

Rural Development, Centralized Servicing Center
Customer Satisfaction Survey
0575-0187

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHOD

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed same. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The total number of customers is approximately 330,600. Approximately 70% of them will be eligible to receive the survey based on our criteria of being current with no servicing actions pending.

The objective is a 50 percent response rate. In order to achieve an expected 50 percent response rate (3000 responses), 6,000 surveys will be mailed to customers considered to be in a current payment status.

The third party contractor will mail the survey along with the numbered return envelope to the randomly selected group of homeowners.

Within 7 days of the mailing of the survey questionnaire, the contractor will send out a postcard to all sample households reminding them to complete the survey and return it.

Within 14 days after the post card mailing, the contractor will send another survey to all homeowners who did not respond to the initial mailing.

The contractor will receive a list of customers in the form of electronic media. The list will exclude customers that are in bankruptcy or other legal action status, customers that are 3 months past due, and customers that have obtained a USDA loan(s) within the last year.

The contractor will randomly select 6,000 customers that are current. We expect an aggressive 50 percent response rate, or approximately 3,000 total respondents. The Agency was advised, by the contractor previously used, that time frames, measurements and response rates outlined in the Agency's requirement are very comparable to those used by private sector companies. The Agency was advised that if too much response time is given, fewer responses will be submitted. A total of 3 weeks will be allowed for survey responses to be returned. Likewise, customers with USDA loans less than a year old are being excluded since their responses are expected to be overly positive and will inappropriately skew the results.

A Spanish version of the survey will be mailed to those customers who are identified on the CSC system as having a Spanish speaking preference.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection. Customers are randomly selected from a list based on the above criteria.
- Estimation procedure. Estimates will be proportionally/percentage estimates based on the number of respondents selecting a particular category of a question, to the total number answering that question.
- Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification. The survey is designed so that all of the respondents' data will be useful. There is no degree of accuracy required. The data will be more beneficial if we receive at least a 15 percent response rate. With the large sample size estimates should be reliable for their intended use.
- Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures. None.
- Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden. Respondents will only need to report information on a one-time basis. An 18-24 month follow-up may or may not be sent to those same respondents.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended use. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe.

A follow-up postcard reminder will be sent to the surveyed customers if, after 10 days, the response rate is less than 10 percent. A second survey will be sent to all customers within 14 days of the initial mailing as a follow-up.

The survey is designed to capture the level of satisfaction that RD-SFH customers have with the service provided by CSC. The data captured will be compared to the benchmark survey and previous surveys to determine the change in overall customer satisfaction.

4. Describe any test of procedure or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

CSC has used Philips & Associates, Inc. to develop and administer the customer satisfaction survey in the past. Philips & Associates, Inc. has experience developing and administering surveys for mortgage companies in the private sector and is working with CSC, RHS National Office, National Association of Credit Specialists (NACS), National Association of Support Personnel (NASP) as

well as System Support Division, to review the survey format, specifics of methods used, schedule and criteria to be used in evaluating the completed surveys. As such, no testing is deemed necessary.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the designing and the name of the Agency contractor(s), grantee(s) or other persons who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the Agency.

CSC contact person is Terrie Barton, Customer Service Branch Chief, (314)457-5133.

Data Collection will be provided by the third party contractor.

Initial Statistical Review was provided by Scott Rumberg (202) 720-5617 and Ginny McBride (202) 720-5778, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.