

OMB SURVEY CLEARANCE PACKAGE
2009 SOLUTION SATURDAY EXIT SURVEY
May 2009

A. Introduction

Background/Overview

The purpose of Solution Saturday Events will be to improve the taxpayers' experience and examine barriers to issue resolution in the overall tax administration process. Solution Saturday is a collaborative business effort that will essentially rebrand the previous Problem Solving Days. The services provided during this pilot will be centered on resolution and education.

More specifically, Wage & Investment (W&I), Small Business Self-Employment (SBSE), and Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) plan to hold Solution Saturday events during the 2009 post-filing season to assist taxpayers with their tax-related problems. The overriding goal of these events is to learn from them and use the data gleaned to improve processes, create seamless case resolution, and ultimately improve the experience for all taxpayers every day. Using data collected from taxpayers, the project will seek to identify successes, in addition to barriers that prevent full resolution of cases for future ameliorations.

Due to the current economic situation, many taxpayers are in the midst of financial difficulties that may impact their ability to meet all of their federal tax obligations in a timely manner. By being proactive, Solution Saturday should have a positive impact on these taxpayers and will improve the ability of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to resolve taxpayer issues faster, while positively impacting revenue and compliance.

Accordingly, W&I Research and Analysis (WIRA) has initiated the Solution Saturday Exit Survey to expand the IRS's understanding of the characteristics of taxpayers that attend these special events and increase the agency's knowledge of the needs and behaviors of these taxpayers. By understanding and meeting the needs of taxpayers the IRS will be able to improve the taxpayer experience by identifying and fixing IRS process barriers.

Objectives of Data Collection

The overall objective of the Solution Saturday Exit Survey is to gather data from taxpayers who attend these special events. Data gathered at these events will help the IRS improve one-stop seamless case resolution for taxpayers, relieve the taxpayer's burden, and make the best use of current resources.

The study's research objectives are:

- Record issue resolution from the taxpayer perspective.
- Measure taxpayer satisfaction with the service provided.

B. Methodology

A paper survey designed and prepared by WIRA researchers with input from the Solution Saturday team members, will be used to collect responses from taxpayers who attend these special events. Taxpayers are currently asked to participate in a customer satisfaction survey when visiting a Taxpayer Assistance Center (TAC) during regular TAC business hours. However during Solution Saturday events taxpayers will not receive the customer satisfaction survey. Taxpayers will be asked to participate in one survey, the Solution Saturday Exit Survey, which will limit burden.

Sample Design

This will be a convenience sample of taxpayers seeking service at Solution Saturday.

Data to be Collected

Taxpayers will be asked survey questions regarding their service experience at TAC locations on Solution Saturday and previous resolution attempts (if applicable). This data will be used to identify and make suggestions about operational changes that will enhance services provided to taxpayers.

How Collected & Used

With input from the Solution Saturday team, WIRA analysts prepared an Exit Survey that will be used to measure the success of this initiative. The Exit Survey will be given to taxpayers that are willing to participate and complete the survey before they leave the TAC on Solution Saturday.

WIRA researchers will use TeleForm, a form processing application to scan and collect survey responses. WIRA researchers will also summarize the quantitative responses and produce a final report showing the characteristics and satisfaction of taxpayers that attended Solution Saturday, as well as barriers in issue resolution. WIRA research will perform analyses that will include: survey counts, overall response rates, frequencies for all survey items, and any patterns in characteristics of respondents.

Dates Collection Begin/End

The Exit Survey will be administered at 5 TAC locations on July 18, 2009. Based on the information collected in July, additional information using the same instrument may be collected on one Saturday in September 2009 at different TAC locations.

Who is Conducting the Research and Where

W&I Research and Analysis staff will primarily conduct the research. This will include survey printing, data collection, and data analysis. Solution Saturday staff will only assist in survey administration and submission of surveys to WIRA at the end of the event(s).

Data collection/survey administration will take place at various TAC sites. Data analysis will take place at the Federal Summit Building in Atlanta, GA, where WIRA analysts are located.

Cost of Study

The estimated cost is \$4,000. This estimate includes potential travel for two staff members, survey production, and mailing.

Stipend

There will be no stipends paid to participants.

Recruitment Efforts

The respondents for this study are a convenience sample of taxpayers seeking service at Solution Saturdays and who agree to participate in the survey. Only certain recruitment strategies will be appropriate. However, the Solution Saturday staff that will be administering the Exit Survey will encourage all attending taxpayers to participate. WIRA analysts will make sure that Solution Saturday staff will receive information and/or training on specific techniques to gain taxpayer cooperation to complete and return the Exit Survey.

Location-Region/City and Facility

The Solution Saturday Exit Survey will be administered at 5 Taxpayer Assistance Centers across the United States on July 18, 2009. Those sites include:

- Atlanta, GA (401 West Peachtree Street N.W., Atlanta, GA 30308)
- Detroit, MI (477 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI 48226)
- Los Angeles, CA (300 North Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012)
- Dallas, TX (4050 Alpha Road, Farmers Branch, TX 75244)
- Philadelphia, PA (6000 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106)

Based on the information collected in July, additional information may be collected in September 2009 at 5-10 TAC offices, locations to be determined.

Expected Response Rate

We expect a 35 percent response rate for the Exit Survey that we will administer to taxpayers. We understand that taxpayers may attend Solution Saturday to resolve complex ongoing tax-related issues and may not want to invest more time to participate in the exit survey.

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 solely from the analysis of data from this survey. The results of this survey are simply one piece of a larger set of information needed to assess taxpayer needs related to services provided by the IRS.

Methods to Maximize Response Rate

Standard procedures will be used in order to obtain a high response rate for the Exit Survey. These include: making the survey as brief as possible to address the study's objectives; limiting the survey to one page and approximately 2 minutes for taxpayer completion; and clearly communicating to the taxpayer the purpose of the study, the importance of their opinions, and the benefits of the results. Respondents will also be informed that their responses will be anonymous.

As taxpayers are leaving the TAC, Solution Saturday staff will remind taxpayers to return their survey to a designated area, which will be located near the exit of the TAC.

Test Structure/Design

The Solution Saturday Exit Survey is attached. The survey asks respondents about various aspects of their service experience, previous issue resolution attempts, and to assess their level of satisfaction with service provided on Solution Saturday. The results will aid in the development of recommendations for service improvements based on the taxpayer perspective. The results will also provide useful input for the special event evaluation.

The survey includes questions regarding the taxpayers': event awareness, tax-related issue, prior resolution attempts, economic hardship, satisfaction, and issue resolution.

Efforts Not to Duplicate Research

Field Assistance uses a customer satisfaction survey to gather data on customer satisfaction with service received at the TACs. The Solution Saturday Exit Survey differs, in that it is a customized survey for the event that gathers information on the characteristics of taxpayers that attend the event in conjunction with taxpayer's satisfaction. Accordingly, this study does not duplicate previous or current studies. As indicated previously, the customer satisfaction survey that is currently given to all TAC customers will not be distributed on the days that the Solution Saturday Exit Survey is administered to limit taxpayer burden.

Participants Criteria

An eligible participant includes any taxpayer aged 18 and over who visits a TAC during Solution Saturday; has adequate English language skills; and possesses the physical ability to complete the paper survey.

C. Privacy, Disclosure, Anonymity, Security Issues

W&I Research will ensure that the utmost scrutiny is given to privacy, security, and disclosure when administrating and describing the taxpayers that responded to this survey. Every precaution will be taken to assure the proper protection of the taxpayer's survey responses. We will limit and control the amount of information that we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the

research objective. All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II during this survey and the administrator will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy of the taxpayers 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 A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at C-2 level is accomplished via the Windows NT operating system. 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 taxpayers. This includes criteria 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.

The survey will not contain tax return or taxpayer personal information. Survey participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy of the survey respondents. We will apply the fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all survey respondents. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the protection of information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

PRA Statement and OMB Control Number

For the Solution Survey Exit Survey, the OMB Control Number is required information and will be provided on the survey instrument—pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

D. Burden Hours

The Exit Survey has been designed to minimize burden on the taxpayer. The time that a respondent takes to complete the survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The average time of survey completion is expected to be 2 minutes. The questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

We have made an attempt in designing this Exit Survey to encourage participation and expect a response rate of 35% percent of the estimated attendance volume (1,000) for the July 18, 2009 event. Therefore, we expect

approximately 350 survey participants. In September we expect approximately the same response rate and attendance volume if it is administered at 5 additional TAC sites.

The total burden in hours is estimated to be 23.3 hours (700 surveys x 2 minutes / 60 minutes) for the July and September events.

There are no burden hours for non-respondents.
The total number of burden hours is estimated to be 23.3 hours.

E. Statistical Contact

For questions regarding the study, questionnaire design or statistical methodology, contact:

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F. Attachments

Solution Saturday Exit Survey