SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A
U.S. Department of Commerce
Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative
Feedback on Agency Service Delivery
OMB Control No. 0690-0030

This is request for an extension of a previously approved information collection.

Abstract

This information collection activity provides a means to garner qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, and timely manner, in accordance with the Administration's commitment to improving service delivery. This feedback provides insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provides an early warning of issues with service, or focuses 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 U.S. Department of Commerce (the Agency) and its customers and stakeholders. It also allows feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to deliver services that meet or exceed the best practices of the private sector. To continuously ensure the effectiveness of our programs and their alignment with customer needs, the Agency seeks to extend OMB approval for a generic clearance to collect qualitative feedback on our service delivery. Qualitative feedback refers to insights into perceptions and opinions that are useful for understanding user experience but are not designed to produce statistically generalizable results.

This information collection is essential for obtaining timely and efficient feedback from customers and stakeholders, consistent with our commitment to improving service delivery. The feedback will help ensure that users have effective, efficient, and satisfactory experiences with the Agency's programs. It will offer insights into customer and stakeholder perceptions, experiences, and expectations; identify emerging service issues; and highlight opportunities for improved communication, training, or operational adjustments. These efforts will support ongoing, collaborative, and actionable engagement between the Agency and its customers and stakeholders and directly inform program management improvements.

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.

Improving agency programs requires ongoing assessment of service delivery, defined as the systematic review of program operations against established standards to support continuous improvement. The Agency will use information collected under this generic clearance to analyze and interpret feedback, identify strengths and weaknesses, and implement improvements in service delivery.

Feedback will focus on areas such as timeliness, appropriateness, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency, and issue resolution. Responses will be used to plan and guide efforts to enhance or maintain the quality of services provided to the public. Without this information, the Agency would lack critical input from customers and stakeholders needed to inform program improvements.

The most common types of collections that this generic clearance covers, but are not limited to, are those outlined in the chart below. The Agency will only submit a collection for approval under this generic clearance if it meets the following conditions:

Conditions for Needs and Uses of Information Collected

Item No.	Needs and Uses	Types of collections
	• 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 of this Supporting Statement 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. • 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. • With the exception of information needed to provide renumeration for participants of focus groups and cognitive laboratory studies, personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained.	• 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)

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.

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

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[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.”

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 to adopt this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Agencies will collect information electronically and use online collaboration tools to reduce burden when appropriate. Additionally, respondents may use any technology that allows compliance with the collection.

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 Question 2

There is no duplication of information within the Agency, no similar data gathered or maintained or that is available from other known sources.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

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

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Without this type of feedback, the Agency will not have timely information to adjust its services to meet customer needs. A less frequent collection would impair the effectiveness of the federal program and thereby impede the Agency from fulfilling its responsibilities.

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

The information collection will be conducted in a consistent manner with 5 CFR Part 1320.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), 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.

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.8(d), on January 15, 2026 (91 FR 1746) a 60-day notice for public comment was published in the *Federal Register*. No comments were received.

In addition to soliciting comments from the public, we consulted and will continue to have ongoing discussions with representatives from other government agencies that have similar collections. All agree it is important to continuously seek ways to reduce costs and burden hours, particularly with the new technology available. We are exploring the use of AI to assist in these efforts.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than renumeration 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.

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 and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

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.

The SORN for this umbrella collection is ***COMMERCE-DEPT-23, Information collected electronically in connection with Department of Commerce activities, events, and programs.*** However, individual information collections (ICs) may include specific SORNs relevant to the IC and the name and citation will be included in the clearance requests. Any privacy impact assessment (PIA) will be included and cited as well.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or 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.

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature. However, some of the instruments in this collection may include OMB already approved demographic information.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

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

The estimated annualized cost to the respondents is **$408,917**. The estimated annual respondent costs are based on the number of estimated hours for the collections we expect to conduct over the requested period for this clearance.

Estimated Annual Respondent Costs				
Form Name	**Type of Respondents**	**Total Annual Burden Hours**	**Hourly Respondent Wage Rate***	**Respondent Cost**
Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Individuals	7,000	$40.22	$281,540
Comment Cards/Complaint Forms/Transactional Surveys	Individuals	1,065	$40.22	$42,915
Focus Groups	Individuals	1,200	$40.22	$48,264
Small Discussion Groups	Individuals	400	$40.22	$16,088
Usability Tests (In-person observation (i.e., Website/ Software)	Individuals	250	$40.22	$10,055
Cognitive Laboratory Studies (Used to refine questions/assess usability for Websites)	Individuals	250	$40.22	$10,055
Total		**10,165**		**$408,917**

These estimates are based on the following data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics: the General Public rate was obtained from the https://www.bls.gov/oes/2024/may/oes_nat.htm#00-0000

Estimated Annual Reporting Burden				
Type of Collection	**No. of Respondents**	**Annual Frequency per Response**	**Average Burden Hours per Response**	**Total Hours**
Customer Satisfaction Surveys	38,900	1	10 mins	6483
Comment Cards/Complaint Forms/Transactional Surveys	9400	1	10 mins	1567
Focus Groups/Interviews	700	1	2 hrs.	1400
Small Discussion Groups	400	1	1 hr.	400
Usability Tests (In-person observation (i.e., Website/ Software)	440	1	30 mins	220
Cognitive Laboratory Studies (Used to refine questions/assess usability for Websites)	190	1	30 mins	95
TOTALS (THREE-YEAR PERIOD)	**50,030 (150,090)**			**10,165 (30,495)**

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

No additional costs are anticipated other than what is stated in question 12.

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 expenses that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Agencies may also aggregate cost estimates from Question 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The estimated cost to the Federal Government for annual oversight is approximately **$95,969**.

Table – Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

Staff	Grade/Step	Salary	Fringe (if applicable	% of Effort	Total Annualized Cost to Gov't
Federal Oversight					
DOC Project Oversight Officer (s)	Multiple	260,000		2.5%	$6,500
Contractor Cost (labor)					
Multiple contractor staff		255,625		35%	$89,469
Total Cost to the Government					$95,969

**The Salary in the table above is cited from: Office of Personnel Management https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salaries-table

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

Based on the actual use of burden hours during the previous approval period and the number of respondents involved, we have adjusted (**decreased**) the number of respondents and burden hours.

The following table shows changes in the number of respondents, and burden hours; and explains the reasons for these changes.

Table – Program changes or adjustments

Information Collection Item/Category	No of Respondents and Burden Hours		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
No. of Respondents	50,030	54,500	0	0	Based on evaluation of actual use during the previous renewal and projected future use.
Total Burden Hours	10,165	14,250	0	0	Based on evaluation of actual use during the previous renewal and projected future use.
Total for Collection	60,195	68,750	0	0	

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

The Agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all instruments. Should the need for an exception arise, the Agency will request prior OMB approval.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

Certification Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

"The agency certifies compliance with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3)."