

**OMB Supporting Statement Study  
to Measure Customer Satisfaction of the Automated Collection  
System Support (ACS Support)  
April 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011**

## **Introduction**

### **Background/Overview**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) engages a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. The Automated Collection System Support (ACS Support) within the Compliance Operating Unit of the Wage and Investment (W&I) Division is responsible for resolving taxpayer accounts using correspondence in a method that reduces taxpayer burden and increases voluntary compliance. ACS Support resolves taxpayer balance due accounts and unfiled returns. As an important customer interface for W&I, ACS Support needs feedback from its customers (i.e., taxpayers) to continuously improve operations.

### **Objectives of Data Collection**

The ACS Support customer satisfaction survey project has three primary goals to:

- Survey external customers on an ongoing basis regarding their expectations of ACS Support;
- Track customer satisfaction at the two W&I sites; and
- Identify operational improvements. The Automated Collection System Support (ACS Support)

Customer Satisfaction Survey results are also used to track changes in customer satisfaction attributable to specific changes made to this service, such as modifying correspondence or improving service provided by ACS Support staff.

## **Methodology**

### **Sample Design**

The contractor prepares a formal sampling plan for the survey. For purposes of budgeting this task request, the contractor stratifies the sample for the two W&I ACS support sites selecting 7,694 taxpayers for the nine month period spanning April through December 2011 closed cases, (3,847 taxpayers per site for the nine-month period). Based on historical information, approximately 35% of the sample includes unqualified respondents (bad telephone number, or did not remember receiving correspondence from the IRS concerning balance due or unfiled return); this leaves approximately 5,000 qualified respondents. The goal is to achieve a total of 1,000 completed questionnaires for the nine-month period (500 per site). The contractor recommends a sample size that provides a 95% confidence level for results at the site level annually.

Each month, the project contractor draws a stratified random sample from the sampling database in accordance with the sampling plan. This sample is provided to the data collection contractor for survey administration. At the end of each month's survey administration, the data collection contractor provides the project contractor with a cleansed data set containing both survey responses and open-ended comments coded according to a coding scheme

supplied by the project contractor, linked with the issue identification number for analysis.

The project contractor develops the coding scheme for open-ended comments and provides it to the data collection contractor.

### **Data to be Collected**

ACS Support taxpayer customer satisfaction respondent data is collected.

### **How Data Collected & Used**

The data collection contractor administers the survey by telephone on a monthly basis. The project contractor monitors the survey's progress in conjunction with the data collection contractor. Standard procedures are used in order to obtain the highest response rate possible for this telephone survey.

The project contractor provides:

- Analysis of the open-ended drill-down questions;
- Monthly raw data to designated IRS personnel;
- Raw data in SPSS and Excel formats quarterly to IRS; and
- Cleansed data files and open-ended comments quarterly.

The contractor includes any relevant database variables in the analysis and weights the survey responses to accurately reflect the entire customer base.

Scoring for this contract is based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – “Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the final outcome, please rate your overall satisfaction with the way your tax issue was handled by the IRS during this latest contact?” 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 ACS Support Customer Satisfaction Survey has already been developed and is currently in use. The survey is conducted via outbound telephone calls. Completion of the survey takes less than 10 minutes. It contains a standard set of questions, but allows certain “drill down” questions that vary as needed. To maintain the ability to compare results from quarter to quarter, changes that impact the meaning of questions will occur minimally.

### **Dates of Collection Begin/End**

Data collection runs through nine months of the 2011 calendar year from April 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

**Who is Conducting the Research/Where**

The contractor is responsible for administering the telephone survey, pulling the sample, conducting data analysis and creation of reports.

**Cost of Study**

The estimated cost for this survey is \$123,970.

**Expected Response Rate**

The expected response rate is 20%. The expected response rate on this survey is lower than the OMB 50% target rate since the sample consists of taxpayers with compliance issues, whose issue was not resolved by going through the ACS function. They either owe money to the IRS or have unfiled tax returns. This group of taxpayers generally doesn't seek out the IRS. In addition, there are no incentives offered to encourage taxpayers to respond to the survey.

With regard to the low response rate, the IRS will assume that all data collected from this survey is qualitative in nature, and that no critical decisions will be made by this office solely from the analysis of data from this survey. The results from this survey are simply one piece of a larger set of information needed to assess the needs related to services provided by the IRS.

**Methods to Maximize Response Rate**

The questionnaire length is minimized to reduce respondent burden; thereby, tending to increase response rates. 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 ACS Support questionnaire is an established and tested survey instrument. If changes are made to the questionnaire, they are expected to be minor.

**Efforts to avoid Duplicate Research**

The ACS Support Customer Satisfaction survey is currently the only study being conducted with the ACS Support customers by W&I Compliance.

**Participants Criteria**

Study participants were pulled from the ACS Support closed cases from each of the two sites. These individuals received correspondence from the IRS regarding a balance owed or an unfiled tax return.

**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 privacy, 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 interview is designed to minimize burden on the taxpayer. The time that a respondent takes to complete the phone survey is carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The average time of survey completion is expected to be less than 10 minutes. The questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

Based on a sample of potential qualified respondents of 5,000 for the nine-month period, and a response rate of 20%, we expect approximately 1,000 survey participants, leaving 4,000 non-participants. The contact time to determine non-participants could take up to one minute, with the resulting burden for non-participants being  $4,000 \times 1 \text{ minute} = 4,000/60 \text{ minutes} = \underline{67 \text{ burden hours}}$ .

For participants, the time to complete the survey is 11 minutes. This reflects the time to get into the automated survey (1 minute) as well as the time to complete the survey (10 minutes maximum). The time burden for participants being  $1,000 \times 11 \text{ minutes}/60 \text{ minutes} = \underline{183 \text{ burden hours}}$ .

Thus the total burden hours for the survey would be  $(67 + 183) \underline{250 \text{ burden hours}}$ .

### **Attachments**

ACS Support Survey