# DOCUMENTATION FOR THE GENERIC CLEARANCE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** E-Gov Post-Entitlement Survey

**SSA SUB-NUMBER:** C-01

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY** *(give purpose of activity, provide specific information; i.e., date(s) of survey, number of focus groups, locations, etc.):*

**BACKGROUND**

Members of the public who have just begun receiving Social Security benefits are called post-entitlement (PE) beneficiaries. If such beneficiaries need to report changes that occur in the PE phase, they are able to do so using any of the following methods: 1) the traditional methods of calling SSA or visiting an SSA field office; 2) the interactive voice response (IVR) services on SSA's national 800-number; or 3) SSA's website on the Internet.

SSA wants to 1) assess customer satisfaction with SSA's PE services and 2) determine satisfaction levels with Internet services to gain insight into how the Agency might persuade more beneficiaries to use SSA's electronic services. To accomplish these goals, SSA plans to conduct the E-Gov Post-Entitlement Survey, which will survey both post-entitlement beneficiaries and their representatives.

**SURVEY**

**Description of Survey**

In October 2006, selected beneficiaries and representative payees will be mailed a pre-survey letter notifying them they have been selected and encouraging their participation. There are four different versions of the survey itself, which will be conducted several days later by phone. The questionnaires share a number of common question modules with minor variations in wording and order of presentation. The PE segment of the survey will include:

- Beneficiaries who recently reported a change of address (COA) or direct deposit (DD) event via SSA's Internet website;
- Beneficiaries who used a telephone IVR to report a PE change; and
- Beneficiaries who reported a COA or DD event via a traditional method.

A second segment of the survey will consist of a sample of representative payees. Because representative payees are currently limited to traditional methods of reporting PE changes, SSA wants to separately identify their needs and expectations for service.

Questions for the beneficiary participants include the following categories:

- Whether the beneficiary reported their changed information themselves or with someone's help;
- How they contacted SSA;
- How easy or hard it was to speak with a phone representative, see a field office representative, or use the Internet (depending on the method they chose);

- What they did if their initial attempt at contact didn't work;
- What, if anything, was difficult about the encounter;
- The beneficiary's general feelings about transacting business with SSA via phone, in person or by Internet;
- What modality they would be likely to use for different types of business (ex: reporting direct deposit information, reporting non-receipt of monthly benefits, reporting death of someone receiving Social Security benefits;
- Their general level of experience with the Internet;
- Previous experience, if any, with SSA's website;
- How beneficiaries would feel about SSA matching their personal information against records from other agencies and/or private companies like banks.

Questions for the representative payees are very similar to those for beneficiaries, except they ask the representative payee to answer them from the viewpoint of how they would do things for the beneficiaries they represent and how they feel about possible future Internet services for them.

## Statistical Information

### Sample Selection

For the PE segment of the survey, a total sample of 2,450 cases will be randomly identified from all types of COA and DD transactions processed during October 2006. Most beneficiaries choose to report a COA or DD via the traditional method of calling or visiting (about 13 million per year) rather than using the Internet (300,000) or a telephone IVR (600,000). To capture the experiences of all beneficiaries, the PE segment of the survey will consist of three main strata:

- SSA beneficiaries who successfully reported their PE change using SSA's Internet website – 550 sample cases,
- SSA beneficiaries who successfully reported their PE change using SSA's telephone IVR – 550 sample cases; and
- SSA beneficiaries who successfully reported their PE change using a traditional method – 1,350 sample cases.

Among the more than 13 million beneficiaries who report a change by calling or visiting SSA, a small proportion have unsuccessfully attempted to use either the Internet (125,000) or the telephone IVR (400,000) before speaking to an SSA representative. The 1,350-participant sample for the traditional method stratum will be further stratified in order to include a subset of these beneficiaries. The same questionnaire will be used for all three sub-groups:

- Unsuccessful Internet users – 450 sample cases,
- Unsuccessful IVR users – 450 sample cases, and
- People who used only a traditional reporting method - 450 sample cases.

Just over 5 million SSA beneficiaries in the Title II and Title XVI programs who have been deemed "incapable" adults and children have representative payees who receive benefits on their behalf. The representative payee segment of the survey will include an equal number of SSA representative payees from both the Title II and Title XVI programs – 625 sample cases each. A total sample of 1,250 cases will be randomly identified from representative payees on SSA's records in October 2006.

**Methodology**

All sampled individuals will receive a written pre-notice advising them that they have been selected for the survey and encouraging them to participate. Two versions of the pre-notice letter will be used so that the language is appropriate for both the PE and Payee segments. Both the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Privacy Act explanations will be included in the pre-notice letter. Following the release of the pre-notice, a random sample of SSA beneficiaries and representative payees will be contacted by telephone by a contractor engaged by SSA.
The survey form will be translated into computer-assisted interviewing (CATI) software so that interviewing and data input of the individual's responses occur simultaneously. The CATI software also ensures that only questions pertinent to the individual's circumstances are asked, allowing for complicated question paths while still minimizing response burden.

**Response Rate**

We cannot directly predict response rates for this survey, since we have not conducted telephone surveys with PE beneficiaries in the past. However, in 1999 and 2001 we did conduct surveys with this population via a mailed questionnaire. In those studies, we achieved response rates of 68 percent to 74 percent. We anticipate that at a minimum, we will be able to duplicate these results with the present study.

In addition, SSA has extensive experience conducting telephone surveys with other beneficiary populations which we expect will help us boost the response rates even further. In recent phone studies where we used the same methodology we plan to use with this survey, we have achevied response rates ranging from 82-86%. Based on this information, we anticipate an 80% response rate.

We will attempt to maximize response rates by doing the following:

- Sending a pre-notice letter of selection for the survey;
- Conducting the survey by telephone versus mail, which will take less time;
- Using an experienced contractor who will make at least 15 contacts at different times of the day to reach the sampled individuals;
- Using SSA records to assist the contractor in locating individuals who have moved or changed their telephone numbers;
- Selecting participants who reported a COA or DD shortly after the date that their PE change is processed in order to improve their recall of the experience;
- Making an 800 number available to all individuals to call with questions about the survey.

**Sampling Variability**

The key variable in these surveys will be the percent of PE beneficiaries who are satisfied with their interaction with SSA (i.e., found the business very easy or somewhat easy to transact). In prior surveys of PE beneficiaries, levels of satisfaction with service ranged from 85 percent to 94 percent. We have no reason to believe that respondents in the current survey will be any less satisfied.

For the key variable, assuming an overall response rate of 80 percent for all strata (2,960 respondents), the sampling variability at the 95 percent confidence level will range from +/- 1.4 percent for an 85 percent satisfaction rate to +/-.8 percent for a 94 percent satisfaction rate. This is an acceptable range of variability for the intended purpose of the survey. Sample sizes are large enough to permit analysis of variables that apply only to subgroups of respondents.

All sampling and data analysis will be performed by the Office of Quality Performance (OQP). Statistical support is provided by Rich Lehigh, Director, Division of Statistics, Office of Statistics and Special Area Studies, OQP. He may be reached at (410) 965-2788.

**IF FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A PAYMENT, INDICATE AMOUNT** *(No more than $25 can be authorized under OMB rules):*
N/A

**USE OF SURVEY RESULTS:**

The survey will measure satisfaction with the method beneficiaries used to report their PE changes. In addition, the survey will gather information on beneficiary preferences for reporting PE changes and events, both those beneficiaries who act on their own behalf and those who need a representative payee. As our beneficiary rolls increase with more technologically savvy recipients, SSA hopes, in particular, to identify the types of PE business beneficiaries prefer to complete using electronic services and to gain insights that will be useful for marketing those services. In addition, survey result will help us understand beneficiaries' experiences as they use electronic services to identify opportunities for improvement.

**BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION** *(Number of responses (X) estimated response time (/60) = annual burden hours):*

| | **Number of Respondents** | **Participation Time** | **Burden** |
|---|---|---|---|
| PE Beneficiaries | 2,450 | 15 minutes | 613 hours |
| Representative Payees | 1,250 | 15 minutes | 313 hours |
| **Totals** | **3,700** | | **926 hours** |

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