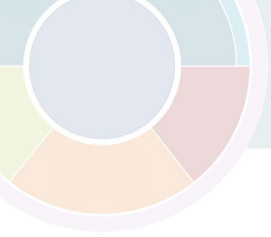


## Minimum Survey Vendor Business Requirements of the Primary Care First (PCF) Patient Experience of Care (PEC) Survey

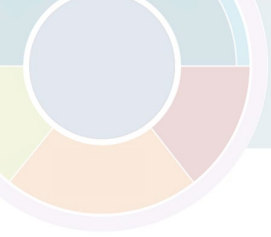
Applicant organizations must currently possess all required facilities and systems to implement the PCF PEC Survey. Subcontractors will be subject to the same requirements as the applicant vendor. Organizations that are approved to administer the PCF PEC Survey must conduct all their PCF PEC Survey business operations within the United States. This requirement applies to all staff and subcontractors.

**Purpose:** Any interested survey vendor is required to possess the following minimum business requirements to ensure that all participating survey vendors can administer the PCF PEC Survey in a consistent, unbiased and competent manner. At a minimum, this includes basic quality assurance and control systems and activities to prevent disorganized, biased, or illegal data collection.

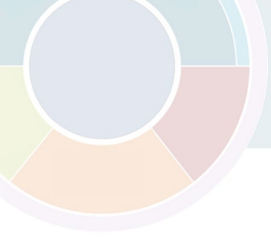
Criteria	
Relevant Survey Experience	
Relevant Survey Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated experience (minimum 3 years) in Mixed-Mode survey administration that includes mail survey administration followed by survey administration via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) with non-respondents</li> <li>• Demonstrated experience (minimum of 3 years) with patient experience of care surveys, surveying vulnerable populations, and experience in a health care setting</li> <li>• Demonstrated experience in implementing HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and other data security requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Note: All applicant vendors must fulfill the above requirements independent of a subcontractor's experience</p>
Number of Years in Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum of 4 years</li> </ul>
Number of Years Conducting CAHPS Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum of 3 years' experience conducting CAHPS surveys individuals; all experience is within the last 5 years</li> </ul>



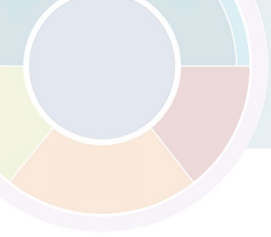
Criteria	
Survey Capability and Capacity	
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Manager with 3 years' experience with relevant Mixed-Mode (mail survey administration followed by CATI administration with non-respondents)</li> <li>• Information Systems Specialist(s) and Computer Programmer(s)/Developer(s) with 1 year experience receiving large, encrypted data files in different formats/software packages electronically from an external organization; processing survey data needed for survey administration and survey response data; preparing data files for electronic submission; and submitting data files to an external organization</li> <li>• Call Center and Mail Center Supervisor (subcontractor designee, if applicable) with minimum 1 year experience in role</li> <li>• Have organizational back-up schedule in place for coverage of key staff</li> <li>• Do not use volunteers to conduct any aspect of the PCF PEC Survey administration process</li> </ul>
Facilities and Systems (all administration modes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical facilities and electronic equipment and software to collect, process, and report data securely</li> <li>• A secure commercial office/facility in which all survey activities are conducted</li> <li>• Facilities and processes to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and patient response data (e.g., hardcopy documents must be stored in a locked file cabinet, room, or building)</li> <li>• Systems needed to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and survey data received from patients (e.g., password protections, firewalls, data encryption software, personnel access limitation procedures, and virus and spyware protection)</li> <li>• Computers and other equipment needed for survey implementation</li> <li>• Systems and ability to receive electronic sample files containing patient-level data (the sample) needed to administer the survey</li> <li>• Electronic survey management system to track fielded surveys</li> <li>• All system resources are subject to oversight activities, including site visits to physical locations (such as to vendor's mail facility to observe production of PCF PEC Survey materials and/or call center where PCF PEC Survey interviews are being conducted)</li> </ul>
Experience with Multiple Survey Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior experience required in conducting survey administration in both English AND Spanish</li> </ul>



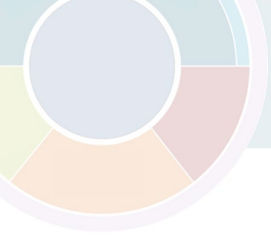
Criteria	
Mixed-Mode Survey Administration	<p>Must have capability to adhere to the following Mixed-Mode survey administration requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mail<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Must have capability to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Verify addresses of sampled patients</li><li>▪ Print professional-quality survey instruments and materials according to formatting guidelines</li><li>▪ Merge and print sample name and address on personalized mail survey cover letters and print corresponding unique sample identification number and group or virtual group provider name associated with each sampled beneficiary on the mail surveys</li><li>▪ Receive and process (key entry or scanning) returned mail surveys</li><li>▪ Track and identify non-respondents for follow-up mailing</li><li>▪ Assign disposition codes to identify the outcome of data collection for each sampled case</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Telephone<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Must have the equipment, software and facilities to conduct interviews using CATI, and to monitor interviewers</li><li>○ Must have capability to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Verify telephone numbers</li><li>▪ Develop computer programs for electronically administering the survey</li><li>▪ Schedule call backs to non-respondents at varying times of the day/week</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Assign final disposition codes to reflect the outcome of data collection for each sampled case</li><li>• Track cases from mail survey through telephone follow-up activities</li><li>• Mail survey administration and telephone interviews must be conducted from the physical place of business, not from a residence or virtual office</li></ul>



Criteria	
Data Processing and File Submission	<p>Must have capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan or key data from completed mail surveys</li> <li>• Develop data files and edit the data according to standard protocols</li> <li>• Follow all data reporting and data submission requirements, including verifying that data files are de-identified and contain no duplicate cases</li> <li>• Export data from the electronic data collection system into the specified XML format. Conduct quality checks to confirm that the data are exported correctly and that the XML files are formatted correctly and contain the correct data headers and data records.</li> <li>• Encrypt data files for transmission per specifications</li> <li>• Submit data electronically in the specified format (XML) to the PCF PEC Survey secure data warehouse</li> <li>• Work with CMS' data warehouse contractor to resolve issues or problems with data submission or data files</li> </ul>
Data Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Execute business associate agreement with groups and virtual groups and receive annual authorization from groups and virtual groups to collect data on their behalf and submit to CMS</li> <li>• Store returned paper surveys in a secure and environmentally safe location (e.g., locked file cabinet, closet, or room)</li> <li>• Utilize firewalls and/or other mechanisms to protect electronic files</li> <li>• Employ electronic security via implementation of access levels and passwords</li> <li>• Implement daily data back-up procedures that safeguard system data</li> <li>• Utilize required encryption protocols for transmitting data files</li> <li>• Develop procedures for identifying, reporting and handling breaches of confidential data</li> <li>• Data custodian must be accountable for all data security for data collection</li> </ul>
Data Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain all PCF PEC Survey data files for a minimum of 3 years</li> </ul>
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include HIPAA-compliant content regarding confidentiality and disclosure that is in the Quality Assurance Plan</li> <li>• Store PCF PEC Survey data files (paper and electronic) securely and confidentially in accordance with requirements specified in the Quality Assurance Guidelines</li> </ul>



Criteria	
Customer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide toll-free customer support telephone lines with live operator during regular business hours (to be established the date of the pre-notification letter through the end of data collection)</li> <li>• Offer customer support in English and Spanish</li> <li>• Respond to calls within 24-48 hours</li> </ul>
Adherences to Quality Assurance Guidelines and Participation in Quality Assurance Activities	
Demonstrated Quality Control Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated ability to conduct well-documented quality control procedures (as applicable) for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In-house training or staff involved in survey operations                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Printing, mailing, and recording or receipt of mail services</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Telephone administration of survey (CATI system)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coding and editing of survey data and survey-related materials</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Scanning or keying in survey data</li> <li>○ Preparing final record-level data files for submission</li> <li>○ All other functions and processes that impact the administration of the PCF PEC Survey</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Participate in conference calls and site visits as scheduled by the Project Team as part of mandatory quality oversight activities</li> <li>• Develop and submit annual Quality Assurance Plans by specified due date.</li> </ul>
Documentation Requirements	
Maintain Records	<p>Must provide documentation as requested for quality oversight and conference calls, including but not limited to: HIPAA compliance, mail material production, staff training records, telephone interviewer monitoring records, and file construction documentation.</p> <p>Must have capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep electronic or hard copy files of staff training and dates</li> <li>• Maintain electronic or hard copy records of interviewer monitoring activities</li> <li>• Maintain electronic or hard copy records of survey mailing dates and dates of returned surveys</li> <li>• Maintain other documentation necessary to allow the PCF PEC Survey Project Team to review survey protocol implementation during site visits</li> <li>• Maintain documentation of actions required (and implemented) as a result of remote site visit findings by the Project Team</li> </ul>



Criteria	
Survey Training	
Survey Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and successfully complete PCF PEC Survey Training Sessions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The following personnel from vendor and subcontractor organizations must attend (at a minimum):                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project Manager</li> <li>▪ Mail Center Supervisor</li> <li>▪ Call Center Supervisor</li> <li>▪ Project staff member(s) responsible for the following functions:                       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Decrypting the sample file and performing sample file quality checks</li> <li>– Programming the CATI script</li> <li>– Preparing and submitting the survey data file</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pass a post-training quiz measuring comprehension of PCF PEC Survey protocols</li> <li>• Participate in additional PCF PEC Survey Training Sessions, if required</li> </ul>
Vendor Approval Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey vendor approval is for the life of the project. However, survey vendors must maintain the minimum business requirements and follow the Quality Assurance Guidelines in order to keep their approval status. If quality problems are found with a vendor, CMS typically stipulates a vendor corrective action plan. CMS may revoke a vendor's approval status if the vendor has not fully implemented their corrective action plan.</li> <li>• Further, please note the following reasons a vendor could lose their approval status and be removed from the list:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vendors that do not obtain a contract with at least one practice site for that Performance Year's survey fielding cycle will lose their approved vendor status. If a vendor wishes to reinstate approval after it is removed, the vendor will need to reapply and meet all vendor requirements, including participation in and successful completion of the Introduction to the PCF PEC Survey On-Demand Training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Administer the Survey According to All Survey Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must review and follow all procedures described in the PCF PEC Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines for Survey Vendors</li> <li>• Must agree to all conditions in the Vendor Participation Application</li> </ul>