

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**Information Collection (ICR) Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction**  
**Research (OMB #1545-1432)**  
**Title: Appointment Line and Follow-Up Survey for FA Service FY2017**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) enlists a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. This initiative is part of the Service-wide effort to maintain a system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act (RRA) of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862 that requires all government agencies to survey their customers.

For the Wage and Investment Division, a new service delivery option is the Appointment line, which was set up for taxpayers interested in scheduling Field Assistance (FA) face to face service. The IRS piloted Appointment Based Service for walk-in offices during the 2015 filing seasons. Based on the results of the pilot, all IRS walk-in offices will be on Appointment Based Service by the end of calendar year 2016. To schedule an appointment at a walk-in office, taxpayers must call the Appointment line which is answered by Accounts Management (AM) Customer Service Representatives (CSR). The AM CSRs who answer the Appointment line are instructed to first try to provide service and resolve the taxpayers issue over the phone, direct taxpayers to an alternative service channel when applicable and set appointments for those with tasks that require face to face service or those who prefer face to face service.

Information collected from the point of service Interactive Voice Response (IVR) customer satisfaction survey and the follow-up surveys will be used to provide meaningful feedback to managers and staff for both FA and AM. The follow-up data collection will measure changes in customer satisfaction, changes in issue resolution, and taxpayer behavior after the taxpayer's call to the Appointment line. These surveys will assist in assessing overall customer satisfaction and overall quality for balanced measures.

**2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection**

The Appointment line point of service survey will measure service provided for a relatively new service delivery model. This research has two components. The first survey will invite taxpayers who call the Appointment line to complete a survey regarding the service obtained. Participants will be asked to take a voluntary telephone survey to provide feedback and interest in additional future research at the conclusion of their call to the Appointment line. The second component will be conducting follow-up surveys within a month with the taxpayers who indicated an interest in participating in future research, specifically regarding satisfaction, resolution and the face to face appointment experience when applicable.

**3. Consideration Given to Information Technology**

Taxpayers who wish to set up an appointment must interact with the IRS via the phone. Given that already preset communication method, the vendor will conduct the point of service survey over the phone. This will allow participants from multiple geographic locations to participate at one time and will limit the burden of travel to the participant. For the follow-up surveys, the participants may use one of two modes, phone or web. Based on the participant's preference and whether or not an email address was provided, interested taxpayers will be asked to participate in a survey over the phone or via web link.

**4. Efforts Not to Duplicate Research**

This survey will provide valuable information that is not available in any internal IRS data source. This is the only survey currently proposed for taxpayers who contact the Appointment line for service. The

follow-up survey is also the only research that measures satisfaction, resolution and experiences over time for taxpayers that sought face to face assistance by calling the Appointment line.

#### **5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities**

No small entities are involved in this study.

#### **6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection**

FA 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 program of research would adversely affect the ability to compare results and determine 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 consultation with persons outside of the Agency.

#### **9. Payment of Gift**

There will be no payments for participants of the point of service IVR survey that takes 8 minutes; we successfully recruit participants for our Toll-Free customer satisfaction IVR survey (same length of time and recruitment process) without payment. On the other hand, a \$25 honorarium will be provided to taxpayers who participate in the follow-up survey as an incentive for participants to take part in an additional longer survey. The follow-up survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and in turn we are offering a \$25 incentive and not the general \$40 honorarium because the time required is less than half an hour. We believe that a \$25 incentive will appeal to participants for a 20 minute survey. We have had less success with follow up research with the same participants, even though they indicate willingness to participate, especially when we do not offer an honorarium.

#### **10. Confidentiality**

All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II during this study and the vendor will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy to the extent allowed by law of taxpayers will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at the C-2 level is accomplished via the Windows NT operating system. Systems are password protected, users profiled for authorized use, and individual audit trails generated and reviewed periodically.

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure privacy protection of all taxpayers to the extent allowed by law. This includes criteria for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

The recruitment lists will not contain tax return or taxpayer information beyond name and contact number and/or email address. Participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy to the extent allowed by law of the survey respondents. We will apply the fair information and

record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all survey respondents. 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 information as well as its releases to authorized recipients.

**11. Sensitive Nature**

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

**12. Burden of Information Collection**

There are two burden assessments for this research: point of service survey and follow up survey. For the Appointment line point of service survey, the total annual burden hours requested is 2,160 hrs. The estimated time to complete the survey is eight minutes and a **10 percent response rate** is assumed. We expect to invite 144,000 potential participants (10 second recruitment) of which 14,400 taxpayers (participate in an 8 minute survey) are expected to respond to the survey. The contact time to determine non-participation is included in the 10 second recruitment.

Point of Service Survey Annual Estimate			
Point of Service Survey	Participation	Time (minutes per person)	Total Burden (in hours)
Potential Respondents (invited)	144,000	10 seconds	240
Survey Respondents	14,400	8 minutes	1,920
<b>Total Annual Estimate</b>			<b>2,160</b>

The second burden calculation is for the follow-up surveys, the total annual burden hours requested is 175.2 hours. Current IRS IVR surveys requesting willing participants for future research attain a 10% opt in rate (in other words 1,440 respondents are estimated to be willing to participate during FY 2017). It is expected that not all contacts will provide accurate contact information; in addition despite initial interest not all participants will participate in the follow-up survey. In response, we project a **30% response rate** of those who provided contact information for future research. Given that there are 1,200 IVR responders per month, we expect about 120 participants each month to opt in to the follow-up survey with the use of an incentive for participation. Subsequently, we anticipate about 36 respondents monthly to participate in the follow up survey. Annually these estimates will yield approximately 432 completed follow-up surveys.

Follow-Up Survey Annual Estimate			
Follow-Up Survey	Participation	Time (minutes per person)	Total Burden (in hours)
Contact and invite to participate	1,440	1	24
Agreed to Participate (reminder phone calls)	432	1	7.2
Survey (20 minute phone or web)	432	20	144
<b>Total Annual Estimate</b>			<b>175.2</b>

**Total Burden (including point of service survey and follow-up surveys) = 2,335.2 hours**

**13. Costs to Respondents**

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

**14. Costs to Federal Government**

\$150,000

### **15. Reason for Change**

No change is being requested. These are new surveys.

### **16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, and Analysis Plans**

The contractor will use the results of the point of service survey and the follow-up survey data to present customer satisfaction, issue resolution, key themes, areas of taxpayer interest, suggestions for improvement, and proposed changes to the Appointment line service delivery process at the completion of data collection.

### **17. Display of OMB Approval Date**

IRS is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval, as this is a one-time, limited-duration collection.

### **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**

November 3, 2016 through November 3, 2017

## **B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

The primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

### **1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

The sampling frame consists of taxpayers who contact the Appointment line.

### **2. Procedures for Collecting Information**

The first survey (point of service) is an IVR, it will be offered over the phone to taxpayers who call for an appointment. Script: This call has been randomly selected for an anonymous IRS improvement survey. It will take under eight minutes. Would you like to participate in the survey? IF YES, READ: Thank you. Please wait while I transfer you.

Customers that have agreed to participate in future research via the point of service survey will be contacted a month or so later to participate in a follow-up survey. The follow-up data collection will occur via phone or web link, based on participant preference. Script: Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am calling from [contracted company], a research company in [location]. We are calling on behalf of the Internal Revenue Service to ask for your participation in research to understand taxpayer opinions regarding the appointment line and subsequent service. Your participation means you will take a survey for about 20 minutes. We are offering \$25 to thank you for your time. This feedback will maintain privacy to the extent allowed by law, which means what you say will not be repeated outside of the session. No advanced preparation is needed for this session. Are you interested in participating? IF 'NO,' thank you and have a great evening/day. IF 'YES,' Great! As I mentioned previously, we are surveying people over the phone or through a web link we can email to you, based on how you prefer to participate. You will be mailed \$25 upon completion of the survey. Would you still like to participate?

### **3. Methods to Maximize Response**

The first survey (point of service) is an IVR, it will be offered over the phone to taxpayers who call for an appointment letting the taxpayer know that their participation will help the IRS improve its services.

For the follow-up survey the contractor will be recruiting from a list of people who said they were willing to participate in future research. The contractor will pay an incentive of \$25 to participants and let the participant know that their participation will help the IRS improve its services.

#### **4. Testing of Procedures**

The surveys are designed based on established and tested customer satisfaction survey instruments.

#### **5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection**

For questions regarding the study or questionnaire design or statistical methodology, contact:

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