

Justification for Non-Material Change to OMB 1290-0027

This memo requests a non-material change to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) package previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Control No. 1290-0027) for data collection for the Evaluation of Strategies Used in the TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) Grant Programs. These changes are requested as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

A user fee paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the United States under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program provides funding for the TechHire and SWFI grants. In September 2016, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) competitively awarded 39 Tech Hire grants and 14 SWFI grants. These programs attempt to help U.S. residents access middle- and high-skill high growth jobs in H-1B industries. Broadly, the goals of TechHire and SWFI are to identify innovative training strategies and best practices for populations that have barriers to participating in skills trainings. Both programs emphasize demand-driven training strategies, including employer involvement in training, usage of labor market data, work-based learning, and sectoral partnerships, among other priorities. This evaluation seeks build knowledge about the implementation and effectiveness of the approaches used under these grant programs. The U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) is undertaking and evaluation that includes both implementation and impact components. The purpose of the evaluation is to identify whether the grants help low-wage workers obtain employment in and advance in H-1B industries and occupations and, if so, which strategies are most helpful.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which began in March 2020, has dramatically altered the landscape for training delivery as well as the labor market into which training completers will enter. It is essential to document the extent to which the pandemic labor market may have impacted the training completion and employment of program participants in different industries and occupations. This information will be critical for understanding how the training programs adapted and interpreting program impacts. This information will inform the design of future job training programs for workers who lost their jobs as the result of the pandemic.

Change Requests

DOL requests minor changes to the 18-month follow-up survey instrument to ensure the study is capturing how the COVID-19 pandemic might be affecting participants' training completion and employment. Specifically, the survey has added 13 items due to COVID-19.

This requested change results in a marginal increase in burden (2 to 3 minutes per respondent), however, given the lower number of participants in the study, the burden is much less than the initially approved burden estimate (227 hours). A revised burden table is included below.

Table 1. Revised Annualized Burden Estimates for Data Collection Estimates

Data Collection Activity	Annual number of respondents	Number of responses per respondent	Total Number of Responses	Average burden per response (in Hours)	Annual estimated burden hours	Average hourly wage ^a	Annual monetized burden hours
18-month follow-up survey	222	1	222	33/60	122	\$9.94	\$1,214

Note: The hourly wage rate for participants was the weighted average of the 2020 minimum wage for each State where the RCT sites are located.

Source: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wage-chart.aspx>

The field period for the 18-month follow-up survey began in April 2020, and about one-third of the sample has already been contacted to complete the survey. The remaining sample will be released over the next several months, with the survey field period ending in spring 2021. Therefore, it is critical to be able to include the added questions as soon as possible as sample continues to be released. This evaluation is in a unique position to be able to learn about how training delivery and employment may be changing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.