

**Supporting Statement Part A For
Generic Clearance of Customer Satisfaction Surveys
Comprehensive Clearance for February 2019 Through February 2022
OMB No. 0960-0526**

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

As part of our efforts to offer the highest possible quality of service to the public, the Social Security Administration (SSA) conducts multiple customer satisfaction surveys each year. In accordance with the guidelines established by *Executive Order (E.O.) 12862*, we prepared a plan detailing customer satisfaction surveys we plan to conduct for the next three years.

This supporting statement and its attachments present SSA's plan of customer satisfaction assessment activities for February 2019 through February 2022. These assessments, also referred to in this document as "generic clearances," cover our quantitative and large-scale (e.g., large participant pool, high cost, etc.) qualitative measures. We transferred the majority of our qualitative customer satisfaction assessment activities to OMB's Fast Track generic clearance (OMB No. 0960-0788).

2. Description of Collection

SSA will conduct customer satisfaction assessments with members of the public who: (1) are recipients of Social Security benefits; (2) have used SSA products or services; or (3) are potential future users of SSA products, programs, or services. We will collect customer service information through various methods, including telephone surveys, mail surveys, online surveys, usability testing sessions, comment cards, and hybrid forms of these methods.

We plan to use these methods to: (1) assess customer satisfaction with existing SSA services, programs, and products; (2) determine the types of services SSA beneficiaries, recipients, claimants, employers, and members of the general public might want from the agency; and (3) gauge public satisfaction levels with proposed new programs or services. Ultimately, these generic clearance activities may lead to SSA policy changes that will enable us to offer the public better customer service.

For a comprehensive list of our planned quantitative and large scale-qualitative generic clearances for the three-year period covered by this clearance request, please see the file entitled "Listing of Proposed GC Collections" posted in the "Manage ICR Documents" page in ROCIS.

Over the past three years, we conducted several customer satisfaction assessments to evaluate our Ticket to Work program; our field office services;

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our 800 number services; our Internet services; and our hearing offices; as well as to assess the effectiveness of our staff, our level of communication, and overall customer satisfaction with our agency. During the previous three years, our largest customer satisfaction survey under this information collection was the SSA Post-Call Satisfaction Survey, for which we surveyed 3,840,000 individuals regarding their satisfaction with the specific mode of contact they used with SSA, to determine how well SSA's National 800 Number Network (N8NN) is performing. We used the results of this assessment to improve the various aspects of SSA's N8NN service. In the same way, we use the results of all of our customer satisfaction assessments to improve the services we offer, and our communications with the public.

3. **Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information.**

In accordance with the spirit of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act program, SSA uses advanced information technology methods to conduct generic clearances whenever possible. These methods include using Internet surveys, conducting telephone surveys with computer-assisted interviewing software, and analyzing results with software programs. Because we have not determined exactly which generic clearances will use advanced information technology, we cannot say what percentage of the total we will conduct electronically.

4. **Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information**

The nature of the information we collect and the manner in which we collect it preclude duplication. SSA does not use another instrument to collect similar data.

5. **Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents**

This collection does not significantly affect small businesses or other small entities.

6. **Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently**

If SSA did not conduct the information collection, we would have no means of assessing customer satisfaction with existing and proposed programs, services, and products. Thus, the agency would lose a valuable means of obtaining information that can help us better serve the public. In addition, we would be in violation of *E.O. 12862*. Since we only conduct individual generic clearances to examine a specific issue, we cannot collect the information less frequently. There are no technical or legal obstacles to burden reduction.

7. **Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances that would cause us to collect this information in a manner inconsistent with *5 CFR 1320.5*.

8. **Federal Register Notices/Public Comment.**
The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on October 22, 2018, at 83 FR 53352, and we received no public comments. The 30-day FRN published on December 26, 2018 at 83 FR 66330. If we receive any comments in response to this Notice, we will forward them to OMB.

9. **Payment or Gift to the Respondents.**
Respondents for activities conducted in a “laboratory”–type setting (that is, in-depth interviews, usability testing, etc.) under this clearance may receive a small stipend. This practice has proven necessary and effective in recruiting subjects to participate in this research, and is employed by the other Federal cognitive laboratories. The incentive for participation in a one-on-one interview or usability session is \$40, and for participation in a focus group is \$50-\$75. SSA may provide smaller incentives than these amounts at its discretion; however, SSA will justify to OMB any requests for larger amounts. Respondents for quantitative satisfaction surveys will not receive payment for participation. We will provide specific information with each individual generic clearance request.

10. **Assurances of Confidentiality.**
SSA protects and holds confidential the information we collect in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 402, 5 U.S.C. 552 (*Freedom of Information Act*), 5 U.S.C. 552a (*Privacy Act of 1974*), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

11. **Justification for Sensitive Questions**
None of our generic clearances will contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. **Estimates of Public Reporting Burden**
Below is a chart listing the total number of respondents and the number of burden hours for each year in the collection.

| GC PLAN YEAR | TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | TOTAL HOURS (FOR ALL FIVE CATEGORIES) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Year 1 (February 2019 through February 2020) | 5,843,298 | 1,004,460 |
| Year 2 (February 2020 through February 2021) | 5,868,843 | 1,371,074 |
| Year 3 (February 2021 through February 2022) | 5,949,054 | 1,012,482 |
| 3-YEAR TOTAL | 17,661,195 | 4,042,212 |

The total burden of 4,042,212 hours. We based these figures on current management information data. This figure represents burden hours, and we did not calculate a separate cost burden. For a complete listing of each proposed generic clearance activity and its projected burden, see the document entitled “Categorization of GC activities w totals,” posted in the “Mange ICR Documents” page of ROCIS.

13. **Annual Cost Burden to the Respondents (Other)**

There is no known cost burden to the respondents.

14. **Annual Cost to the Federal Government.**

Below are the annual and triennial costs to the Federal Government for these generic clearance activities.

| GC Plan Year | Cost to the Federal Government |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Year 1 | \$2,913,911 |
| Year 2 | \$2,937,775 |
| Year 3 | \$3,010,149 |
| 3-YEAR TOTAL | \$8,861,835 |

The total cost to the Federal government for conducting these generic clearances is **\$8,861,835**. This represents the costs for conducting the surveys, payment to contractors, payment to respondents, and printing/distributing/mailling survey materials. For a complete listing of the cost of each generic clearance activity, see the document entitled “Categorization of GC Activities /w Totals,” posted in the “Manage ICR Documents” page in ROCIS.

15. **Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request**

The number of respondents and burden hours increased for this collection because we are planning to conduct more generic clearance activities in the next three years.

16. **Plans for Publication of Information Collection Results**

We may publish reports for some of the generic clearance activities we will conduct. However, these are internal-use reports; we will only disseminate them to SSA policy and management officials.

17. **Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date**

SSA will display the OMB expiration date on most of its generic clearance customer satisfaction surveys, which are primarily one-time surveys. However, some activities we conduct under the generic clearance authority are ongoing forms, which have no defined expiration date. Examples of these types of collections are comment cards. For these types of collections, OMB exempted SSA from the requirement of printing the OMB expiration date on its forms/surveys to avoid Government waste.

18. Exception to Certification Requirements.

SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at 5 *CFR* 1320.9 and related provisions at 5 *CFR* 1320.8(b)(3).