

Mariner Survey

Supporting Statement Part A

Maritime Administration (MARAD)

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SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Transportation is requesting a three-year approval to renew an information collection titled OMB 2133-0555 “Mariner Survey Pretest,” which is being renamed “Mariner Survey,” to reflect the transition from the pretest survey to a full survey. The revised information collection consists of a biennial voluntary survey of a sample of appropriately credentialed U.S. merchant mariners to assess the availability and willingness of qualified mariners to serve on short notice on U.S. government-owned or privately-owned vessels during periods of war, armed conflict, or other national emergency (hereafter collectively called “National Need”).

The Mariner Survey initiative will help the Maritime Administration (MARAD) meet its national security mission by providing the Agency and the Department of Transportation with more granular information necessary to assess the availability of sealift-qualified mariners who are willing to serve at times of National Need as recommended by the Maritime Workforce Working Group 2017 Report to Congress¹ and the 2015 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 15-666, Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits are Unclear.²

The most recent survey of this scope was completed in 2002. Prior to submitting this renewal request, MARAD conducted the Mariner Survey Pretest consisting of cognitive interviews and a pilot test to evaluate survey questions, survey administration procedures, contact methods, response patterns, and overall survey functioning. Findings from the pretest informed revisions to the survey instrument, survey administration procedures, and sampling assumptions proposed for the full survey effort. Because the pretest was conducted for methodological testing purposes and was not designed to produce statistically representative estimates of the U.S. merchant mariner population, MARAD currently lacks reliable and current information regarding the number of mariners available and willing to serve during periods of National Need. Accordingly, MARAD is seeking approval to conduct the full Mariner Survey. Additional information regarding the pretest methodology, key findings, and resulting survey refinements is provided in Supporting Statement B, Section 4.

The current Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MMLD) database system, developed and maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), was designed for the sole purpose of issuing mariner credentials. The MMLD database is updated daily and contains certain information on every mariner who has been issued a Merchant Mariner Credential. However, the MMLD does not collect any information on mariner willingness to serve or their availability at times of need. The MMLD also does not include the capability to provide complete details of mariner sea service once the credentials are issued.

Since the implementation of this survey, the total respondents, responses, and burden hours increased from 690, 690, and 247 hours to 5,162, 5,162, and 1,721 hours respectively. Additionally, there were minor changes to clarify some of the survey questions, while the

¹ <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/sites/marad.dot.gov/files/docs/mariners/1026/mwwg-report-congress-finalr3.pdf>

² <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

Cognitive Interview instrument was eliminated. Therefore, this collection will be submitted as *revision of a currently approved collection*.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

MARAD, an agency within the Department of Transportation (DOT), is responsible for fostering, promoting, and developing the maritime industry of the United States to meet the Nation's economic and security needs.

The Secretary of Transportation has delegated authority to MARAD to survey mariners. Title 46, United States Code (USC), Section 50102(a) states that: "The Secretary of Transportation shall survey the merchant marine of the United States to determine whether replacements and additions are required to carry out the objectives and policy of section 50101 of this title." Title 46 USC Section 50104 is also applicable. In addition, National Security Directive 28 directs DOT to "ensure that the U.S. maintains the capability to meet sealift requirements in the event of crisis or war," and states that DOT is "responsible for determining whether adequate manpower is available to support the operation of reserve ships during a crisis." Relevant supporting documentation is provided in Appendix 1.a.

During periods of war, armed conflict, or national emergency ("National Need"), qualified merchant mariners would be required on short notice to crew U.S. government-owned reserve sealift vessels, including MARAD Ready Reserve Force (RRF) vessels and the Military Sealift Command (MSC) surge sealift vessels, while simultaneously supporting ongoing domestic and international maritime commerce. Accordingly, the availability of sufficient numbers of qualified merchant mariners is essential to the Nation's sealift readiness and national security capabilities.

The USCG is responsible for issuing Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs) and maintaining the MMLD. Although the MMLD system serves as the nation's sole repository for merchant mariner credentialing information, it was not designed to assess mariner availability or willingness to serve during periods of National Need. In addition, the MMLD system does not consistently track recent sailing activity necessary to assess recency of experience and proficiency relevant to service aboard RRF and MSC surge sealift vessels.

The need for additional information regarding mariner availability has been identified in multiple Federal reviews and studies. The 2015 Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 15-666 recommended "that the Secretary of Transportation direct the Administrator of MARAD to study the potential availability of all qualified mariners needed to meet a full and prolonged activation of the reserve sealift fleet." In 2017, a Congressionally mandated Maritime Workforce Working Group (MWWG), chaired by MARAD and consisting of representatives from Federal agencies including the USCG and the Department of Defense as well as industry stakeholders, estimated the number of

sealift qualified mariners with recent sailing experience available in the commercial sector and verified this estimate with the number of mariners reported by maritime labor unions and non-union maritime employers. However, these data excluded estimates of mariner availability or their willingness to serve.

In this context, it should be noted that a recent international regulation related to mariner credentialing that was implemented by the USCG with effect from January 1, 2017, has elevated the requirements and the costs associated with acquiring such credentials. Simultaneously, the documented decline in the number of large U.S.-flag ships in recent years has reduced the employment opportunities for mariners holding or seeking those credentials, thereby reducing incentives for mariners to maintain the level of credentialing required to operate RRF vessels.

The Maritime Workforce Working Group (MWWG) 2017 Report to Congress,³ in response to National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) For Fiscal Year 2017, Section 3517, recommended that “A periodic survey of the U.S. citizen mariner pool qualified to crew U.S. government reserve vessels should be undertaken to measure mariner availability – Since merchant mariner employment is voluntary, the number of people willing to sail in times of National Need is unknown.” Consistent with this recommendation, MARAD proposes to conduct a biennial Mariner Survey to support ongoing assessments of the number of qualified mariners who are available and willing to serve aboard reserve sealift vessels during periods of National Need. Prior to finalizing the full survey methodology, MARAD conducted a survey pretest consisting of cognitive interviews and a pilot test. Findings from the pretest informed revisions to the survey instrument, survey administration procedures, and sampling assumptions proposed for the full survey effort. The information collection described in this supporting statement reflects those refinements and forms the basis for the proposed biennial survey.

Conducting the survey on a recurring basis also will allow MARAD to evaluate changes in mariners’ availability and willingness across different mariner subgroups and operational scenarios.

This information collection supports the DOT Strategic Objective to “support the development of appropriately skilled and prepared transportation workers and develop strategies to meet emerging workforce challenges”⁴ and MARAD’s Strategic Goal (Objective 2.1) of ensuring that “U.S. mariner requirements for economic and national security are identified and met.”⁵

MARAD is requesting approval to make the following changes to OMB 2133-0555 (*Mariner Survey*)[*Mariner Survey Pretest*]:

I. Introductory Page

³ <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/sites/marad.dot.gov/files/docs/mariners/1026/mwwg-report-congress-finalr3.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/mission/administrations/office-policy/304866/dot-strategic-planfy2018-2022508.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/sites/marad.dot.gov/files/docs/resources/3606/marad-strategic-plan-2017-2021-20170119-final-signed.pdf>

- Changed the year in the heading from “2023” to “2027”
- First paragraph, changed the year from “2023” to “2027” and changed “...on behalf of the Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).” to “...on behalf of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Maritime Administration (MARAD).”
- Second paragraph, changed “United States” to “U.S.”
- Third paragraph, changed “...2023 provides” to “...2027 will provide”
- Third paragraph, changed “The Mariner Survey 2023...” to “It...”
- Fifth paragraph, changed “Merchant Marine” to “merchant marine”

II. Survey Instructions

- First bullet point, changed “check” to “select”

III. Survey Instrument

- Deleted “Section 1. Background Information” and “Section 2. Willingness to Volunteer in the Event of a National Need”
- **Q1**
 - Changed item from “What BEST describes your current merchant mariner status?” to “Which of the following options BEST describes your current situation?”
 - Changed every response option except the last option, “Other, please specify”
 - Original set of options:
 - Sailing (includes mariners on sailing vacation or short-term shore employment who intend to resume sailing)
 - Quit sailing permanently and seeking ashore employment
 - Quit sailing permanently and working ashore in a merchant marine-related job
 - Quit sailing permanently and working ashore outside maritime industry
 - Permanently quit working any full-time job and not seeking any permanent full-time employment
 - Other; please explain:

Revised set of options:

- Sailing and not seeking long-term ashore employment (includes mariners on periodic aboard/ashore rotation, vacation or brief shore employment who intend to resume sailing within one year)
- Sailing full-time or part-time but seeking long-term ashore employment
- Never sailed as a merchant mariner after obtaining U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) and not serving in the U.S. Armed Forces / Uniformed Services

- o Serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces / Uniformed Services
 - o Not sailing; working ashore in the maritime industry
 - o Not sailing; working ashore outside the maritime industry
 - o Retired or permanently quit working any full-time job; not seeking any permanent full-time employment
 - o Other; please explain:
- Deleted the skip instructions so that all respondents will go on to answer Q2.
- **Q2**
 - Changed item from “Are you currently employed by the U.S. Government as a Civil Service Mariner (CIVMAR) to sail on vessels operated by the Military Sealift Command (MSC) or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)?” to “Are you currently employed by the U.S. Government as a Civil Service Mariner (CIVMAR) sailing on a vessel operated by the Military Sealift Command (MSC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)? Select "Yes" only if you are currently a direct U.S. Government employee serving as a CIVMAR on an MSC, NOAA, or USACE vessel. All other respondents should select "No" (examples include employees of commercial vessel operators on government-owned vessels, government contractors, retired mariners, and unemployed mariners).”
- **Q4**
 - Now Q8.
 - Changed item from “Do you currently hold any rating (unlicensed) endorsements?” to “Does your MMC currently list any rating (unlicensed) endorsements, regardless of whether you have served or are willing to serve under that rating endorsement? (Note that if you hold an MMC with an officer endorsement, you also hold rating endorsements.)”
 - As a result of changing question order, “No” responses now skip to Q9 instead of Q5.
- **Q4a**
 - Now Q8a.
 - Changed item from “For each rating endorsement below, indicate whether you have EVER sailed under that rating” to “For each position below, select all the positions in which you have EVER served under that rating.”
 - Changed response option format from yes/no response grid to “select all that apply”
 - Changed response option “Ordinary Seaman” to “Ordinary Seafarer”

- Combined the two “Able Seaman” response options to one “Able Seafarer” option
- Changed response option “Steward” to “Any position in the Steward Department”
- Added a “None of the above” response option with instructions that respondents who select this response will skip to Q9 and deleted the previous instruction “Programming note: If “no” to every item, SKIP TO #5”
- **Q4b**
 - Deleted item; however, this information will continue to be collected as described in the next point
 - Changed programming note from “Will only present the items for which the respondent selected “Yes” to q4a. Survey will accept responses from 1950-2023” to “For each position selected in 8a, respondents will be asked to enter the four-digit year they last served under that rating. They will be instructed to provide their best guess if they are unsure of the exact year. Responses from 1950-2027 will be accepted.”
- **Q5**
 - Now Q9
 - Changed item from “Do you hold a DECK officer MMC endorsement, whether active, inactive, or expired?” to “Do you hold or have you held an MMC with a DECK officer endorsement?”
 - As a result of changing question order, “No” responses now skip to Q10 instead of Q6.
- **Q5a**
 - Now Q9a
 - Changed item from “For each position below, indicate whether you EVER sailed in that position” to “For each position below, select all the positions in which you have EVER served under that endorsement.”
 - Changed response option format from yes/no response grid to “select all that apply”
 - For the first three options, changed “1,000” to “1,600”
 - Added three response options: “Master of a vessel greater than 500 but less than 1,600 gross tons upon oceans,” “Mate of a vessel greater than 500 but less than 1,600 gross tons upon oceans” and a “None of the above” response option with programming instructions that respondents who select this response will skip to Q10 and deleted the previous instruction “Programming note: If “no” to every item, SKIP TO #6”
- **Q5b**
 - Deleted item; however, this information will continue to be collected as described in the next point

- Changed programming note from “Programming note: If “no” to every item, SKIP TO #6” to “Programming note: For each position selected in Q9a, respondents will be asked to enter the four-digit year they last served under that endorsement. They will be instructed to provide their best guess if they are unsure of the exact year. Responses from 1950-2027 will be accepted.”
- **Q6**
 - Now Q10
 - Changed item from “Do you hold an ENGINEER officer MMC endorsement, whether active, inactive, or expired?” to “Do you hold or have you held an MMC with an ENGINEER officer endorsement?”
 - As a result of changing question order, “No” responses now skip to Q11 instead of Section 2.
- **Q6a**
 - Now Q10a
 - Changed item from “For each position below, indicate whether you have EVER sailed in that position” to “For each position below, select all the positions in which you have EVER served under that endorsement.”
 - Changed response option format from yes/no response grid to “select all that apply”
 - Added a “None of the above” response option to each of the three sets of response options.
- **Q6b**
 - Deleted item; however, this information will continue to be collected as described in the next point
 - Changed programming note from “Programming note: If “no” to every item, SKIP TO SECTION 2” to “Programming note: For each position selected in 10a, respondents will be asked to enter the four-digit year they last served under that endorsement. They will be instructed to provide their best guess if they are unsure of the exact year. Responses from 1950-2027 will be accepted.”
- **Q7**
 - Now Q11
 - In the item deleted “(select all that apply)”
 - Changed response option format from “select all that apply” to restricting selection to one response option
 - Deleted the response option “Transgender, non-binary, or another gender”
- **Q8**
 - Now Q12
- **Q9**
 - Now Q13
- **Q10**

- Now Q14
- **Q11**
 - Now Q15
- **Q12-17**
 - Deleted the programming instruction preceding the Willingness to Volunteer items, which read “Programming Note: The six scenarios will be presented on the same page with the instructions. A response to all questions applicable to a respondent in this section is mandatory except for Q24.”
 - Changed from six individual question to one grid-style question and moved to Q4
 - Lead-in for the Willingness to Volunteer items changed from:

“For the scenarios described in questions 12-17 below, please indicate how likely you would be to volunteer to serve as a paid crew member in the event of a war, armed conflict, or national emergency (hereafter, collectively referred to as “National Need”). Any necessary training would be provided. You also would have re-employment rights (the legal right to resume your previous job after serving).

As you respond to these questions, please be honest; we understand that your answers will reflect your current thinking and that your perspective may change in the future.

Also, when responding to these questions, please consider the risks and benefits for merchant mariners who volunteer to serve during a time of National Need. Click [here](#) for information about these risks and benefits.”

To:

“For the scenarios described below, please indicate how likely you would be to volunteer to serve as a paid crew member in the event of a war, armed conflict, or national emergency (hereafter, collectively referred to as “National Need”). Any necessary training would be provided. You also would have reemployment rights (the legal right to resume your previous job after serving). Click here for further details about your reemployment rights.

As you respond to these questions, please know we understand that your answers will reflect your current thinking and that your perspective may change in the future.

Also, when responding to these questions, please consider the risks and benefits for merchant mariners who volunteer to serve during a time of National Need. Click here for information about these risks and benefits.

How likely would you be to volunteer to serve as a paid crew member in the following scenarios? When responding, please use the following scale: Very Unlikely (VU), Somewhat Unlikely (SU), Somewhat Likely (SL), and Very Likely (VL)."

- Items with the tours "One tour of four months" changed to "One tour not exceeding four months"
- Items with the tours "At least two tours of four months each (with two months off between tours)" changed to "At least two tours not exceeding four months each (with two months off between tours)"
- Items with the vessel "Privately-owned vessel on a military mission" changed to "Privately-owned vessel transporting military cargo"
- Items with the vessel "Government-owned vessel on a military mission" changed to "Government-owned vessel transporting military cargo"
- **Q18**
 - Now Q5
 - Programming instruction that appears before the item changed from "Ask q18 of everyone except those who answered "Very Unlikely" to every scenario" to "Ask #5 of everyone except those who answered "Very Unlikely" to every scenario in #4."
 - After item, added the instruction "(Please keep in mind that your answer reflects your current situation which may be subject to change.)"
 - Deleted the "Unsure" response option
- **Q19**
 - Now Q6
 - Changed item wording from "...to maintain your MMC in active status" to "to maintain a valid MMC"
 - Programming instruction preceding Qs 19 and 20 (now Qs 6 and 7) changed from "Ask q19 and q20 of everyone except those who answered "Very Likely" to every scenario (q7-q12). The two questions will appear on the same page" to "Ask #6 and #7 of everyone except those who answered "Very Likely" to every scenario in #4. The two questions will appear on the same page."
- **Q20**
 - Now Q7
 - Changed item wording from "...to maintain your MMC credential with your last active highest officer or rating endorsement" to "...to maintain your MMC with your highest officer or rating endorsement"
- **Q21**
 - Now Q16
 - Changed item wording from "U.S. Merchant Marine vessels" to "U.S. merchant vessels"

- Deleted the “Other, please explain” response option and added an “Unsure” response option
- **Q22**
 - Now Q17
 - Changed item from “Based on your afloat career in the U.S. maritime industry, please select the statement below that best reflects your views” to “Based on your experience in and knowledge of the U.S. maritime industry, which of the following statements best reflects your views about current shipboard culture?”
 - Retained the “Unsure” and “Other, please explain” responses but modified the other response options and added a response option.
 - Original set of options:
 - Shipboard culture today is much improved and has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct and predatory behavior
 - Shipboard culture is improving from where it was
 - Shipboard culture remains prone to sexual misconduct and predatory behavior as in the past
 - Unsure
 - Other, please explain:
 - Revised set of options:
 - Shipboard culture has improved significantly and does not tolerate sexual misconduct or predatory behavior
 - Shipboard culture has improved, but sexual misconduct and predatory behavior remain concerns
 - Shipboard culture has changed little, and sexual misconduct and predatory behavior remain concerns
 - Shipboard culture remains prone to sexual misconduct and predatory behavior
 - Unsure
 - Other, please explain:
- **Q23**
 - Item has been deleted (“Do you think that sexual assault and sexual harassment is a problem in the U.S. Merchant Marine?”)
- **Q24**
 - Now Q18
 - Item changed from “Would mental health concerns affect your willingness to serve on vessels during a period of National Need?” to “Do you perceive the need for additional mental health support if you were to serve aboard a vessel during a period of National Need?”

IV. Risks of Volunteering

- First sentence wording from “...on a military mission” to “...transporting military cargo”

- Second sentence changed from “Vessels on a military mission...” to “Vessels supporting the transportation of military cargo...”
- Last sentence changed from “By volunteering, mariners also may forego other employment and personal opportunities” to “Although mariners have reemployment rights, they may forego other new or different employment opportunities as well as personal opportunities during the time they are sailing.”

2. Purposes and Uses of the Information Collection

The proposed Mariner Survey will collect information from mariners to estimate the number of qualified merchant mariners who, on short notice, could and would serve during a period of National Need. This estimate would be used by MARAD to assess the maritime workforce’s ability to support both sealift operations and maritime commerce during surge operations. The results of the full biennial Mariner Survey will be used to respond to inquiries from U.S. Transportation Command, Congress, and other stakeholders, and to explore future courses of action when government-owned ships as well as commercial ships are required to meet our national security needs.

The proposed Mariner Survey questionnaire consists of 18 questions designed to assess the willingness and availability of U.S. merchant mariners to serve aboard vessels during periods of war, armed conflict, or national emergency. The survey includes questions regarding respondents’ employment and sailing status, merchant mariner credentials and sailing experience, likelihood of volunteering to serve in various scenarios during a period of National Need, and factors that may affect willingness to volunteer. The survey also collects demographic and household information, as well as respondents’ perceptions regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH), shipboard culture, and mental health support needs within the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The remainder of this section provides the rationale for including each of the survey questions, organized by topic rather than by the order in which the questions appear on the survey instrument. A copy of the web-based version of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.b, and a copy of the mail/self-administered version is included in Appendix 1.c.

Mariner Availability and Experience

Q1. Which of the following options BEST describes your current situation?

Responses to this question will allow MARAD to identify mariners who are currently sailing, temporarily ashore but intending to return to sailing, employed outside the maritime industry, serving in the Armed Forces, or retired from the workforce. Current sailing status may affect whether mariners maintain valid credentials, medical clearances, and recent sea service experience, which in turn may influence their potential availability to serve aboard vessels during periods of National Need.

Q2. Are you currently employed by the U.S. Government as a Civil Service Mariner (CIVMAR) sailing on a vessel operated by the Military Sealift Command (MSC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)?

Select “Yes” only if you are currently a direct U.S. Government employee serving as a CIVMAR on an MSC, NOAA, or USACE vessel. All other respondents should select “No” (examples include employees of commercial vessel operators on government-owned vessels, government contractors, retired mariners, and unemployed mariners).

Responses to this question will allow MARAD to identify respondents currently employed as Civil Service Mariners (CIVMARs). CIVMARs may differ from other mariners with respect to their availability and willingness to serve during periods of National Need because they are already employed in positions supporting U.S. Government vessel operations and may be subject to different employment considerations than mariners employed elsewhere in the maritime industry.

Q3. Do you currently belong to a Reserve Component or National Guard?

Responses to this question will allow MARAD to identify respondents who currently belong to a Reserve Component or National Guard. Mariners serving in a Reserve Component or National Guard may differ from other mariners with respect to their availability and willingness to serve during periods of National Need because they may already have military service obligations during such periods.

Q8. Does your MMC currently list any rating (unlicensed) endorsements, regardless of whether you have served or are willing to serve under that rating endorsement? (Note that if you hold an MMC with an officer endorsement, you also hold rating endorsements.)

Q8a. For each position below, select all the positions in which you have EVER served under that rating. For each position you selected, please enter the four-digit year you LAST served under that rating. If you are unsure of the exact year, please provide your best guess.

Questions 8 and 8a collect information regarding respondents’ experience serving in unlicensed (rating) positions. Respondents who indicate that they currently hold rating endorsements on their MMC are asked to identify the rating positions in which they have served and the year in which they most recently served in each position. This information will allow MARAD to assess the experience and recency of service of mariners qualified to perform critical unlicensed vessel functions during periods of National Need.

Q9. Do you hold or have you held an MMC with a DECK officer endorsement?

Q9a. For each position below, select all the positions in which you have EVER served under that endorsement. For each position you select, please enter the four-digit year you LAST served under that endorsement. If you are unsure of the exact year, please provide your best guess.

Questions 9 and 9a collect information regarding respondents' experience serving in deck officer positions. Respondents who indicate that they currently hold or previously held a deck officer endorsement on their MMC are asked to identify the deck officer positions in which they have served and the year in which they most recently served in each position. This information will allow MARAD to assess the experience and recency of service of mariners qualified to perform critical deck officer functions during periods of National Need.

Q10. Do you hold or have you held an MMC endorsement with an ENGINEER officer endorsement?

Q10a. For each position below, select all of the positions in which you have EVER served under that endorsement. For each position you select, please enter the four-digit year you LAST served under that endorsement. If you are unsure of the exact year, please provide your best guess.

Questions 10 and 10a collect information regarding respondents' experience serving in engineer officer positions. Respondents who indicate that they currently hold or previously held an engineer officer endorsement on their MMC are asked to identify the engineer officer positions in which they have served and the year in which they most recently served in each position. This information will allow MARAD to assess the experience and recency of service of mariners qualified to perform critical engineer officer functions during periods of National Need.

Mariner Demographic and Household Information

Q11. Are you: Male or Female?

Q12. Do you currently live with a spouse or a partner? (Yes/No)

Q13. How many children, under the age of 19, are living with you at least two days a week?

Q14. What is the age of the youngest child living in your household at least two days a week?

Questions 11 through 14 collect limited demographic and household information, including respondents' gender, marital or partner status, and the presence and age of children in the household. Household and caregiving responsibilities may affect mariners' availability and willingness to serve aboard vessels during periods of National Need. Collecting this information will allow MARAD to better understand how household circumstances may affect the availability of the merchant mariner workforce.

Q15. In the last six months, how difficult has it been for your household to pay for the usual household expenses, including but not limited to food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, student loans, and so on?

Question 15, adapted from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, collects information regarding respondents' level of financial hardship. Financial circumstances may affect mariners' willingness and ability to serve during periods of National Need. For example, the costs associated with maintaining credentials and completing required training may represent greater barriers for some mariners than others. Collecting this information will allow MARAD to better understand whether financial hardship may affect willingness to volunteer to serve and whether reimbursement of credentialing or training-related costs may influence willingness to serve.

Mariner Perceptions of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Merchant Marine and Perceived Need for Additional Mental Health Support

Q16. Have reports about sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) incidents on board U.S. Merchant vessels affected your willingness to volunteer to serve on these vessels during a period of National Need?

Q17. Based on your experience in and knowledge of the U.S. maritime industry, which of the following statements best reflects your views about current shipboard culture?

Questions 16 and 17 collect information regarding respondents' perceptions of sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) in the U.S. Merchant Marine and perceptions of current shipboard culture. Concerns regarding personal safety, workplace culture, and the potential for sexual misconduct aboard vessels may affect mariners' willingness to volunteer to serve during periods of National Need. Collecting this information will allow MARAD to better understand whether perceptions of shipboard culture and SASH-related concerns may influence mariners' willingness to volunteer to serve aboard vessels.

Q18. Do you perceive the need for additional mental health support if you were to serve aboard a vessel during a period of National Need?

Question 18 collects information regarding respondents' perceived need for additional mental health support while serving aboard a vessel during periods of National Need. Service during periods of war, armed conflict, or national emergency may involve heightened operational stress, long deployments, hazardous conditions, and other factors that could affect mariners' mental well-being. Collecting this information will allow MARAD to better understand mariners' perceptions regarding mental health support needs during periods of National Need.

Mariner Willingness to Volunteer to Serve in the Event of a National Need

Q4. In the event of a National Need, how likely would you be to volunteer to serve as a paid crew member in the following scenarios?

Question 4 is designed to assess mariners' willingness to volunteer to serve aboard vessels during periods of National Need under a range of operationally relevant scenarios. Because willingness to serve during a future period of National Need cannot be

directly observed, the question uses a stated preference approach in which respondents are asked to evaluate a series of hypothetical but realistic service scenarios.

The design of Question 4 was informed by best practices from the stated preference literature, which emphasizes presenting respondents with realistic and understandable scenarios that reflect the decisions and conditions being evaluated.^{6,7} Prior research has shown that respondents' stated preferences may be influenced by their perceptions of uncertainty and by the information provided regarding the conditions, risks, and potential outcomes associated with the hypothetical scenarios.^{8,9} To help ensure that respondents evaluate the scenarios using a common understanding of the relevant conditions, risks, and potential outcomes, the survey provides respondents with information regarding potential risks and benefits associated with serving during periods of National Need, including operational risks, re-employment rights, compensation considerations, and potential impacts on personal and professional obligations. A copy of the Summary of Merchant Mariner Risk and Compensation Factors provided to respondents is included in Appendix 1.d. Respondents also are informed that their answers should reflect their current thinking and that perspectives may change in the future.

Although responses may be compared across scenarios to better understand the factors associated with willingness to serve, the primary purpose of Question 4 is to estimate mariners' willingness to serve under a range of operationally relevant conditions that MARAD could encounter during periods of National Need. Accordingly, the scenarios were designed to reflect realistic variations in vessel assignment and deployment duration that may affect mariners' willingness to serve during such periods.

MARAD considered a broader range of potential attributes during questionnaire development; however, including too many attributes or scenarios would substantially increase respondent burden and reduce the practicality of the questionnaire. The attributes and levels ultimately selected for inclusion were limited to those considered most operationally relevant to mariners' willingness to serve while still allowing MARAD to evaluate willingness across a range of realistic conditions that may be encountered during periods of National Need.

Two operationally significant attributes were identified for inclusion in the scenarios:

1. Type of vessel, with three levels:
 - o Privately-owned vessel engaged in commercial trade;
 - o Privately-owned vessel transporting military cargo; and

⁶ Johnston, R., K. Boyle, W. Adamowicz, J. Bennett, R. Brouwer, T. Cameron, W. Hanemann, N. Hanley, M. Ryan, R. Scarpa, R. Tourangeau, and C. A. Vossler. 2017. Contemporary Guidance for Stated Preference Studies. *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists*, 4:319-405.

⁷ Champ, P. A., K. Boyle, and T. C. Brown, eds. 2017. *A Primer on Nonmarket Valuation*. Amsterdam: Springer Science & Business Media.

⁸ Lundhede, T., J. B. Jacobsen, N. Hanley, N. Strange, and B. J. Thorsen. 2015. Incorporating outcome uncertainty and prior outcome beliefs in stated preference. *Land Economics* 91:296-316.

⁹ Arrow, K., R. Solow, P. R. Portney, E. E. Leamer, R. Radner, and H. Schuman. 1993. Report of the NOAA panel on contingent valuation. *Federal Register* 58:4601-14.

- o Government-owned vessel transporting military cargo.
- 2. Number of tours, with two levels:
 - o One tour not exceeding four months; and
 - o At least two tours not exceeding four months each, with two months off between tours.

These attributes were selected because they represent important operational characteristics considered relevant to mariners' willingness to serve and reflect realistic and plausible conditions that mariners may encounter within the maritime industry.¹⁰ MARAD may require mariners to serve aboard a variety of vessel types and for varying lengths of service depending on operational requirements, making vessel assignment and deployment duration important factors to consider when assessing willingness to volunteer to serve.

Combining the three vessel types and two tour-length conditions results in six unique scenarios. Respondents are asked to indicate their likelihood of volunteering to serve under each scenario using a four-point response scale ranging from "Very Unlikely" to "Very Likely."

Following the six scenarios in Question 4, all mariners except those who answered "Very Unlikely" to all six scenarios will be asked one additional question (Q5), "If you were to volunteer to serve in a paid position aboard a vessel during a period of National Need, how long would it take you to report to an assigned vessel? (Please keep in mind that your answer reflects your current situation which may be subject to change.)" Response options include multiple reporting timeframes. This information will allow MARAD to assess how quickly mariners could report to an assigned vessel during a period of National Need. Although mariners may be willing to volunteer to serve, personal, employment, travel, or other obligations may affect the amount of time required for them to become available for duty.

All mariners except those who answered "Very Likely" to all six scenarios will be asked two follow-up questions regarding whether they would be more likely to volunteer to serve if: 1) the government were to reimburse them for the required fees for all administrative requirements (physical examination fee, TWIC renewal fee, and MMC renewal fee) to maintain a valid MMC (Q6), and 2) the government were to reimburse them to take all STCW required courses to maintain their MMC credential with their highest officer or rating endorsement (Q7). These questions will allow MARAD to assess whether reimbursements of credentialing and training-related costs increase mariners' willingness to volunteer to serve during periods of National Need.

3. Automation or Use of Information Technology (IT)

The Mariner Survey will primarily be administered using a web-based survey instrument. This mode was selected in part because of the mobile nature of the merchant mariner

¹⁰ Johnston, F. R., E. Lancsar, D. Marshall, V. Kilambi, A. Mühlbacher, D. A. Regier, B. W. Bresnahan, B. Kanninen, and J. F. P. Bridges. 2013. Constructing experimental designs for discrete choice experiments: Report of the ISPOR conjoint analysis experimental design good research practices task force. *Value in Health* 16:3-13.

population, as a notable percentage of sampled respondents may be serving aboard vessels during the data collection period. A web-based survey allows respondents to complete the questionnaire at a time and location convenient to them using any device with internet access, which reduces respondent burden and increases flexibility in participation.

Although the survey will primarily be administered online, some mariners may not have reliable internet access or may prefer not to complete the survey electronically. In addition, email addresses are unavailable for approximately one-third of merchant mariners, and some available email addresses may be invalid. Accordingly, paper questionnaires will be mailed to mariners without valid email addresses and to sampled mariners who do not complete the survey after receiving a mailed invitation to participate online. Paper questionnaires also will be provided to mariners upon request. Both mailed survey invitations and the cover letter for the mailed survey packet will include the survey website address and a QR code respondents may use to access and complete the survey online.

It is estimated that approximately 75% of completed surveys will be submitted electronically and approximately 25% will be completed using a paper questionnaire returned by mail.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This information collection does not duplicate information collected through other Federal information collection efforts or by other organizations.

The MMLD system is the primary repository for information regarding Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs) issued by the USCG. Although the MMLD system supports the credentialing process, it does not contain sufficient information to estimate the number of seafaring-qualified mariners, assess recent sailing experience or proficiency status, or evaluate mariners' availability and willingness to serve during periods of National Need. The Maritime Workforce Working Group (MWWG) 2017 Report to Congress identified these limitations and recommended that MARAD conduct recurring mariner surveys to supplement existing credentialing data and support assessments of mariner availability.

MARAD previously collaborated with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics to conduct Mariner Surveys in 2001 and 2002. Although those surveys provided useful information at the time, the data are now outdated and cannot be relied upon to assess the current availability and willingness of today's mariner workforce. Since those surveys were conducted, there have been substantial changes in the maritime industry, including changes in the size and composition of the U.S.-flag fleet, changes in the mariner workforce, and revisions to credentialing and training requirements under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW). Maintaining internationally valid credentials now requires additional training

and associated costs that may affect whether mariners who are not actively sailing maintain qualifications necessary for international service.

MARAD also examined whether historical information from prior military mobilizations or other maritime industry sources could be used in place of a new survey effort. However, reliable and comprehensive historical data regarding mariners who volunteered during prior periods of National Need are not readily available. MARAD consulted maritime labor organizations and reviewed available internal records but was unable to identify sufficiently complete or reliable historical data suitable for estimating the current availability or willingness of mariners to serve during periods of National Need. Even if such historical data were available, substantial changes in the maritime industry, mariner workforce, and credentialing requirements over time would limit the usefulness of those data for current readiness assessments.

More detailed information is provided in Appendix 1.e, Summary of Available Historical Revealed Data from Past Major Mariner Mobilizations.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

This information collection will not impose a significant economic burden on small businesses or other small entities.

6. Frequency of Data Collection

If the Mariner Survey is not conducted, MARAD will lack current information regarding the number of qualified mariners who are available and willing to serve on short notice in the event of a war, armed conflict, or national emergency (i.e., “National Need”). Without this information, MARAD’s ability to assess sealift workforce readiness in support of its national security mission would be substantially limited.

The population of qualified mariners who are available and willing to serve during periods of National Need changes over time. Mariners may leave the available workforce due to retirement, expiration of credentials or endorsements, medical incapacity, career changes, or unwillingness to sail during periods of National Need. At the same time, additional mariners may enter the workforce by obtaining required credentials, completing training requirements, or becoming willing to serve.

Conducting the survey on a biennial basis will allow MARAD to monitor changes in the size and characteristics of the sealift-qualified mariner workforce over time and assess trends in mariner availability and willingness to serve during periods of National Need. Collecting the information less frequently would reduce MARAD’s ability to maintain current readiness assessments and evaluate changes in the mariner workforce, which are essential components of MARAD’s national security mission.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guideline 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection. The collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR

1320.5(d)(2), and none of the special circumstances identified in the Paperwork Reduction Act implementing regulations apply to the Mariner Survey such as those identified below:

- Requiring respondents to report information to MARAD more often than quarterly;
- Requiring respondents to prepare a written response in fewer than 30 days after receipt of a collection instrument;
- Requiring respondents to submit more than one original copy of any document;
- Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;
- Requiring the use of any statistical data that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- Requiring any pledge of confidentiality; or
- Requiring respondents to submit any proprietary or trade secrets.

8. Public Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Outside Consultation

MARAD published a 60-day notice and request for comments on this information collection in the Federal Register on June 03, 2026 (FR 33290, Vol. 91, No. 106), indicating comments should be submitted on or before August 03, 2026. MARAD received no comments to date related to the cost and burden of the proposed information collection.

In addition, a 30-day notice will be published in the Federal Register to solicit public comments on this information collection.

Efforts were made to consult with people outside of MARAD regarding the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping requirements, disclosure, reporting format, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed or reported. These consultations were conducted by MARAD's contractor, Strategic Research Group (SRG).

MARAD provided SRG with a list of potential stakeholders that included representatives from the U.S. Congress; the U.S. Navy; the U.S. Coast Guard; labor representatives; U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and State Academies; Owner Representatives of U.S. Flag Fleet, Coast wise Trade; Owner Representatives of U.S. Flag Fleet, International Trade; Subject Matter Experts; MARAD; and other relevant stakeholders identified by MARAD. SRG sent 48 email invitations asking these potential stakeholders if they wished to participate in a telephone discussion and offer feedback regarding the Mariner Survey methodology. Seventeen individuals from 13 organizations responded and participated in the feedback discussions.

One common theme that arose during the discussions was which mariners would be eligible to take the survey. Several stakeholders expressed that they thought that there

were 200,000 mariners and wondered why only a small number was being included in the target population. Conversely, several other stakeholders felt that MARAD should streamline the target population to those mariners who are especially needed and those who are most willing. Along similar lines, it was suggested by several stakeholders that the survey effort focus on “upper-level mariners,” especially engineers and engineers of steam vessels, or those most willing to sail, such as those who are retiring or leaving the fleet.

MARAD drafted a response that was provided to the stakeholders who participated in the feedback discussions, in order to clarify the target population and provide a rationale for the target population. MARAD’s updated response to this issue is as follows:

All mariners employed aboard United States (U.S.) merchant vessels greater than 100 Gross Register Tons (Domestic Tonnage), except operators of uninspected passenger vessels, are required to have a valid USCG-issued Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). Mariners obtain credentials to perform a very wide range of shipboard duties, from serving as entertainers and bartenders on cruise ships to being the Master or Chief Engineer of a globally trading supertanker. The USCG Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MMLD) System contains information on credentials for over 200,000 people; this includes all mariners who possess any USCG-issued credential. The requirements to obtain a credential with specific qualifications are also wide ranging, from “no experience or exams” to complex sea-time requirements and rigorous testing by the USCG. There are additional training and certification requirements for mariners working on internationally trading vessels, issued in compliance with internationally mandated standards. Clearly, not all credentialed mariners are qualified to work on the large oceangoing vessels of the type used for military sealift and large-scale humanitarian aid.

Mariners that are credentialed to only operate specialized or limited size vessels (e.g., a harbor tugboat) are unlikely to have the training or the competence for the safe and reliable operation of larger oceangoing ships. Therefore, a mariner qualified for crewing the larger oceangoing ships is defined as one who holds a current and valid unlimited tonnage or unlimited horsepower or oceans credential and meets the required international Standards for Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW); a current and valid Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC); and a current and a valid USCG STCW Medical Certificate. Accordingly, this survey is targeted toward such mariners. MARAD estimates that around 100,000 of the 200,000 credentialed mariners meet these basic requirements to some degree. Also, because an MMC is valid for five years after the date of issue, it does not imply that the person is, or has been, employed on a vessel. It is important to reiterate that with the exception of those directly employed by the U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command, these mariners serve voluntarily; as such, their availability when called upon requires clarification. Thus, the Mariner Survey will help determine the supply of willing and available appropriately credentialed U.S.

merchant mariners who will serve on board U.S. government-owned sealift ships or commercial ships on short notice during a period of National Need.

9. Explanation of Any Payments or Gifts to Respondents

Mariner Survey respondents will not be offered any incentive or payment.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality and Protection of Privacy

The Mariner Survey will be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal privacy and information security requirements, including the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a), DOT Order 1351.18, Privacy Risk Management Policy, and the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2014 (FISMA). Information collected through the Mariner Survey is covered by the DOT/MARAD 031, Mariner Outreach System, System of Records Notice (SORN).

The project's data security and confidentiality procedures include signed non-disclosure agreements for all personnel with access to individually identifiable data and training on the handling of Personally Identifiable Information (PII). The confidentiality plan also includes the use of unique respondent passcodes, restricted access to identifiable data, and information technology security controls designed to comply with applicable Federal security requirements, including NIST SP 800-53 and NIST SP 800-171. Physical materials will be stored in locked file cabinets within secured offices accessible only to authorized project personnel.

Respondent identities will be known only to authorized project personnel for purposes of survey administration and data collection. However, individually identifiable information will be protected to the extent permitted by law and will not be disclosed outside the project except as authorized under the applicable Privacy Act System of Records Notice or otherwise required by law.

Survey results will be reported only in aggregate form. No individual respondent will be identified in any reports, publications, presentations, or publicly released data products resulting from this information collection.

All letters and survey materials provided to respondents will explain the voluntary nature of the survey, describe the purpose of the study, and explain the extent to which respondent information will be kept confidential. The following statement will appear on the front cover of the paper surveys as well as one of the introductory screens of the online survey:

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2133-0555. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 20 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, completing and reviewing the collection of

information. All responses to this collection of information are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Maritime Administration, MAR-390, W26-494, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The Mariner Survey includes two questions regarding mariners' perceptions of sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) and shipboard culture within the U.S. Merchant Marine. These questions are included because perceptions regarding personal safety and workplace culture may affect mariners' willingness to serve during periods of National Need. The survey does not ask respondents about personal experiences with sexual assault or sexual harassment, and respondents are not required to answer these questions.

The survey does not include questions about sexual behavior, religious beliefs, or other matters commonly considered private. The survey also does not collect information regarding race or ethnicity.

12. Estimate of Annualized Burden and Cost

a. Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

The Mariner Survey will be administered biennially and is expected to be conducted twice during the requested three-year OMB approval period. As shown in the table below, from a total survey sample of 17,196 individuals in a given year, an estimated 5,162 respondents will take 20 minutes (.3333333) to complete the survey once annually for a total 1,720.67 or 1,721 hours. The combined total survey sample of individuals over a three-year period is 34,392, of which 10,324 respondents will respond once annually for a total of 3,442 hours:

Table for Item 12a: Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

Mariner Subpopulation	Total Sample Size	Total Respondents		Total Responses per Respondents		Number of Responses		Average burden per respondent (hours) (20 mins)		Total Burden (hours)
Master	1,478	493		1		493		0.33333333		164.3333332
Chief Mate	856	294		1		294		0.33333333		97.9999999
Second Mate	1,233	418		1		418		0.33333333		139.3333332
Third Mate	1,653	544	*	1	*	544	*	0.33333333	=	181.3333332
Chief Engineer	1,255	424		1		424		0.33333333		141.3333332

First Assistant Engineer	892	307		1		307		0.33333333		102.3333332
Second Assistant Engineer	1,115	381		1		381		0.33333333		126.9999999
Third Assistant Engineer	1,530	505		1		505		0.33333333		168.3333332
Seafarer/ Wiper/ Steward's Department (FH)	1,528	382		1		382		0.33333333		127.3333332
Able Seafarer/ Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED)	5,656	1414		1		1,414		0.33333333		471.3333329
Total Annually	17,196	5,162				5,162		0.33333333		1,720.666665/ 1,721
3-Year Total	34,392	10,324				10,324		0.33333333		3,442

Note: The sample sizes, estimated responses, burden hours, and respondent costs shown in this table reflect two survey administrations during the requested three-year OMB approval period. Per-survey administration sample sizes are based on the sample design needed to achieve the target number of surveys completed using assumed minimum response rates of 35% for licensed mariners with a valid MMC, 30% for licensed mariners with an MMC placed in continuity, and 25% for unlicensed mariners with a valid MMC, as described in Supporting Statement Part B, Sections 1 and 2. These assumptions were informed by the Mariner Survey pilot test described in Supporting Statement Part B, Section 4.

b. Estimated Annualized Burden Costs

Per the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2025 Occupation Profiles ¹¹, the eight mariner subpopulations can be organized into three water transportation categories as follows: Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021) (i.e. a total of four (4) mariner subpopulations: Master, Chief Mate, Second Mate, Second Mate and Third Mate; Ship Engineers (53-5031) (i.e. a total of four (4) mariner subpopulations: Chief Engineer, First Assistant Engineer, Second Assistant Engineer, and Third Assistant Engineer; and Water Transportation Workers (53-5000) (i.e. a total of two (2) mariner subpopulations: Seafarer/ Wiper/ Steward's Department (FH), and Able Seafarer/ Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED).

¹¹ Per the BLS occupation tables, the ten (10) mariner subpopulation that were organized into three groups based in BLS Occupation Profiles: https://www.bls.gov/oes/2025/may/oes_stru.htm

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS)¹² estimates that the average hourly wage for the following professionals are as follows: Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021) is \$ 49.87, Ship Engineers (53-5031) is \$ 53.75, and Water Transportation Workers (53-5000). When combined with the total compensation rate of 29%¹³, the hourly wages are as follows: Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021) is \$ 64.33, Ship Engineers (53-5031) is \$ 69.34, and Water Transportation Workers (53-5000) is \$ 52.34. Therefore, the total combined annualized cost for all subpopulations of mariners who respond to this survey is \$ 106,209.83, which can be calculated as shown in the table below:

Table for Item 12b: Estimated Annualized Burden Costs

Title and Code of Respondents	Hourly Wage	Compensation Rate of 29%	Total Annualized Burden Hours	Total Annualized Cost Burden
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021)	\$ 49.87	\$ 64.33	582.980	\$ 37,503.10
Ship Engineers (53-5031)	\$ 53.75	\$ 69.34	538.980	\$ 37,372.87
Water Transportation Workers (53-5000)	\$ 40.57	\$ 52.34	598.660	\$ 31,333.86
COMBINED TOTAL			1,720.62/1,721	\$ 106,209.83

13. Estimate of the Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and/or Record Keepers

There are no capital, start-up, operation or maintenance costs for respondents participating in this survey.

14. Estimated Cost to the Federal Government

The estimated total annual cost to the government, as detailed below, is \$ 135,050.18.

a. Contractor Cost

MARAD has contracted with Strategic Research Group (SRG) to conduct the Mariner Survey. The total contractor cost to the Federal Government associated with this information collection is \$ 329,731.32. This amount reflects a fixed-price contract covering a five-year period (September 2025 to September 2030) and includes the costs associated with administering the Mariner Survey twice during the contract period.

¹²The hourly wage for all mariner positions including mates, engineers, and other water transportation workers is taken from: <https://data.bls.gov/oes/#!/area/0000000/2025>

¹³ Per BLS Employee Compensation Memo, the total compensation rate for the private sector is 29%: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/eccec.pdf>

The contractor cost is annualized over the five-year contract period, which includes activities associated with the previously approved Mariner Survey Pretest as well as two administrations of the full Mariner Survey.

The contract cost includes all direct and indirect costs associated with survey design, sample design, pretesting activities, contact information updates, web survey programming, printing and mailing, data entry, telephone nonresponse prompting, data cleaning and quality control, data analysis, file preparation and delivery, report preparation, project management, labor, and overhead.

The annualized contractor cost to the Federal Government is estimated to be \$65,946.26.

b. MARAD's internal costs

According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)¹⁴, the hourly wages for the following employees to complete program related tasks for the Mariner Survey are as follows: GS-7 (Step 5) \$ 31.35, GS-13, (Step 5) is \$ 66.14, GS-14, Step 5 is \$ 78.15, GS 15, Step 5 is \$ 91.93 and one Senior Executive Service (SES)¹⁵ is \$ 109.25. When combined with the Federal Employee Compensation rate of 31%¹⁶ the total hourly wage rates are as follows: GS-7 (Step 5) \$ 41.07, GS-13, (Step 5) is \$ 86.64, GS-14, Step 5 is \$ 102.38, GS 15, Step 5 is \$ 120.43 and one Senior Executive Service (SES) is \$ 143.12. There individuals will spend a combined total of 623 hours reviewing, coordinating tasks and confirming concurrence with various aspects of the Mariner Survey for a total combined cost of \$ 69,103.92 which can be calculated as shown in the table below:

Table for Item 14b: Annualized MARAD Internal Cost for Oversight of the Mariner Survey

Employee Grade	Office Code	Activity	Hourly Salary ^{17, 18}	Total Benefits ¹⁹		Annual Hours		Total Cost ²⁰
GS-7, Step 5	MAR-600.3	Records	\$ 31.35	\$ 41.07	*	25	=	\$ 1,026.75
GS-13, Step 5	MAR-650	Review	\$ 66.14	\$ 86.64		25		\$ 2,166.00
GS-14, Step 5	MAR-650	Review	\$ 78.15	\$ 102.38		25		\$ 2,559.50

¹⁴ OPM 2026 wage tables for Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA is as follows:

https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2026/DCB_h.pdf

¹⁵ The average annual wage of an SES level III employee is taken from the OPM wage table:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2026/ES.pdf>

¹⁶ Per BLS Employee Compensation Memo, the total compensation rate for the Federal Government is 31%, :<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/eccec.pdf>

¹⁷ OPM 2026 wage tables for Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA is as follows:

https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2026/DCB_h.pdf

¹⁸ The average annual wage of an SES level employee is taken from the OPM wage table:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2026/ES.pdf>

¹⁹Per BLS Employee Compensation Memo, the total compensation rate for the Federal Government is 31%, :<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/eccec.pdf>

²⁰ Total Federal Cost = Total Federal Compensation * Total Time Taken to Review Process Survey Responses

GS-15, Step 5	MAR-650	Review	\$ 91.93	\$ 120.43	25	\$ 3,010.75
GS-15, Step 5	MAR-600.32	Coordinate, Review	\$ 91.93	\$ 120.43	300	\$ 36,129.00
SES	MAR-600.3	Review	\$ 109.25	\$ 143.12	25	\$ 3,578.00
GS-14, Step 5	MAR-232	Review	\$ 78.15	\$ 102.38	50	\$ 5,119.00
GS-15, Step 5	MAR-232	Review	\$ 91.93	\$ 120.43	25	\$ 3,010.75
GS-13, Step 5	MAR-380	Review	\$ 66.14	\$ 86.64	50	\$ 4,332.00
GS-13, Step 5	MAR-390	Review	\$ 66.14	\$ 86.64	8	\$ 693.12
GS-13, Step 5	MAR-390	Concurrence	\$ 66.14	\$ 86.64	1	\$ 86.64
GS-15, Step 5	MAR-225	Review	\$ 91.93	\$ 120.43	8	\$ 963.44
GS-14, Step 5	OST-R	Review	\$ 78.15	\$ 102.38	25	\$ 2,559.50
GS-15, Step 5	OST-R	Review	\$ 91.93	\$ 120.43	25	\$ 3,010.75
SES ²	MAR-600	Concurrence	\$ 109.25	\$ 143.12	4	\$ 572.48
SES ²	MAR-220	Concurrence	\$ 109.25	\$ 143.12	1	\$ 143.12
SES ²	MAR-220	Concurrence	\$ 109.25	\$ 143.12	1	\$ 143.12
TOTAL			\$ 83.94	\$ 1,869.40	623	\$ 69,103.92

Therefore, the total combined annualized cost to the Federal Government for the Mariner Survey is \$ 135,050.18, which consists of \$ 65,946.26 in annualized contractor costs and \$ 69,103.92 in annualized internal MARAD costs.

15. Program Changes or Adjustments

OMB 2133-0555 “Mariner Survey Pretest” is being revised and renamed “Mariner Survey”, to reflect the transition from a pretest survey to a full biennial voluntary survey of merchant mariners. Since the implementation of this survey, the total respondents, responses, and burden hours increased from 690, 690, and 247 hours to 5,162, 5,162, and 1,721 hours respectively. Additionally, there were minor changes to clarify some of the survey questions, while the Cognitive Interview instrument was eliminated.

16. Publication of Data Collection Results

Data analyses will primarily consist of descriptive statistics, including frequencies and cross-tabulations of survey items. In addition, survey response rates and potential sources of nonresponse bias will be evaluated through response rate analyses and respondent- and item-level bias analyses. MARAD does not plan to use complex statistical modeling or other advanced analytical techniques in reports or publications based on the survey data.

The table below provides the anticipated schedule for data collection, analysis, reporting, and publication activities associated with the Mariner Survey.

Table for Item 16: Time Schedule for Data Collection, Analysis, Reporting, and Publication Activities

Activity	Estimated Timeline for Completion
Publish 60-day Federal Register Notice	June 2026
Publish 30-day Federal Register Notice	September 2026
Submit request to OMB for Full Survey ICR approval	October 2026
Receive mariner data from USCG for Full Survey #1	December 2026
Receive OMB approval	February 2027
Distribute Full Survey #1 to respondents	May 2027
Data Collection for Full Survey #1 ends	October 2027
Data Management, Analysis, and Draft Report Preparation	October 2027 - January 2028
Full Survey #1 Final Report	April 2028
Receive mariner data from USCG for Full Survey #2	December 2028
Distribute Full Survey #2 to respondents	May 2029
Data Collection for Full Survey #2 ends	October 2029
Data Management, Analysis, and Draft Report Preparation	October 2029 - January 2030
Full Survey #2 Final Report	April 2030

All respondent contacts and information collection activities will occur during the approved information collection period. Activities scheduled after the expiration of the approval period consist solely of data analysis, report preparation, and publication based on information previously collected.

MARAD will publish the final report for Full Survey #1 and Full Survey #2 on the MARAD website at www.maritime.dot.gov.

17. Display OMB Expiration Date

The OMB expiration date will be displayed on all data collection and recruitment materials.

18. Exceptions of Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.