

**Office of Management and Budget
Clearance Package**

Customer Focus Groups:

Tax-Exempt and Government Entities Examination Customers

Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities Division

October 22, 2009

Background

IRS has replaced the traditional measures of accomplishment with a balanced measurement system, consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction, to assess how well it is achieving its mission and objectives. The IRS Tax Exempt and Government Entities division (TE/GE) has administered four ongoing monthly mail surveys since 2001, and implemented a new survey in 2007. TE/GE collects feedback from five customer segments: Employee Plan (EP) Determination, Exempt Organization (EO) Determination, EP Examination, EO Examination, and Federal, State, and Local Government (FSLG) Examination. TE/GE collects feedback from these five customer segments to identify what TE/GE can do to improve service, to track progress in improving customer satisfaction over time, and to identify improvement opportunities.

Survey data and feedback collected during past customer focus groups indicate that an improvement opportunity for all five examination programs (EP, EO, FSLG, Tax-Exempt Bonds and Indian Tribal Governments) is the Information Document Request (IDR) process. TE/GE seeks to supplement the information already collected by gaining additional perspective into customer satisfaction by finding out more about the Information Document Request (IDR) process. An Information Document Request, Form 4564, is a formal, structured process established to request and secure information from the taxpayer. TE/GE seeks to glean best practices from managers that excel in the IDR arena, and to gather customer perspectives and feedback surrounding the IDR process and its impact on their examination experience. By collecting both internal and external feedback, it will afford TE/GE the opportunity to compare internal and external perspectives and identify improvement areas that will affect the examination process and result in increased employee and customer satisfaction.

Research Methodology

TE/GE, in conjunction with ICF Macro, will conduct five phone-based focus groups that represent TE/GE's examination customer base - EO, EP, FSLG, TEB, and ITG. The focus groups will be conducted between December 1st and 4th, 2009. ICF Macro will handle the recruitment of focus group participants using data provided by TE/GE ensuring representation across EO, EP, FSLG, TEB and ITG. Each focus group will last one hour in duration. The purpose of the focus groups will be to solicit customer feedback regarding the IDR process and to identify key concerns as they relate to interaction and communication with TE/GE during the examination process.

TEGE will furnish ICF Macro lists of customers who have recently experienced an examination. ICF Macro will conduct telephone look-ups for each customer on the list and will recruit until they confirm twelve attendees to participate in each focus group. TEGE estimates that they will need to contact 50 customers per each of the five programs in order to obtain twelve confirmed attendees. Once scheduled, ICF Macro will make a

confirmation call to each participant within two business days of the focus group to ensure their participation. The focus groups will be moderated by an ICF Macro facilitator. Neither the notes of the discussions nor the final report will include participants' names or any identifying information. The participant screener and a draft of the moderator's guide are attached.

Tallies and Other Information

The following information is needed to satisfy OMB clearance requirements. It must be provided within 60 days after survey data collection operations are concluded:

1. **FINDINGS:** Provide a brief summary of significant (important) findings that were evidenced in the results.
2. **ACTIONS TAKEN OR LESSONS LEARNED:** Provide a brief summary of any actions taken or lessons learned as a result of the findings.
3. **TAXPAYER PARTICIPATION:**
 - a. **SURVEYS:**
 - i. Number of requests for taxpayer participation
 - ii. Number of questionnaires returned or interviews completed
4. **DATE THE DATA COLLECTION BEGAN**
5. **DATE THE DATA COLLECTION ENDED**
6. **COST:** Include printing, postage, travel, overtime payments, payments to vendors, and any other costs incurred as a direct result of the survey (do not include regular salaries of IRS employees).

Estimated Burden Hours

The IRS plans to conduct five focus groups with twelve participants each. We estimate each group to last one hour. Participants will experience minimal screening time (two minutes) and no travel time.

60 participants x 60 minutes per focus group = 3,600 minutes + 250 participants x 2 minutes screening = 500 minutes = Total of 4,100 minutes / 68 hours.

Estimated Study Cost

The cost to this study will run approximately \$21,243 for the vendor to conduct telephone look-ups, recruit participants, design the screener and the moderator guide, facilitate the group, and prepare the final report.

Privacy, Disclosure, and Security

The IRS will ensure compliance with the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II. All participants will be treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy of participants will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A7B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Audiotapes are stored in locked cabinets. Transcription of audiotapes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at the appropriate levels has been accomplished. Systems are password protected, users profiled for authorized use, and individual audit trails generated and reviewed periodically.

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record keeping practices to ensure privacy protection of all participants. This includes criterion for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

Privacy will be safeguarded; participants will not be identified to IRS personnel. In addition, no participant names will be mentioned in the reports or data files. Participants will be advised that comments will be audio taped. Privacy is assured by virtue of agency policy.

The paperwork Reduction Act requires that the IRS display an OMB control number on all public information requests. The OMB Control Number for this study is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the: IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224

Study Contact

For questions regarding the study, contact:

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