

## Supporting Statement

### OMB Information Collection (ICR) Approval Request to Conduct

Approval Request for IRS In-Person Direct-Hire Event Survey Research, SU-7391  
(OMB #1545-1432)  
2023 IRS In-Person Direct-Hire Event Survey

#### A. JUSTIFICATION

##### 1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) enlists a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. This initiative is part of the Service-wide effort to maintain a system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act (RRA) of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862 that requires all government agencies to survey their customers.

In this study, IRS' *customers* are job seekers who attended calendar year 2023 Wage and Investment (W&I) Customer Account Services (CAS) in-person hiring events to obtain filing season work. The W&I CAS function is the largest single entity within the IRS with approximately 30,000 employees during peak season. CAS is the *cornerstone* of the IRS filing season operation with three Submission Processing (SP) centers (i.e., Austin, Kansas City, and Ogden), plus a new "satellite" center (i.e., Brookhaven), processing over 160 million individual paper and electronic returns. SP center staff, the majority of whom are seasonal employees, also process over 50 million paper and electronic business returns. In short, W&I CAS SP seasonal employees are IRS mission critical.

Since 2016, CAS SP became increasingly unable to meet seasonal employee hiring goals. Even after lowering the goals in 2019, targets continued to go unmet. For the two years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, unmet staffing goals caused "seasonal" employees to be kept on year-round. The pandemic compounded the problem as IRS Service Centers closed for several months during filing season in 2020 resulting in an unprecedented accumulation of work for CAS SP.

Efforts to mitigate the backlog included former CAS employees' mandatory return to the function to work the "Surge" at their current salary level. In addition, approximately 1,300 temp agency staff were hired to perform SP Clerk duties at the centers.

In March 2022, the IRS secured OPM approval to use [Direct-Hire Authority](#) (DHA) for recruiting and hiring mission critical positions including CAS SP seasonal employees. A DHA is an appointing (hiring) authority the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) can give to Federal agencies for filling vacancies when a *critical hiring need* or *severe shortage of candidates* exists. A DHA enables an agency to hire, after public notice is given, any qualified applicant without regard to 5 U.S.C. 3309-3318, 5 CFR part 211, or 5 CFR part 337, subpart A. A DHA expedites hiring by eliminating competitive rating and ranking, veterans' preference, and "rule of three" procedures.

W&I CAS SP partnered with IRS Human Capital Office (HCO) Strategic Talent Analytics & Recruitment Solutions (STARS) to hold in-person Direct Hiring (DH) events near centers to better meet hiring goals for Clerks and Tax Examiner (TE) positions. DH events enabled SP to attain 90% of fiscal year (FY) 2022's hiring goal for TE positions and 64% of goal for Clerks. In FY 2023 to date, DH events are contributing over 90% of all CAS SP seasonal employees hired. Currently SP has reached 54% of its overall hiring goal – far superior to last year at this time (12%, see table below).

## W&I CAS SP Hiring Operations, April 2023 and 2022

Center	Through 04-11-2023			Original Goal	Total Reported	% Reported to Goal
	Original Goal	Total Reported	% Reported to Goal			
Austin	1,721	942	54.7%	1,691	200	11.8%
Kansas City	2,297	603	26.3%	2,297	178	7.7%
Ogden	1,435	1,017	70.9%	1,435	279	19.4%
Total	5,453	2,944	54.0%	5,423	657	12.1%

The success of the in-person DH hiring method for mission critical, seasonal, Clerk and TE positions in CAS SP is evident and the events will continue going forward. Therefore, IRS W&I CAS SP and STARS wish to understand attendees' experiences and opinions to identify ways to improve event procedures. Improved DH event procedures will impact hiring goals for mission critical, seasonal, Service Center positions and improve service for taxpayers.

### 2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The purpose of the study is to gather and analyze prospective seasonal hires' experiences with IRS in-person DH events in calendar year (CY) 2023. This experience survey offers event attendees the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences. W&I CAS and STARS need to learn how event attendees feel about the current marketing, recruitment and hiring processes and what components need improvement.

### 3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

An electronic survey will be administered with CY 2023 CAS SP in-person DH attendees who opted-in to receive a survey via email regarding their event experiences. Survey invitations will be sent from W&I Research office's email box [wi.research@irs.gov](mailto:wi.research@irs.gov) including a link to the Qualtrics survey.

### 4. Duplication of Information

Similar data is not gathered or maintained by the IRS W&I division or HCO STARS.

### 5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

N/A

### 6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

Not meeting CAS SP seasonal hiring goals for Clerks and TEs effects diminished taxpayer service experiences.

### 7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances relating to this request. The information collected via the survey is voluntary and will not be used for statistical purposes.

### 8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency

N/A

### 9. Payment or Gift:

None

### 10. Confidentiality:

The file containing in-person DH event attendees who opted-in for the experience survey and the data file containing participants' responses will be protected to the extent allowed by law.

Access to opt-in and survey response data files is limited to the principal researcher on the project. No personally identifiable information (PII) will be collected in the survey so no PII related to the results will be maintained by IRS.

#### 11. Sensitive Nature

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

#### 12. Burden of Information Collection

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden Hours
Survey invitation	2140	0.5 mins	17.8 hrs
Survey participation	749	8 mins	99.9 hrs
<b>Total</b>			<b>117.7 hrs</b>

#### 13. Costs to Respondents

There is no dollar cost to respondents. The total estimated annual cost burden to respondents is \$3,296.78 = (117.7 hours x \$28.01). This estimate was created using the mean hourly wage for all occupations (\$28.01) from the BLS May 2021 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates - United States.

#### 14. Cost of Federal Government

The total estimated cost is \$20,678.40 for IRS staff time (see chart below).

Description	Hours	Avg. Hourly Rate <sup>1</sup>	Total
GS-14 Project Lead	320	\$55.77	\$17,846.40
GS-13 Project Staff	60	\$47.20	\$2,832.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>380</b>		<b>\$20,678.40</b>

<sup>1</sup> 2023 General Schedule (Rest of US Locality), Step 1

#### 15. Reason for Change

No change is being requested. This is a new request.

#### 16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

Survey results will be used to identify ways W&I CAS and STARS can improve in-person DH events to increase the number of qualified seasonal job applicants and tentative job offers (TJOs) made at events to better meet seasonal employee hiring goals to provide taxpayers with accurate and timely service.

Quality of data capture will be assessed prior to survey fielding. Dummy survey content will be input and analyzed for accuracy with a focus on skip pattern checking. A summary containing procedures and results of quality assurance testing will be produced.

After the fielding and prior to analysis, the survey data will be cleansed of PII, questionnaire items labeled, and response levels formatted. Open open-ended responses will be examined and analyzed for common themes.

Feedback from in-person DH event attendee survey respondents will provide useful information that can be generalized to improve these special events going forward.

#### **17. Display of OMB Approval Date**

IRS is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval, as this is a one-time, limited-duration collection.

#### **18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

#### **19. Dates Collection of Information will Begin and End**

5/15/2023-6/1/2023

### **B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

#### **1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

The IRS developed an opt-in script for use at W&I SP's In-Person Direct Hiring (DH) events during winter and spring of 2023. At event intake, DH event participants voluntarily provide their contact information to HCO STARS staff members. In addition to collecting attendees' contact information, STARS staff asked whether attendees consent to receive an email survey about their event experiences so the IRS can improve them going forward.

#### **2. Procedures for Collecting Information**

W&I CAS SP In-person DH event attendees who opted-in for the experience survey will be contacted via email and invited to participate in an online survey hosted in Qualtrics. Non-respondents will receive a reminder after one week.

#### **3. Testing of Procedures**

W&I Research, W&I CAS SP, and IRS HCO have worked together to refine the survey instrument to ensure the right questions are being asked from the IRS and DH event attendees' perspectives.

#### **4. Contacts from W&I**

Kirsten K. Davis  
Operations Research Analyst  
W&I Operations Support (WIOS)  
Strategies and Solutions, Research Group 2  
[kirsten.k.davis@irs.gov](mailto:kirsten.k.davis@irs.gov)

Javier Framinan  
W&I Operations Support (WIOS)  
Strategies and Solutions, Chief, Research Group 2  
[javier.framinan@irs.gov](mailto:javier.framinan@irs.gov)

Michael Gonzales  
Program Management/Process Assurance  
W&I Customer Account Services (CAS)  
Submission Processing  
[michael.a.gonzales@irs.gov](mailto:michael.a.gonzales@irs.gov)