

2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Survey Minimum Business Requirements

A survey vendor must meet all of the Minimum Business Requirements listed below in order to apply to administer the 2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey (QHP Enrollee Survey).

Relevant Survey Experience

Demonstrated recent experience in fielding patient experience surveys.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Number of Years in Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of three years.
Organizational Survey Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of two years prior experience administering standardized patient experience surveys as an organization within the most recent three-year period. • Minimum of two years prior experience conducting mixed mode (mail/telephone/Internet) survey protocols within the most recent three-year period. • Prior experience administering patient experience surveys for vulnerable populations. • Prior experience employing a statistical sampling process within the two most recent years. • Prior experience submitting patient experience survey data to an external third-party organization. • The following activities are not considered relevant experience for approval: experience with polling questions; qualitative data collection; surveys that did not use statistical sampling methods; and Interactive-Voice Response (IVR) surveys. • If applicable, poor past performance on CMS sponsored survey projects will be considered as survey vendors failing to meet minimum business requirements. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not adhering to the timeline and/or procedures for survey administration. ○ Not adhering to Discrepancy Report and/or Corrective Action Plan procedures.
Number of Years Conducting Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of two years of experience within the most recent three-year period conducting large-scale patient experience survey projects using mixed mode administration (mail/telephone/Internet).

Experience with Multiple Survey Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience administering mail and telephone surveys in English and Spanish. • Survey vendors have the option of conducting the 2017 survey in Chinese and should have prior experience with Chinese (Mandarin) language survey administration if opting to administer Chinese language surveys.
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Organizational Survey Capacity

Capacity to handle a required volume of mail questionnaires and conduct standardized telephone interviewing in a specified time frame.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Capacity to Handle Estimated Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient physical and personnel resources to administer large-scale outgoing and incoming mail surveys, perform telephone interviews using an electronic telephone interviewing system, and administer the Internet survey during the survey fielding time period (estimated February through May of calendar year). • All survey-related activities must be conducted within the Continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska and U.S. Territories to enable the Project Team to conduct all required oversight activities. This requirement applies to all staff and subcontractors. • Must adhere to requirements specified in the 2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Project Manager, directly employed by the survey vendor (i.e., not a subcontractor), oversees all survey operations and has at least two years of experience in overseeing all functional aspects of survey operations including mail, telephone, Internet, data file preparation and data security. Must have a strong background in survey research and methodology and previous experience using the specified modes of administration. • Designated Mail Supervisor has previous experience managing large-scale mail survey projects. • Designated Telephone Survey Supervisor has previous experience managing large-scale telephone interviewing projects. • Designated Internet Survey Supervisor has experience with managing large-scale Internet survey projects. • Designated Sampling Manager, directly employed by the survey vendor (i.e., not a subcontractor), has sample frame development and sample selection experience. • Designated Information System staff responsible for data submission (programmer) must be directly employed by the survey vendor (i.e., not a subcontractor) and have previous experience preparing and submitting data files in a specified format to external third-party organization(s) within the past two years. • Survey vendor has appropriate organizational back-up staff for coverage of key staff, in terms of sufficiency and experience.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<p>System Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial physical plant and system resources meet CMS specifications and accommodate the volume of surveys being administered. All system resources are subject to oversight activities, including onsite visits to physical locations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All survey-related work, including mail and Internet survey administration activities and telephone interviewing must be conducted at the survey vendor’s or approved subcontractor’s official business location. Home-based places of work (e.g., residences) and virtual organizations will not be considered. ○ Capacity for reproduction and mailing of questionnaires, cover letters and reminder letters in-house or in accordance with requirements outlined in the “Approved Use of Subcontractors” section. ○ Capacity for processing (e.g., scanning or key entering) incoming paper surveys at the survey vendor’s or designated subcontractor’s official business location. ○ Capacity for programming electronic telephone interview systems in accordance with specifications provided and conducting telephone interviews using an electronic telephone interviewing system in-house or in accordance with requirements outlined in the “Approved Use of Subcontractors” section. ○ Capacity for producing and programming the Internet survey instrument in-house. ○ Ability to handle concurrent survey projects while maintaining high quality survey data and response rates. ○ Electronic survey management system tracks fielded surveys through each stage of the protocol using a random, unique de-identified enrollee identification number and interim disposition codes. This electronic management system prevents duplicative records. • Provide regular progress reports to QHP issuers, within guidelines specified by CMS. • Maintain a secure work environment for receiving, processing and storing hardcopy and electronic versions of questionnaires and sample files that protects the confidentiality of survey response data and personally identifiable information. • Prepare, accommodate, and plan for onsite visits from CMS or the CMS-sponsored Project Team for quality oversight purposes.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Use of Subcontractors (Subject to Approval)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CMS must approve subcontractors as part of the survey vendor approval process at the time of application. (Subcontractors must meet the criteria outlined for the survey administration activities that they will conduct.)• Subcontracting of printing, outgoing mail processing, data entry/scanning, and telephone interviewing by a survey vendor is limited to a reasonable number based on the survey vendor's estimated number of surveyed enrollees and subject to CMS review.• Subcontracting of sample file generation and data file preparation and submission is not allowed.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<p>Mode Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for printing, assembling and mailing survey materials in accordance with the 2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications. • Responsible for programming electronic telephone interviewing systems in accordance with the 2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications. • Responsible for producing and programming the Internet survey instrument in accordance with the 2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications. • Comply with all quality oversight requirements described in the <i>2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>. This includes the submission of sample mail materials, sample telephone scripts and interviewer screen shots, and an Internet survey test link to the Project Team for review and approval prior to survey administration. • Demonstrate ability to collect and accurately process survey data through all phases of survey administration. • Demonstrate experience identifying nonrespondents for mail and/or telephone follow-up. • Demonstrate ability to follow survey administration timeline. • Use commercial software/resources to ensure that addresses and telephone numbers are updated and correct for all sampled enrollees. • Demonstrate capability to administer the survey in Spanish (and Chinese, if applicable). • Assign appropriate disposition codes to each sampled member indicating final survey status. • Mail and Internet survey administration activities and telephone interviews are not to be conducted from any residences.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Sampling Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent experience in the two most recent years selecting sample based on specific eligibility criteria. • Applicant organization must adequately document statistical approach to drawing a sample. • Demonstrate ability to work with QHP issuer(s) to electronically obtain sample frame(s) for sampling within specified timeframe. • Conduct quality checks on sample frame file(s) received from QHP issuer(s) to verify accuracy and completeness of sample frame information.
Data Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan or key enter data according to standard protocols. • Follow all data preparation and submission rules as specified in the <i>2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>, including verifying data are de-identified and contain no duplicate cases. • Submit data electronically in the specified format. • Execute business associate agreement with QHP issuer(s) and receive annual authorization from QHP issuer(s) to collect data on their behalf and submit to CMS. • Work with the Project Team to resolve data and data file submission problems.
Data Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain established electronic security procedures related to access levels, passwords and firewalls as required by HIPAA. • Perform daily data back-up and off-site redundancy procedures that adequately safeguard system data. • Use required encryption protocols, if applicable, to transmit data files. • Implement established procedures for identifying and reporting breaches of confidential data. • Prepare and submit data via secure methods (HIPAA compliant).
Data Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain all data files for a minimum of three years, or as otherwise specified by CMS. • Store returned paper questionnaires in a secure and environmentally safe location.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store data files (paper and/or electronic) securely and confidentially in accordance with specified requirements. • Ensure confidentiality of data for sampled enrollees' personally identifiable information during each phase of the survey process. • Obtain signed confidentiality agreements from staff and subcontractors. • Ensure compliance with all applicable HIPAA Security and Privacy Rules, Protected Health Information (PHI), and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) protocols in conducting all survey administration and data collection activities.
Technical Assistance/ Customer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish toll-free customer support telephone lines with live operator during survey vendor regular business hours to accommodate both Spanish and English inquiries starting at the beginning of the survey fielding period and continuing through the duration of survey fielding. • If administering the survey in Chinese (Mandarin), accommodate telephone inquiries from Chinese-speaking survey participants.

Quality Control Procedures

Personnel training and quality control mechanisms employed to collect valid, reliable survey data.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<p>Demonstrated Quality Control Procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish and document quality control procedures for all phases of survey implementation, as specified in the <i>2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal staff training. ○ Printing, mailing and recording receipt of surveys. ○ Telephone administration of surveys (electronic telephone interviewing system). ○ Internet administration of surveys. ○ Adequate monitoring of subcontractor(s), if applicable. ○ Scanning and coding of survey data. ○ Preparing final data files for submission. ○ All other functions and processes that affect the administration of the QHP Enrollee Survey. ● Develop and submit annually a Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) for survey administration in accordance with the <i>2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>. ● Physical business premises on which major operations of survey business are conducted are amenable to on-site visits by CMS and CMS-sponsored Project Team, as specified in the <i>2017 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>.
<p>Training Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in and successfully complete the required survey vendor training via Webinar after confirmation of conditionally approved status. ● Successfully complete a training evaluation to assess survey vendor comprehension of QHP Enrollee Survey protocols. ● Establish in-house training of staff involved in all aspects of survey administration.

Training Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager, Mail Survey Supervisor, Sampling Manager, Telephone Survey Supervisor and Internet Survey Supervisor, at a minimum. • Strongly recommend that all survey vendor staff responsible for data coding and file preparation attend training. • Subcontractor attendance is optional.
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Approval Term

An approved survey vendor may administer the QHP Enrollee Survey for the specified amount of time.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
Approval Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One year subject to annual approval. • Approved survey vendors are required to maintain a minimum of one active QHP Enrollee Survey client for at least one of two consecutive survey administration periods.