

JUSTIFICATION B

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)

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.

The Veteran and caregiver survey for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is a multimode survey of Veteran and caregiver participants who were enrolled with at least 90 days of program participation between fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016. They may be currently enrolled, or their status may have been revoked.

This survey is a census and consequently does not involve sampling from the universe population. This is a high visibility program and has been expanded by the recent passage of the MISSION Act. Therefore, we are conducting this survey as a census in order to optimize the opportunity for all caregivers and veterans to be heard. We recognize that this opportunity may be important to respondents for reasons beyond statistical generalizability. All persons in the data set that meet FY15 and FY16 enrollment for at least 90 days are eligible. The approximate number in the universe is 27,000 Veterans and 28,000 caregivers.

This is the first time this unique survey has been conducted. As such, actual response rates from previous years are not applicable. As one comparison to best estimate response rates, the VA's Enrollee Survey typically achieves 34% response rate. Given that the respondents in the Veteran and caregiver surveys are relatively similar to those in the Enrollee Survey, we are estimating a 34% response rate.

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

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection**
- **Estimation procedure**
- **Degree of accuracy needed**
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures**
- **Any use of less frequent than annual data collection to reduce burden**

Given that these surveys will be conducted as a census, no sample selection of the universe population is involved. Additionally, no target number of responses have been established. Also, these surveys are intended to only be executed one time.

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.

We will maximize response rate by implementing best practices in both the survey instrument and data collection methods:

Instrument.

- Survey topic has high salience for both Caregivers and Veterans, which should lead to higher response rates overall (Calahan and Schumm 1995: 1385)
- Questions have been simplified and skip patterns minimized to increase readability and decrease burden, which corresponds with higher response rates (Axhausen et al 2010)
- Introductory and transition statements have been formulated to make respondents feel comfortable sharing information on their caregiving activities, to increase motivation to respond (Berry and Gunn 2014: 372)
- Grouped like-topic questions together to reduce burden and increase response (Schwarz et al 1991: 12)

Data Collection.

- Cover letter will use best practices laid out by Nicolaas et al. (2015: 4-5), including:
 - o Short in length
 - o Focused on a limited number of key messages
 - o Formatting will convey the importance of the survey, including prominent logo, high status signatory, and professional letter format
- Will use multiple modes of response – mail and web; using them in combination leverages reduced response burden which leads to improvements in Web response rates (Millar and Dillman 2011: 266; Shih and Fan 2008: 264).
- Will use multiple rounds of non-response reminders to encourage response (Kaplowitz et al 2004: 100)

Axhausen, Kay W. and Claude Weis. 2010. "Predicting Response Rate: A Natural Experiment." *Survey Practice* 3(2).

Berry, Sandra H. and Patrick P. Gunn. 2014. "Conducting Research on Vulnerable and Stigmatized Populations." Pp. 368–78 in *Hard-to-Survey Populations*, edited by R. Tourangeau, B. Edwards, T. P. Johnson, K. M. Wolter, and N. Bates. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Calahan, Charles A. and Walter R. Schumm. 1995. "An Exploratory Analysis of Family Social Science Mail Survey Response Rates." *Psychological Reports* 76(3):1379–88.

Kaplowitz, Michael D., Timothy D. Hadlock, and Ralph Levine. 2004. "A Comparison of Web and Mail Survey Response Rates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(3):94–101.

Millar, Morgan M. and Don A. Dillman. 2011. "Improving Response to Web and Mixed-Mode Surveys." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75(2):249–69.

Nicolaas, Gerry, Patten Smith, Kevin Pickering, and Chris Branson. 2015. "Increasing Response Rates in Postal Surveys While Controlling Costs: An Experimental Investigation." *Social Research Practice* (1):3–16.

Schwarz, Norbert, Fritz Strack, and Hans-Peter Mai. 1991. "Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Part-Whole Question Sequences: A Conversational Logic Analysis." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 55(1):3–23.

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.

The study team utilized the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and volunteers from the VA's Caregiver Support Program to support a consumer panel and pilot test of the surveys. The consumer panel provided valuable cognitive and contextual feedback on the surveys. The pilot test provided valuable contextual and usability feedback on the surveys. Both consumer panel and pilot test feedback were integrated in the submitted surveys for OMB approval. Neither the consumer panel nor the pilot test utilized more than 9 persons.

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.

Prime Contractor: Advanced Survey Design

Data collection lead – Mr. Mike Schimpf, 831-657-0238, mschimpf@advancedsurveydesign.com

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