

Addendum to Attachment B:

Tax Preparer Confirmation and
Follow-up Documentation



An Employee-Owned
Research Corporation

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OMB No. 1545-1349

[DATE]

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our IRS-website research study. This letter includes details to remind you when and where to appear for your research session. The website research session, geared toward tax professionals who might use the IRS website to search for Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) regulations and policies, professional filing requirements, and information about determining eligibility for clients, should take about an hour and a half. We are asking professional tax preparers to help us explore and evaluate the IRS.gov website so we can learn what the experience is like when you look for information about EITC on the IRS site. We would also like to get your feedback about ways that IRS may improve access to information about EITC on their website.

To thank you for your time, we will give you \$200 cash for your participation.

DATE: [DATE]

TIME: [TIME]

LOCATION: Westat—5th Floor Conference Center Room H
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850
(301) 251-1500

Directions and a map are enclosed.

Please plan to arrive a few minutes prior to the above time to check-in with our project staff. Please allow sufficient time for travel as we want to begin on time. We will have a parking space reserved for you in the Westat Conference Center parking lot.

If you need further information, please call me toll free at the Westat office at 1-800-937-8281, extension 2651, or on my cell phone at 240-620-1315 (this is a toll call if made outside the DC area). If something comes up and you cannot arrive at the appointed time, it is essential that you call and let us know. It is important that we speak to all the people with whom we've arranged research sessions. Your impressions and opinions are central to the study.

We look forward to seeing you and thank you in advance for your input.

Sincerely,

Debra Stark
Study Recruiting Manager

IRS Task Order 11—Tax Preparer Telephone Reminder Script

Hello, is this [Name]?

This is [NAME] from Westat, calling to remind you about the IRS/EITC website evaluation session you agreed to participate in.

Your session will be held tomorrow, [DATE] on the 5th floor of Westat's Conference Center, 1600 Research Boulevard, Room 5H, Rockville, Maryland.

If you need additional directions to the facility, or find that you will *not* be able to attend, please call Martha Popovic at **240.314.5897**.

If you have any *other* questions, or want to know more details about this study, please feel free to contact Debra Stark during the workday at 240.453.261 (a toll call) or toll-free at 1.800 WESTAT 1 ext. 2651 (1.800.937.8281 ext. 2651). At other times, you may call her cell—240.620.1315.

We thank you in advance for your input into this evaluation session--please plan to arrive a few minutes early for check-in. There will be a space marked "IRS Study" in the Conference Center parking lot. There will be a cash thank-you (\$200) for your participation.

Thank you.

[NOTE: Recruiters will refer to the FAQs on the next page as needed during this reminder call.]

IRS TO 11 Tax Preparer Recruit
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

OMB No. 1545-1349

General Questions

What is the purpose of this study? What is this survey about?

The IRS is conducting this study to learn what it's like for Professional tax preparers who might be expected to use www.irs.gov to search for Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) regulations and policies, professional filing requirements, and detailed information about determining eligibility for their clients in special circumstances (e.g., for a taxpayer who receives disability benefits.) We would like to know if you are still interested in helping us evaluate the IRS website and giving your feedback about how you think it works.

Who do you work for?

I work for Westat, a survey research firm in the Washington, DC area, and we have been contracted by the IRS to conduct this study.

How will the study results be used? / What will you do with this information?

The IRS will use the study results to help improve the functionality of the IRS website, so that tax professionals such as you can access the information you need to assist taxpayers inquiring about this tax refund program.

Will results be made available? / May I know the results of the survey?

The results will be available some months from now. We will see if the IRS will be able to mail you a copy of the results. [COLLECT NAME & ADDRESS, FILL OUT PROBLEM SHEET.]

Privacy

How do I know you will keep this information private? / How will the results be published?

We are required by law not to reveal any identifying information other than to persons directly involved with the study. No information that would permit the identification of any individual will be released or published. Furthermore, Westat will not give any identifying information about you to the IRS.

Will doing/not doing this study subject me to a Due Diligence examination or compliance audit?

Because this study is not mandatory, your participation or non-participation will not affect you as a tax preparer. However, you represent other professionals in this field. Your participation is important because you are actually speaking for them, as well as yourself.

Refusals

Do I have to do this? / Do I have to attend the session? / I don't want to do this.

It is not mandatory that you participate, but your input and opinions are very important to the success of this study. You represent a lot of other people in the tax preparation field, and you are speaking for them, as well as yourself.

I think this whole business is stupid. The federal government could better spend this money.

[INTERVIEWERS: Occasionally you will encounter argumentative respondents. In spite of their seemingly hostile questions, they tend to be interested in the study, but want to explain their feelings before consenting to participate. Hear them out! As long as they keep talking, they have not refused to participate. Do not argue. Simply make short, neutral comments to let them know you are listening.]

How long will this take? I'm too busy.

You should allow an hour and a half for the session.

Take me off your list. You cannot call me according to the "No Call" law.

I'm not trying to sell you anything. I understand that you might think I work for a telemarketing company, however, survey research telephone calls are not prohibited or regulated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Our aim is to encourage you to participate in our study, not to sell you anything. The information you provide will be used exclusively for research purposes.

I need more information about the study before I'll participate or any questions. Send me something in writing.

The study is for tax preparers who might use the IRS website to search for information about EITC regulations and policies, professional filing requirements, and detailed information about determining eligibility for their clients in special circumstances (e.g., for a taxpayer who receives disability benefits.) All of your answers will be kept private and participation is voluntary.

[IF RESPONDENT INSISTS ON SOMETHING IN WRITING]: We will send you a letter which will explain the purpose of this study. May I verify your name and address? Please allow one week for this letter to arrive. We will need to re-schedule your session.

Selection of Respondents

How did you get my name? / How did you get my address? / How did you get my phone number?

Your name was picked at random from a list of tax preparers in the Washington, DC area who represent third-party paid or volunteer professionals who have filed for EITC on behalf of their clients.

Why don't you call someone else?

Your name was picked at random from a list of tax preparers in the Washington, DC area who represent third-party paid or volunteer professionals who have filed for EITC on behalf of their clients. Please take a few moments to consider attending the session.

Legitimacy of the Survey

What is the authority/sponsor for this study?

The IRS has contracted with Westat to collect this information and answer any questions you might have.

Who can I call at the IRS to verify this study?

You may contact Mary O'Brien in the Earned Income Tax Credit Office at the IRS. She can be reached by email at Mary.J.O'Brien@irs.gov or by phone at 202/622-9609. This is not a toll-free call.

How do I know the study is legitimate? / How can I make sure this is really a study?

If you wish, you can call the recruiting manager at 1-800937-8281 ext 2651. This is a toll-free call.

Does this survey have approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)? / What is the OMB number?

Yes, the OMB number is 1545-1349.

Study Content

What is the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit, also known as the EITC or EIC, is a tax credit for certain people who work and have earned income below roughly \$42,000. If they qualify for the credit, it can reduce the amount of tax that filers owe or increase the size of their tax refund.

What kinds of questions will you ask me?

You are invited to participate in this session because you are a professional or volunteer tax preparer who might be expected to use www.irs.gov to search for EITC regulations and policies, professional filing requirements, and detailed information about determining eligibility for your clients in special circumstances (e.g., for a taxpayer who receives disability benefits.) This is your opportunity to evaluate the IRS site and provide insights into how the site might be made more accessible and useful for tax professionals such as you. I think you'll find the session interesting.

Can you help me with a problem I'm having with one of my tax cases?

Westat has been hired by the IRS specifically to conduct this study. We cannot represent the IRS in any other matters. I can give you a telephone number at the IRS that you can call for assistance with your problem or to find out more information. You can find a phone number for your local IRS office at <http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html>