

Office of Special Counsel - Supporting Statement B

1. OSC is required by statute to conduct the annual survey and to use a prescribed universe of potential respondents. Section 13 of Pub. L. 103-424 stated that: "(a) In General. - The Office of Special Counsel shall, after consulting with the Office of Policy and Evaluation of the Merit Systems Protection Board, conduct an annual survey of all individuals who contact the Office of Special Counsel for assistance. The survey shall - "(1) determine if the individual seeking assistance was fully apprised of their rights; "(2) determine whether the individual was successful either at the Office of Special Counsel or the Merit Systems Protection Board; and "(3) determine if the individual, whether successful or not, was satisfied with the treatment received from the Office of Special Counsel. "(b) Report. - The results of the survey conducted under subsection (a) shall be published in the annual report of the Office of Special Counsel."

Accordingly, OSC's annual survey universe consists of all complainants and whistleblowers whose cases we closed during the previous fiscal year. In our last survey (FY 2016), we mailed out 4,709 surveys. We received 524 completed surveys comprising 11% response rate. While the universe of closed matters will determine the number of people in this year's universe of potential respondents, we expect a response rate similar to FY 2016.

2. As noted above, and in the main Supporting Statement, the statute directs that OSC conduct the survey on an annual basis, and that the survey universe consist of the complainants and whistleblowers whose cases OSC closed the previous fiscal year. Accordingly, we are not introducing sampling selection bias into the universe of potential respondents. In recent years, and prior to OMB's most recent approval, OSC changed from a paper survey to an electronic one. This method reduced the response-time burden.
3. The survey polls a defined universe on defined criteria. OSC is in the process of developing a new "test" survey that we might use at one or more key points in the handling of our cases while they are in an open status. We would expect the results of that test survey to show a greater level of customer satisfaction compared to the present survey, and to increase overall response rates regarding our work.
4. As noted in the main Supporting Statement, OSC estimates that each individual respondent will spend 12 minutes completing the survey. OSC cannot meaningfully reduce that burden. OSC reviews the survey each year to ensure that the flow of questions is logical and consistent with the nature of the closed cases and the statutory survey requirement.
5. To discuss testing, analysis, publication, and all other considerations of the survey other than its coding by IT, please contact Ms. Elena Kaybulkina in the Finance Unit, by email at ekaybulkina@osc.gov, or by telephone at 202-804-7064.