

Supporting Statement
OMB Information Collection (ICR) Approval Request to Conduct
Customer Satisfaction Research (OMB #1545-1432)
Appeals Customer Satisfaction Survey

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) enlists a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. This initiative is part of the Service-wide effort to maintain a system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act (RRA) of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862 that requires all government agencies to survey their customers.

This customer survey has produced significant information about the key dimensions of the customers' experience in dealing with IRS Appeals in their tax matters as well as pointers to where improvement opportunities might lie.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

In addition to the objective of measuring customer satisfaction to meet a balanced measures requirement, Appeals management is motivated to use survey results to identify improvement opportunities and as the basis for enacting improvements.

The primary goals of the study are to survey Appeals external customers on an ongoing basis regarding their expectations, track customer satisfaction progress over time nationwide, and identify operational improvements.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

The Appeals survey will be administered by web with a follow-up telephone survey to non-respondents on a quarterly basis, adjusted to have the first two quarters occur together to avoid surveying customers during tax season.

4. Duplication of Information

This survey will provide valuable information that is not available in any internal IRS data source.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

No small entities are involved.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

Without this type of feedback, the Appeals Division will not have the external measures used to assess their success in meeting IRS goals and customer needs.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances relating to this request. The information collected will be voluntary and will not be used for statistical purposes.

8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency

ICF and the IRS Oversight Board.

9. Payment or Gift

No payment or gift will be provided to the respondents.

10. Confidentiality:

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure privacy to the extent allowed by law protection of all taxpayers to the extent allowed by law. This includes criteria for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

The survey will not contain tax return information and will only use the taxpayer name in determining the correct individual to speak with for the survey. Survey participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy of the survey respondents to the extent allowed by law.

11. Sensitive Nature

No questions will be asked that are of a sensitive or personal nature.

12. Burden of Information Collection

The average time of survey completion is expected to be 10 minutes. This is based on the questionnaire consisting of several screener questions, satisfaction rating questions, open-ended questions, and yes/no or other response questions. Not all participants will be asked all questions as skip patterns are utilized. The questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

Based on a sample of potential respondents of 3,805 and a response rate of 40%, we expect 1,522 survey participants leaving 2,283 non-participants. This also accounts for a small percentage of potential respondents not receiving the mailed pre-notification letter or having bad phone numbers in the sample.

For participants, total time to complete the survey (including screening) is 10 minutes. The time burden for participants is $1,522 \times 10/60 = 253.7$ burden hours.

The total burden hours for the survey is **393.2**.

Type of Collection	Participation	Response Time (minutes)	Total Burden (hours)
Time to read mailed survey invitation (all contacted potential respondents)	3,805	1	63.4
Screening participants (non-participants contacted during phone follow-up)	2,283	2	76.1
Expected Participants	1,522	10	253.7
Grand Total Burden			393.2

13. Costs to Respondents

There is no cost to respondents resulting from the collection of information. The total estimated annual cost burden to respondents is \$9,822.14. The surveys take place across the United States with all cross-sections of society. This estimate was created using the mean hourly wage for all occupations (\$24.98) from the BLS May 2018 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates - United States.

14. Cost of Federal Government

The estimated cost is \$163,118.

15. Reason for Change

The survey questionnaire has been revised to be shorter to reduce the burden on respondents and provide more streamlined information. In addition, the previous section of the survey focused on the Alternative Dispute Resolution program has been replaced with a new section to obtain customer feedback on a new Appeals Team Case Leaders (ATCL) initiative Appeals is conducting. The methodology for the survey has not been altered. In addition, this is a request for an option year continuation of this survey.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

The survey data is collected via web and telephone. If changes are made to the questionnaire, they are expected to be minor. The survey includes ratings and yes/no style questions evaluating service delivery during the Appeals process and fact-based questions about if procedures were followed during the appeal process. In addition, questions are included to obtain open-ended suggestions for improvement.

Survey scoring for this contract is based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – “Regardless of the outcome of your appeal, rate your satisfaction with the Appeals process.” Questions utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied, or a yes/no response scale. All survey responses will be released only as summaries. The contractor shall hold the identities of the taxpayers responding to the survey private to the extent permitted by law. The contractor ensures that taxpayers responding to the survey are guaranteed anonymity. The contractor will not provide the IRS with data or status updates that are linked to individual respondents. Upon completion of data collection and cleaning, the contractor will provide de-identified survey data to the IRS. This data will not include any individually identifying information such as name, address, or taxpayer identification number.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

IRS is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval, as this is a one-time, limited-duration collection.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

19. Dates Collection of Information will Begin and End

Anticipated dates are May 6, 2019 to January 7, 2020.

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

Survey participants are pulled from Appeals closed cases in a random sample. In addition, the full census of approximately 150 participants from the ATCL initiative are selected to receive the survey.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The vendor will administer the survey by web and telephone on a quarterly basis, with the first two quarters being conducted simultaneously to avoid survey customers during tax filing season. Standard procedures will be used in order to obtain the highest response rate possible for the survey. These will include: 1) a pre-notification letter on IRS letterhead about the survey with a link unique link to take the survey via web and 2) telephone survey follow-up to non-respondents with up to 9 attempts of reaching the potential respondent.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

The questionnaire length is minimized to reduce respondent burden; thereby, tending to increase response rates. Respondents are assured anonymity of their responses. Also, weighting procedures can be applied to adjust aggregated data from those who do respond.

4. Testing of Procedures

The survey is conducted using an established and tested methodology.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

For questions regarding the study or questionnaire design or statistical methodology, contact:

Rocco D. DiLisio
Policy Analyst
Appeals Customer Satisfaction Survey Coordinator
Internal Revenue Service
(412) 404-9222

Survey instruments include the following and are attached in one document as a separate file.

- Appeals Pre-notification letter
- Appeals Customer Satisfaction Survey Instrument