



**OMB PACKAGE
DATA COLLECTION/NEEDS
ASSESSMENT FOR THE REL-SE**

Supporting Statement Part B

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Submitted to:

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Appendix

Needs Assessment Protocol

Supporting Statement for Request for OMB Approval of Data Collection/Needs Assessment for the REL-SE

Part B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or any other respondent selection methods to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, household, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

Our goal in this information collection process is not to accurately report on the information needs of the entire population of educational decision-makers in the Southeast. Rather, we are proposing to use convenience samples based on key client groups' availability to provide us with an understanding of the range of issues and challenges educators face each year, in particular, as regards the issues which could be better informed by research and evaluation. The table below summarizes the potential respondents by type of event at which the needs assessment protocol (Appendix) will be used. The first row in the table involves random sampling of attendees at 12 state-sponsored conferences per year (2 conferences per state). That is, the sampling frame will be the participants registered at each conference. Participants may include state, district and school-based educators from all regions of a state. Approximately 500 to 3000 participants attend such state conferences. For each of the 12 conferences, 30 potential respondents will be invited to participate in the two hour market research group session through a letter, and a follow-up phone call or email. The other three types of event settings listed will be REL-SE hosted events (for other purposes) and thus, the universe of attendees will be used for the market research session. For the REL-SE events, the market research session will be embedded in the overall event agenda where appropriate.

**Table 1
Annual Sampling Selection Methods**

Universe of all Available Cases	Number Available	Number to be Selected	Selection Method	Expected Response Rate
Attendees at 12 conferences (two conferences per state)	500 to 3000 participants per conference	30 participants	Random selection from participant list	75%
Attendees at six CEEBE Meetings (one per each of six states)	30 per meeting	All attendees	Universe of all attendees at the meeting	100%
REL-SE Board Meetings/Open Hearings	25 per meeting	All attendees	Universe of all attendees at the meeting	100%
One topical meeting (hosted by REL-SE)	30 per meeting	All attendees	Universe of all attendees at the	100%

Universe of all Available Cases	Number Available	Number to be Selected	Selection Method	Expected Response Rate
for the region)			meeting	

- 2. Describe procedures for collection of information, including: statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; estimation procedures; degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.***

As mentioned above, the market research sessions (estimated at 20 annually) are to be conducted with convenience samples of educators. Our intent is to ensure that we understand emerging information needs in each state; thus, market research sessions will be held with an invited random sample of attendees at two large state conferences in each of our six states. In addition, district participants in the REL-SE sponsored Consortium of Educators for Evidence-Based Education, which meets once per year in each state, will serve as the setting for our third market research session in each state. Finally, two REL-SE regional events (a Board Meeting and a topical meeting) will serve as the final two settings for market research sessions. Through this procedure, we will be able to describe emerging information needs in each state and compare the responses of the groups within each state and across states. Understanding each state’s context and needs is important in planning our products and services and thus, this approach of using convenience samples of educators within each state should serve our purposes. We do not need a high degree of accuracy such that probability sampling of the population is needed. Because the market research data are to be used for internal planning purposes, not for external reporting or publishing, and because our purpose is in uncovering the range of information needs not pinpointing perceptions exactly, convenience samples, using available groups, is the best fit for our needs.

- 3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.***

The average state meeting has approximately 500 to 3000 participants (teachers, principals, and central office staff), from which we will sample. REL-SE staff will randomly select and invite 30 participants from the attendees at each state-sponsored conference, in order to ensure 20-25 participants at the market research sessions. Additional randomly selected participants will be invited if less than 20 participants agree to attend the particular market research session. For other REL-SE sponsored events (CEEBE, Board Meeting, topical event), non-response will not be an issue as the group session will be embedded in the agenda of the broader meeting.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of data.***

Various aspects of the market research protocol have been developed and used as components of REL-SE events. For example, questions about client information needs have been used informally over the years by the REL-SE or its parent organization SERVE at such meetings as the SERVE Policy Network meeting, and at REL Board meetings. Thus, the first market research session in the summer of 2007 will constitute a pilot of the entire protocol; however, only very minor changes to the protocol are expected as part of the ongoing process of refinement across the 20 market research sessions.

The protocol has been reviewed by the following REL-SE staff, as shown below, Jane Curtis of Curtis Research Associates, and members of the REL-SE Board.

Dr. Wendy McColskey, Director of Assessment and Accountability
Dr. Pam Finney, Research Management Leader
Dr. Helen DeCasper, Director of Education Policy
Dr. Ludwig van Broekhuizen, Executive Director

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Dr. Helen S. DeCasper will organize the market research sessions.
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Jane Curtis will collect, analyze and report on the market research session data.
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