

**Supporting Statement for the  
Application for Employment with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System  
(FR 28, FR 28c, FR 28i, FR 28s; OMB No. 7100-0181)**

**Summary**

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board), under authority delegated from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), proposes to extend for three years, with revision, the Application for Employment with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Applicant's Voluntary Self Identification Form, and the Research Assistant Candidate Survey of Interests and Computer Experience (respectively, FR 28, FR 28s, FR 28i; OMB No. 7100-0181). The application currently consists of the following forms:

- The Application for Employment form (FR 28), which collects information to determine the qualifications of applicants<sup>1</sup> for employment with the Board (such as education and training, employment record, and other information since the time the applicant left high school);
- The Voluntary Self Identification form (FR 28s), which is an optional form that collects information on the applicant's gender, race, and ethnicity; and
- The Research Assistant Candidate Survey of Interests and Computer Experience form (FR 28i) if the applicant is applying for a position as a Research Assistant (RA), which collects information on the RA applicant's level of interest in various economic topics and experience in different data analytics/programs.

The Board proposes to revise this information collection to add a supplemental form, the Pre-Hire Conflict of Interest Screening Form (FR 28c; OMB No. 7100-0379), which is currently collected from applicants selected for an interview at the Board under a separate OMB clearance. In addition, given that extensive information on potential conflicts is already collected on the FR 28c form, the Board proposes to revise the FR 28 application form to remove the three conflicts of interest questions contained on the FR 28 application form. Because such information would no longer be collected on the FR 28 application form, therefore, the FR 28c conflicts of interest form also would be amended to delete the instruction that applicants provide additional information on conflicts of interest "not previously described on your employment application (FR 28)." Lastly, the FR 28s voluntary self-identification form is being revised to update the legal authority cited on the face of the form and, with respect to the hardcopy PDF version of the FR 28s form, to remove the statement that it is not necessary for an applicant to fill in the questions on Race identification if they had selected "Hispanic or Latino" as their ethnicity. Regardless of the ethnicity voluntarily identified by an applicant, an applicant would also be asked to voluntarily identify their race, as this comports with the similar form approved by OMB (the Standard Form 181).

The current estimated total annual burden for the FR 28, FR 28c, FR 28i, and FR 28s is 5,971 hours and would increase to 7,212 hours. The proposed revisions would result in an increase of 1,150 hours. The FR 28 form is available on the Board's public website at

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<sup>1</sup> An "applicant" is any person who meets the published minimum qualifications for a specific position and has expressed interest in or been considered for that position.

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/careers-addinfo.htm>. The FR 28i survey is available on the Board's public website at <https://www.federalreserve.gov/apps/rasurvey/default.aspx>.

## **Background and Justification**

Among other things, the FR 28, and if applicable, the FR 28i may be used to examine, rate, or assess the applicant's qualifications, and to contact the applicant to arrange an interview. After Board staff evaluates these form(s), the applicant is either contacted for an interview or notified in writing that he or she does not qualify for the specific open position for which they have applied.

In 2001, the Board implemented the FR 28s form in order for an applicant to voluntarily identify their gender, race, and ethnicity. The Board also implemented the FR 28i survey, which is used to better match an RA candidate's interests with the different research areas at the Board and determine their data analysis and programming experience. Since 2001, the FR 28 form, the FR 28s form, and the FR 28i survey have undergone revisions to update, add or remove various data items.

Most recently, in 2016, the Board modified the FR 28 application form by creating an online submission website for the application, and adjusting the wording of questions on the FR 28 form to match what is in the online application website. In addition, in 2016, the Board adjusted the race and ethnicity self-identification questions on the FR 28s form to comply with OMB standards, and the FR 28i survey was also shortened. Other minor revisions to the data collected on the FR 28 form and the FR 28i survey were made in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

In June 2020, the Board implemented the FR 28c conflicts of interest form to ensure advanced knowledge of a prospective employee's potential conflicts of interest.<sup>3</sup> Conflicts of interest could include, but may not be limited to, financial interests or secondary employment. Although certain conflicts of interest information is requested on the FR 28 form, the FR 28c form requests additional information to make sure that conflicts of interest are fully vetted, and not discovered after an applicant is already employed at the Board. The FR 28c is also automatically generated through the Board's online application portal if an applicant is selected for an interview.

This information is not available from other sources.

## **Description of Information Collection**

The Board receives approximately 17,000 FR 28 applications per year, both solicited and unsolicited, from members of the public who would like to be considered for employment at the Board. The FR 28 application form comprises seven sections: (I) Background, (II) Job Preferences, (III) Education and Training, (IV) Certifications and Professional Licenses, (V) Employment Record, (VI) References, and (VII) General Questions, including clarifying comments if applicable. The Background section collects name, address, telephone, citizenship

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<sup>2</sup> See 82 Fed. Reg. 49370 (October 25, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> See 85 Fed. Reg. 38893 (June 29, 2020).

information, the position for which the applicant is applying, and willingness to travel. The Job Preferences section asks about the type of employment desired (e.g., permanent or temporary; full or part-time; and desired compensation). The Education and Training section collects detailed information on the applicant's educational history and skills set. The Certifications and Professional Licenses section collects information on when an applicant's current certification(s) and license(s) were issued and expired. The Employment Record section collects a chronological summary of work experience. The References section collects information on three references. The General section collects information such as criminal records, discharges or terminations from employment, retirement annuity status from the DC or Federal Governments or Military, relationships to or acquaintances with Board staff or with officers and directors of financial institutions, and the ownership interest that the applicant, their spouse or child holds in certain financial institutions. The FR 28 application form may be completed online through the Taleo submission website, or in hardcopy by PDF. If the applicant completes the online version of the application through Taleo, they will initially be asked to upload a resume to Taleo. In addition, the version of the application on the Taleo website only requires the applicant to complete the initial four sections that come before the "Employment Record" section on the PDF version of the FR 28 application. Thus, it is not until the applicant is asked to interview, that they will be instructed to complete the remaining sections of the application on the Taleo website prior to the interview. However, if the applicant fills out the PDF version of the FR 28 application form, they will fill out sections I through VII of the PDF version in its entirety but may not be asked to supply a resume.

The FR 28s is a voluntary form that comprises four sections seeking the following information: name and gender of the applicant, in which applicants are asked to check the box that corresponds to their gender or to check "I do not wish to disclose"; the position for which the applicant is applying; ethnicity self-identification, in which applicants are asked to choose between Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino, or "I do not wish to disclose"; and race self-identification in which applicants are asked to choose one or more among: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African-American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, or "I do not wish to disclose." The Board uses this information to comply with federal equal employment opportunity (EEO) recordkeeping and reporting requirements, other legal requirements, and as an input to its self-analysis of hiring practices. Information collected on the FR 28s has no bearing on the determination of an applicant's job-related qualifications and completion of the self-identification form is voluntary.

The FR 28i survey comprises three sections in which RA candidates are asked (i) to rate their level of interest in categories of economics and related research areas; (ii) provided the option to expand upon certain qualifying characteristics indicated as important to the Board; and (iii) rate their experience with various software packages and statistical programming languages. The FR 28i helps to streamline the RA recruitment process.

The FR 28c conflicts of interest form comprises four sections and collects information from external applicants after they have been selected for an interview at the Board regarding certain financial interests held by the applicant and by his/her spouse and minor child(ren); immediate family members who are involved in related businesses (e.g., whether a spouse, parent, child or sibling is an employee, officer, director or trustee of any bank); compensated

outside employment and uncompensated positions that the applicants participates in (aside from positions with religious, social, fraternal, or political entities); and a general question asking the applicant to disclose any other situations, arrangements, or investments the applicant believes could pose a conflict of interest based on the duties of the position for which you are applying. The purpose of the FR 28c form is to determine whether a conflict of interest exists that would impact the applicant's ability to fulfill the responsibilities associated with the position for which they have applied.

## **Proposed Revisions**

There are no proposed revisions to the questions asked or the information collected on the FR 28i survey. However, as part of this OMB authorization, the Board is proposing to add the FR 28c conflicts of interest form to this information collection, as it was previously collected pursuant to a separate OMB authorization, because the FR 28c form is associated with the application process. In addition, the Board proposes to revise the FR 28 application form to remove the three conflicts of interest questions on the FR 28 application form. Given that detailed information on potential conflicts would no longer be collected on the FR 28 application form, the Board proposes amending the FR 28c form to delete the instruction that applicants provide additional information on conflicts of interest "not previously described on your employment application (FR 28)." The Board is also proposing to revise the hardcopy PDF version of the FR 28s voluntary form so that, regardless of the ethnicity identified by the applicant, the applicant would also be asked to voluntarily identify their race, in order to comport with the standards set out by OMB, which aligns with the similar form approved by OMB (the Standard Form 181) and the electronic version of the FR 28s form in the Taleo application submission portal. In addition, the legal authorization cited on the face of the FR 28s form (both the hardcopy PDF version and the electronic version in the Taleo portal) would be updated to reflect that the collection of information is authorized pursuant to sections 10 and 11(l) of the Federal Reserve Act, 12 U.S.C. §§ 244 and 238(l).

## **Respondent Panel**

The respondent panel comprises individuals who are seeking employment with the Board.

## **Time Schedule for Information Collection**

The completed FR 28 application form (both the PDF version and the version on the Taleo website) is event-generated and must be completed and submitted to the Management Division by all applicants.<sup>4</sup> Staff in the economic research divisions and the Legal Division at the Board may distribute and collect the PDF version of the FR 28 application in their recruiting efforts. Only candidates for RA positions<sup>5</sup> submit the FR 28i survey along with the application.

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<sup>4</sup> Additional Information about Applying for a Career at the Board is available at: <http://www.federalreserve.gov/careers/addInfo.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Research Assistant positions are most often found in the following divisions at the Board: Consumer and Community Affairs; Financial Stability; International Finance; Monetary Affairs; Research and Statistics; Reserve Bank Operations; and Supervision and Regulation.

The FR 28s self-identification form is voluntary and, if the applicant wishes to complete this form, the form is generally provided to Management at the time the FR 28 application is submitted. Board staff who are responsible for recruiting new employees will provide and collect the FR 28c form from an applicant after the applicant has been selected for an interview, but before a formal offer of employment has been extended. Some divisions may provide the applicant with the FR 28c form after the interview has taken place.

### **Public Availability of Data**

In certain circumstances, the data related to the FR 28 may be disclosed in the aggregate for statistical purposes.

### **Legal Status**

The FR 28 form, the FR 28i survey, and the FR 28s form are authorized by Sections 10 and 11(l) of the Federal Reserve Act, which provide the Board broad authority over employment of staff. 12 U.S.C. §§ 244 and 248(l). The FR 28c form is also authorized by Section 10 of the Federal Reserve Act, 12 U.S.C. § 244, which provides that the Board's determination with respect to the "employment, compensation, leave, and expenses [of its members and employees] shall be governed solely by the provisions of this chapter and rules and regulations of the Board not inconsistent therewith." In addition, under regulations promulgated by the Office of Government Ethics ("OGE") pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 7301,<sup>6</sup> each executive agency's designated ethics officer is required to provide "advice and counseling to prospective ... employees regarding government ethics laws and regulations" and to "maintain records of agency ethics program activities." 5 CFR 2638.104(c)(2) and (4).

The obligation to respond to the FR 28 form, the FR 28c form, and to the questions in Sections I and III of the FR 28i survey is required to obtain the benefit of Board employment. The obligation to respond to the questions in Section II of the FR 28i survey and the obligation to submit gender, race and ethnicity on the FR 28s form is voluntary.

Certain information provided on the FR 28 and the FR 28i forms may be kept confidential under exemption (b)(6) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which protects information in "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). For example, the release of information such as an applicant's home address, personal phone number, and personal information regarding any references provided would likely constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy and would be kept confidential. However, the release of information such as the educational and professional qualifications of successful

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<sup>6</sup> See Executive Order 12674, 54 Fed. Reg. 14925, 15159, (April 12, 1989), as modified by Executive Order 12731, 55 Fed. Reg. 42345, 42547 (Oct. 19, 1990) (authorizing the OGE, in consultation with the Department of Justice and the Office of Personnel Management to issue "regulations that establish a single, comprehensive, and clear set of executive-branch standards of conduct.'). If hired by the Board, under 5 U.S.C. § 7301, an employee of the Board is therefore subject to the OGE's executive branch-wide financial disclosure regulations at 5 CFR part 2634, as well as the OGE's executive branch-wide standards of ethical conduct at 5 CFR part 2635, and the Board's supplemental ethics regulations that were issued with the concurrence of the OGE at 5 CFR part 6801. See also 12 CFR 264.101.

applicants would not likely constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, and would not be treated as confidential if requested under the FOIA.

Generally, information provided on the FR 28c form may be kept confidential from the public under exemption 6 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which protects information in “personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). In addition, financial information collected on the form (such as confidential details about the amount of shares an applicant, their spouse, or minor child owns in a bank) may be withheld under exemption 4 of the FOIA, which protects “financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged and confidential.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4).

The information collected on the FR 28, the FR 28c, the FR 28i, and the FR 28s forms will be maintained in a “system of records” within the meaning of the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a(a)(5), and a Privacy Act statement will accompany each of the four forms that respectively comprise this information collection. Disclosures of the information collected on these forms, including confidential information withheld from the public under a FOIA exemption, may be made by the Board to third parties in accordance with the Privacy Act’s “routine use” disclosure provision, 5 U.S.C. §§ 552a(a)(7) and (b)(3)), which permits the disclosure of a record for a purpose that is compatible with the purpose for which the record was collected. The routine uses that would permit the disclosure of the information collected on each form are listed in the specific system of records notices (“SORNs”) that apply to each form. For the FR 28, the FR 28c, the FR 28i, and the FR 28s, the information collected will be stored in the SORN entitled “BGFRS-1, FRB-Recruiting and Placement Records,” located here: <https://www.federalreserve.gov/files/BGFRS-1-recruiting-and-placement-records.pdf>. The information collected on the FR 28c will also be stored in the SORN titled “BGFRS-41, FRB-Ethics Program Records,” located here: <https://www.federalreserve.gov/files/BGFRS-41-FRB-Ethics-Program-Records.pdf>. If the applicant is hired, the information provided on the FR 28s may also be stored in the SORN titled “BGFRS-24: FRB—EEO General Files,” located here: <https://www.federalreserve.gov/files/BGFRS-24-eeo-general-files.pdf>.

Specifically, the BGFRS-1 and the BGFRS-41 SORNs provide that the information may be disclosed outside the Board in accordance with general routine uses A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J (see “General Routine Uses of Board Systems of Records available at <https://www.federalreserve.gov/files/SORN-page-general-routine-uses-of-board-systems-of-records.pdf>). The BGFRS-24 SORN provides that the information may be disclosed outside the Board in accordance with general routine uses A, B, C, D, E, F, G, I, and J (see id.). The BGFRS-1 SORN also provides that all or part of the record may be disclosed outside of the Board in order to disclose information to any source from which additional information is requested (to the extent necessary to identify the individual, inform the source of the purpose(s) of the request, and identify the type of information requested), when necessary to obtain information relevant to a Board decision to hire or retain an employee, issue a security clearance, conduct a security or suitability investigation of an individual, classify jobs, let a contract, or issue a license, grant or other benefit.

## **Consultation Outside the Agency**

There has been no consultation outside of the agency.

### **Public Comments**

On November 24, 2020, the Board published an initial notice in the Federal Register (85 FR 75016) requesting public comment for 60 days on the extension, with revision, of the FR 28. The comment period for this notice will expire on January 25, 2021.

### **Estimate of Respondent Burden**

As shown in the table below, the estimated total annual burden for the FR 28, FR 28c, FR 28s and FR 28i is 5,971 hours and would increase to 7,212 with the proposed revision. The estimated number of respondents is based on the average number of applications (FR 28, FR 28s, and FR 28i) submitted over the last two years. The estimated number of respondents for the FR 28c form is based on the projected number of applicants who are expected to be selected for an interview and required to provide the FR 28c form either before, or shortly after, their interview.

Filling out the first part of the FR 28 application on the Taleo website and uploading a resume is estimated to take an average of 15 minutes (0.25 hours) to complete if the applicant is not invited to interview, it is estimated that it will take an applicant one hour to complete the entire application (initial application and subsequent pre-interview section) on the Taleo website, and it is estimated that it will take an applicant 45 minutes (0.75 hours) if the applicant completes the PDF version of the FR 28 application. The FR 28c is expected to take 30 minutes to complete. The FR 28s is completed on a voluntary basis and is estimated to take an average of one minute (0.0166 hours) to complete. The FR 28i is completed only by RA candidates and is estimated to take about 15 minutes (0.25 hours) to complete. These reporting requirements represent less than 1 percent of the Board's total paperwork burden.

	<i>Estimated number of respondents<sup>7</sup></i>	<i>Annual frequency</i>	<i>Estimated average time per response</i>	<i>Estimated annual burden hours</i>
<i>Current</i>				
FR 28 (Initial application only on Taleo)	15,000	1	0.25	3,750
FR 28 (Initial application plus pre-interview section on Taleo)	2,000	1	1	2,000
FR 28 (PDF)	150	1	0.75	112.5
FR 28s	2,000	1	0.0166	33
FR 28i	300	1	0.25	75
			<i>Total</i>	5,971
<i>Proposed</i>				
FR 28 (Initial application only on Taleo)	15,000	1	0.25	3,750
FR 28 (Initial application plus pre-interview section on Taleo)	2,000	1	1	2,000
FR 28 (PDF)	150	1	0.75	112.5
FR 28s	7,500	1	0.0166	124.5
FR 28i	300	1	0.25	75
FR 28c	2,300	1	0.5	1,150
			<i>Total</i>	7,212
			<i>Change</i>	1,241

<sup>7</sup> Of these respondents, none are small entities as defined by the Small Business Administration (i.e., entities with less than \$600 million in total assets) [www.sba.gov/content/table-small-business-size-standards](http://www.sba.gov/content/table-small-business-size-standards).

The estimated total annual cost to the public of this information collection is \$93,808.<sup>8</sup>

### **Sensitive Questions**

This information collection gathers sensitive information on an applicant's race, gender, and ethnicity. The Board uses this information to comply with federal EEO recordkeeping and reporting requirements, other legal requirements, as an input to its self-analysis of hiring practices, and preparing statistical reports. Sections 10(4) and 11 of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 244, 248(q) and 248(l)) give the Board the authority to recruit, examine, and evaluate a new hire's qualifications for employment with the Board, as well as authority for the security of its buildings.

### **Estimate of Cost to the Federal Reserve System**

The estimated cost to the Federal Reserve System for collecting and processing this information collection is \$175,000.

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<sup>8</sup> The average consumer cost of \$26 is estimated using data from the BLS Economic News Release (USDLE-12-0549)