

**Supporting Statement for Form SSA-3885**  
**Government Pension Questionnaire**  
**20 CFR 404.408a**  
**OMB No. 0960-0160**

**A. Justification**

**1. Introduction/Authoring Law and Regulations**

Section 202(k)(5) of the *Social Security Act (Act)* as codified in *20 CFR 404.408a* of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, mandates the Social Security Administration (SSA) to reduce a spouse's or surviving spouse's Social Security benefits when the spouse also receives a government pension based on employment not covered by Social Security. SSA may reduce the benefits by two-thirds of the amount of the non-covered government pension under the *Act's* Government Pension Offset (GPO) provision. SSA uses Form SSA-3885, Government Pension Questionnaire, to document such cases.

**2. Description of Collection**

The basic Social Security benefits application (OMB No. 0960-0618) contains a lead question asking if the applicants are qualified (or will qualify) to receive a government pension. If the respondent is qualified, or will qualify, to receive a government pension, the applicant completes Form SSA-3885 either on paper or through a personal interview with an SSA claims representative. If the applicants are not entitled to receive a government pension at the time they apply for Social Security benefits, SSA requires them to provide the government pension information as beneficiaries when they become eligible to receive their pensions. Regardless of the timing, at some point the applicants or beneficiaries must complete and sign Form SSA-3885 to report information about their government pensions before the pensions begin.

SSA uses the information to: (1) determine whether the Government Pension Offset provision applies; (2) identify exceptions as stated in *20 CFR 404.408a*; and (3) determine the benefit reduction amount and effective date. If the applicants and beneficiaries do not respond using this questionnaire, SSA offsets their entire benefit amount. The respondents are applicants or recipients of spousal benefits who are eligible for or already receiving a Government pension.

**3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information**

SSA created an Intranet version of Form SSA-3385 through MCS. Based on our data, we estimate approximately 100% of respondents under this OMB number use the electronic version through a personal interview with SSA field office employees. This collection does not currently have a fully public-facing Internet version, as we prioritized other information collections for full electronic conversions. As per our 4/3/20 conversation with OIRA, we welcome OIRA to join our conversations with OMB on IT Mods; however, as our IT Mod

programming is an ongoing project, we cannot provide timelines for when we will be able to make any particular ICR available via the Internet. We will convert existing ICRs to full electronic versions depending on how they fall within our overall IT Mod schema, but this is unconnected to the PRA approval lifecycle. This information collection does not currently allow for electronic submission or electronic disclosure under GPEA as it has been conveyed to us by OIRA.

4. **Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information**

The nature of the information we collect and the manner in which we collect it precludes 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-3885, we would be unable to prevent incorrect Social Security benefits for a spouse or surviving spouse. Because we only collect this information once, we cannot collect this information 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 July 29, 2020, at 85 FR 45723, and we received no public comments. The 30-day FRN published on September 25, 2020 at 85 FR 60509. If we receive any comments in response to this Notice, we will forward them to OMB. We did not consult with the public in the revision of this form.

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

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)*	Average Wait Time in Field Office (minutes)**	Total Annual Opportunity Cost (dollars)
SSA-3885	6,495	1	13	1,407	\$25.72*	24**	\$103,000

\* We based this figure on average U.S. citizen’s hourly salary, as reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics data (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes231011.htm>).

\*\* We based this figure on the average FY 2020 wait times for field offices, based on our current management information data.

\*\*\* This figure does not represent actual costs that we are 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.**

In addition, OMB’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs is requiring SSA to use a rough estimate of a 30-minute, one-way, drive time in our calculations of the time burden for this collection. OIRA based their estimation on a spatial analysis of SSA’s current field office locations and the location of the average population centers based on census tract information, which likely represents a 13.97-mile driving distance for one-way travel. We depict this on the chart below:

Total Number of Respondents Who Visit a Field Office	Frequency of Response	Average One-Way Travel Time to a Field Office (minutes)	Estimated Total Travel Time to a Field Office (hours)	Total Annual Opportunity Cost for Travel Time (dollars)*****
6,495	1	13	16,250	\$417,950*****

\*\*\*\*\*We based this dollar amount on the Average Theoretical Hourly Cost Amount in dollars shown on the burden chart above.

Per OIRA, we include this travel time burden estimate under the 5 CFR 1320.8(a) (4), which requires us to provide “time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons [for]...transmitting, or otherwise disclosing the information,” as well as 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3)(iii) which requires us to estimate “the average burden collection...to the extent practicable.” SSA notes that we do not obtain or maintain any data on travel times to a field office, nor do we have any data, which shows that the average respondent drives to a field office, rather than using any

other mode of transport. SSA also acknowledges that respondents' mode of travel and, therefore, travel times vary widely dependent on region, mode of travel, and actual proximity to a field office.

NOTE: We included the total total opportunity cost estimate from this chart in our calculations when showing the total time and opportunity cost estimates in the paragraph below.

We base our burden estimates on current management information data, which includes data from actual interviews, as well as from years of conducting this information collection. Per our management information data, we believe that 10 minutes accurately shows the average burden per response for reading the instructions, gathering the facts, and answering the questions. Based on our current management information data, the current burden information we provided is accurate. The total burden for this collection instrument is **1,407** burden hours (reflecting SSA management information data), which results in an associated theoretical (not actual) opportunity cost financial burden of **\$520,959**. SSA does not charge respondents to complete our applications.

**13. Annual Cost to the Respondents**

This collection does not impose a known cost burden on the respondents.

**14. Annual Cost to the Federal Government**

The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately **\$49,317**. This estimate accounts for costs from the following areas:

<b>Description of Cost Factor</b>	<b>Methodology for Estimating Cost</b>	<b>Cost in Dollars*</b>
Designing and Printing the Form	Design Cost + Printing Cost	\$307
Distributing, Shipping, and Material Costs for the Form	Distribution + Shipping + Material Cost	0
SSA Employee (e.g., field office, 800 number, DDS staff) Information Collection and Processing Time	GS-9 employee x # of responses x processing time	\$33,292
Full-Time Equivalent Costs	Out of pocket costs + Other expenses for providing this service	\$0
Systems Development, Updating, and Maintenance	GS-9 employee x man hours for development, updating, maintenance	\$15,718
Quantifiable IT Costs	Any additional IT costs	\$0
Other	[Component may add as	\$0

	needed]	
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$49,317</b>

\* We have inserted a \$0 amount for cost factors that do not apply to this collection.

SSA is unable to break down the costs to the Federal government further than we already have. It is difficult for us to break down the cost for processing a single form, as field office and State Disability Determination Services staff often help respondents fill out several forms at once, and the time it takes to do so can vary greatly per respondent. As well, because so many employees have a hand in each aspect of our forms, we use an estimated average hourly wage, based on the wage of our average field office employee (GS-9) for these calculations. However, we have calculated these costs as accurately as possible based on the information we collect for creating, updating, and maintaining these information collections.

15. **Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collecting Request**  
When we last cleared this IC in 2017, the burden was 16,647 hours. However, we are currently reporting a burden of 1,407 hours. This change stems a decrease in the number of responses from 76,000 to 6,495. There is no change to the burden time per response. Although the number of responses changed, SSA did not take any actions to cause this change. These figures represent current Management Information data.
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 has 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. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

SSA does not use statistical methods for this information collection.