

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

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Disability  
Initial Claims Report Card (DICRC)  
Survey

**SSA SUB-NUMBER:** D-01

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:**

**BACKGROUND**

As part of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ongoing evaluation of its initial disability application process, we gather applicants' opinions about their experience filing for benefits. SSA surveys three groups: 1) mid-process applicants, who just filed an application but have not yet received a decision; 2) post-adjudicative awarded applicants, who just received a favorable decision; and 3) post-adjudicative denied applicants, who just received an unfavorable decision. SSA measures satisfaction with the application process overall and with specific aspects of the experience as they pertain to each sampled group. We last conducted this survey in FY 2014 and are conducting it again in FY 2016 to track changes in customer perceptions.

**SURVEY**

**Description of Survey**

The survey uses two questionnaires developed by SSA, one for mid-process and one for post-adjudicative applicants (awarded and denied). We have successfully administered all the questions in the survey with these populations.

We conduct the survey in three phases during the fiscal year. We conduct each of the surveys at the same point in time as previous years to ensure comparability of results. Based on our experience conducting surveys with initial disability applicants, we have identified some key service elements that have an impact on satisfaction with the process. Those key elements included in the questionnaire are:

- How the person filed the application;
- Whether the person had assistance filing and who helped them;
- Satisfaction with the ease of filing, i.e. finding information, quality of information obtained and ease of working with SSA to start the process (mid-process only);
- Satisfaction with the ease of providing medical information, i.e., describing medical, job and school history, obtaining medical records and undergoing a medical examination;

- Satisfaction with the explanations SSA provided about the application process (mid-process only);
- Satisfaction with the ease of checking the status of the application (post-adjudicative only);
- Satisfaction with SSA employees, including their helpfulness, courtesy, job knowledge, the clarity of their explanations, and the amount of time they spent with the person;
- Satisfaction with claims processing time (post-adjudicative only);
- Satisfaction with the clarity of the notice of decision (post-adjudicative only); and,
- Satisfaction with the overall ease of filing and overall opinion of SSA’s service.

**Statistical Information**

**Sample Selection**

Each phase of the DICRC survey assesses the satisfaction of a different group of randomly selected disability applicants.

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Date Selected</b>
Mid-process - shortly after filing but before a decision is made	10,000	October 2015
Post-adjudicative Awards - just after they receive the decision	10,000	December 2015
Post-adjudicative Denials - just after they receive the decision	10,000	February 2016

We select 1,000 cases per region in each stratum (10,000 total per stratum) for an overall sample size of 30,000. The table below shows the estimated yearly volume for each of SSA’s 10 regions. We weight survey data to reflect the actual regional universes identified during each sample phase.

<b>Initial Disability Applications Processed – Title II and Title XVI Combined</b>			
	<b>Cases Processed Annually</b>	<b>Percent Cases Awarded</b>	<b>Percent Cases Denied</b>
National	2,766,706	32.3	67.7
Boston	123,570	36.8	63.2
New York	235,152	38.2	61.8
Philadelphia	285,308	32.0	68.0
Atlanta	705,004	27.8	72.2
Chicago	433,588	33.2	66.8
Dallas	404,174	32.6	67.4
Kansas City	121,250	35.2	64.8
Denver	64,003	35.8	64.2
San Francisco	290,973	32.6	67.4
Seattle	82,606	37.7	62.3

## **Methodology**

An SSA-approved contractor conducts the survey by mail. We mail a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals advising them to expect the survey questionnaire. Three to four days later, we mail a brief (one page front and back) scannable questionnaire to all sampled individuals accompanied by a letter that explains the purpose of the survey. We include both the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Privacy Act statements in the initial cover letter. We make two additional contacts to solicit participation: a follow-up postcard and a duplicate survey package (questionnaire and follow-up cover letter).

## **Response Rate**

We take the following steps to maximize the response rate for this survey:

- The questionnaire is short and easy to read and complete. We designed the scannable survey for ease of use by a disabled population, e.g., font sizes are large, difficult fill-in bubbles are not used;
- We send a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals to inform them that 1) they have been selected for the survey and 2) they should be on the lookout for the envelope containing the questionnaire. Using a postcard format allows the recipient to see that SSA sanctions the survey. Also, the postcard identifies the contractor who is conducting the survey for SSA, which should increase the likelihood that participants will open the envelope when they receive the questionnaire;
- The first survey package includes a cover letter signed by an agency official that encourages the individual to respond by emphasizing the importance of the survey;

- We make two additional contacts to encourage participation. We send a follow-up postcard and a follow-up survey package to all sampled individuals who did not respond to the initial solicitation;
- We send Spanish surveys to sampled individuals where SSA records indicate that is their preferred language; and,
- We provide SSA’s toll-free National 800 number so participants can call if they have any questions.

In FY 2014, we achieved a combined response rate of 44 percent for all three strata; the individual response rates were 44 percent for mid-process, 58 percent for awards, and 26 percent for denials. The FY 2014 combined regional response rates ranged from 38 percent to 46 percent. We expect to achieve similarly good response rates in the FY 2016 surveys. Note that SSA routinely conducts a non-responder analysis to identify any significant differences in the responder and non-responder populations and their potential impact on the survey results.

### Sampling Variability

The key variable for this survey is overall satisfaction with SSA’s service, i.e., the percent giving a rating of excellent, very good or good (E/VG/G). Nationally, our proposed sample size of 10,000 cases in each phase is large enough, assuming a 50 percent response rate, to provide a sampling variability at the 95-percent confidence level equal to:

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>FY 2014 National Key Variable (E/VG/G Rating)</b>	<b>Sampling Variability</b>
Mid-process	81%	+/- 1.5%
Awards	91%	+/- 1.1%
Denials	51%	+/- 1.9%

Anticipating a response rate of 50 percent as well from the regional samples, we estimate that the sampling variability will fall in the ranges shown below. These ranges are acceptable given the intended purpose of the survey.

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Regional Key Variables (E/VG/G Rating)</b>	<b>Sampling Variability</b>
Mid-process	74% to 84%	+/- 3.8% to +/- 3.1%
Awards	86% to 93%	+/- 3.1% to +/- 1.9%
Denials	43% to 56%	+/- 4.3% to +/-4.4%

SSA’s Office of Quality Performance (OQP) will perform all sampling and data analysis. Dan Zabronsky, Director of SSA’s Division of Modeling in OQP, will provide statistical support. Mr. Zabronsky’s telephone number is (410) 965-5953.

**IF FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A PAYMENT, INDICATE AMOUNT**  
*(No more than \$25 can be authorized under OMB rules):*

N/A

**USE OF SURVEY RESULTS:**

SSA uses the results of this study to gauge satisfaction with the current initial disability application process, and to assess the impact of the agency's ongoing improvement efforts.

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

Number of Responses: 30,000

Estimated Response Time: 5 minutes

Annual Burden Hours: 2,500 hours

**NAME OF CONTACT PERSON:** Deborah A. Larwood

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 410-966-6135