

Minimum Survey Vendor Business Requirements of the Accountable Care Organization Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System (ACO REACH CAHPS)

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

Purpose: Interested survey vendors are required to possess the following minimum business requirements to ensure that all participating survey vendors can administer the ACO REACH CAHPS 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	
<i>Relevant Survey Experience</i>	
Relevant Survey Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated experience (minimum of 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. Subcontractors must have a minimum 3 years in mail <u>or</u> CATI experience as appropriate. • Demonstrated experience (minimum of 3 years) with Medicare patient experience of care surveys, surveying vulnerable populations, and experience in a health care setting • Demonstrated experience with XML format and submitting encrypted data to an external data warehouse • Demonstrated experience in implementing HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and other data security requirements <p><i>Note: All applicant vendors must fulfill the above requirements independent of a subcontractor's experience</i></p>
Number of Years in Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 4 years
Number of Years Conducting CAHPS Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 3 years-experience conducting CAHPS surveys of individuals; all experience is within the last 5 years

Criteria	
<i>Survey Capability and Capacity</i>	
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager with 3 years-experience with relevant Mixed-Mode (mail survey administration followed by CATI administration with non-respondents) • 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 • Telephone Survey and Mail Survey Supervisor (subcontractor designee, if applicable) with minimum 1 year experience in role • Have organizational back-up schedule in place for coverage of key staff • Do not use volunteers to conduct any aspect of the ACO REACH CAHPS Survey administration process
Facilities and Systems (all administration modes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical facilities and electronic equipment and software to collect, process, and report data securely • A secure commercial office/facility in which all survey activities are conducted • 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) • Systems to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and survey data received from patients (e.g., password protections, firewalls, data encryption software, staff access limitation procedures, and virus and spyware protection) • Computers and other equipment for survey implementation • Systems and ability to receive electronic sample files containing patient-level data (the sample) needed to administer the survey • Electronic survey management system to track fielded surveys • 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 ACO REACH CAHPS materials and/or call center where ACO REACH CAHPS interviews are being conducted). • Video and audio capabilities allowing facility to be observed remotely during remote site visits. • A Business Continuity Plan in the event of staffing and supply chain interruptions.
Experience with Multiple Survey Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience required in conducting survey administration in English, Spanish AND at least 1 other language.

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"> • Mail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Must have capability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verify addresses of sampled patients ▪ Print professional-quality survey instruments and materials according to formatting guidelines ▪ 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 ▪ Ability to print additional text on specified envelopes ▪ Receive and process (key entry or scanning) returned mail surveys ▪ Track and identify non-respondents for follow-up mailing ▪ Assign disposition codes to identify the outcome of data collection for each sampled case • Telephone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Must have the equipment, software and facilities to conduct interviews using CATI, and to monitor and record interviewers ○ Must have capability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verify telephone numbers ▪ Develop computer programs for electronically administering the survey ▪ Schedule call backs to non-respondents at varying times of the day/week ▪ Implement anti-Spam Flagging protocol ▪ Schedule call times at time zones appropriate for respondent's address ▪ Leave voicemail messages for respondents to identify the call as a survey request from CMS and to provide callback information • Assign final disposition codes to reflect the outcome of data collection for each sampled case • Track cases from mail survey through telephone follow-up activities • Mail survey administration and telephone interviews must be conducted from the physical place of business, not from a residence or virtual office. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vendors can request CMS' approval for remote operations by submitting an Exceptions Request Form (ERF) as part of the vendor application process.

Criteria	
Data Processing and File Submission	<p>Must have capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan or key data from completed mail surveys • Develop data files and edit the data according to standard protocols • Follow all data reporting and data submission requirements, including verifying that data files are de-identified and contain no duplicate cases • 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. • Encrypt data files for transmission per specifications • Submit data electronically in the specified format (XML) to the ACO REACH CAHPS secure data warehouse • Work with CMS' data warehouse contractor to resolve issues or problems with data submission or data files
Data Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute and maintain a contract and business associate agreement (BAA) with REACH Accountable Care Organization (REACH ACO) client and receive their authorization to collect data associated with their patients on their behalf. • Store returned paper surveys in a secure and environmentally safe location (e.g., locked file cabinet, closet, or room) • Utilize firewalls and/or other mechanisms to protect electronic files • Employ electronic security via implementation of access levels and passwords • Implement daily data back-up procedures that safeguard system data • Utilize required encryption protocols for transmitting data files • Develop procedures for identifying, reporting and handling breaches of confidential data • Data custodian must be accountable for all data security for data collection
Data Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain all ACO REACH CAHPS data files for vendor oversight and audit purposes.
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Quality Assurance Plan, describe HIPAA-compliant procedures to be undertaken regarding confidentiality and disclosure. • Store ACO REACH CAHPS data files (paper and electronic) securely and confidentially in accordance with requirements specified in the Quality Assurance Guidelines • Sign CMS' Data Use Agreement (DUA) to receive the sample file containing beneficiary information. The sample file comes from CMS' Medicare information.

Criteria	
Customer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide toll-free customer support telephone lines during regular business hours (to be established the date of the pre-notification mailing through the end of data collection) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage an inbound Help Desk ○ Offer customer support in English and Spanish ○ Respond to calls within 24-48 hours ○ Provide the ability to quickly start a CATI interview with an inbound caller who is ready to complete their interview (within working hours) ○ Establish email Help Desk and respond to email inquiries
<i>Adherences to Quality Assurance Guidelines and Participation in Quality Assurance Activities</i>	
Demonstrated Quality Control Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Quality Assurance Plan by specified due date, describing vendor survey implementation protocols as required throughout this MBR document, and also describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrated ability to conduct well-documented quality control procedures (as applicable) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-house training of staff involved in survey operations ▪ Printing, mailing, and recording or receipt of mail surveys ▪ Telephone administration of survey (CATI system) ▪ Coding and editing of survey data and survey-related materials ▪ Scanning or keying in survey data ▪ Preparing final record-level data files for submission ▪ All other functions and processes that impact the administration of the ACO REACH CAHPS • Participate in conference calls and site visits as scheduled by the Project Team as part of mandatory quality oversight activities

Criteria	
<i>Documentation Requirements</i>	
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"> • Keep electronic or hard copy files of staff training and dates • Maintain electronic or hard copy records of interviewer monitoring activities • Maintain electronic or hard copy records of survey mailing dates and dates of returned surveys • Maintain other documentation necessary to allow the ACO REACH CAHPS Project Team to review survey protocol implementation during site visits • Maintain documentation of actions required (and implemented) as a result of remote site visit findings by the Project Team
<i>Survey Training</i>	
Survey Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and successfully complete ACO REACH CAHPS Training Sessions • The following staff from vendor and subcontractor organizations must attend (at a minimum), as applicable for staff role(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Manager ○ Telephone Survey Supervisor ○ Mail Survey Supervisor ○ Project staff member(s) responsible for the following functions: <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 ○ The vendor’s project manager must pass a post-training quiz measuring comprehension of ACO REACH CAHPS protocols ○ Participate in additional ACO REACH CAHPS Training Sessions, if required
Vendor Approval Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey vendor approval is for 1 Performance Year. Approval as a survey vendor in prior Performance Years doesn’t guarantee future approval.
Administer the Survey According to All Survey Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must review and follow all procedures described in the ACO REACH CAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines • Must agree to all conditions in the Vendor Application