Supporting Statement for Form SSA-7157
Farm Arrangement Questionnaire
20 CFR 404.1082(c)
OMB No. 0960-0064

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

The Social Security Administration (SSA) collects information using Form SSA-7157, Farm Arrangement Questionnaire, to determine whether individuals who own or lease farm property materially participate in the farm's operation. SSA uses this information to determine whether income from farm rental arrangements is includable in net earnings from self-employment (NESE) for Social Security coverage purposes.

Section *211(a)(1)* of the *Social Security Act* defines NESE and generally excludes rentals from real estate and personal property leased with the real estate. However, SSA may include farm rental income in NESE when an owner or tenant receives the income under an arrangement that requires the production of agricultural or horticultural commodities and the owner or tenant materially participates in producing or managing those commodities.

SSA collects this information under Section *20 CFR 404.1082(c)* of the *Code of Federal Regulations,* which establishes the criteria and procedures for determining whether farm rental income is includable in NESE.

2. Description of Collection

Self-employed individuals who rent farmland to others generally cannot count the rental income as net earnings from self-employment (NESE) unless they demonstrate material participation in the farm's operation. Under Section *20 CFR 404.1082* of the *Code of Federal Regulations,* material participation may include physical work, management decisions, capital investment, or other involvement in producing or managing agricultural or horticultural commodities. SSA uses Form SSA-7157, Farm Arrangement Questionnaire, to document this participation and determine whether it may credit farm rental income as NESE.

Respondents learn about the need to document material participation, gather the required information to complete Form SSA-7157, and submit the completed form to SSA during the application process or when they seek to count earnings from a farming arrangement as credible earnings toward insured status for Social Security benefit coverage. Claims representatives in field offices and teleservice centers, as well as accountants, tax preparers, financial advisors, and other sources inform claimants about the Farm Arrangement Questionnaire, Form SSA-7157, and Claims representatives may print and mail the form to the applicants and inform them that SSA makes the SSA-7157 available through Upload Documents on SSA's website.

Form SSA-7157 asks about the respondent's work and involvement in the farm,

including inspections, advice, consultation, production activities, and management activities. The specific questions on the form help determine if the landlord's participation in the farm constitutes material participation, which is why they address topics such as kind of work, inspections, and advice and consultation. SSA collects information about both production and management to enable SSA technicians to evaluate whether the respondent meets the material-participation requirement under either criterion. The agency notes that while *20 CFR 404.1082(c)(2)(i)* requires only that the respondent "will materially participate in the production *or* the management of the production of the commodities," (emphasis added), the nature of the information gathered makes it more appropriate to solicit information regarding both production and management of the production of the commodities to allow the SSA technician to holistically assess eligibility under either criterion.

The collection is voluntary; however, respondents must provide the information if they want SSA to credit their farm rental income as NESE. Respondents may submit the SSA-7157 to receive credit for net earnings from self-employment (NESE), along with other forms and documentation if necessary, and SSA employees, in verifying NESE, use it for additional development. SSA collects this information on an as-needed basis, typically once per respondent, when an individual seeks to have farm rental income credited as NESE. Respondents may complete the form themselves and submit it via mail, in person at a field office, or electronically through SSA's Upload Documents portal. SSA employees review and process the information as part of the agency's verification of NESE.

We identified the following psychological costs based on the requirements for this information collection:

Psychological Cost #1:

- **Requirement for Program:** Form SSA-7157 requests a significant amount of information regarding the nature of the farmwork, inspections, advice and consultations, production activities, and management activities, most of which the respondent needs to complete in short-answer format.
- **Psychological Cost:** Because of the sheer amount of information requested on the form, the respondents may find the form daunting or too cumbersome to complete. Even so, since this form is voluntary, respondents have not submitted any comments associated with these potential psychological costs.

We understand these psychological costs may cause respondents to delay their completion of the information collection or cause them to abandon the information collection entirely. However, we require full completion of this collection to receive benefits. Therefore, we have taken this potential psychological cost into account when calculating our burden in #12 below.

The respondents are individuals who own or lease farmland and seek to have their rental income counted as NESE.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information

This collection has a public-facing fillable and submittable version which the respondent can submit using SSA's Upload Documents Portal (OMB No. 0960-0830). Upload Documents allows the respondent to complete the fillable PDF and submit the information through the Upload Documents Portal. The submittable version mirrors the paper version and provides respondents with an online service option as an alternative to mailing, faxing, or bringing the form to an SSA field office. Use of the Upload Documents Portal does not require respondents to download and install the application locally on their device or pay any subscription or licensing fees, and we account for the burden for using Upload Documents under OMB No. 0960-0830.

This collection does not currently have a fully public-facing Internet version, as we prioritized other information collections for full electronic conversions. Given that IT Mod programming is an ongoing, dynamic project, we cannot provide specific timelines for when we will be able to make any particular ICR available via Internet web-based application. We will ultimately convert most existing ICRs to full electronic versions depending on how they fall within our overall IT Mod schema, but this may be unconnected to the PRA approval lifecycle.

4. Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information

The nature of the information we collect and the manner in which we collect it precludes duplication. SSA does not use another collection instrument to obtain similar data.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents

This collection does not affect small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently

If SSA did not use Form SSA-7157, self-employed farmers who are renting out farm property and are materially participating in that farm's operation would have no means of counting income from the farm on their earnings records. SSA needs this collection to ensure accurate crediting of NESE for Social Security coverage. Because we collect this information once, SSA cannot collect it less frequently. There are no technical or legal obstacles to burden reduction.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances that would cause SSA to conduct this information collection in a manner inconsistent with *5 CFR 1320.5*.

8. Solicitation of Public Comment and Other Consultations with the Public

The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on September 24, 2026, at 91 FR 60685, and we received no public comments. The 30-day FRN published on November 25, 2026, at 91 FR 76295. If we receive any comments in response to this Notice, we will forward them to OMB. We did not consult with the public in the development revision of this form.

9. Payment or Gifts to Respondents

SSA does not provide payments or gifts to the respondents.

10. Assurances of Confidentiality

SSA protects and holds confidential the information it collects in accordance with *42 U.S.C. 1306*, *20 CFR 401* and *402, 5 U.S.C. 552* (Freedom of Information Act), *5 U.S.C. 552a* (Privacy Act of 1974), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimates of Public Reporting Burden

Please see the burden chart below:

Method of Completion	**Number of Respondents**	**Frequency of Response**	**Average Burden Per Response (minutes)**	**Estimated Total Annual Burden (hours)**	**Average Theoretical Cost Amount (dollars)***	**Average Wait Time in Field Office (minutes)****	**Total Annual Opportunity Cost (dollars) *****
SSA-7157 (Upload Documents)	639	1	60	639	$47.99*	N/A	$30,666***
SSA-7157 (Paper)	71	1	60	71	$47.99*	19**	$4,463***
Total	**710**			**710**			**$35,129*** **

*We based this figure on an average Farmer's, Rancher's, and other Agricultural Manager's hourly wages ($47.99), as reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics (Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics).

** We based this figure on the average November 2026 wait time for field offices (19 minutes), as captured by SSA's current management information data. This figure is also posted on our public-facing website (Social Security performance | SSA). As the figures fluctuate, the wait times may be different on the website than they appear here. We continue to monitor our website and management information data to ensure we report updated figures when possible. While we have included wait time for all respondents who complete the paper form, we note that respondents are not required to complete the form in person, and those who mail or drop off a completed form do not experience any wait time.

*** This figure does not represent actual costs that SSA is imposing on individuals; rather, these are theoretical opportunity costs for the additional time respondents will

spend to complete the information collection. **There is no actual charge to respondents to complete the information collection**.

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

Total Number of Respondents Who Visit a Field Office	Frequency of Response	Average One-Way Travel Time to a Field Office (minutes)	Estimated Total Travel Time to a Field Office (hours)	Total Annual Opportunity Cost for Travel Time (dollars)****
71	1	30	36	$1,728****

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

Per OIRA, we include this travel time burden estimate under the *5 CFR 1320.8(a)(4),* which requires us to provide "time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons [for]…transmitting, or otherwise disclosing the information," as well as *5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3)(iii)* which requires us to estimate "the average burden collection…to the extent practicable." SSA notes that we do not obtain or maintain any data on travel times to a field office, nor do we have any data which shows that the average respondent drives to a field office, rather than using any other mode of transport. SSA also acknowledges that respondents' mode of travel and, therefore, travel times vary widely dependent on region, mode of travel, and actual proximity to a field office.

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

We calculated the following Learning Cost time burden based on the estimated time and effort we expect respondents will take to learn about this program, its applicability to their circumstances, and to cover any additional research we believe respondents may need to take to understand how to comply with the program requirements (beyond reading the instructions on the collection instrument):

Total Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Estimate Learning Cost (minutes)	Estimated Total Annual Burden (hours)	Total Annual Learning Cost (dollars)*****
710	1	30	355	$17,036*****

*****We based this dollar amount on the Average Theoretical Hourly Cost Amount in

dollars shown on the burden chart above.

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

Based on our current management information data, the current burden information we

We base our burden estimates on current management information data, which includes data from actual interviews, as well as from years of conducting this information collection. Per our management information data, we believe that **60** minutes accurately shows the average burden per response for learning about the program; receiving notices as needed; reading and understanding instructions; gathering the data and documents needed; answering the questions and completing the information collection instrument; scheduling any necessary appointment or required phone call; consulting with any third parties (as needed); and waiting to speak with SSA employees (as needed). Based on our current management information data, the current burden information we provided is accurate. The total burden for this ICR is **710** burden hours (reflecting SSA management information data), which results in an associated theoretical (not actual) opportunity cost financial burden of **$17,036**. SSA does not charge respondents to complete our applications.

13. Annual Cost to the Respondents (Other)

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

14. Annual Cost To Federal Government

The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately **$11,117**. This estimate accounts for costs from the following areas:

Description of Cost Factor	**Methodology for Estimating Cost**	**Cost in Dollars***
Designing and Printing the Form	Design Cost + Printing Cost	$150
Distribution, Shipping, and Material Costs for the Form	Distribution + Shipping + Material Cost	$2,000
SSA Employee (e.g., field office, 800 number, DDS staff) Information Collection and Processing Time	GS-9 employee x # of responses x processing time	$8,967
Full-Time Equivalent Costs	Out of pocket costs + Other expenses for providing this service	$0*
Systems Development, Updating, and Maintenance	GS-9 employee x man hours for development, updating, maintenance	$0**
Quantifiable IT Costs	Any additional IT costs	$0*

Total		**$11,117**

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

** Since we completed the development of this information collection under Upload Documents (OMB No. 0960-0830), we track the overall costs for maintaining it under the Upload Documents information collection. We do not account for it here to avoid double counting this cost to the federal government.

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

15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request

When we last cleared this IC in 2023, the burden was 662 hours. However, we are currently reporting a burden of 710 hours. This change stems from an increase in the number of responses received, from 662 to 710. There is no change to the burden time per response. Although the number of responses changed, SSA did not take any actions to cause this change. This modest increase is consistent with the prior submission and reflects updated Management Information data. These figures represent current Management Information data.

*Note: The total burden reflected in ROCIS is **1,123**, while the burden cited in #12 of the Supporting Statement is **710**. This discrepancy is because the ROCIS burden reflects the following components: field office waiting time + a rough estimate of a 30-minute, one-way, drive burden, + learning costs. In contrast, the chart in #12 above reflects actual burden.

16. Plans for Publication Information Collection Results

SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.

17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date

For the **paper form** SSA-7157, we will not publish the OMB approval expiration date. OMB granted SSA an exemption from the requirement to print the OMB expiration date on its program forms. SSA produces millions of public-use forms with life cycles exceeding those of an OMB approval. Since SSA does not periodically revise and reprint its public-use forms (e.g., on an annual basis), OMB granted this exemption so SSA would not have to destroy stocks of otherwise useable forms with expired OMB approval dates, avoiding Government waste.

For the **Internet version** of form SSA-7157, SSA is not requesting an exception to the requirement to display the OMB approval expiration date.

18. Exceptions to Certification Statement

SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at *5 CFR 1320.9* and related provisions at *5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3)*.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

SSA does not use statistical methods for this information collection.