

SUPPORTING STATEMENT A

Paralympics & Olympics Monthly Assistance Allowance Application and Certification

VA Forms 0918a and 0918b

OMB Control Number 2900-0760

Summary of Changes from Previous Approval:

- The forms were updated with the new VA Burden Statement; there are no other form changes.
- There are changes to the respondent numbers and burden hours based upon program data since the last PRA clearance.
- No comments were received on the 60-day FRN.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection of information.

Section 703 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008, P.L. 110-389, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to administer a monthly assistance allowance to a veteran with a service-connected or non-service-connected disability if the veteran is competing for a slot on or selected for the United States Paralympics and Olympics team or is residing at a United States Paralympics or Olympics training center.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purposes the information is to be used; indicate actual use the agency has made of the information received from current collection.

The information collected will be used to certify eligibility for the monthly assistance allowance, verify the veteran's mailing address, confirm that he or she has been accepted by the Paralympics or Olympics to compete in a specific Paralympic or Olympic sport, and to determine their marital status and number of dependents for the purpose of assessing payment amounts.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Current information collections are done through a combination of automated and electronic collection because the application and certification processes collect information from the beneficiary and their Paralympics or Olympics representative, but also collects some personal information from VA databases to reduce burden and enhance security. These applications are entered into a database for program planning and implementation. Further information technology will not decrease the burden on the public. The paper forms are maintained due to rare circumstances that can occur that would not enable use of the electronic collection.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

This information collection is specific to a beneficiary's involvement in Paralympics or Olympics sport training. VA has no other collections containing Paralympics or Olympics sport information and as such VA has determined that the collection does not duplicate an existing collection.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Because these are applications for individual benefits, no small businesses or other small entities are impacted by the information collection.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The collection will be to enroll beneficiaries for this monthly assistance allowance, determine the amount of the allowance, and to certify eligibility for the allowance. VA would not be able to implement the provisions of Section 703 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008, P.L. 110-389, without this collection. VA would not be responsive to the needs of the patient and to the legal requirement to release of information if information were collected less frequently.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted more often than quarterly or require respondents to prepare written responses to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; submit more than an original and two copies of any document; retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study and require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.

There are no such special circumstances.

8. a. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the sponsor's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the sponsor in responses to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A 60-Day Federal Register Notice (FRN) for the collection published on Thursday, May 30, 2024. The 60-Day FRN citation is 89 FR 46993. No comments were received during the 60-Day Comment Period.

A 30-Day Federal Register Notice for the collection published on Monday, August 5, 2024. The 30-Day FRN citation is 89 FR 63494.

b. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure or reporting format, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed or reported. Explain any circumstances which preclude consultation every three years with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained.

Outside consultation is conducted with the public through the 60- and 30-day Federal Register notices.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift is provided to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of privacy, to the extent permitted by law, provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Assurances of privacy are contained in 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332. Respondents are informed that the information collected on VA Forms 0918a and 0918b and the Stipends4Vets app (electronic collection software) will become part of the system of record identified as 58VA21/22/28 "Compensation, Pension, Education, and Rehabilitation Records – VA" as set forth in the Compilation of Privacy Act Issuances via online GPO access at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/privacyact/index.html>.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature (Information that, with a reasonable degree of medical certainty, is likely to have a serious adverse effect on an individual's mental or physical health if revealed to him or her), such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private; include specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of the hour burden of the collection of information:

a. The number of respondents, frequency of responses, annual hour burden, and explanation for each form is reported as follows:

VA Forms 0918a, 0918b	No. of respondents	x No. of responses	x No. of minutes	÷ by 60 =	Number of Hours
0918a = Certification	170	1 = 170	5 = 850		~ 14 hrs
0918b = Application	170	1 = 170	10 = 1700		~ 29 hrs
TOTALS	170		15 min		43 hours

b. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13.

See chart in subparagraph 12a above.

c. Provide estimates of annual cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.

VA cannot make further assumptions about the population of respondents because of the variability of factors such as the educational background and wage potential of respondents. Therefore, VBA used general wage data to estimate the respondents' costs associated with completing the information collection.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) gathers information on full-time wage and salary workers. In accordance with the latest available BLS Occupational Wage Code Median Hourly (May 2022), the mean hourly wage is \$28.01 based on the BLS wage code – "00-0000 All Occupations." This information was taken from the following website: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm.

Legally, respondents may not pay a person or business for assistance in completing the information collection. Therefore, there are no expected overhead costs for completing the information collection. VBA estimates the total cost to all respondents to be \$1,204.43 (43.0 burden hours x \$28.01 per hour).

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

- a. There are no capital, start-up, operation or maintenance costs.
- b. Cost estimates are not expected to vary widely. The only cost is that for the time of the respondent.
- c. There is no anticipated recordkeeping burden beyond that which is considered usual and customary.

14. Provide estimates of annual cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operation expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The estimated annual cost of Stipends4Vets app and the VA Forms 0918a and 0918b to the Federal Government is \$39,012.

15. Explain the reason for any burden hour changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14.

VA does not project any significant changes since our last submission.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

VA does not intend to publish this data.

17. If seeking approval to omit the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

VA will include the expiration date on all forms.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB 83-I.

There are no exceptions.