

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction Research
W&I E-help Desk Focus Groups FY2015

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) enlists a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. This initiative is part of the Service-wide effort to maintain a system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act (RRA) of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862 that requires all government agencies to survey their customers.

For the Wage and Investment Division, an important service delivery channel is the toll-free E-help Desk phone service. Information collected from the currently in field customer satisfaction survey and the proposed companion focus groups are used to provide meaningful feedback to managers and staff in the E-help Desk function at a national and site level. This survey will assist E-help Desk in assessing its overall customer satisfaction and overall quality for its balanced measures.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The E-help Desk IVR phone survey currently conducted by Pacific Consulting Group used to measuring customer satisfaction has not been reviewed for several years. Three focus groups will be used to test potential changes to the survey. This research has two components. The first will utilize a screener to invite taxpayers who have participated in a prior E-help Desk survey to participate in a telephone focus group to provide feedback. The second component will be conducting the E-help Desk telephone focus groups with those taxpayers.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

E-help Desk Customers interact with the IRS via the phone. Given that already preset communication method, the vendor will conduct the focus groups over the phone. This will allow participants from multiple geographic locations to participate at one time and will limit the burden of travel to the participant.

4. Efforts Not to Duplicate Research

This is the only focus group study currently proposed for this customer group.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

N/A

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

E-help Desk would be unable to meet corporate goals and would fall short of meeting the IRS Mission of a Balanced Measurement System. Failure to fund this program would adversely affect our ability to compare our results and determine where customer satisfaction improvements are needed.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. The information collected will be voluntary and will not be used for statistical purposes.

8. Consultations with Persons outside SOI

N/A

9. Payment of Gift

\$50 per focus group participant. The purpose of the stipend is to encourage participation, and to thank participants for sharing their time and contributions to the discussion. This amount is considered lower than the industry standard.

10. Confidentiality

All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II during this study and the vendor will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy to the extent allowed by law of taxpayers will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at the C-2 level is accomplished via the Windows NT operating system. Systems are password protected, users profiled for authorized use, and individual audit trails generated and reviewed periodically.

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure privacy protection of all taxpayers to the extent allowed by law. This includes criteria for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

The focus group recruitment lists will not contain tax return or taxpayer information beyond name and contact number. Participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy to the extent allowed by law of the survey respondents. We will apply the fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all survey respondents. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the protection of information as well as its releases to authorized recipients.

11. Sensitive Nature

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Burden of Information Collection

A total of 3 phone focus groups will be held. We will recruit 9 qualified individuals for each group for a total of 27 recruits, with the expectation that 6 will ultimately participate in each group for a total of 18 participants. Considering all factors (competing interests, willingness, and schedule), we expect about 25% of those invited to participate to agree to participate. Therefore, a total of 108 people will be invited to participate.

As shown in the table below, the contact time to invite and screen the 108 who are invited to participate is 2 minutes each for a total of 3.6 hours. The time for reminder phone calls to the 27 participants who agreed to participate is 2 minutes each for a total of .9 hours. The time for participating in the groups is 60 minutes each for 18 participants for a total of 18 hours. The total number of burden hours is 22.5.

Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Participation Time (minutes)	Burden (Hours)
Contact and invite to participate	108	2	3.6
Agreed to Participate (reminder phone calls)	27	2	0.9

Participate (hour long phone group)	18	60	18
TOTAL			22.5

Total Burden = 22.5 hours

Estimated Response Rate: 25%

13. Costs to Respondents

N/A

14. Costs to Federal Government

\$10,587.78

15. Reason for Change

N/A

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, and Analysis Plans

The vendor will use the results of the focus groups to outline key themes and areas of taxpayer interest, suggestions for improvement and proposed changes to the companion W&I E-help Desk phone IVR survey currently in field. Verbatim quotes from participants will be used to support all findings.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

N/A

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

N/A

19. Dates collection will begin and end

August-December 2015 pending OMB approval

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

The primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The sampling frame consists of W&I E-help Desk taxpayers.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

E-help Desk customers that have agreed to participate in future research via the companion IVR survey will be contacted to participate in the focus groups. The focus group will be held via telephone, participants will call toll free number to join the conference. The contractor will provide the toll free number.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

The contractor will be recruiting from a list of people who said they were willing to participate in future research. The contractor will pay an incentive of \$50 to participants. Let the participant know that their

participation will help the IRS improve its services. The contractor will have 3 separate focus groups at different times on different days to allow people to participate when it is most convenient for them.

4. Testing of Procedures

N/A

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

For questions regarding the study or questionnaire design or statistical methodology, contact:

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