

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Generic Clearance for Formative Data Collections for Evaluation, Research, and Evidence-
Building
OMB Control Number, 1601-New
Part B Supporting Statement

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

The primary purpose of this generic clearance is to collect data to inform the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) evaluation, research, and evidence-building activities and allow for collaborative, ongoing, and actionable communications between the Agency and its customers and stakeholders that allow the DHS to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current programs, initiatives, and services. Due to the nature of the proposed activities, various data collection techniques and instruments and information will not be collected requiring statistically sophisticated strategy for respondent selection or analysis. Public sharing of this data is limited to the context described in Supporting Statement A.

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

Given the nature of the information collection activities under this request, the universe and respondent selection varies considerably. However, for the most part, the questionnaires and surveys, semi-structured small group discussions or focus groups, observation, interviews, and cognitive interviews and user testing undertaken as part of this clearance will involve self-selected and convenience, quota, or purposive samples with respondents selected either to cover a broad range of groups or to include specific characteristics related to the topic of the study. Respondents could include key stakeholder groups involved in DHS projects and programs, state or local government officials, service providers, participants in DHS programs or similar comparison groups, experts in fields pertaining to DHS research and programs, or others involved in conducting DHS research or evaluation projects. DHS will submit information about the sampling strategy with each individual collection request.

Data collection requests under this generic clearance are not intended for statistical purposes as defined by 44 U.S. Code § 3561, and the samples associated with these collections are not subject to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples. All sampling methods used with requests made under this generic clearance are to gain insight from a broad and diverse set of stakeholders while simultaneously minimizing the burden, not intended to make inferences about a population. Findings from these formative studies will not be generalized to the broader population. The results will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, produce statistical descriptions (careful, repeatable measurements), or generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The DHS's formative studies will collect data using well-established methodologies, including but not limited to questionnaires and surveys, semi-structured small group discussions or focus groups, observation, interviews, and cognitive interviews and user testing. The particular

samples will vary based on the content of the discussion and the programs or policies of interest. Each individual collection request will provide specific data collection methods and procedures.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Expected Response Rates: Expected response rates will vary for individual information collection requests. Information about expected response rates will be provided with each individual information collection request. An industry average is approximately 40%¹.

Maximizing Response Rates and Dealing with Nonresponse: In general, callbacks will be used to maximize response rates for telephone surveys and interviews; reminder phone calls, letters, emails and/or second questionnaires are some methods that will be used to maximize response rates in mail and web-based surveys. Reminder phone calls, letters, and/or emails to participants are some methods that will be used to encourage them to keep their appointments. Each individual information collection request will provide specific information about methods to maximize response rates and deal with nonresponse.

Information collected under this generic clearance will be voluntary and will not yield generalizable quantitative findings. While the collected information can provide useful stakeholder input, it does not produce results that can be generalized.

4. Testing of Procedures

Pretesting information collections under this generic clearance may be conducted with internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with the programs and products. If the number of pretest respondents exceeds nine members of the public, the DHS will submit the pretest instruments for review under this generic clearance.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

Information collections under this generic clearance will not require sophisticated statistical analysis. However, as appropriate, DHS's internal evidence experts (evaluators, researchers, economists, data scientists, statisticians) or qualified external contractors will provide guidance in the design, development, administration, or analysis of data collection instruments. Additional information about consultation and contact information will be provided to OMB within each individual information collection request package.

¹ [Household and establishment survey response rates : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)