



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

June 15, 2011

M-11-26

**MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES,  
AND INDEPENDENT REGULATORY AGENCIES**

**FROM:** Cass R. Sunstein *CRS*  
Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs

Jeffrey D. Zients *JZ*  
Deputy Director for Management and Federal Chief Performance Officer

**SUBJECT:** New Fast-Track Process for Collecting Service Delivery Feedback Under the Paperwork Reduction Act

As emphasized by the President's Executive Order (EO) 13571, on "Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service," issued on April 27, 2011, agencies must work continuously to ensure that their programs are effective and meet their customers' needs. This guidance describes a new Fast Track Process that will allow agencies to obtain timely feedback on service delivery while ensuring that the information collected is useful and minimally burdensome for the public, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA).

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been working with many agencies to create this new process. The process will apply to a wide range of information collections that focus on the awareness, understanding, attitudes, preferences, or experiences of customers or other stakeholders relating to existing or future services, products, or communication materials. To begin utilizing this process, agencies must first submit a generic clearance to be approved for the new process. Once that has occurred, agencies submitting information collection requests can consider their qualifying activities approved unless OMB notifies the agency otherwise within five days. Please see Attachment A for the list of agencies that have created, or are in the process of creating, the generic clearance establishing the Fast Track Process. If your agency is not on this list, please contact your OIRA desk officer, who will assist you in submitting the 60-day *Federal Register* notice to begin the creation of the Fast Track Process.

You should consider using the new process for your data collection activities when:

- a. The data collection is focused on the awareness, understanding, attitudes, preferences, or experiences of customers or other stakeholders (e.g., delivery

See also, FAQs for New Fast-Track Process for Collecting Service Delivery Feedback under the Paperwork Reduction Act (January 30, 2012)  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/inforeg/pr-faqs.pdf>



- partners; co-regulators; potential customers) in order to improve existing or future services, products, or communication materials;
- b. The data collection is voluntary and non-controversial;
  - c. Statistical rigor is not required;
  - d. The burden on participants is not high; and
  - e. Public dissemination of results is not intended.

As a general matter, the following kinds of voluntary collections fall under the new Fast Track Process:

- a. **Focus groups:** For example, a series of focus groups of individuals who are eligible for (but not enrolled in) Medicaid, focused on barriers to enrollment for the purpose of identifying problems and potential solutions.
- b. **One-time or panel discussion groups:** For example, a regular panel of current and past recipients of Small Business Administration loans who participate in a monthly discussion on issues they are facing.
- c. **Customer satisfaction qualitative surveys:** For example, a survey by the Department of Veterans Affairs, asking patients (on a scale of 1-5) about their satisfaction with different parts of their health care experience in order to identify early warning signs of customer dissatisfaction and areas to explore further.
- d. **Post-transaction customer surveys:** For example, a post-transaction survey of callers to the Internal Revenue Service call centers, asking callers about their experience on the call and why they chose to call rather than use the Internet.
- e. **Online surveys:** For example, an email survey of school principals asking for their thoughts about, and ranking of, specified ideas to improve outreach and communications materials for the school lunch program.
- f. **Comment cards or complaint forms:** For example, a ten question form asking visitors to Social Security Administration offices about their satisfaction with their particular visits as well as with the agency's services generally.
- g. **Moderated, unmoderated, in-person, and remote usability studies:** For example, in-person observation of individuals navigating a website that is in the process of being developed.
- h. **Testing of a survey or other collection to refine questions:** For example, distributing to a small number of individuals the preliminary questions to use for a statistically rigorous customer satisfaction survey, followed by a debriefing with some of the respondents.

The new Fast Track Process is intended to support the efforts of program managers to seek timely feedback from customers and others in order to improve service delivery. With this goal in mind, examples of collections that would generally not fall under the new process are: (i) surveys that require statistical rigor because they will be used for making significant policy or resource allocation decisions; (ii) collections where the results are intended to be published; and (iii) collections that are intended for the purpose of basic research and that do not directly benefit the agency's service delivery.

We have created a resource for program managers and PRA officials to learn more about the new process and different customer feedback options. The agency support website [www.HowTo.gov](http://www.HowTo.gov) now has several types of relevant information. First, the website provides a list of answers to frequently asked questions about the new process. Second, the website has an introduction to different customer feedback tools designed for program managers who are interested in improving service delivery. The introduction describes questions that program managers should ask themselves before soliciting feedback, and explains the advantages and disadvantages of different collection tools. Finally, the site has fact sheets on common types of customer feedback tools such as comment cards, focus groups, usability studies, and surveys. Each fact sheet provides a general introduction to the type of collection, tips on how to conduct it effectively, and good examples of the collection.

**Attachment A**

The following agencies, and their subcomponents, signed on to the 60-day *Federal Register* notice for a generic approval and have now received or will soon receive approval from OMB. For questions about the status of your agency, contact your PRA official. If your agency is not on this list, please contact your OIRA desk officer, who will provide you with templates and instructions to file the 60-day *Federal Register* notice to begin the creation of the new process.

Administrative Conference of the United States	General Services Administration
Consumer Product Safety Commission	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Corporation for National and Community Service	Merit Systems Protection Board
Department of Agriculture	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Department of Commerce	National Credit Union Administration
Department of Defense	National Endowment for the Arts
Department of Education	National Endowment for the Humanities
Department of Energy	National Science Foundation
Department of Health and Human Services	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Department of Homeland Security	Office of Personnel Management
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
Department of Interior	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
Department of Justice	Peace Corps
Department of Labor	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
Department of State	Railroad Retirement Board
Department of Transportation	Securities and Exchange Commission
Department of Treasury	Small Businesses Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs	Social Security Administration
Environmental Protection Agency	Surface Transportation Board
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	Tennessee Valley Authority
Export-Import Bank of the United States	U.S. Access Board
Federal Communications Commission	U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	U.S. International Trade Commission
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	United States Agency for International Development
Federal Trade Commission	