

Date of Approval: 11/08/2024  
Questionnaire Number: 1683

## Basic Information/Executive Summary

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

Centralized Referrals Intake Processing (CRIP) Ad Hoc Recurring Research

Business Unit

Office of Online 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.

This research initiative focuses on the IRS's Centralized Referrals Intake Processing (CRIP). CRIP is hosted by the Whistleblower Office and will allow taxpayers to report potential tax scams by submitting forms (e.g. Form 211) and other types of referrals (e.g. reporting fraud or scams) to the Whistleblower Office. This initiative's goal is to conduct ad hoc and recurring studies to better understand user needs and improve the overall experience. Over a three-year period, we will engage in primary research with taxpayers, tax professionals, and IRS employees to gather insights that will guide the development and refinement of CRIP.

Research Goals:

1. Identify User Needs for IRS Interactions: Generative research will help us understand the challenges, issues, and questions that taxpayers and tax professionals resolve by interacting with IRS employees and systems. These insights will inform the design of applications that better meet their needs.

2. Examine User Experiences when submitting referrals to the IRS: We aim to understand how taxpayers, tax professionals, and IRS employees interact with the referrals, relevant paper forms, and relevant digital forms. This research will highlight key touchpoints, pain points, and opportunities to enhance the user experience.

3. Establish Application Design Best Practices: By analyzing user habits, beliefs, preferences, and pain points in both IRS and non-IRS tools, we will identify best practices for designing applications that align with user needs and expectations.

4. Evaluate the Effectiveness of Updates to CRIP: In evaluative studies, we will assess how well updates to the CRIP application meet user needs, ensuring that changes enhance usability and satisfaction.

Vendors may assist with participant recruitment, facilitate research sessions, analyze data, and present findings. This external support will enable efficient execution of research efforts.

The research will involve the collection of standard personally identifiable information (PII). Through this research, the IRS aims to build and refine CRIP to provide a streamlined and user-centered experience that reduces the burden of submitting referrals to the IRS and reduces the IRS workload required to process those referrals.

## **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).

PII data will be used during recruitment. For recruitment done by vendors, their PII Statement reads: Participant information is protected by the vendor's proprietary and fully secure database store in an encrypted format on their private servers. Research data will be collected via IRS Microsoft Teams, IRS Microsoft Forms and secure email. When storing the research data on our computers we will encrypt the data and only store it in approved folders, making sure only those who are approved to have access can get to the data. It may also be stored in encrypted files on IRS UES SharePoint. It will be viewed only by the CRIP team members, with a need to know. Notes and data collected during the UX research (i.e. ad hoc, iterative user feedback activities) will be anonymized and therefore will not include names of participants. Notes and data will only be viewed by researchers with a need to know. All data collected from IRS Microsoft Teams, IRS Microsoft Forms and secure email and each instance of a UX research study will be destroyed in accordance with IRS destruction guidelines and no later than 1 year after study completion.

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

- Biometric Information
- Centralized Authorization File (CAF)
- Citizenship or Migration Status
- Education Information
- Email Address
- Employment Information
- Geographical Indicators
- Internet Protocol Address (IP Address)
- Language
- Name
- Other
- Personal Characteristics
- Telephone Numbers

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

Gender, Language proficiency, and personal characteristics (such as demographics and psychographics).

Cite the authority for collecting SBU/PII/FTI (including SSN if relevant).

PII for federal tax administration - generally IRC Sections 6001 6011 or 6012  
PII for personnel administration - 5 USC

## Product Information (Questions)

1.1 Is this survey a result of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)?

Yes

1.12 What is the IRA Initiative Number?

1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 1.10, 1.12

1.13 What is your research method(s) used (i.e., survey, telephone interview, focus group, etc.)?

Ad hoc, iterative user feedback activities i.e. Usability Testing (in person, remote moderated, remote unmoderated), Interviews, Task Analysis, Focus Groups, Card Sorting, Tree Testing, Diary Studies, Field Studies, Ethnography, Contextual inquiry, Direct observation / site visit, Surveys, Eye Tracking, A/B Testing, Web analytics (heat map, scroll map, traffic analytics, etc.)

1.14 Is this a new survey, telephone interview, focus group, or usability testing?  
Throughout the rest of this questionnaire, we will use the term "survey" to include all of these.

Yes

1.19 Which Business Unit (BU) is requesting this survey?

Office of Online Services

1.21 Who will the survey be administered to?

User feedback activities will be administered to taxpayers, tax professionals, and IRS employees.

1.215 Is this a reoccurring survey?

Yes

1.216 Will the survey be administered annually (3-year expiration)?

Yes

1.22 What is the start date?

11/1/2024

1.23 What is the end date?

10/31/2027

2.11 Will the survey capture any type of PII or is PII (names, addresses, email addresses, etc.) used to select participants?

Yes

2.12 If any PII data is collected, disclosed, or studied on individuals who choose not to participate, please describe the data.

PII and linkable data is listed in the PII section of this PCLIA. We do not differentiate between participants and non-participants.

2.13 List any linkable data that the survey uses, collects, receives, displays, stores, maintains, or disseminates (gender, ethnicity, parts of address, tax filing information, etc.) or uses to select participants?

First and last name , Email, Phone Number, Age, Gender, Household size, Marital Status, US residency, Ethnicity, Education, Language proficiency, disability status/impairment type (assistive technologies used, need for ASL interpreter, etc.), employment status/type (PT/FT/Unemployed; federal/state/local govt, employment in tax services industry, self-employed, small business, military, non-profit, etc.), tax account information (filing status - S/MFJ/MFS/HH, number of dependents, withholding status - employer/estimated payments/pay at filing, filing habits - electronic/paper/self/pro, balance due - refund or pay, types of IRS forms filed - 1040/940/1065, types of letters/notices received - CP2000, etc.), use

of bank or other types of financial institutions/services, technology proficiency/comfort/access (internet use, device use, device type, email account, familiarity with web conferencing software, etc.), types of IRS interactions/services/touchpoints, Voice/audio recording (for post-collection analysis only).

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

When recruiting, our objective is to recruit participants through a combination of online and in-person methods while ensuring stringent data privacy and protection. Online recruitment will leverage social media platforms, potential email campaigns, website pop-ups (IRS.gov and Online Account), online forums, and surveys. In-person recruitment will focus on local events, public spaces, flyers, posters, and partnerships with local organizations. When BLN24 recruits participants for user experience (UX) research they will use their internal database of volunteer participants. The participants have voluntarily accessed the vendor's website to self-register and in doing so have volunteered to be contacted by phone or email to be part of future market research studies. BLN24 will send emails to potential participants asking them to take an online screener to determine their eligibility. Within the email they are notified of an upcoming survey event, including the dates and times. The attachment (Letter\_Notification\_Call\_to\_Participants) shows sample language used when contacting potential participants. That language is used on all recruitment materials, regardless of whether it's done via letter, mail, social media, etc.

2.15 How are the participants notified (letter, postcard, email, etc.) of the survey, and if the survey is voluntary/optional, how is notice given? If it is not voluntary, please explain why it is mandatory.

Participants may be notified via email, in-person, letter, or phone call. Each of these communications will indicate that participation is voluntary.

3.11 What tool(s) is/are used to conduct the survey? Please indicate if the anonymous feature has been set for the survey, if applicable.

Microsoft Teams - anonymous feature; Microsoft Survey - anonymous feature; Medallia - anonymous feature; Microsoft Outlook Whiteboard, IRS Qualtrics

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

Yes

3.13 Provide the consent method and statement.

Consent is handled verbally by the participant responding to the following statement: "We would like to record this interview. The recording is for research purposes only and your name will not be associated directly with the content in the recording. Recordings will be kept in a secure location and shared only with persons with a valid need to know. Do you consent to the use of the recording by the IRS?"

4.11 Does this survey retrieve information by any personal identifier for an individual who is a U.S. citizen, or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence? If the answer is Yes, you must have at least one SORN name and number selected in the SORNs section.

Yes

4.12 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 about themselves. Do survey participants provide information about themselves?

Yes

4.13 Please provide the Privacy Act Statement.

Privacy Act Statement: The authority requesting this information is 5 USC 301, 26 USC 6001, 6011, or 6012. The primary purpose of asking for the information is to determine steps the IRS can take to improve our services to you. The information may be disclosed as authorized by the routine uses published in the following Privacy Act System of Records: (1) IRS 00.001 Correspondence Files and Correspondence Control Files. Not answering some or all of the questions will not affect you.

4.14 Does the IRS administer (conduct) the survey?

Yes

4.15 Provide the name of the IRS office administering the survey.

Office of Online Services

4.18 Does the IRS perform analysis of the survey results?

Yes

4.19 Provide the name of the IRS office performing the analysis of the survey.

Office of Online Services

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

Yes

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

No video, audio, or notes taken will include names. Only CRIP staff will have access to the video, audio and notes. Participant information is protected by the vendor's proprietary and fully secure database store in an encrypted format on their private servers.

4.23 Where and how is the PII stored and protected?

Participant information is protected by the vendor's proprietary and fully secure database store in an encrypted format on their private servers.

4.24 Provide the Cyber Security approved security and encryption used when data is transferred electronically from the IRS to contractors and back to the IRS.

There is typically never any need for a contractor to transfer participant PII to the IRS. If the need arises, we will use the built-in email encryption in Outlook ("Encrypt-Only").

4.25 How is the survey PII protected and stored when it is housed at a contractor site on contractor computers? Provide a detailed explanation of the physical and electronic security and protection of the data before, during and after the survey.

Participant information is protected by the vendor's proprietary and fully secure database store in an encrypted format on their private servers.

4.26 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

4.27 Identify the roles and their access level to the PII data.

IRS UX Researchers: Read-Write Access to secure server where PII is stored  
Usability Session.

Notetaker - No access to PII.

Observers - No access to PII.

Designers - No access to PII.

Stakeholders - No Access to PII.

4.28 Identify the roles and their access level to the PII data and indicate whether their background investigation is complete or not.

BLN24 employees: Will have access to PII data for recruiting purposes. Third-party recruitment vendors will have access to PII data for recruiting purposes. All employees with access to the IRS network have undergone background checks.

4.28 Explain the precautions taken to ensure the survey results will not be used for any other purpose not listed in the Detailed Business Purpose and Need section and to ensure that employees or taxpayers who participate in the survey cannot be identified or re-identified under any circumstances and no adverse actions taken.

Survey results will be stored in secure IRS SharePoint, and only CRIP team members who administer the ad hoc, iterative user feedback activities with a need to know will have access. No video, audio, or notes taken will include names. Only CRIP researchers will have access to the video, audio and notes. Findings from ad hoc, iterative user feedback activities will be aggregated with no names attached to any feedback in final reports.

4.29 Does the administrator of the survey have access to information identifying participants?

Yes

5.11 For employee or taxpayer satisfaction surveys explain how you have ensured that no "raw" or unaggregated employee or taxpayer data will be provided to any IRS office.

In reporting to IRS offices, researchers will not connect information collected with employee names or email addresses. Final reports will contain only aggregated employee feedback and will contain no names or emails.

## Interfaces

### Interface Type

IRS or Treasury Contractor

Agency Name

BLN24

Incoming/Outgoing

Incoming (Receiving)

Transfer Method

Secure email/Zixmail

### Interface Type

IRS Systems, file, or database

Agency Name

Limited Access SharePoint

Incoming/Outgoing

Both

Transfer Method

Other

Other Transfer Method

Secure SharePoint

## Systems of Records Notices (SORNs)

### SORN Number & Name

IRS 10.004 - Stakeholder Relationship Management and Subject Files

Describe the IRS use and relevance of this SORN.

This SORN is used to manage stakeholder relations and communications related to CRIP.



# Records Retention

What is the Record Schedule System?

General Record Schedule (GRS)

What is the retention series title?

6.5 - Public Customer Service Records

What is the GRS/RCS Item Number?

10

What type of Records is this for?

Electronic

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

Public 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?

SharePoint Online (SPO) Collection

What is the name of the SharePoint Online (SPO) Collection?

UES Home

What is the sensitivity of the SharePoint Online (SPO) Collection?

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) including Linkable Data

What is the URL of the item, if applicable?

<https://irs.gov.sharepoint.com/sites/KMHVNQGL/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FKMHVNQGL%2FDocuments%2FCentralized%20Referrals%20Intake%20Processing%20%28CRIP%29&viewid=f24c697f%2D4bf9%2D43db%2D8390%2D1e4618976f68>

Please provide a brief description of the SharePoint Online (SPO) Collection.

UES Home is a secure SharePoint site used by User Experience Services to store documentation.

What are the incoming connections to this SharePoint Online (SPO) Collection?

IRS Systems, files or database. Raw data of emails collected from interested participants will be stored in secure IRS SharePoint.