

2007

December 12,

“Race & Ethnicity” Project Discussion Guide

Introduction/Ground Rules

- Welcome
- Review Structure of discussion
- Value of your input
- Encourage interaction among participants
- Paperwork Reduction Act - Tell participants 1) the focus groups will take an estimate 90 minutes to complete and 2) if they want to submit comments about that estimate, you will tell them at the end how to do so (see end for PRA Statement text).

Application Process

- How many of you had to apply for something from the government (state, local or federal) within the last 2 years?
- What type of information did they ask you on the application?
- Do you recall having to provide demographic information?
- *Probe for types of demographic information, If all participants say no, ask, “What if the application asked for demographic information, would you feel comfortable providing this information?”*
- *If they recalled providing demographic information, ask: Did you feel comfortable providing this information?*

Impression of the Questionnaire

I am going to show you a document and ask that you read it and we will discuss in a few minutes.

For this part of the discussion, consider that you are a person who is applying for Social Security benefits. These could include retirement, disability, or survivors benefits (which may be paid to certain family members after a person who has worked and paid Social Security taxes has died), or they could include Supplemental Security Income payments to persons who are aged, blind or disabled.

Give them copies of the R&E questions (be sure to collect at the end of the focus group)

- Based on what is said on this form, what is your understanding of why Social Security is asking about your race and ethnicity?
- Are the reasons we need to collect race and ethnicity information clear to you? Is the explanatory material sufficient? Is it clear?
- What does “informational and statistical purposes” mean to you?
- Do you think the public will understand why we are collecting this information (even with the explanatory material)?
 - The form says, “Answering these questions is voluntary and will not influence the decision on your application.”
 - Do you believe that this statement is true?
 - How comfortable do you feel answering asking these questions? Scale 1 to10. 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable. *Participants will be asked to give their rating and the reason.*
 - How could we change this form to make you more comfortable?
- What is your impression of the design and layout of this questionnaire?

Understanding the Questionnaire

Explain the purpose of the document and when in the interview process SSA anticipates collecting this information, and ask the following:

- What problems do you foresee with this information collection process?
- When would be the best time to collect this information from the applicant (during the pre-interview, during the interview or at the close of the interview)?

Improvements to the Questionnaire

- How would you improve this questionnaire? What improvements would you make?
- Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to add about this questionnaire?

Closing

Thank you for time and participation. You've provided valuable input for this project.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

(If someone wants to comment, then tell them the OMB number and read the Paperwork Reduction Act statement):

"Paperwork Reduction Act Statement - This discussion meets the requirements of 44 U.S.C. § 3507, as amended by section 2 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. You do not need to participate unless we provide a valid Office of Management and Budget control number. We estimated that it would take about 90 minutes to complete the discussion. You may send comments on our time estimate to: SSA, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235-6401. Send to this address only comments relating to our time estimate."