

# **Supporting Statement Part B: Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

**B.1 Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

A national survey of surety firms and surety agents will be conducted to evaluate the impacts of fee changes on the SBG Program through a multimethod approach consisting of two study components: (1) statistical modeling using the SBG Program's administrative data (collected under a previously approved collection, OMB Control Number 3245-0007) and (2) a web-based survey (this collection). Surveys will be sent to the universe of surety firms participating in the SBG Program (41 firms) and the universe of participating surety agents (450 agents). SBA will provide lists to the Contractor of both populations. An 80 percent response rate is estimated for this collection due to SBA's collaborative partnerships with the surety firms and surety agents participating in the Program and a multistep recruitment and follow-up process that will be undertaken (see Appendix B3 below).

**B.2 Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**

**B.2.A Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection**

Sampling will not be conducted because the surveys will be administered to the universes of the surety firms and surety agents participating in the SBG Program. Prior to data collection efforts, both universe frames will be reviewed for duplicate cases or any anomalies; variables that will be reviewed include surety firm/surety agent name, email address, and telephone number. Any variances will be verified with follow-up efforts and removed if necessary.

**B.2.B Estimation Procedure and Degree of Accuracy Needed for the Purpose Described in the Justification**

The survey estimates will be derived using unweighted responses because the data collection phase includes the universe of both priority populations. The data will be adjusted for nonresponse rates to appropriately reflect both universes. The above methodology will allow for accurate population estimates and reporting.

**B.2.C Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures**

SBA does not anticipate unusual problems that require the usage of specialized sampling procedures.

## **B.2.D Any Use of Periodic (Less Frequent Than Annual) Data Collection Cycles to Reduce Burden**

The data collection will be conducted only once.

## **B.2.E General Data Collection Procedures**

Identical data collection procedures will be used for both the surety agent and surety firm universe populations. The process of collecting data will occur in the following fashion:

- 1) Surety firms and surety agents will be notified of the study by two introductory emails (Appendices B2, C2, B4, and C4) providing information necessary to complete the web survey (Appendices B3 and C3). The emails will contain official labels to verify SBA's and the Contractor's intent and professionalism.
- 2) If the participant does not complete the web survey within 1 week, the surety firms or surety agent may be contacted throughout the duration of the data collection period (up to four times by email [Appendices B5, C5, B6, C6, B8, C8, B9, and C9] and twice by telephone [Appendices B7 and C7]) as reminders and encouragement to complete the Surety Bond Guarantee Program Impacts on Fee Reduction Survey via an online platform.
- 3) Throughout the duration of the data collection period, web-based responses will be stored electronically and downloaded.

**B.3 Describe methods to maximize response rates 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.**

In an effort to achieve an 80 percent response rate for both surety firm and surety agent populations, the procedures described below will be executed to secure survey participation. The Surety Bond Guarantee Program Impacts on the Fee Reduction Surveys are designed to achieve the highest practical response rates, commensurate with the importance of survey uses, time constraints, respondent burden, and data collection costs. Efforts to minimize cost include the convenience of responding on an online platform; the short length of the surveys (15 minutes); easy-to-answer question formats (closed-ended, multiple-choice questions); and using survey management software that allows respondents to save and exit the survey at any time and return to complete the survey at a later time. In the event that an 80 percent response rate is not obtained, a nonresponse bias analysis will be conducted.

Below, we describe the recruitment procedures designed to maximize the number of surety firms and surety agents who complete the Surety Bond Guarantee Program Impacts on the Fee Reduction Surveys.

- The introductory emails inviting surety firms and surety agents to participate in the Surety Bond Guarantee Program Impacts on the Fee Reduction Survey have been carefully developed to emphasize the importance of this study and how the information

will help SBA improve the SBG Program, as well as to maximize cooperation through advance notice. Furthermore, introductory emails will frame the evaluation as an opportunity for surety firms and surety agents to partner with SBA to improve the SBG Program.

- An email address for the study will be provided so respondents can receive assistance with the survey.
- A training for telephone interviewers will be conducted. The training, specific to this study, will include an overview of the project, techniques for encouraging respondent candor, and a review of the survey questions in case the interviewer needs to discuss specific survey question inquiries.
- A survey support team with in-depth background on the SBG Program, the evaluation, and familiarity with the population being surveyed will be available.
- Follow-up attempts will begin to be emailed to all surety firms and surety agents who do not complete the survey 1 week after the start of data collection. A telephone follow-up attempt will be conducted the fourth and sixth week of data collection to offer respondents the opportunity to answer any study questions or inquiries regarding survey questions or responses and provide technical support to surety firms and surety agents.
- Weekly reminder emails will be sent to participants from the second week of data collection to the sixth week of data collection. The reminders will emphasize the importance of surety firms' and surety agents' cooperation to the evaluation and the SBG Program.

- The final 2 weeks of data collection will be utilized for follow-up efforts with a post-survey clarification email (Appendices B.10 and C.10) and a clarification phone call (Appendices B.11 and C.11).
- The survey support team will be available to provide support for technical issues and for all inquiries between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. ET during the week (Monday through Friday) throughout the entire data collection period.

#### **B.4 Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.**

**Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.**

The Surety Bond Guarantee Program Impacts on the Fee Reduction Surveys were pretested with seven respondents for understandability (confusing wording or layout, failure to comprehend the question, etc.) and length of time to answer. Three surety firm staff and four surety agents pretested the respective surveys. Recommended revisions from both populations were incorporated into each respective survey; certain revisions were added to both surveys due the similarities between the instruments. Revisions included adding response options to both surveys and modifying the wording of the survey introduction for clarity purposes. Burden estimates for the two surveys did not change. The final versions of the surveys for surety firms and surety agents are included in Appendices B1 and C1, respectively.

**B.5 Provide the names and telephone numbers 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.**

The Contractor, 2M Research, will conduct this study and will be supported by SBA project members. See Table 4 for contact information.

**Table 1 - Persons Consulted on Statistical Aspects of the Design**

Name	Affiliation	Telephone Number	Email
Jim Murdoch, PhD	2M	817-856-0863	<a href="mailto:jmurdoch@2mresearch.com">jmurdoch@2mresearch.com</a>
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