

OMB Clearance Package
External Stakeholder Survey at IRS Nationwide Tax Forums 2009
Multilingual Initiative Strategy Office

Background

Executive Order 13166 (EO 13166), "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" requires federal agencies to provide meaningful access to persons who have difficulty speaking and understanding English. In response to the Executive Order, the Multilingual Initiative was established to determine the need to expand and/or integrate products and services to assist limited English-speaking taxpayers in meeting their tax responsibilities. The MLISO is continuing the MLI efforts of developing strategies and policies that target the specific needs of LEP customers.

Historically, the Multilingual Initiative Strategy Office (MLISO), as a part of the IRS Needs Assessment Process conducts research of external stakeholders to solicit feedback on tax-related language assistance for limited-English proficient (LEP). This includes conducting a survey at the IRS Nationwide Tax Forums held in six locations across the country annually. The feedback, along with that of other research efforts allows IRS to develop and improve IRS products and services for the LEP.

As done in prior years, the MLISO will conduct a survey at all six 2009 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums as follows:

Las Vegas, NV	July 7 – 9, 2009
San Diego, CA	July 14 – 16, 2009
Orlando, FL	August 4 – 6, 2009
New York, NY	August 25 – 27, 2009
Dallas, TX	September 8 – 10, 2009
Atlanta, GA	September 22 – 24, 2009

MLISO staff will conduct a survey to assess the needs of tax practitioners and other external stakeholders whose clients who have limited English reading and/or speaking skills.

Purpose

This OMB request is to obtain approval for MLISO to conduct a survey of tax forum participants at the 2009 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums. The tax forums present an opportunity to solicit feedback from tax professionals on IRS products and services critical to assisting the LEP taxpayers in understanding their rights and obligations. Key areas of this year's survey surround language communication preference, IRS LEP products and electronic services.

A key component of EO 13166 requires internal and external assessment of the LEP population and their language assistance needs. The Executive Order requires regular assessment to determine the "resources that will be needed to provide effective language assistance" and the effectiveness of those resources.

The LEP Needs Assessment approach has been developed to comply with the Executive Order. A key component of the process involves conducting internal and external assessments to capture qualitative and quantitative feedback from taxpayers, tax practitioners, community groups, advocacy groups, and volunteers.

Survey

The survey questions are generally one sentence in structure and written on an elementary concept level. A few demographic questions are included to provide the geographical areas of the LEP segments represented in our responses. The survey gathers the needs and preferences of the top-five priority languages as defined by the most recent Census. There are aspects of IRS products and services for each language segment included in the survey's design (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian). Individual and Small Business LEP taxpayer needs are being assessed with this effort.

The survey will take about 3 minutes to complete. A copy of the survey is attached.

Methodology

At each of the six Tax Forums, booth visitors will be screened by MLISO (screener questions are below). The survey will be offered to all participants of the forums who approach the MLISO booth who have limited-English speaking clients. The completed surveys will be gathered by MLISO. Research will provide frequency tables and analysis. Key findings will be shared as appropriate Service-wide.

Screener questions:

1. Do you service LEP clients who do not speak and/or read English well?
2. Do you have Spanish clients?
3. Do you service LEP Small Business clients?
4. Have you used the IRS Over-the-Phone Interpreter service?

Efforts Not to Duplicate Research

As an oversight office, MLISO has taken steps to ensure that these research efforts will not be a duplicate of existing studies. MLISO coordinates with IRS business units and Research staffs to keep abreast of research efforts pertaining to the LEP community.

Efforts to Maximize Response Rate

MLISO has designed the survey to maximize response rate and limit taxpayer burden. A non-monetary honorarium will be provided to participants. Each survey respondent will be offered a giveaway of nominal value, which has been IRS-approved.

In 2008, there were 13,356 tax forum participants. Using this figure as an estimate and along with an estimate of those who visited the MLISO booth (approximately 1/8 of participants) at each forum, we anticipate a 50% response rate.

Burden Estimate:

1670 participants anticipated visiting the booths x 1 minute (to screen for those who have LEP clients) = 28 hours

Screening time: 1 minute
1 x 1670 booth visitors = 28 hours

Survey time: 3 minutes
835 x 3 minutes = 42 hours

Total burden (screening and survey participation) = 70 hours

Privacy, Security, Disclosure, and Anonymity

The MLISO will ensure that privacy, security, disclosure, and anonymity is upheld when gathering and reporting results from the survey. Information derived from the survey will be used in the final report. During screening and survey administration, respondent names will not be used. Collected information will be limited to those necessary to accomplish the research objectives.

Other Information

The following information will be provided to Statistics of Income, Statistical Support Section within 60 days after the close of the survey data collection operations:

Findings: A brief summary of key findings.

Actions taken/Lessons learned: A brief summary of any action taken or lessons learned as a result of the findings.

Number of completed questionnaires

Pont of contact:

Cynthia Lee, Program Analyst
IRS, Multilingual Initiative Strategy Office
404.338.8840

Attachment
Survey Questions