

**Supporting Statement for Form SSA-581
Authorization to Obtain Earnings Data
From the Social Security Administration
OMB No. 0960-0602**

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

On occasion, organizations and agencies, both public and private, need to obtain detailed earnings information about specific Social Security Number (SSN) holding wage earners for business purposes (e.g. pension funds, State agencies). Respondents use Form SSA-581 to identify the SSN holder whose information they wish to request, and to provide authorization from the SSN holder (when applicable). Section 205(c)(2)(A) of the *Social Security Act (Act)* requires the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide this information when the SSN holder in question authorizes the agency to do so.

2. Description of Collection

SSA uses the information provided on Form SSA-581 to: (1) identify the wage earner; (2) establish the period of earnings requested; (3) verify the wage earner authorized SSA to release this information to the requesting party; and (4) produce the Itemized Statement of Earnings (SSA-1826, OMB Control No. 0960-0525). Generally, organizations submit the SSA-581 as a one-time request; however, some organizations use the form annually to maintain private pension programs, while others use the form for litigation matters.

Some private pension plans need itemized earnings information to determine, for example:

- Whether an individual is eligible for a private pension benefit;
- Whether the individual remains eligible to receive a pension benefit; continued eligibility to receive a pension benefit; or
- What the pension benefit should be.

Additionally, some law firms need itemized earnings information for litigation-related matters to determine, for example:

- If an individual worked for a particular company; or
- How much the client earned in wages during specific years.

This form is not accessible publicly, but entities seeking this information contact the OCO Pension Fund. One of the project coordinators within the OCO Pension Fund then initiates an agreement between SSA and the participant.

When an entity sends an SSA-581 form to a respondent, the respondent may either mail it directly back to SSA or return it to the entity, which then forwards it to SSA. The Earnings Correction component, located in Baltimore, MD, receives the form. This component within Central Processing handles the form. Upon

receipt in the mailroom, our High-Speed Scanning operators scan the forms into the system for processing.

Because these respondents are organizations, they will not incur any psychological costs associated with this ICR; and because the claimant is simply authorizing SSA to release earnings information and is not required to provide sensitive personal details beyond consent, there are no psychological costs associated with this ICR for the claimant.

The respondents are the private businesses and other Federal agencies requesting the claimant's earnings information, and the claimant who signs Form SSA-581 to authorize SSA to release the requesting organization the claimant's earnings information.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information

The SSA-581 is not available as a print only PDF on SSA's website; rather, SSA sends the PDF file to the organizations via email. In addition, SSA did not create an electronic version of this form under the agency's Government Paperwork Elimination Act plan, because the *Tax Reform Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-455)* requires a wet signature from the SSN holder for SSA to release earnings data.

While SSA does not currently have a fully electronic version of this form, we allow the respondents to submit the PDF version of the form with an electronic signature so long as they follow IRS requirements for electronic signature. At this time, we estimate that 100 percent of the respondents electronically sign and submit the PDF versions of the form.

We are working on creating an electronically submittable version of this form and hope to have one in place within the next 3-6 years. However, this anticipated timeline will depend on the availability of agency resources, as we need to implement higher volume forms electronically first.

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 we did not use Form SSA-581, organizations and wage earners would have no way of requesting earnings data to administer private pension programs or resolve litigation matters, which would be a violation of Section 205(c)(2)(A) of the *Act*. Because we only collect the information on an as-needed basis, we 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 March 23, 2026, at 91 FR 13915, and we received no public comments. The 30-day FRN published on May 22, 2026, at 91 FR 30360. If we receive any comments in response to this Notice, we will forward them to OMB.
9. **Payment or Gifts to Respondents**
SSA does not provide payment or gifts to the respondents.
10. **Assurances of Confidentiality**
SSA protects and holds confidential the information we collect 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**

Method of Completion	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Average Burden per Response (minutes)	Estimated Total Annual Burden (hours)	Average Theoretical Hourly Cost Amount (dollars)*	Total Annual Opportunity Cost (dollars)**
SSA-581	24,000	1	10	4,000	\$40.54*	\$162,160**

*We based this figure on average Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists hourly wage data, as reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics data ([Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#)).

** This figure does not represent actual costs that SSA is imposing on recipients of Social Security payments to complete this application; rather, these are theoretical opportunity costs for the additional time respondents will spend to complete the application. **There is no actual charge to respondents to complete the application.**

We did not include travel time as per our current management information data, respondents who complete the paper forms return them to us via mail or email. Should this change in the future, we will include the language and chart for travel time to a field office.

We do not have any recorded learning costs for this information collection, as the respondents learn about it when we issue the form, and SSA technicians walk them

through the process as needed.

We base our burden estimates on current management information data, as well as from years of conducting this information collection. Per our management information data, we believe that **10** 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. The total burden for this ICR is **4,000** burden hours (reflecting SSA management information data), which results in an associated theoretical (not actual) opportunity cost financial burden of **\$162,160**. 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 **\$29,804**.

This estimate accounts for costs from the following areas:

Description of Cost Factor	Methodology for Estimating Cost	Cost in Dollars*
Designing, Printing, and Distributing the Form	Design Cost + Printing Cost + Distribution Cost	\$5,584
SSA Employee (e.g., field office, 800 number, DDS staff) Information Collection and Processing Time	GS-9 employee x # of responses x processing time	\$20,800
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	\$3,420
Quantifiable IT Costs	Any additional IT costs	\$0*
Total		\$29,804

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

SSA is unable to break down the costs to the Federal government further than we already have. Since we work with almost every US citizen, we often do bulk mailings, and cannot track the cost for a single mailing. In addition, it is difficult for us to break down the cost for processing a single form, as field office staff process Form SSA-581 without assisting respondents in filling it out, and the processing time varies from form to form. 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. Finally, SSA prefers not to provide breakdowns of estimated payment to employees who process these items for a variety of reasons (only one of which is that it is not possible to do this entirely accurately).

15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request

There are no changes to the public reporting 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

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.

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.