

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980

(P.L. 96-511)

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (PRA) was signed by President Carter on December 11, 1980, at which time it became Public Law No. 96-511. That law had major effect on federal regulatory and information policy.

The following summary of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 comes from the Thomas Internet website of the Library of Congress (<http://thomas.loc.gov>).

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- Establishes, within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA).
- Requires the Director of OMB to appoint an Administrator as head of OIRA.
- Makes the Director responsible for any functions delegated to such Administrator.
- Requires the Director to develop and implement Federal information policies and standards including policies concerning:
 - (1) the reduction of the Government paperwork burden on the public;
 - (2) records management activities; and
 - (3) the privacy of records pertaining to individuals; and
 - (4) the review of information collection requests.
- Sets forth functions of the Director with respect to Federal information collection and management in the following categories:
 - (1) general information policy functions;
 - (2) information collection requests clearance and other paperwork control functions;
 - (3) statistical policy and coordination functions;
 - (4) records management functions;
 - (5) privacy of information functions; and
 - (6) automatic data processing and telecommunications functions not including intelligence, cryptologic, or military activities.
- Requires each Federal agency to submit to the Director a copy of any proposed rule which specifically requires an information collection requests.
- Allows the Director 60 days to file public comments on such request.
- Directs each agency to publish with the final rule its responses to such comments.
- Requires the Director to make publicly available a justification of any decision to disapprove such a request.
- Precludes the Director from disapproving any such request if the Director received notice of the proposed rule and failed to file comments within the specified period.
- Requires the Director, upon enactment of this Act, to set a goal to reduce the Government paperwork burden by 15 percent by October 1, 1982, and by an additional 10 percent during the subsequent year.
- Requires the Director, within one year after enactment of this Act:

- (1) to establish requirements and assign responsibility for agency and Government-wide audits of all major information systems except systems used for criminal investigations or intelligence or cryptologic activities;
- (2) to establish the Federal Information Locator System;
- (3) to develop a schedule for eliminating any duplication of information collection requests by the Government;
- (4) to develop a proposal for collecting data profiles of agency information holdings which are not included in the Federal Information Locator System; and
- (5) to identify initiatives which may reduce by ten percent the Federal paperwork burden associated with Federal grant programs.

· Directs the Director, within two years after this Act is enacted:

- (1) to establish a system for integrating informative management practices with the information policies of this Act;
- (2) to identify initiatives to improve productivity in Federal operations using information processing technology;
- (3) to develop a program to enforce Federal information processing standards and to revitalize the standards development program;
- (4) to complete action on recommendations of the Commission on Federal Paperwork;
- (5) in consultation with the Administrator of General Services, to develop a five- year plan for meeting the automatic data processing and telecommunication needs of the Government; and
- (6) to submit to the President and Congress legislative proposals to remove inconsistencies in laws involving privacy, confidentiality and disclosure of information.

· Requires each agency:

- (1) to carry out information management activities in an efficient, economical manner;
- (2) to designate a senior official or officials to carry out agency responsibilities under this Act including the acquisition of automatic data processing equipment and services;
- (3) to inventory its major information systems and review, periodically, its management activities;
- (4) to ensure that its systems do not overlap each other or duplicate systems of other agencies;
- (5) to develop procedures for assessing the paperwork burden of its collection activities; and
- (6) to ensure that each information collection request submitted to nine or fewer persons contains a notice that it is not subject to the provisions of this Act.

· Requires an agency, before collecting any information, to:

- (1) eliminate reporting requirements which seek information which is available through another Government source;
- (2) minimize compliance burden on respondents;
- (3) plan the tabulation of the information in a manner which maximizes its usefulness to other agencies;
- (4) obtain the Director's approval of such collection; and
- (5) obtain a control number for each information collective request.

· Requires the Director to notify the public of a decision to approve or disapprove any collection request within 60 days of receiving it.

· Provides for a 30-day extension of such period.

· Declares that the Director's approval may be inferred if the Director fails to notify the agency of a decision within the required period.

· Authorizes an agency to conduct the collection of information which has been disapproved by the Director if a majority of agency members vote to override such disapproval.

- Prohibits the Director from approving a collection request for a period exceeding three years.
- Permits the Director to delegate partial or total authority to evaluate the information collection requests of an agency to the official designated by that agency to perform information management functions.
- Specifies conditions under which an agency head may request the Director to authorize the agency to collect information for a period of 90 days without complying with provisions of this Act.
- Allows the Director, when considering whether a proposed information collection request is necessary for agency operations, to provide an opportunity for the agency and other interested persons to submit or present comments.
- Authorizes the Director:
 - (1) to designate a single collection agency for two or more agencies; and
 - (2) to direct the disclosure of confidential information from one agency to another under specified conditions.
- Establishes, within OIRA, a Federal Information Locator System composed of a director of information resources, a data element dictionary, and an information referral service. States that the System shall serve as the authoritative register of all information requests.
- Requires the Director:
 - (1) to design an index for the System;

- (2) to require each agency to submit for inclusion in the System a data profile of each information request of that agency;
 - (3) to compare proposed information requests with existing requests through the System; and
 - (4) to ensure that no actual data, excluding descriptive data which is necessary to locate information or identify duplicative data, is included in the System.
- Declares that no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to provide information to an agency if the information collection request was made after December 31, 1981, and does not display a control number or a statement that such request is not subject to this Act.
- Requires the Director:
 - (1) to review the information management activities of each agency at least once every three years;
 - (2) to report the findings to the agency and specified committees of Congress;
 - (3) to keep Congress fully informed of major activities under this Act; and
 - (4) to submit to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House an annual report on such activities. Specifies the contents of such report.
- Sets forth exceptions to the authority and applicability of this Act. Declares that nothing in this Act affects the substantive authority of any Federal agency to enforce civil rights laws.
- Grants the Comptroller General access to all records of OIRA.
- Authorizes appropriations to carry out the provisions of this Act.
- Requires the Administrator of General Services:
 - (1) to include in an annual report to Congress and the Director estimates of the costs to the Government resulting from the failure of agencies to implement the Administrator's recommendations resulting from records management studies; and
 - (2) to assist the Administrator of OIRA in conducting studies and developing standards relating to records retention requirements of Federal agencies.
- Directs the President and the Director to delegate specified Federal information functions to the Administrator of OIRA.
- Amends the General Education Provisions Act to direct the Secretary of Education to coordinate the information collection activities of all Federal agencies if the respondents are primarily educational institutions or if the purpose of such an activity is to request information to formulate education policies.
- States that such information collection activities shall be subject to this Act.