

Date of Approval: 05/16/2025
Questionnaire Number: 2017

Basic Information/Executive Summary

What is the name of your project (system, database, pilot, product, survey, social media site, etc.)?

Internal Revenue Service Customer Callback Number Focus Groups

Business Unit

Taxpayer Services

Preparer

For Official Use Only

Subject Matter Expert

For Official Use Only

Program Manager

For Official Use Only

Designated Executive Representative

For Official Use Only

Executive Sponsor

For Official Use Only

Executive Summary: Provide a clear and concise description of your project and how it will allow the IRS to achieve its mission.

The Internal Revenue Service Customer Callback (CCB) Number Focus Groups will be used to determine and refine customer experience using this function, which lets a taxpayer provide their phone number for a callback instead of waiting on hold. This will enhance our understanding of the benefits of the callback feature, such as increased productivity, and challenges, such as aligning workflow with callback time, and refine further surveys and outreach. Additionally, this will provide further knowledge to optimize Joint Operations Center (JOC) policy and procedure regarding continuous improvement and targeted expansion of the CCB service, in alignment with the IRS's Strategic Operating Plan (SOP), specifically Objective 1, which states that the IRS should "Dramatically improve services to help taxpayers meet their obligations and receive the tax incentives for which they are eligible". This will further empower the IRS to meet the evolving needs of the modern taxpayer and create a more convenient, approachable, and accessible IRS that works with the taxpayer workflow.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Will this project use, collect, receive, display, store, maintain, or disseminate any type of Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU), Personally Identifiable Information (PII), or Federal Tax Information (FTI)?

Yes

Please explain in detail how this project uses sensitive data from inception to destruction (data lifecycle).

Participants are recruited by Pacific Consulting Group (PCG) via phone, email, or Qualtrics to participate in focus groups. Names are sourced from IRS internal databases and include the minimum data required for recruitment: names, contact information, and demographics. This data is transmitted through the IRS-approved, encrypted Electronic File Transfer Upload (EFTU) platform. Only PCG staff with moderate risk clearances can access it. Data is stored on PCG's secure systems in compliance with IRS Publication 4812 and all contract safeguarding requirements. PCG contacts participants via phone or email; if they are willing and available, PCG sends a confirmation email or call. Focus groups are conducted via Microsoft Teams, a FedRAMP-compliant platform. Participants receive reminders with the session title, date, time, and Teams meeting link. At the beginning of the session, participants introduce themselves by first name only. For sampling, calls made to the IRS's 1040 toll-free line (excluding the Spanish-language line) are eligible if the caller is offered Callback (CCB). Aceyus compiles contact center information and customer experience data. The sample list is pulled from this database and includes first name, phone number, email, age range, and an indicator of whether the call was classified under one of the most prevalent reasons. PCG randomly selects participants, beginning with the most recent callers and balancing for age ranges and CCB usage (50% CCB users, 50% non-users). PCG contacts selected individuals via phone or email and confirms their participation if they meet eligibility criteria.

Please select all types of Sensitive but Unclassified data (SBU)/Personally Identifiable Information (PII)/Federal Tax Information (FTI) that this project uses.

Email Address

Name

Online Identifiers

Other

Telephone Numbers

Please explain the other type(s) of PII that this project uses.

There will be collection of basic geographic data whether the participant is urban, suburban, or rural. The tax bracket or the income tier of the participant will be collected.

Cite the authority for collecting SBU/PII/FTI (including SSN if relevant).
PII for federal tax administration - generally IRC Sections 6001 6011 or 6012

Product Information (Questions)

1 Is this survey a result of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)?
No

2 What is your research method(s) used (i.e., survey, telephone interview, focus group or usability testing)?
Focus Group

3 Is this a new survey, telephone interview, focus group, or usability test? Throughout the rest of this questionnaire, we will use the term "survey" to include all of these.
No

3.1 Is there a Privacy and Civil Liberties Impact Assessment (PCLIA) for this project?
Yes

3.11 Enter the full name of the most recent PCLIA.
Evolving Service Technologies: Enhancing Experience through Electronic Submission and Customer Call Back

3.12 Enter the PCLIA number of the most recent PCLIA.
1299

3.2 What are the reasons for the change?
This survey is being done by a vendor online, rather than being done at the Nationwide Tax Forums (NTF). Additionally, this no longer includes questions about the electronic submission. Furthermore, the questions asked are different, and we expect different responses to the questions.

4 Which Business Unit (BU) is requesting this survey?
Taxpayer Services - Joint Operations Center

5 Who will the survey be administered to?
Taxpayers that opted in to using the customer call back feature and who have agreed to be a part of this focus group.

6 Is this a reoccurring survey?
No

6.11 Will this survey be administered for one year with multiple events (1-year expiration)?

Yes

7 What is the start date?

August 1st, 2025

8 What is the end date?

September 31st, 2025

9 Will PII be used to select or contact survey participants or administer the survey?

Yes

10 Explain how the participants are selected. Include a detailed description. Please provide your research plan as supporting documentation.

For obtaining the sampling, the caller calls the IRS's 1040 toll free line & is offered CCB. This excludes the Spanish-language line. The IRS' Customer Experience (CX) Analytics Tool maintains a database of transcripts w/ the ability to link to Taxpayer Information Numbers (TINs) & PII. The sample list is developed from the IRS' CX Analytics Tool database which has a consolidated database of TIN-linked call transcripts. The sample list contains first name, phone number on file, email on file, age range, & yes/no if the call was classified as one of the most prevalent reason calls. PCG randomly selects names, starting w/ most recent callers & aiming for mix of age ranges & 50% of participants not using CCB & 50% using it. Recruiters call / email & invite participants to the online focus group, confirming participation if taxpayer meets criteria.

- Has a desktop/laptop computer and is willing to do an online meeting
- Remembers well or somewhat their experience hearing the CCB service offered
- Does not require language-assistance

11 Describe the SBU/PII data, if applicable, that is collected, disclosed, or studied on individuals who choose not to participate.

SBU/PII data about those who choose to participate includes the name, contact information and demographic information contained in the original source list. No additional SBU/PII data is collected during the process of recruiting participants.

We do not differentiate between participants and non-participants.

12 Explain how participants are notified of the survey (letter, postcard, email, etc.); indicate if the notice lets them know the survey is voluntary/optional; indicate if the privacy act notice was included; lastly, if your survey is not voluntary, explain why it is mandatory.

Participants will be notified by Qualtrics, phone call, or email. The Privacy Act notice will be included, and the survey will be optional.

13 What tool(s) is/are used to conduct the survey? Please explain how you ensure anonymity of the participants.

Microsoft Teams - no anonymous feature available

Microsoft Outlook - no anonymous feature available

Microsoft PowerPoint - no anonymous feature available

Qualtrics Software - anonymous feature not set

Structured Query Language (SQL) - as this is code, PII is not transmitted, although it is received

Aceyus - anonymous feature not set

14 Will the survey be audio-recorded or video-recorded?

yes

14.1 Where will your recorded session be stored? (Both audio and video.)

Audio will be stored within PCG's secure Microsoft Azure servers.

14.2 Provide the consent-to-record method and statement. (Upload may be required in the Attachments section.)

If you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the: IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, IR-6526, Washington, DC 20224. You understand that the information and recording is for research purposes. All the data the IRS collects will be kept private to the extent allowed by law, nor will it appear in any written reports or publications. Your participation is voluntary. Therefore, at any point in time you may leave the room. This session will last [one hour]. Lastly, you understand and consent to the use of the audio recording.

15 Do participants provide information about themselves? The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC § 552a(e)(3)) requires each agency that maintains a system of records to inform each individual requested to supply information.

Yes

15.1 Please provide the Privacy Act Statement.

Our legal authority to collect this information is 5 U.S.C. 301. We are requesting this information to determine steps the IRS can take to improve our services for taxpayers in the realm of customer callback. We may disclose information with identifiers to the Appeals/CI function, if authorized by law and requested for official purposes for the purpose of properly administering this data collection in accordance with applicable laws, Executive Orders, and applicable regulations. Your responses to this interview are voluntary. Not answering all or part of the questions will not affect you. It may affect our ability to obtain feedback and suggestions on how to improve customer callback.

16 Who administers (conducts) the survey? (IRS, Vendor or Both)

Both - The IRS compiles and provides the list of potential participants while PCG, the vendor, conducts the focus groups.

17 Who performs the analysis of the survey? (IRS, Vendor, or Both)

Vendor - Pacific Consulting Group

18 If a contractor administers (conducts) and analyzes the survey, is all work performed and contained in the United States?

Yes

19 How does the administrator of the survey protect employees' or taxpayers' SBU/PII from compromise, loss, theft, or disclosure?

PCG maintains a technology infrastructure that complies with IRS Publication 4812 and to all the requirements within the contract. PCG leverages cloud-based FedRAMP approved systems such as Microsoft 365 for Government and Microsoft Azure for Government to provide us with a secure and compliant primary work environment hosted in their datacenter. Data stored within this work environment, while hosted exclusively in the cloud, is only accessible by PCG staff with moderate risk level clearances. PCG's data storage, servers, and workstations are backed up once a day to Microsoft's Azure for Government's datacenter. Microsoft staff do not have access to PCG data. All data is encrypted at rest (AES-256). PCG maintains a data retention policy standard that meets or exceeds the highest required security standards of all contracts. At the end of the retention period or if requested by a client, PCG will delete all datasets and subsets data according to data destruction procedures from all systems including servers, workstations, data bases, file shares, and backups in accordance with contract specifications. Microsoft Teams is a FedRAMP approved cloud-based collaboration platform that offers a method to conduct individual or group interviews in a secure and compliant environment. Microsoft Teams is hosted on Microsoft Azure infrastructure that PCG cannot physically access, while the data is only accessible by PCG staff. The PCG infrastructure framework is compliant with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) to ensure that all data, operations, and assets are protected from security threats. As such, we follow the standards and guidelines set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication 800-53 Rev 5 (Recommended Security Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations) at the Moderate level, the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), and IRS Publication 4812. In keeping with our high standards, the policies established in the OMB Circular A-130 regarding Management of Federal Resources Appendix III, are strictly followed. PCG uses the FedRAMP compliant survey and analytic platform, Qualtrics platform web surveys. Qualtrics is designed to host online web surveys as well as perform analytical processes. The platform is hosted by Qualtrics on their FedRAMP approved servers. Data stored outside of Qualtrics is stored on the PCG's secure file shares or MS SQL Database. The file shares are hosted on an Azure Storage account and MS SQL Database is hosted on a virtual

server running Windows Server and MS SQL Server Express. All security access is granted through Active Directory security groups and MS SQL access groups. Access is only granted to users that have been approved to work on the project. The project director or designated alternative must approve all access requests. Only staff that is approved to work on the project are granted access to the project data. Data and file transfers are done via a Managed File Transfer (MFT) from Axway. The phone numbers of the CCB users are stored in SQL tables. Authorized IRS personnel, and only those personnel, pull the phone numbers for appropriate randomized sampling by PCG. These phone numbers are of CCB users. This data is not cross-referenced with other taxpayer information to preserve privacy and anonymity.

20 Provide the information technology (IT)-approved encryption methods and access controls used to transfer data electronically from the IRS to contractors and back to the IRS. (Or contractor to contractor/subcontractors.)

PCG and the IRS transfer data through the IRS-approved EFTU system which uses MFT (Managed File Transfer) service from Axway and that product uses PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) at any level between Rivest-Shamir-Adleman (RSA) Asymmetric Key Pair up to HMAC-SHA1 (Hash-based Message Authentication Code - Secure Hash Algorithm).

21 Has a Contracting Officer or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) verified the contract included privacy and security clauses for data protection and that all contractors have signed non-disclosure agreements which are on file with the COR?

Yes

22 Identify all IRS/Contractor roles and their access level to the PII data.

Only PCG staff that have been cleared by the IRS at the moderate risk level has access to PII data. All security access is granted through Active Directory security groups. Access is only granted to users that have been approved to work on the project. The project director or designated alternative must approve all access requests. The roles at PCG assigned to this initiative are Research Manager, Project Manager, Research Analyst and Project Director. The PII of the CCB users are stored in SQL tables. Authorized IRS personnel, and only those personnel, pull the PII for appropriate randomized sampling by PCG. The PII is of CCB users. This data is not cross-referenced with other taxpayer information to preserve privacy and anonymity. This is being done at the request of Taxpayer Services and the Joint Operations Center (JOC) in Accounts Management (AM).

23 Explain the precautions taken, to ensure that employees or taxpayers who participate in the survey cannot be identified or re-identified under any circumstances.

All PII is purged from systems. PCG maintains a data retention policy standard that meets or exceeds the highest required security standards of all contracts. At the end of the retention period or if requested by a client, PCG will delete all datasets and subsets data according to data destruction procedures from all systems including servers, workstations, data bases, file shares, and backups in

accordance with contract specifications. All focus groups responses will be released only as summaries. No individual answers will be attributed to any individual and responses will have no effect on individual tax accounts. PCG will not release the information of the taxpayers who participated to IRS employees. The phone numbers of the CCB users are stored in SQL tables. Authorized IRS personnel, and only those personnel, pull the phone numbers for appropriate randomized sampling by PCG. These phone numbers are of CCB users. This data is not cross-referenced with other taxpayer information to preserve privacy and anonymity.

24 Explain the precautions taken to ensure no adverse actions can be taken against participants.

The contractor PCG adheres to highest ethical standards and follows the privacy, respondent and research protocols consistent with the American Association of Public Opinion (Research), specifically the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices (last update April 2021). All invitations to participate in research contain language that participation is voluntary, there is no obligation to answer any questions and participants may opt out at any time. All staff upon hire undergo IRS background clearances, as well as training on treatment of research participants.

25 Explain how you have ensured that no "raw" or unaggregated employee or taxpayer data will be provided to any IRS office.

Any audio recordings will have individual PII edited out. Survey solicitations are sent with the respondent's individual email, but data collected will only have a numerical identifier. In this manner no raw, personal data will be provided to any IRS office.

26 Does your survey use, maintain, collect, or display any records describing a participant's tax return information or income, deductions, credits, etc. that are covered by the individual's First Amendment rights.)

Yes

26.1 Is this First Amendment information that is used, collected, and/or maintained for this survey, received directly from the participant?

No

26.2 Is the First Amendment information used, collected, and/or maintained, received as a result of an authorized law enforcement activity?

No

26.3 Is the First Amendment information used, collected, and/or maintained, received as a result of a statute?

No

26.4 Will the First Amendment information be used as the basis to make any adverse determination about an individual's rights, benefits, and/or privileges? Explain the determination process. Consult with IRS General Legal Services to complete this section.

No

Interfaces

Interface Type

IRS or Treasury Contractor

Agency Name

Pacific Consulting Group

Incoming/Outgoing

Both

Transfer Method

Electronic File Transfer Utility (EFTU)

Interface Type

IRS Systems, file, or database

Agency Name

Structured Query Language (SQL)

Incoming/Outgoing

Outgoing (Sending)

Transfer Method

Other

Other Transfer Method

SQL is the code used to obtain information from the CDW

Interface Type

IRS Systems, file, or database

Agency Name

Aceyus

Incoming/Outgoing

Incoming (Receiving)

Transfer Method

Integrated Enterprise Portal (IEP)

Interface Type

IRS Systems, file, or database

Agency Name

Compliance Database Warehouse

Incoming/Outgoing

Both

Transfer Method
Electronic File Transfer Utility (EFTU)

Systems of Records Notices (SORNs)

SORN Number & Name

IRS 00.003 - Taxpayer Advocate Service and Customer Feedback
and Survey Records

Describe the IRS use and relevance of this SORN.

IRS will use the feedback that receive from the focus groups
conducted by PCG to understand what issues users of the callback
feature have with the feature. This information will aid the IRS in
future enhancements to improve the taxpayer experience, improve
survey methodology, and inform future policy changes.

Records Retention

What is the Record Schedule System?

General Record Schedule (GRS)

What is the retention series title?

GRS 6.5

What is the GRS/RCS Item Number?

010

What type of Records is this for?

Electronic

Please provide a brief description of the chosen GRS or RCS item.

Public customer service operations records

What is the disposition schedule?

Destroy 1 year after resolved, or when no longer needed for
business use, whichever is appropriate.

Data Locations

What type of site is this?

System

What is the name of the System?

Microsoft Outlook

What is the sensitivity of the System?

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) including Linkable Data

Please provide a brief description of the System.

Microsoft Outlook is used to communicate with potential participants and to confirm information regarding the focus group with confirmed participants.

What are the incoming connections to this System?

PCG and the IRS will communicate about the project via Microsoft Outlook, and anonymized information will be shared between vendor and IRS. Participants who select into the focus group will receive an email notification regarding meeting where audio recording will occur.

What are the outgoing connections from this System?

Same as incoming connections, emails are going to and from the IRS.

What type of site is this?

Teams Collection

What is the name of the Teams Collection?

Microsoft Teams

What is the sensitivity of the Teams Collection?

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) including Linkable Data

Please provide a brief description of the Teams Collection.

Focus groups will occur on Microsoft Teams, a FedRAMP compliant platform.

What are the incoming connections to this Teams Collection?

Participants who select into the focus group will connect to the Microsoft Teams meeting where audio recording will occur.

What are the outgoing connections from this Teams Collection?

Audio recording from Teams data will be shared in PCG's secure Azure servers.