

Supporting Statement for
National Cemetery Administration, Customer Satisfaction Survey (Headstone/Marker)
(2900-0571)

A. Justification

1. In response to Executive Order 12862, the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) will conduct surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with existing services among their customers. The surveys will solicit voluntary opinions and are not intended to collect information required to obtain or maintain eligibility for a VA program or benefit. Baseline data obtained through these information collections is to be used to validate customer service standards. This submission requests the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to:

a. Grant the organizations a three-year extension of its generic clearance approval authority;

b. Allow them to establish a maximum number of annual burden hours against which burden will be charged for each survey actually used; and

c. Allow for the submission of a summary of objectives, specific burden estimates, and all final or near final survey instruments (focus group scripts, test questions, etc.) covered by the generic clearance for inclusion in the OMB public docket prior to their use.

2. The NCA will continue to conduct customer satisfaction surveys under this generic clearance to implement the Executive Order. If the surveys were not conducted, the organizations would be unable to comply with the Executive Order, and would not have the information needed to improve established standards for the best possible customer-focused service. They will use the information gathered to determine where and to what extent services are satisfactory, and where and to what extent they meet customer needs and expectation and are in need of improvement. Participation in the surveys will be voluntary and the generic clearance will not be used to collect information required to obtain or maintain eligibility for a VA program or benefit. In addition, voluntary customer surveys are not program evaluations and will not be used as substitutes for traditional program evaluation surveys that measure objective outcomes. In order to maximize the voluntary response rates, the information collection will be designed to make participation convenient, simple, and free of unnecessary barriers. The NCA anticipate the surveys will identify those aspects of services that are most important to their customers, the veteran. OMB will be consulted regarding any changes made to the information collection during this approval period. This collection will be consistent with the following terms of clearance: approved for 1.5 years, VA shall track the usage of all collections approved under this clearance including instruments, methodology, respondents, and total burden hours to ensure compliance with the description of collections approved under this generic clearance and in the next submission of this collection to OMB for review VA shall provide a summary report

addressing all collection conducted under the generic during this approval, consistent with the previous terms of clearance, surveys developed under this generic clearance number using questions not pre-approved in this submission must be submitted to OMB for review. Additionally: 1. VA will track all surveys developed with the pre-approved questions and report the actual burden numbers in the annual information collection budget. 2. Surveys developed under this generic clearance number using questions not pre-approved in this submission must be submitted to OMB for review.

3. Information technology will be used wherever possible to reduce the information collection burden these activities place on the public. In most instances, surveys sent to NCA customers will be paper based. This customer requirement was derived through focus sessions with NCA customers. Customers (mostly elderly) felt that receiving a survey over the phone or electronically so soon after the death of a loved one would be insensitive, hurtful and impact on the grieving process. Using a paper survey ensured consistence in message and tone. Additionally, they noted that most NCA customers are elderly and do not have access to computers for electronic surveys.

4. The NCA will use VA's internal review process to examine each information collection to prevent duplication of effort or redundancy in information collected. No information currently being collected in VA can be used to meet the requirements of the Executive Order. The information to be gathered from the surveys as a whole is unique and not available from any other sources.

5. Small businesses, such as directors of funeral homes, are involved in this collection of information.

6. Most customer satisfaction surveys are recurring so that ongoing measures can be created to measure satisfaction and to determine how well the agency meets customer service standards. The burden consists only of that information which is essential to maintain the validity and accomplish the goals of the Executive Order. The NCA will use a variety of activities including focus groups and surveys to gauge customer perceptions of VA services as well as customer expectations and desires. The results of these information collections should lead to improvements in the quality of the NCA service delivery.

7. There are no special circumstances that require the collection of information to be conducted in a manner that is inconsistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. The agency notice was published in the Federal Register on November 12, 2009 at pages 58373-58374. The notice solicited comments relating to the organizations' customer satisfaction survey proposals. No comments were received in response to this notice.

9. There are no plans to provide payments or gifts to respondents. However, participants in focus groups may be reimbursed for travel expenses.

10. The identities of individuals and organizations contacted will be carefully protected. Names and personal identifiers will be used to locate survey participants and will thereafter be stripped from any files kept for analysis purposes.

11. Questions of a sensitive nature will not be asked.

12. Estimate of the Respondent Burden:

Most customer satisfaction surveys will be recurring so that the National Cemetery Administration can determine how well the administration meets the requirements of its customer service standards. Each collection of information will consist of the minimum amount of information necessary to determine customer needs and determine how well NCA meets those needs. NCA expects to conduct 15 focus groups annually involving a total of 450 hours annually during the approval period. In addition, NCA expects to conduct mail surveys with a total annual burden of approximately 13,000 hours and will distribute Comment Cards with a total annual burden of 208 hours. NCA also plans to conduct mail surveys of customers that receive headstones or markers at private cemeteries and Presidential Memorial Certificates to determine levels of customer satisfaction and how well NCA meets the customer's needs and expectations. These customer surveys are estimated at 1000 burden hours annually during the approval period.

I. National Cemetery Administration Focus Groups

National Cemetery Administration Focus Groups with Next of Kin (5 groups/10 participants per group/3 hours each session)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
2010	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually
2011	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually
2012	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually

National Cemetery Administration Focus Groups with Funeral Directors (5 groups/10 participants per group/3 hours each session).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
2010	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually
2011	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually
2012	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually

National Cemetery Administration Focus Groups with Veterans Service Organizations
(5 groups/10 participants per group/3 hours each session).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
2010	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually
2011	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually
2012	50	150 hours	5 Groups Annually

II. National Cemetery Administration Visitor Comment Cards (Local Use)

National Cemetery Administration Visitor Comments Cards (2,500 respondents/5 minutes per card)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency of Response</u>
2010	2,500	208 hours	Annually
2011	2,500	208 hours	Annually
2012	2,500	208 hours	Annually

III. National Cemetery Administration Mail Surveys

National Cemetery Administration Next of Kin National Customer Satisfaction Survey
(Mail, 15,000 respondents/30 minutes per survey)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency of Response</u>
2010	15,000	7,500 hours	Annually
2011	15,000	7,500 hours	Annually
2012	15,000	7,500 hours	Annually

National Cemetery Administration Funeral Directors National Customer Satisfaction Survey
(Mail, 4,000 respondents/30 minutes per survey)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency of Response</u>
2010	4,000	2,000	Annually
2011	4,000	2,000	Annually
2012	4,000	2,000	Annually

National Cemetery Administration Veterans-At -Large National Customer Satisfaction Survey (Mail 5,000 respondents/30 minutes per survey)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency of Response</u>
2010	5,000	2,500 hours	Annually
2011	5,000	2,500 hours	Annually
2012	5,000	2,500 hours	Annually

IV. Program/Specialized Service Survey

National Cemetery Administration Headstone and Marker/PMC Survey (Mail, 6, 000 surveys/10 minutes each)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>	<u>Frequency of Response</u>
2010	6,000	1,000 hours	Annually
2011	6,000	1,000 hours	Annually
2012	6,000	1,000 hours	Annually

V. Total Burden Hours Per Year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Number of Respondents (all surveys)</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Burden</u>
2010	32,650	13,658
2011	32,650	13,658
2012	32,650	13,658

13. Estimated Cost to the Respondents. The total cost to the respondents is \$204,870. (13,658 x \$15.00)

14. Estimated Cost to the Federal Government:

At this time, the organizations cannot estimate the cost of this effort to the Federal Government; however, each will incur internal administrative costs in developing, printing, and mailing survey instrument, and in data analysis and reporting results.

15. The burden hour increase is due to a change in the number of prospective survey participants.

16. The results obtained from these information collections will be disseminated to management officials, VA employees, and the public.

17. Survey instruments do not display an expiration date and if required to do so, would result in unnecessary waste of the existing stock. For this reason, VA continues to seek an exemption that waives the displaying of the expiration date.

18. There are no exceptions to the "Certification of Paperwork Reduction Act Submission."