

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR  
PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION  
Special Immigrant Visa Biodata**

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

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

1. Section 525 of 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. The Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, Public Law 111-8, signed into law March 10, 2009, extended this period to eight months for Afghan nationals. 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.
2. Based on current law and processing capabilities, the Department estimates that there will be up to 14,000 Iraqis and Afghans eligible for the resettlement benefits each fiscal year. This is based on a three-year average number of visa issuances in these categories. 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 is necessary for the processing of the resettlement benefits for Afghan and Iraqi SIV recipients and 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. The State Department (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration) published a 60-day Notice (83 FR 63697) on December 11, 2018 to solicit public comments. Two comments were received.
  - One commenter expressed the need to stop immigration stating that immigrants are receiving too many benefits, and are a major burden on the system. The commenter suggests that we halt immigration altogether. The commenter did not offer any recommended changes to the current data collection process; therefore, no changes will be made to the data collection process to address this comment.
  - One commenter supports the proposed revisions to the form stating that they will reduce government processing time and make it easier for applicants to provide all requested information. The commenter felt that the proposed changes will make the form clearer for respondents, minimizing the reporting burden and clarity of the information to be collected, and streamlining the process for the Department of State.
9. Respondents receive neither payments nor gifts for providing their biodata forms. However, the level of 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 the Department of 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 ensured if the applicant had not indicated his or her religion during the collection of biographical data.
12. The Refugee Processing Center estimates that the average time required for this information collection to determine eligibility for a special validation is 15 minutes per response. Therefore, the estimated total annual burden for the collection is:  
 $14,000 \text{ (estimated number of respondents)} \times 15 \text{ (minutes)} / 60 = 3,500 \text{ hours per year.}$

To estimate the cost to respondents based on the hourly wage and weighted wage multiplier, the Department of State calculated the following:

\$24.64 (mean hourly earnings based on estimated income per hour from the Bureau of Labor Statistics) x 1.4 (weighted wage multiplier) = \$34.5 weighted wage<sup>1</sup>

3,500 (annual hours) x \$34.5 (weighted wage) = \$120,750 (hour burden cost)

13. There are no costs to respondents associated with this collection.

14. The total cost to the Federal Government, at a \$71.03<sup>2</sup> hourly rate, to process 14,000 respondents is \$248,605. Annualized cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$248,605. Please see chart below. This is based upon an average hourly salary of a Refugee Processing Center (RPC) contractor of \$71.03; data collection time of 15 minutes per SIV case; and 14,000 total SIVs estimated for admission in FY19.

SIV Admissions	RPC Hourly Salary	Time to Input Data	Total
14,000	\$71.03/per hour	15 Minutes	\$248,605

15. Estimated Number of Responses: 14,000 (The Department has increased the number of Special Immigrant Visas issued since the last noticed was published. The previously estimated number was 12,000.) The changes to the form are suggested below and will streamline the data entry process for the RPC:

- a) Request that the “SECURED” designation of the electronic version of the pdf be removed.
- b) In the beginning section it reads: “Special immigrant visa applicants who qualify for and request resettlement assistance from the Department of State must complete this form for each family member and submit it via email as a scanned attachment to the National Visa Center at [NVCSIV@state.gov](mailto:NVCSIV@state.gov).”

<sup>1</sup> The Department calculated the total hour cost burden using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics [www.BLS.gov](http://www.BLS.gov). This Hour cost is estimated to reflect the wide range of respondents responding to the information collection.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/ref\\_text/GS35F0217J/0MTJF4.2TKODC\\_GS-35F-0217J\\_DEVISGS35F0217JPRICELISTCATALOGMOD2520140502.PDF](https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/ref_text/GS35F0217J/0MTJF4.2TKODC_GS-35F-0217J_DEVISGS35F0217JPRICELISTCATALOGMOD2520140502.PDF)

This figure is the negotiated contract rate for the contractors who process the DS-234.

The Department recommends replacing the [NVCSIV@state.gov](mailto:NVCSIV@state.gov) address with [SIV@wrapsnet.org](mailto:SIV@wrapsnet.org). If applicants send the form(s) to NVC, NVC currently forwards them to RPC.

- c) 17. Native Language ADD: (Indicate Reading/Writing/Speaking ability)
- d) 18. Other Language(s) ADD: (Indicate Reading/Writing/Speaking ability)
- e) Increase size of Address box in Section D. U.S. Ties if possible. The field is often too small for applicants to include city, state, and zip code.
- f) Include Gender for Section D U.S. Ties. It is not always clear when a Friend is listed whether they are male or female, and this information is entered into WRAPS.
- g) If there is room to expand Section D, we recommend separating the Address box into Address, City, State, Zip Code. Applicants don't typically list seven USTs so maybe the number of rows can be reduced to save room.

- 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.