

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR  
BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS  
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH HEARING SURVEY, VA Form 0745  
2900-0548**

**A. Justification**

**1. Necessity:** Executive Order 12862, issued in September 2003, mandated that all federal agencies that provide significant services directly to the public must establish and implement certain customer service standards. Subject to the Order, each agency must report on its customer surveys to the President of the United States. In response to this Executive Order, the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA or Board) implemented the use of a hearing survey card, VA Form 0745. Over 9,900 hearings were held by the Board in fiscal year 2007. The purpose of the hearing survey card is to determine the level of customer satisfaction with the way hearings are conducted. Data obtained through the information collection is used to evaluate and, if necessary, revise the way hearings are conducted in an effort to raise customer service standards.

**2. How, by Whom, and for What Purpose the Information is to be Used:** At the conclusion of each hearing, the presiding official presents the appellant with the hearing survey card and requests that he or she fill it out and mail it back to BVA. The appellant is informed that participation is voluntary, anonymous, and has no bearing on the outcome of his or her appeal. The information collected is used to assess the effectiveness of current hearing procedures and to develop better methods of serving the Board's customers, namely, veterans and their families.

**3. Use of Information Technology:** The format of the information collection, a postcard-sized questionnaire designed to be mailed in a postage-paid return envelope, does not lend itself to the use of information technology, and it would not be cost effective given the diminutive amount of information being collected. Moreover, the hearing survey card allows for "on the spot" completion, as opposed to having to log onto a computer to complete the survey, and is more likely to elicit a response.

**4. Description of Efforts to Identify Duplication:** BVA has determined that no other program is in place for assessing overall customer satisfaction with the conduct of BVA hearings.

**5. Description of Methods Used to Minimize Burden:** This information collection will not have a significant impact on small businesses or other small entities. The respondents consist only of individual appellants who have testified at a hearing.

**6. Description of the Consequence if the Collection Were Conducted Less Frequently:** Survey participation is triggered by an appellant's participation in a

hearing. Survey participation is not requested at any other time. In most cases, an appellant has only one hearing on appeal.

**7. Special Circumstances:** None.

**8. Consultation Outside the Agency:** Comments were solicited in compliance with 5 C.F.R. § 1320.8(d). *See* 73 Fed. Reg. 60406 (2008). There were no comments received. .

**9. Payments or Gifts to Respondents:** None.

**10. Description of Confidentiality:** VA complies with the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701 and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a). However, responses are anonymous and consequently are not associated with the respondent's claim for benefits.

**11. Sensitive Questions:** The questions on this form are not considered to be of a sensitive nature.

**12. Estimate of Respondent's Reporting Burden:**

In most cases, an appellant has only one hearing on appeal, and thus the appellant should only need to fill the card out once in the course of his or her appeal. The appellant is presented with the hearing survey card at the end of the hearing, with instructions to fill out the card and to mail it back to the Board. Only a small percentage of appellants return the card to the Board. Approximately 1,102 respondents returned the card to the Board in a recent twelve-month period. This accounted for approximately 10.5% of the hearings held within that period. The card takes approximately 6 minutes to read, fill out, and mail. Forms are completed by individual appellants, whose earning capacity covers an extremely wide spectrum. We have used \$28.46 per hour as the estimated hourly cost.<sup>1</sup>

<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Hours per Response</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Cost per hour</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
1,102	6 minutes	110	\$28.46	\$3,130.60

<sup>1</sup> This figure is equal to the wage and salary component of the average employer costs for employee compensation for civilian workers in private industry and State and local government in the United States. United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics News Release 08-0788, June 11, 2008. <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.nr0.htm>> The assumption is that most fringe benefits are covered by existing employment and that theoretical lost opportunity income would likely not produce significant additional fringe benefits.

**13. Estimate of Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Recordkeepers from Collection of Information:**

There should be no costs to respondents other than those identified in question 12. No ongoing accumulation of information, or special purchase of services, supplies or equipment, is required.

**14. Estimated Annual Cost to the Federal Government:**

The cost for printing the cards equals approximately \$.424 per card. One card is used per hearing. Over 9,900 hearings were held in Fiscal Year 2007, and the number is expected to steadily increase in the next few years. VA estimates that it will distribute approximately 10,500 cards per year. The cost to the government when a respondent mails the card back to the Board is \$0.36 per card.

When the survey cards are received at the Board, the data is compiled by two BVA employees, including a GS-5 program support assistant and a GS-11 program analyst. Each employee spends approximately 5 hours per month (60 hours per year) compiling the data and generating reports analyzing the data.

<b>Position &amp; Grade</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>Total</b>
BVA Program Analyst – GS-11	\$31.61 <sup>2</sup>	60		\$1,896.60
BVA Program Support Specialist – GS-5	17.24 <sup>3</sup>	60		1,034.40
			Postage (1,102 x \$0.36)	396.72
			Printing 10,500 cards (10,500 x \$.424)	4,452.00
			<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$7,779.72</b>

**15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments:**

There are no program changes, but there is a program adjustment. The adjustment in burden hours is due to an increase in the number of respondents returning the survey card back to the Board.

<sup>2</sup> Salary Table 2008-DCB, Office of Personnel Management.

<sup>3</sup> Salary Table 2008-DCB, Office of Personnel Management.

**16. Tabulation, Statistical Analysis, and Publication Plans:** The information will be collected for internal program use. No plans currently exist to publish survey results, however, if requested by a Veterans' Service Organization or others, statistical analysis results will be made available.

**17. Reason for Seeking Approval Not to Display Expiration Date for OMB Approval of the Information Collection:** Display of an expiration date on survey instruments would result in unnecessary waste of stock.

**18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement:** None.