

DOCUMENTATION FOR THE GENERIC CLEARANCE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Office Visitor Survey

SSA SUB-NUMBER: D-02

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY (*give purpose of activity, provide specific information; i.e., date(s) of survey, number of focus groups, locations, etc.*):

BACKGROUND:

The Social Security Administration (SSA) annually surveys individuals who do business with us to assess their satisfaction with the specific mode of contact they used. As part of this effort, we will conduct the FY 2010 Office Visitor Survey, in which we will survey members of the public who visited one of SSA's field offices (FO) or hearings offices (HO) to complete their business.

We have designed the survey, which we will conduct shortly after the participant visits the FO/HO, to 1) assess public perception of the in-person service provided by SSA FOs/HOs and 2) collect information that helps SSA understand the customer experience behind satisfaction ratings. The Office Visitor Survey is one of three annual surveys (along with the 800 Number Caller and Field Office Caller surveys) that SSA uses to produce its performance indicator, "percent of individuals doing business with SSA who rate overall service excellent, very good or good."

SURVEY:

Description of Survey

The Office Visitor Survey uses a brief, scannable questionnaire that SSA mails out to selected respondents. When SSA receives the completed surveys, we forward them to our contractors, who scan them and prepare a data file of survey results. SSA then computes data tabulations and conducts an analysis of the survey findings.

To ensure a higher response rate, SSA will send a Pre-Notice postcard letting participants know they will soon be receiving a survey. Some time after we send the survey, we will mail out a follow-up postcard to remind participants about the survey and encourage them to complete it.

The survey will cover multiple FO/HO visit customer satisfaction questions, including the following:

- Satisfaction with office location, hours, signs and instructions, comfort, appearance, privacy, and waiting time;

- Satisfaction with the performance of SSA employees, including their helpfulness, courtesy, job knowledge and clarity of explanations;
- Whether the person was able to take care of all business completely during the visit;
- The person's overall satisfaction with the service received during the visit;
- The person's service preferences for future business, including questions about use of the Internet for SSA business.

We have attached a copy of the questionnaire and the accompanying survey correspondence to this submission. This attached version is identical to the last approved version, except for the following changes:

- In Question 9, we revised "waiting time to be helped" to "waiting time to be served in the office." The new wording makes it clearer that the question is referring to the actual physical waiting time and not referring to how long the customer may wait for SSA to resolve a problem.
- In Question 10, we revised the first time interval from "less than 10 minutes" to "up to 10 minutes." This wording more accurately describes waiting times of 10 minutes or less.

Statistical Information

Sample Selection and Methodology

SSA maintains over 1,300 FOs and 140 HOs that serve over 40 million visitors annually. We select 52 FOs and 13 HOs to participate in the Office Visitor Survey each year. We use random, stratified selection to select FOs to ensure representation of each of SSA's 10 regions. We select HOs randomly on a national level.

We randomly assign each sampled office one week within a 4-week survey period to record identifying information for every office visitor who conducts business with SSA. The receptionist records each visitor's name, address, telephone number, language preference, and customer segment (which identifies the type of business the visitor conducted) into a database.

At the end of each work day, the office sends a file containing the visitor information collected that day to the Office of Quality Performance (OQP) statistical staff in Central Office. OQP selects a random sample of 275 FO customers from each day's visitors, proportional to the number of visitors in each office that day, plus 35 HO visitors, to participate in the survey. This results in approximately 5,890 sampled customers who receive a questionnaire during the course of the survey. OQP combines the files, selects the sample cases, and transmits the names and addresses of survey participants to the contractor, who prints and mails the survey questionnaire. We repeat the sampling process on each business day of the 4-week period.

Response Rate

SSA takes the following steps to maximize response rates for this survey:

- To minimize the time between the customers' service experience and the survey, thereby ensuring salience, we select samples daily and transmit them to the contractor within 2-3 business days of the FO/HO visit.
- We mail out a Pre-Notice postcard a few days after sample selection to inform participants that 1) we have selected them for the survey and 2) they should be on the lookout for the envelope containing the questionnaire. Using a postcard format allows the recipient to quickly see that the survey is sanctioned by SSA. Additionally, the postcard identifies the contractor who is conducting the survey for SSA, which should increase the likelihood that participants will open the envelope when they receive the questionnaire.
- We mail out the actual survey questionnaire within 3 business days of sending the Pre-Notice postcard. An SSA official signs an enclosed cover letter, which encourages the individual to respond by emphasizing the importance of the survey and the confidentiality of the responses.
- Five business days after the first mailing, we mail out a follow-up letter and a duplicate questionnaire to all individuals in the sample. We do not send more than one follow-up because responses for service satisfaction surveys must be obtained shortly after the date of the contact (while respondents' perceptions are still fresh) to ensure their validity and utility.
- The questionnaire is short and has an eye-catching title. We have designed the scannable questionnaire for ease of use by an aged and disabled population, e.g., font sizes are large, difficult fill-in bubbles are not used.
- We will send a Spanish version of the survey to those visitors identified in the sample selection process as preferring doing business in Spanish.

Using methods similar to these, we have achieved a consistent response rate of approximately 50 percent response rate with past Office Visitor Surveys. These response rates are the highest possible considering that time permits only a limited number of contacts. We expect to achieve an equally good response rate in the upcoming survey.

Sampling Variability

The sample size of 5,890 is large enough, assuming a 50 percent response rate, to provide a sampling variability at the 95-percent confidence level of +/-1.1 percent for the key indicator of overall satisfaction (which was 88 percent in the most recent Office Visitor Survey).

The Office of Quality Performance (OQP) will perform all sampling and data analysis. Dan Zabronsky, Director of SSA's Division of Modeling in OQP, provides statistical support, and is available for discussion of statistical-related issues.

IF FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A PAYMENT, INDICATE AMOUNT:

We will not compensate participants for this survey.

USE OF SURVEY RESULTS:

SSA will use the results of this survey to evaluate and improve various aspects of its FO and HO service. In addition, we will use the study results in combination with results from the Field Office Caller and 800 Number Caller surveys to report a combined performance indicator of customer satisfaction for the agency each year.

BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION (*Number of responses (X) estimated response time (/60) = annual burden hours*):

Number of Responses: 5,890

Estimated Response Time: 5 minutes

Annual Burden Hours: 491 hours

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