

Response to OMB Comments on 1820-NEW Focus Group Input from Individuals with Disabilities and Targeted Individuals

January 17, 2007

1. Part B of the Instructions for Completing OMB Form 83-1 refers to those studies in which variables are measured and statistical analysis is used to determine the probability to which a given hypothesis is either true or untrue. For those studies, item #17 (“Does this item contain statistical methods?”) would necessarily be checked. With regard to focus group methodology, hypotheses are not given, variables are not measured, and statistical analysis is not conducted. The qualitative data that is obtained from focus groups is analyzed using qualitative analysis software in order to identify common themes, issues, and experiences. Using these methods, we can gain an understanding of peoples’ lived experiences as well as how systems interact and impact their current situations. This knowledge is extremely valuable in and of itself. It also allows for subsequent hypothesis development in terms of further research in numerous areas.

With regard to sample selection, focus group participants are not selected randomly, but are chosen with the use of the participant screening forms to insure diversity within each focus group and across focus groups. We aim for diversity with regard to type of disability, level of impairment, ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, level of education, occupation, marital status. This allows for a rich data set that includes a variety of life experiences among people with disabilities in the U.S. As to focus group size, we rely on the consensus of social science researchers regarding the accepted standard for focus group methodology. Having conducted numerous focus groups in the past, we have found that 8 to 12 participants is optimal for creating a positive group dynamic in which every participant can feel comfortable and motivated to share their knowledge, concerns, and experiences.

2. Supporting statement has been updated and the title has been corrected. See attached.

3. The 2003 and 2005 focus groups were conducted under OMB control #1800-0011.

4. The information will not be shared publicly. The information gained through these focus groups, however, will be an integral part of the ICDR’s deliberative process in shaping the federal disability research agenda. The legislation establishing the ICDR (U.S. Code Collection, Title 29, Chapter 16, General Provisions, Sec. 763) notes the following duties of the ICDR:

(a) Duties

(1) After receiving input from targeted individuals, the Committee shall identify, assess, and seek to coordinate all Federal programs, activities, and projects, and plans for such programs, activities, and projects with respect to the conduct of research (including AT research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design) related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.

(2) In carrying out its duties with respect to the conduct of Federal research (including AT research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design) related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the Committee shall -

(A) share information regarding the range of AT research, and research that incorporates the principles of universal design, that is being carried out by members of the Committee and other Federal departments and organizations;

(B) identify, and make efforts to address, gaps in AT research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design that are not being adequately addressed;

(C) identify, and establish, clear research priorities related to AT research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design for the Federal Government;

(D) promote interagency collaboration and joint research activities relating to AT research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design at the Federal level, and reduce unnecessary duplication of effort regarding these types of research within the Federal Government; and

(E) optimize the productivity of Committee members through resource sharing and other cost-saving activities, related to AT research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design.

The planned focus group questions will give ICDR members an opportunity to hear from a variety of real-life users of AT. These focus groups will be organized in such a way to aim for diversity with regard to type of disability, level of impairment, ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, level of education, occupation, and marital status. This allows for a rich data set that includes a variety of life experiences among people with disabilities in the U.S.

5. We have found in the previous years' focus groups that most participants rely on paratransit or public transportation in order to attend. Travel time for the majority has often been an hour or more each way. Because of the unreliability that people with disabilities face with both of these systems in many regions of the country, a number of participants experienced a range of unexpected transportation difficulties because the location chosen happened to be on a route they were not accustomed to. Given these issues, we determined that a \$50 honorarium would compensate them more adequately than a lesser amount.

6. The same focus group guide will be used in each of the 12 focus groups this year. The following table lists planned focus group topics and regions:

2007	2008	2009
<p>Earthquake: Western U.S.</p> <p>Flood: Coastal areas and river systems</p> <p>Hurricane: Southeast U.S.</p> <p>Terrorism: Medium to large cities, industrial areas, main transportation hubs</p> <p>Tornado: Central U.S.</p> <p>Industrial Accident (oil refineries, chemical processing plants, etc): (Gulf coast, various locations throughout the U.S.)</p>	<p>Volcanic Eruption: Pacific Northwest</p> <p>Wildfire: Western U.S.</p> <p>Terrorism: Medium to large cities, industrial areas, main transportation hubs</p> <p>Coast flooding/storm surge/tsunami: Any coastal area</p> <p>Civil Unrest: Medium to large cities</p> <p>Hurricane: Southeast U.S.</p>	<p>Earthquake: Western U.S.</p> <p>Flood: Coastal areas and river systems</p> <p>Tornado: Central U.S.</p> <p>Wildfire: Western U.S.</p> <p>Dam Failure: Various locations on major rivers</p> <p>Industrial Accident (oil refineries, chemical processing plants, etc): (Gulf coast, various locations throughout the U.S.)</p>

7. NIDRR will ask the same questions from the same group identified in the recruitment strategy (section II) in all three years. The administration of the focus groups will not change from year to year.

8. Minors will no longer be included in the focus groups. The minimum age for participation will be 21 years old. The implementation plan and screening form will be changed to reflect this prior to our contacting any potential groups or individuals.

9. The screening form information is collected prior to participant selection in order to insure diversity within each focus group and across focus groups. We aim for diversity with regard to type of disability, level of impairment, ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, level of education, occupation, and marital status. This allows for a rich data set that includes a variety of life experiences among people with disabilities in the U.S. This approach to participant selections is recommended and standard procedure in qualitative research when collecting qualitative data from individuals participating in focus groups or in depth interviews.

10. In the supporting statement we will include mention of the \$600 payment to the local coordinator as part of the incentive discussion. Through our past experience in conducting focus groups, both in this study and in others, we have determined that \$600 is a reasonable compensation for the tasks involved in the role of local coordinator. We have found that, because of the time and effort involved in each task, it is often difficult to interest a director of a local disability organization to collaborate with us and either act as a local coordinator or appoint someone in their organization to do so. We have also found that this amount of compensation puts us in a position to request timely completion of the local coordinator's necessary tasks. We are often told that the fee is subsequently spent on the organization's needed improvements or programs.

11. In all focus group materials and at the focus group, we will inform participants that we will protect their privacy in accordance with applicable laws.

12. We will remove the words "some other race" from the screening form options.