

**Supporting Statement**  
**Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction Research**  
**(OMB #1545-1432)**  
**November 2011**

**A. Justification**

**1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary**

Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. In order to work continuously to ensure that our programs are effective and meet our customers' needs, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) seeks to obtain OMB approval of a generic clearance to collect qualitative feedback on our service delivery. By qualitative feedback we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions, but are not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population of study.

This collection of information is necessary to enable the IRS to garner customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with our commitment to improving service delivery. The information collected from our customers and stakeholders will help ensure that users have an effective, efficient, and satisfying experience with the IRS's programs. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with service, or focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between the IRS and its customers and stakeholders. It will also allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

**2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection**

The Virtual Service Delivery ("VSD") Project is an opportunity to test the feasibility of providing virtual service to taxpayers in the Appeals process at a Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC) via video conferencing technology. This technology will initially be tested in two LITCs that are each partnered with with a separate IRS Campus Appeals office. Both Field Assistance and the Taxpayer Advocacy Service are piloting similar technology in FY 2012.

The objective of the project is to provide taxpayers who are in the appeals process with alternative service delivery methods. This will allow the IRS to enhance the utilization of their current resources and providing access to face-to-face service interaction where currently unavailable.

The overall objective of the survey is gather data that will provide Appeals with information on the satisfaction of the newly implemented virtual service delivery from the taxpayers' and LITC's perspective.

Specific research questions include:

Are customers willing to use the technology?

What are customers' satisfaction levels with virtual service delivery?

The data collected will only be used internally for service improvement. The results of the review will be used to determine the success of the VSD Project and determine its impact on customer service. Overall, the project and survey will help inform future decisions on whether it is beneficial to expand the virtual service delivery option.

### **3. Consideration Given to Information Technology**

The surveys do not have a Web component because online administration is cost prohibitive.

### **4. Duplication of Information**

No similar data are gathered or maintained by WIRA or are available from other sources known to the WIRA.

### **5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities**

Small businesses or other small entities are not involved in this research study.

### **6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection**

Without collecting taxpayer feedback about the VSD Project, the IRS would not have timely information that could be used to identify potential areas where service improvements could be made.

### **7. Special Circumstances**

N/A

### **8. Consultations with Persons Outside WIRA**

N/A

### **9. Payment or Gift**

The IRS will not provide payment or other forms of remuneration to survey respondents.

### **10. Confidentiality**

No personally identifiable information (PII) will be collected. Wage and Investment, Research and Analysis (WIRA) personnel will ensure the privacy, disclosure, and security of the survey results as allowed by law. Public and official access to the information will be tightly controlled as stipulated by the security requirements of the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130.

### **11. Sensitive Nature**

The surveys will not contain any questions that are of a sensitive nature.

### **12. Burden of Information Collection**

The VSD Customer Satisfaction Survey is designed to minimize burden. The average time of survey completion is expected to be less than 5 minutes. The questions are generally on an elementary concept level and the structure is usually one sentence. Additionally, when designing the survey, we considered the amount of time it would take to complete the questionnaire. Accordingly, only the most important areas are being surveyed and each survey question ties back to a research question.

Based on a potential sample of 250 and a response rate of 30 percent, we estimate 75 respondents. The burden hour estimate follows below.

### Estimated Burden Hours

Virtual Service Delivery Customer Satisfaction Survey =  
 Read invitation at top of survey 250 x 1 minute= 4.16 hours  
 75 respond to survey x 5 minutes = 6.25 hours

### Total Burden – 10.41 hours

Type of Collection	Number of Respondents	Minutes per Response	Total Hours
Invitation to Participate	250	1	4.16
Survey	75	5	6.25

### 13. Costs to Respondents

No costs are anticipated for respondents.

### 14. Costs to Federal Government

WIRA estimates that the total costs will include survey administration and data collection:  
 \$200(contractor cost)

### 15. Reason for Change

N/A

### 16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

WIRA will summarize the quantitative ratings of all survey items and create a report that presents the findings from the survey data. All relevant variables (from the survey) will be included in the analysis, and the survey responses will be weighted as necessary. Again, the findings are intended to improve taxpayer services provided by the IRS. WIRA will perform the following analyses for the report:

- Survey counts and overall response rates
- Frequencies for all survey items
- Levels of customer satisfaction for various aspects of service delivery
- Analysis of the relationship between survey responses

- Analysis of the open-ended questions

While the WIRA does not intend to publish its findings, WIRA may receive requests to release the information (e.g., congressional inquiry, Freedom of Information Act requests). WIRA will disseminate the findings when appropriate, following IRS's guidelines to disseminating information to the public.

### **17. Display of OMB Approval Date**

We are not requesting an exemption.

### **18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

The data collection activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

## **B. Statistical Methods**

### **1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

Every taxpayer who receives assistance from Appeals through Virtual Service will be offered the survey. The sample for the VSD Project will include every taxpayer who received and participated in a virtual assistance call and who completed the survey.

### **2. Procedures for Collecting Information**

The Virtual Assistance customer satisfaction survey will be administered at the Low Income Tax Clinic “partnered” site after every taxpayer contact with Appeals. Physical copies of the survey will be administered between February 2012 and September 2012. The survey asks respondents to evaluate various aspects of their experience during their virtual service including interaction with employee (courtesy, professionalism) and the degree to which expectations were met. The survey also asks respondents to provide an overall summary evaluation of their experience and level of satisfaction with the virtual contact.

All of the surveys will be returned to WIRA where analysts will extract the data into a database and perform necessary analyses. WIRA will include any relevant database variables in the analysis and weight the survey responses as necessary.

### **3. Methods to Maximize Response**

This study will invite every taxpayer who receives Virtual Assistance to complete the customer satisfaction survey which is intended to maximize the response rate. The survey length has also been minimized to reduce burden on the respondents which tends to increase response rates.

### **4. Testing of Procedures**

Pretesting may be conducted with internal IRS staff.

### **5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection**

For questions regarding the study, survey design, or statistical methodology, contact:

Amber Thompson  
401 W Peachtree ST NW 16-WI  
Atlanta, GA 30308-3525  
Telephone: (404) 338-9139  
Email: Amber.N.Thompson@irs.gov

## **Attachments**

Virtual Service Delivery Customer Satisfaction Survey