

## **DOCUMENTATION FOR THE GENERIC CLEARANCE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS**

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Disability Initial Claims Report Card (DICRC) Survey

**SSA SUB-NUMBER:** D-01

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY** (*give purpose of activity, provide specific information; i.e., date(s) of survey, number of focus groups, locations, etc.*):

### **Background**

As part of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ongoing evaluation of its initial disability application process, we gather applicants' opinions about their experience filing for benefits. Each year SSA surveys three groups: 1) mid-process applicants, who just filed an application but have not yet received a decision; 2) post-adjudicative awarded applicants, who just received a favorable decision; and 3) post-adjudicative denied applicants, who just received an unfavorable decision. SSA will survey overall satisfaction with and assessment of various aspects of service for each group at their specific stage in the application process. FY 2011 is the fifth year in which SSA will conduct this survey.

### **SURVEY**

#### **Description of Survey**

The survey will use two questionnaires developed by SSA, one for mid-process and one for post-adjudicative applicants (awarded and denied). We successfully used both questionnaires in FY 2007, when we first conducted the DICRC survey, and with one exception, the FY 2011 questionnaires are the same as those used in FY 2008, 2009 and 2010. In FY 2009, the issues of whether the person had assistance filing and who helped them, formerly covered in one question, was broken into two separate questions to improve clarity.

We will conduct the survey in three phases during FY 2011. We will conduct each of the surveys at the same point in time as last year to ensure comparability of results. Based on our experience conducting previous surveys with this population, we have identified some key service elements that have an impact on satisfaction with the disability application process. Those key elements included in the questionnaire are:

- How the person filed the application;
- Whether the person had assistance filing and who helped them;
- Satisfaction with the ease of filing, i.e. finding information, quality of information obtained and ease of working with SSA to start the process (mid-process only);

- Satisfaction with the ease of providing medical information, i.e., describing medical, job and school history, obtaining medical records and undergoing a medical examination;
- Satisfaction with the explanations SSA provided about the application process (mid-process only);
- Satisfaction with the ease of checking the status of the application (post-adjudicative only);
- Satisfaction with SSA employees, including their helpfulness, courtesy, job knowledge, the clarity of their explanations, and the amount of time they spent with the person;
- Satisfaction with claims processing time (post-adjudicative only);
- Satisfaction with the clarity of the notice of decision (post-adjudicative only);
- Satisfaction with the overall ease of filing and overall opinion of SSA's service.

**Statistical Information**

**Sample Selection**

We will conduct this survey in three phases; each phase assesses the satisfaction of a different group of randomly selected disability applicants.

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Date Selected</b>
Mid-process - shortly after filing but before a decision is made	10,000	September 2010
Post-adjudicative Awards - just after they receive the decision	10,000	December 2010
Post-adjudicative Denials - just after they receive the decision	10,000	February 2011

We plan to select 1,000 cases per region in each stratum (10,000 total per stratum) for an overall sample size of 30,000. The table below displays the anticipated yearly volumes for each of SSA's ten regions. We will weight survey data to reflect the actual regional universes identified during each sampling phase.

<b>Initial Disability Applications Processed – Title II and Title XVI Combined</b>			
	<b>Cases Processed Annually</b>	<b>Percent Cases Awarded</b>	<b>Percent Cases Denied</b>
National	2,679,000	36.9	63.1
Boston	114,000	41.4	58.6
New York	224,000	47.1	52.9
Philadelphia	254,000	36.4	63.6
Atlanta	667,000	31.1	68.9
Chicago	449,000	35.0	65.0
Dallas	364,000	40.7	59.3
Kansas City	119,000	34.8	65.2
Denver	57,000	41.4	58.6
San Francisco	337,000	37.7	62.3
Seattle	93,000	40.2	59.8

## **Methodology**

An SSA-approved contractor will mail all sampled individuals a pre-notification postcard encouraging their participation. Three to four days later, we mail a brief (one page front and back) scannable questionnaire to all sampled individuals accompanied by a letter explaining the purpose of the survey. We will include the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Privacy Act statements in the cover letter. Two weeks after we mail the initial package, we will send a follow-up postcard to those sampled individuals who did not respond to the initial solicitation. Four weeks after we mail the initial survey package, we will send a follow-up letter and another copy of the survey form to those sampled individuals who did not respond to the initial solicitation.

## **Response Rate**

We take the following steps described to maximize the response rate for this survey:

- The questionnaire is short and easy to read and complete. The scannable survey is designed for ease of use by a disabled population, e.g., font sizes are large, difficult fill-in bubbles are not used;
- We send a pre-notification postcard to sampled individuals to inform them that 1) they have been selected for the survey and 2) they should be on the lookout for the envelope containing the questionnaire. Using a postcard format allows the recipient to see that SSA sanctions the survey. Also, the postcard identifies the contractor who is conducting the survey for SSA, which should increase the likelihood that participants will open the envelope when they receive the questionnaire;
- Three to four days later, we mail the first survey package, including a cover letter signed by an Agency official that encourages the individual to respond by emphasizing the

importance of the survey; we include the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Privacy Act statements in the cover letter;

- Two weeks after we mail the initial survey package, we send a follow-up postcard to those sampled individuals who did not respond to the initial solicitation;
- Four weeks after we mail the initial survey package, we send a follow-up letter and another copy of the survey form to those sampled individuals who have not responded to the initial solicitation;
- We will send Spanish surveys to sampled individuals where SSA records indicate that is their preferred language; and,
- We will provide SSA’s toll-free National 800 number for people to call if they have any questions.

In FY 2010, we achieved a combined response rate of 48 percent for all three strata; the individual response rates were 47 percent for mid-process, 64 percent for awards, and 33 percent for denials. We have not yet completed tabulating the FY 2010 data so we are unable to provide the latest regional response rates at this time. However, in FY 2009, the combined regional response rates ranged from 47 percent to 50 percent. We expect to achieve similarly good response rates in the FY 2011 surveys. (Note that as part of its data validation, SSA completes a non-responder analysis to evaluate any potential impact of the response rate on survey findings. We include the results of that analysis when we report the survey data.)

### **Sampling Variability**

The key variable for this survey is overall satisfaction with SSA’s service (percent giving a rating of excellent, very good or good (E/VG/G)). (We are using the FY 2009 satisfaction ratings to estimate sampling variability because, as just noted, tabulation of the FY 2010 data is still underway.) Nationally, our proposed sample size of 10,000 cases in each phase is large enough, assuming a 50 percent response rate, to provide a sampling variability at the 95-percent confidence level equal to:

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>National Key Variable (E/VG/G Rating)</b>	<b>Sampling Variability</b>
Mid-process	84%	+/- 1.4%
Awards	92%	+/- 1.2%
Denials	51%	+/- 2.0%

Anticipating a response rate of 50 percent as well from the regional samples of 1,000 cases, we estimate that the sampling variability will fall in the ranges shown below. These ranges are acceptable given the intended purpose of the survey.

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Regional Key Variable (E/VG/G Rating)</b>	<b>Sampling Variability</b>
Mid-process	77% to 87%	+/- 3.8% to +/- 3.1%
Awards	88% to 94%	+/- 2.6% to +/- 1.9%
Denials	44% to 56%	+/- 4.4% to +/-4.3 %

SSA’s Office of Quality Performance (OQP) will perform all sampling and data analysis. Dan Zabronsky, Director of SSA’s Division of Modeling, OQP, will provide statistical support. His phone number is (410) 965-5953.

**IF FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A PAYMENT, INDICATE AMOUNT**  
*(No more than \$25 authorized under OMB rules):*

N/A

**USE OF SURVEY RESULTS:**

SSA will use the results of this study to gauge satisfaction with the current initial disability application process, and to assess the impact of the Agency’s ongoing improvement efforts.

**BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION** *(Number of responses (X) estimated response time (/60) = annual burden hours):*

Number of Responses: 30,000  
 Estimated Response Time: 5 minutes  
 Annual Burden Hours: 2,500 hours

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