

## **Office of Management and Budget Clearance Package**

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IRS Stakeholder Liaison Headquarters (SL HQ)

Activity/Event Survey:

2011 National Phone Forums/Webinars

Internal Revenue Service  
Small Business/Self Employee (SB/SE)  
Communications, Liaison and Disclosure (CLD)  
Operating Unit

**June 24, 2010**

## Introduction

### Background

“Event Feedback Surveys” are not new to the IRS. SL HQ has asked Research to administer these feedback surveys/evaluations on the NPF/Ws for the last three years. Event feedback surveys/evaluations have previously been used to analyze the satisfaction levels for both NPF and W participants. (This is the fourth year Research has prepared and submitted an OMB package for this customer for purposes of obtaining feedback from participants who participate in CLD tax information “Phone Forums/Webinars.”)

The mission of **Communications, Liaison and Disclosure (CLD)** is to develop and deliver integrated strategic communications and educational products to SB/SE employees and taxpayers. CLD also partners with key stakeholders in tax administration including federal, state and local governmental agencies, practitioners, and industry groups, to develop as well as execute strategies designed to enhance voluntary compliance and to ensure that federal tax information is protected by those agencies that receive federal tax data. CLD is also responsible for a wide range of programs and activities in support of both SB/SE and the IRS Strategic Plans, including administration of the IRS Disclosure Program, IRC §6103, the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act, and administration of the IRS Disaster Assistance Program.

CLD is comprised of six functions that provide critical support in accomplishment of SB/SE and IRS missions and objectives:

- Governmental Liaison and Disclosure
- Stakeholder Liaison Headquarters
- Stakeholder Liaison Field
- Communications
- Policy and Strategic Planning
- Safeguards

**Specific to this package, Stakeholder Liaison Headquarters (SL HQ)** – focuses on national engagement of the payroll and practitioner community and stakeholder organizations to provide information about IRS policies, practices and procedures to ensure compliance with the tax laws, both by voluntary means and through enforcement programs. In addition, SL HQ oversees IRS involvement in disaster assistance and emergency relief activities.

Key engagement vehicles/tools for SL HQ and their customers are the use of tax information “Phone Forums/Webinars.” **The National Phone Forum/Webinars**

(NPF/W) process enables the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to communicate with the tax professional community and professional associations. The program is designed to provide presentations on tax gap and key tax topics across the country. Topics selected have national impact and the forums use presenters who are viewed to be subject matter experts (SMEs) on the topic. Presentations occur throughout the business day enabling stakeholders to participate as their schedule permits.

**Note:** While this OMB package outlines the details of the NPF events (public burden, event schedules etc), SL HQ would like to use the evaluation for smaller forums, the SB/SE National Practitioner Forums. A printable version of this evaluation has been created for SL HQ use at these forums. SL HQ will distribute and collect the evaluation as well as profile its results. See Attachment V to view the printable version.

Aside from providing updated tax information, the NPF/Ws can provide an added educational benefit to participants. For some of the participants, the national forums are being used to gain Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits, which are needed to maintain their professional certifications. An example would be a participant who is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

While past attendance may suggest that the NPFs are successful in terms of planning, scheduling and content, SL wants a formal process to measure stakeholder/participant satisfaction. Therefore, in an effort to gauge/baseline the quality and satisfaction of their forums, SL HQ would like to administrate an event feedback survey/evaluation at the conclusion of each NPF/W.

## **Objectives of Data Collection**

SL HQ specifically seeks to gain feedback from NPF/W participants on the overall quality of and satisfaction with the events. The survey/evaluation data would be used to enhance future NPF/W events and to develop new strategies if needed. Furthermore, the event survey/evaluation will be used to identify key compliance issues for future events throughout the year and in FY 2011.

## **Methodology**

### **Sample Design**

This event evaluation will be administered after a voluntary IRS customer event. SL HQ intends to survey the total **population** of NPF/Webinar participants per event. A participant is defined as a practitioner who participated in the event for at least 50 minutes.

The forum feedback survey/evaluation will assist in measuring the quality of the event and satisfaction levels of stakeholders/participants to ensure that positive relationships with customers are being developed and maintained.

NPF/W event information is posted on IRS.gov (for an example of a Webinar posting, see Attachment I) and advertisement is made via individual e-mail distributions from IRS Stakeholder Relationship Managers to their partners in other agencies/organizations and/or associations. Additionally, those Partners post the events on their individual websites. The NPF/Ws are first come first served and SL HQ generally hosts multiple sessions per month on an assigned day. The Webinars have virtually limitless capacity for the number of attendees and can also be made available at the conclusion of the forum for viewing later by additional participants.

Subsequent to the forums, the event evaluation and/or a link to a web-based evaluation will be emailed to each registered participant (please see Attachment VI). The participants for the NPF/W sessions are primarily practitioners, e.g., return preparers, the majority of whom are enrolled agents or sole practitioner CPAs that prepare Federal Income Tax returns as part of their normal tax practice. The participants may also include IRS employees. Thus far in FY 2010, 30,797 people participated in seven events, two of which were NPFs, while the remaining five were Webinars. These events took place between October 2009 and June 2010 (there was no event held in December 2009 or May 2010). Of those, 5,249 completed surveys/evaluations in regard to those events (the totals for June had not been received as of this writing).

NPF/W sessions present a unique opportunity for SL HQ to obtain feedback from a diverse group of practitioners who participate in the events.

## **Data to be Collected**

Attachment III, "Event Evaluation Sample" outlines the type of information that will be collected from participants. Primarily, SL HQ seeks to obtain practitioner feedback on the overall quality and satisfaction with the NPF/W events. Secondly, SL HQ would like suggestions from participants for both improvements and future topics.

## **How Collected and Used**

Participants will first be notified of the survey/evaluation via e-mail with confirmation of enrollment in their session. At the conclusion of each event, participants will be reminded and asked to complete an e-survey/evaluation.

The surveys/evaluations will be reviewed and analyzed by SB/SE Research in Philadelphia. Using descriptive statistics, the findings will be presented to SL HQ in table format. Suggestions and comments will be reviewed and summarized. Findings will be reviewed and considered by SL HQ for improvements to future NPF/Webinars and for

potential topics. The data will also be used to measure against the satisfaction and quality of future events in 2011 and beyond.

## **Dates Collection Begin/End**

The FY 2010 events have been held monthly, and while the majority of the events were conducted via Webinar technology there were two NPF events conducted between October 2009 and June 2010. NPF/W participants are notified of the feedback survey/evaluation via e-mail with their confirmation of enrollment in their event. The data collection dates for the FY2011 NPF/Webinars will vary month to month. SL HQ will be holding multiple events in any one month. SB/SE Research will only survey one event a month as decided upon by SL HQ. The first NPF/W will be held in October 2010, and the last event will be held in September 2011.

## **Who is Conducting the Research**

SB/SE Stakeholder Headquarters (SL HQ) requests this research. The event survey/evaluation was developed by the SB/SE Research staff in Philadelphia, PA. The e-survey/evaluation will be administered and analyzed by the same research site. The results will be provided to SL HQ approximately 30 days after each event.

## **Cost of Study**

There are no additional costs estimated for this project.

## **Stipend**

A monetary stipend will not be offered to participants.

## **Recruitment Efforts**

Practitioners who have a confirmed registration and attended the NPF/W event for at least 50 consecutive minutes will be asked to participate in the survey/evaluation. Based on interest for IRS Tax Forums/ Seminars and Workshops, SL HQ expects that practitioners who need CPE credits and general tax information will be interested in taking the survey/evaluation. This survey/evaluation will not be replacing any existing IRS survey that is related to the NPF/W initiative.

## Location and Facility

The NPF/W is a nationwide survey/evaluation. AT&T Executive Services will be used to secure 2,500 conference lines for each NPF event for participants throughout the country. Small Business Television.com is being used to facilitate the Webinars. Webinars have no limit capacity on the number of potential participants. In order to estimate the potential number of participants, previous NPF/W registration numbers can be used. Approximately 4,400 participated in NPF/Ws a month in FY10. However only those who participate for 50 minutes or more will receive a survey/evaluation.

## Expected Response Rate

Given the prior participation in the NPF/W events for FY 2010 through June, 2010, SL HQ expects to have a response rate of 30%. This was computed using the total number of surveys/evaluations returned divided by the total number of forms distributed from October 2009 through April 2010.

With regard to the low response rate, the IRS will assume that all data collected from this survey is **qualitative in nature**, and that no critical decisions will be made by this office solely from the analysis of data from this survey. The results from this survey are simply one piece of a larger set of information needed to assess the needs related to services provided by the IRS.

## Methods to Maximize Response Rate

All NPF/W registrants who participated for 50 or more consecutive minutes will be issued a survey/evaluation notice via email. At the conclusion of the actual forum, participants will be verbally reminded of the survey/evaluation. Seven days after the initial survey/evaluation notification, a reminder email will be issued.

## Test Structure/Design

The survey/evaluation has been designed to model an approved OMB "Feedback Survey" developed by TEGE for their specialty events (see Attachment IV). The primary difference between the two surveys is the method of distribution /administration (on-line/e-survey) and the use of drop-down options/menus for the selection of participant answers.

## **Efforts to not Duplicate Research**

“Event Feedback Surveys” are not new to the IRS, and SL HQ has asked Research to administer these feedback surveys/evaluations on the NPF/Ws for the last three years. Event feedback surveys/evaluations have previously been used to analyze the satisfaction levels for both NPF and W participants. Since NPF/Ws are unique to CLD SL HQ no other NPF/W survey/evaluation has been or will be issued for these events. The survey/evaluation may be used in subsequent years with OMB approval.

## **Participant Criteria**

Participants for this survey/evaluation must have registered with SL HQ and received a registration confirmation for the event (see Attachment II).

## **Privacy/Disclosure/Security Issues**

SBSE Research 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 taxpayers/participants will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Respondents to the survey/evaluation will not be identified to SL HQ. In addition, no taxpayer names or business names will be mentioned in the summary reports.

For the subject project,

- The use of taxpayer data will be restricted to authorized personnel for approved research projects;
- Taxpayer/participant privacy will be safeguarded;
- The data used in a research project will be validated;
- Any known or potential limitations in the data used in a research project will be properly disclosed;
- Any data used in a research project will be obtained, utilized, stored, disseminated, and transported in accordance with the Internal Revenue Manual;
- Related documentation (data dictionary, record layout, sampling plan, data validation documentation, syntax and other computer code) will be made available to any research site requesting data;
- All data used in a research project and under the control of Research, whether stored on computer or archived on magnetic media, will be destroyed in a timely manner in accordance with the Internal Revenue Manual.

This document covers all data used in any research activity from internal or external sources.

OMB Submission  
Forums/Webinars  
6/15/10

2011 Nationwide Phone

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement & OMB Control Number will be provided on the survey/evaluation form.



## Burden Hours

SL HQ will ask SB/SE Research to conduct four Webinars and 8 NPFs in FY2011. One survey/evaluation a month will be distributed to the participants at the discretion of SL HQ. Given the amount of AT&T conference lines available, there is a potential for 2,500 registered participants in the NPF months for a potential survey population of 10,000 people (2,500 participants per event x 4 events).

Webinars have an unlimited capacity for participants per event. Approximately 5,340 participate in the Webinars on a monthly basis, so it is anticipated that the potential Webinar survey population is 42,720 (5,340 participants per event x 8 events). However, only those registrants who participate in a NPF or Webinar for at least 50 minutes will receive a survey/evaluation.

SL HQ SL HQ would also like to use the evaluation for smaller forums, the SB/SE National Practitioner Forums. A printable version of this evaluation has been created for SL HQ use at these forums. SL HQ will distribute and collect the evaluation as well as profile its results.

### NPF Burden

Given the above potential population of 10,000 participants, the estimated public burden is 500 hours for the NPFs. However, with an accepted response rate of 30% the public burden would be 150 hours.

For persons participating in the survey/evaluation, the burden time is estimated at 3 minutes.

The following table details the burden calculation for NPF participants.

	Number of Persons	Number of NPFs	Time Estimate (Minutes)	Total Burden (Hours)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	[(1)*(2)*(3)]/60
Potential Survey Population	2,500	4	3	<b>500</b>
With an Estimated Response Rate of 30%				<b>150</b>

**Webinar Burden**

It is more difficult to estimate burden hours for the Webinars as the number of participants is unlimited. In addition Webinars can be viewed after the actual event, but those participants will not be receiving any surveys/evaluations. Given the above potential population of 42,720 participants, the estimated public burden would be 2,136 hours for the Webinars. With an accepted response rate of 30%, the public burden would be 641 hours.

For persons participating in the survey/evaluation, the burden time is estimated at 3 minutes.

The following table details the burden calculation for Webinar participants.

	Number of Persons	Number of Webinars	Time Estimate (Minutes)	Total Burden (Hours)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	[(1)*(2)*(3)]/60
Potential Survey Population	5,340	8	3	<b>2,136</b>
With an Estimated Response Rate of 30%				<b>641</b>

**SB/SE National Practitioner Forums**

SL HQ provided counts for the number of events planned in FY2011. The population of participants is estimated to be 185,000. Given this potential population of 185,000 participants, the estimated public burden would be 9,250 hours for the practitioner forums. With an accepted response rate of 30%, the public burden would be 2,775 hours.

The following table details the burden calculation for the practitioner forum participants

	Number of Persons	Number of Practitioner Forms	Time Estimate (Minutes)	Total Burden (Hours)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	[(1)*(2)*(3)]/60
Potential Survey Population	74	2,500	3	<b>9,250</b>
With an Estimated Response Rate of 30%				<b>2,775</b>

**Total Burden Hours for NPFs, Webinars, and Bi-monthly SB/SE National Practitioner Forums**

Based on an estimated response rate of 30%, the total estimated public burden for the NPFs, the Webinars, and the National Practitioner Forums is 3,566 hours.

Participants will not experience travel time for this study.

**Study Contact**

For questions regarding the Survey/Evaluation, contact:

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