

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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

A. JUSTIFICATION1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Centralized Servicing Center (CSC) has been operating since 10/96. The CSC was established to achieve a high level of customer service and operating efficiency. The CSC has established a fully integrated call center and is able to provide borrowers with convenient access to their loan account information in both English and Spanish. In accordance with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the survey will enable CSC to continue to measure the results and overall effectiveness of customer service provided as well as implement action plans and measure improvements.

The original Customer Satisfaction Survey was completed April 2004 and a follow up surveys were performed in August 2006 and January 2009. The purpose of the first survey was to establish a baseline for future measurements of aspects of satisfaction. Subsequent surveys are necessary to gauge the overall effectiveness of loan servicing, program efficiency and accessibility for Rural Development and the Single Family Housing (SFH) Direct program.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the Agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

To facilitate the CSC's mission and in an effort to continuously improve its services, a survey has been developed that can measure the quality of service borrowers receive when they contact the CSC. The outcome of the Customer Satisfaction Survey will provide the general satisfaction levels among RD customers throughout the nation, highlight areas that need improvement, and provide comparisons for future surveys and mark improvement in customer service. The customer survey is being administered as part of CSC's on-going service quality improvement program. An independent third party contractor conducts the survey in accordance with the statement of work and mails customer satisfaction surveys to RHS customers/homeowners.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection.

At this time the survey will be conducted through the U. S. Postal Services (by an independent contractor). However, to comply with the E-Gov Act, and give respondents in the future the option to respond electronically, RHS is requesting approval to provide the option of completing the survey either via mail or via the internet. Internet responses will be received using a Web

site address that will be provided by the third party contractor, specifically for the purpose of responding to this survey.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

There is no other similar information available to measure RD-SFH CSC customer satisfaction; therefore, no duplication of information exists.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (item 5 of OMB Form 83-1), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The collection will not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The CSC is focusing on service quality and customer satisfaction. If we do not collect this information, we will not be able to set accurate performance goals, measure program effectiveness against those goals and improve program effectiveness. Without this survey we will not be able to comply with the GPRA of 1993.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- a. Requiring respondents to report information more than quarterly. Respondents will only need to report information on a one-time basis. A follow-up survey will be conducted in 18-24 months.
- b. Requiring written responses in less than 30 days. Based on previous experience with a prior contractor, in his professional opinion, if you give customers 30 days to respond to a survey, they are more likely to postpone their response and ultimately forget to answer the survey. A request of a 2-week response usually motivates the customer to respond more quickly and improves the overall response rate.
- c. Requiring more than an original and two copies. Only the original survey needs to be completed and returned to the contractor.
- d. Requiring respondents to retain records for more than 3 years. The survey doesn't require the respondents to retain information.
- e. Not designed to produce valid and reliable results. Probabilistic statistical sampling will be used with regard to the target population as described in Section B-1.
- f. Requiring use of statistical data classification, which has not been reviewed and approved by OMB. We are not using statistical classification, which has not been reviewed and approved.
- g. Requiring a pledge of confidentiality. The survey contains a statement regarding confidentiality notifying respondents that information from the survey will not be exchanged or sold with any third party.

h. Requiring submission of proprietary trade secrets. We are not requiring submission of proprietary trade secrets.

8. If applicable, identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice soliciting comments on the information collection. Summarize public comments received and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the Agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, reporting format (if any), and on data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Notice was published in the Federal Register on January 12, 2009, [75 FR 1585] soliciting comments from the public. No comments were received.

The following individuals were instrumental in providing feedback about the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Bev Wilde	William Terrell	Janet Havelka
Nat. Assoc. of Support Personnel	Nat. Assoc. of Credit Specialists	USDA, SSD, SFH
101 Industrial Park Rdwy	P O Box 593	1520 Market St.
63013		St. Louis, MO
Eldon, Mo 65026	Vinita, OK 74301	314-335-8655
573-339-5667	918-256-7863	

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than reenumeration of contractors or grantees.

Customers will not receive a payment, gift or incentive to respond.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or Agency policy.

An independent contactor will be administering the survey for CSC. The contractor will tabulate the completed surveys and provide results to CSC in an aggregate form. The names of survey respondents will not be associated with their answers and comments.

11. Provide additional justification for any question of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature on the survey.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

The RHS Customer Satisfaction Survey, sent to an estimated 6,000 individuals, is estimated to take 10 minutes per response, for an estimated total of 1,000 annual hours, and an estimated total cost to the public of \$14,400. We are seeking a 3 year approval in order to send the survey out again in 18-24 months to determine if the level of satisfaction has improved, declined or remained stable.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information.

There are no capital and start-up costs or operation and maintenance costs.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.

The estimated cost to the Federal Government for each survey is referenced below.

The cost is estimated to be \$12.50 per initial survey mailed= \$75,000. With printing costs, government expense of approximately \$4,000. The estimated total cost to the government is \$79,000 with the survey being repeated every 18-24 months.

Breakdown of costs:

Admin- 10% (\$7,500)
Analysis- 30% (\$22,500)
Labor- 25% (\$18,750)
Processing- 20% (\$15,000)
Mailing Costs*- 15% (\$11,250)

*Mailing costs include postage (Wave I survey, Wave II postcards, Wave III survey- to all participants each wave), handling, database set up and administration, stuffing and return postage. The only cost not included is for GPO printing of all correspondence and supplying envelopes which is estimated to be about \$4000.00.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

There are no changes or adjustments.

16. For collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

The third party contractor will tabulate completed surveys and provide results to CSC in an aggregate form. Questions about customer satisfaction are rated on an 8-point scale. Other questions have Yes/No responses. Those questions will be scored based on the number of Yes/No responses. The collection of information will not be published.

The timetable follows:

1. Award contract	
2. Meeting CSC/contractor - provide sample of comparable data segments	5 workdays from award
3. First draft of survey to CSC	5 workdays from meeting
4. CSC return comments or approve with access to customer database	5 workdays from first draft
5. Final draft of survey	10 workdays from first draft
6. CSC - obtain approval on cover letter and postcard (English/Spanish)	10 workdays from first draft
7. Send final survey, postcard, and print specs to GPO*	5 workdays from receipt of final draft
8. Distribute survey	10 workdays from receiving print from USDA
9. Deadline for customer to respond (to allow mail time)	15 workdays from distribution
10. Final results delivered to CSC	15 workdays from deadline
Total Expected Timeframe	80 workdays total

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The agency will display the OMB expiration date on the survey associated with this information collection.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19 on OMB 83-I.

There are no exceptions noted.

19. How is this information collection related to the Service Center Initiative (SCI)? Will the information collection be part of the one-stop shopping concept?

It is related because it seeks feedback on the quality of service provided to customers by the Service Center. Information sought will be part of the one-stop shopping concept.