

Response to OMB Questions on the SOAR Focus Groups

1. Please submit all the materials that will be sent to the participants (e.g. recruitment letters, informed consent forms, etc.). Generally speaking, you should submit everything to OMB that the respondent will be seeing.

The participants will be contacted with a letter at their place of work, and draft copies of the proposed recruitment letter and follow-up letter are attached. There are no plans to obtain informed consent, because this activity is not designed as a research project defined under 45 CFR Part 46; therefore, the participants are not considered human subjects or participants in a research activity. Individuals will be participating at work in their capacity as case managers and will provide opinions on the training received as part of their occupation. No personal information or information about their personal lives will be collected from participants.

2. Will the final report be shared outside the agency, or will the formal report be used for internal agency improvement purposes only (e.g. to improve the SOAR training and TA)? The latter would be an appropriate use of a generic IC, but the former may be a little problematic. There is a fine line between customer satisfaction surveys and evaluations, and sometimes the supporting statement for this IC sounds like an evaluation. However, if the results will only be used internally, then OMB would be more inclined to view this activity as a customer satisfaction survey.

The results from the focus group activity will be used for internal agency improvement purposes, to identify areas in the SOAR training and technical assistance that case managers indicate need improvement or modification. The report will be shared with the workgroup participants and the federal partners involved in the SOAR.

3. How were the 6 sites chosen from among the 25?

The supporting statement reported that there were 25 sites from which the six would be selected. This number was in error, as the actual number of potential sites is 24. The first round of funding for the SOAR was awarded to 13 states in June 2005¹, and the second round of funding supported 11 states and the District of Columbia in April 2006².

Three states will be randomly selected from each of the two rounds of funding. The focus group activity is not trying to make generalizations about a population, and is not collecting a representative sample of states that participated in SOAR. Since there isn't any feedback from the case managers that have received the training, the focus group activity will provide such feedback from those individuals that were trained regarding the training and technical assistance that they received.

¹ Round 1: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Virginia, and Washington

² Round 2: Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee