

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Fee Remittance for Certain F, J and M Nonimmigrants

ICE Form I-901

(OMB No. 1653-0034)

A. Justification.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

On March 1, 2003, the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) transferred duties from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA), Public Law 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135 (Nov. 25, 2002). The adjudication functions of INS transferred to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) function transferred to the Bureau of Border Security, now U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE). For the sake of simplicity, any reference to the INS has been changed to DHS, even when referencing events that proceeded March 1, 2003.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, Public Law 104-208, Subtitle D, Section 641 directs the Attorney General, in

consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Education, to develop and conduct a program to collect information on academic nonimmigrant students (F-1), vocational nonimmigrant students (M-1), and exchange visitors (J-1), as well as their dependents (F-2, M-2 or J-2), from approved institutions of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, or in a program of study at any other DHS-approved academic or language-training institution, to include approved private elementary and secondary schools and public secondary schools, and from approved exchange visitor program sponsors designated by the Department of State (DOS). It also authorized a fee at a rate established in the final rule published September 26, 2008, at 73 FR 55683, to be collected from these F, J and M nonimmigrants to support this information collection program.

DHS implemented the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to oversee and manage the database, SEVIS, to carry out this statutory requirement. The substantive requirements and procedures for SEVIS have been promulgated in separate rulemaking proceedings. See 67 FR 34862 (May 16, 2002) (proposed rule implementing SEVIS); 67 FR 44343 (July 1, 2002) (interim rule for schools to apply for preliminary enrollment in SEVIS); 67 FR 60107 (September 25, 2002) (interim rule for certification of schools applying for enrollment in SEVIS); 67 FR 76256 (December 11, 2002) (DHS final rule implementing SEVIS); 67 FR 76307 (December 12, 2002) (DOS interim rule implementing SEVIS). On December 21, 1999, the publication of a Federal Register document at 64 FR

71323 proposed to amend 8 CFR 103.7; 214.2(f), (j), and (m); and 8 CFR 299.1 to provide for this fee as required in the law.

Section 641(e) of IIRIRA, as amended, 8 U.S.C. 1372(e), directs that this information collection system be self-funded by the academic nonimmigrant students (F-1), vocational nonimmigrant students (M-1) and exchange visitors (J-1) it benefits. These nonimmigrants will pay the fee before the DOS considers granting them F, J or M nonimmigrant visa status.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

This information collection is necessary to implement section 641 of IIRIRA, 8 U.S.C. §1372, which directs DHS to collect information relating to academic nonimmigrant students (F-1), vocational nonimmigrant students (M-1), and exchange visitors (J-1), as well as their dependents (F-2, M-2 or J-2)¹, and provides for the collection of the required fee to defray the costs of this program. Section 641 of IIRIRA requires DHS to collect current information, on an ongoing basis, from schools and exchange visitor program sponsors relating to F, J and M nonimmigrants during the course of their stay in the United States, using electronic reporting technology to the fullest extent practicable. SEVP, an office of the DHS agency U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, implemented SEVIS to carry out this statutory requirement. SEVP uses the Form I-901, Fee

¹ Dependents are not required to pay a fee. Cost of their participation is incorporated in the payment of their F-1, M-1 or J-1 principal.

Remittance for Certain F, J and M Nonimmigrants, to provide a receipt to the F, J or M nonimmigrant upon payment and to positively identify that a particular F, J, or M nonimmigrant has paid the fee.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology (e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses) and the basis for the decision to adopt this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The use of the Form I-901 provides the most efficient means for collecting and processing the required data. SEVP employs information technology in collecting and processing this information through the use of the www.fmjfee.com website. At this point in time, approximately 99 percent of the academic nonimmigrant students (F-1), vocational nonimmigrant students (M-1) and exchange visitors (J-1) complete their Forms I-901 electronically via www.fmjfee.com, a reduction of 2% since the last reporting cycle. However, SEVP continues to accept paper submission of the Form I-901 from approximately one percent of the F, J and M nonimmigrant population that still requires an alternative to electronic submission.² At some point in the future, when SEVP no longer sees a need to provide paper submission, SEVP will switch to only electronic submission of the Form I-901.

² All percent calculations are rounded to the nearest number.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The information supplied can be obtained from an existing information system. A designated school official enters a nonimmigrant student's personal and school information on the Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status) within SEVIS and subsequently issues a completed Form I-20 to the nonimmigrant student upon acceptance to the school. Similarly, a responsible officer enters an exchange visitor's personal and sponsor information on the Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status) within SEVIS and subsequently issues a completed Form DS-2019 to the exchange visitor upon acceptance to the program.

The Form I-901 electronic system supported by the Department of Treasury, Financial Management Service (FMS), and utilized by SEVP, aggregates fee data from the Internet, and other potential electronic payment systems and the manual paper-based system ("lockbox"), but is a separate system from SEVIS which addresses the Forms I-20 and DS-2019 and most other nonimmigrant student and SEVP-certified school processes. However, the Form I-901 requires a nonimmigrant student's valid SEVIS ID#, as well as some basic biographical information gathered in SEVIS through the Form I-20 or Form DS2019. SEVP is working with FMS to establish a data share interface whereby the Form I-901 system provides SEVIS with payment information. SEVP also intends to continue working closely with DOS to integrate such payment information from

SEVIS into the existing data share arrangement providing Forms I-20 and DS-2019 data to the consulates for use during the visa screening process. The Form I-901 fee must be paid prior to the issuance of a nonimmigrant F, J or M visa or a change of nonimmigrant classification. The ability to locate and match records to confirm payment of the fee is critical, because the failure to pay the fee will result in the denial of visa issuance or in a violation of status. As such, this data matching enables SEVP and DOS to credit the nonimmigrant student or exchange visitor with payment of the required fee.

Therefore, while academic nonimmigrant students (F-1), vocational nonimmigrant students (M-1) and exchange visitors (J-1) must provide a minimum amount of Form I-20 or DS-2019 information on the Form I-901, the information repeated is minimal and the purpose is to benefit the F, J and M nonimmigrant by ensuring that each is properly credited with having paid the Form I-901 fee in order to maintain status as an F, J or M nonimmigrant.

The Form I-901 requests credit card and bank account information from those paying the fee over the Internet (www.fmjfee.com). SEVP provides this electronic submission option in order to provide as many F, J or M nonimmigrants as possible an easy means to pay the fee. Banks require the information on the Form I-901 in order to process the F, J or M nonimmigrant's payment. This credit card and bank account information is not stored in the SEVIS database or retained by the FMS system beyond the time it takes to settle the transaction. The Internet site has been implemented in partnership with the Department of Treasury and

developed with appropriate security measures in place to safeguard the applicant's information.

The nonimmigrant prints a receipt in order to provide backup to the I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Information in SEVIS for the Consular interview. This facilitates confirmation that the I-901 fee was paid, as required. Five of the data elements that once printed on these receipts in order to provide the student's identity are now redundant. SEVP will no longer collect the following data elements: Gender, City (Province) of Birth, Country of Birth, Country of Citizenship and Passport Number.

When the SEVP I-901 processing team encounters an error or omission on the Form I-901 submission, it is imperative that the processing team communicates with the nonimmigrant student or exchange visitor in a timely manner in order to correct the information and successfully process the I-901 fee before the nonimmigrant student or exchange visitor arrives at a consulate interview, as proof of Form I-901 payment is necessary at the visa screening process.

Currently, SEVP's Form I-901 processing staff effectuates such contact with the nonimmigrant student or exchange visitor via a letter sent through the traditional international postal systems, a process that can take up to 60 days. In order to shorten this response time, SEVP will now also collect the Form I-901 applicant's email address and send all future communication to those Form I-901 applicants via email thereby reducing the error correction window from the current 60 days to approximately 14 days, as well as saving the I-901 processing team the staff

hours and printing costs associated with establishing contact through traditional mail. Again, the information repeated is minimal and the purpose is to benefit the F, J and M nonimmigrant by ensuring that each is properly credited with having paid the Form I-901 fee in order to maintain status as an F, J or M nonimmigrant.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities disproportionately (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

This information collection does not disproportionately impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

If the information is not collected, SEVP cannot allow the academic nonimmigrant students (F-1), vocational nonimmigrant students (M-1) or exchange visitors (J-1) to complete payment of the Form I-901 fee. In addition, SEVP will be unable to positively identify those F, J and M nonimmigrants who have paid the fee. Therefore, SEVP's ability to ensure compliance with the law and enforce fee collection will be severely limited without this information.

If email address information is not collected, the payment process is significantly delayed.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the**

pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or

- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

The special circumstances contained in item 7 of the supporting statement are not applicable to this information collection.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the data and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years -- even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior

periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

On September 25, 2014, USICE published a notice in the Federal Register at 79 FR 22829, soliciting public review and comment for a 60-day period on the proposed extension of the approval of this information collection. USICE received no comments during this 60 day period. On December 5, 2015, USICE published a follow up notice in the Federal Register at 79 FR 28504, soliciting public review and comment for an additional 30-day period on the proposed extension of the approval of this information collection with instructions that any comments should be sent directly to the Office of Management and Budget. .

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

SEVP does not provide payment or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The SEVIS system of records covers the use and potential sharing of information in this collection. The SEVIS system of records is covered by the Privacy Act. USICE published notice of this system of records in the Federal Register on January 5, 2010 at 75 FR 412. The SEVIS Privacy Impact Assessment covers the use and potential sharing of information in this collection. USICE published

notice of this Privacy Impact Assessment on June 23, 2011; see

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/privacy/privacy_pia_sevis_update_nctc.pdf.

- 11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to person's from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

There are no questions in this collection of a sensitive nature.

- 12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:**
 - Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and**

explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.

- **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.**

Annual Reporting Burden:

a.	Number of Respondents	
	F-1 and M-1 @ \$200	493,114
	J-1 @ \$180	168,515
	J-1 @ \$35	144,158
b.	Number of Responses per each Respondent	1
c.	Total Annual Responses	805,786 ³

³ For fiscal year 2013, the total number of F-1/M-1 nonimmigrant students was 469,632; the total number of J-1s at the \$180 fee level was 160,490; and, the total number of J-1s at the \$35 fee level was 137,293. SEVP projects an increase of a flat 5% for the next three years covered by this Supporting Statement (i.e., F-1/M-1 at the \$200 fee level 493,114; J-1s at the \$180 fee level 168,515; and, J-1s at the \$35 fee level 144,158 for fiscal year 2014, and the same amount for calendar years 2015 and 2016).

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| d. | Hours per Response

minutes) | 0.25 hours (15 |
| e. | Total Annual Reporting Burden | 201,447 hours |

SEVP bases the projected FY2016 number of application type respondents on historical Form I-901 payment data obtained from the I-901 system. SEVP derived the projected hours per response for this collection of information by breaking the process into three basic components:

Learning about the Law and the Form	4 Minutes
Completion of the Form	7 Minutes
Assembling and Filing the Form	4 Minutes
TOTAL Hours per Response	0.25 hours (15
minutes)	

For all components, SEVP used tests to determine completion times. SEVP used people who were not conversant with immigration processes to determine average completion times.

Note: SEVIS by the Numbers data, posted on the Outreach page of the SEVP website, reflect a limited period of the year (a “snapshot” of that segment) rather than the entire fiscal year, as given in this statement.

Total annual reporting burden hours are 201,447. SEVP derived this figure by multiplying the number of respondents (805,786) x frequency of response (1) x 0.25 hours (15 minutes) per response.

Annual Public Cost

Collection cost to Respondents

a. Total Annual Public Cost \$ 2,014,465

The estimated annual public cost is \$2,014,465. SEVP based this figure on the number of respondents 805,786 multiplied by 0.25 hours (15 minutes), multiplied by \$10 (average hourly rate). SEVP based the projected FY2016 number of respondents on historical I-901 payment data by application type from the I-901 system.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

- **The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life); and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition,**

expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.

- If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.**
- Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.**

There are no capital or start-up costs associated with this information collection. However, there is a fee charge of \$200, \$180 or \$35 associated with the collection of this information. The breakdown is as follows:

a.	Fee Revenue	\$ 134,001,030
	430,000 F-1 and M-1 @\$200	\$ 98,622,800
	148,000 J-1 @\$180	\$ 30,332,700
	170,000 J-1 @\$35	\$ 5,045,530

SEVP based these calculations on the following: a \$200 fee charge for F-1 and M-1 nonimmigrant students; a \$180 fee charge for J-1 exchange visitors; and, reduced fee of \$35 for those J-1 exchange visitors sponsored by Au Pair programs, summer/work/travel programs, and camp counselor programs.

This fee is not applicable to those J-1 nonimmigrants who are participating in a program sponsored by the Federal government. The section of IIRIRA mandating the SEVIS fee, IIRIRA section 641, provides that an alien seeking J-1 status to participate in an exchange visitor program that is sponsored by the Federal government is exempt from paying a fee. Accordingly, J-1 exchange visitors exempt from the fee as participants in a Federal government sponsored exchange visitor program are those participating in an exchange visitor program with a program identification designator prefix of G-1, G-2, G-3 or G-7.

- 14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should**

include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

Annualized Cost Analysis:

a.	Software Development and System Management	\$	1,105,014
b.	Collection and Processing Cost	\$	2,693,673

Total Annual Cost to Government \$ 3,798,687

Government Cost

The estimated cost to the government is \$3,798,687. SEVP based its software development and system management costs for the Form I-901, which is accessed via the Internet at www.fmjfee.com, on FY2013 costs. These software development services consist of new features and interfaces, as well as employing new technologies within the I-901 Fee System to support SEVP's requirements. SEVP based its collection and processing costs on the FY2013. This fee collection web services system expedites the collection and processing of the I-901 fees, and includes salary expense for three contract staff used as personnel support.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reporting in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

Approximately 99% of participants now submit Form I-901 payment online (Those who submit a paper Form I-901 incur the print and processing cost). Previously, when SEVP's Form I-901 processing staff identified an error or omission on a Form I-901, it affected contact with the F-1/M-1 nonimmigrant students or J-1 exchange visitors via a letter sent through the traditional international postal systems, a process that could take up to 60 days to reach the addressee. By augmenting SEVP's Form I-901 data collection to include the F-1/M-1 nonimmigrant students and J-1 exchange visitors email address, SEVP will shorten the error correction window from the current 60 days to approximately 14 days. Timely Form I-901 error correction, and the successful processing of the I-901 fee before the F-1/M-1 nonimmigrant students or J-1 exchange visitors arrive at a consulate interview is imperative, as proof of Form I-901 payment is necessary at the visa screening process.

SEVP will divert the saved dollars and the saved staff hours to other facets of the Form I-901/FMJfee site's software development and management.

The nonimmigrant prints a receipt in order to provide backup to the I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Information in SEVIS for the Consular interview. This facilitates confirmation that the I-901 fee was paid, as required. Five of the data elements that once printed on these receipts in order to provide the student's identity are now redundant. SEVP will no longer collect the following data elements: Gender,

City (Province) of Birth, Country of Birth, Country of Citizenship and Passport Number. By eliminating these five data elements, SEVP shorten the nonimmigrant's Form I-901 response burden.

- 16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation, and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

SEVP does not intend to employ the use of statistics or the publication thereof for this information collection.

- 17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

SEVP is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection. As mandated by 5 CFR 1320.3(f)(2), the first screen of SEVIS will include the OMB control number and PRA burden statement. However, as the collection of this information utilizes the complete electronic submission of responses for various types of notification and reporting requirements there is no single place to display the expiration date. Additionally, to continually upgrade an automated system to change only expiration dates would be costly to SEVP, as well as counter-productive and inefficient.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission," of OMB 83-I.

SEVP does not request an exception to the certification of this information collection.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods.

Not Applicable.