

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

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IRS Stakeholder Liaison Headquarters (SL HQ)

Activity/Event Evaluation for:

2009 National Phone Forums

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

## February 5, 2021 Introduction

### Background

#### ***Communication, Liaison and Disclosure Mission***

Support the IRS mission by building relationships and understanding between IRS and its stakeholders through effective information sharing.

To emphasize the Communications, Liaison and Disclosure (CLD) mission statement above, CLD develops and delivers 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.

CLD is responsible for developing as well as executing strategies designed to enhance voluntary compliance and ensuring 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 Plan. This includes the administration of IRS Disclosure Programs (IRC §6103), overseeing 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 toward the 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

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 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.” The National Phone Forum (NPF) 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 known to be subject matter experts (SMEs). Presentations occur throughout the business day enabling stakeholders to participate as their schedule permits.

In addition to the NPF process, there is a Local Phone forum (LPF) process, which provides Stakeholder Liaison (SL) personnel the opportunity to address issues that are not national in scope but may be of interest in their area/region. As a means of eliminating duplicate messages in FY08, Communication Liaison Disclosure (CLD) SL Field has discontinued all local forums with messages consistent with National Phone Forums (NPF).

**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 Bi-monthly SB/SE National Practitioner Forums that generally attracts no more than 25 participants. 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 I to view the printable version.

Aside from providing updated tax information, the NPFs can provide an added educational benefit to participants. Some of the participants use the national forums to gain Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits, which are needed to maintain their professional certifications (e.g. Certified Public Accountants (CPAs)).

While past attendance levels may suggest that the NPFs are successful in terms of planning, scheduling and content, no formal process currently exists to measure stakeholder/participant satisfaction. In an effort to gauge as the quality and satisfaction of their forums, SL HQ would like to include an evaluation process at the conclusion of each NPF.

## **Objectives of Data Collection**

SL HQ seeks to gain feedback from NPF participants on the overall quality of and satisfaction with the NPF events. The evaluation data will be used to enhance future NPF events. Furthermore, the event evaluation will be used to identify key compliance issues for future events throughout the year and in FY 2010.

## Methodology

### Sample Design

This evaluation will be administered after a voluntary IRS customer event. SL HQ will survey the total population of NPF participants per event.

The NPF feedback evaluation will assist in measuring the quality of the event and satisfaction levels of stakeholders/participants. The data gathered will be used to verify that positive relationships with customers are being developed and maintained.

The phone forums are posted on IRS.gov (see Attachment II) and advertisement is made on Tax Talk Today (see Attachment III). Individual e-mails are also distributed 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 Phone Forums accept participants on a first come first served basis and SL HQ generally hosts three sessions per month on an assigned day. After completion of the registration process participants receive a confirmation email (see Attachment IV).

Participants register for the phone forum events through an AT&T website. AT&T tracks the number of registrants and provides SL HQ with a list of which registrants participate and how long they dialed in for the phone forum event. This list is provided to SP HQ approximately 4 hours after the completion of the phone forum event. This same list will be given to SB/SE Research for the evaluation distribution process. Participants will be notified via e-mail of the evaluation (See Attachment V). The evaluation and/or a link to a web based evaluation will be emailed to each participant along with directions on how to submit the evaluation. The participants for the NPF sessions are primarily practitioners, e.g., return preparers, the majority of whom are enrolled agents or sole practitioner CPAs who prepare Federal Income Tax returns as part of their normal tax practice. The participants may also include IRS employees. In the past year (FY07), over 12,000 people participated in ten (10) NPF sessions.

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

### Dates Collection Dates

The FY 2009 phone tax forums are held monthly throughout the United States, between October 22, 2008 and September 16, 2009.

#### Planned Data Collection Dates

October 22, 2008	Wednesday
November 19, 2008	Wednesday
December 10, 2008	Wednesday

January 21, 2009	Wednesday
February 18, 2009	Wednesday
March 18, 2009	Wednesday
May 20, 2009	Wednesday
June 17, 2009	Wednesday
July 15, 2009	Wednesday
August 19, 2009	Wednesday
September 16, 2009	Wednesday

## **Data to be Collected**

Attachment VI, “Phone Forum Event Evaluation” outlines the type of information that will be collected from participants. Primarily, SL HQ will obtain practitioner feedback on the overall quality of and satisfaction with the NPF events. Secondly, SL HQ will solicit suggestions for improvements and for future topics.

## **How Collected and Used**

NPF participants will be asked to take the evaluation via e-mail at the conclusion of each event. NPF participants will also be reminded verbally to complete the evaluation during the phone forum event.

The evaluations will be reviewed and their answers will be profiled by SB/SE Research in Philadelphia. Using descriptive statistics, the findings will be presented to SL HQ in table format. Findings will be reviewed and considered by SL HQ for improvements to the NPF and for potential topics.

## **How Data will be Analyzed**

The analysis will consist of a profile of the NPF event evaluation results.

## **Who is Conducting the Research**

SB/SE Stakeholder Headquarters (SL HQ) requested this research. The event evaluation was developed by the SB/SE Research staff in Philadelphia, PA. The evaluation will be administered and analyzed by the same research site. The results will be provided to SL HQ within 15 days after each event.

## **Location and Facility**

The NPF is a nationwide seminar. AT&T Executive Services will be used to secure 2,500 conference lines for each event for participants throughout the country.

## **Stipend**

A monetary stipend will not be offered to participants.

## **Recruitment Efforts**

All practitioners with a confirmed participation for the NPF event will be asked to complete an evaluation. SL HQ will provide the confirmed list of participants (provided by AT&T) to SB/SE Research. 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 registering for the NPFs.

## **Methods to Maximize Response Rate**

All NPF participants will be issued an evaluation notice via email. After the conclusion of the actual NPF event, participants will be verbally reminded of the evaluation. Seven days after the event, participants will be sent a reminder email requesting that they take the evaluation if they have not done so already. An example of the reminder email can be seen in Attachment VII.

## **Expected Response Rate**

Given the prior interest and participation in the NPF events, SL HQ expects to have a response rate of 50%.

## **Test Structure/Design**

Prior to distributing the evaluations, Philadelphia Research and SL HQ will conduct a pilot test using 10 participants. The purpose is to ensure that all questions and statements are interpreted similarly by all participants. Once the responses from the pilot participants are received, SBSE Research will confer with SL HQ to finalize the evaluation instrument.

The evaluation was modeled after an approved OMB "Feedback Survey" developed by TEGE for their specialty events (see Attachment VIII). The differences between the two

surveys include 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**

While “Event Feedback Surveys” are not new to the IRS, they have not been used in the context of NPF events. Since NPFs are unique to CLD –SL HQ no other NPF evaluation has been or will be issued for NPF events. The evaluation may be used in subsequent years with OMB approval.

## **Cost of Study**

The estimated cost to administer and analyze the evaluation results is \$ 28,329. This amount includes the salary of the Lead Analyst and any procured survey software.

## **Participants’ Criteria**

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

## **Privacy/Disclosure/Confidentiality/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. Confidentiality will be safeguarded. Respondents to the evaluation will not be identified to Research or SL HQ.

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.

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

## Burden Hours

SL HQ plans to issue their NPF evaluation on a monthly basis. Given the number of AT&T conference lines available from October 2008 through September 2009, there is a potential for 3,000 registered participants each month for a potential evaluation population of 33,000 people (3,000 participants per event x 11 events).

**Note: The above surveyed population could be smaller depending on when the OMB approval is received.**

The survey will take 3 minutes or less to complete. Given the above population of 33,000 participants, the total estimated public burden is 1,650 hours. However, with an expected response rate of 50% the public burden would be 825 hours.

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

Participants will not experience travel time for this study. The following tables detail the total burden calculation.

<b>Total Estimated Burden Hours</b>				
	Number of Persons	Number of NPFs	Time Estimate (Minutes)	Total Burden (Hours)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	$[(1)*(2)*(3)]/60$
Potential Survey Population	3,000	11	3	<b>1,650</b>
With an Estimated Response Rate of 50%				<b>825</b>



## **Study Contact**

For questions regarding the Evaluation, contact:

**Reuben Robinson**

Chief SB/SE Research – Philadelphia  
600 Arch Street (RM 7204)  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215) 861-1268

**Cait DeStefano**

Operations Research Analyst – Lead Analyst for the Evaluation  
SB/SE Research - Philadelphia  
600 Arch Street (RM 7204)  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215) 861-3890