

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Financial Services Center (FSC) is a Franchise Fund and operates on a fee for service basis. The FSC provides financial services to an array of Federal agencies. In order to improve customer relationships and service quality, the FSC conducts annual surveys to gauge customer satisfaction on various FSC products and services. The FSC willingly conducts annual surveys in an effort to improve customer service and create more efficient business processes.
2. The information gathered in the surveys is used to improve FSC customer services. Survey results are used by FSC management only in an effort to refine current business processes. Customer responses give insight to FSC management and allow management to make informed decisions that directly impact their customers. Surveys contain a variety of questions ranging from how often would customers like to hear from the FSC to how long do customers have to wait before speaking to an FSC representative. Changes to FSC customer services are made based on the positive and negative feedback received.
3. The FSC surveys are sent out electronically. The FSC uses Qualtric to format and conduct each FSC customer survey. Qualtric is an online survey collection tool that enables the FSC to easily design electronic surveys. Customers receive an email containing a survey link. Customers are encouraged to participate in the FSC survey and are instructed to either click on the link or cut and paste it into their Web browser. The link takes customers directly to the survey where they can complete and submit the survey with the click of a mouse. Qualtric records each response in real time and converts survey responses into downloadable reports. The FSC chose to use Qualtric for several reasons. First, it offers a cost effective method for customers to evaluate the FSC's services. Customers do not have to spend more than 5 minutes completing a survey and are spared the hassle of dealing with a traditional paper survey. The electronic method saves the FSC money in postage as well as preparatory time folding and addressing each survey. Second, the use of Qualtric does not require storage or use of FSC technical resources. All information and survey results are maintained off site on Qualtric's servers. The FSC does not need to deal with firewall and security issues when it sends out a customer survey. Since the customers are going to a Website not maintained by the FSC, there is no threat of a security breach to the FSC. Third, survey results are recorded in real time and contain a timestamp for each recorded response. Responses are converted into a downloadable report complete with bar graphs and pie charts. Qualtric has a ballot stuffing feature that does not allow the same person to submit a survey more than once by recording each computer's internet protocol (IP) address. Only one IP address can submit a survey. The use of Qualtric has decreased workload burden for both customers and FSC. Since surveys are electronic and sent directly to customers via e-mail, customers can go straight to the survey by clicking on the survey link directly in the email.

4. The FSC sends out product and service surveys on an annual basis. With each survey, changes are made to current FSC business processes. It is important to send out a new survey each year to allow customers the opportunity to evaluate the FSC on its improvement efforts. The FSC would not gain any valuable knowledge about its performance if it did not send out a new survey each year. Since each survey contains questions about the past years performance and new service features, customers would not be evaluating the current year's efforts with an out of date survey.
5. FSC survey collection does not impact small businesses.
6. There is no consequence to Federal programs or policy activities if the FSC surveys less frequently. On the contrary, FSC customers prefer to be surveyed less frequently. There are no legal or technical obstacles to reduce burden.
7. There are no circumstances that require customers to complete a survey more than once a quarter. FSC surveys do not require written responses. Customers click on the descriptive that best describes their experience; i.e. Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Neutral, Somewhat Dissatisfied, and Very Dissatisfied. Since the surveys are electronic, there is no need to copy the survey or submit a paper version of the survey. Only one survey is needed and only one survey response can be recorded per survey participant. None of the FSC's surveys requires the participants to retain records for any of the above. Retention for more than three years is not applicable. FSC surveys do not ask for personal information such as social security numbers or home addresses. Surveys are anonymous and are not mandatory. Customers are not asked, nor required, to submit any proprietary trade secrets or any other confidential information.
8. Notice of a proposed information collection was published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2008 at pages 64015-64016. There were no comments received.
9. Survey participants are not provided with any payment or gift for completing a FSC survey.
10. The FSC notifies potential survey respondents that all responses are confidential and anonymous.
11. The FSC does not ask personal questions of this nature. All questions are limited to work related tasks of the FSC such as how satisfied customers are with the speed of response time when calling, wait time to reach a FSC employee, and satisfaction with the quality of FSC products.
12. FSC estimates one survey response from each customer. However, not all customers participate in the surveys. Based on past participation, the FSC estimates at least 500 total survey responses. Each survey takes approximately 5 minutes or less to complete for a total of 42 burden hours $((500 \times 5) / 60 = 41.6)$.

There is no cost to FSC customers to take the survey. It is very difficult to estimate an approximate cost using calculated wage rates due to the fact that the wages FSC customers earn vary greatly. FSC customer grades range anywhere from a GS-5 to SES personnel.

13. This submission does not involve any recordkeeping cost.

14. To use Qualtric, the FSC incurs an annual cost of \$2,750 per year. This all inclusive fee covers Qualtric administrative fees, unlimited surveys, reports, data storage, and customer support. There is no additional printing or operational expenses since Qualtric is Web based.

15. . There is no change in burden.

16. The result of survey information will not be published in magazines or reports. FSC management will use the results of the survey only as a guide for improving work processes. The surveys will be conducted on an annual basis.

17. VA is requesting an exemption in not displaying an expiration date since the surveys will be collected electronically. VA will continue to seek an approval for the data collection every three years.

18. There are no such exceptions to item 19.

B. This submission does not employ statistical methods.