

Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan (MA & PDP) CAHPS® Survey

2019 Minimum Business Requirements

A survey vendor must meet **all** of the Survey Vendor Minimum Business Requirements listed below in order to apply to administer the Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan (MA & PDP) CAHPS® Survey. Organizations that are approved to administer the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey must conduct all of their business operations within the United States so the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey Project Team can perform the required oversight activities.

Any organization that performs key survey administration functions on behalf of an MA & PDP CAHPS Survey vendor that requires receipt of an electronic file containing beneficiary-level personally identifiable information (PII) shall be referred to hereafter as a “subcontractor.” All Minimum Business Requirements also apply to all staff and subcontractors.

1. Relevant Survey Experience

Demonstrated recent experience in fielding Mixed Mode surveys.

Criteria	Survey Vendor
Survey Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience (minimum of 3 years) conducting surveys with the Medicare population • Prior experience (minimum of 3 years) administering CAHPS surveys within the most recent 5-year time period • Prior experience (minimum of 3 years) conducting large-scale Mixed Mode surveys (i.e., mail survey administration followed by survey administration via computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) follow-up of non-respondents) within the most recent 2-year time period • If applicable, poor past performance on CMS beneficiary surveys will be considered as 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 Event Report procedures and corrective actions
Number of Years in Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 4 years
Experience with Multiple Survey Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience conducting surveys in both English and Spanish. A survey vendor will have the option of electing to conduct the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey in Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.

2. Organizational Survey Capacity

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

Criteria	Survey Vendor
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Project Manager with a minimum of 3 years relevant Mixed Mode (mail survey administration followed by CATI administration with non-respondents) survey experience • Designated Mail Survey Supervisor with minimum 1 year previous experience in role • Designated Telephone Survey Supervisor with minimum 1 year previous survey call center experience • Designated Lead or Primary Programmer with minimum 1 year previous experience processing survey data and preparing data files for electronic submission
System Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System resources must meet CMS specifications in the QAP&TS and at a minimum include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical facilities and electronic equipment and software for secure data collection processing and reporting ○ Production of computer files ○ Anticipate and plan for on-site visits ○ Electronic survey management system to track fielded surveys through the entire protocol that protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and survey data received from beneficiaries (e.g., password protections, firewalls, data encryption software, personnel access limitation procedures, and virus and spyware protection) ○ A secure commercial work environment for receiving, processing, and storing hardcopy questionnaires and hardcopy sample files that protects the confidentiality of beneficiary response data and personally identifiable information
Approved Use of Subcontractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontractors must meet the criteria outlined for the survey administration activities the subcontractors will be performing. Subcontractors will be assessed at the time of application and must be approved by CMS

Criteria	Survey Vendor
Mixed Mode Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for reproduction, printing, and mailing of survey materials in accordance with specifications provided • Capacity for conducting telephone interviews using a CATI system • Follow MA & PDP CAHPS Survey timeline • Use commercial software/resources to ensure that addresses and telephone numbers are accurate and correct for all sample members • If a survey vendor intends to administer the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey in Chinese, Korean and/or Vietnamese, both the mail and telephone modes must be administered in these languages • Survey vendor must have the capacity to maintain an interviewer pool that meets the needs of beneficiaries in all languages in which the survey is administered • Survey vendor must have the capacity to conduct accurate monitoring of interviewers in all languages in which the survey is administered • Mail Survey administration and telephone interviews are not to be conducted from a residence, nor from a virtual office
Data Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register with the RAND Corporation for access to the MA & PDP CAHPS Data Warehouse and follow data specifications and procedures in order to submit and receive encrypted data via the Internet • Must be authorized by health or drug plan prior to submission of data • Execute business associate agreement with health or drug plans and receive annual authorization from health plans to collect data on their behalf and submit to CMS

Criteria	Survey Vendor
Data Security and Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returned paper questionnaires must be stored in a secure and environmentally safe location • Firewalls and/or other mechanisms must be utilized to protect electronic files • Electronic security via implementation of access levels and passwords must be instituted • Daily data back-up procedures that adequately safeguard system data must be implemented • Required encryption protocols must be utilized for transmitting data files. CMS-defined personally identifiable information (PII) must be transmitted securely (e.g., encrypted file via email, data portal, or SFTP). • Develop procedures for identifying and handling breaches of confidential data • Ensure Data Use Agreement (DUA) with CMS is kept up to date and that all DUA requirements are followed, including cell size suppression rules • Develop and implement confidentiality agreements which include language related to HIPAA regulations and the protection of patient information, and obtain signatures from all personnel with access to survey information, including staff and all subcontractors involved in survey administration and data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confidentiality agreements must be reviewed and re-signed periodically, at the discretion of the survey vendor, but not to exceed more than a three-year period • HIPAA compliant procedures • Vendors must not share identifying information about beneficiaries in the survey sample with health or drug plans • Vendors must receive approval from CMS to append any additional data to the sample file
Data Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain all data files for a minimum of 3 years, including sample information. Retention of data will require renewal of the CMS Data Use Agreement (DUA).
Technical Assistance/Customer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish toll-free customer support telephone lines with live operator during regular business hours (to be established from the time of the pre-notification letter through the end of data collection) • Accommodate both Spanish and English inquiries • Accommodate Chinese, Korean and/or Vietnamese inquiries if administering the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey in these optional languages

3. Quality Control Procedures

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

Criteria	Survey Vendor
Demonstrated Quality Control Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set-up, conduct, and document quality control procedures for all phases of survey implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitoring of subcontractor(s) if applicable ○ Training ○ Printing, mailing, and recording receipt of surveys ○ Telephone administration and monitoring of survey (electronic telephone interviewing system) in all languages in which the survey is administered ○ Coding, editing, or keying in survey data ○ Preparing final person-level data files for submission ○ All other functions and processes that affect the administration of the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey • Develop and submit annual Quality Assurance Plan by specified due date • Submit an Event Report to CMS within one business day of becoming aware of an event in survey administration
Training Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After conditional approval, participate in and successfully complete MA & PDP CAHPS training webinar(s) for new and continuing vendors • Complete a training evaluation to assess comprehension of MA & PDP CAHPS Survey protocols • Participate in any refresher training sessions or webinars
Training Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager, Mail Survey Supervisor, and Telephone Survey Supervisor at a minimum • Project staff member(s) responsible for the following functions are also recommended to attend training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decrypting the sample file and performing sample file quality checks ○ Programming the CATI script ○ Preparing and submitting the survey data file • If a subcontractor will be conducting any of the functions below, at least one representative from that subcontractor organization must attend training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inserting or survey packet preparation ○ Processing of returned mail surveys ○ Conducting telephone interviews (CATI administration)

4. Approval Term

An approved survey vendor may administer the MA & PDP CAHPS Survey for the specified amount of time.

Criteria	Survey Vendor
Approval Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 year subject to annual re-approval• Approved survey vendors will be required to maintain at least one active MA & PDP CAHPS Survey client for a minimum one of two consecutive survey administration periods