

SUPPORTING STATEMENT A

JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is requesting a 3-year renewal of its Generic Clearance Request for Voluntary Customer Surveys. Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," mandates agencies to identify their customers and survey them to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services. Customers and stakeholders include persons who file appeals with MSPB of agency actions taken against them (appellants), their representatives, and representatives of the agency which took the action; Federal officials and members of the public (academicians, researchers, and consultants) who read and use the findings of reports issued by our Office of Policy and Evaluation (OPE); and those who are interested in MSPB's role in overseeing the Office of Personnel Management.

Over the past several years, we have used customer satisfaction surveys to evaluate how well we are serving our customers in terms of their perceptions of our timeliness, fairness, accessibility, and sensitivity to their situation in deciding their appeals. We have also used customer surveys to determine the usefulness of the reports issued by OPE. As a result of these surveys, we have established baseline performance measures for both our appeals process and merit systems review responsibilities. We have also instituted a number of changes to both of these processes as a result of feedback obtained from our customers. We plan to use customer surveys periodically over the next 3 years to measure the success of our changes and to attempt to identify additional areas where improvements can be made. The views of our customers are also important measures we use to report our performance under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), as amended by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010.

2. How the Information will be used.

As mentioned in response to Item 1, the results of these surveys will be used to improve the timeliness, fairness, accessibility and sensitivity of the Board's appeal decisions. Responses will also be used to improve the usefulness of our reports on merit systems issues. We have used information obtained from customer satisfaction surveys conducted in the past to improve the form used by appellants to file appeals with the Board. We have also used information obtained from surveys of users of our merit systems reports to determine what issues we should be studying and how best to communicate our findings to our intended audience. In addition, the perceptions stakeholders and customers have of our work processes and work products are important ways we measure the success of our programs under the GPRA, as amended.

3. Use of automated collection procedures.

The collection of information from our customers uses automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology to the maximum extent possible. In addition, we make every effort to reach our customers using information technology that would reduce the burden on them and ensure the validity of the information we are trying to obtain. On occasion, we may use paper surveys where electronic means are not available or practical.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

As far as we know, no duplication of efforts exists since we know of no one who intends to survey our customers concerning their satisfaction with our work. The information obtained in the past will be used as a baseline to compare the results of future surveys, but the surveys we have conducted in the past do not tell us what our customers currently think about the work we are performing.

5. Impact on small businesses.

The information we plan to collect does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequences of not collecting the information.

If the survey is not conducted, we will not be able to fully comply with Executive Order 12862. We would be limited in the extent to which we could obtain reliable and valid information concerning what our customers thought about the work we are performing. We would be unable to measure whether or not we have met annual performance goals involving customer perceptions of our processes and/or work products.

7. Explanation of special circumstances.

On occasion, an agency representative or appellant representative may be connected to more than one appeal. Because our level of analysis is usually the case, a representative may receive more than one survey. It is also possible that the same individual could be contacted about more than one merit system study. We suspect this to be a rare occurrence so we do not plan to alter the manner in which our surveys are conducted.

8. Federal Register notice.

On June 19, 2015, MSPB published a notice and request for comment on the surveys covered by this submission in the Federal Register at (80 FR 35404). MSPB received zero comments. A copy of the Federal Register notice soliciting

comments on this information collection is attached.

9. Assurance of confidentiality.

Respondents are advised in cover letters that their answers will be kept completely confidential. Certain information may be used in depersonalized form to establish overall program statistics. Responses to the survey are entirely voluntary. There is no requirement to complete the survey to maintain a relationship with MSPB. The only use of the data from the survey instrument will be to monitor and improve customer service and/or track and report our progress in meeting performance goals or measures.

10. Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There will be no questions of a sensitive nature on the surveys.

11. Estimates of annualized costs for collection of information.

We anticipate that a total of up to 3,000 customer satisfaction surveys will be distributed annually during each year of the 3-year period covered by this request. For purposes of calculating the burden on respondents we are assuming that 1,500 people will respond to our surveys. Our surveys generally take about 5 to 45 minutes to complete, with an average completion time of 30 minutes. Multiplying 30 minutes by 1,500 respondents yields a total maximum burden on respondents of 750 hours.

The annualized costs to respondents cannot be calculated since the respondents represent a diverse group whose range of income is not known. If respondents chose to participate in our survey, it is anticipated that the average time to complete and return our survey will be about 30 minutes.

12. Total cost to respondents or record keepers.

There is no additional cost to respondents or record keepers beyond that shown in Item 11.

13. Estimates of annualized costs to the Federal Government.

There are 3 types of costs to the Federal Government associated with conducting the anticipated customer satisfaction surveys. These include:

- Professional staff time designing, reviewing, programming and distributing surveys. It is estimated that this will require approximately 120 staff hours over the 3 years covered by this request. Assuming an average cost of \$70.00 per staff hour, this results in a total cost of about \$8,400.00 or \$2,800.00 annually.

- Professional staff time recording and analyzing survey results. Over the 3-year covered by this request this is estimated to require about 240 staff hours. Assuming an average cost of \$70.00 per staff hour, this results in a total cost of about \$16,800 or about \$5,600 annually.
- Professional staff time devoted to preparing information related to obtaining Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act. It is estimated that about 40 staff hours will be devoted to obtaining clearance for the customer satisfaction surveys. At \$70.00 per hour this yields a total cost of \$2,800.00. This is a one-time cost for the 3 years covered by this request.

Combining the 3 costs discussed above results in a total cost to the Federal Government of approximately \$28,000. On an annual basis the cost would be about \$8,400.00.

14. Reasons for program changes.

There were no program changes

15. Outline of plans for use and publication.

The results of the surveys conducted under this request will not be published. The information obtained in these surveys will be used only by MSPB to improve service.

16. Approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of information collection.

We are not seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.

17. Exceptions to the certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.