

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

1405-0102 REFUGEE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. *Why is this collection necessary and what are the legal statutes that allow this?*

The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended by the Refugee Act of 1980, allows for the admission as refugees of persons of special humanitarian concern to the United States who can establish that they have suffered past persecution or have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. See INA §§ 101(a)(42) and 207; 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101(a)(42) and 1157. The law also provides for resettlement assistance to be provided to arriving refugees, including initial reception and placement with a voluntary public or private nonprofit agency serving as a sponsor. See INA §412; 8 U.S.C. § 1522. Biographical information is collected from each refugee applicant in order to initiate resettlement processing, to run security checks by the law enforcement and intelligence communities before the refugee can be approved to travel to the United States, to conduct an adjudication interview on refugee admissibility by a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer, to place him or her with a resettlement agency at an appropriate resettlement site if admitted to the United States, and to plan and conduct international travel for the refugee applicant to the United States.

2. *What business purpose is the information gathered going to be used for?*

This information is collected at refugee processing locations abroad during a personal intake process with the applicant using, for the most part, already pre-approved DHS and DOS collections (OMB 1115-0057, OMB 1615-0008, and OMB 1615-0097). The recipient of the information is generally an employee of a nonprofit or international organization that has a cooperative agreement or a memorandum of understanding with the State Department to perform this service at a Resettlement Support Center. The data collected includes a refugee applicant's personal characteristics such as date and place of birth, gender, contact information, including social media handles, marital status, family ties, religion, ethnic group, background, education, occupation, skills, medical information, English language ability, associated family members' refugee resettlement cases and identity documents. The data is transmitted to federal law enforcement and intelligence community partners to run security checks on refugee applicants before they can be permitted to travel to the United States. The data is also used to produce forms USCIS requires to interview and adjudicate the refugee claim. Data is also given to resettlement agencies at a weekly allocation meeting, as well as the International Organization for Migration to conduct a medical screening and plan international travel. Resettlement agencies use the data to place each refugee in an appropriate resettlement location in the United States. If the data were not collected, refugees could not be properly vetted by the intelligence and law enforcement community, and therefore refugee applicants could no longer be processed through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

In addition, the resettlement agencies would not be able to provide appropriate initial reception and placement services as provided for in the Refugee Act.

3. *Is this collection able to be completed electronically (e.g. through a website or application)?*

There is currently no form associated with this data collection. The applicants verbally provide the information during the intake process and may submit personal records in support of their statements. The State Department developed an automated data capture system called the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) that is in use at processing locations for electronic transmission of the data to the Refugee Processing Center, which permits faster dissemination of the information to the vetting partners and resettlement agencies. The Department is also building a new case management system to replace WRAPS to allow for more effective and efficient electronic management of refugee resettlement cases. This system, called START, will perform the same overall functions as the WRAPS system. The Department began deployment of START in late 2020 and expects full deployment to all locations worldwide by late 2021. The Department has designed this data collection to make most efficient use of digital data capture. While this does not represent a complete end-to-end electronic process, it equates to paperwork reduction by incorporation of the electronic entry of intake responses.

4. *Does this collection duplicate any other collection of information?*

There is no duplication of collection. Some information is available on other forms necessary for the processing of refugees, but all the required information is not available on other forms. It is more efficient to collect the complete data needed by the intelligence and federal law enforcement community and resettlement agencies at one time than it would be to collect partial data and then search other completed forms for the remaining information.

5. *Describe any impacts on small business.*

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

6. *What are the consequences if this collection is not done?*

Failure to collect refugee applicant data would impede the ability of the intelligence and federal law enforcement community to properly vet refugees and resettlement agencies to place refugees in appropriate resettlement locations in the United States.

7. *Are there any special collection circumstances?*

The data is collected by the Resettlement Support Center only once for each refugee. Updates are also recorded if there are changes to the data during resettlement processing.

8. *Document publication (or intent to publish) a request for public comments in the Federal Register*

The State Department (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration) published a 60-day notice on December 8, 2020, to solicit public comments for this collection.⁸⁵ FR 79068. One comment was received.

The commenter stated: “I agree that more accurate data on refugees will make their resettlement more efficient. Also, it seems useful for security reasons. The problem, however, is that implementing this policy may not be feasible since it requires many partners overseas. Also, the data may not be useful since usually the information provided by refugees is not base [sic] on official records, so there is no way to measure their accuracy.”

The commenter did not offer any recommended changes to the current data collection process; therefore, no changes will be made to the data collection process to address this comment.

9. *Are payments or gifts given to the respondents?*

Respondents receive neither payments nor gifts for providing their biodata. However, the level of resettlement benefits which refugees receive in the United States is based in part upon needs that are identified through a review of the data provided.

10. *Describe assurances of privacy/confidentiality*

Respondents are notified that the information in their files is released to State Department personnel, officers of other federal agencies including Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security, and resettlement agency employees on a need to know basis. Disclosure of information is restricted in accordance with provisions of the cooperative agreements and a memorandum of understanding between the resettlement agencies and the State Department.

11. *Are any questions of a sensitive nature asked?*

Information on religion and ethnic group is provided at the option of the respondent, but it can be useful for validating a refugee applicant’s persecution claim, as well as determining which resettlement site is appropriate for a refugee. For example, a Jewish refugee might prefer to be located in a city with a synagogue. This placement could not be assured if the applicant had not indicated his or her religion during the collection of biographical data.

12. *Describe the hour time burden and the hour cost burden on the respondent needed to complete this collection*

Based upon the estimated refugee admission numbers for FY 2021, up to 15,000 individuals will be admitted into the United States. Each individual provides the information only once, along with their family members within a case. However, based upon our experiences in collecting this data over a number of years, we estimate that more than 15,000 individuals will participate, whether or not they are granted admission to the United States. Since we currently do not have knowledge of the number of participants for FY 2021, our calculation is based on FY20 numbers, equivalent to 26,223

individuals and 10,124 refugee cases. Typically, it takes approximately 3 hours per refugee case to collect the necessary data from each family member. Total hour burden is estimated to be 30,372 hours (10,124 responses per case x 3 hours estimated completion time = 30,372 hours). Please note, due to refugee applicants' circumstances, we estimate the majority of them do not work and therefore, PRM is unable to calculate the hour cost burden because many refugees are unemployed.

13. *Describe the monetary burden to respondents (out of pocket costs) needed to complete this collection.*

There is no cost to the individual who provides biographical information.

14. *Describe the cost incurred by the Federal Government to complete this collection.*

Annualized cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$455,580. Please see chart below. This is based upon an average hourly salary of a Resettlement Support Center worker of \$15; data collection time of 3 hours per refugee case size; and 15,000 total refugees estimated for admission in FY2021.

Refugee Cases	RSC Hourly Salary	Biographic Data Gathering Time	Total
10,124	\$15/per hour	3 hours	\$,455,580

15. *Explain any changes/adjustments to this collection since the previous submission*

The number of hours reported on our last submission was 22,500, based on FY 2016 projected refugee admissions of 45,000. However, the number of hours being reported in this submission is 30,372 based on the 10,124 refugee cases we anticipate collecting this data from in FY2021. As a result of Presidential mandates, additional biographic data must be gathered from each refugee applicant in FY 2021, and therefore, the collection timeframe required has increased for each refugee case, which varies upon size. The number of refugee admissions varies each fiscal year, guided by the ceiling set in the annual Presidential Determination, but which may also be affected by financial resources and refugee processing capacity. Further, additional information is being collected during the personal intake process abroad, capturing contact information, social media handles, family ties, background, medical information, associated family and friends' refugee resettlement cases, and identity documents. The additional data is also used to run security checks on refugees by intelligence and federal law enforcement agencies before refugees can be permitted to travel to the United States.

16. *Specify if the data gathered by this collection will be published.*

The results of this collection will not be published.

17. *If applicable, explain the reason(s) for seeking approval to not display the OMB expiration date.*

Relevant officers and employees will inform applicants of the expiration date of the collection.

18. *Explain any exceptions to the OMB certification statement below.*
There are no exceptions to this certification statement.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

This collection does not employ statistical methods.