

encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy", USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: May 30, 1997.

Dell Pendergrast,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0569]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Revision

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed revision of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on requirements relating to customer satisfaction surveys.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before August 4, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Lynne R. Heltman, Veterans Benefits Administration (243F), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0569" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynne R. Heltman at (202) 273-5440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is

being made pursuant to section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Generic Clearance for the Veterans Benefits Administration Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0569.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: The VBA administers integrated programs of benefits and services, established by law for veterans and their survivors, and service personnel. Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, requires Federal agencies and departments to identify and survey its customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing service. The VBA uses customer satisfaction surveys to gauge customer perceptions of VA services as well as customer expectations and desires. The results of these information collections lead to improvements in the quality of VBA service delivery by helping to shape the direction and focus of specific programs and services.

Affected Public: Individuals or households, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, veterans' service organizations, and businesses or other for-profits.

Year	Number of respondents	Estimated annual burden (hours)	Frequency of response
Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction With the VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process			
1997	22,800	5,700	One-time.
1998	22,800	5,700	One-time.
1999	22,800	5,700	One-time.
VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups			
1997	200	400	One-time.
1998	200	400	One-time.
1999	200	400	One-time.

Year	Number of respondents	Estimated annual burden (hours)	Frequency of response
Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction With the VA Education Claims Process			
1997	4,000	1,000	One-time.
1998	3,200	800	One-time.
1999	3,200	800	One-time.
VA Education Claims Process Focus Groups (Certifying Official Needs, Montgomery GI Bill, and Service Organization Focus Groups)			
1997	140	220	One-time.
1998	140	220	One-time.
1999	140	220	One-time.
VA Loan Customer Service Survey			
1997	2,300	575	One-time.
1998	2,300	575	One-time.
VA Loan Guaranty Lender Survey			
1997	909	303	One-time.
1998	909	303	One-time.
VA Regional Office-Based Loan Guaranty Surveys			
1997	980	257	One-time.
1998	980	262	One-time.
1999	980	262	One-time.
VA Regional Office-Based Loan Guaranty Focus Groups (Loan Servicer and Realtor Focus Groups)			
1997	210	960	One-time.
1998	210	960	One-time.
1999	210	960	One-time.
VA Regional Office-Based Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Surveys			
1997	2,174	384	One-time.
1998	2,164	506	One-time.
1999	2,164	506	One-time.
Insurance Customer Surveys			
1997	2,160	216	One-time.
1998	2,808	280	One-time.
1999	2,808	280	One-time.
Survey of Insurance Interactive Voice Response Users			
1997	200	41	One-time.
VA Regional Office-Based Customer Satisfaction Surveys			
1997	3,912	423	One-time.
1998	4,056	468	One-time.
1999	4,056	468	One-time.
VA Regional Office-Based Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups			
1997	402	767	One-time.
1998	402	767	One-time.
1999	402	767	One-time.
VA Regional Office Specific Service Improvement Initiatives (Comment Card)			
1997	800	4,275	One-time.
1998	1,600	8,550	One-time.
1999	1,600	8,550	One-time.
VA Regional Office-Based Surveys Of Specialized Population Groups (Veterans Service Officers and Persian Gulf War Veterans)			
1997	556	125	One-time.
1998	546	115	One-time.
1999	546	115	One-time.

Year	Number of respondents	Estimated annual burden (hours)	Frequency of response
VA Regional Office-Based Focus Groups of Specialized Population Groups (Female Veterans, Minority Veterans, Active Duty Military Personnel, and Separating Active Duty Military Personnel) (NOTE: 2-year surveys)			
1997	60	120	One-time.
1999	60	120	One-time.
Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service Survey (National Survey)			
1999	11,200	5,600	One-time.
Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Focus Groups (National Survey)			
1998	300	600	One-time.
1999	300	600	One-time.
VA Loan Customer Service Survey			
1999	18,400	4,600	One-time.
Survey of Educational Institutions			
1999	1,000	250	One-time.
Survey of Veterans Who Filed for an Increase in Their Service-Connected Disability Compensation			
1999	500	167	One-time.
Survey of Veterans and Their Survivors Who Have Been Denied Claims for Service-Connected Disability Compensation or Related Benefits			
1999	500	167	One-time.
Survey of Military Personnel Who Are Separating From Active Duty			
1999	500	167	One-time.
Survey of Veterans Service Officers			
1998	150	50	One-time.
Undetermined Focus Groups (To Assess Issues and Canvass Population Groups Not Yet Identified)			
1998	2,000	4,000	One-time.
1999	2,000	4,000	One-time.

Most customer satisfaction surveys will be recurring so that the VBA can create ongoing measures of performance and to determine how well the agency meets customer service standards. Each collection of information will consist of the minimum amount of information necessary to determine customer needs and to evaluate the VBA's performance. The VBA expects to conduct 62 focus groups involving a total of 2,467 hours during the remainder of 1997; 282 focus groups involving an estimated 6,947 hours in 1998; and 292 focus groups involving an estimated 7,067 hours in 1999. In addition, the VBA expects to distribute written surveys with a total annual burden of approximately 13,308 hours in 1997, 17,559 hours in 1998, and 27,683 hours in 1999. The grand totals for both focus groups and written surveys are—15,775 hours in 1997, 24,506 hours in 1998, and 34,750 hours in 1999.

The areas of concern to the VBA and its customers may change over time, and it is important to have the ability to evaluate customer concerns quickly. OMB will be requested to grant generic clearance approval for a 3-year period to conduct customer satisfaction surveys and focus groups. Participation in the surveys and focus groups will be voluntary and the generic clearance will not be used to collect information required to obtain or maintain eligibility for a VA program or benefit. In order to maximize the voluntary response rates, the information collection will be designed to make participation convenient, simple, and free of unnecessary barriers. Baseline data obtained through these information collections will be used to improve customer service standards. The VBA will consult with OMB regarding each specific information collection during this approval period.

Dated: May 14, 1997.

By direction of the Secretary

Donald L. Neilson,

Director, Information Management Service.

[FR Doc. 97-14665 Filed 6-4-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0073]

Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C., 3501 et seq.), this notice announces that the Veterans Benefits