SUPPORTING STATEMENT A

FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

Generic Clearance for Improving Customer Experience Central Survey Tool

(OMB Circular A-11, Section 280 Implementation)

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

On September 11, 1993, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards" which clearly define his vision that the Federal agencies will put the people first. Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. Section 1(b) of Executive Order 12862 requires government agencies to "survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services" and Section 1(e) requires agencies "survey front-line employees on barriers to, and ideas for, matching the best in business."

On March 30, 2016, President Obama established the Core Federal Services Council, which again emphasized the need to deliver world-class customer service to the American people. The Council, composed of the major high-volume, high-impact Federal programs that provide transactional services directly to the public, were encouraged "to improve the customer experience by using public and private sector management best practices, such as conducting self-assessments and journey mapping, collecting transactional feedback data, and sharing such data with frontline and other staff."

In March 2018, the Administration of President Trump launched the President's Management Agenda (PMA) and established new Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals. Excellent service was established as a core component of the mission, service, stewardship model that frames the entire PMA, embedding a customer-focused approach in all of the PMA's initiatives. This model was also included in the 2018 update of the Federal Performance Framework in Circular A-11, ensuring 'excellent service' as a focus in future agency strategic planning efforts. The PMA included a CAP Goal on Improving Customer Experience with Federal Services, with a primary strategy to drive improvements within 25 of the nation's highest impact programs. This effort is supported by an interagency team and guidance in Circular A-11 requiring the collection of customer feedback data and increasing the use of industry best practices to conduct customer research.

These Presidential actions and requirements establish an ongoing process of collecting customer insights and using them to improve services. The General Services Administration has developed a survey collection tool (**https://feedback.usa.gov/touchpoints/**) that Federal entities may use to collect this customer feedback.

This new request will enable the General Services Administration (hereafter "the Agency") to act in accordance with OMB Circular A-11 Section 280 to ultimately transform the experience of Federal customers by gathering customer feedback to support Federal entities to improve both efficiency and mission delivery, and increase accountability by communicating about these efforts with the public.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.

The Agency and the Federal entity that it collects customer feedback for will collect, analyze, and interpret information gathered through this generic clearance to identify services' accessibility, navigation, and use by customers, and make improvements in service delivery based on customer insights gathered through developing an understanding of the user experience interacting with Government.

For the purposes of this request, "customers" are individuals, businesses, and organizations that interact with a Federal Government agency or program, either directly or via a Federal contractor.

"Service delivery" or "services" refers to the multitude of diverse interactions between a customer and Federal agency such as applying for a benefit or loan, receiving a service such as healthcare or small business counseling, requesting a document such as a passport or social security card, complying with a rule or regulation such as filing taxes or declaring goods, utilizing resources such as a park or historical site, or seeking information such as public health or consumer protection notices.

Surveys to be considered under this generic clearance will only include those surveys modeled on the OMB Circular A-11 CX Feedback survey to improve customer service by collecting feedback at a specific point during a customer journey. This could include upon submitting a form online on a Federal website, speaking with a call center representative, paying off a loan, or visiting a Federal service center.

In an effort to develop comparable, government-wide scores that will enable cross-agency or industry benchmarking (when relevant) and a general indication of an agency's overall customer satisfaction, OMB Circular A-11 Section 280 requires high impact services to measure their touchpoint/transactional performance in as a real-time manner as possible, with respect to satisfaction and confidence/trust using the following questions, without modification. Responses will be assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)).

These questions were developed in consultation with leading organizations in customer experience both in the private sector and industry groups that study the most critical drivers of customer experience. They may be only minimally modified in order to maintain relevance to the specific service and agency administering the survey.

- 5 point Likert scale: *I am satisfied with the service I received from [Program/Service name].*

- 5 point Likert scale: *This interaction increased my confidence in [Program/Service name].* OR *I trust [Agency/Program/Service name] to fulfill our country's commitment to [relevant population].*
- Free response: *Any additional feedback on your scores above?*
- 5 point Likert scale: *My need was addressed* OR *My issue was resolved.* OR *I found what I was looking for.*
- 5 point Likert scale: *It was easy to complete what I needed to do.*
- 5 point Likert scale: *It took a reasonable amount of time to do what I needed to do.*
- 5 point Likert scale: *I was treated fairly.*
- 5 point Likert scale: *Employees I interacted with were helpful.*
- Free response: *Any additional feedback for [Program/Service name]?*

The surveys shall include no more than approximately 15 questions in total. The Agency may add a few additional questions to those listed above to clarify type of service received, inquiry type, service center location, or other program-specific questions that can help program managers to filter and make use of the feedback data.

As part of the Customer Experience CAP goal's strategy to increase transparency to drive accountability, the feedback data collected through the A-11 Standard Feedback survey is meant to be shared with the public. This collection is part of the government-wide effort to embed standardized customer metrics within high-impact programs to create government-wide performance dashboards. Data collected from the questions listed above will be submitted by the Agency to OMB quarterly for updating of customer experience dashboards on performance.gov. This dashboard will also include the total volume of customers that passed through the transaction point at which the survey was offered, the number of customers the survey was presented to, the number of responses, and the mode of presentation and response (online survey, in-person, post-call touchtone, mobile, email). This will help to qualify the data's representation by showing both the response rate and total number of actual responses.

The Agency will only submit under this generic clearance if it meets the following conditions:

- The collections are voluntary;
- The collections are low-burden for respondents (based on considerations of total burden hours or burden-hours per respondent) and are low-cost for both the respondents and the Federal Government;
- The collections are non-controversial and do not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
- Any 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 near future;
- Personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained;

- Information gathered is intended to be used for general service improvement and program management purposes;
- Upon agreement between OMB and the agency collecting the information, all or a subset of information may be released only on performance.gov. Release of any other data must be discussed with OMB before release.

Public responses to these individual collections will provide insights in improving services offered to the public. If this information is not collected, vital feedback from customers and stakeholders on services will be unavailable.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection.

There are neither legal nor technical obstacles to the use of technology in these information collection activities. The determination to use technology, and which technology to use, will be based on the type of information collected and the utility and the availability of specific technology to each respondent in a proposed customer research activity or feedback survey. For example, the Touchpoints survey may be administered at a kiosk on an ipad, as a tab on webpage, or as an embedded form displaying at the end of an application process.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The Agency and the Federal entities it is working with to administer these surveys will work to ensure the streamlining of all customer research and feedback surveys under this clearance. The information to be supplied on these surveys will not be duplicated on any other information collection.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The information collected in these surveys will represent the minimum burden necessary to evaluate customer experience with the Agency's programs and processes. The Agency will minimize the burden on respondents by sampling as appropriate, asking for readily available information, and using short, easy-to-complete information collection instruments.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Without regular mechanisms for collecting and generating customer insights, the Agency is not able to provide the public with the highest level of service. These activities will be coordinated to ensure that most individual respondents will not be asked to respond to more than one survey instrument per transaction or to participate in more than one qualitative feedback or testing activity.

7. Explain any special circumstances.

These surveys will be consistent with all the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5, especially those provisions in subsection (g) which require that a statistical survey be designed to produce results that can be generalized to the universe of study. There are no special circumstances that would cause this information collection to be conducted in an unusual or intrusive manner. All participation will be voluntary. Should the Agency need to deviate from the requirements outlined in 5 CFR 1320, individual justification will be provided to OMB on a case-by-case basis.

8. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years – even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

The 60-day public comment notice was published in the Federal Register at 84 FR 31868, on July 3, 2019. No comments were received. A 30-day notice published in the Federal Register at 84 FR 48355 on September 13, 2019.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees with meaningful justification.

The standard will be no payment or gift to respondents for participation. If any payments are proposed the Agency will submit specific justification for each proposed use as part of the completed package submitted to OMB.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Activity and survey instructions will provide all necessary assurances of confidentiality to the respondents. Although there is no requirement for such an assurance in statute, the quality of this type of information requires respondent candor and anonymity.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

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

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Customer Feedback (Satisfaction Survey**):** Industry best practice is to present every customer the opportunity to provide feedback at each instrumented touchpoint/transaction in a customer journey (ex. After submitting an application, completing a call at a call center, or visiting an in-person service center). The Agency will specify the total possible number of respondents based on estimated annual volume, but this information collection sets a ceiling estimate of 2,000,000 annually.

Average Expected Annual Number of Activities: Approximately 50 customer feedback surveys.
Average Number of Respondents per Activity: Range varies greatly depending on Federal Service.
Annual Responses: Approximately 40,000,000.
Average Minutes per Response: 3 minutes
Burden Hours: 2,000,000

The Agency will keep track of the above activities in order to accurately update burden calculations year to year.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

No costs for respondents are anticipated.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The anticipated cost to the Federal Government is not easily calculable, but has been averaged using the cost of the survey platform at the Agency. The total cost to government has been averaged to $76,987.75. Any costs will be related to minimal staff/administrative time in analyzing the data.

The Agency may incur additional costs in hosting of the Touchpoints technology, but if additional costs are required for a specific collection, these will be determined on an individual survey basis and will be included in the ICR provided to OMB for each survey to be conducted.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

This is a new information collection.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used.

No attempt will be made to generalize the findings from these surveys to be nationally representative or statistically valid. They are meant to compliment and help to contextualize performance and evaluation data as part of a three-pronged approach to understanding Federal program implementation and opportunities for improvement (Performance, Evaluation, and "Feedback" data[1]).

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

Not applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the Certification of Paperwork Reduction Act.

Not applicable.

[1] https://ssir.org/articles/entry/time_for_a_three_legged_measurement_stool