

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL TRUSTEE FOR AMERICAN INDIANS

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Users Report High Levels of Satisfaction with Debit Card Program Pilot

An independent survey of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians' (OST) debit card pilot program revealed an overall satisfaction rating of 77 percent among users. OST began enrolling beneficiaries in December 2007. The program was expanded to nationwide coverage in September 2008. As of December 31, 2008, more than \$3 million of trust funds had been disbursed through debit cards to Indian trust beneficiaries.

"We are reaching our target population," said Special Trustee Ross Swimmer. "Ninety-five percent of the beneficiaries who signed up during the program pilot were receiving disbursements by paper checks before switching to the debit card option."

The debit card option was offered as a safer and more convenient way for Indian trust beneficiaries to receive trust income. Sixty-six percent of those who signed up for the program during the pilot did not have bank accounts. Receiving disbursements by check typically meant they incurred check cashing fees.

An analysis of the survey of users who signed up during the pilot showed:

- 82 percent were "extremely" or "very" satisfied with the enrollment process (includes 72 percent extremely satisfied and 10 percent very satisfied, the top two of five categories)
- 77 percent were "extremely" or "very" satisfied with the overall program (includes 64 percent extremely satisfied and 13 percent very satisfied, the top two of five categories)
- 78 percent would recommend the program to others (includes 66 percent who would "definitely" recommend and 12 percent who would "probably" recommend the program to others; the top two of five categories)
- 71 percent reported zero problems using the card

JP Morgan Chase Bank, who provides the debit card service to OST beneficiaries, arranged for an outside contractor to conduct the survey.

Beneficiaries can enroll in the debit card program at OST field office locations through their Fiduciary Trust Officers or through OST's Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC), which complements local services with trained operators who have access to various trust systems. The TBCC telephone number is 1-888-678-6836. It is staffed Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to noon, Mountain Time.

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The mission of OST is to perform our fiduciary trust responsibilities to American Indian tribes, individual Indians and Alaska Natives by incorporating a beneficiary focus and beneficiary participation while providing effective, competent stewardship and management of trust assets.