

Justification
Customer Satisfaction Monitoring

1. **Circumstances of the collection** - In accordance with E.O. 12862, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) conducts periodic surveys designed to determine the kind and quality of services our beneficiaries, claimants, employers and members of the public want and expect, as well as their satisfaction with existing RRB services. As per the instructions received from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), these surveys are limited to data collections that solicit strictly voluntary opinions, and do not collect information which is required or regulated. To conduct a number of customer satisfaction surveys over the next three years, the RRB requests renewal of the generic authority, that OMB first granted the RRB in 1997. OMB's approval of the RRB's renewal request for generic clearance enhances the RRB's ability to comply with E.O. 12862 by providing the agency with the ability to secure timely review and approval of new or revised customer survey instruments, improving the RRB's overall ability to timely implement customer monitoring activities.
2. **Purposes of collecting/consequences of not collecting the information** – As the only Federal agency dedicated to providing income security and related programs to a specific industry, the RRB is a customer-centered organization. The agency has traditionally enjoyed a relationship with its customers based on cooperation, respect, and service. This was confirmed by recent surveys of RRB customers performed as part of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI represents an independent annual measure of national customer satisfaction with corporate and government services.

While the use of ACSI surveys are the primary vehicle used to monitor customer satisfaction, The RRB still plans to conduct a variety of other activities utilizing smaller periodic surveys to assist in determining the kind and quality of services our beneficiaries, claimants, employers and members of the public want and expect. These periodic surveys enhance the RRB's ability to comply with E.O. 12862, and help the agency to provide the best service possible to the railroad public we serve. It is for these types of activities that the RRB requests renewal of the generic authority to monitor customer satisfaction.

The data provided by these on-going initiatives, periodic surveys, and focus groups will assist RRB employees in determining where and to what extent services are satisfactory or can be improved. Following is a breakdown of the three main areas the RRB will use to monitor customer satisfaction.

A. ACSI Surveys

The RRB uses the ACSI surveys as its primary vehicle in monitoring customer satisfaction. The ACSI is a statistically determined sample of retirement, survivor, unemployment and sickness, or disability benefit customers. The voluntary surveys are designed to collect specific data on overall satisfaction, quality of RRB services (both direct and indirect contact), office waiting time, and ease of telephone and office access. The results of the voluntary surveys help determine the overall level of customer satisfaction including RRB field office, mail and telephone services.

The first ACSI survey conducted in 2001 focused on the RRB's core constituency of railroad workers who had recently retired and were receiving monthly benefits. The RRB earned a score of 82, 13 points higher than the overall score for the Federal government and 11 points higher than the private-sector average. The RRB scored highest (91) in the area of customer service, with respondents specifically praising the courtesy and professionalism of agency employees.

A second survey conducted in 2002 focused on rail workers who had recently applied for and received unemployment or sickness benefits from the RRB. The agency earned a total score of 75 in that survey, 4 points higher than the overall score for the Federal government. The results showed the RRB scored highest (88) in the area of customer service, with respondents particularly praising the courtesy and professionalism of agency employees.

A third survey conducted in 2005 focused on the RRB survivor benefit process. The agency earned an overall total score of 90, **the highest score** for any agency surveyed that year and 18 points higher than the overall Federal government score.

A fourth survey conducted in 2006 focused on railroad workers who had been recently awarded disability benefits from the RRB. The RRB earned an overall score of 85 out of a possible 100, 14 points higher than the current overall Federal government score. The results showed the RRB scored highest (89) in the area of customer service, with respondents particularly praising the courtesy and professionalism of agency employees. A confidence index of 90 was earned indicating that the RRB's customers are satisfied with the service provided by the agency and are confident they will be well served in the future. A copy of this report is attached as a supporting document.

The Federal Consulting Group advises that it is fitting to revisit core constituency segments to determine if there are any changes improvements, or deficiencies in agency service to that customer base. This request relates to Goal I-B-1 of the FY 2009 Performance Budget, and to the Strategic Plan which calls for conducting customer satisfaction surveys which will give us feedback on our goals and to evaluate customer confidence. To that end, a fifth survey was conducted in September 2009. This survey revisited those who represent the core constituency of railroad workers who have recently retired and are receiving monthly benefits. An RRB Office of Public Affairs new release outlining the successful results of the survey is attached as supporting documentation.

The RRB plans to continue the use of ACSI surveys as its **primary vehicle** to monitor customer satisfaction. **The ACSI surveys are currently cleared under OMB authority granted to the Department of the Interior. The September 2009 survey was contracted through the Department of the Interior, Federal Consulting Group, OMB Control No. 1090-0007 and was estimated to take 8 minutes to complete.**

B. RRB Form G-201, Customer Assessment Survey

The RRB's one current vehicle to conduct on-going measurements of customer satisfaction activity is **Form G-201, Customer Assessment Survey**, which is a point-of-contact

questionnaire that is provided to RRB customers (for voluntary completion) at the conclusion of a field office visit, or after completion of an application process, to assess the level of satisfaction with the recently completed service experience.

The RRB proposes no changes to Form G-201.

C. Other Surveys

The RRB plans the following additional RRB Customer Service Monitoring activities during the next renewal cycle:

- To periodically obtain comments from members of the public who have been browsing the RRB Web Site. Comments received will allow the RRB to tailor the future design and content of our Web Site to best suit our customers' needs.
- To periodically conduct a variety of surveys to assist in determining the kind and quality of services our beneficiaries, claimants, and members of the public want.
- To conduct periodic focus groups with railroad employers. These focus groups will obtain opinions and feelings on a wide variety of railroad employer wage and service reporting issues. The RRB estimates that representatives of 50 railroad employers will participate in sessions lasting up to two hours.
- To conduct focus groups with various interest groups over the next three years. Participants will be asked to share their views on how they want to interact with the RRB, their opinion of the RRB's current level of service and what levels of services they want and expect. The RRB plans a broad-based approach in the selection of these participants. They will include a cross section of current railroad retirement beneficiaries, unemployment and sickness insurance claimants, as well as active railroad employees. In addition, participants will be drawn from established interest groups. The RRB estimates that approximately 200 individuals will participate annually in sessions lasting up to two hours.

In addition, the RRB is likely to plan ad-hoc client satisfaction monitoring efforts, specifically targeting program areas such as retirement and survivor programs, disability, Medicare, unemployment and sickness, and wage reporting during the 3 year timeframe.

Please note: The RRB agrees to advise and consult with OMB before proceeding with any monitoring efforts, whether they are specifically outlined above or are planned after OMB approval of the generic clearance, and agrees to provide, upon OMB approval, updated burden estimates that result from such efforts. ***Conversely, the availability of resources may impact the RRB's ability to conduct the proposed activities.***

3. **Planned use of improved information technology or technical/legal impediments to further burden reduction** - Improved information technology including the use of the RRB's Web Site (www.rrb.gov) will be used whenever possible to reduce the burden on the public.
4. **Efforts to identify duplication** - This information collection does not duplicate any other information collection.
5. **Small business respondents** - Small businesses may be involved in these efforts, but we will keep the burden on them to a minimum by asking for their opinions on a strictly voluntary basis, and by asking only the minimum amount of information needed to evaluate the RRB's performance in the areas of concern.
6. **Consequences of less frequent collection** -This information could not be collected less frequently. The surveys gauge customer reaction to the services that the RRB currently provides, as well as customer expectations, desires, and preferences in the areas being surveyed. Such surveys should lead to improved performance and service in specific areas.
7. **Special circumstances** - None
8. **Public comments/consultations outside the agency** - Consultations may be made on an as needed basis with other Federal agencies (SSA, HCFA, VA, etc) that have conducted or will be conducting surveys similar to those the RRB has planned. In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.8(d), comments were invited from the public regarding this information collection. The notice to the public was published on page 4595 of the January 28, 2010, Federal Register. No comments or requests for additional information were received from the public.
9. **Payments or gifts to respondents** - N.A.
10. **Confidentiality** - Respondents will be advised that participation is voluntary and that their responses are confidential in that neither names nor any other identifying information will be divulged.
11. **Sensitive questions** - No sensitive information will be collected.
12. **Estimate of respondent burden** - The current burden for this generic collection is unchanged as follows:

Current Annual Burden

Form #/Survey	Annual Responses	Time (Min)	Burden (Hrs)
G-201	180	2	6
Web-Site Survey	300	5	25
Periodic Survey	1,020	12	204
Focus Groups	250	120	500
Total	1,750		735

13. **Estimated annual cost to respondents or record keepers** - There is no known cost to respondents. Participation/responding is voluntary.
14. **Estimate of cost to Federal government** - N.A.
15. **Explanation for change in burden** – N.A.
16. **Time schedule for data collection and publication** - The results obtained from these surveys will be disseminated to key RRB policy and management officials, employees, and the public.
17. **Request not to display OMB expiration date** - Most of the customer satisfaction surveys conducted under the generic clearance umbrella will be one-time surveys. The recurring items will be revised infrequently. The RRB requests that OMB not require the agency to display the OMB expiration date on its customer satisfaction forms and surveys.
18. **Exceptions to Certification Statement** -None