

# OMB Bulletin No. 97-03



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON D.C. 20503

January 13, 1997

## OMB BULLETIN NO. 97-03

### TO THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Year 1996 Information Streamlining Plan and Information Collection Budget

**I. Purpose.** The President has committed this Administration to eliminating unnecessary paperwork burden. Excessive Federal information requirements have hampered the American people and economy. When the President signed the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, he referred to the need to "conquer a mountain of paperwork that is crushing our people and wasting a lot of time and resources."

Since enactment of the original Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, which established paperwork burden reduction goals, agencies have made substantial progress in reducing paperwork burden. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), working with Executive branch agencies, has in the past and will continue to develop an annual "Information Collection Budget," reflecting agency administrative initiatives to reduce the burden of individual information requirements. More recently, as part of the Administration's regulatory reform efforts, the President called upon agencies to "eliminate the outdated, and streamline the bloated" and, "whenever possible, to cut in half the frequency of reports" required from the public.

There have been many achievements in reassessing and streamlining Federal information requirements; agencies have lessened the "hassle factor," simplified content, automated data collection efforts, and worked to identify and collect only information that is actually needed and used in administration of programs.

These efforts, while laudable, are not enough. The American public still experiences the complexity, redundancy, detail, and burden of Federal paperwork. In order to meet this challenge, agencies need to undertake comprehensive reviews to assess how programs have been administered to identify needed changes, including fundamentally restructuring and reducing existing information requirements. Specifically, agencies should look beyond individual data collections and instead focus on improved methods of program administration and ways to more carefully calibrate efforts to monitor regulatory

compliance. This may require consideration not only of the content of information requirements but the means of its collection. It may also require agencies to look beyond what can be achieved administratively and consider seeking to amend existing statutes.

**II. Summary.** This Bulletin instructs Executive departments and agencies to prepare and implement an Information Streamlining Plan (ISP) and an Information Collection Budget (ICB). These efforts will be carried out by senior-level agency officials, including the agency's Chief Information Officer (CIO). The ISP should include goals and timetables to achieve, by the end of FY 1998, a cumulative burden reduction of 25 percent from its FY 1995 year-end level, consistent with the government-wide burden reduction goals in the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. Each agency's 1995 year-end burden level is identified in the *Information Resources Management Plan of the Federal Government*, which was published August 1996. The annual ICB should contain a summary of the agency's actual paperwork burdens imposed at the end of FY 1996, the individual agency initiatives to reduce burden during FY 1996 and those expected in FY 1997, and the aggregate paperwork burden reduction goals to be accomplished by the end of FY 1997. The ICB should be consistent with the ISP.

**A. Information Streamlining Plan.** For those agencies identified in Part VII-A, the ISP is to provide a detailed explanation of an agency's multi-year plan to achieve, by the end of FY 1998, a cumulative burden reduction of 25 percent from its FY 1995 year-end level. Through a systematic, program-wide burden reduction effort, the agency is to identify specific administrative changes, program restructures, regulatory reinventions, and legislative proposals that will reduce its total paperwork burden on the public and streamline the paperwork it does impose. In developing its approach, the agency is to consider eliminating the collection of less useful information, reducing the frequency of reporting and recordkeeping, increasing the use of information technology, and devolving responsibility to non-Federal entities. The agency is to specify actions that will enable an assessment of progress toward meeting these goals and timetables and will report to OMB on the status of these activities at least every six months.

**B. Information Collection Budget.** On August 29, 1995, OMB issued regulations, "Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public" (5 CFR 1320), that require designated agencies to prepare an annual ICB. For those agencies identified in Part VII-A and -B, the ICB called for by this Bulletin reports actual total information collection burden for FY 1996 and estimated burden for FY 1997. In addition, the ICB requires the identification of the most significant burden reduction accomplishments and planned initiatives for those years.

**III. Authority.** This Bulletin is issued pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, as amended; the Budget and Accounting Procedures Act of 1950, as amended; and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**IV. Required Submissions.** Executive department and agency reporting should be consistent with OMB fiscal and policy guidance. Submissions should reflect coordination with the agency's CIO. Agencies are to submit the following information in accordance with the instructions and formats provided:

A. One copy of the agency's Information Streamlining Plan, prepared in accordance with instructions in Appendix A.

B. One copy of the agency's Information Collection Budget, prepared in accordance with instructions in Appendix B.

C. One copy of data regarding compliance with OMB Circular No. A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources," in accordance with the instructions in Appendix C.

OMB intends to convene a staff-level workshop to assist the agencies in preparing their ISP and ICB submissions. Attendance is highly recommended in light of the major new requirements for agency reporting contained in this Bulletin.

**V. Submission Date.** Not later than ninety days after the date of issue of this Bulletin, each agency listed in Part VII (Coverage) shall provide the reports required by this Bulletin. The reports should be delivered to:

Jonathan Winer  
The Office of Management and Budget  
The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs  
New Executive Office Building, Room 10235  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

**VI. OMB Hearings on Submissions.** OMB intends to conduct hearings with agency heads and other senior-level agency officials, including agency CIOs, regarding the content of agency ISP and ICB submissions. The purpose of the hearings will be to determine compliance with the specified burden reduction levels.

**VII. Coverage.** The following agencies are subject to the requirements of this Bulletin:

A. **Both** Information Streamlining Plan and Information Collection Budget

Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense

Department of Education  
Department of Energy  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Justice  
Department of Labor  
Department of State  
Department of Transportation  
Department of the Treasury  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Federal Communications Commission  
Federal Trade Commission  
Securities and Exchange Commission  
Social Security Administration  
Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR Secretariat)

**B. Only** Information Collection Budget

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
National Science Foundation  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Personnel Management  
Small Business Administration

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**VIII. Information Contacts.** Questions about specific agency matters should be directed to the agency's Desk Officer in OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Questions about this Bulletin should be directed to Jonathan Winer, tel. (202) 395-7858.

**IX. Expiration Date.** This Bulletin expires September 30, 1997.

**Franklin D. Raines**

*Director*

### **INFORMATION STREAMLINING PLAN (ISP)**

**I. General.** The ISP establishes a broad framework within which each agency is to develop and present a multi-year plan to reduce Federal paperwork burden on the public, achieving by the end of FY 1998, a cumulative burden reduction of 25 percent from its FY 1995 year-end level. Each agency is to identify specific administrative changes, program restructures, regulatory reinventions, and legislative proposals that will reduce total burden on the public. Each agency is to consider eliminating the collection of less useful information, reducing the frequency of reporting and recordkeeping, increasing the use of information technology, and devolving responsibility to non-Federal entities. Each agency is to specify actions that will enable an assessment of progress towards meeting the 25 percent burden reduction goal and will report to OMB on the status of these activities at least every six months.

**II. Content.** Each agency's ISP is to contain the four sections identified below, including Exhibit 1A discussed in Section 2.

Section 1 provides a general overview of how the agency will reduce paperwork burden. Specifically, the agency is to show how it will achieve, by the end of FY 1998, a cumulative burden reduction of 25 percent from its FY 1995 year-end level.

Section 2 identifies specific agency information collections that have been or will be targeted for revision, consolidation, and/or elimination. Each agency is to follow the format in Exhibit 1A to illustrate these reductions. Specifically, for each targeted information collection, an agency is to identify, describe, and set specific dates for completion of intermediate steps and final actions. An agency is to consider statutory and regulatory changes that streamline information collections, ultimately reducing burden on the public. In developing its approach, an agency is to consider eliminating the collection of less useful information, reducing the frequency of reporting and recordkeeping, increasing the use of information technology, and devolving responsibility to non-Federal entities. Although all information collections should be considered, an agency should include in Exhibit 1A burden reduction plans for each collection greater than one million total burden hours. In those cases where there are fewer than 15 collections having greater than one million total burden hours, an agency should include its 15 largest total burden hour collections.

Section 3, if applicable, details the agency's justification for not targeting for burden reduction in Section 2 each collection greater than one million total burden hours or its 15 largest total burden hour information collections. Specifically, each agency is to explain on a collection-by-collection basis why, in its opinion, these major information collections cannot be reduced. Each agency is to be specific for each information collection that it has not targeted for reduction.

Section 4 identifies a senior-level agency official directly accountable to the agency head for the completion and implementation of the ISP, as well as responsible for providing progress reports on the status of meeting goals and timetables identified in the ISP. These reports will be submitted to OMB at least every six months.

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## **INFORMATION STREAMLINING PLAN**

### **EXHIBIT 1A**

Title of Collection: \_\_\_\_\_

OMB Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Total Burden Hours at End of FY 1995: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Total Burden Hours at End of FY 1996: \_\_\_\_\_

Type(s) of Action Required to Reduce Burden (check all that apply):

statutory  regulatory  administrative  other: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify, Describe, and Set Specific Dates for Completion of Intermediate Steps and Final Burden Reduction Actions (add more lines, as necessary):

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Estimated Total Burden Hours for Collection After Completion of Final Burden Reduction Step Identified Above: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appendix B

### INFORMATION COLLECTION BUDGET (ICB)

**I. General.** The ICB presents an accounting of an agency's total information collection activity as of the end of the previous and current fiscal years.

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget,

"in consultation with agency heads, set an annual Governmentwide goal for the reduction of information collection burden by at least 10 percent during each of fiscal years 1996 and 1997 and 5 percent during each of fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001, and set annual agency goals to (A) reduce information collection burdens imposed on the public that (i) represent the maximum practicable opportunity in each agency ... ." (44 U.S.C. 3505(a)(1)).

"[report annually on] a summary of accomplishments and planned initiatives to reduce collection of information burdens." (44 U.S.C. 3514(a)(2)(A)(i)).

"[report annually on] a list of any increase in the collection of information burden, including the authority for each such collection." (44 U.S.C. 3514(a)(2)(A)(iii)).

Enclosed with this Bulletin is a final list of all active information collections and their associated burden figures as of the end of FY 1996 (September 30, 1996). The purpose of the list is to allow agencies to verify OMB's official records and, subsequently, submit an updated total for aggregate burden hours of all active information collections for FY 1996. OMB will compare the total Governmentwide information collection burden for FY 1996 against the total Governmentwide information collection burden baseline developed in FY 1995.

**II. Content.** Each agency's ICB is to be prepared in the format presented in Exhibits 1B, 2B, and 3B, of this appendix.

Exhibit 1B provides, in hours and number of collections, the total information collection burden for FY 1996 and the burden reduction goals for FY 1997. If an agency expects its total information collection burden to increase, Exhibit 1B also asks for the primary statutes and/or regulations that will directly lead to this increase. For those agencies not required to prepare an ISP, Exhibit 1B also asks agencies to describe, in narrative form, primary goals and timetables to reduce burden to the maximum extent practicable; these goals should be consistent with improving agency management of the information collection review process.

Exhibit 2B details the agency's most significant FY 1996 accomplishments that reduced information collection burdens on the public. In other words, only describe those information collection accomplishments that most significantly reduced burden on the public -- do not report every or almost every burden-reducing collection. Include additional descriptive information in narrative form on each initiative that explains the specific burden reduction accomplishment (e.g., less frequent reporting, consolidation of several forms, and/or cross-cutting activities). Please be specific, but brief. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Exhibit 3B details the agency's most significant planned initiatives for FY 1997 to reduce information collection burdens on the public. In other words, only describe those planned initiatives that will most significantly reduce burden on the public -- do not report every or almost every burden-reducing collection. Include additional descriptive information in narrative form on each initiative that explains the specific burden reduction accomplishment (e.g., less frequent reporting, consolidation of several forms, and/or cross-cutting activities). Please be specific, but brief. The specific burden reduction initiatives identified in Exhibit 3B should support the burden reduction goals and timetables discussed in an agency's ISP submission or illustrated in Exhibit 1B. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR VERIFYING COMPUTER-GENERATED  
TRANSACTIONS SHEETS**



Verify FY 1996 Individual Information Collections. OMB has provided agencies with a computer-generated inventory list of all collections that were active as of the end of FY 1996 (September 30, 1996). Agencies should verify the "annual reporting hours" for each collection presented in this inventory list, and either provide OMB with the revised annual reporting hours or a statement that OMB's figures are accurate. Agencies should not re-submit the entire inventory list, but rather only those pages containing annual reporting hours revisions. If revisions are necessary, the agency should also simultaneously submit an Information Correction Worksheet (ICW, or OMB 83-C) to update the OMB's official computer record system. The purpose of this verification is to support the agency's burden numbers in Exhibit 1B (A1-4), although it also should be helpful in completing Exhibits 2B and 3B.

**Definitions:** Program changes should not be confused with adjustments.

A "**Program increase**" is an additional burden resulting from an action or directive of any branch of the Federal government (e.g., an increase in sample size or coverage, amount of information, reporting frequency, or expanded use of an existing form). This also includes previously in-use and unapproved information collections discovered during the ICB process, or during the fiscal year, which will be in use during the next fiscal year.

A "**Program decrease**" is a reduction in burden because of: (1) the discontinuation of an information collection; or (2) a change in an existing information collection as by a Federal agency (e.g., the use of sampling (or smaller samples), a decrease in the amount of information requested (fewer questions), or a decrease in reporting frequency).

An "**Adjustment**" does not denote change in the actual paperwork requirements or in agency policy, but rather in factors such as population growth over which the government has no control.

Note: Only expired collections that are no longer in use (and will not be put back in use) will be accounted for as program decreases (e.g., surveys that have been completed). For an expired collection which is still in use and for which reinstatement is pending or expected, agencies should write "REINSTATEMENT PENDING" in the margin next to the collection.

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## INFORMATION COLLECTION BUDGET

### EXHIBIT 1B

#### Information Collection Burden Reduction Achievements and Goals

- A. (1) Total actual hour burden for all FY 1996 collections: 2,500,000 hrs  
 (2) Total estimated hour burden for all FY 1997 collections: 1,500,000 hrs  
 (3) Total actual number of all FY 1996 collections: 20 collections  
 (4) Total estimated number of all FY 1997 collections: 13 collections  
 (5) Statutes and the corresponding regulations responsible for only the most significant burden increases: Name of Law  
 Name of Regulation
- B. (1) Agencies not required to prepare an ISP are also asked to describe, in narrative form, their primary goals to reduce burden to the maximum extent practicable; these goals should be consistent with improving agency management of the information collection review process.

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1 Sum of burden hours for all collections for FY 1996.

2 Sum of burden hours for all collections for FY 1997.

3 Total number (count) of all collections for FY 1996.

4 Total number (count) of all collections for FY 1997.

5 List only the primary statutes/regulations responsible for burden increases, if any, from FY 1996 to FY 1997.

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## INFORMATION COLLECTION BUDGET

### EXHIBIT 2B

#### FY 1996 Accomplishments in Reducing Burden

OMB NO.	TITLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	ANNUAL BURDEN FY 1995 (HOURS)	ANNUAL BURDEN FY 1996 (HOURS)	PROGRAM CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT	COMMENTS <sup>8</sup>
0000-0000	U.S. Survey	750	Annual	20,000,000	12,000,000	Program Change	

*[Exhibit 2B details the agency's most significant FY 1996 accomplishments that reduced information collection burdens on the public. In other words, only describe those information collection accomplishments that most significantly reduced burden on the public -- do not report every or almost every burden-reducing collection.]*

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6 Include additional descriptive information in narrative form on each initiative which explains the specific burden reduction accomplishment (e.g., less frequent reporting, consolidation of several forms, and/or cross-cutting activities). Please be specific, but brief. Attach additional sheets, as necessary.

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## INFORMATION COLLECTION BUDGET

### EXHIBIT 3B

#### FY 1997 Planned Initiatives for Reducing Burden

OMB NO.	TITLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	ANNUAL BURDEN FY 1995 (HOURS)	ANNUAL BURDEN FY 1996 (HOURS)	PROGRAM CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT	COMMENTS <sup>7</sup>
0000-0000	U.S. Survey	750	Annual	12,000,000	8,000,000	Program Change	

*[Exhibit 3B details the agency's most significant planned initiatives for FY 1997 to reduce information collection burdens on the public. In other words, only describe those planned initiatives that will most significantly reduce burden on the public -- do not report every or almost every burden-reducing collection.]*

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7 Include additional descriptive information in narrative form on each initiative which explains the specific burden reduction accomplishment (e.g., less frequent reporting, consolidation of several forms, and/or cross-cutting activities). Please be very specific, but brief. Attach additional sheets, as necessary.

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Appendix C

Section 9(a)(10) of OMB Circular No. A-130, as revised on February 8, 1996 (61 *Federal Register* 6434, February 20, 1996) provides that the head of each agency shall:

(10) Direct the senior official appointed pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 3506(b) to monitor agency compliance with the policies, procedures, and guidance in this Circular. Acting as an ombudsman, the senior official shall consider alleged instances of agency failure to comply with this Circular and recommend or take corrective action as appropriate. The senior official shall report annually, not later than February 1st of each year, to the Director those instances of alleged failure to comply with this Circular and their resolution.

Each agency shall report on (1) each instance in which a failure to comply was alleged, (2) the nature of the alleged violation, and (3) the disposition of the complaint. Agencies that receive no complaints should so state.