

Total Annualized Capital/Startup Costs: \$0.

Total Annual Costs (operating/maintaining systems or purchasing services): \$0.

Description: Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, employers seeking to employ Nonimmigrants on H-1B Visas in specialty occupations are required to file a labor condition application with and receive certification from the Department of Labor before the Immigration and Nationalization service may approve an H-1B petition.

Ira L. Mills,
Departmental Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration

Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment; Furnishing Documents to the Secretary of Labor on Request Under ERISA Section 104(a)(6)

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor (the Department), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and other federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This program helps to ensure that requested data is provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed.

By this notice, the Department is soliciting comments concerning the information collection provisions of regulations pertaining to section 104(a)(6) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA). Under the statute, and regulatory provisions codified at 29 CFR 2520.104a-8, the administrator of an employee benefit plan subject to part 1 of Title I of ERISA is required to furnish the Secretary of Labor with certain documents relating to the plan upon request. A copy of the information collection request (ICR) can be obtained

by contacting the office shown in the addresses section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the addresses section on or before September 3, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are invited to submit written comments regarding the information collection request and burden estimates to: Gerald B. Lindrew, Office of Policy and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5647, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-8410; Fax: (202) 219-4745. These are not toll-free numbers.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (TRA 97) eliminated the ERISA requirement that employee benefit plan administrators file with the Department copies of the summary plan descriptions and summaries of material modifications that are required to be furnished to plan participants and beneficiaries. TRA 97 added paragraph (6) to section 104(a) of ERISA which provides that the administrator of any employee benefit plan subject to Part 1 of Title I of ERISA is required to furnish to the Secretary of Labor, on request, any documents related to the employee benefit plan. Prior to the TRA 97 amendments, ERISA provided that certain documents be filed with the Department of Labor to ensure that plan participants and beneficiaries would have a means to obtain the documents without requesting them from the plan administrator. With the elimination of the filing requirement, the new section 104(a)(6) provision authorizes the Department to obtain documents on behalf of plan participants and beneficiaries. The Department issued final implementing guidance with respect to the requirement to provide these documents on January 7, 2002 (67 FR 772). The ICR relating to responding to these requests was approved following publication of the proposed rule on August 5, 1999 (64 FR 42797). This approval will expire on October 31, 2002.

II. Desired Focus of Comments

The Department is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected;

- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

III. Current Actions

The Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration is requesting an extension of the currently approved ICR pertaining to Furnishing Documents to the Secretary of Labor under ERISA section 104(a)(6). The Department is not proposing or implementing changes to the regulation or the existing ICR at this time. A summary of the ICR and current burden estimates follows:

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Agency: Department of Labor, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration.

Title: Furnishing Documents to the Secretary of Labor on Request under ERISA.

OMB Number: 1210-0112.

Frequency: On occasion.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions.

Total Respondents: 1,000.

Total Responses: 1,000.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 95.

Estimated Total Burden Cost: \$4,100.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of the ICR; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: June 26, 2002.

Gerald B. Lindrew,

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Research, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration.

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