

**Supporting Statement Part A For
Generic Clearance of Customer Satisfaction Surveys
Comprehensive Clearance for December 2015 Through November 2018
OMB No. 0960-0526**

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

As part of our efforts to offer the highest possible quality of service to the public, the Social Security Administration (SSA) conducts multiple customer satisfaction surveys each year. In accordance with the guidelines established by *Executive Order (E.O.) 12862*, we prepared a plan detailing customer satisfaction surveys we plan to conduct for the next three years.

This supporting statement and its attachments present SSA's plan of customer satisfaction assessment activities for December 2015 through November 2018. These assessments, also referred to in this document as "generic clearances," cover our quantitative and large-scale (e.g., large participant pool, high cost, etc.) qualitative measures. We transferred the majority of our qualitative customer satisfaction assessment activities to OMB's Fast Track generic clearance (OMB No. 0960-0788).

2. Description of Collection

SSA will conduct customer satisfaction assessments with members of the public who: (1) are recipients of Social Security benefits; (2) have used SSA products or services; or (3) are potential future users of SSA products, programs, or services. We will collect customer service information through various methods, including telephone surveys, mail surveys, online surveys, usability testing sessions, comment cards, and hybrid forms of these methods.

We plan to use these methods to: (1) assess customer satisfaction with existing SSA services, programs, and products; (2) determine the types of services SSA beneficiaries, recipients, claimants, employers, and members of the general public might want from the agency; and (3) gauge public satisfaction levels with proposed new programs or services. Ultimately, these generic clearance activities may lead to SSA policy changes that will enable us to offer the public better customer service.

For a comprehensive list of our planned quantitative and large scale-qualitative generic clearances for the three-year period covered by this clearance request, please see the file entitled "Listing of Proposed GC Collections" posted in the "Manage ICR Documents" page in ROCIS.

Over the past three years, we conducted several customer satisfaction assessments to evaluate our Ticket to Work program; our field office services; our 800 number services; our Internet services; and our hearing offices; as well as to assess the effectiveness of our staff, our level of communication, and overall customer satisfaction with our agency. During the previous three years, our largest customer satisfaction survey under this information collection was the

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SSA Field Office Network Enterprise (FONE) Satisfaction Survey, for which we surveyed 2,070,000 individuals regarding their satisfaction with the specific mode of contact they used with SSA, to determine how well SSA's FONE service is performing. We used the results of this assessment to improve the various aspects of SSA's FONE service. In the same way, we use the results of all of our customer satisfaction assessments to improve the services we offer, and our communications with the public.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information.

In accordance with the spirit of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act program, SSA uses advanced information technology methods to conduct generic clearances whenever possible. These methods include using Internet surveys, conducting telephone surveys with computer-assisted interviewing software, and analyzing results with software programs. Because we have not determined exactly which generic clearances will use advanced information technology, we cannot say what percentage of the total we will conduct electronically.

4. Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information

The nature of the information we are collecting and the manner in which we are collecting it preclude duplication. SSA does not use another instrument to collect similar data.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents

This collection does not significantly affect small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently

If SSA did not conduct the information collection, we would have no means of assessing customer satisfaction with existing and proposed programs, services, and products. Thus, the agency would lose a valuable means of obtaining information that can help us better serve the public. In addition, we would be in violation of *E.O. 12862*. Since we only conduct individual generic clearances to examine a specific issue, we cannot collect the information less frequently. There are no technical or legal obstacles to burden reduction.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances that would cause us to collect this information in a manner inconsistent with *5 CFR 1320.5*.

8. Federal Register Notices/Public Comment.

SSA published the 60-day advance Federal Register Notice on June 23, 2015, at 80 FR 36031, and we received no public comments. We published the 30-day Federal Register Notice on November 17, 2015, at 80 FR 71908. If we receive any public comments in response to the 30-day Notice, we will forward them to OMB. We did not consult with the public in the development or maintenance of these collections.

Note: When we published the 30-day Federal Register Notice, we needed to make corrections to the burden chart; however, we inadvertently published the incorrect numbers. We corrected the burden in #12 below as well as on the attached documents: Listing of Proposed GC Collections, and Categorization of GC Activities with Totals.

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9. Payment or Gift to the Respondents.

Respondents for activities conducted in a “laboratory”–type setting (that is, in-depth interviews, usability testing, etc.) under this clearance may receive a small stipend. This practice has proven necessary and effective in recruiting subjects to participate in this research, and is employed by the other Federal cognitive laboratories. The incentive for participation in a one-on-one interview or usability session is \$40, and for participation in a focus group is \$50-\$75. SSA may provide smaller incentives than these amounts at its discretion; however, SSA will justify to OMB any requests for larger amounts. Respondents for quantitative satisfaction surveys will not receive payment for participation. We will provide specific information with each individual generic clearance request.

10. Assurances of Confidentiality.

SSA protects and holds confidential the information we collect in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 402, 5 U.S.C. 552 (*Freedom of Information Act*), 5 U.S.C. 552a (*Privacy Act of 1974*), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

None of our generic clearances will contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimates of Public Reporting Burden

Below is a chart listing the total number of respondents and the number of burden hours for each year in the collection.

GC PLAN YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	TOTAL HOURS (FOR ALL FIVE CATEGORIES)
Year 1 (September 2012 through August 2013)	9,564,240	1,346,304
Year 2 (September 2013 through August 2014)	9,569,940	1,347,404
Year 3 (September 2014 through August 2015)	9,575,440	1,348,504
3-YEAR TOTAL	28,709,620 respondents	4,042,212 hours

The total burden of 4,042,212 hours represents burden hours, and we did not calculate a separate cost burden. For a complete listing of each proposed generic clearance activity and its projected burden, see the document entitled “Categorization of GC activities w totals,” posted in the “Mange ICR Documents” page of ROCIS.

13. Annual Cost Burden to the Respondents (Other)

There is no known cost burden to the respondents.

14. Annual Cost to the Federal Government.

Below are the annual and triennial costs to the Federal Government for these generic clearance activities.

GC Plan Year	Cost to the Federal Government
Year 1	\$2,014,001
Year 2	\$2,079,001
Year 3	\$2,109,001
3-YEAR TOTAL	\$6,202,003

The total cost to the Federal government for conducting these generic clearances is \$6,202,003. This represents the costs for conducting the surveys, payment to contractors, payment to respondents, and printing/distributing/ mailing survey materials. For a complete listing of the cost of each generic clearance activity, see the document entitled “Categorization of GC Activities /w Totals,” posted in the “Manage ICR Documents” page in ROCIS.

15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request

The number of respondents and burden hours increased for this collection because we are planning to conduct more generic clearance activities in the next three years.

16. Plans for Publication of Information Collection Results

We may publish reports for some of the generic clearance activities we will conduct. However, these are internal-use reports; we will only disseminate them to SSA policy and management officials.

17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date

SSA will display the OMB expiration date on most of its generic clearance customer satisfaction surveys, which are primarily one-time surveys. However, some activities we conduct under the generic clearance authority are ongoing forms, which have no defined expiration date. Examples of these types of collections are comment cards. For these types of collections, OMB exempted SSA from the requirement of printing the OMB expiration date on its forms/surveys to avoid Government waste.

18. Exception to Certification Requirements.

SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at 5 *CFR* 1320.9 and related provisions at 5 *CFR* 1320.8(b)(3).