

**OMB SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**STUDY TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**  
**FIELD ASSISTANCE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY– CY2011**  
**JANUARY 1, 2011 - DECEMBER 31, 2011**  
**TIRNO-10-Z-00010**

## **Introduction**

IRS engages a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. The Field Assistance function within the Customer Assistance, Relationships and Education (CARE) Operating Unit of Wage and Investment (W&I) Business Operating Division (BOD) is responsible for service delivery from the 401 Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) field offices serving walk-in customers. The overall goal of this task request is to provide meaningful feedback to managers and staff in those field offices. This initiative is part of the Service-wide system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862, which requires all government agencies to survey their customers and incorporate customer preferences in their process improvement efforts.

The key goals of the Field Assistance Customer Satisfaction Survey are:

1. to survey external customers on an on-going basis regarding their expectations of the TAC offices;
2. to track customer satisfaction at all TAC offices nationwide; and
3. to identify customer satisfaction improvement opportunities.

## **Methodology**

### **Sample Design**

The IRS has been measuring customer satisfaction in the TACs since January 1998 using a survey card. Every taxpayer who requires a wait ticket from the Q-matic system is given a comment card. Taxpayers are instructed to leave completed surveys in a drop box and the TACs mail them to the data collection subcontractor for processing. The objective of the comment card will be to gauge customer expectations and perceptions about services offered at the TACs. Every customer will have the opportunity to complete the customer comment card. The results should facilitate more effective management of W&I Field Assistance by:

- Providing insight from the customer's perspective about possible improvements.
- Providing useful input for program evaluation and execution at the programmatic and field office level of service delivery.

The comment card survey will be based upon approximately 6 million taxpayers who visit TACs during a calendar year. The comment cards are continually available to taxpayers and it is the taxpayer's choice to pick up a comment card. The typical response rate ranges from 5% - 7% of the total walk-in volume. Additional cards will be distributed to the TACs if more taxpayers than expected are taking the opportunity to complete the comment card. The contractor will receive 650,000 cards in CY2011 and scan half. The contractor will also complete a national-level report three times a year, which will summarize the findings.

**Data to be Collected**

Field Assistance customer satisfaction respondent data is collected.

**How Data Collected & Used**

The Survey data is collected via a Customer Comment Card paper questionnaire. Survey scoring for this contract is based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – “Overall satisfaction with service.” Questions utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. All survey responses are released only as summaries. The contractor shall hold the identities of the taxpayers responding to the survey private to the extent permitted by law.

The Field Assistance Customer Satisfaction Survey has already been developed and is currently in use. The survey is conducted via the comment card from which the data is collected and used for analysis and reporting by the contractor. Completion of the survey takes approximately two minutes. It contains a standard set of questions, but allows for an open-ended question. The contract allows for data collection by means of a computerized kiosk and phone options that may be exercised. Exercising this optional task(s) will provide an opportunity to explore increasing the response rate for this study. The estimated burden hours will remain the same due to the same questions being used with the various data collection modes. A report for each of the three planning periods per year will maintain the ability to compare results over time. Changes that impact the meaning of questions will occur minimally.

**Dates of Collection Begin/End**

Data collection runs the 2011 calendar year from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

**Who is Conducting the Research/Where**

The survey is conducted by Pacific Consulting Group from the 401 TAC offices throughout the United States. The comment card data is transferred by the field offices to the contractor to prepare the data for analysis and reporting.

**Cost of Study**

The estimated cost for this survey is \$401,913.00.

**Expected Response Rate**

The expected response rate is 6%.

**Methods to Maximize Response Rate**

The comment card has traditionally had a low response rate given that an estimated 6% of the approximately 6 million TAC walk-in customers completed the questionnaire in previous years. However, this contract includes optional tasks to test additional methods of data collection in an attempt to increase the response rate. Optional tasks for a computer assisted kiosk in selected TACs and an optional task to call a toll-free phone line for an Interactive

Voice Response (IVR) system will provide opportunity to explore other data collection methods with a view to increase the response rate. A web-based survey optional task will also be considered in an effort to maximize the response rate. The taxpayer burden will remain the same as the same survey questions will be used and comment cards will not be available at the test locations. Respondents are assured anonymity of their responses. Also, weighting procedures can be applied to adjust aggregated data from those who do respond.

### **Test Structure and Design**

The Field Assistance Comment Card questionnaire is an established and tested survey instrument. If changes are made to the questionnaire, only minor changes are expected. Revising the coding scheme for open-ended questions is an example.

### **Efforts to not Duplicate Research**

The Field Assistance Customer Satisfaction survey is currently the only study being conducted with the TAC customers by W&I CARE.

### **Participants Criteria**

Walk-in TAC customers (taxpayers) participate in the survey by completing a paper comment card survey and leave completed surveys in a drop box. The TACs mail them to the data collection contractor for processing.

### **Privacy, Disclosure and Security Issues**

The IRS 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 participants will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A7B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Audiotapes are stored in locked cabinets. Transcription of audiotapes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at the appropriate levels has been accomplished. Systems are password protected, users profiled for authorized use, and individual audit trails generated and reviewed periodically. The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record keeping practices to ensure privacy protection of all participants. This includes criterion for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients. Privacy will be safeguarded; participants will not be identified to IRS personnel. In addition, no participant names will be mentioned in the reports or data files. Participants will be advised that comments will be audio taped. Privacy is assured by virtue of agency policy.

Pursuant to the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), Title III of the E-Government Act of 2002, P.L. 107-347, the contractor shall provide minimum security controls required to protect Federal information and information systems. The term ‘information security’ means protecting information and information systems from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction in order to provide anonymity, integrity and availability.

The contractor shall provide information security protections commensurate with the risk and magnitude of the harm resulting from the unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information collected or maintained by or on behalf of the agency; or information systems used or operated by an agency or by a contractor of an agency. This applies to individuals and organizations having contractual arrangements with the IRS, including employees, contractors, vendors, and outsourcing providers, which use or operate information technology systems containing IRS data. The contractor shall comply with Department of Treasury Directive TD P 85-01, Treasury Security Manual TDP 71-10, and Internal Revenue Manual 10.8.1 Information Technology Security Policy and Guidance. The contractor shall comply with IRS Internal Revenue Manuals (IRM) and Law Enforcement Manuals (LEM) when developing or administering IRS information and information systems. The contractor shall comply with the Taxpayer Browsing Protection Act of 1997 - Unauthorized Access (UNAX), the Act amends the Internal Revenue Code 6103 of 1986 to prevent the unauthorized inspection of taxpayer returns or tax return information. Contractors systems that collect, maintain, operate or use agency information or an information system on behalf of the agency (a General Support System (GSS), Major or Minor Application with a FIPS 199 security categorization) must ensure annual reviews, risk assessments, security plans, control testing, a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), contingency planning, and certification and accreditation, at a minimum meet NIST guidance, if required by the IRS.

The contractor shall be subject to at the option / discretion of the agency, to periodically test, (but no less than annually) and evaluate the effectiveness of information security controls and techniques. The assessment of information security controls may be performed by an agency independent auditor, security team or Inspector General, and shall include testing of management, operational, and technical controls of every information system that maintain, collect, operate or use federal information on behalf of the agency. The agency and contractor shall document and maintain a remedial action plan, also known as a Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) to address any deficiencies identified during the test and evaluation. The contractor must cost-effectively reduce information security risks to an acceptable level within the scope, terms and conditions of the contract. The contractor shall maintain procedures for detecting, reporting, and responding to security incidents, and mitigating risks associated with such incidents before substantial damage is done to federal information or information systems. The contractor shall immediately report all computer security incidents that involve IRS information systems to the IRS Computer Security Incident Response Center (CSIRC). Any theft or loss of IT equipment with federal information / data must be reported within one hour of the incident to CSIRC. Those incidents involving the loss or theft of sensitive but unclassified (SBU) data (i.e. taxpayer, PII) shall be reported to CSIRC, first-line manager, and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA). Based on the computer security incident type, CSIRC may further notify the Treasury Computer Security Incident Response Capability (TCSIRC) in accordance with TCSIRC procedures.

### **Burden Hours**

The survey instrument is designed to minimize burden on the taxpayer. The time that a respondent takes to complete the comment card survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The average time to complete the survey is

2 minutes. The questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

We have made every attempt in designing this comment card to maximize response rate. Using the response rate of 6% of the total walk-in volume (6 million annually), the total burden in hours is estimated to be 12,000 hours (360,000 surveys x 2 minutes / 60 minutes).

There are no burden hours for non-respondents. The total number of burden hours is estimated to be 12,000 hours.

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### **Attachments**

Field Assistance Comment Card Survey