

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity of the Information Collection

The purpose of this request for review is for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to obtain clearance to collect the information needed to enroll participants in the international training programs of BLS. The BLS is one of the largest labor statistics organizations in the world and has provided international training in labor market information and price indexes since 1945. Each year, the BLS conducts training programs of 1 to 2 weeks duration at its training facilities in Washington, DC.

Each training program is designed to strengthen the participants' ability to collect and analyze economic and labor statistics. Typical participants are statisticians, economists, analysts, and other data producers and users from agencies of other nations; usually, they are from Ministries of Labor or Finance or from the statistical agencies. Training programs include lectures, discussions, and workshops.

The BLS is given broad authority under Title 29 of the U.S. Code “to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with labor, in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word.” In carrying out the broad range of statistical activities assigned to the BLS, the Secretary’s (of Labor) Order 9-75 specifies that the Commissioner of Labor Statistics is delegated authority and assigned responsibility for providing advice, assistance and services to “other Department of Labor components, other departments of the executive branch of the Federal Government, State and local government jurisdictions, and other public and private agencies.”

29 U.S.C. 9 authorizes the Department of Labor, within the discretion of the Secretary of Labor, upon the written request of any person, to make special statistical studies relating to employment, hours of work, wages, and other conditions of employment. The BLS has broadly interpreted “special statistical studies” under 29 U.S.C.9 to include, among other things, statistical training.

The U.S. Agency for International Development determined that BLS may provide training in labor, price, and productivity statistics to agencies of friendly, foreign governments and international organizations under Sections 607 and 627 - 630 of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2357.

BLS reviews and updates costs on an annual basis to ensure recovery of the full cost associated with seminars for the international technical assistance program. These costs may change to account for adjustments in direct and indirect costs.

Costs will be updated in the package materials through an OMB non-substantive change request.

2. Use of Information

Potential participants, their employers, or sponsors complete the Training Application to provide their names, employers, titles, job duties, contact information, and other information required to determine the suitability of potential participants for the BLS international training and to enroll those who are deemed to be suitable. The approval of this collection of information will support the administrative duties of the BLS to register applicants for the training programs.

3. Use of Electronic Collection Methods

Most applicants submit their application electronically via the web. Applicants also have the option of submitting their applications via fax, email, or conventional mail.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The information collected will not duplicate any existing information being collected by the BLS.

5. Impact on Small Businesses

The information is collected from individuals; no small businesses or other small entities are involved.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

In order for a person to be considered for training at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, he/she must complete this application, so that the Bureau has the necessary information to register a person in a program or programs.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. The data are collected in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation Outside the BLS

One comment was received as a result of the Federal Register notice published in 84 FR 800 on January 31, 2019.

The comment expressed concern that tax payer funds are being used to support the international training programs of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and questioned why the programs weren't being paid for by the attendees. In fact, the Bureau's international training programs are funded by the attendees or their organizations (national statistical offices of foreign governments or other international organizations) not U.S. tax payers. The form in question (OMB 1220-0179) allows BLS to collect information about and payment from foreign citizens who attend the international training programs.

9. Payment to Respondents

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The BLS does not provide an express assurance of confidentiality to respondents. However, as a practical matter, information would only be released in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and its attendant regulations codified at 29 CFR part 70.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

No sensitive data will be collected.

12. Estimate of Respondent Burden

Number of respondents: 100 applicants each year
Response time: 20 minutes each
Burden hours: 34 hours

Please note that most applicants are from countries other than the United States.

The total annualized cost to respondents, based on burden hours and the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour*, is \$246.50. The only cost to the respondent is the time it takes to complete the interview.

*The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, As Amended, revised May 2011,
<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf>

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

- a. Capital start-up costs: \$0
- b. Total operation and maintenance and purchase of services: \$0

There are no costs to the potential participants (applicants) other than the time it takes to complete the Training Application. Applicants complete the form based on personal knowledge and experience, which requires no record-keeping or other expenses. Please note that most applicants are from other countries.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

We estimate that it costs the Federal Government approximately \$22.00 per training applicant or \$2,200 for 100 applicants to process the Training Application.

15. Changes in Respondent Burden

None.

16. Plans for Publication

The information collected will not be used for publication but, rather, for program operational purposes, including the determination of a potential participants' suitability to attend a BLS training program, further contacts with individuals to acknowledge receipt of the applications, their acceptance into a training program, and other administrative purposes.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

BLS is requesting OMB approval for permission to suppress the expiration date on the application forms. This allows for a savings in printing costs by providing the printer with final forms at an earlier date.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.