



U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

GSA Order: Customer/Supplier Surveys

OGP 5460.1A

Office of Government-wide Policy

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Purpose:

This Order establishes and communicates policy regarding the General Services Administration's (GSA) survey initiatives. GSA's Voice of the Customer (VoC) program within the Office of Government-wide Policy (OGP) is responsible for embedding customer-oriented thinking into GSA's daily operations to ensure GSA delivers great customer experiences in addition to great products and services. This Order designates OGP VoC as the official entity responsible for ensuring survey materials distributed to recipients outside of GSA and/or across all of GSA meet agency standards. This policy will reduce the burden on our customers, and promote data transparency of survey results. Further, this policy allows GSA to better realize efficiencies around survey administration and leverage best practices across the enterprise.

Questions related to this Order should be directed to the VoC division located in OGP.

Background:

GSA employees who gather feedback i.e. customer sentiment data outside of GSA and/or across all of GSA through surveys represent the agency as a whole. We must apply a consistent approach and use best practices for survey design and execution to ensure sound methodology and data validity while providing a more positive, streamlined user experience.

Applicability:

This Order applies to all GSA employees and contractors acting on behalf of GSA, subject to the terms of their contracts, who conduct external customer/supplier research via surveys that collect customer sentiment data, or who conduct surveys broadly across GSA (distributions of 1,000 or more contacts within GSA). This Order applies regardless of the distribution platform or application used for collection of customer sentiment data. This Order applies if the customer experience management platform governed by VoC is being used to capture non-customer sentiment data from external-facing customers/suppliers. This Order does not apply to research conducted solely on behalf of other agencies. This Order does not apply to customer/supplier

interviews, user testing, or other forms of qualitative customer research; however, questions or requests for support in these areas can be directed to the OGP VoC Division.

This Order applies to all GSA employees and contractors as they perform their duties. The following are exceptions:

1. The Office of Inspector General (OIG), given its independence under the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (5 U.S.C. §§ 401-424).

Cancellation:

1. This Order supersedes OCE 5460.1, GSA Customer/Supplier Surveys, dated October 1, 2018.

Summary of Changes:

1. Updates the responsible party for survey governance from Office of Customer Experience to the Voice of the Customer Division within the Office of Government-wide Policy.
2. Removes references to specific platform based actions and shifts to platform neutral framing.
3. Clarifies applicability, roles, and responsibilities for the approval process.
4. Adds Statistical Policy Directive 15 as an applicable policy covering demographic questions.
5. Adds definitions for key terms
6. Updates to formatting.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The following abbreviated roles and responsibilities apply to this Order. See section 5 of the Order for the full description.

1. The VoC division ensures survey materials distributed to recipients outside of GSA and/or across all of GSA meet agency standards.
2. The Submitting Party follows the Order and requests approval of applicable surveys and/or information collections that use the customer experience management platform governed by VoC.

3. The Office of Strategic Communications (OSC) reviews and approves communications packages related to surveys to ensure they meet GSA communication standards.
4. The Office of the Regulatory Secretariat (RegSec) manages the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) program for the GSA Chief Information Officer's office which may apply to surveys / data collections from the public.

Signature

/S/
Larry Allen
Associate Administrator
Office of Government-wide Policy

7/9/26
Date

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1. Purpose

This Order establishes and communicates policy regarding the General Services Administration's (GSA) survey initiatives. GSA's Voice of the Customer (VoC) program within the Office of Government-wide Policy (OGP) is responsible for embedding customer-oriented thinking into GSA's daily operations to ensure GSA delivers great customer experiences in addition to great products and services. This Order designates OGP VoC as the official entity responsible for ensuring survey materials distributed to recipients outside of GSA and/or across all of GSA meet agency standards. This policy will reduce the burden on our customers, and promote data transparency of survey results. Further, this policy allows GSA to better realize efficiencies around survey administration and leverage best practices across the enterprise.

Questions related to this Order should be directed to the VoC division located in OGP.

2. Background

GSA employees who gather feedback i.e. customer sentiment data outside of GSA and/or across all of GSA through surveys represent the agency as a whole. We must apply a consistent approach and use best practices for survey design and execution to ensure sound methodology and data validity while providing a more positive, streamlined user experience.

3. Scope and Applicability

This Order applies to all GSA employees and contractors acting on behalf of GSA, subject to the terms of their contracts, who conduct external customer/supplier research via surveys that collect customer sentiment data, or who conduct surveys broadly across GSA (distributions of 1,000 or more contacts within GSA). This Order applies regardless of the distribution platform or application used for collection of customer sentiment data. This Order applies if the customer experience management platform governed by VoC is being used to capture non-customer sentiment data from external-facing customers/suppliers. This Order does not apply to research conducted solely on behalf of other agencies. This Order does not apply to customer/supplier interviews, user testing, or other forms of qualitative customer research; however, questions or requests for support in these areas can be directed to the OGP VoC Division.

This Order applies to all GSA employees and contractors as they perform their duties. The following are exceptions:

- The Office of Inspector General (OIG), given its independence under the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (5 U.S.C. §§ 401-424).

4. Policy

Individuals acting on behalf of GSA must receive approval from the OGP VoC Division [Internal link only] before conducting externally-facing and/or GSA-wide customer/supplier surveys. This Order also if the customer experience management platform governed by VoC is being used for an information collection other than customer sentiment.

- OGP VoC Division has up to five business days from the time of submission for initial review to provide approval, disapproval, or a correction log which the submitter must address prior to a survey's distribution.
- GSA's Office of Strategic Communication (OSC) or representative delegate reviews all communication packages; this review may extend beyond the ten-business-day window, depending on the status of communications content development. Externally-facing research audiences include Federal employees outside GSA, GSA suppliers, and members of the public.
- The Office of the Regulatory Secretariat manages the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) program for the GSA Chief Information Officer's office which may apply to surveys / data collections from the public.

4.1. Approval Requirements

Approval requests are reviewed more swiftly if the request meets the requirements listed below:

- Written in plain language.
- Falls under a specific use case (where approval has already been granted).
 - Short, transactional surveys.
 - Templated, website feedback.
- Follows survey design guidance. [Survey creation and approval process on InSite.](#)

4.2. Automatic Returns

VoC automatically returns customer/supplier survey requests to the submitter for revisions if OGP VoC identifies any of the following deficiencies:

- Inaccessible to those with disabilities ([Section 508](#)).
- The data to be collected already exists within the agency.
- The target audience has been surveyed within the last 3 months.
- Does not follow survey design guidance. [Survey creation and approval process on InSite](#).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

VoC acts as the ultimate authority within GSA to uphold the integrity of customer/supplier surveys by approving content distributed to customers/suppliers.

5.1. Submitting Party

GSA employees or contractors who issue customer/supplier surveys will request review of their survey package by submitting an OGP VoC survey approval request form a minimum of ten business days before the desired distribution date. If survey communications package review and/or [Paperwork Reduction Act \(PRA\)](#) approval is needed, the submitter must incorporate the necessary lead time for processing.

5.1.1. Requests for survey review

Requests for survey review shall be submitted through the OGP VoC survey approval request form and must include the following:

- Link to draft survey that includes
 - Specific survey questions
 - Response options
 - PRA statement and GSA privacy statement
- Audience definition and reach/impact of customer/supplier survey
 - Target groups
 - Expected distribution size
- Brief justification of the customer/supplier survey
 - Purpose
 - Description of how the data will be used

- Target start and end dates
- 5.1.2. Commitment to act on insights

Commitment to act on the insights gathered. All projects approved under this policy must have a documented plan for analyzing results, sharing them with relevant stakeholders, and using them to inform service improvements or business decisions. The submitting party is responsible for closing the feedback loop with the audience surveyed.

5.2. Voice of the Customer Division

The Office of Government-wide Policy Voice of the Customer (VoC) Division must approve all customer/supplier surveys reaching external-facing audiences as well as distributions of 1,000 or more contacts within GSA. Before creating a customer/supplier survey, VoC is available to partner on survey design which includes research question review, best practices, survey flow, distribution methods, and data analysis methods.

5.2.1. Survey reviews

Requests for survey approval that are submitted through the OGP VoC survey approval request form receive:

- 5.2.1.1. Initial review completion and decision sharing with the submitting party in 5 business days from date of receipt via the survey approval request form:
- Approved
 - Rejected
 - Required and/or recommended corrections documented on a User Acceptance Testing Log
- 5.2.1.2. Subsequent review completed and decision sharing with the submitting party in 3 business days from the date the submitting party notifies VoC that they have resolved required and/or recommended corrections are ready to review.

5.2.2. Maintains Generic Clearance for PRA

Coordinate with the Regulatory Secretariat to maintain a Generic Clearance for the collection of qualitative feedback on Agency Service Delivery.

5.3. Office of Strategic Communications

OSC reviews survey communication plans for surveys sent to external contacts to ensure alignment with agency goals and priorities, and to provide guidance on plain language usage and communication strategies.

5.4. Regulatory Secretariat

The RegSec reviews the request for compliance with the PRA. The RegSec submits the request to the OMB Desk officer for a preliminary review. Once OMB provides tentative approval, the RegSec formally submits the survey into OMB's system, ROCIS. [RegSec on InSite](#).

6. Appendix

6.1. Definitions

6.1.1. Customer

For the purposes of this Order, the term "Customer" acts as an inclusive category that encompasses individuals from GSA, other Federal Agencies, State, Local, or Tribal governments, and members of the public who interact with, use, and/or buy GSA products or services.

6.1.2. Supplier

For the purposes of this Order, the term "Supplier" acts as an inclusive category that encompasses vendors, industry partners, contractors, and other non-government entities that do business with GSA. For instance, the terms "Supplier" and "Vendor" are interchangeable regarding the scope and applicability of this policy.

6.1.3. Customer Experience Management (CXM) Platform

For the purposes of this Order, the CXM is a platform that is governed by VoC and is primarily used for the collection of customer sentiment data typically in the form of surveys or website feedback. This platform can also be utilized by GSA teams who need to collect data from sources outside of GSA.

6.1.4. Customer sentiment data

For the purposes of this Order, customer sentiment data refers to a survey project that collects, analyzes, and interprets information gathered to identify strengths and weaknesses of current services, covering areas such as timeliness, appropriateness, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency of service delivery, ease of use, and resolution of issues with service delivery.

6.2. Related Policies and Procedures

- 6.2.1. Paperwork Reduction Act - As with all externally-facing customer research projects, [Paperwork Reduction Act](#) approval must be obtained for any survey in which 10 or more individuals who work outside the Federal Government are expected to respond. The submitting party must insert the full text of the Paperwork Reduction Act statement along with a GSA privacy statement, as a PDF or linked to a web page in the footer of the survey.
- 6.2.2. [Section 508](#) is an amendment to the United States Workforce Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandating that all electronic and information technology used by the Federal Government be accessible to people with disabilities.
- 6.2.3. [OMB Statistical Policy Directive 15](#) establishes how demographic questions regarding race and ethnicity are presented in surveys.
- 6.2.4. Records management for customer/supplier research: Keep surveys and response records for six years per the [National Archives and Records Administration policy](#).

6.3. Survey Administration

- 6.3.1. Develop questions with care to ensure:
 - The survey collects the desired data; and
 - Questions do not introduce bias into participants' responses.
- 6.3.2. Conduct all external-facing surveys through GSA's enterprise customer experience management platform unless the program obtains express consent from the Voice of the Customer Division to use an alternative platform. All approval requirements as outlined in this Order apply.

- 6.3.2.1. OGP VoC approves alternative platforms when the platform allows the customer to encounter the survey as close to the point of service as possible. If a customer receives a service or engages with GSA through a specific platform with a built-in survey function, the program acts in accordance with this policy by utilizing that function rather than sending a separate survey link. Regardless of the platform selected, if the survey targets an external-facing audience or exceeds 1,000 internal contacts, the submitting party must submit the survey questions and design elements to OGP VoC for review.
- 6.3.3. Transactional surveys (excluding post-event surveys) must be no longer than 6 questions. Annual or one time surveys must be no more than 25 questions. If you have a legitimate business need to exceed these limits please submit the rationale to the Voice of the Customer Division with the survey approval request.
- 6.3.4. Do not send targeted, individualized reminder emails or post-survey follow ups without the customer's consent (e.g., soliciting additional feedback from dissatisfied customers unless they indicate that they are willing to be contacted regarding their responses).
- 6.3.5. When presenting data, aggregate and/or blind data so that an individual's identity cannot be identified.