

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Information Collection Request (ICR) for Approval to Conduct
Customer Satisfaction Focus Group
(OMB #1545-1349)

TITLE: Small Business/Self Employed (SB/SE) 2016 Campus Correspondence Exam (CCE) Focus Group

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. In order to work continuously to ensure that our programs are effective and meet our customers' needs, we seek to obtain Office of Management & Budget (OMB) approval. This collection of information is necessary to enable SB/SE to garner customer feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with our commitment to improving service delivery. The information collected from our customers and stakeholders will help ensure that users have an effective, efficient, and satisfying experience with SB/SE's customer service programs. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with service, or focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and its customers and stakeholders. It will also allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The focus group will be conducted to concentrate on the CCE process and how to improve the audit process, since we know that taxpayers want to communicate with IRS on-line. The information collected will help the IRS provide better service to customers. We want to make sure that we have captured the key factors that drive taxpayer satisfaction with interactions with IRS Campus Exam staff.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

Taxpayers who wish to participate in the focus group must interact with the IRS via the telephone. Given that already preset communication method, the vendor will conduct the focus group over the telephone. This will allow participants from multiple geographic locations to participate at one time and will limit the burden of travel to the participant.

4. Duplication of Information

No similar data are gathered or maintained by SB/SE or are available from other sources known to SB/SE.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

No small entities are involved in this focus group.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

SB/SE Campus Exam would be unable to meet corporate goals and would fall short of meeting the IRS Mission of a Balanced Measurement System. Failure to approve this focus group would

adversely affect the ability to compare taxpayer concerns 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 the Agency

There were no consultations with persons outside of the Agency.

9. Payment or Gift

The focus group vendor plans to provide a \$75 check per participant, an industry-standard amount for participating in this form of research. To encourage participation, the contractor will be offering an incentive to participants and let them know that their participation will help the IRS improve its services.

10. Confidentiality

No PII will be collected during the focus group. Participation will be voluntary and signed focus group consent forms will be collected from each participant. Moderator will indicate that no names will be used in the final report. Also, the data returned to IRS will have no identifying information relating specific records to individual taxpayers. Nonetheless, IRS will ensure that privacy to extent allowed by law and security of the aggregated results will receive the utmost attention. Public and official access to the information will be tightly controlled. The computer files containing this tabulated information will remain password protected at all times. Data security approaching level C-2 will be accomplished using the Windows XP operating system. Digital audio files used to capture the testing sessions will be destroyed when the project is completed and there is no further need for the data. We will apply fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all taxpayers. 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 taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

11. Sensitive Nature

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

12. Burden of Information Collection

We estimate contacting 96 individuals to recruit 9 taxpayers for the focus group. The response rate is estimated at .0937%. The focus group will take place in the form of a one-hour telephone conference call. Participants will dial a toll-free number at a designated date and time.

For potential focus group participants, it takes 2 minutes for the screener. The time burden is 96 potential participants x 2/60 = 3.2 burden hours.

For actual participants, the focus group takes 1 hour. The time burden is 9 participants x 1 hour = 9 burden hours. Total hours = 12.2 burden hours.

CCE Focus Group	Participation	Participation Time (minutes per person)	Total Burden (in hours)
Requests for Focus Group Participation	96	2 minutes	3.2 hours
Estimated Focus Group Respondents	9	60 minutes	9 hours

Total Burden			12.2 hours

13. Costs to Respondents

There is no cost to focus group respondents resulting from the collection of information.

14. Costs to Federal Government

The cost to the Federal Government is \$7,830.80. This cost is comprised of: focus group recruiting costs, costs to moderate the session, create a summary, telephone conference call costs, and participation incentive fees.

15. Reason for Change

No change is being requested. This is a new focus group.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

The contractor will tabulate the results of the telephone focus group and analyze the customers' experiences and needs, and will identify ways in which the IRS can improve the overall Campus Exam experience. The contractor will prepare and submit a draft report of the Focus Group findings within 10 working days of completion of focus group. The report shall include, but is not limited to, a summary of the highlights of the focus groups and ensure that previously identified topics are addressed in the focus group report.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

SB/SE is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval, as this is a one-time, limited-duration focus group.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

19. Dates collection will begin and end

January 2017– March 2017

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

Taxpayers who participated in the 2016 CCE customer satisfaction survey will be recruited for the focus group. At the end of the CCE survey, these taxpayers indicated their willingness to participate in future research by providing their phone number and/or email address to be contacted for participation. The focus group will be scheduled for 60 minutes, and will be limited to 9 participants.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The contractor expects to use telephone and email data collection methods for recruiting for the focus group, depending on whether the taxpayer provided a telephone number or email address to be contacted for participation. The actual focus group will be conducted by telephone. The focus group will be moderated by professional moderators at Fors Marsh Group (FMG).

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Standard procedures will be used in order to obtain the highest response rate possible for the focus groups. The contractor will recruit focus group participants and conduct the focus group.

4. Testing of Procedures

No pretest is necessary for these focus groups as SB/SE has evidence from previous research that the research procedures to be used for this task are successful.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

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Attachments

- Moderator's Guide
- Screener
- Reminders
- Consent Form