

# 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 Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey (QHP Enrollee Survey).

## Relevant Survey Experience

Demonstrated recent experience in fielding patient experience surveys.

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>Number of Years in Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of three years.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Survey Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of two years prior experience administering standardized patient experience surveys within the most recent three year period as an organization.</li> <li>Minimum of two years prior experience conducting mixed mode (mail/telephone/Internet survey protocol) survey protocol.</li> <li>Prior experience administering patient experience surveys for vulnerable populations, such as additional contact and callback attempts.</li> <li>Prior experience employing a statistical sampling process within the two most recent years.</li> <li>Prior experience submitting patient experience survey data to an external third-party organization.</li> <li>The following activities cannot be used as 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Number of Years Conducting Surveys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of two years conducting large scale patient experience survey projects using mixed mode (mail/telephone/Internet administration).</li> </ul>
<b>Experience with Multiple Survey Languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior experience administering mail and telephone surveys in English and Spanish.</li> <li>Survey vendor(s) will have the option of conducting the 2015 survey in Chinese and should have prior experience with Chinese (Mandarin) language survey administration if choosing to administer Chinese (Mandarin) language surveys.</li> </ul>

## 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
<b>Capacity to Handle Estimated Workload</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient physical and personnel resources to administer large-scale outgoing and incoming mail surveys, to perform telephone interviews using an electronic telephone interviewing system, and to administer the Internet survey during survey fielding time period (estimated January through April of calendar year).</li> <li>All survey-related activities must be conducted within the Continental United States, Hawaii, and Alaska and U.S. Territories.</li> <li>Must adhere to requirements specified in the <i>Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Personnel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated Project Manager, who is directly employed by the survey vendor (i.e., not a subcontractor), overseeing all survey operations 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 strong background in survey research and methodology and previous experience using specified modes of administration.</li> <li>Designated Mail Supervisor has previous experience managing large scale mail survey projects.</li> <li>Designated Telephone Survey Supervisor has previous experience managing large scale telephone interviewing projects.</li> <li>Designated Sampling Manager, who is directly employed by the survey vendor (i.e., not a subcontractor), has sample frame development and sample selection experience.</li> <li>Designated Internet Survey Supervisor has experience with managing large scale Internet survey projects.</li> <li>Information System staff responsible for data submission (programmer) must be directly employed by survey vendor (i.e., not a subcontractor) and have previous experience preparing and submitting data files in specified format to external third-party organization within the past two years.</li> <li>Survey vendor has appropriate, in terms of sufficiency and experience, organizational back-up staff for coverage of key staff.</li> </ul>

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>System Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 on-site visits to physical locations.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commercial physical plant. All survey-related work, including mail 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.</li> <li>○ Capacity for reproduction and mailing of questionnaire, cover letters and postcards in-house or in accordance with requirements outlined in “Approved Use of Subcontractors.”</li> <li>○ Incoming paper surveys will be processed (e.g., scanned or data entered) at the survey vendor’s or designated subcontractor’s official business location.</li> <li>○ Capacity for conducting telephone interviews using an electronic telephone interview system in-house or in accordance with requirements outlined in “Approved Use of Subcontractors.”</li> <li>○ Capacity for producing and programming the Internet survey instrument in-house.</li> <li>○ Ability to handle concurrent survey projects while maintaining high quality survey data and high response rates.</li> <li>○ Electronic survey management system for tracking fielded surveys through each stage of the protocol through the use of a unique individual identifier ID and interim disposition codes. This electronic management system should also prevent duplicative records.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide regular progress reports to QHP issuers, within guidelines specified by CMS.</li> <li>• 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 personal identifying information.</li> <li>• Prepare, accommodate, and plan for on-site visits from CMS or CMS-sponsored Project Team for quality oversight purposes.</li> </ul>

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>Use of Subcontractors (Subject to Approval)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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 the subcontractors will be performing.)</li><li>• Subcontracting of printing, outgoing mail processing, data entry/scanning, and telephone interview centers by survey vendor is limited to a reasonable number based on a survey vendor's estimated number of enrollees surveyed on behalf of QHP issuers and to be reviewed by CMS.</li><li>• Subcontracting of sample file generation and data file preparation and submission is not allowed.</li></ul>

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

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>Sampling Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent experience in the two most recent years selecting sample based on specific eligibility criteria.</li> <li>• Applicant organization must document statistical approach to drawing a sample.</li> <li>• Demonstrate ability to work with individual QHP issuer to electronically obtain sample frame for sampling within specified timeframe.</li> <li>• Conduct quality checks on sample frame file received from QHP issuer to verify accuracy and completeness of sample frame information.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Submission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to scan or key enter data according to standard protocols.</li> <li>• Follow all data preparation and submission rules as specified in the <i>Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>, including verifying data are de-identified and contain no duplicate cases.</li> <li>• Submit data electronically in specified format.</li> <li>• Data files may require encryption for transmission in accordance with required specifications (HIPAA compliant).</li> <li>• Must be authorized by a QHP issuer prior to submission of data.</li> <li>• Execute business associate agreement with a QHP issuer and receive annual authorization from the QHP issuer to collect data on their behalf and submit to CMS.</li> <li>• Work with the Project Team to resolve data and data file submission problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established electronic security procedures related to access levels, passwords and firewalls.</li> <li>• Perform daily data back-up and offsite redundancy procedures that adequately safeguard system data.</li> <li>• Required encryption protocols, if applicable, must be utilized for transmitting data files.</li> <li>• Established procedures for identifying and reporting breaches of confidential data.</li> <li>• Experience preparing and submitting data via secure methods (HIPAA compliant).</li> </ul>

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>Data Retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to retain all data files for a minimum of three years, or as otherwise specified by CMS.</li> <li>• Provision to store returned paper questionnaires in a secure and environmentally safe location.</li> </ul>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data files (paper or electronic) must be stored securely and confidentially in accordance with specified requirements.</li> <li>• Ensure confidentiality of data for sampled enrollees' identifying information during each phase of the survey process.</li> <li>• Obtain signed confidentiality agreements from staff and subcontractors.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with all applicable HIPAA Security and Privacy Rules in conducting all survey administration and data collection activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Assistance/ Customer Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish toll-free customer support telephone lines with live operator from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (survey vendor local time) to accommodate both Spanish and English inquiries starting at the beginning of the survey fielding period and continuing through the duration of survey fielding.</li> <li>• If administering the survey in Chinese (Mandarin), accommodate telephone inquiries from Chinese-speaking survey participants.</li> </ul>

## Quality Control Procedures

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

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>Demonstrated Quality Control Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and document quality control procedures for all phases of survey implementation, and as specified in the <i>Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Internal staff training.</li> <li>○ Printing, mailing and recording receipt of surveys.</li> <li>○ Telephone administration of survey (electronic telephone interviewing system).</li> <li>○ Internet administration of survey.</li> <li>○ Scanning, coding and cleaning of survey data.</li> <li>○ Preparing final data files for submission.</li> <li>○ All other functions and processes that affect the administration of the survey.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Physical business premises on which major operations of survey business are conducted are amenable to site visits by CMS and CMS-sponsored Project Team, as specified in the <i>Qualified Health Plan Enrollee Experience Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in and successfully complete all required survey vendor training, via Webinar, after confirmation of conditionally approved status.</li> <li>• Successfully complete a training evaluation to assess survey vendor comprehension of protocols.</li> <li>• Establish in-house training of staff involved in all aspects of survey administration.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Manager, Mail Survey Supervisor, Sampling Manager, Telephone Survey Supervisor and Internet Survey Supervisor, at a minimum.</li> <li>• All key subcontractor personnel.</li> <li>• Strongly recommend that all survey vendor staff responsible for data coding and file preparation attend training.</li> </ul>

## Approval Term

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

Criteria	Survey Vendor Requirements
<b>Approval Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One year subject to annual re-approval based on submission and review of Participation Form.</li><li>• Starting in 2017, previously-approved survey vendors must have fielded at least one QHP Enrollee Survey during the prior two survey fielding years to remain eligible for consideration as an approved survey vendor.</li></ul>