

May 26, 2021

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

OMB Control Number: 1660 - 0130

**Title: Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on
Agency Service Delivery**

Form Number(s):

General Instructions

A Supporting Statement, including the text of the notice to the public required by 5 CFR 1320.5(a)(i)(iv) and its actual or estimated date of publication in the Federal Register, must accompany each request for approval of a collection of information. The Supporting Statement must be prepared in the format described below and must contain the information specified in Section A below. If an item is not applicable, provide a brief explanation. When Item 17 or the OMB Form 83-I is checked “Yes”, Section B of the Supporting Statement must be completed. OMB reserves the right to require the submission of additional information with respect to any request for approval.

Specific Instructions

A. Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information. Provide a detailed description of the nature and source of the information to be collected.

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, Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA) (hereafter “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 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. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. Provide a detailed description of how the information will be shared, if applicable, and for what programmatic purpose.

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, appropriateness, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency of service delivery, and resolution of issues with 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 the collection meets the following conditions:

- 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 decisions;¹
- 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;
- The collections are voluntary;

¹ 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."

- 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; and
- With the exception of information needed to provide remuneration for participants of focus groups and cognitive laboratory studies, personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained.

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); and
- 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.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

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

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

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

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize.

Small businesses or other small entities may be involved in these efforts, 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. Describe the consequence to Federal/FEMA program or policy activities if the collection of information is not conducted, or is conducted less frequently as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

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

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

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

(a) Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly.

(b) Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it.

(c) Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.

(d) Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years.

(e) In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study.

(f) Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.

(g) That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use.

(h) Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

8. Federal Register Notice:

a. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A 60-day Federal Register Notice inviting public comments was published on March 19, 2021, at 86 FR 14938. No comments were received.

A 30-day Federal Register Notice inviting public comments was published on June 7, 2021, at 86 FR 30327. The public comments is open until July 7, 2021.

b. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

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

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

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 in 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.

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

If a confidentiality pledge is deemed useful and feasible, 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. If the agency includes a pledge of confidentiality, it will include a citation for the statute or regulation supporting the pledge.

11. Provide additional justification for any question of a sensitive nature (such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs and other matters that are commonly considered private). This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

There are no questions of sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

a. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated for each collection instrument (separately list each instrument and describe information as requested). Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desired. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for

the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.

b. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.

c. Provide an estimate of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. NOTE: The wage-rate category for each respondent must be multiplied by 1.4 and this total should be entered in the cell for “Avg. Hourly Wage Rate”. The cost to the respondents of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead this cost should be included in Item 13.

A variety of instruments and platforms will be used to collect information from respondents. The annual burden hours requested (268,783) are based on the number of collections we expect to conduct over the requested period for this clearance and past generic clearance submissions.

Estimated Annualized Burden Hours and Costs								
Type of Respondent	Form Name / Form Number	No. of Respondents	No. of Responses per Respondent	Total No. of Responses	Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Annual Burden (in hours)	Avg. Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
Customer Satisfaction Survey		600,000	1	600,000	0.1667	100,020	\$39.52	\$3,952,790
Focus Group		50,000	1	50,000	2	100,000	\$39.52	\$3,952,000
Other: Course Evaluation		400,000	1	400,000	0.1667	66,680	\$39.52	\$2,635,194
Customer Comment		25,000	1	25,000	0.0833	2,083	\$39.52	\$82,320

Card								
Total		1,075,000		1,075,000		268,783		\$10,622,304

Instruction for Wage-rate category multiplier: Take each non-loaded “Avg. Hourly Wage Rate” from the BLS website table and multiply that number by 1.46². For example, a non-loaded BLS table wage rate of \$42.51 would be multiplied by 1.46, and the entry for the “Avg. Hourly Wage Rate” would be \$62.06.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics³, the May 2020 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates wage rate for All Occupations (SOC 00-0000) is \$27.07. Including the wage rate multiplier of 1.46, the fully-loaded wage rate is \$39.52 per hour. Therefore, the annual burden hour cost is estimated to be \$10,622,304 (\$39.52 x 268,783 hours = \$10,622,304.20).

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14.)

The cost estimates should be split into two components:

a. Operation and Maintenance and purchase of services component. These estimates should take into account cost associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing information. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred.

b. Capital and Start-up-Cost should include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software, monitoring sampling, drilling and testing equipment, and record storage facilities.

There are no record keeping, capital, start-up or maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, Table 1. “Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Civilian workers, by major occupational and industry group, March 2020.” Available at https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecec_06182020.pdf. Accessed May 26, 2021. The wage multiplier is calculated by dividing total compensation for all workers of \$37.73 by wages and salaries for all workers of \$25.91 per hour yielding a benefits multiplier of approximately 1.46

³ Information on the mean wage rate from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics is available online at: https://www.bls.gov/oes/2020/may/oes_nat.htm

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing and support staff), and any other expense that would have been incurred without this collection of information. You may also aggregate cost estimates for Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The anticipated cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$2,180,168 annually. These costs are comprised of:

Annual Cost to the Federal Government	
Item	Cost (\$)
Contract Costs: Funding for contract costs related to survey design and collection	\$850,700
Staff Salaries: 15 GS 12, Step 5 employees in Washington, DC spending 50% of their time annually to collect data/survey individuals for this data collection ¹ [15 x \$98,827 x 0.5 x 1.46 = 1,082,155.65] ²	\$1,082,156
Facilities [cost for renting, overhead, etc. for data collection activity]	\$125,359
Computer Hardware and Software [cost of equipment annual lifecycle]	\$13,420
Equipment Maintenance [cost of annual maintenance/service agreements for equipment]	\$9,500
Travel	\$40,000
Printing [150,000 annually at \$0.12 per page x 2 pages = \$36,000]	\$36,000
Postage: [30,000 pages/cards x \$0.49 = \$14,700]	\$14,700
Focus Group Incentive: [Nominal Incentive to range from \$80-\$100 for 250 Participants to attend Focus Groups held in Person and a fee of \$35 for 400 On-Line Interviews (Note: Using the higher cost of \$100 for the Focus Groups held in Person) Annualized over 3 years.]	\$8,333
Total	\$2,180,168
¹ Office of Personnel Management 2021 Pay and Leave Tables for the Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA locality. Available online at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2021/DCB.pdf . Accessed February 10, 2021.	
² Wage rate includes a 1.46 multiplier to reflect the fully-loaded wage rate.	

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I in a narrative form. Present the itemized changes in hour burden and cost burden according to program changes or adjustments in Table 5. Denote a program increase as a positive number, and a program decrease as a negative number.

A "Program increase" is an additional burden resulting from a federal government regulatory action or directive. (e.g., an increase in sample size or coverage, amount of information, reporting frequency, or

expanded use of an existing form). This also includes previously in-use and unapproved information collections discovered during the ICB process, or during the fiscal year, which will be in use during the next fiscal year.

A "**Program decrease**", is a reduction in burden because of: (1) the discontinuation of an information collection; or (2) a change in an existing information collection by a Federal agency (e.g., the use of sampling (or smaller samples), a decrease in the amount of information requested (fewer questions), or a decrease in reporting frequency).

"**Adjustment**" denotes a change in burden hours due to factors over which the government has no control, such as population growth, or in factors which do not affect what information the government collects or changes in the methods used to estimate burden or correction of errors in burden estimates.

Itemized Changes in Annual Burden Hours						
Data collection Activity/Instrument	Program Change (hours currently on OMB Inventory)	Program Change (New)	Difference	Adjustment (hours currently on OMB Inventory)	Adjustment (New)	Difference
Customer Satisfaction Survey				100,620	100,020	-600
Focus Group				100,000	100,000	0
Other: Course Evaluation				66,800	66,680	-120
Customer Comment Card				2,075	2,083	+8
Total(s)				269,495	268,783	-712

Explain:

There is an adjustment to the itemized annual burden hours estimate due to correcting the conversion rate of minutes to hours resulting in a reduction in burden hours from 269,495 to 268,783 hours (a reduction of 712 hours).

Itemized Changes in Annual Cost Burden						
Data Collection Activity/Instrument	Program Change (cost currently on OMB inventory)	Program Change (new)	Difference	Adjustment (cost currently on OMB inventory)	Adjustment (new)	Difference
Customer Satisfaction Survey				\$3,505,601	\$3,952,790	\$447,189
Focus Group				\$3,484,000	\$3,952,000	\$468,000
Other: Course Evaluation				\$2,327,312	\$2,635,194	\$307,882
Customer Comment Card				\$72,293	\$82,320	\$10,027
FEMA				\$2,079,001	\$2,180,168	\$101,167
Total				\$9,389,206	\$10,622,304	\$1,233,098

The cost burden for this collection increased from \$9,389,206 to \$10,622,304 due to wage rate increases. For respondents, the BLS May 2020 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates wage rate for All Occupations (SOC 00-0000) increased to \$27.07. For FEMA, the wage rate increased to the 2021 GS-12 Step 5 rate of \$98,827. Additionally, the burden hour correction reduced the number of respondent hours lessening the impact of the increased respondent wage rate.

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. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

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

This collection does not seek approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions,” of OMB Form 83-I.

FEMA does not request an exception to the certification of this information collection.