Supporting Statement for Form SSA-723
Statement Regarding the Inferred Death of an Individual by Reason of Continued and Unexplained Absence
20 CFR 404.720-404.721
OMB No. 0960-NEW

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

When an individual has been missing, or is presumed dead, we need to take certain actions before paying out benefits. Section *202(d)-(i)* of the *Social Security Act (Act)* mandates that when insured workers pass away, their surviving family members are entitled to a lump-sum death payment and monthly survivor benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA). Policies for establishing the date of death for a person who has been absent from home for at least seven years, when there is no evidence the individual is alive are set forth in *20 CFR 404.720-404.721* of the *Code of Federal Regulations*.

2. Description of Collection

Before SSA can declare a missing individual deceased, we must ensure there is no evidence indicating the individual is still alive. SSA uses Form SSA-723, the Statement Regarding the Inferred Death of an Individual by Reason of Continued and Unexpected Absence, to collect the information needed to make that determination. In cases where insured wage earners have been absent from their homes for at least seven years, and there is no evidence these individuals are alive, SSA may presume they are deceased and will pay their survivors the appropriate benefits. SSA uses the information from Form SSA-723 to determine if we may presume a missing wage earner is deceased, and, if so, to establish a date of presumed death. The respondents are relatives, friends, neighbors, or acquaintances of the presumed deceased wage earner, or the person who is filing for survivor's benefits.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information

Form SSA-723 is available as a print-only, fillable PDF on SSA's website. Due to the projected low volume of respondents for this form, it is currently not viewed as a good candidate for electronic implementation.

4. Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information

The nature of the information we collect and the manner in which we collect it preclude duplication. SSA does not use another collection instrument to obtain similar data.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents

This collection does not affect small businesses or other small entities.

6. **Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently**
If we did not use Form SSA-723, we would have no means of presuming death for missing and presumed-dead wage earners, which would deprive their survivors of rightful Social Security benefits. Because we only collect this information once, we cannot collect it less frequently. There are no technical or legal obstacles to burden reduction.

7. **Special Circumstances**
There are no special circumstances that would cause SSA to conduct this information collection in a manner inconsistent with *5 CFR 1320.5*.

8. **Solicitation of Public Comment and Other Consultations with the Public**
The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on December 3, 2019 at 84 FR 66262, and we received no public comments. SSA published the second Notice on February 25, 2020 at 85 FR 10804. If we receive comments in response to the 30-day Notice, we will forward them to OMB.

9. **Payment or Gifts to Respondents**
SSA does not provide payments or gifts to the respondents.

10. **Assurances of Confidentiality**
SSA protects and holds confidential the information it collects in accordance with *42 U.S.C. 1306*, *20 CFR 401* and *402*, *5 U.S.C. 552* (Freedom of Information Act), *5 U.S.C. 552a* (Privacy Act of 1974), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

11. **Justification for Sensitive Questions**
The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. **Estimates of Public Reporting Burden**
Please see the burden chart below:

Modality of Completion	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Average Burden per Response (minutes)	Estimated Total Annual Burden (hours)	Average Theoretical Hourly Cost Amount (dollars)*	Total Annual Opportunity Cost (dollars)**
SSA-723	3,000	1	30	1,500	$22.50*	$33,750**

* We based this figure on average U.S. citizen's hourly salary, as reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

** This figure does not represent actual costs that SSA is imposing on recipients of Social Security payments to complete this application; rather, these are theoretical opportunity costs for the additional time respondents will spend to complete the application. **There is no actual charge to respondents to complete the application**.

The total burden for this ICR is **1,500** burden hours (reflecting SSA management information data), which results in an associated theoretical (not actual) opportunity cost financial burden of $**33,750**. SSA does not charge respondents to complete our applications.

13. Annual Cost to the Respondents (Other)
This collection does not impose a known cost burden on the respondents.

14. Annual Cost To Federal Government
The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately $5,000. This estimate accounts for costs from the following areas: (1) designing, printing, and distributing the form; and (2) SSA employee (e.g., field office, 800 number, DDS staff) information collection and processing time.

15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request
This is a new form that increases the public reporting burden. See #12 above for burden figures.

16. Plans for Publication Information Collection Results
SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.

17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date
OMB granted SSA an exemption from the requirement to print the OMB expiration date on its program forms. SSA produces millions of public-use forms with life cycles exceeding those of an OMB approval. Since SSA does not periodically revise and reprint its public-use forms (e.g., on an annual basis), OMB granted this exemption so SSA would not have to destroy stocks of otherwise useable forms with expired OMB approval dates, avoiding Government waste.

18. Exceptions to Certification Statement
SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at *5 CFR 1320.9* and related provisions at *5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3*).

B. <u>Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods</u>

SSA does not use statistical methods for this information collection.