

**SUPPORTING SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT A
FOR
PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION
OF THE
U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL**

Justification

1. **Necessity for the Collection.** The U.S. Office of Special Counsel's (OSC's) basic authorities come from four federal statutes: The Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing.

OSC created its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program to come into compliance with Executive Order 12988. In order to maintain a robust, ethical, and effective program, the ADR unit follows Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators and other best practices established by the Interagency Alternative Dispute Resolution Working Group. See ADR.gov. To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of OSC's mediation program and mediators' adherence to ethical standards, the ADR unit relies on prompt, candid feedback from participants.

The survey questionnaires included in this submission request voluntary feedback from all individuals who participate in OSC's ADR process.

2. **Uses of the Information.** The initial ADR survey consists of a questionnaire containing thirty-four (34) questions about the respondent's experience in mediation at OSC, including whether they understood how the process would work, their confidentiality obligations, and the neutrality of the mediator; whether they felt the process was adequately resourced; and other matters. A follow-up survey is sent approximately six (6) months later to participants who agree to receive it. The follow-up survey consists of a maximum of six (6) questions, the number of questions depending on the outcome of the concluded mediation. The ADR unit will use the feedback collected in the responses to improve its mediation program.
3. **Collection Techniques.** OSC's survey software will email an electronic link to the survey to individuals. OSC will receive and host this survey in its own IT systems. Recipients of the survey may open a weblink to the survey and submit their answers to OSC electronically.

The survey software automatically reminds participants who have not responded to submit their responses one time.

4. **No duplication of effort.** The information to be collected is not otherwise available to OSC.
5. **Minimizing burden.** OSC uses an electronic survey and email response, thus minimizing the respondent's paperwork burden. Paragraph 12 below sets forth the time burden of a maximum of 10 minutes per respondent. The total burden is therefore *de minimus*.
6. **If collection were not conducted.** If OSC could not conduct the collection, its ADR unit would be unable to obtain critical feedback from mediation participants, and thus be unable to assess quality, compliance with ethical standards, and degree of satisfaction with the process from the viewpoint of the participants.
7. **Federal Register publication.** Attached is the notice submitted to the Federal Register. OSC's proposed information collection is submitted pursuant to 5 C.F.R. 1320.13.
9. **Payment of gift to respondents.** Not applicable.
10. **Confidentiality.** Respondents will click on an electronic link embedded within an email to access the survey. There is an option for respondents to agree to a brief follow-up survey in six months and if so, to provide a preferred email address. Otherwise, the survey does not request any personally identifying information (PII). If a respondent provides PII (despite the survey not requesting it), confidentiality is protected consistent with 5 U.S.C. 552a; 5 U.S.C. 1212(g); 5 U.S.C. 1213; and OSC policy.
11. **Justification for a question of a sensitive nature.** The optional request for an email address is necessary so that OSC can send a follow-up survey to the mediation participant to their email address of choice. Questions gauging respondent satisfaction with OSC's ADR program are necessary to the survey. Those questions are anonymized and do not contain PII.
12. **Hour burden of the collection of information.** OSC estimates that 100 respondents will complete the initial ADR survey at an average time of eight minutes per completed survey, and 75 respondents will complete the follow-up ADR survey at an average time of two minutes per completed survey, for an estimated burden of 15.8 hours.
13. **Total Annual Cost Burden.** Any cost incurred by a respondent's reproduction of a personal copy of the emailed survey is nominal.
14. **Total Annual Cost to the Federal Government.** Because the survey was created and will be distributed by OSC, the total annual cost to the Federal Government is *de minimus*.
15. **Changes or adjustments.** This is a new collection.

16. **Publication of results.** The ADR unit will not publish these results
17. **Reason for not displaying expiration date.** Not applicable.
18. **Exceptions to Certification.** Not applicable.

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