

Supporting Statement
Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction Research (OMB #1545-1432)
TE/GE Examination and Determination Mail Surveys

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

IRS has replaced the traditional measures of accomplishment with a balanced measurement system, consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction, to assess how well it is achieving its mission and objectives. The IRS Tax Exempt and Government Entities division (TE/GE) has administered four ongoing monthly mail surveys since 2001. TE/GE collects feedback from four customer segments: Employee Plan (EP) Determination, Exempt Organization (EO) Determination, EP Examination, and EO Examination. Beginning in 2007, TE/GE began collecting feedback from another customer segment: Federal, State, and Local Government (FSLG) Examination. EP and EO Determination customers are those that have submitted an application to TE/GE to be determined tax exempt. EP, EO, and FLSG Examination customers are Plans, Organizations, and Government Entities that have been examined (audited) by TE/GE. TE/GE collects feedback from these five customer segments to identify what TE/GE can do to improve service, to track progress in improving customer satisfaction over time, and to identify improvement opportunities.

TE/GE's FY2012 statement of work covers four quarters of survey administration; October 2011 through September 2012 closed cases, and three option years. TE/GE will begin administering the five questionnaires beginning with October's closed cases November 2011. TE/GE will have the analysis and survey findings in March 2013. This clearance package will cover the same period of administration.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

Improving agency programs requires ongoing assessment of service delivery, by which we mean systematic review of the operation of a program compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the continuous improvement of the program. TE/GE will collect, analyze, and interpret information gathered to identify strengths and weaknesses of current services and make improvements in service delivery based on feedback. The solicitation of feedback will target areas such as: timeliness, communication, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency of service delivery, and resolution of issues with service delivery. Responses will be assessed to plan and inform efforts to improve or maintain the quality of service offered to the public. If this information is not collected, vital feedback from customers and stakeholders on TE/GE services will be unavailable.

By conducting this survey, TE/GE expects to accomplish the following objectives:

- Track customer satisfaction with the Determination and Examination process over time.
- Identify which customer characteristics most influence satisfaction ratings

- Identify areas where improvements will have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction

From the survey responses, TE/GE will be able to assess the current level of customer satisfaction with our programs and draw on customer input to improve our services.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

TE/GE does not collect email addresses from our customers so, unfortunately, an online survey is not doable.

4. Duplication of Information

This survey will provide valuable information that is not available in any internal IRS data source.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

NA

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

Without this feedback, TE/GE will not have timely information to adjust its services to meet customer needs.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. The information collected will be voluntary and will not be used for statistical purposes.

8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency

NA

9. Payment or Gift

TE/GE will not provide payment or other forms of remuneration to respondents.

10. Confidentiality

No PII will be collected during the survey.

11. Sensitive Nature

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Burden of Information Collection

The estimated time to complete the survey is eight minutes, but some variation in the length of time required to answer the survey is expected. Assuming a 37 percent response rate, the total annual burden hours requested (681 hrs) are based on the number of collections we expect to conduct over the requested period for this clearance (cases closed between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012).

13. Costs to Respondents

No costs are anticipated.

14. Costs to Federal Government

\$152,000

15. Reason for Change

Not applicable.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

Feedback collected provides useful information, but it does not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. Findings will be used for general service improvement, but are not for publication or other public release.

Although TE/GE does not intend to publish its findings, TE/GE may receive requests to release the information (e.g., congressional inquiry, Freedom of Information Act requests). TE/GE will disseminate the findings when appropriate, strictly following IRS' "Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of Information Disseminated to the Public.", and will include specific discussion of the limitation of the qualitative results discussed above.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

We are requesting no exemption.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

The primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The contractor will send the questionnaires to a census of all EP, EO, and FSLG Examination customers based on the extract of monthly closed cases received from the IRS. The EP, EO, and FSLG Examination extract is derived from the Audit Information Management System (AIMS) database consisting of organizations whose employee benefit plan(s), exempt organization, or government entity has been examined and their cases closed. Cases closed by the Appeals division, cases closed with either of two disposal codes (claims allowed in full and referrals to other Operating Divisions), and cases with international address are excluded from the sample.

For EP and EO Determination customers, a monthly sample of 400 each is selected from the extract of monthly closed cases sent from the IRS. The contractor will stratify the sample by cases closed on merit and cases closed that required contact to produce survey estimates with at least 90% confidence interval and 5% precision for each type on a semi-annual basis. The EP and EO Determination extract is derived from the Employee Plans/Exempt Organizations Determination System (EDS) database of employee plans and organizations who have submitted an application to be determined tax-exempt and their cases closed. For EO, cases that are closed with codes of no remittance and correction disposal, requests that are amendments, termination of exempt status, or returned post-review, and international addresses are excluded from the sample. For EP, cases that are closed with codes of Form 5310A and correction disposal, requests for Notice of Merger and Notice of Qualified Separate Line of Business, and international address are excluded from the sample. Also, the contractor will not send a questionnaire to any customer that received one in the last six months (three months for EP Determination customers).

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The same mailing procedures currently in place will be used for these five questionnaires. The fielding methods and structure mirror the Dillman approach (Dillman, "The Tailored Design Method", 1999). Customers will receive an advance letter from the Commissioner informing them of the survey, they will then receive a letter with the questionnaire followed by a reminder postcard. Lastly, non-respondents will receive an additional letter and questionnaire. Each survey mailing will contain a return postage paid envelope. The survey instrument contains rating questions, demographics, and space for an open-ended comment.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Following up:

As a reminder to complete the survey, a follow-up postcard will be sent to all who received the first survey. A few weeks later, a second mailing of the survey will be sent to only those who did not return the first survey yet. These multiple waves of mailings aim to maximize the response rates.

4. Testing of Procedures

N/A – it's a mail survey.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

Michelle Pendzick in the Strategy & Planning Office, TE/GE manages all of the customer satisfaction survey. Michelle may be contacted at 202-683-9195 or by email at michelle.penzick@irs.gov.