

areas where more technical assistance is needed, and determine opportunities for greater program integration. Section 239(c) of Title II, Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2271 *et seq.*), authorizes this information collection.

This information collection is subject to the PRA. A Federal agency generally cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information, and the public is generally not required to respond to an information collection, unless it is approved by OMB under the PRA and displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. In addition, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall generally be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information that does not display a valid Control Number. See 5 CFR 1320.5(a) and 1320.6.

Interested parties are encouraged to provide comments to the contact shown in the **ADDRESSES** section. Comments must be written to receive consideration, and they will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval of the final ICR. In order to help ensure appropriate consideration, comments should mention OMB Control No. 1205-0540.

Submitted comments will also be a matter of public record for this ICR and posted on the internet, without redaction. DOL encourages commenters not to include personally identifiable information, confidential business data, or other sensitive statements/information in any comments.

DOL 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; and
- 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).

Agency: DOL-ETA.

Type of Review: Extension Without Changes.

Title of Collection: Trade Adjustment Assistance Administrative Collection of States (TAAACS).

Form: TAA State Survey.

OMB Control Number: 1205-0540.

Affected Public: State, Local, and Tribal Governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 52.

Frequency: Annual.

Total Estimated Annual Responses: 52.

Estimated Average Time per Response: 5 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 260 hours.

Total Estimated Annual Other Cost Burden: \$0.

Authority: 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A).

Brent Parton,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Labor.

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BILLING CODE 4510-FN-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

Labor Certification Process for the Temporary Employment of H-2A and H-2B Foreign Workers in the United States: Annual Update to Allowable Monetary Charges for Agricultural Workers' Meals and for Travel Subsistence Reimbursement, Including Lodging

AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the Department of Labor (DOL) is issuing this notice to announce the annual updates to allowable monetary charges employers of H-2A workers, in occupations other than herding or production of livestock on the range, may charge workers when the employer provides three meals per day. This notice also announces the maximum travel subsistence meal reimbursement a worker with receipts may claim under the H-2A and H-2B programs. Finally, this notice includes a reminder regarding employers' obligations with respect to overnight lodging costs as part of required subsistence.

DATES: These allowable charges become effective February 13, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brian Pasternak, Administrator, Office of Foreign Labor Certification, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of

Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-5311, Washington, DC 20210, telephone (202) 693-8200 (this is not a toll-free number). Individuals with hearing or speech impairments may access the telephone numbers above via TTY/TDD by calling the toll-free Federal Information Relay Service at 1 (877) 889-5627.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security will not approve an employer's petition for the admission of H-2A or H-2B nonimmigrant temporary workers in the U.S. unless the petitioner has received an H-2A or H-2B labor certification from DOL. The labor certification provides that: (1) there are not sufficient U.S. workers who are able, willing, and qualified and who will be available at the time and place needed to perform the labor or services involved in the petition; and (2) the employment of the foreign worker(s) in such labor or services will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of workers in the U.S. similarly employed. See 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a) and (b), 1184(c)(1), and 1188(a); 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5) and (6); 20 CFR 655.1(a) and 655.100.

Allowable Meal Charge

H-2A agricultural employers who are employing workers in occupations other than herding or production of livestock on the range must offer and provide workers three meals per day or free and convenient cooking facilities.¹ See 20 CFR 655.122(g). Where the employer provides the meals, the job offer must state the charge, if any, to the worker for such meals. See *id.* The amount of meal charges is governed by 20 CFR 655.173.

By regulation, DOL has established the methodology for determining the maximum amount that H-2A agricultural employers may charge workers for providing them with three meals per day. See 20 CFR 655.173(a). This methodology allows for annual adjustments of the previous year's maximum allowable charge based on the updated Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for Food (CPI-U for Food), not seasonally adjusted. See *id.* The maximum amount employers may charge workers for providing meals is adjusted annually by the 12-month percentage change in the CPI-U for Food for the prior year (*i.e.*, between December of the year just concluded and December of the prior year). See *id.*

¹ H-2A employers must provide workers engaged in herding or the production of livestock on the range meals or food to prepare meals without charge or deposit charge. See 20 CFR 655.210(e).

The Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) Certifying Officer may also permit an employer to charge workers a higher amount for providing them with three meals a day if the higher amount is justified and sufficiently documented by the employer, as set forth in 20 CFR 655.173(b).

The percentage change in the CPI-U for Food between December 2022 and December 2023 was 2.7% percent.² Thus, the annual update to the H-2A allowable meal charge is calculated by multiplying the current allowable meal charge (\$15.46) by the 12-month percentage change in the CPI-U for Food between December 2022 and December 2023 ($\$15.46 \times 1.027 = \15.88).³ Accordingly, the updated maximum allowable charge under 20 CFR 655.122(g) and 655.173 is \$15.88 per day, and an employer is not permitted to charge a worker more than \$15.88 per day unless the OFLC Certifying Officer approves a higher charge, as authorized under 20 CFR 655.173(b).

Reimbursement for Travel-Related Subsistence

H-2B and H-2A employers must pay reasonable travel and subsistence costs, including the costs of meals and lodging, incurred by workers during travel to the place of employment from the place from which the worker has come to work for the employer and from the place of employment to the place from which the worker departed to work for the employer, as well as any such costs incurred by the worker incident to obtaining a visa authorizing entry to the United States for the purpose of H-2A or H-2B employment. See 20 CFR 655.122(h)(1) and (2) and 655.20(j)(1)(i) and (ii).

Specifically, an H-2A employer is responsible for providing, paying in advance, or reimbursing a worker for the reasonable costs incurred by the worker for transportation and daily travel-related subsistence from the place from which the worker has come to work for the employer, if the worker completes 50 percent of the work contract period. 20 CFR 655.122(h)(1). In general, the employer must provide (or pay at the time of departure) the worker's transportation and daily travel-related subsistence from the place of employment to the place from which the worker departed to work for the

employer upon the worker completing the contract or being terminated without cause. 20 CFR 655.122(h)(2).

Similarly, an H-2B employer is responsible for providing, paying in advance, or reimbursing a worker for transportation and daily travel-related subsistence from the place from which the worker has come to work for the employer, if the worker completes 50 percent of the job order period. 20 CFR 655.20(j)(1)(i). Upon the worker completing the job order period or being dismissed early (for any reason), the employer is generally responsible for providing (or paying at the time of departure) the worker's cost of return transportation and daily travel-related subsistence from the place of employment to the place from which the worker departed to work for the employer. 20 CFR 655.20(j)(1)(ii).

The amount of the daily subsistence must be at least the amount permitted in 20 CFR 655.173(a) (or the higher amount approved under 20 CFR 655.173(b), if any). The maximum daily amount an employer is required to reimburse workers for travel-related lodging and subsistence, as evidenced with receipts, is equal to the standard Continental United States (CONUS) per diem rate, as established by the General Services Administration (GSA) at 41 CFR part 301, formerly published in Appendix A and now found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. See Maximum Per Diem Reimbursement Rates for the Continental United States, 88 FR 56629 (Aug. 18, 2023). The standard CONUS meals and incidental expenses rate is \$59.00 per day for 2024. See 88 FR 56629, 56630. Workers who qualify for travel reimbursement are entitled to reimbursement for meals up to the standard CONUS meals and incidental expenses rate when they provide receipts. In determining the appropriate amount of reimbursement for meals for less than a full day, the employer may limit the meal expense reimbursement, with receipts, to 75 percent of the maximum reimbursement for meals, or \$44.25, based on the GSA per diem schedule. See <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. If a worker does not provide receipts, the employer is not obligated to reimburse above the minimum stated at 20 CFR 655.173, as specified above.

If transportation and lodging are not provided by the employer, the amount an employer must pay for transportation and, where required, lodging must be no less than (and is not required to be more than) the most economical and reasonable costs. The employer is responsible for those costs necessary for

the worker to travel to the worksite if the worker completes 50 percent of the work contract period but is not responsible for unauthorized detours. The employer also is responsible for the costs of return transportation and subsistence, including lodging costs where necessary, as described above. These requirements apply equally to instances where the worker is traveling within the U.S. or internationally to the employer's worksite. See 20 CFR 655.122(h)(1) and (2) and 655.20(j)(1)(i) and (ii).

For further information on when the employer is responsible for lodging costs, please see the DOL's Meal Charges and Travel Subsistence, on OFLC's website at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/wages/meals-travel-subsistence>, and H-2B Frequently Asked Questions on Job Offers and Employer Obligations, on OFLC's website at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/faqs/print>.

Authority: 20 CFR 655.173.

Brent Parton,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Labor.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission for OMB Review; General Inquiries to State Agency Contacts

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor (DOL) is submitting this Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)-sponsored information collection request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). Public comments on the ICR are invited.

DATES: The OMB will consider all written comments that the agency receives on or before March 14, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function.

Comments are invited on: (1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of

² See Consumer Price Index—December 2023, published January 11, 2024, available at https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/cpi_01112024.pdf.

³ In 2023, the maximum allowable charge under 20 CFR 655.122(g) and 655.173 was \$15.46 per day. See 88 FR 8478 (Feb. 9, 2023).