

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
INSURANCE SURVEYS  
OMB 2900-0771**

**1. Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection of information.**

The Insurance Service (29) conducts surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with existing services among its customers. The 10 surveys are: Beneficiary Survey, Cash Surrender Survey, Correspondence Survey, Insurance Claims Survey, Policy Loan Survey, Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) Survey, Waiver Survey, Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) Survey, Telephone Insurance Claims Division Survey, and Telephone Policy Service Survey. The surveys solicit voluntary opinions and are not intended to collect information required to obtain or maintain eligibility for a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program or benefit. The Insurance Service program is constantly striving to improve the service we provide to our nation's Veterans/beneficiaries.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purposes the information is to be used; indicate actual use the agency has made of the information received from current collection.**

VA wishes to continue to conduct customer satisfaction surveys to advance VA's progress toward the goal of improving customer satisfaction. If the surveys were not conducted, then Insurance Service would not have the specific information needed to further practices that support the best possible customer-focused service. The Insurance Service goal is to provide an experience to Veterans/beneficiaries that meet the needs of a diverse community. Insurance Service seeks approval for this information collection that will allow Veterans/beneficiaries an opportunity to provide feedback. Insurance Service will use this feedback to improve the process. Insurance Service will use the information gathered to determine where and to what extent services are satisfactory, and where and to what extent they are in need of improvement.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

A cover letter and the survey will be mailed to Veterans/beneficiaries inviting them to participate in the survey. This will be an ongoing survey that will be offered to

approximately 40 Veterans/beneficiaries per month. The probability of Veterans/beneficiaries having access to the public Internet is unknown therefore the Veterans/beneficiaries will receive a paper copy of the survey to complete. All surveys will be distributed through U.S. Mail.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why all similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

Insurance Service will use its internal review process to examine each information collection to prevent duplication of effort or redundancy in all information collected. The information to be gathered from the surveys as a whole is unique and not available from any other sources with the appropriate level of specificity required.

**5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

No small businesses or other small entities are impacted by this information collection.

**6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

Most of the customer satisfaction surveys are recurring so that Insurance Service can create ongoing measures of performance and determine how well the agency meets customer service standards. Insurance uses a variety of activities including written, web-based, and telephonic questionnaires and surveys as well as focus groups to gauge customer perceptions of VA services as well as customer expectations and desires. The results of these information collections should lead to improvements in the quality of service and delivery by helping to shape the direction and focus of specific programs and services. If these surveys were not conducted or conducted less frequently, then VA would not be responsive to the needs of the Veteran, nor be able to quickly correct issues or meet the needs of the Veteran by improving service.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted more often than quarterly or require respondents to prepare written responses to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; submit more than an original and two copies of any document; retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study and require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.**

There are no special circumstances that require the collection of information to be conducted in a manner that is inconsistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

**8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the sponsor's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by sponsor in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

The Department notice was published in the Federal Register on September 20, 2017, Volume 82, Number 181, page 44028.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.**

The information collected is supplied by the respondent. No remuneration is made.

**10. Describe any assurance of privacy, to the extent permitted by law, provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

These surveys are generally anonymous. Names and personal identifiers will be used to locate survey participants, when appropriate/and or necessary and will thereafter be stripped from any files as well as reports.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private; include specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

**12. Estimate of the hour burden of the collection of information:**

- a. Number of Respondents: 4,440
- b. Frequency of Response: Once
- c. Annual Burden Hours: 444 hours
- d. Estimated Completion Time: 6 minutes
- e. The respondent population for the Insurance Surveys are Veterans or beneficiaries who have received a service from the VA Insurance Center. VBA cannot make further assumptions about the population of respondents because of the variability of factors such as the educational background and wage potential of respondents. Therefore, VBA used general wage data to estimate the respondents' costs associated with completing the information collection.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) gathers information on full-time wage and salary workers. According to the latest available BLS data, the median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers are \$954.40. Assuming a forty (40) hour work week, the median hourly wage is \$23.86 based on the BLS wage code – “00-0000 All Occupations”. This information is taken from the following website: ([http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm), May 2016).

Legally, respondents may not pay a person or business for assistance in completing the information collection. Therefore, there are no expected overhead costs for completing the information collection. VBA estimates the total cost to all respondents to be \$13,123 (550 burden hours x \$23.86 per hour).

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

This submission does not involve any record keeping costs.

**14. Provide estimates of annual cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operation expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Estimated Costs to the Federal Government:

Grade	Step	Burden Time	Hourly Rate	Cost Per Response	Total Responses*	Total
13	3	15	\$38.12	\$9.53	152.5	\$ 1,453.33
Overhead at 100% Salary						\$ 1,453.33
11	3	25	\$26.75	\$11.24	152.5	\$ 1,714.10
Overhead at 100% Salary						\$ 1,714.10
9	3	2	\$22.11	\$.74	1,873.5	\$ 1,386.39
Overhead at 100% Salary						\$ 1,386.39
9	3	20	\$22.11	\$7.37	152.5	\$ 1,123.93
Overhead at 100% Salary						\$ 1,123.93
6	3	5	\$16.26	\$.31	2,026	\$ 628.06
Overhead at 100% Salary						\$ 628.06
<b>Overhead costs are 100% of salary and are same as the wage listed above and the amounts are included in the total.</b>						
Processing / Analyzing Costs						\$ 12,611.62
Printing and Production Cost						\$ 5,850.62
Total Cost to Government						\$ 18,462.24

\*Total Responses will not equal the number sent out as the surveys are voluntary. Response numbers were determined by calculating the average returned over the last 3 Fiscal years. Also, more time is spent reviewing the surveys returned with negative responses.

Note: the hourly wage information above is based on the hourly 2017 General Schedule (Base) Pay ([https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2017/GS\\_h.pdf](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2017/GS_h.pdf)). This rate does not include any locality adjustment as applicable.

The processing time estimates above are based on the actual amount of time employees of each grade level spend to process to completion a claim received on this form. The within-grade step (3) of each employee represents the average experience of employees within each grade.

**15. Explain the reason for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of OMB 83-I.**

The respondent burden decreased due to the removal of two surveys that were previously included. Additionally, in the past it was only stated that the surveys would be a minimal cost to the Federal Government. Now we actually included the estimated cost figures.

The icr is a “reinstatement of a currently approved collection”. The approval for this icr expired due to a transition in the VA Insurance Service that affected the process for ensuring that VA Insurance icr’s were submitted to OMB in a timely manner. The transition has been completed and the PRA duties have been reassigned in order to avoid future icr expirations.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The information is collected for insurance purposes only and there are no plans for publication.

**17. If seeking approval to omit the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

We are not seeking approval to omit the expiration date for OMB approval.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions,” of OMB 83-I.**

This submission does not contain any exceptions to the certification statement.

## B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

**1. Provide a numerical estimate of the potential respondent universe and describe any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. households or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular format for the universe as a whole and for each strata. Indicate expected response rates. If this has been conducted previously include actual response rates achieved.**

During a 12 month period, 4,440 copies of surveys are released to insureds/beneficiaries.

	To Be Contacted	Actual Response (Number)	Average Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	4,440	2026	45.6%

**2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information, including:**

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection**

The population from which this sample was drawn was from insured Veterans who requested a new Beneficiary Designation and Optional Settlement form (VA Form 29-336).

- **Estimation procedure**

N/A

- **Degree of accuracy needed**

N/A

- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures**

N/A

- **Any use of less frequent than annual data collection to reduce burden**

N/A

**3. Describe methods to maximize response rate and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

To maximize response rates, a cover letter is released with the survey explaining how the response will help improve service to all our insured Veterans.

**4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions of 10 or more individuals.**

No testing of procedures or methods has been done as this survey has been used for years.

**5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

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