

**Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Generic Information Collection
Submissions for
“Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service
Delivery”**

OMB CONTROL Number 3245-0398

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. In order to work continuously to ensure that our programs are effective and meet our customers’ needs, the Small Business Administration (hereafter “SBA” or “the Agency”) seeks to obtain OMB approval of a generic clearance to collect qualitative feedback on our service delivery. By qualitative feedback we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions but are not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population of study.

This collection of information is necessary to enable the Agency to garner customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with our commitment to improving service delivery. The information collected from our customers and stakeholders will help ensure that users have an effective, efficient, and satisfying experience with the Agency’s programs. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with service, or focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between the Agency and its customers and stakeholders. It will also allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

Improving agency programs requires ongoing assessment of service delivery, by which we mean systematic review of the operation of a program compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the continuous improvement of the program. The Agency will collect, analyze, and interpret information gathered through this generic clearance to identify strengths and weaknesses of current services and make improvements in service delivery based on feedback. The solicitation of feedback will target areas such as: timeliness or responsiveness, appropriateness, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency of service delivery, and resolution of issues through the service delivery. Responses will be assessed to plan and inform efforts to improve or maintain the quality of service offered to the public. If this information is not collected, vital feedback from customers and stakeholders on the Agency’s services will be unavailable.

The Agency will only submit a collection for approval 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, total number of respondents, 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 necessary¹ and is not retained;
- Information gathered will be used only internally for general service improvement and program management purposes and is not intended for release outside of the agency (if released, procedures outlined in Question 16 will be followed);
- Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions²; and
- Information gathered will yield qualitative information; the collections will not be designed or expected to yield statistically reliable results or used as though the results are generalizable to the population of study.

If these conditions are not met, the Agency will submit an information collection request to OMB for approval through the normal PRA process.

To obtain approval for a collection that meets the conditions of this generic clearance, a standardized form will be submitted to OMB along with supporting documentation (e.g., a copy of the comment card). The submission will have automatic approval, unless OMB identifies issues within 5 business days.

The types of collections that this generic clearance covers include, but are not limited to:

- Customer comment cards/complaint forms
- Small discussion groups
- Focus groups of customers, potential customers, delivery partners, or other stakeholders
- Cognitive laboratory studies, such as those used to refine questions or assess usability of a website;
- Qualitative customer satisfaction surveys (e.g., post-transaction surveys; opt-out web surveys)
- In-person observation testing (e.g., website or software usability tests)

The Agency has established a manager/managing entity to serve for this generic clearance and will conduct an independent review of each information collection to ensure compliance with the terms of this clearance prior to submitting each collection to OMB.

¹ For example, collections that collect PII in order to provide re-numeration for participants of focus groups and cognitive laboratory studies will be submitted under this request. All privacy act requirements will be met.,

² As defined in OMB and agency Information Quality Guidelines, "influential" means that "an agency can reasonably determine that dissemination of the information will have or does have a clear and substantial impact on important public policies or important private sector decisions."

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

If appropriate, SBA will collect information electronically and/or use online collaboration tools to reduce burden.

4. Duplication of Information

No similar data are gathered or maintained by the Agency or are available from other sources known to the Agency.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

Small business or other small entities may be involved in efforts under this generic clearance, but the Agency will minimize the burden on them of information collections approved under this clearance by sampling, asking for readily available information, and using short, easy-to-complete information collection instruments.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

Without these types of feedback, the Agency will not have timely information to adjust its services to meet customer needs.

7. Special Circumstances

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

8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.8(d), a 60-day notice for public comment was published in the *Federal Register* on July 27, 2020 [[85 FR 45287 - Data Collection Available for Public Comments -](#)] No comments were received.

9. Payment or Gift

The Agency will not provide payment or other forms of remuneration to respondents of its various forms of collecting feedback. Focus groups and cognitive laboratory studies are the exceptions.

In the case of in-person cognitive laboratory and usability studies, the Agency may provide stipends of up to \$40. In the case of in-person focus groups, the Agency may provide stipends of up to \$75. If respondents participate in these kinds of studies remotely, via phone, or Internet, any proposed stipend needs to be justified to OMB and must be considerably less than that provided to respondents for in-person studies who have to travel to the agency or other facility to participate. If such information collections include hard-to-reach groups and the agency plans

to offer non-standard stipends, the Agency will provide OMB with additional justifications in the request for clearance of these specific activities. If OMB guidance for the stipend level is adjusted upward, the stipends may also increase accordingly.

10. Confidentiality

If a confidentiality pledge is deemed necessary, the Agency will only include a pledge of confidentiality that is supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, and that does not unnecessarily impede sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use.

11. Sensitive Nature

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

12. Burden of Information Collection

A variety of instruments and platforms will be used to collect information from respondents. The 150, 238 annual burden hours requested are based on the number of collections we expect to conduct over the requested period for this clearance and are based on our previous three years of experience.

Burden Hours:

Estimated Annual Reporting Burden				
Type of Collection	No. of Respondents	Responses per Respondent	Hours per Response	Total Hours
Customer Satisfaction interviews	250	1	.5	125
Focus Groups, online or in-person	500	1	1	500
Customer Comment Cards or Complaint Forms	2,000	1	.04	80
One time or Panel Discussion Groups	200	1	1	200
Online Surveys	1,750,000	1	.08	145,833
Moderated, unmoderated, in-person and remote usability studies	2000	1	.5	1000
Methodological Testing or other Pretesting interviews	2000	1	1	2000
Message Development and Testing	500	1	1	500
TOTAL	1,757,450			150,238

Respondent Annualized Cost:

Based on the previous 3-year clearance period, the annualized cost estimate for all respondents is \$76,288, which is based on the average annual salary from payscale.com of \$59,000 for a small business owner.

13. Costs to Respondents

No additional costs are anticipated.

14. Costs to Federal Government

The anticipated cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$648,000, annually. These costs are comprised of: equipment, overhead, printing, postage, contractor payments and any other expense that is necessary to collect the information approved under this generic clearance.

15. Reason for Change

Based on previous three years of research activity. The estimated number of respondents and associated burdens has increased.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

Feedback collected under this generic clearance provides useful information, but it does not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. Findings will be used for general service improvement but are not for publication or other public release.

Although the Agency does not intend to publish its findings, the Agency may receive requests to release the information (e.g., congressional inquiry, Freedom of Information Act requests). The Agency will disseminate the findings when appropriate, strictly following the Agency's "Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of Information Disseminated to the Public.", and will include specific discussion of the limitation of the qualitative results discussed above.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

We are requesting no exemption.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.