

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

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Office Visitor Survey (OVS)

SSA SUB-NUMBER: D-02

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

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, we conduct the OVS, in which we survey members of the public who visited one of SSA's field offices (FO), hearing offices (HO) or Social Security Card Centers (SSCC) to complete their business.

SSA has surveyed FO and HO visitors for over ten years. SSA initiated a survey of Social Security Card Center (SSCC) visitors in FY 2011 because the SSCCs have grown to be another important part of SSA's in-person service. SSA will again include the SSCC visitors in the FY 2013 OVS.

We designed the OVS, which we 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 OVS 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 OVS uses two questionnaires developed by SSA, one for FO/HO visitors and one for SSCC visitors. The brief, scannable questionnaires address key service elements that have an impact on customer satisfaction with the service received during an office visit. To ensure the comparability of the data from the two samples, both questionnaires contain all of the same core satisfaction questions. The SSCC survey questionnaire includes a few additional questions tailored to address issues unique to the SSCC experience.

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 the business in one 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;
- Whether the person needs special accommodations because of a medical condition, and satisfaction with how well SSA meets the person's needs;
- How the person found out how to apply for a new or replacement Social Security card and their satisfaction with the clarity of information provided (SSCC questionnaire only); and,
- Language preference (SSCC questionnaire only).

Statistical Information

FO/HO Sample Selection

SSA maintains over 1,200 FOs and 140 HOs that serve over 40 million visitors annually. We will select 52 FOs and 13 HOs to participate in the **FO/HO survey** each year. We will use random, stratified samples of FOs to ensure representation of each of SSA's 10 regions. We select HOs randomly on a national level.

We will 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. Office staff will record each visitor's name, address, telephone number, language preference, and customer segment (identifies the type of business the visitor conducted) into a database.

At the end of each workday, the office staff notifies SSA's Office of Quality Performance (OQP) via email that they have entered the last visitor's information in the database. The OQP staff then retrieves the daily visitor information and selects a random daily sample of 275 FO customers, proportional to the number of visitors in each FO that day; plus 35 HO visitors. We repeat the sampling process on each of the 19 business days of the 4-week period for an overall sample size of 5,890 FO/HO visitors.

SSCC Sample Selection

SSA currently has ten SSCCs that served almost 900,000 visitors in FY 2011. 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 will select a random sample of 150 SSCC visitors per day during a 4-week survey period in January - February. We will 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.

Methodology

SSA will send the sample files to a contractor who conducts the survey by mail. We will mail a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals advising them to expect the survey questionnaire. Three to five days later, we will mail the questionnaire to all sampled individuals accompanied by a cover 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 letter and another copy of the questionnaire to all sampled individuals.

Response Rate

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

- To minimize the time between the visitor's 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 visit.
- We will mail out a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals a few days after sample selection. The postcard informs them of 1) their selection to participate in the survey; and 2) they should be on the lookout for the envelope containing the questionnaire. Using a postcard format allows sampled individuals to see, quickly and easily, SSA sanctions the survey. Additionally, the postcard identifies the contractor who is conducting the survey for SSA, which should increase the likelihood that sampled participants will open the envelope when they receive the questionnaire.
- Within 3-5 days after sending the pre-notification postcard, we mail the survey questionnaire along with a cover letter encouraging sampled participants to respond by emphasizing the importance of the survey.
- Five business days after we send the first questionnaire, we mail out a follow-up letter and a duplicate questionnaire to all sampled individuals. 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 participants' perceptions are still fresh) to ensure their validity and utility.

- The questionnaire is short (one page - front and back), 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 sampled individuals where the visitor identification process indicated that is their preferred language. (Note: We cannot pre-identify language preferences for SSCC visitors; we mail the questionnaire in English only. However, the questionnaire solicits the person’s preferred language so we can compare survey results for English/non-English speakers.)
- We provide SSA’s toll-free national 800 number so sampled individuals can call if they have any questions.

In FY 2012, we achieved a response rate of 47 percent in the FO/HO survey and 30 percent in the SSCC survey. (We received about two-thirds of the completed surveys from the first mailing and the remaining one-third from the second mailing.) We believe that we achieved a higher response rate in the FO/HO survey because most of those visitors conducted business indicative of a significant relationship with SSA, e.g., filing an application for benefits. In contrast, the majority of SSCC visitors (84 percent of the sample) were simply obtaining a replacement Social Security card.

These response rates are the highest possible considering that time permits only a limited number of contacts. We expect to achieve similarly good response rates in the upcoming surveys. Note that SSA routinely conducts a non-responder analysis to identify any significant differences in the responder/non-responder populations and their potential impact on the survey results.

Sampling Variability

The key variable for the OVS is overall satisfaction with the service received during the visit. We define satisfaction as a combined rating of excellent, very good, or good (E/VG/G). In the most recent OVS, FO/HO visitors rated overall service 91 percent E/VG/G, and SSCC visitors rated overall service 92 percent E/VG/G. Assuming a response rate of 50 percent and similar satisfaction ratings, our sample sizes are large enough to yield a sampling variability at the 95 percent confidence level acceptable for the intended purpose of the survey.

Stratum	Sample Size	Key Variable (E/VG/G Rating)	Sampling Variability
FO/HO visitors	5,890	91%	± 1.0
SSCC visitors	3,000	92%	± 1.6

OQP will perform all sampling and 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 can be authorized under OMB rules):

We will not compensate participants for this survey.

USE OF SURVEY RESULTS:

SSA uses the results of this survey to evaluate and improve various aspects of our FO, HO, and SSCC service. In addition, SSA will use the study results in combination with results from the FO Caller, 800 Number Caller, and Internet Report Card surveys to report a combined key performance indicator of customer satisfaction 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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