

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate during the last collection.

NAD receives approximately 3,500 individual appeal requests each year from USDA agency decisions. Of the 3,500 requests, 1,100 are settled by parties or withdrawn prior to a Hearing Officer written determination. This leaves 2,400 written determinations each year from which customer surveys can be mailed. NAD would mail a survey, with Business Reply Mail Postage Paid, to each appellant as his or her appeal is finalized. NAD expects its response rate to be at or above 80%.

Previous customer surveys sent by NAD had a response rate of more than 80%.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:
 - a. Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection;
 - b. Estimation procedure;
 - c. Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification;
 - d. Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and,
 - e. Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

Using a census methodology, NAD will collect information by mailing out customer surveys to each appellant that recently received final written determination by a Hearing Officer. Each person in this category (approximately 2,400) will receive a survey with a few days of receiving the decision. No estimation or stratification is used because we survey 100% of the particular population. NAD has protected itself from non-response bias by reducing non-response itself. When responses are not received by a specified date, NAD sends a reminder to each potential respondent and this has worked quite well in the past and it is assumed that it will also do so in the future.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

NAD will track the mailed survey with NAD's tracking number to maximize responses to the survey. We have patterned our strategy on a similar method used by other USDA agencies.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

NAD does not plan to undertake any test of procedures.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individual consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

NAD did not consult with any outside individual on the statistical aspects of the design of its survey. NAD did consult with outside individuals on previous surveys. NAD employees who will collect and/or analyze the information are:

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