

Appendix C-3 Client Outcome Survey (Cohort 1) announcement to directors

Dear VBOC directors,

Greetings from the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD). SBA is conducting a performance evaluation of the VBOCs as we develop plans for improving the program and assessing its impact on clients' business-related goals. To offer a fair and independent study, OVBD has contracted Optimal Solutions Group, LLC (Optimal), to complete the evaluation. As part of this assessment, Optimal is distributing a survey to a sample of clients from each VBOC who were served during Calendar Year (CY) 2014.

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, SBA (OVBD) may not conduct this survey unless it has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). SBA has obtained that approval under OMB control #3245-xxxx, Expiration date xx/ xx/ xxxx. The web-based survey is brief and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete, including the time for this invitation. The primary purpose of this survey is to collect data about clients, clients' businesses or business ideas, clients' business needs and goals, progress clients made toward achieving their business-related goals, clients' interaction with VBOCs, the services clients received from VBOCs, how beneficial the services have been for helping clients accomplish their business goals, and clients' successes and challenges. This information is extremely important for evaluating the VBOC program. The survey does not need to be completed in one sitting. Also, clients may choose "Prefer not to answer" if they do not want to respond to a specific question.

Clients are in no way required to participate in the survey but are encouraged to do so, because OVBD values their input. All survey responses are confidential. In the context of this survey, confidentiality means that no respondent will be identified or named in any publicly available report or other such publication without his or her prior, explicit approval. In any public report, such phrases as "a VBOC client" will be used to report information provided by a particular respondent. However, the survey results, along with personally identifiable information (PII), will be provided to SBA headquarters for the purpose of implementing a future impact evaluation of the VBOC program. The VBOCs where clients received business assistance will only be provided aggregate data and will not be given access to individual responses.

To conduct the survey with clients, we respectfully request that you send an e-mail announcement to all individuals who received at least one counseling or training service during CY 2014. Please send this announcement e-mail by <DATE>. The text for the announcement e-mail is provided below.

If you have any questions about the client survey or sending the announcement e-mail to clients, please do not hesitate to contact Optimal by phone at 301-306-1170. Thank you very much for your assistance during this data-collection process.

Respectfully,

Barbara Carson

On behalf of the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development

Text for announcement e-mail from VBOC directors to clients:

Dear <VBOC name> clients,

We thank you for seeking and receiving services at <VBOC>. As you may be aware, <VBOC> is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD). SBA is conducting a performance evaluation of the VBOC program to develop plans for improving it and assessing its impact on the business goals of clients, who are the veterans and their families served by VBOCs.

To offer a fair and independent study, OVBD has contracted Optimal Solutions Group, LLC (Optimal), to complete the evaluation. As part of this assessment, Optimal is distributing a survey to a sample of clients from each VBOC who were served during Calendar Year 2014. You may be randomly selected to participate in the survey. The web-based survey is brief and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete, including time to review this invitation. The primary purpose of this survey is to collect data about clients, clients' businesses or business ideas, clients' business needs and goals, progress clients made toward achieving their business goals, clients' interaction with VBOCs, the services clients received from VBOCs, how beneficial the services have been for helping clients accomplish their business goals, and clients' successes and challenges. This information is extremely important for evaluating the VBOC program. The survey does not need to be completed in one sitting. Also, you may choose "Prefer not to answer" if you do not want to respond to a specific question.

As required by law, SBA (OVBD) has obtained approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to conduct this interview. The OMB control number is 3245-xxxx, Expiration date xx/ xx/ xxxx. You are in no way required to participate in the interview, but are encouraged to do so because SBA values your input. All responses are confidential. In the context of this survey, confidentiality means that no respondent will be identified or named in any publicly available report or other such publication without his or her prior, explicit approval. In any public report, such phrases as "a VBOC client" will be used to report information provided by a particular respondent. However, the survey results, along with personally identifiable information (PII), will be provided to SBA headquarters for the purpose of implementing a future impact evaluation of the VBOC program. SBA will protect any information provided to the extent permitted by the law, including Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a and the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552. The VBOC where you received business assistance will only be provided aggregate data and will not be given access to individual responses. Additionally, your participation will in no way affect the services you receive from <VBOC>.

If you are randomly selected to participate in the survey, you will soon receive an e-mail with the survey invitation directly from Optimal.

(OMB Control Number: 3245-XXXX)

Thank you for your support and assistance in this effort.

Respectfully,

<VBOC director>