

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 0651-0080)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Pro Se Education and Customer Service Feedback

PURPOSE: To obtain feedback from pro se applicants regarding their experience prosecuting their application at the USPTO on their own (i.e. pro se). Information collected from the participants will assist the USPTO agency wide, as well as improve educational resources and customer service for all applicants filing patent applications for examination and for all examiners examining applications filed by applicants without legal representation before the USPTO.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Respondents are randomly selected applicants who filed a non-provisional utility patent application without legal representation with the USPTO.

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.

Business Unit Certification: Darnell Jayne

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

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published? Yes No

Gifts or Payments:

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

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Individuals (electronic survey)	1,000	10 minutes	10,000 minutes (167 hours)
Totals	1,000		167 hours

FEDERAL COST:

Receiving surveys by phone

The USPTO estimates that it takes a GS-7 step 5, 5 hours to answer approximately 20 phone returns and enter the data into the survey instrument (15 minutes per call).

The hourly rate for a GS-7, step 5, is currently \$25.53 according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) 2019 wage chart, including locality pay for the Washington, DC area. When 30% is added to account for a fully loaded hourly rate (benefits and overhead), the rate per hour for a GS-7, step 5, is \$33.19 (\$25.53 + \$7.66).

The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is the combined average hourly rate of \$33.19 per hour * 5 hours = **\$166**.

Summarization

The USPTO estimates that it takes a GS-14 step 7, 32 hours (1,920 minutes) for data analysis and reporting.

The hourly rate for a GS-14, step 7, is currently \$67.38 according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) 2019 wage chart, including locality pay for the Washington, DC area. When 30% is added to account for a fully loaded hourly rate (benefits and overhead), the rate per hour for a GS-14, step 7, is \$87.59 (\$67.38 + \$20.21).

The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is the combined average hourly rate of \$87.59 per hour * 32 hours = **\$2,803**.

Total Federal Cost:

The total estimated annual cost to the Federal government is the combined total, **\$2,969 (\$166 + \$2,803)**.

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 (or attach the sampling plan)? 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?

All survey participants are applicants who have filed for patent without legal representation (pro se). The majority of participants filed a nonprovisional utility application with the USPTO between January 2016 and December 2018.

Approximately 3,000 nonprovisional utility pro se applications were randomly identified. 1,500 were drawn from the population of pro se applications examined specifically by the pro se assistance program, a group of patent examiners with specialized training in pro se applications. These 1,500 were deemed the ‘pilot sample’ for survey purposes. The other 1,500 were drawn from the population of pro se applications examined by the patent corps of examiners, prior to or without benefit of the pro se assistance program (i.e. normal operations). This was deemed the ‘control sample’ for survey purposes.

Results for the two samples will be compared to measure the benefit provided by the USPTO’s pro se assistance program, and determine if that benefit justifies the possible expansion of the pro se assistance program.

Survey invitation letters will be sent to all 3,000 participants, to the address of record in the applications. Each letter will contain a link to complete the survey online. Pilot participants will receive a link that is distinct from that supplied to control participants. The two links will correspond to two separate collectors within the same survey instrument. The letter will include notice that a link will additionally be sent to the applicant’s email address if there is one on file in the application. Applicants will also have the opportunity to call the office and complete the survey verbally using a customer service representative who will go through the questions with the applicant.

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

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.