

SUPPORTING STATEMENT B
Generic Clearance for the National Cemetery Administration
Customer Satisfaction Surveys
OMB Control Number: 2900-0571

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Overview:

All surveys will use statistical methods and will follow OMB guidelines. The organization will also follow the guidance in the OMB Manual, "Resource Manual for Customer Surveys." Technical survey expertise and statistical service will be sought from VA statisticians or from other Federal statistical agencies.

In general, all surveys will be based upon a detailed sampling plan that determines the sample size needed to yield valid data at the 95 percent confidence level, assuming a 60 percent response rate. All samples will be randomly generated.

To ensure NCA and VA are following Executive Order No. 12862 and other legal requirements cited in Supporting Statement A, NCA has conducted the voluntary Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries since 2000. The survey's purpose and design were developed to determine the kind and quality of services customers of NCA wanted and their level of satisfaction with existing services. Since 2000, NCA followed the OMB generic clearance guidance established in the OMB guidance titled, "Resource Manual for Customer Surveys Part 1," dated October 1, 1993. As a result, NCA continually identifies its customers' needs, expectations, and level of satisfaction with service to meet and exceed customer expectations, to improve service, and to comply with legal requirements. The annual survey is administered to NCA's two major customer groups: next of kin and funeral directors.

The National Cemeteries Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey; State, Tribal or Territorial Veterans Cemeteries Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey; VA Memorial Products Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey; and Funeral Director Satisfaction Survey are paper-based surveys also made available on the web. NCA focus group and other research conducted with next of kin respondents, having recently lost a loved one and still in a stage of grieving, found phone surveys intrusive during this sensitive time. However, the survey Help Line allows for telephonic survey response if requested by the survey respondent. Mailed paper surveys are used out of respect for the mourning process. Additionally, surveys are never sent to a grieving next of kin until a minimum of 90 days have passed to respect the grieving process.

National Cemeteries Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey; State, Tribal or Territorial Veterans Cemeteries Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey; and Funeral Director Satisfaction Survey

To maximize the response rate, a four-step mailing protocol will be used. It will consist of a copy of the survey with a return envelope and cover letter; a reminder/thank you postcard; a second questionnaire for non-respondents; then, a final reminder/thank you postcard. Last year, the four-step process generated an overall response rate of 44.50% for next of kin and 19.09% for funeral directors.

NCA plans to pilot a “push-to-web” mailing protocol for a subset of the 2027 survey sample. The pilot employs a three-step mailing protocol consisting of an initial postcard with information on completing the online survey; a copy of the survey with a return envelope and cover letter; then, a final reminder/thank you postcard. This push-to-web pilot will enable NCA to ascertain impacts to response rate, response data, and potentially result in reduced survey burden. Online surveys can be completed more expeditiously, automatically and accurately ingested into data models and do not require physical mailing by the respondent.

VA Memorial Products Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey

The VA Memorial Products Next of Kin/Family Member Satisfaction Survey is for customers who buried their loved one in a private cemetery and received either a government furnished headstone, marker, medallion, commemorative urn, or commemorative plaque. Questions surrounding the Presidential Memorial Certificate are also included. NCA will administer the surveys in the least burdensome manner. NCA developed a detailed random sampling plan to determine the sample size needed to yield valid data at the 95 percent confidence level, assuming a 60 percent response rate. A random representative sample will be drawn from the two population groups: next of kin of a deceased Veteran who ordered a headstone or marker for installation at a private cemetery and the funeral directors that assisted in the process.

The two mailing protocols detailed above for the other 3 surveys will be extended to this survey as well.

National Cemetery Visitor Comment Cards:

Comment cards will be used in instances where additional Veteran feedback is needed to better understand customer requirements. Comment Cards in general will not provide statistically valid data as they are qualitative in nature. They will however provide additional insight into customer needs and service requirements.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information, including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection**
The 2026 sample selections for next of kin and funeral directors had the overarching goal of achieving comparability with past administrations of the NCA

Customer Satisfaction Surveys to avoid a break in the series of survey administration and strive for full comparability from survey administrations in recent years.

The three 2026 Next of Kin surveys employ sampling whereas the 2026 Funeral Director Satisfaction Survey used a census, which included every available unduplicated record.

The second stage of sampling utilized stratification by creating groups, or strata, from which records were selected using simple random sampling (SRS) with different percentages applicable to certain stratum. For example, a policy decision of NCA over all survey administrations has been to select 100% (or a census) of interments at any cemetery with 100 or fewer interments. The cut points and percent of records selected, or probability, within each stratum are provided in the table below.

Stratum Creation by Cemetery Size	
Number of Interments per Cemetery	Percent of Records Selected
100 or less	100.00%
101-199	75.00%
200-449	55.00%
450-749	40.00%
750 or more	30.00%

The above sampling methodology results in surveys mailed to Next of Kin comprised of approximately 40,000 who utilized National Cemeteries, 18,000 who used State, Tribal or Territorial Veterans Cemeteries, and 6,500 who ordered Memorial Products. The sampling methodology results in approximately 11,000 surveys mailed to funeral directors. The number of funeral directors needed was much lower than the number of next of kin needed because many funeral directors conducted multiple services at a national cemetery over the survey timeframe.

- **Estimation procedure**

To administer the survey in the least burdensome manner, a detailed sampling plan was developed that determined the sample size needed for each national cemetery to yield valid data at the 95 percent confidence level. The confidence level for this 2026 survey was 95 percent ($\alpha = 1 - 0.95$, or $\alpha = 0.05$) which is in accordance with other federal surveys. Margin of error (MOE) is defined as $1.96 \cdot \sqrt{(\sigma/n)}$ for each question. The MOE is commonly used to indicate how many percentage points estimates will differ from the real population value. The MOE is

calculated by finding the critical value of the z-score (1.96 for 95% confidence level), sigma (σ) is the standard deviation, and n is the sample size.

- **Degree of accuracy needed**
NCA strives for confidence level of 95% as detailed above.
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures**
Not applicable.
- **Any use of less frequent than annual data collection to reduce burden**
Not applicable.

3. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

- **John Ampela** serving as COR for survey contract
Management and Program Analyst
Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration
Performance Analysis and Planning Service (42A)
(202) 731-6517
- **Jason Willis**
Director, Performance Analysis and Planning Service (42A)
(202) 461-5622
- **TRIBILITY**
Survey Vendor with Joint Venture for this requirement
NCA Contract # 36C78625C50423
Base Year: July 2025-July 2026
Option Year 1: July 2026-July 2027
Option Year 2: July 2027-July 2028
Option Year 3: July 2028-July 2029
Option Year 4: July 2029-July 2030