

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

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Office Visitor Survey (OVS)

**SSA SUB-NUMBER:** D-02

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) annually surveys individuals who do business with us to assess their satisfaction with the specific mode of contact they used. As part of this effort, we conduct the OVS, in which we survey members of the public who visited one of SSA's field offices (FO), hearing offices (HO), or Social Security Card Centers (SSCC) to complete their business.

The OVS, which we conduct shortly after the participant's visit, assesses public perception of the in-person service provided by SSA FOs/HOs/SSCCs, and collects information that helps SSA understand the customer experience behind satisfaction ratings.

**SURVEY:**

**Description of Survey**

The OVS uses two questionnaires developed by SSA, one for FO/HO visitors and one for SSCC visitors. The brief, scannable questionnaires address key service elements that have an impact on customer satisfaction with the service received during an office visit. To ensure the comparability of the data from the two samples, both questionnaires contain all of the same core satisfaction questions. The SSCC survey questionnaire includes a few additional questions tailored to address issues unique to the SSCC experience.

The survey includes the following questions that address satisfaction with in-person service:

- Satisfaction with office location, hours, signs and instructions, usefulness of the information provided in the waiting area, office comfort, appearance, privacy, and waiting time;
- Satisfaction with the performance of SSA employees, including their helpfulness, courtesy, job knowledge, and clarity of explanations;
- Whether visitors were able to complete their business in one visit;

- Satisfaction with the overall service received during the visit;
- Whether visitors tried to take care of their business some other way before going to the office, what action they took, and why they were not successful;
- Visitors' service preferences for future business, including a series of questions on the use of the Internet and on SSA's *my Social Security* online account; and
- Whether visitors needed special accommodations to do business with SSA because of a medical condition, what those special accommodations are, and their satisfaction with how well SSA met their needs.
- How visitors found out how to apply for a new or replacement Social Security card and their satisfaction with the clarity of information provided (SSCC questionnaire only); and,
- Language preference (SSCC questionnaire only).

### **Statistical Information**

#### ***FO/HO Sample Selection***

SSA maintains over 1,200 FOs and 140 HOs that serve over 40 million visitors annually. We select 52 FOs and 13 HOs to participate in the **FO/HO survey** each year. We use a random, stratified sample of FOs to ensure representation of each of SSA's 10 regions. We select HOs randomly on a national level.

We will randomly assign each sampled office one week within a 4-week survey period in October to record identifying information for every office visitor who conducts business with SSA. Office staff record each visitor's name, address, telephone number, language preference, and customer segment (identifies the type of business the visitor conducted) into a database.

At the end of each workday, the office staff notifies SSA's Office of Quality Review (OQR) via email that they have entered the last visitor's information in the database. The OQR staff then retrieves the daily visitor information and selects a random daily sample of 275 FO customers, proportional to the number of visitors in each FO that day, plus 35 HO visitors. We repeat the sampling process on each of the 19 business days of the 4-week period to reach an overall sample size of 5,890 FO/HO visitors.

## ***SSCC Sample Selection***

SSA's 14 SSCCs serve approximately 1,000,000 visitors each year. OQR identifies the visitor contact information (name and address) from a database that processes the applications for new or replacement Social Security cards. From the daily universe of SSCC visitors, we select a random sample of 250 SSCC visitors per day during a 4-week survey period in March - April. We repeat the sampling process on each of the 20 business days in the 4-week period to reach an overall sample size of 5,000 SSCC visitors.

## ***Methodology***

An SSA-approved contractor conducts the survey by mail using a scannable questionnaire. We mail a pre-notification postcard to all sampled individuals advising them to expect the survey questionnaire. Three to five days later, we 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. One week after we mail the initial package, we send a follow-up cover letter and another copy of the questionnaire to all sampled individuals.

## ***Response Rate***

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

- To minimize the time between the visitor's service experience and the survey, thereby ensuring salience, we select samples daily and transmit them to the contractor within two to three business days of the visit.
- A few days after sample selection, 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 see quickly 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 participants will open the envelope when they receive the questionnaire.
- Within three to five 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.
- Five business days after we send the first questionnaire, we mail a follow-up letter and a duplicate questionnaire to all sampled individuals. We do not send more than one follow-up because responses for service satisfaction surveys must be obtained shortly after the date of the contact (while participants' perceptions are still fresh) to ensure their validity and utility.

- The questionnaire is short (one page - front and back), has an eye-catching title, and is easy to read and complete. We designed the scannable questionnaire for ease of use by an aged and disabled population, e.g., font sizes are large, difficult fill-in bubbles are not used.
- We send a Spanish version of the FO/HO questionnaire to sampled individuals where the visitor identification process indicates that is their preferred language. (Note: We cannot pre-identify language preferences for SSCC visitors; we mail the questionnaire in English only. However, the questionnaire solicits the person’s preferred language so we can compare survey results for English/non-English speakers.)
- We provide SSA’s toll-free national 800 number so sampled individuals can call if they have any questions.

In FY 2015, we achieved a response rate of 41 percent in the FO/HO survey and 25 percent in the SSCC survey. We believe that we achieved a higher response rate in the FO/HO survey because most of those visitors conducted business indicative of a significant relationship with SSA, e.g., filing an application for benefits. In contrast, the majority of SSCC visitors (75 percent of the sample) were simply obtaining a replacement Social Security card.

These response rates are the highest possible considering that time permits only a limited number of contacts. We expect to achieve similarly good response rates in the upcoming surveys. 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 for the OVS is overall satisfaction with the service received during the visit. We define satisfaction as a combined rating of excellent, very good, or good (E/VG/G). In the most recent OVS, FO/HO visitors rated overall service 90 percent E/VG/G, and SSCC visitors rated overall service 91 percent E/VG/G. Assuming a response rate of 50 percent and similar satisfaction ratings, our sample sizes are large enough to yield a sampling variability at the 95 percent confidence level acceptable for the intended purpose of the survey.

Stratum	Sample Size	Key Variable (E/VG/G Rating)	Sampling Variability
FO/HO visitors	5,890	90%	± 1.1
SSCC visitors	5,000	91%	± 1.2

SSA’s OQR and Office of Quality Improvement (OQI) are responsible for sampling and data analysis. Dan Zabronsky, Deputy Associate Commissioner, OQI, provides statistical support. OMB can reach Mr. Zabronsky 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 uses the results of this survey to evaluate and improve various aspects of our FO, HO, and SSCC service.

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

Number of Responses:	10,890
Estimated Response Time:	5 minutes
Annual Burden Hours:	908 hours

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