

Supporting Statement Part B
0985-0080 ACL Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Research and Assessment

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The data and information collected under the auspices of this generic mechanism will be used for hypothesis generation for further research, analysis, or assessment as well as program improvement. As is typical of other qualitative data collections at the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the qualitative research activities undertaken as part of this generic clearance will involve purposive or convenience samples; samples which include a universe of grantees or directors of state-level offices such as state units on aging; area agencies on aging; disability grantees or entities; state health or human services departments; tribal communities; or other entities relevant to ACL's constituents or programs. Respondents selected will likely cover a broad range of experiences or expertise in a particular subject matter related to ACL's mission.

The activities under this clearance may involve samples of self-selected partners or grantees, as well as quota samples, with respondents selected either to cover a broad range of issues or to include specific characteristics related to certain programs or topics. Results will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, to produce statistical descriptions (careful, repeatable measurements), or to generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample. The specific sample planned for each individual collection and the method for soliciting participation will be described fully in each information collection request.

Qualitative surveys are tools used by program analysts to change or improve programs, policies, or services. The accuracy, reliability, and applicability of the results of these surveys are adequate for their purpose.

The samples associated with this collection are not subjected to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples where more rigorous approaches to design and sampling are used. A description of the plans for selecting respondents for each individual activity will be provided to OMB at the time the qualitative research activity is submitted through the generic information collection request.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Data and information collection methods and procedures will vary and the specifics of these will be provided with each collection request. ACL expects to use a variety of methodologies for these collections. For example, ACL or its contractors may use commercial survey-specific software to automate its collection and analysis of information. Instruments submitted through information collection requests may be electronically disseminated and/or posted to ACL's website. Telephone scripts, personal interviews, and focus groups with professional guidance and moderation may also be used.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Information and data collected under this generic clearance will not yield generalizable quantitative findings; it can provide useful input, but these types of sample designs and methods do not yield data that can be generalized to populations broader than those under study. Some methods may be used to maximize response, including reminder emails, phone calls, or other means will be used to maximize response rates in web-based questionnaires or whatever method is being used; and reminder phone calls and/or emails to participants will be used to encourage potential respondents to participate.

4. Testing of Procedures

Pretesting may be done with internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with ACL's programs and issues. If the number of pretest respondents exceeds nine members of the public, ACL will submit the pretest instruments for review under this generic clearance.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

Each program will obtain information from researchers and statisticians in the development, design, conduct, and analysis of service surveys, when appropriate. This statistical expertise will be available from agency statisticians or from contractors and ACL will include the names and contact information of persons consulted in the specific information collection requests submitted under this generic clearance.