**Request for Approval under the "Improving Customer Experience (OMB Circular A-11, Section 280 Implementation)"**
**(OMB Control Number: 3245-0404)**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Small Business Administration (SBA)– Office of Field Operations (OFO) Customer Experience Data Evaluation**

**PURPOSE:**
*What are you hoping to learn / improve? How do you plan to use what you learn? Include any artifacts your team may develop as a result of this collection.*

The intent of this customer research is to understand the experiences of customers interacting with the SBA's district offices and how the agency's Office of Field Operations (OFO)can improve the customer experience during interactions with the district offices. The proposed data collection extends the customer experience knowledge gleaned from the District Office Customer Satisfaction Survey. Findings will be incorporated into the evaluation team's final report, recommendations plan, customer journey map, and presentation of results to the OFO. This data will provide insights to support ongoing customer experience improvements.

**TYPE OF ACTIVITY:** (Check one)

[X ] Customer Research
[  ] Customer Feedback Survey *(if selecting this option, include survey instrument tool with this submission)*
[   ] User Testing of Services and Digital Products

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**
1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
   - [  ] Web-based surveys
   - [X] Telephone interviews (focus groups)
   - [  ] In-person
   - [  ] Mail

**For Customer Feedback Survey:**
*Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate for the Federal program / service to connect with. Do you have a list of customers to reach out to (e.g., email addresses of individuals who have visited a service center in the past month)? Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and if only a sample will be solicited for feedback, how you will select them.*

The SBA has contracted with 2M Research to conduct two 1-hour focus groups. One focus group will consist of up to eight customers/businesses currently in, or applying to, SBA's 8(a)-Business Development Program (8(a) Program). The second focus group will consist of up to eight customers who selected the "receiving information about options to fund my business" as the primary reason for interacting with the SBA when completing the District Office Customer Satisfaction Survey. The focus groups will occur remotely using an online conferencing platform (i.e. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype). The SBA will work with the contractor to select a range of representation for the 8(a) group based on variations in business type (NAICS industry or other relevant criteria), stage in the certification process (already obtained or applying for 8(a)Program certification), and the average Customer Experience (CX) score across other 8(a) customers of the prospective participant's local district office based on the results from District Office Customer Satisfaction Survey. Representation for the second focus group will be selected from the District Office Customer Satisfaction Survey respondents who after selecting "receiving information about options to fund my business" were asked about their willingness to be contacted for participation in a focus group. Respondents select "yes" were then asked for their name and contact information.

**DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENTS**

*Generally describe the information collection activity – e.g. will facilitators or interviewers be used? What will respondents be asked? Or, what actions will you observe / how will you have respondents interact with a product you need feedback on?*

Data will be collected during two focus group sessions. The evaluation team used response data from the current District Office Customer Satisfaction Survey to design the focus group protocols. Focus groups will be recorded provided permission is received from all participants; a notetaker will also join each call to create notes that serve as a backup to the transcriptions. The evaluation team will use discussion guides for the focus groups that ask about customer experiences with services received from the district offices, suggestions for improvements in customer service, and recommendations for collecting future customer feedback. The focus group discussion guide is designed to be amenable to group discussion. Please see Appendix A and Appendix B for the focus group discussion guides. Recruitment materials for the focus groups are presented in Appendix C.

**Gifts or Payments:**

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

**BURDEN HOURS**

For each individual respondent, we estimate 70 minutes for participation, which includes both recruitment time and response time. Total burden hours for participation in the focus groups is 18.66 hours.

| **Category of Respondent** | **No. of Respondents** | **Participation Time*** | **Burden** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individuals (focus group concerning customers selecting "receiving information about options to fund my business" on the District Office Customer Satisfaction Survey) | 8 | 70 minutes | 9.33 hours |
| Individuals (focus group concerning customers/businesses in the 8(a)Program) | 8 | 70 minutes | 9.33 hours |
| **Totals** | 16 | 1,120 minutes | 18.66 hours |

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collections are voluntary;
2. 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;
3. The collections are non-controversial and do not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
4. 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;
5. Personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained;
6. Information gathered is intended to be used for general service improvement and program management purposes
7. Upon agreement between OMB and the agency all or a subset of information may be released as part of A-11, Section 280 requirements on performance.gov. Summaries of customer research and user testing activities may also be included in public-facing agency publications.

Name: Dorrice Roth

Title: Acting CFO

All instruments used to collect information must include:
OMB Control No. 3245-0404
Expiration Date: 02/28/2021