United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Evaluation

Interview and Field Observation Protocols Questionnaire

Contract No.: HSSCCG-14-A-00021

February 2, 2017

Submitted to:
Robin Silver, Ph.D.
Contracting Officer Representative
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Policy and Strategy
Research and Evaluation Division
robin.s.silver@uscis.dhs.gov

Submitted by:
IMPAQ International, LLC
10420 Little Patuxent Parkway
Suite 300
Columbia, MD 21044
www.impaqint.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Participants
System Demonstration	Individual(s) who can speak to each step. The goal is to understand the SAVE verification whole process from beginning to end at your site. You likely will need multiple individuals present to represent the full process.

Introduction/Purpose of the Study

System Demonstration:

The goal of this system demonstration is to see how the SAVE process works for each verification step, from beginning to end. We suggested that you use the one or two types of cases you most frequently encounter. Please describe and demonstrate all the stages of your process.

Start Time:
End Time:
Participants and SAVE roles:

Notes:

1st Level: Initial Verification:

2nd Level: Institute Second Level Verification – Enter Additional Biographical Information:

3rd Level: Scan and Upload or Mail Paper G-845 Application to USCIS:

Comments and observations:

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Module #1: Interviewee Information

Module	Topic	Respondent
Module #1	Interviewee Information	All Interviewees

So let's just start with the basics to understand your role.

1. <u>What is your name, title, and position?</u>

2. <u>How long have you worked at this site? For the agency?</u>

3. <u>How long have you been in your current role? Before that what did you do?</u>

4. <u>What are your roles and responsibilities related to the SAVE system?</u>

5. <u>How familiar are you with SAVE operations at your site? Which aspects of the SAVE system do you know most about? Which do you know less about?</u>

Module #2: Verification Process

Module	Topic	Respondent
Module #2	Verification Process	Users and/or Supervisors

Information to Clients
Agencies have different ways they integrate the SAVE program into their business operations. In first set of questions, we'd like to understand how you use SAVE on a daily basis.

First, we are interested in understanding what information you might give to clients on the SAVE program.

6. <u>Tell me about any information you typically provide to clients on SAVE at any point in the process. In what situations do you provide this information? In what format?</u>

7. <u>Are there any other information items? For example, do you ever hand out SAVE program materials or point clients to the program website? If so, which ones? In what types of situations?</u>

8. <u>Do you provide any other information? For example, have you given clients information about how to correct their immigration records? In what scenarios do you typically provide this information? At what point in the SAVE process? In what format? What sources do you typically point to?</u>

9. Is there anything else? For example, have you given clients information about CaseCheck? If, yes, in what scenarios do you typically provide this information? What type of information do you typically provide on CaseCheck?

10. If so, do you tell them anything else about CaseCheck? For example, do you let clients know what "Document ID" they need to use on the CaseCheck website to track their case? If so, what instructions do you provide on the Document ID?

Getting Help
Next, we are interested in knowing more about when you need help using the SAVE system and how you go about getting it.

11. First, can you say something about the most common circumstances when you find you need help with SAVE?

12. What do you usually do when this happens? For example, what type(s) of help/guidance/advice do you seek? From whom/what sources?

13. Do you use any other resources? For example, have you used the resources on the SAVE user website? If so, how helpful were they? If not, why not?

14. Any other resources? For example, have you ever reached out to your agency's SAVE Super User for assistance on any SAVE matters? If so, how helpful were they? If not, why not?

Cases that Require Additional Verification
Next, we are interesting in learning about the types of SAVE cases that frequently require additional verification beyond the first SAVE step.

15. First, can you tell me about the most common circumstances when you find that cases require additional verification beyond the first SAVE step?

We would also like to know about circumstances where you might initiate a SAVE case but not need to complete all the additional verification steps when the system prompts you do to so.

16. Can you say something about the most common circumstances when this happens?

17. What happens next with these types cases? For example, how does this affect the client's application for a benefit/license?

Outside Methods for Checking Immigration Status
Next, we are interested in any other methods you have for verifying immigration status outside of the SAVE system.

18. Please tell me how this works at your site. How useful is this other method? Why do you say that?

Case Resolution

We would also like to learn about how you monitor and close out pending SAVE cases. By pending, we mean cases where you are waiting for a response from USCIS.

19. Can you tell me about this process in your office? Who is involved? How often does it occur?

20. At what point do you consider a SAVE case complete? Does this vary depending on the type of case? Please explain.

21. We would also like to understand the process if a client is denied a benefit or license due to SAVE. Tell me about this process in your office.

22. Is there anything else? For example, do you let the client know that they were denied due to SAVE? In what situations are they typically informed? In what format?

Module #3: Training

Module	Topic	Respondent
Module #3	Training	Users, supervisors, super users, and the individual most knowledgeable about training at the site

Training

We would like to understand training on SAVE work at your site. I'd like to ask about any training you may have received in use of the SAVE system.

23. Tell me about when and how you were trained on use of SAVE at your site. Was there any follow-up to that initial training? If so, please describe.

24. How useful was the training in helping you to use the SAVE system? In what areas was it most helpful? Least helpful?

25. Have you used any other training materials? For example, have you used any videos or webinars on the SAVE website. If so, how helpful were they? If not, why not?

26. If you did not receive formal training in SAVE, how did you teach yourself how to use it? Would training have been helpful—if yes, in which area/why?

27. In what area(s) could you use additional training/instructional materials in use of SAVE? Please explain

Memorandum of Agreement

We would like to understand how you might integrate the SAVE Memorandum of Agreement into your training process on SAVE. Each SAVE agency has a Memorandum of Agreement with USCIS that defines the responsibilities of the user agency related to the SAVE program.

28. Can you tell me how this works at your site? If you are not sure, is there someone else you suggest we ask?

Module #4: Super User Role

Module	Topic	Respondent
Module #5	Super User Role	Super Users

Functions Performed

We would like to learn about your role as the SAVE Super User at your agency.

29. Please tell me about your role and the activities you perform for the SAVE program. Have these activities changed at all since you first assumed this role?

30. Anything else? For example, have you been involved with setting up or managing accounts for staff? Please explain your role. How does this work at your site?

31. Do you do anything else to manage user accounts at your site? For example, have you deactivated SAVE user accounts?

32. Do you have any other roles related to SAVE? For example, have you been involved in any way with user training? Please explain.

33. We would also like to understand your SAVE responsibilities in relation to your other job responsibilities. Compared to your other job responsibilities, how much of your time would you say you spend on SAVE activities, and how important a part do these play in your total job responsibilities? Why?

Communication with USCIS and the Users

We are interested in knowing how communication about SAVE takes place between USCIS and user agencies.

34. Tell me about how you usually communicate with USCIS on SAVE matters.

35. Tell me about how you receive information from USCIS on SAVE matters. How useful is this information? Which aspects are most useful? Which are less useful? Why?

We would also like to learn about how Super Users communicate with their fellow agency staff on SAVE matters.

36. Tell me about how you communicate with your fellow staff on SAVE matters. How effective do you think it has been? Why is that?

Module #5: Overall Perspectives on SAVE

We would like to get a big picture "overview" of SAVE operations at your site, including how you budget for SAVE, any oversight processes you use for SAFE at your site, and your perspective on the overall value of SAVE to your agency.

Module	Topic	Respondent
Module #4	Leadership Perspectives	Individual with a leadership position related to the SAVE program (i.e., director, manager)

Budget

37. First, we would like to learn about how you develop your budget for SAVE. Please tell me about how this works at your site.

38. Please tell me about any challenges you face in developing your SAVE budget. Do you face particular challenges because your agency's budget cycle does not coincide with SAVE's annual budget cycle? If so, how do you deal with these challenges?

39. We would also like to understand the role of individual transaction fees in your day-to-day use of SAVE. Tell me about any impact transaction fees have had on how, how often, or when you use SAVE at your site.

Oversight

Next, we are interested in learning about any oversight processes, guidelines, or review procedures you might use at your site to ensure SAVE is used properly.

40. What processes, guidelines, and/or procedures –if any--do you use to oversee SAVE use at your site? In what types of situations are they brought to bear? Who is involved?

41. Anything else? For example, does your site use the SAVE Self-Assessment Guide? If yes, in what types of situations? Who is involved? Frequency? If not—have you ever used it? If not —is there a reason why you have not made use of this resource?

Value of SAVE

*Now we are going to ask you to step back a bit and think about your perceptions of the program and its value at different levels. This includes its **effectiveness** (doing the right thing) and its **efficiency** (doing things in an optimal way).*

42. What do you think are the benefits, if any, of SAVE to your agency's ability to accomplish its mission? To you in your work? To the applicants?

43. How effective is SAVE in verifying the immigration status of applicants? In what ways is it effective? In what ways is it not so effective? Why?

44. Next, I'd like to hear your thoughts on SAFE's effectiveness in reducing unnecessary expenses and deterring fraud.

    a. How effective is SAVE in reducing spending on benefits that would have otherwise been issued to ineligible individuals? Why?

    b. To what extent do you think SAVE acts as a deterrent to ineligible individuals who might otherwise try to file fraudulent applications? Why?

45. Next we would like to understand your perspective on the **efficiency of the SAVE program** in the context of your business operations. In what ways is it efficient? In what ways is it not so efficient? What do you think might be done to improve its efficiency? And why?

Module #6: Strengths, Challenges and Recommendations for Improvement

Module	Topic	Respondent
Module #6	Challenges and Ideas for Improvement	All Interviewees

Lastly, we would like to learn more about your perspectives on the strengths as well as the challenges in using SAVE and ask for your recommendations for improving the SAVE program.

46. What about the SAVE process would you say is **working particularly well**? Why? What are the **main challenges using SAVE**? Why?

47. Which of these are **the most significant challenges** for you? Why do you say that?

48. Are there any **characteristics of your client population that create specific challenges** for the SAVE process. Tell me about any of these types of challenges. In what kinds of situations? With which groups? How frequently?

49. Next, we would like to learn about any **recommendations you might have to improve SAVE**. What suggestions do you have for improving SAVE? Why do you think doing this would make a positive change?

50. What is the **one feature you would most like to see removed from** the SAVE process? Why is that?

51. <u>What is the **one feature or improvement you would most like to see added** to the SAVE</u>
<u>process? Why?</u>

Closing

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. This discussion has been very informative and helpful. If you think of any additional information you would like for us to know, please feel free to contact me directly.