

- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Interior;
- General Services Administration;
- Two other participants to be selected by the Director of OMB (the Department of Commerce and additional representation from the Small Business Administration were chosen).

The Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force members are listed by name at Appendix 2. A list of other participating staff is included at Appendix 3.

What Are the Goals, Objectives, and Operating Principles?

Goal: Identify effective, realistic ways to reduce the burden on small businesses by making it easier to find, understand, and comply with government information collection requirements.

Objective 1: Recommend actions that can make it easier for small businesses to find out what information collections apply to them from individual Federal agencies, across all Federal agencies, and from State and Local governments, where practicable.

Objective 2: Recommend actions that can reduce the difficulty, frequency, redundancy and expense of compliance for small businesses.

Objective 3: Recommend actions that will help small businesses understand why information is being collected and how it benefits them.

Operating Principles

- Recommendations should be consistent with principles of the President's Management Agenda:
 - Citizen-centered, not bureaucracy-centered.
 - Benefits to small businesses must take precedence over benefits to government.
 - Results-oriented. Success should be measured by benefits that are demonstrable.
 - Market-based, actively promoting innovation.
 - Recommendations must be technically feasible.
 - Recommendations should be supportable within existing government agencies and management structures.
 - Recommendations must be achievable given existing Agency resources, or sufficient case must be made to support additional costs.
 - Recommendations should address both short term and long term remedies.
 - Recommendations should leverage and build on efforts underway that address the Task Force's goals.
 - Recommendations should be consistent with lessons learned and based on best practices from past efforts.

In developing its recommendations, the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force made the assumption that Federal agencies are in compliance with existing legislative requirements that address paperwork burden, including: the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 and 1995, the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1995, and the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1996. The Task Force recommendations are intended to build upon, rather than duplicate, the efforts required by these statutes. In addition, the Task Force assumed that Federal agencies collect the minimum information necessary to fulfill statutory or programmatic responsibilities, consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act. The recommendations concentrate on ways to minimize the burden associated with existing requirements, rather than eliminate requirements.

What Methods Did the Task Force Use To Derive Its Recommendations?

The Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force began its work with a meeting of the full membership to develop a common understanding of the law, project goals, scope, roles and responsibilities, resource requirements, strategy, timeline and deliverables. A professionally facilitated brainstorming session followed, during which members began looking at the three major tasks for the 2003 report.

After the initial meeting the Task Force divided into three subcommittees to examine the three questions in greater detail. Additional staff experts from the agencies joined the effort. The subcommittees used methods such as:

- Assigning specific questions to experts for research;
- In-person and virtual brainstorming with a wider group of experts;
- Inventorying and investigating activities and projects already underway;
- Studying best practices and lessons learned from prior/current activities; and
- Studying the results of public outreach conducted by the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy and other reference material intended to provide input from the business community and other stakeholders.

The subcommittee members and staff experts worked together to develop findings and recommendations. The initial drafts were reviewed, modified, and finally adopted by the subcommittees, then presented to the full Task Force for consideration. Again the material was reviewed, modified

and adopted for publication in the **Federal Register**.

At the request of the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force, SBA's Office of Advocacy held a public meeting on March 4, 2003, to solicit the views of interested persons regarding SBPRA. The Chief Counsel for Advocacy convened the meeting both in his Advocacy role, and as a Task Force member. Following the meeting, written input was accepted, including the results of two surveys conducted about SBPRA by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Business. The Office of Advocacy published the written proceedings of its outreach activities which is included at Appendix 4.

The Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force is now seeking input from all interested parties concerning the findings and recommendations contained in this draft report. All comments will be considered and may result in modifications to the final report. A summary of the public comments with responses of the Task Force will be attached to the final report.

Findings and Recommendations

Task #1: Consolidated Information Collections (See, 44 U.S.C. 3520(c)(1))
Problem Statement

As noted earlier in this report, reporting and recordkeeping requirements place a heavy and expensive burden on businesses, particularly small businesses. Compliance with these requirements is made more difficult by the number and complexity of regulations which impose direct burdens of compliance. Businesses are often subject to regulations enforced by multiple Federal agencies. The need to report information to several different government entities also increases compliance costs, particularly when reporting or recordkeeping requirements are not coordinated across Agencies. Subcommittee 1 has considered ways to reduce the paperwork burden on small businesses by identifying and consolidating similar collections of information across Federal agencies. This section reports our findings and recommendations for accomplishing these goals.

Assumptions

In developing our recommendations, the subcommittee made the following assumptions:

- There are several barriers to burden reduction that must be recognized.