

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR
PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION
SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)
OMB Number 1405-0152,
DS-4024, DS-4024e**

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. The information solicited on this form is requested in connection with the provisions of 22 U.S.C. § 2715, 22 U.S.C. § 4802(b), 22 C.F.R. 71.1 and 22 C.F.R. 71.6. 22 U.S.C. § 3904 . The Department of State provides consular assistance and protection to U.S. nationals abroad. U.S. nationals may register with U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. In the event of a family emergency, natural disaster or international crisis, U.S. embassies and consulates rely on this registration information to provide registrants with critical information and assistance.

22 U.S.C. § 2715 provides, *inter alia*, that in the case of a major disaster or incident abroad which affects the health and safety of citizens of the United States residing or traveling abroad, the Secretary of State shall provide prompt and thorough notification of all appropriate information concerning such disaster or incident and its effect on United States citizens to the next-of-kin of such individuals.

22 U.S.C. § 4802(b) provides *inter alia*, that the Secretary of State shall develop and implement policies and programs to provide for the safe and efficient evacuation of United States Government personnel, dependents, and private United States citizens when their lives are endangered and develop a mechanism whereby United States citizens can voluntarily request to be placed on a list in order to be contacted in the event of an evacuation, or which, in the event of an evacuation, can maintain information on the location of United States citizens in high risk areas submitted by their relatives.

22 CFR § 71.1 provides that officers of the Foreign Service shall perform such duties in connection with the protection of American nationals abroad as may be imposed upon them by rules and regulations prescribed by the Secretary of State.

22 CFR § 71.6 provides for Foreign Service Officers to extend every possible aid and assistance within their power to distressed American citizens within their districts, but they shall not expend the funds nor pledge the credit of the Government of the United States for this purpose, except in the case of American seamen, or except as authorized by the Department of State.

22 U.S.C. § 3904 provides, *inter alia*, that members of the Foreign Service, at the direction of the Secretary, shall perform functions under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, including safeguarding the interests of U.S. citizens abroad.

The Department of State has developed a Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) that makes it possible for U.S. nationals to register on-line from anywhere in the world. The site uses secure encryption. The STEP system enables the Department and its embassies and consulates abroad to better assist U.S. nationals in the event of a crisis, disaster or other emergency, by providing information about which nationals are present in country.

2. The primary purpose for soliciting the information is to enable U.S. nationals to register their whereabouts abroad on a voluntary basis, so that they may be contacted in the event of an evacuation or other emergency, in furtherance of the Secretary's responsibility for the protection of U.S. nationals abroad.

3. The STEP is intended for use by U.S. nationals residing or traveling abroad. Travelers may register from their home or business in the United States prior to their overseas travel, or from anywhere in the world using the Internet. The service is available on the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs web site <http://travel.state.gov/> at <https://step.state.gov/step/>. The information received is used to facilitate locating and contacting U.S. nationals in the event of a major disaster or incident abroad, and evacuation, or a family emergency. This collection of information is stored and primarily collected through electronic means, but a paper version of the information collection has been developed to assist individuals who do not have access to the Internet. U.S. embassies and consulates can enter the data from the paper version received by mail or fax into the American Citizens Services (ACS) system. The paper version provides a convenient mechanism to supplement existing electronic registration services. By registering over the Internet, U.S. nationals do not have to go to a U.S. embassy or consulate, thereby reducing the burden on the public. Increased security threats against U.S. embassies abroad were also a factor in the decision to use electronic registration in lieu of requiring individuals to go to a U.S. embassy or consulate. Traditional on-site registration is still available.

4. The information in the STEP is not duplicative of information maintained elsewhere or otherwise available. Since U.S. adult passports are issued for a period of 10 years, the information on the passport application regarding intended places to visit and contacts in the event of an emergency are often not current. The STEP enables members of the public to register this information quickly and easily for each trip abroad.

5. The information collection does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Protection of U.S. nationals, particularly in times of crisis or disaster, is a core function of the Department of State. It is important that the Department have a reliable mechanism to facilitate communication with U.S. nationals in times of emergency. If the collection were not conducted, the negative impact on U.S. nationals abroad during these times could be considerable.

7. No special circumstances exist.

8. Department of State published a 60 day Federal Register notice on October 13, 2022, for public comment. 87 FR 62171. [The Department received a public comment that internet communications in some situations may be censored or otherwise unreliable, and there should be a third, call-in option for submissions. The Department disagrees, and finds that internet submission with a mail-in back-up option is a reliable and preferred method to a call-in process that would require separate infrastructure and resources.](#)

9. No payment or gift is provided to respondents.

10. Respondents are informed that release of information obtained in this collection is subject to the restrictions on dissemination contained in the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a). No promises of confidentiality are made to respondents.

11. No questions of a sensitive nature are asked.

12. On average, 1,010,389 respondents file a registration request through STEP annually. The DS 4024 takes 20 minutes to complete. Therefore, the annual burden is calculated at 336,796 hrs. (1,010,389 respondents x 20 mins./60 mins. = 336,796 hrs.). The frequency of response is “on occasion.” ¹

The annualized cost to all respondents for the hour burden for collections of information, based on appropriate wage rate categories, is \$10,528,243. This was determined by multiplying the average mean hourly civilian earnings (\$24.34/hr.) by 1.4 to get a weighted hourly wage of \$34.07/hr. \$34.07/hr. was then multiplied by 336,796 burden hours. The final calculation equals \$11,474,639.70. ²

13. There are an estimated 2,560 respondents of the 1,010,389 respondents who mailed the STEP form to U.S. diplomatic posts worldwide. The total average postage cost burden for all respondents is \$25,600. The respondents are located in the U.S. and abroad. The average postage cost burden on the respondent is determined using Priority Mail with a Flat Rate Envelope that is 12 1/2 by 9 1/2 inches. Domestic postage under this criterion averages \$5. International postage under this criterion averages \$15. Based on half of respondents being located abroad, the overall average for domestic and international postage for each respondent is \$10. To determine the overall postage cost burden we multiplied 2,560 respondents by \$10, which equals \$25,600. The total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information is \$25,600.

14. The projected annual cost to the federal government is as follows: for Calendar Year (CY) CY 2021-2022, the cost is \$9,638,179. The projected cost is based on multiplying the projected number of respondents (1,010,389) by the cost of five minutes processing time per form. We determined that half of the forms are processed by overseas Foreign Service Officers and half by Locally Employed Staff (LES) at embassies and consulates overseas. We used the recurring costs in the Bureau of Budget and Planning New Position Cost Model for overseas Foreign Service Officers and the LES Cost Worksheet for Locally Employed Staff to determine the cost rates.

15. The number of respondents and the burden hours remained the same.

16. The information collected will not be published.

17. The OMB approval information and expiration date for this collection will be displayed.

18. No exceptions are being requested to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.

¹ Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employer Costs for Employee Compensation news release text".
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/eccec.t02.htm>

²Source: "Bureau of Budget and Planning New Position Cost Model", Department of State, Internal Use Only.