that the Secretary of Labor may investigate and gather data regarding the wages, hours, or other conditions and practices of employment in any industry subject to the FLSA, and may enter and inspect such places and such records (and make such transcriptions thereof), question such employees, and investigate such facts, conditions, practices, or matters deemed necessary or appropriate to determine whether any person has violated any provision of the FLSA. 29 U.S.C. § 211(a).

Other Federal laws the WHD administers provide similar authority. These Acts include the: Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act (41 U.S.C. § 38); McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act (41 U.S.C. § 353(a)); Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. § 3141 *et seq.*, pursuant to Reorganization Plan No. 14 of 1950, and Related Acts); Consumer Credit Protection Act (15 U.S.C. § 1676); Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (29 U.S.C. § 1862(a)); Employee Polygraph Protection Act (29 U.S.C. § 2004(a)(3)); Family and Medical Leave Act (29 U.S.C. § 2616(a)); Immigration and Nationality Act H-2A program (8 U.S.C. § 1188(g)); the Immigration and Nationality Act H-2B program (8 U.S.C. 1184(c)(14)(B) and the Immigration and Nationality Act H-1C program (8 U.S.C. § 1182(m)(2)(E)(ii)). The regulatory provisions authorizing the filing of complaints under these laws and how the agency acts upon the concerns can be found at 29 C.F.R.

§§ 4.191, 5.6, 10.41, 500.1(e), 501.1(c), 501.5, 801.7(a)(3), 825.401; 41 C.F.R. § 50-201.1202; and 20 C.F.R. § 655.1200(b).

On February 12, 2014, President Obama signed Executive Order 13658 establishing a minimum wage for contractors to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 for all workers on federal construction and service contracts. This ICR may be affected as a result of the NPRM resulting from this Executive Order.

## **2. Use**

WHD staff use Form WH-3 as a guide for obtaining optional information from complainants (e.g., current and former employees, unions, and competitor employers) about alleged employer violations of the labor standards provisions of the above-cited Acts. Complainants generally provide the optional information requested on the form to WHD staff over the telephone or in-person. Where the information provided does not support a potential WHD enforcement action, complainants are advised and referred to the appropriate agency for further assistance. When the WHD schedules a complaint-based investigation, the agency makes the completed Form WH-3 part of the investigation case file. The form is printed in both English and Spanish.

## **3. Technology**

The DOL has considered developing an automated complaint system or making Form WH-3 available on the Internet and determined it would have a negative effect on the ability of the WHD to provide quality, timely service to potential complainants and be impractical to implement. The ability to screen complaints during the intake process is critical to effectively meeting the potential complainants' needs. Long experience has shown that well over half of the potential complainants contacting the WHD complain of problems that the WHD cannot resolve for a variety of reasons. These reasons include lack of a federal Wage Hour law covering their complaint, an employer not covered by federal Wage Hour laws, an employee exempt from otherwise applicable Wage Hour law provisions, violation(s) past the statute of limitations for WHD action, or the issues involved are better serviced by another federal or state agency.

Making the Form WH-3 available on the Internet and allowing submission of forms completed without WHD consultation would generate tens of thousands of complaints filed in the erroneous belief the WHD can help with a problem outside of WHD jurisdiction. These non-actionable complaints will require extensive WHD follow-up to secure additional information, or notification of complainants that they should have contacted another federal or state agency, or that WHD is unable to assist them with their problem. These individuals are better and more timely served through an initial, personal (by phone or in-person) consultation with the WHD. Potential complainants are encouraged to call (using a toll-free number) or visit the nearest WHD office in virtually all WHD compliance assistance materials, Web site programs, and guides.

Implementation of an automated complaint system using the WH-3 would be impractical given available technology and agency resources. An automated system would greatly decrease the quality of customer service provided to potential complainants while increasing the burden on the public (i.e., providing information where the WHD can provide no assistance).

#### **4. Duplication**

This information collection does not duplicate existing WHD requirements. No similar information is available from any other source, since the WHD has enforcement authority over the various labor standards laws previously identified. A separate statutorily mandated information collection, OMB Control No. 1205-0310, covers the filing of complaints under the H-1B program of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and this information collection does not duplicate that data.

#### **5. Minimizing Small Entity Burden**

While this information collection does not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, it does infrequently involve small businesses, as in the case of competitor complaints. Form WH-3 provides an easy way for the WHD to obtain the information necessary to determine whether it is likely that a violation of the law has occurred and to schedule an investigation.

#### **6. Consequence of Failing to Collect and Obstacles to Reducing Burden**

Complainants are asked to provide information relevant to this information collection only when they seek WHD assistance in addressing one or more alleged labor standards violation(s); consequently, there is no way to request the information less frequently and still collect it. Complaints provide the basis for the overwhelming majority of WHD compliance actions, and the agency would lose an efficient and reliable tool for assessing violations were there no means to obtain information from complainants.

#### **7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances involved in this information collection.

#### **8. Public Comments**

On 06/17/2014, the DOL published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking public comments regarding this information collection as part of the NPRM. 79 FR 34568. On July 8, 2014, the Department extended the comment period for filing written comments until July 28, 2014 by placing notice in the *Federal Register*. See 79 FR 38478. Several comments were received in response to the PRA section of the NPRM.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Federation of Independent Business estimated that the Department's Paperwork Reduction Act burden estimate provided in the NPRM is low. They indicated that the Department's assertion of only 35 additional complaints filed was not credible. They suggested that the large numbers of persons becoming entitled to this new wage level would be in the thousands and that more complaints would be received.

With respect to the potential increase to the number of complaints, the Department notes a partial error in the publication of the NPRM. In ICR 1235-0021, the currently approved responses for the Employment Information Form used to collect complainant information is 35,000 annually. The Department notes that in the NPRM, the number was increased to 35,350 (although it incorrectly identified only 35 new responses in the subsequent brackets to this rulemaking). The correct number is 35,350 which was listed in the NPRM but 350 of that amount is from this rulemaking. Some commenters thought this should be listed in the thousands. The Department does not agree with such an assessment. Of the millions of employees that are included in the FLSA information collection, the Department only receives about .06% in annual complaints. Of the 183,814 affected workers estimated in the NPRM, the Department estimates it will receive approximately 350 complaints (or .19%). This amount is approximately triple the percentage of complaints the Department currently receives for the FLSA, SCA, and DBA combined information collection. As a result, the Department declines to incorporate a larger number of complaints suggested by some commenters into its burden estimates.

Contacts with complainants during the course of responding to the information collection have not indicated any substantive problems with providing the information required on the form.

*Historical Public Engagement for Clearances Beginning with ICR Approved via Notice of Action Issued 08/29/2013.*

On April 17, 2013, the DOL published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking public comments regarding this information collection. 78 FR 22912. No comments were received.

## **9. Payment or Gifts to Respondents**

The DOL offers no payments or gifts to respondents.

## **10. Assurances of Confidentiality**

The DOL gives an assurance of confidentiality on the form, which provides that the agency will keep the respondent's identity confidential to the maximum extent possible under existing law. Information gathered during the course of an investigation of a

complaint is disclosed only in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552; the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a; and attendant regulations, 29 C.F.R. parts 70 and 71. The FOIA provides an exception from its disclosure requirements for records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes to the extent that release of the information could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution that furnished information on a confidential basis. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(D).

#### **11. Sensitive Questions**

These information collections ask no sensitive questions.

#### **12. Estimated Annual Respondent Burden Hours**

WHD estimates it annually receives about 35,000 complaints. The DOL anticipates the current NPRM would result in an addition 350 complaints each year, for a total of 35,350 responses from an equal number of respondents. Agency experience also indicates a typical complainant spends about twenty minutes providing information needed to complete the Form WH-3 to WHD staff. This produces an annual respondent burden of 11,783 hours. 35,350 annual responses x 20 minutes.

Complainants alleging violations of WHD-enforced labor standards may be employees of any of a wide variety of businesses, from small farms or retail stores to large manufacturing plants. Absent specific wage data regarding complainants, the DOL has used the average hourly rate for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls for March 2014, of \$24.32 to estimate respondent costs. *See The Employment Situation, May 2014*, at 32, Table B-3, DOL, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit\\_06062014.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_06062014.pdf). The DOL estimates total monetized value of the burden hours to be \$286,562.56. \$24.32 X 11,783 hours.

#### **13. Estimated Annual Respondent Capital/Start-Up/Operation/Maintenance Costs**

Because the WHD orally obtains the relevant information from the complainant and fills out the Form WH-3, complainants incur no costs, other than the value of their time, in filing a complaint. *See* Item 12.

#### **14. Estimated Annual Federal Costs**

The information collected to file a complaint is almost always taken via phone and entered directly into the WHISARD case tracking system utilized by WHD. However, on occasion, a paper form is used when the e-system is unavailable or in the case of emergency such as during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans where investigators would be in the field collecting the data.

The DOL annually prints approximately 1,000 copies of this information collection, at the cost of \$45. 1,000 copies x \$0.045 per copy.

A GS 11, step 4 Investigator needs approximately 20 minutes to complete a Form WH-3 for the initial screening of the complaint, incurring a cost of \$360,099. 35,350 forms (online and paper) x 20 minutes x \$30.56 per hour (GS 11, step4, Rest of U.S). See *Salary Table 2014*, Office of Personnel Management at 33, <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2014/salhrl.pdf>.

Approximately 25,000 responses require additional evaluation. In those cases, a GS 13, step 4 supervisor needs about 15 minutes to analyze each to determine whether a potential violation of the law exists, producing a cost of \$272,250. 25,000 forms x 15 minutes x \$43.56 per hour (GS 13, step4, Rest of U.S). *Id.*

TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUALIZED FEDERAL COSTS = \$632,394. (\$45 + \$360,099 + 272,250).

**15. Reasons for Program Changes or Adjustments Affecting Public Burdens**

Federal costs have declined as most complaints are taken via phone and entered directly into the WHISARD case tracking system. The Department estimates a slight increase in burden associated with a slight increase in complaints associated with this rulemaking.

**16. Publishing Data From Information Collection**

The DOL does not publish the results of this information collection.

**17. Display of OMB Approval Expiration**

The DOL does not seek an exception to the requirement to display the expiration date on this information collection.

**18. Exceptions to Certification Statement**

The DOL is not requesting an exception to any of the certification requirements for this information collection. This request complies with 5 C.F.R. § 1320.9.

**B. Employing Statistical Methods**

This information does not employ statistical methods.