



# HOW TO WRITE A PUBLIC COMMENT ON FEDERAL DATA

March 20, 2026



*DATA INDEX . US*

# Take Action: Opportunities to Submit Public Comments

<u>Open for Comment</u> Comment Period Closed					
Search		Search		All Agencies	All Issues
Showing 20 of 76 results					
Due Date	Collection	Agency	Summary	Main Issues	
2026-03-20	<a href="#">Patent and PTAB Pro Bono Programs</a>	DOC/USPTO	The USPTO works with and supports various non-profit organizations to operate a series of autonomous regional hubs that endeavor to match under-resourced inventors with volunteer patent practitioners across the United States. This Survey collects information regarding the activity of the regional hubs. Although it's unclear what changes PTO is making to the survey at this time, in 2025 PTO revised the survey to remove all demographic questions, which makes it more difficult to know if the program is serving under-resourced inventors.	Economic Justice	
2026-03-20	<a href="#">FCC and Indiana Data Sharing and Matching Agreement</a>	FCC	This new agreement will permit eligibility verification for the Lifeline program and ACP by checking an applicant's/subscriber's participation in SNAP and Medicaid in Indiana Family and Social Services Administration Division of Family Resources. Under FCC rules, consumers receiving these benefits qualify for Lifeline discounts and also for ACP benefits.	Public Benefits	
2026-03-20	<a href="#">National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)</a>	DOJ/FBI	Through this program, the FBI requests incident data from federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies in order for the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program to serve as the national clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of incident data. It does not appear that any changes are being made to this program.	Criminal Justice	

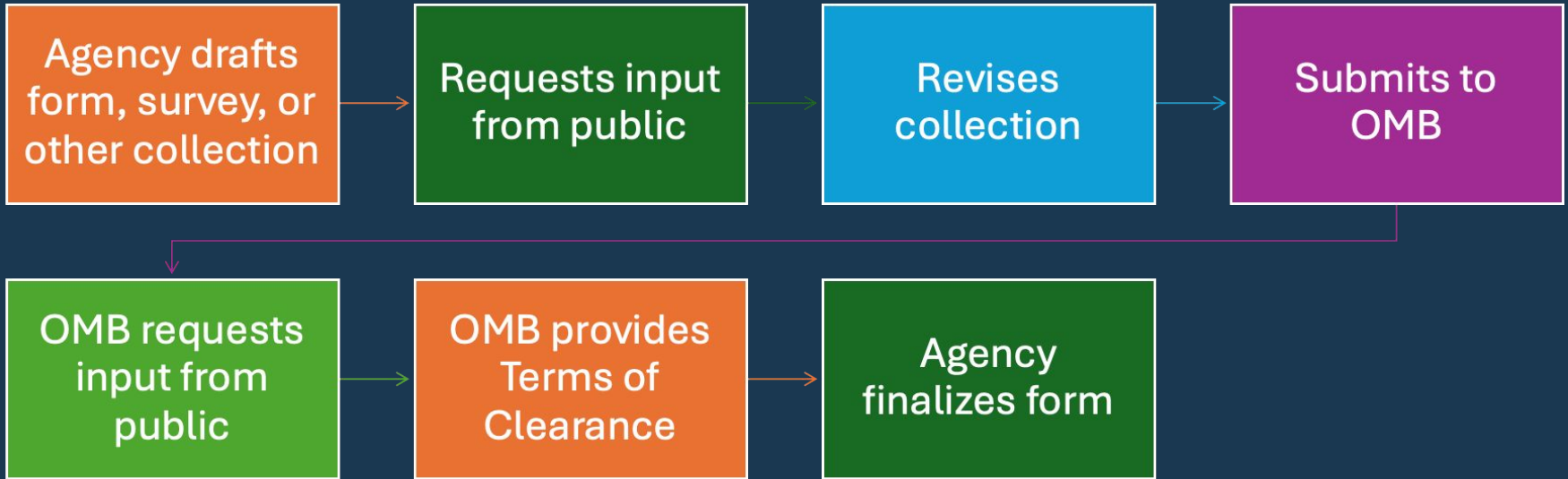
# Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

Agencies must prove data collection is necessary, useful, and not overly burdensome

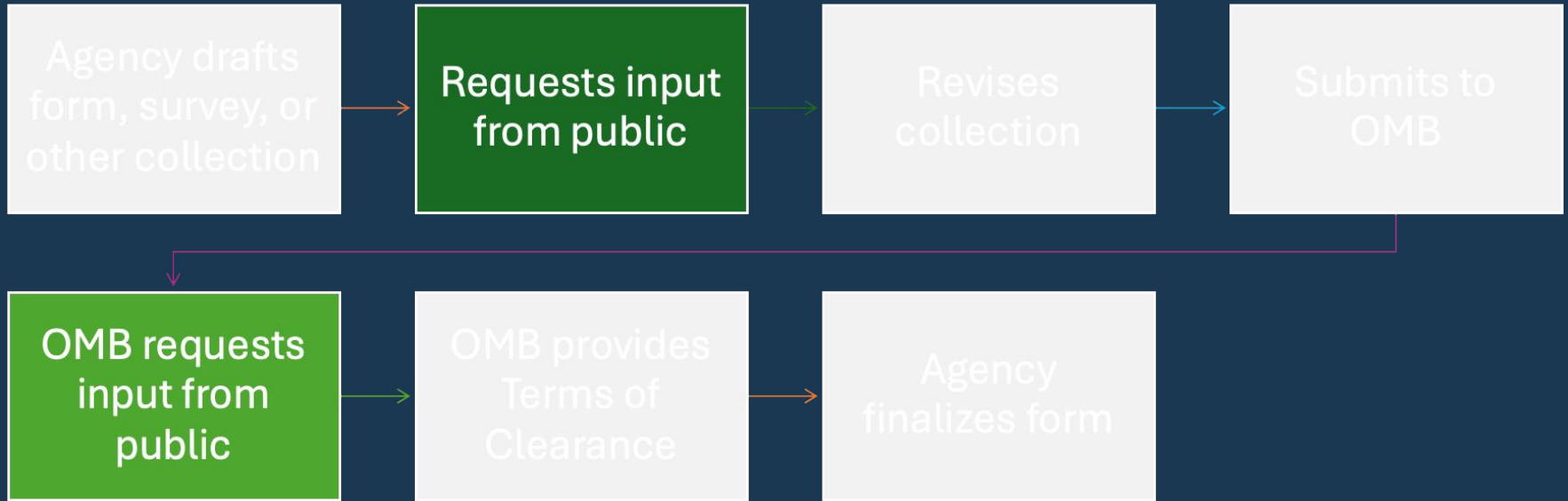
AND gives the public a chance to comment before collections are approved



# PRA Process



# PRA Process



# Two comment opportunities, One ultimate goal

- (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is **necessary**...
- (2) The accuracy of the agency's estimate of the **burden**...
- (3) Ways to enhance the **quality, utility, and clarity** of the information to be collected...
- (4) Ways to **minimize the burden** of the collection of information on those who are to respond

## Strategy Tip #1: Know your purpose

- Are you trying to show support for continued collection?
- Are you trying to get the agency to change how they collect data?
- Are you trying to argue that the collection causes more burden - or difficulty - than it needs to?

Question: What other purpose might be driving your comment?

## Strategy Tip #2: Ground your comment in PRA language

- Support for continued collection → Collection is “necessary”
- Change how data are collected → Enhance “quality, utility, and clarity”
- Collection is too complicated/difficult → Minimize “burden on respondents”

## Strategy Tip #3: Be concrete + propose a workable fix

Instead of “This collection is burdensome,” say “This will require X community to take Y action, which will reduce response rates.”

Point out the problem AND provide a practical solution. After explaining burden, for example, suggest alternatives that would reduce burden.

EXAMPLE: “Given evidence of lack of identification documents among the target population, requiring extensive proof of identification to access shelter services will require an estimated 60 hours per person to acquire relevant documentation (e.g., birth certificate, license). Relying on self-attestation for access will eliminate this burden and is unlikely to cause high rates of fraud or misuse of government assets.”

## Strategy Tip #4: Clarity over perfection

- Avoid technical jargon - unless you speak the same “language” as agency staff
- Readable > dense
- Goal is to influence, not to impress!
- Use examples strategically: Real world experience = credibility

## Strategy Tip #5: Remember the long game!

- Shape the future!
- Create a record
- Signal priorities for public/movement

# Resources

Check out [dataindex.us](https://dataindex.us) and our Take Action page: [dataindex.us/datawatch](https://dataindex.us/datawatch)

Sign up for our newsletter to receive weekly Take Action opportunities:  
[dataindex.us/newsletter/subscribe](https://dataindex.us/newsletter/subscribe)

Join us for Take Action office hours on the first Friday of every month from 12–1 PM.  
Additional details will be shared next week.