

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

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Office Visitor Survey

**SSA SUB-NUMBER:** D-02

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

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) annually surveys individuals who do business with us to assess their satisfaction with the specific mode of contact they used. As part of this effort, will conduct the FY 2011 Office Visitor Survey, in which we survey members of the public who visited one of SSA's field offices (FO) or hearing offices (HO) to complete their business.

In addition to the FOs and HOs that operate around the country, SSA has recently opened a number of specialized offices, known as Social Security Card Centers (SSCC), that process requests for new or replacement Social Security cards. Because the SSCCs have grown to be another important in-person service delivery channel, SSA will add a separate cohort of SSCC visitors under the Office Visitor Survey umbrella for FY 2011.

We designed the survey, which we will conduct shortly after the participant visits the FO/HO/SSCC, to: 1) assess public perception of the in-person service provided by SSA FOs/HOs/SSCCs; and 2) collect information that helps SSA understand the customer experience behind satisfaction ratings. The Office Visitor Survey is one of three annual surveys (along with the 800 Number Caller and Field Office Caller surveys) that SSA uses to produce its performance indicator, "percent of individuals doing business with SSA who rate overall service excellent, very good or good."

### **SURVEY:**

#### **Description of Survey**

The Office Visitor Survey uses two brief, scannable questionnaires (one for FO/HO visitors and one for SSCC visitors) that SSA mails to selected respondents. When SSA receives the completed surveys, we forward them to our contractors, who scan them and prepare a data file of survey results. To ensure comparability, the questionnaire for newly added SSCC visitors includes all of the core satisfaction questions from the FO/HO questionnaire, along with a few questions tailored to address issues unique to the SSCC experience.

To ensure a higher response rate, SSA will send a pre-notification postcard letting participants know they will soon be receiving a survey. Some time after we send the survey, we will mail out a follow-up postcard to remind participants about the survey and encourage them to complete it.

The survey will cover multiple FO/HO/SSCC visit customer satisfaction questions, including the following:

- Satisfaction with office location, hours, signs and instructions, usefulness of the information provided in the waiting area, office comfort, appearance, privacy, and waiting time;
- Satisfaction with the performance of SSA employees, including their helpfulness, courtesy, job knowledge and clarity of explanations;
- Whether the person was able to complete their business the visit;
- Satisfaction with the overall service received during the visit;
- The person's service preferences for future business, including questions about use of the Internet for SSA business;
- How the person found out how to apply for a new or replacement Social Security card and their satisfaction with the clarity of information (SSCC only);
- The person's language preference (SSCC only).

We have attached a copy of the questionnaires and the accompanying survey correspondence to this submission.

### **Statistical Information**

#### ***FO/HO Sample Selection and Methodology***

SSA maintains over 1,300 FOs and 140 HOs that serve over 40 million visitors annually. We select 52 FOs and 13 HOs to participate in the Office Visitor Survey each year. We use random, stratified selection to select FOs to ensure representation of each of SSA's 10 regions. We select HOs randomly on a national level.

We randomly assign each sampled office one week within a 4-week survey period in October to record identifying information for every office visitor who conducts business with SSA. The receptionist records each visitor's name, address, telephone number, language preference, and customer segment (which identify the type of business the visitor conducted) into a database.

At the end of each workday, the office sends a file containing the visitor information collected that day to the Office of Quality Performance (OQP) statistical staff in at SSA's Central Office. OQP selects a random sample of 275 FO customers from each day's visitors, proportional to the

number of visitors in each office that day, plus 35 HO visitors, to participate in the survey. This results in approximately 5,890 sampled customers who receive a questionnaire during the course of the survey. OQP combines the files, selects the sample cases, and transmits the names and addresses of survey participants to the contractor, who prints and mails the survey questionnaire. We repeat the sampling process on each business day of the 4-week period.

### ***SSCC Sample Selection and Methodology***

SSA currently has eight SSCCs that served over 600,000 visitors in FY 2009. OQP identifies the visitor contact information (name and address) from a database that processes the applications for new or replacement Social Security cards. From the daily universe of SSCC visitors, we select a random sample of 150 SSCC visitors per day during a 4-week survey period in January - February. We repeat the sampling process on each of the 20 business days in the 4-week period for an overall sample size of 3,000 SSCC visitors.

SSA sends the randomly selected samples to a contractor. In turn, the contractor mails a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals encouraging their participation. Three to five 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 include the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Privacy Act statements in the cover letter. One week after we mail the initial package, we send a follow-up package to all sampled individuals.

### ***Response Rate***

SSA takes the following steps to maximize response rates for this survey:

- To minimize the time between the customers' service experience and the survey, thereby ensuring salience, we select samples daily and transmit them to the contractor within 2-3 business days of the FO/HO/SSCC visit.
- We mail out a pre-notification postcard a few days after sample selection to inform participants 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. Additionally, 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.
- We mail out the questionnaire within 3-5 business days of sending the pre-notification postcard. An SSA official signs an enclosed cover letter, which encourages the individual to respond by emphasizing the importance of the survey and the confidentiality of the responses.
- Five business days after the first mailing, we mail out a follow-up letter and a duplicate questionnaire to all individuals in the sample. We do not send more than one follow-up because responses for service satisfaction surveys must be obtained shortly after the date of the contact (while respondents' perceptions are still fresh) to ensure their validity and utility.

*(Note: In the FY 2010 Office Visitor Survey, 1,580 people responded to the first mailing {63 percent of the total responses}; the second mailing yielded 931 additional responses {37 percent of the total responses}.)*

- The questionnaire is short and has an eye-catching title. We have designed the scannable questionnaire for ease of use by an aged and disabled population, e.g., font sizes are large, difficult fill-in bubbles are not used.
- We send a Spanish version of the FO/HO questionnaire to those visitors identified in the sample selection process as preferring doing business in Spanish. (Note: We cannot pre-identify language preference for SSCC visitors; we mail that questionnaire in English only. However, the SSCC visitor questionnaire solicits the responder’s preferred language so we can compare survey results for English and non-English speakers.)
- We provide SSA’s toll-free national 800 number on all letters so participants can call if they have any questions.

Using methods similar to these, we have achieved a response rate of approximately 50 percent with past Office Visitor Surveys. These response rates are the highest possible considering time permits only a limited number of contacts. We expect to achieve an equally good response rate in the upcoming survey.

(Note: SSA routinely conducts a non-responder analysis to identify any significant differences in responder/non-responder populations and their potential impact on the survey results. For example, in the SSCC survey we will be able to compare response rates for the eight SSCCs.)

**Sampling Variability**

The key variable for the Office Visitor Surveys is overall satisfaction with the service received the day of the visit. We define satisfaction as a combined rating of excellent, very good or good (E/VG/G). In the most recent Office Visitor Survey, the overall satisfaction rating was 88 percent E/VG/G. Assuming a 50 percent response rate and a similar satisfaction rating, the sampling variability around the results for the FY 2011 survey is acceptable for the intended purpose of the survey.

Survey	Sample Size	Sampling Variability
FO/HO visitors	5,890	± 1.1
SSCC visitors	3,000	± 1.8

OQP will perform all data analysis. Dan Zabronsky, Director of SSA’s Division of Modeling in OQP, provides statistical support. He can be reached at (410) 965-5953.

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

We will not compensate participants for this survey.

**USE OF SURVEY RESULTS:**

SSA will use the results of this survey to evaluate and improve various aspects of its FO, HO, and SSCC service. In addition, we will use the study results in combination with results from the Field Office Caller, 800 Number Caller, and Internet Report Card surveys to report a combined performance indicator of customer satisfaction for the agency each year.

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

**Number of Responses:** 8,890

**Estimated Response Time:** 5 minutes

**Annual Burden Hours:** 741 hours

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