

## **Employed Teens Focus Groups Implementation Plan**

### **Purpose**

- Explore what working teens perceptions of usefulness and their satisfaction with the current set of Wage and Hour Division's (WHD) education and outreach materials.
- Obtain teens' opinions of the education and outreach materials and suggestions for changes.

### **Overview**

Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG), WHD's subcontractor for this project, will organize two 2-hour focus groups, each involving approximately 10 employed youths, ages 14-17. Both groups will be held in the Boston, MA area<sup>1</sup>. Participants will be recruited through contacting guidance counselors at local public high schools. Focus group attendees will each receive a \$50 stipend for participating.

ERG conducted a pilot test of the employed teen focus group on May 27, 2008 at Waltham High School in Waltham, MA. The guidance counselor at Waltham High was asked to recruit nine or fewer students to participate for this focus group. A total of six students attended the focus group after submitting a parental consent form developed by school staff. ERG staff conducted the pilot test of the focus group based on draft version of this plan. This version of the implementation plan reflects the experience of conducting this pilot test.

### **Recruitment**

#### ***Recruitment Plan***

ERG will recruit participants for the focus groups by contacting guidance counselors at local high schools. ERG has selected two local towns as targets: Waltham, MA and Lowell, MA. ERG expects that these towns will provide teens that are sufficiently representative for purposes of these focus groups.

Waltham, MA is a suburb of Boston (10 miles west) with a population of 59,000 (83 percent Caucasian, and 4 percent African-American; 9 percent of all races consider themselves Hispanic).<sup>2</sup> In the 2000 Census, Waltham was reported to have a median household income of \$54,010 (MA median household income was \$50,502). Furthermore, the Job Placement Coordinator at Waltham High School has agreed to help ERG in identifying students interested in participating in the teen focus group.

Lowell, MA is a small city located 30 miles north-west of Boston. According to the 2000 Census, 105,000 people live in Lowell (68 percent Caucasian, 17 percent Asian, and 4 percent African-American; 14 percent of all races consider themselves Hispanic). In the 2000

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<sup>1</sup> ERG's two current prospective locations are Waltham, MA and Lowell, MA.

<sup>2</sup> All numbers are based on the 2000 Census.

Census, Lowell was reported to have a median household income of \$39,192 (MA median household income was \$50,502). ERG has a personal contact with a guidance counselor at Lowell High School who has agreed to assist in recruitment of teens for this project.

ERG will aim to create focus groups that are equally divided between 14- to 15-year-olds and 16- to 17-year-olds, as well as between boys and girls.

The composition of the teen focus group is not intended to be representative of all employed teens. For this reason, ERG will not recruit specifically for geography, race, family income, or type of employment held. .

ERG will develop a parental consent form and have each teen involved obtain a signature from his/her parents prior to participating in the group. The consent form will explain the purpose of the group and that each participant will be compensated for participation.

### ***Recruitment Materials***

ERG will create a flyer to inform employed teens of the opportunity to participate in the focus group, including the stipend amount. ERG will provide copies to the high schools from which students will be recruited and will include PDF files of the flyer in the recruiting emails sent to potential participants.

## **Logistics**

### ***Schedule***

ERG will hold the focus groups during the late spring or early summer of 2009.

### ***Location***

ERG will hold the focus groups at high schools or at local youth organization locations that agree to participate in the project. If the schools or other organizations do not have facilities, ERG will use hotel meeting spaces. ERG will provide snacks and drinks to focus group participants.

## **Protocol**

### ***Script***

The focus group facilitators' script and discussion questions are included in Appendix A.

### ***Education and Outreach Materials to be Reviewed***

Each focus group will spend time to review child labor outreach and education materials, including:

- <http://www.youthrules.dol.gov> (using a projector or other large screen, or 2-3 laptop computers) web site
- “Employer’s Pocket Guide on Youth Employment” brochure
- “Jobs Youth May Perform”, “Youth Rules!” and “Federal Youth Employment Laws” posters
- “What Jobs Can I Do? When Can I Work?” bookmark
- “Stop: You Must Be 18 to Operate or Clean this Equipment” sticker.

Each Teen Focus Group participant will receive a folder of child labor outreach and education materials to take home with them. The folders will include:

- “Employer’s Pocket Guide on Youth Employment” brochure
- “Jobs Youth May Perform”, “Youth Rules!” and “Federal Youth Employment Laws” posters
- “What Jobs Can I Do? When Can I Work?” bookmark
- “Stop: You Must Be 18 to Operate or Clean this Equipment” sticker.

***Protocol for Handling Disclosure of Violations by Teens***

If a teen focus group participant mentions a violation or potential violation of Child Labor laws, the focus group facilitators will refer the participant to the WHD Northeast Region Child Labor Coordinator Maggie McDonald in Boston, MA or provide the child with the WHD toll free hotline number.

**Post-Focus Group Actions**

ERG will send a thank-you letter to each participant, in which ERG will invite them to share any additional suggestions they might have on the web site and outreach materials.

## **Appendix A**

### **Employed Teen Focus Group Script**

Participants: Group of ~10 teens (14-17 yrs old)

Duration: 1-2 hours

#### ***Questions and Schedule***

##### **Pre-Session**

Greet participants as they arrive, offer them snacks, let them know where the restrooms are, and give them a short handout. A few minutes before beginning the session, gather the participants and encourage them to choose a seat.

##### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Welcome participants (2 minutes).
  - Hello everyone, thank you for taking time to help us with our study. My name is [Facilitator name], and I work for Eastern Research Group, Inc. We are doing a study on youth employment to help the government improve the materials they have created to help parents, employers and teens understand labor law and keep teens safe on the job.
  - We need your help. We want to know what you think about some of the pamphlets, factsheets and other materials that the Federal government in Washington, DC has put together. We will show you these materials and we'll discuss the things that you like and don't like about the materials. Also, be aware that there really are no right or wrong answers here. You won't hurt our feelings if you tell us you think something is terrible! We didn't develop these things, someone else did. We also want to figure out how to make these materials better, or even what other things would work better. We're trying to help the people in Washington come up with materials that will be useful to teens like yourself. In reality, you guys are helping us come up with new materials that could be used all across the country!
  - Keep in mind that we will not share any identifying information about you or your employer with anyone, and if we write about anything you say here today, we will make sure your comments are anonymous and can't be linked to you or your employer. To help us with this, we encourage you to speak about your job in general terms, like "cashier at a fast food restaurant." We don't need to know the name of the business.
  - Brief discussion of ground rules
  - Are there any questions before we begin?

- Briefly review handout (3 minutes)
  - Okay, let me draw your attention to the handout you received when you arrived, does everyone have a copy? You may already be familiar with this information, but let's take a moment to review just to be sure that everyone is on the same page. The chart at the top of the page describes the number of hours you can work during the school year or during summer, and also describes jobs that you are not allowed to do, usually referred to as "Hazardous Occupations." These are jobs that the government has decided are too risky for young workers to do, there is a list of them below the chart.
  - When you talk about your job, it's okay if something you describe isn't allowed by the rules. We're not concerned with whether or not something you did on the job was legal, and we are not going to report you or your employer.
  - Does anyone have any questions about the hazardous occupations or the equipment listed on the handout?
- Have participants introduce themselves (5 minutes).
  - Now you all know who I am and why we're here today so let's take a minute for you to introduce yourselves. Please tell the group your first name, or the name you prefer to go by if you have a nickname. Then tell us where you work – again, you don't need to give us the name of your employer, you can just describe them in general terms. For example, if you work for McDonald's, you can tell the group that you work for "a fast food restaurant."

**Work Experiences (10 minutes):**

*[Note: the purpose of these questions is to get the students into "talking" mode. Up this point in the group, our facilitator will have dominated the conversation. These first few questions work to transition the talking role from the facilitator to the students by giving the students a set of topics/questions that should be non-threatening and relatively simple for them to discuss.]*

- Let's start by talking about why everyone decided to get a job. What made you decide to start working?
- Tell me what you like about having a job.
- What kind of information, if any, did your employer give you about what you're allowed and not allowed to do given your age?
- Did you talk to your parents about what kinds of jobs you're allowed and not allowed to do?
- What kind of information, if any, did you receive from your guidance counselor or other educator about what you're allowed and not allowed to do given you age?

**Evaluation of Materials (45 minutes):**

- [Provide copies of material to each student] Have you ever seen any of these materials, maybe during work training or at school?
  - If a coworker asked you to slice some tomatoes using a meat slicer with this sticker [show sticker] on it, how would you react? Do you think the sticker would affect their decision to ask you?

- For each item, ask:
  - Students to briefly review the material.
  - How useful do you think this item is?
  - How the item could be changed to make it more useful or informative.
- How would seeing these materials or signs change how you do your job, if at all?
- If you were in charge of teaching teens about teen employment rules, how would you do it?
  - Would you create posters/bookmarks? How would they be different?
- [Bring up [www.youthrules.dol.gov](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov) web site on computer screen] This is the YouthRules! Web site, which the Department of Labor has created to inform you about your rights as an employee.
  - What are some reasons, if any, you might search for information on this site?
  - [Go through the main page, the hours page, and the page on what jobs teens can work.]
  - What do you think is useful about the site? Not useful?
  - If you were in charge of creating a web site to inform other teens about teen employment rules, what would the site need to include? What design features and information?

**Concluding comments** (5 minutes)

- Summarize comments for participants.
- Thank participants for their comments.
- Give participants outreach packet and reimbursement.