

OMB Statement for Injured Spouse Customer Satisfaction Survey
Wage & Investment Division
2008
BPA TIRNO-05-Z-00014, Task Request # 0074
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Introduction

One of the most important and major parts of the Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (RRA98) deals with Injured Spouse claims. The Adjustments operation within the Customer Accounts Services Operating Unit of the Wage and Investment (W&I) Business Operating Division is responsible for responding to customer technical and account inquiries, resolving customer account inquiries, resolving customer account issues, and working issues related to Injured Spouse Allocations. W&I desires feedback from customers to continually improve the Injured Spouse Allocation Process.

The Objective of this task order is to administer the Injured Spouse Allocation Processing of requests for Relief from Joint and Several Liability is centralized at the Cincinnati IRS Campus now known as the Cincinnati Centralized Innocent Spouse Operation (CCISO) of the Andover Compliance Center. Examiners make a determination by considering requested information from the taxpayer. The examiners will consider all known facts and circumstances when applying Internal Revenue Code 6013(e) or Internal Revenue Code 6015.

The objective of this task order is to administer the Injured Spouse Allocation customer satisfaction research process for 2008.

IRS now uses a balanced measurement system, consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction, to assess how well it is achieving its mission and objectives. As an important customer interface for Wage & Investment, Injured Spouse will need feedback from customers (i.e., taxpayers) to continuously improve its operations.

This project has three primary goals: 1) to survey and track customer satisfaction at all W&I Injured Spouse (Adjustments) sites; 2) to investigate actions IRS can take to improve customer satisfaction with the W&I Injured Spouse (Adjustments) service; and 3) to gauge the effectiveness of changes to the W&I Injured Spouse (Adjustments) service.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Injured Spouse Customer Satisfaction Survey is a mail survey. The questionnaire is attached. The survey is expected to take approximately 7 minutes for customers to complete.

The objective of the survey is to capture customer expectations and perceptions about the Injured Spouse process. The questionnaire is based on Pacific Consulting Group's methodology, which asks respondents to evaluate various aspects of their experience and to provide an overall summary evaluation.

The new questionnaire was developed based on input from a similar W&I survey with like customers who were serviced by the IRS in prior years. The outcome is expected to obtain:

- Insight from the customer's perspective about possible improvements.
- Useful input for program evaluation and execution at the programmatic and field office level of service delivery.
- Gauge the effectiveness of the W&I Injured Spouse (Adjustments) service

The survey includes several ratings questions evaluating service delivery during the Injured Spouse process. In addition, ample space is provided for additional suggestions for improvement. The taxpayer is also given the opportunity to participate in future research studies, if interested.

Survey scoring for this contract will be based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – "Overall, how satisfied were you with the Injured Spouse process." Questions will utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. All survey responses generated will be confidential. The questionnaire will capture information to evaluate our service provided to the taxpayer during the transaction and prior to the transaction. It will also provide information W&I can use to develop "actionable" improvement tasks and strategies. Another key feature of the questionnaire will be the capture of open-ended comments on questions a through k, answered with a low rating of a "1" or "2". This will help IRS better understand why taxpayers give the ratings they give.

Design and Methodology

The sample universe will consist of taxpayers with closed Injured Spouse cases stratified by the 8 W&I Accounts Management (Adjustments) sites. The vendor will administer the survey by mail on a monthly basis. Standard procedures will be used in order to obtain the highest response rate possible for these surveys. These will include: 1) an advance letter (pre-note) about the survey; 2) a cover letter with the survey; 3) a postcard reminder; and, 4) a second letter and survey to non-respondents. The vendor will ensure that taxpayers responding to the survey are guaranteed anonymity.

The vendor will, on a quarterly basis, summarize the quantitative ratings and produce a national report showing customer satisfaction scores on all Injured Spouse survey items, some site information, and overall improvement priorities for the function. The vendor will include any relevant database variables in the analysis and will weight the survey responses as necessary to accurately reflect the entire customer base. The contractor will also produce a one-page quarterly summary report to distribute to specified IRS personnel.

On an annual basis, the contractor will prepare one national report and eight site level reports. The national report will show the calculation of a weighted fiscal year cumulative score for Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction.

Sampling

The Accounts Management (Adjustments) Injured Spouse function will provide the contractor a complete database each month from which a random sample can be drawn. The database will consist of a unique identifying number (TIN), customer name and address, and relevant database information about each Injured Spouse case, all in a single record.

Based on the information provided herein and discussions during preceding tasks, the vendor will develop a sampling plan based on volumes of Injured Spouse claims by the 8 sites. This sampling plan will include the target population and sampling frame, sampling specifications, expected reliability of the sample estimates, preliminary sampling weights, and the strategy of achieving target quotas within key strata. The sampling plan will be designed to result in 16,000 mail-outs per year, with an expected response of 3,200.

Upon receipt of the data file, the vendor will run the file through standard checks to ensure complete mailing address and to remove duplicate cases both within the file, and across files of other surveys that are being conducted.

Estimates of the Burden of Data Collection

The Injured Spouse survey has been designed to minimize the 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 approximately 7 minutes, plus 2 minutes to read the pre-notification letter. Average time of survey completion is based on the questionnaire consisting of approximately 27 categorical questions and 2 open-ended questions (one to understand reasons for dissatisfaction concerning satisfaction items, and one on suggestions for improvement). All questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

We have made every attempt in designing the survey to maximize the response rate. Using a response rate of 60%, the total burden in hours is estimated to be 622 hours for the year.

For respondents, the estimated annual burden is expected to be 551 hours (5,334 pre-notification letters x 2 minutes/60 minutes) + (3,200 survey responses x 7 minutes/ 60 minutes). The number of burden hours for non-respondents is estimated to be approximately 71 hours (2,134 pre-notification letters x 2 minutes/60 minutes).

Other Information

The following information will be provided to the Organizational Performance Division within 60 days after the close of the survey data collection operations:

- Findings: A brief summary of significant findings that were evidenced in the results.
- Actions taken or lessons learned: A brief summary of any action taken or lessons learned as a result of the findings.
- Number of completed questionnaires.
- Taxpayer participation rate
- Number of requests made for taxpayer participation
- Data collection beginning and ending dates
- Cost for surveys (excluding regular IRS salaries)

The estimated cost for this study is \$112,202.00.

The period of performance is October 14, 2008 through July 20, 2009.

Statistical Contact

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

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