

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 3090-0297)

Req-22

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Improving USAGov Communications for Email Subscribers

PURPOSE:

USAGov aims to increase relevance of USAGov's email and notifications' content, structure, and design to better serve the public. Additionally, through this work, USAGov and OES aim to build the capacity of the USAGov team to conduct ongoing rapid evaluation, in support of [OIRA Memorandum “Behavioral Science Insights for Federal Forms”](#) that encourages agencies to implement rapid, no/low-cost randomized controlled trials and other rigorous evaluation methods to measure the most effective and efficient design and structuring of information collections, easing respondent burden, reducing misunderstanding, and improving data quality.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Each day, USAGov and other websites on the USA.gov domain receive 130,000 unique visitors (2.8 million per month). Some of these visitors subscribe to the USAGov email list(s) to receive additional information from the Federal government. However, little is know about these recipients - their demographic information or their interests, or which particular area(s) of the broad topics USAGov covers that are of particular relevance to them.

Subscribers of USAGov emails will have the opportunity to complete a survey. This will also enable USAGov to better satisfy the customer satisfaction metrics required by the Digital Government Strategy. Participation is voluntary and anonymous.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

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To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? [] Yes [x] No
2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? [] Yes [x] No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published? [] Yes [x] No

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? [] Yes [x] No

BURDEN HOURS:

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Total (Spread over multiple waves) Individuals	44,280*	Appx. 2 minutes**	1476 hours
Totals	44,280*	Appx. 2 minutes**	1476 hours

**Based on a sample of 737,994 individuals and an average completion rate of 6% , which is the current click-through rates for USAGov emails*

***Qualtrics calculation of current survey design (questions below)*

FEDERAL COST:

Costs are negligible as surveys can be developed and analyzed as part of business-as-usual activities of the Office of Evaluation Sciences and USAGov Outreach team. We estimate the federal cost will be \$3,305 (3 OES and USAGov team members at an average GS-14-1 x 20 hours each). These costs are based on time for survey design and development.

The cost of survey implementation, using Qualtrics, is also part of business-as-usual activities at GSA. GSA estimates a cost of \$0.37 for one Qualtrics survey response. Since we estimate there will be 44,280 responses, we expect a total cost of survey implementation of \$16,384. However, this dollar amount is within the GSA Enterprise contract with Qualtrics so at this time no new dollars need to be allocated to this survey.

The total cost estimate is \$19,689.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
[x] Yes [] No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

See charts above and below of current subscribers.

Sampling Plan

USAGov has a total of 737,994 unique email subscribers. Of these subscribers we know:

- Whether they are considered “active” or “inactive” (“inactive” means a subscriber has not opened an email in the last 16 emails)
- Which email lists they are subscribed to (Education, Health, etc.)
- Whether they receive their emails in English or Spanish

Working with the Office of Evaluation Sciences, the USAGov team will conduct a randomized controlled trial to build evidence about which messages presenting the survey to subscribers generates the most open, click-through, and ultimately survey completion rates.

We will randomly assign each subscriber who receives emails in English into one of six message arms - five “treatment” arms receiving a message informed by behavioral science insights and one business as usual message after “blocking” on the three factors described above. Subscribers who receive emails in Spanish will be assigned to a subset of the six messages, two “treatment” arm messages informed by behavioral science insights and the business as usual message, which could be meaningfully translated into Spanish.

We will conduct the randomization using R or Stata statistical software and randomization code developed by OES team members. This code will be documented in an experimental design document.

Current subscriber counts:

English						
	Total	Active	Inactive	Open Rate	Click Rate	Frequency Emails Are Sent
Total unique emails where we will send english survey	646,213	283,351	362,862	N/A	N/A	
Benefits, Grants, and Loans	276,705	107,743	168,962	32.62	15.01	Weekly
Business	81,802	56,584	25,218	40.62	2.23	Biweekly
Disasters and Emergencies	55,186	20,557	34,629	28.93	4.36	Dependent on Season [2 / week in hurricane, bad snow storms, extreme temps]
Education	174,623	84,581	90,042	24.89	12.62	2 / Week [1 Teachers, 1 Parents [separate lists]]
Health	227,845	85,316	142,529	29.9	6.83	Biweekly
Housing	113,890	42,812	71,078	32.07	10.2	Biweekly
Jobs and Unemployment	143,569	57,654	85,915	36.15	20.78	Biweekly
Military and Veterans	79,319	31,295	48,024	36.42	11.82	Monthly
Money and Shopping	309,601	111,498	198,103	32.65	13.77	Weekly / 2/Week
Travel and Immigration	105,377	41,831	63,546	32.31	16.49	Biweekly
Voting and Elections	55,429	22,178	33,251	0	0	Seasonal

Spanish						
	Total	Active	Inactive	Open Rate	Click Rate	Frequency Emails Are Sent
Total unique emails where we will send spanish survey	91,781	31,146	60,635	N/A	N/A	
Beneficios y programas de ayuda del Gobierno	12,010	-	12,010			Rarely
Desastres y emergencias	47,102	15,371	31,731	24.5	1.1	Sporadically/Seasonal
Educación	20,036	5,804	14,232	0	0	Rarely
Salud	33,345	9,950	23,395	25.1	1.1	Monthly
Vivienda y comunidad	60,199	19,101	41,098	27.3	4.48	Quarterly
Trabajo y desempleo	22,936	6,949	15,987	29.47	3.65	Monthly
Militares y veteranos	12,339	3,378	8,961	22.88	1.47	Quarterly
Dinero y temas del consumidor	26,127	8,063	18,064	33.19	6.63	Monthly/Bi-Monthly
Ciudadanía, inmigración y viajes	23,579	7,449	16,130	20.32	4.44	Quarterly
Votaciones y elecciones	12,314	3,391	8,923	0	0	Seasonal
Todos los temas (Spanish)	84,636	29,385	55,251	17	3	Sporadically

The Goal

The goal of this project is twofold: learn more about who is accessing USAGov content and resources (by respondents responding to the survey) and determine which communications about surveys are most effective at increasing completion (by sending out this survey through six different email messages). Because other agencies across government often conduct similar activities, findings from this pilot can inform their efforts as well.

Right now, USAGov has little information about things like the age, regional location, or even subject area of interest of the people opening their messages and clicking on their websites. If USAGov had more details about their subscribers, they could tailor their content and strategies to better serve the public. For example, if USAGov learns that there is a large population of young veteran email subscribers, USAGov could increase the amount of content and reshape their messaging on subjects like the GI Bill, PTSD resources, veteran startup grants, and home loan benefits.

Sending surveys to learn more about customers is a common practice across private sector and even other government websites. Many government agencies contract with “[ForSee](#),” a customer experience firm that helps agencies optimize their websites. An example of a government entity that creates and embeds their own single-question surveys and pop-up opportunities for feedback is <https://www.stopbullying.gov/get-help-now/index.html>. This pilot will help determine the type of communications that are effective at increasing feedback from customers. OES will share aggregate results on which communications are most effective to help other agencies improve customer experience and feedback.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

Web-based or other forms of Social Media

Telephone In-person

Mail Other, Explain

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

Enclosure:

USAGov - Survey Instrument and Email Communications (English)

USAGov - Survey Instrument and Email Communications (Spanish)