

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Baseline Federal Student Aid Awareness Survey- Long Beach, California

SURVEY FOCUS GROUP SOFTWARE USABILITY TESTING

DESCRIPTION OF THIS SPECIFIC COLLECTION

1. Intended Purpose

In July and August 2005, the U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) conducted a baseline study among high school students and parents to determine public awareness of FSA's role in helping individuals and their families meet the rising costs of postsecondary education. This was undertaken prior to a national outreach campaign begun in 2007 using public service announcements (PSAs), other media materials designed to increase such awareness, and a redesigned web site. Baseline awareness was assessed through a national telephone survey of a random sample of high school students and their parents, using a questionnaire that took an average of 8 minutes to complete.

The program factors assessed in this baseline focused on:

- Awareness of the resources that the Department of Education and FSA provide to help individuals pay for education beyond high school
- Knowledge about the process of applying for aid, including awareness of the FAFSA as the starting point
- Prevailing attitudes about borrowing money for school and the perceived personal and social value represented by the government's involvement in the loan process

While a national follow-up survey began in July 2008 to assess changes in awareness and accompanying attitudes the purpose of the proposed survey is to focus on one urban primarily Hispanic community (Long Beach, California) where FSA is working with community-based organizations and area schools to achieve similar goals. This survey (essentially the same as the national follow-up survey) will serve as a baseline among Long Beach high school students, prior to the start of the Long Beach community activities/efforts that will begin in October 2008.

2. Need for the Collection

This collection of information is necessary for FSA to obtain program performance measures as required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. GPRA was enacted to improve confidence in government by holding Federal agencies accountable for program results; to measure program performance against goals and

report on progress; to improve program effectiveness by focusing on results; to provide managers with information about program results as part of efforts to meet program objectives; to provide Congress with objective information on the effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs and spending; and to improve internal management of the Federal Government.

The President's Management Agenda (2002), which calls for government to become citizen-centered, results-oriented and market-based, further focused efforts on improving government performance. As such, programs must "focus on results" and provide evidence of success in order to obtain continued funding. The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) sets out a process for agencies to conduct assessments of key programs. A PART review identifies program strengths and weaknesses that impact its effectiveness and informs budget recommendations.

To meet these performance measurement requirements for program improvement, the office of Federal Student Aid proposes to collect baseline measures/benchmarks with this survey; subsequently, after conducting outreach efforts in Long Beach, the office of Federal Student Aid will conduct a follow-up survey. (The follow up survey is expected to be conducted in August 2009, but is not yet funded and is not included in this request for data collection.) The specific program goals, contained within the Department of Education's Performance Plan, include helping ensure access to high-quality postsecondary education by providing financial aid in the form of grants, loans, and work-study in an efficient, financially sound and customer-responsive manner.

Note that the national follow-up survey cannot provide sufficient reach to serve as a baseline measure in Long Beach. Even with augmentation, it could not reasonably provide the targeted reach needed in the Long Beach community.

3. Planned Use of the Data

The proposed data collection will be used as a baseline measure for FSA program activities implemented in Long Beach. The survey results will provide the office of Federal Student Aid with initial measures of knowledge and awareness with constituents in Long Beach. Specifically, the data will provide baseline measures of 1) awareness of Federal resources to help pay for postsecondary education; 2) knowledge about how to apply for Federal aid; and 3) attitudes toward student loans and the Federal role in the loan process.

4. Dates and Location

The survey will commence upon approval by OMB. The survey will be conducted by Macro International, a survey research firm using local area interviewer(s). Interviewers will approach youth in public places in Long Beach (shopping malls, parks, recreation centers) randomly and conduct what are known as intercept interviews. Intercept interviews are a recognized approach in survey research ideally suited to localized efforts.

5. Collection Procedures

The contractor will conduct intercept surveys among high school students, regardless of the student's intent to attend college. The contractor will locate areas in Long Beach where high school-age students gather (several shopping areas, parks and other public areas have been suggested by those who work with youth in the area) and approach youths to reach respondents aged 13-18 who attended high school in the Long Beach Unified School District in the year ending in June 2008. Efforts will be made to reach Hispanic youth in approximate proportion to their enrollment and the interviewer(s) will be bi-lingual and able to conduct the survey in the respondent's preferred language. (As high school students, Hispanic youth are expected to be fluent in English; however, some youth are expected to prefer a Spanish-language interview.) However, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic youth will be included in the survey. (In 2007-2008 46.4 percent of high school students in Long Beach were Hispanic.¹)

Additional discussion of the stratification and sampling is included below under **Statistical Information.**

Procedures: Surveys will be conducted using intercept interviews with students who were in high school during the previous school year as the survey will be conducted in the summer, when school is not in session.

The survey will be translated into Spanish and administered in Spanish as required.

6. Number of Surveys

There will be 160 completed surveys from students. This will provide estimates of change in the population at or exceeding 85 percent power.

7. Description of Respondents

The contractor will approach youth with a high likelihood of being 13-18 years old and further screen the individuals to make sure they were high school students in the Long Beach Unified School District in the year ending June 2008. If there is more than one high school student in a group approached, separate interviews will be conducted with as many respondents as feasible.

All respondents will be advised of the nature of the activity, the length of time it will require, that participation is purely voluntary, and that responses will be confidential. The

¹ Derived from data provided by California Department of Education (DataQuest), 2007-08, Long Beach Unified School District: (<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DstEnrAll.asp?cYear=2007-08&cChoice=DstEnrAll&cSelect=1964725--LONGBEACHUNIFIED&Level=District&myTimeFrame=S&cTopic=Enrollment&cLevel=District&TheName=long^beach>)

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contractor, Macro International, complies with Department and Health and Human Services regulations for the protection of human subjects (45 CFR 46). Thus, an Institutional Review Board will review this research for compliance, as required.

AMOUNT OF ANY PROPOSED STIPEND OR INCENTIVE

An incentive valued at \$5 (in the form of a gift card to McDonalds, Starbucks or similar) is proposed.

BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION (*Number of responses (X) estimated response or participation time in minutes (/60) = annual burden hours*):

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Students	160	9 minutes	24 hours

BURDEN COST COMPUTATION

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Hourly Rate	Response Time	Total
Students	160	\$8.00*	24 hours	\$192

* The minimum wage in California is \$8.00 per hour effective January 1, 2008. <http://www.dir.ca.gov/iwc/minwage2007.pdf>.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Sample Size. A sample of 160 high school students will provide sufficient power to assess changes from the pretest (to be conducted in August 2008) to the posttest (anticipated in August 2009) based on an assumed increase in basic awareness of the Department of Education’s role in student financial aid. This is a substantial change in awareness but one that seems reasonable given the promotional efforts that will be undertaken in Long Beach and their support by multiple community based organizations as well as the Long Beach Unified School District, California State University – Long Beach, and Long Beach City College. For example, given a conservative estimate of change in the mid range (from 42.5% awareness to 57.5% awareness) a sample of 160 will allow us to detect a difference with 85 percent power with a one-tailed test of significance at $p < .05$. (A one-tailed test is suitable given a projected increase in awareness, rather than a change in either direction.) Using a less conservative estimate (a change from 20 percent awareness to 35% awareness) the power increases to 91.5 percent with a one-tailed of significance at $p < .05$.

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Services