

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

**OMB Number 1405-0203
DS-0234**

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Section 525 of the Division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, Public Law, 110-161, signed into law December 26, 2007, provides that Iraqi and Afghan aliens granted special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act shall be eligible for resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits available to refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program for a period not to exceed six months. Likewise, section 1244(g) of the Subtitle C of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007), Public Law 110-181, signed into law on January 28, 2008, provides that Iraqis granted special immigrant status shall be eligible for the same resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits provided to refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program for a period not to exceed eight months. In order to elect the portion of these benefits administered by the Department of State, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants must submit information that will allow the Department of State to identify an appropriate resettlement site in the United States and correctly allocate additional services. Under section 1059 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Public Law 109-163, up to 50 Iraqi and Afghan translators who worked for the U.S. military have been eligible for SIVs each fiscal year (FY). Public Law 110-36, which was signed into law on June 15, 2007, amended section 1059 by expanding the total number of primary applicant beneficiaries to 500 a year for FY 2007 and FY 2008 only. In FY 2009, the number of visas available for this category reverted to 50 annually. The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007, as amended by PL 110-242, provides up to 5,000 (Primary Applicant) Iraqis Special Immigrant Visas in FY 2008 and up to 5,000 more in each of the following four fiscal years.
2. There will be up to 12,000 Iraqis and Afghans eligible for the resettlement benefits each fiscal year by estimation. SIV applicants who qualify for and request resettlement support upon arrival in the United States must complete this form for each family member and submit it to the National Visa Center (NVC), along with the Resettlement Benefits Election Form which will aid in selecting an appropriate resettlement agency for the individual and family. Both documents will be submitted via email as scanned attachments to the NVC.
3. Responses are submitted electronically to the NVC as it is the most efficient means of collecting and processing the data. The NVC will forward the forms to the Refugee Processing Center (RPC), which uses the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), thus permitting faster dissemination of the information to the sponsoring agencies.

4. There is no duplication of collection. The information necessary for the processing of the Afghan and Iraqi SIV applications is not available elsewhere.
5. The information collection does not involve small businesses or other small entities.
6. Failure to collect this data would seriously impact the ability of the resettlement agencies to place Afghans and Iraqis in appropriate resettlement locations in the United States.
7. There are no special circumstances associated with this collection.
8. A 60-Day Notice of Proposed Information Collection: Affidavit of Relationship was published in the *Federal Register* on October 27 (80 FR 65845) to solicit public comment. One comment was received which was not germane to the collection, but rather a general complaint against refugees and immigrants.
9. Respondents receive neither payments nor gifts for providing their biodata forms. However, the level resettlement benefits which SIV recipients will receive in the United States is based in part upon needs that are identified through a review of the data provided.
10. Respondents are notified that the information in their files is released to State Department personnel, officers of other federal agencies (including Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security), and voluntary agency employees on a need to know basis. Guidelines for the disclosure of information are attached to the cooperative agreements between the voluntary agencies and the State Department.
11. Information on religion and ethnicity is provided at the discretion of the respondent because it can be useful in determining which voluntary agency or resettlement site is appropriate. For example, an individual can be placed in a community where there are established places of worship for members of his or her religion. This placement could not be assured if the applicant had not indicated his or her religion during the collection of biographical data.
12. The estimated burden time to complete the DS-234 is 20 minutes. The estimated number of annual respondents is 12,000, which includes the 5,000 approved SIV applicants and 7,000 family members (all of whom need to complete a form). The annual burden hour based on these figures is 4,000 hours. We can estimate an hour-cost burden of \$228,368.
(40.78/hourly rate x 1.4 weighted multiplier x 4,000 hours)
13. There are no costs to respondents associated with this collection.
14. RPC staff estimates devoting 10 minutes each to inputting information submitted by applicants. The total cost to the Federal Government, at a 40.78 hourly rate, to process 12,000 respondents is \$81,560. The hourly rate is a reduction from \$47.44 which is due to increased staff size at the (RPC) and the inputting responsibilities falling to lesser paid staff.
15. A number of questions were re-worded to extract the most accurate information from the beneficiaries, which will in turn aid resettlement agencies in providing needed services as soon as possible after arrival to the United States. The specific changes are described below:
 1. For question 20, we removed the wording “(Condition, Treatment, Urgency, Comments)” because this seems to cause some confusion with applicants. We rephrased as “Health Issues (If yes, please explain)”.

2. We added a box for a new Question 21 inquiring if the beneficiary is pregnant. If the answer is yes, we ask the beneficiary to provide the Estimated Date of Delivery (EDD)
 3. The drop down boxes for the addresses have been adjusted so that the address does not “cut off” and will not have to re-write in the note section.
 4. Space section C so questions 21 and 22 are on the same page as 22 is a follow up to 21.
 5. We rewrote question 22 for clarity and provided a field to specify the city, state in the United States to which they are traveling.
16. The Department will not publish the results of this collection.
17. The Department will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.
18. There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.