

**OMB Supporting Statement
Financial Management Service/Treasury
Institutional Representative Payee Survey**

Background

The Financial Management Service (FMS), a bureau of the Department of the Treasury (Treasury), requested that the Federal Reserve Bank (FRB) of St. Louis (acting as Treasury's Fiscal Agent) plan and execute a national marketing campaign about direct deposit. To perform this task, the FRB of St. Louis contracted with a national marketing firm. FMS/Treasury and the FRB of St. Louis launched the **Go Direct** campaign nationally on September 27, 2005. The campaign is a marketing program designed to encourage Social Security Administration (SSA) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) check recipients to switch to direct deposit. Given the campaign's success over the past two years, FMS has decided to continue this effort in 2007-08, and the FRB has contracted with Weber Shandwick for assistance in providing services for FMS in connection with the campaign.

On behalf of FMS/Treasury, the FRB of St. Louis and its contractors, Weber Shandwick and KRC Research, plan to conduct a study to help better understand the attitudes and perceptions of the campaign target audiences toward direct deposit and refine campaign messages. This research study is a 15-minute telephone survey among institutional representative payees¹(hereafter institutional rep payees) who receive check payments for beneficiaries. Objectives and methodologies for this study is explained in detail below.

This research study is a component of the data collection approved in the October 2003 Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Market Research Study submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) referenced in the October 2003 EFT Market Research Study Supporting Statement for Paper Work Reduction Act (PRA) Submission (OMB Control #1510-0074).

Institutional Representative Payee Quantitative Survey

Objectives

Institutional representative payees are important to the success of the **Go Direct** campaign and communicating the benefits of EFT to this audience could significantly impact the success the campaign. Institutional rep payees provide an opportunity to convert many beneficiaries, rather than just one check recipient at a time.

Institutional rep payees have been an audience of interest to the **Go Direct** campaign since its inception. Unfortunately we still know little about them and their receptivity to direct deposit. Based on what we know², the primary barrier to an institutional rep payee

¹ Institutional rep payees are organizations such as nursing homes, long-term care facilities, mental institutions, and other social service agencies receiving federal benefit payments on behalf of those in their care.

² Our knowledge of institutional rep payees comes from anecdotal evidence based on conversations with the Social Security Administration (SSA) about their promotion of direct deposit to this audience and a

using direct deposit instead of check payments is the payee receives the direct deposit for multiple payees in a lump sum and has difficulty matching the payment with the individual recipients. Other than this barrier, direct deposit appears to be an attractive option for this audience because it's more convenient and reduces workload, avoids lost or stolen checks, and avoids delays in the payee receiving the payment and in the beneficiaries getting their money.

Given the lack of information available on this audience, the primary objective of the research is to better understand institutional rep payees' attitudes toward direct deposit and barriers to signing-up in order to more effectively communicate with them. More specifically, the research will allow us to:

- Understand current attitudes and perceptions of direct deposit and checks as payment options for receiving benefits;
- Assess the barriers for institutional rep payees to switch from check payments to direct deposit – particularly the issue of matching lump sum payments to specific benefit recipients (an issue that has been mentioned repeatedly by both the Social Security Administration in our conversations with them and during the limited qualitative research);
- Assess the willingness of institutional rep payees to switch to direct deposit if their bank or the Department of Treasury resolved the issue of matching payments to individuals; and,
- Evaluate and test key messages and tactics that would encourage institutional rep payees to switch to direct deposit.

Methodology

To achieve the research objectives noted above, KRC Research will conduct a 15-minute quantitative telephone survey of a random sample of 300 institutional rep payees who receive check payments instead of direct deposit for their beneficiaries. All respondents will be selected to participate at random and will be contacted at their place of business during the day.

We will use screening criteria to ensure that we are talking to the correct person. First, we will ask to speak to the person who is most responsible for making decisions on how benefit payments are received. Second, we will include screening questions to make sure we are talking to an organization that is a rep payee receiving paper checks for federal benefit recipients.

very limited qualitative research project consisting of 9 in-depth interviews conducted by KRC Research in December 2005. The SSA does not know the exact number of institutional representative payees who receive check payments instead of EFT, although estimates are that there are close to 40,000.

Additionally, we will translate the survey into Spanish and have bilingual interviewers available to conduct interviews in Spanish for Spanish speaking respondents.

Estimated Burden Hours

Completion of the telephone survey of a national random sample of 300 institutional rep payees who receive check payments is expected to take a total of 75 hours and 18 minutes of time.

This estimate is based on completing 300, 15-minute interviews ($300 \text{ interviews} \times 15 \text{ minutes} / 60 = 75 \text{ hours}$).

While 100% of the sample collected from the Department of Treasury should qualify for the survey, it is prudent to assume some errors in the sample. Therefore, we intend to use screening questions to verify we are interviewing an institution that is a rep payee receiving paper checks instead of direct deposit. We anticipate the incidence of qualified respondents to be approximately 90 percent, so we estimate making an additional 35 contacts of individuals who will be read an introduction and asked screening questions to determine qualification to participate in the survey. Each contact should last approximately 30 seconds. Therefore, in addition to the 75 hours spent interviewing respondents, there will be approximately 18 minutes spent with those who are contacted but do not participate in the survey.

$(35 \text{ contacts} \times 30 \text{ seconds}) / 60 = 18 \text{ minutes}$

Contact

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