

**DOCUMENTATION FOR THE GENERIC CLEARANCE
OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS – OMB No. 0960-0526**

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Office of Public Inquiries (OPI) Response Survey

SSA SUB-NUMBER: D-03

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

BACKGROUND:

When individuals have a Social Security-related problem or issue they have been unable to resolve through other channels (e.g., through the local field office or the national 800 number), they have the option of writing directly to the Social Security Administration (SSA) headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. The SSA's OPI handles these inquiries and responds to the individuals' concerns. The purpose of this survey is to measure satisfaction with the OPI written response. SSA will use the results of the survey to identify areas for improvement in the OPI responses.

SURVEY:

Description of Survey

We will conduct the survey by mail using a scannable questionnaire. We modeled the questions in the OPI Response Survey on earlier surveys we conducted to measure customer perceptions of benefit-related notices. The survey includes the following questions that address satisfaction with the OPI written response:

- Reminds participants of their recent business that led them to write to SSA headquarters and provides a context for understanding their ratings;
- Solicits ratings of key aspects of the OPI written response, including its clarity, helpfulness, logical organization, thoroughness, how long it took to receive the response, and the overall quality;
- Asks participants whether the OPI written response resolved their issue; asks participants whose issue is still unresolved what action they will take next.

Statistical Information

Sample Selection

Each year the OPI issues between 5,000 and 6,000 written responses to the inquiries they receive from the public. OPI maintains a case control system that contains the name and address of the individual who made the inquiry, the topic covered, and the date of the OPI response. We will use the OPI case control system to identify survey participants. Because the overall volume is small, we plan to select three monthly samples of 400 records to achieve a total sample size of 1,200.

Methodology

An SSA-approved contractor will conduct the survey by mail using a scannable questionnaire. We will mail a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals advising them to expect the survey questionnaire. 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. Three weeks later we will send a follow-up cover letter and another copy of the questionnaire to sampled individuals who have not responded as of that point.

Response Rate

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

- We mail out a pre-notification postcard to inform sampled individuals that they will soon be invited to participate in the survey, and to be on the lookout for the envelope containing the questionnaire. Using a postcard format allows sampled individuals to quickly see that SSA sanctions the survey. Additionally, the postcard identifies the contractor who is conducting the survey for SSA, which should increase the likelihood that sampled individuals will open the envelope when they receive the questionnaire.
- Within 5 days after sending the pre-notification postcard, we mail the survey questionnaire along with a cover letter encouraging sampled individuals to respond by emphasizing the importance of the survey.
- Three weeks after we send the first questionnaire, we mail a follow-up letter and a duplicate questionnaire to sampled individuals who have not yet responded. We will not send more than one follow-up because perceptions must be obtained shortly after receipt of the OPI response to ensure their validity and utility.
- The questionnaire is short (one page - front and back), and is easy to read and complete. The scannable version will be designed for ease of use, e.g., font sizes will be large, difficult fill-in bubbles will not be used.

- We provide SSA's toll-free national 800 number so sampled individuals can call if they have any questions.

In other surveys of SSA customers where we used a similar methodology, we achieved response rates ranging from 30 to 50 percent, depending on the nature of the business. Individuals who write to SSA headquarters are strongly invested in their Social Security business and have been proactive in seeking a resolution to their issue. In view of these attributes, we believe they will be highly motivated to respond to the survey and anticipate a response rate at the higher end of that range (50 percent).

This response rate is the highest possible considering that time permits only a limited number of contacts. 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 in the OPI Response Survey is the individual's overall satisfaction with the written response. We define satisfaction as the combined rating of excellent, very good, or good (E/VG/G). In other surveys conducted with customer groups who had an adverse experience, the overall notice rating ranged from 37 to 46 percent E/VG/G. We anticipate a similar overall rating (40 percent E/VG/G) in the OPI Response Survey. Assuming a 50 percent response rate, our proposed sample size is large enough to provide a sampling variability at the 95-percent confidence level equal to +/- 3.9, which is adequate for the intended purpose of the survey.

SSA's Office of Quality Review will perform all sampling and data analysis. Dan Zabronsky, Director of SSA's Division of Modeling in the Office of Quality Improvement, will provide statistical support. Dan 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 will use the results of the survey to identify areas for improvement in the written responses issued by the OPI to the public.

BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION (Number of responses (X) estimated response time (/60) = annual burden hours):

Number of Responses: 1,200
Estimated Response Time: 5 minutes
Annual Burden Hours: 100 hours

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