

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

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Disability  
Initial Claims Report Card (DICRC)  
Survey

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

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:**

**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 through their specific stage in the process. FY 2012 is the sixth 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 have successfully administered all the questions in the survey with these populations.

We will conduct the survey in three phases during FY 2012. 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 surveys with initial disability applicants, we have identified some key service elements that have an impact on satisfaction with the 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 2011
Post-adjudicative Awards - just after they receive the decision	10,000	December 2011
Post-adjudicative Denials - just after they receive the decision	10,000	February 2012

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 shows the estimated yearly volume for each of SSA's ten regions. We will weight survey data to reflect the actual regional universes identified during each sample 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	3,083,000	35.3	64.7
Boston	132,000	40.0	60.0
New York	256,000	44.6	55.4
Philadelphia	308,000	35.5	64.5
Atlanta	771,000	29.6	70.4
Chicago	534,000	33.8	66.2
Dallas	432,000	38.5	61.5
Kansas City	138,000	34.0	66.0
Denver	68,000	40.0	60.0
San Francisco	330,000	36.1	63.9
Seattle	111,000	39.3	60.7

## **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 have not responded at that point.

## **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 all 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;
- The first survey package includes a cover letter signed by a agency official that encourages the individual to respond by emphasizing the importance of the survey;

- We will make two follow-up contacts with participants: a follow-up postcard and a follow-up survey package to those sampled individuals who did not respond 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 so participants can call if they have any questions.

In FY 2010, we achieved a combined response rate of 49 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 2011 data so we are unable to provide the latest regional response rates at this time. However, in FY 2010, the combined regional response rates ranged from 45 percent to 51 percent. We expect to achieve similarly good response rates in the FY 2012 surveys. (Note that as part of our 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 2010 satisfaction ratings to estimate sampling variability because, as noted above, tabulation of the FY 2011 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	83%	+/- 1.4%
Awards	92%	+/- 1.2%
Denials	51%	+/- 2.0%

Anticipating a response rate of 50 percent as well from the regional samples, 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 Variables (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 can be 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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