

Office of Management and Budget Clearance Package

Internal Revenue Service Tax Exempt and Government Entities: Collection of Participant Feedback at Outreach Events

**Internal Revenue Service
Small Business/Self-Employed (SB/SE) Research – Ft. Lauderdale/Greensboro
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Introduction

Background

The Tax Exempt and Government Entities (TEGE) operating unit consists of several functions. Within the Government Entities function, the Federal, State and Local Governments (FSLG) Division supports the three types of government entities shown in their division title. Throughout calendar year 2008, FSLG will sponsor and present various types of outreach activities nationwide which include speeches, presentations and specialty workshops. Agendas for their outreach activities include providing tax law and filing information to their partnership groups, along with training and educational services. FSLG requires a process to gather the opinions of those attending these events – to help them determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the events and ways to improve them, if necessary. TEGE requested that we (SB/SE Research) support them in implementing a process to capture feedback from event participants, until TEGE Research can conduct the research independently later in 2008.

Objective

The objective of this research is to determine the opinions (of event participants) on FSLG outreach events and on the information provided by FSLG at these events.

Methodology

How and Where Data Will Be Collected

SB/SE Research designed a paper feedback form (see Appendix A) for FSLG to solicit opinions from the participants in events nationwide. FSLG staff responsible for an event will distribute the forms to all participants, and collect the forms from those participants who choose to complete it (after the event ends). Completing the form is voluntary. The events are held nationwide in cities determined by TEGE staff, based on the need in each state. The facilities are varied, and include conference rooms in government buildings, in hotels, and in other public facilities.

The FSLG staff will mail completed forms for each event to the SB/SE Research office in Ft. Lauderdale, where the forms will be scanned using the current scanning software. The responses will be captured as data files in the current statistical software used in Research.

What Data Will Be Collected and Dates of Collection

The data to be collected consists of the responses to the questions on the feedback form. The data will be collected during calendar year 2008. Appendix A shows the 10 questions the participants will answer.

How Data Will Be Analyzed and Used

The responses on the feedback form will be tallied – that is, the number and percentage of participants selecting each choice on each question will be computed. This will be completed for each quarter, starting in January, and then for the entire year (ending in December 2008). TEGE will review these numbers, using them to identify aspects of their events which satisfied participants and aspects which received low satisfaction ratings from participants. TEGE will then determine if changes can be made to improve deficient areas in the event. TEGE will use

the participant information and information on how participants hear about their events to help broaden and improve their communication and notification efforts for future events. The data from this research is anecdotal and TEGE will use it appropriately. No decisions will be based solely on feedback gathered in this process.

Participants in the Feedback Process (Sampling Not Required)

A sampling plan is not required for this research. The participants in the feedback process are the event attendees who choose to complete the form. These results are not representative of any population.

Method to Maximize Response Rate

The FSLG staff responsible for each event will verbally encourage event attendees to complete a feedback form, providing them with information on how the responses will be used and the benefits to future attendees from the feedback provided. The FSLG staff will emphasize that the responses are anonymous – participants do not provide their names. Time will be allotted at the end of the event timeframe for participants to complete a form.

Functions Conducting the Research

The SB/SE Research office in Ft. Lauderdale/Greensboro will support TEGE in the data collection and analysis, until TEGE Research can conduct the research independently later in 2008. FSLG staff in TEGE will coordinate the efforts and work at each event to distribute and collect the forms for Research

Stipend

No monetary incentive will be provided to event participants.

Recruitment Efforts

Potential participants learn of the efforts through TEGE publications, IRS websites available to tax professionals, publications and notifications from government entities and tax professional organizations.

Expected Response Rate

TEGE expects a 70% response rate.

Cost of Research

The total estimated cost for this project is \$10,000. The estimate includes staff costs for SB/SE Research (approximately \$8,000 for an estimated 0.1 staff year) and for FSLG staff on analysis and consultation with Research (approximately \$2,000 for an estimated 0.02 staff year).

Efforts to Not Duplicate Research

TEGE has researched and confirmed that no other collection efforts are underway within their organization that target this audience – the potential participants in FSLG outreach events.

Estimates of the Burden of the Collection of Information

TEGE projects that 50 events will be held, with approximately 60 attendees at each event. With a 70% response rate, this results in approximately 2,100 potential participants (70% of the estimated 3,000 event attendees). There would then be 900 potential non-participants.

The contact time to determine non-participation is estimated to be 1 minute, with the resulting burden for non-participants being $900 \times 1 \text{ minute} = 900 \text{ minutes} = \underline{15 \text{ burden hours}}$.

For participants, the estimated time to complete the form is 3 minutes. The burden time is $3 \text{ minutes} \times 2,100 = 6,300 \text{ minutes} = \underline{105 \text{ burden hours}}$.

The total burden hours for the research are 120 hours (15 + 105).

Privacy, Security, Disclosure and Confidentiality Requirements

SB/SE Research will ensure the privacy of those who participate in the feedback process and will ensure that security requirements are followed regarding the data obtained. SB/SE Research will follow security requirements according to the Internal Revenue Manual (IRM) and applicable federal guidelines, including the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA). The data, although it has no identifying information, will still be stored on the SB/SE Research computer system located in a secured area. The data will be maintained in a restricted access folder, so that only those researchers conducting the analysis will have access to the data (either on paper or electronically). The paper feedback forms will be stored in locked cabinets in the secured Research Office.

The data SB/SE Research obtains from the feedback process will be used only for this research for TEGE. At the end of 2008, the data will be destroyed, according to IRM procedures.

Compliance with research data standards, as defined by the Servicewide Research Council, will be certified by the Chief, SB/SE Research (Ft. Lauderdale/Greensboro).

Research will apply fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of privacy of all respondents. The criteria for disclosure, as specified in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients. SB/SE Research will ensure adherence to these standards. As applicable, Research will adhere to conditions in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR - title 5, part 1320, section 8).

Special Tallies and Other Information

We will provide a report on the feedback results for calendar year 2008 to the IRS' Statistics of Income Division, as required for their subsequent reporting to OMB on accomplishments. We will submit the report within the 60 days after the close of the data collection for the last event of 2008. The report will contain the following:

1) Purpose:

2) Findings:

A brief summary of significant (important) findings that were evidenced in the survey results.

3) Actions taken or lessons learned:

A brief summary of any actions taken or lessons learned as a result of the survey findings.

4) Number of requests or attempts for taxpayer participation for surveys, focus groups or collection method:

5) Number of questionnaires returned or number of focus group participants:

6) Date the data collection began:

7) Date the data collection ended:

8) Response Rate:

9) Actual Burden Hours:

10) Cost:

Includes reproduction costs, travel, overtime payments, stipends, and any other costs incurred as a direct result of the survey (does not include regular salaries of IRS employees or those of contractors).