

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire research (OMB clearance number 0607-0725). We plan to conduct focus groups for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) pretesting project.

The ACA is set for implementation in 2014 but in 2006 Massachusetts passed similar legislation at the state level. We would like to conduct qualitative work in Massachusetts to explore how to ask people (in English and Spanish) about participation in an “Exchange” – a key feature of the ACA that will introduce novel ways of obtaining health coverage.

From December, 2011 through February, 2012, a contractor will be conducting a maximum of 6 focus groups (3 in Spanish and 3 in English) with 8-12 participants each. Participants will be recruited based on their likely eligibility for the Exchange, such as:

- Parents of dependent children age 17 or younger
- Married individuals with and without children
- Individuals who are aged 18-34;
- Individuals who are aged 61-64;
- Lower income individuals

Four focus groups will be conducted in the Boston area, and two will be conducted in Central/Western Massachusetts. See attached draft moderator guides (in English and Spanish) for further details on the content of the focus groups.

In terms of recruiting, an agreement is being sought with the “Connector” (the administrative arm of the Exchange in Massachusetts) to provide lists of individuals who are known to be enrolled in the Exchange, with the characteristics noted above. The contractor has submitted a request to the IRB of the Exchange and is awaiting a response. If permission is granted, contact will be made through advance letters and follow-up phone calls. In the event that a list cannot be obtained, the contractor will work with the Connector agency staff to contact clients directly and provide them with the contractor’s contact information for further screening. For populations unavailable through the Connector lists, recruiting techniques such as posting flyers (both Spanish and English) at medical clinics and (if possible) emergency rooms serving rural and lower income clients as well at facilities that provide ESL training will be used. Newspapers, Craigslist.com, MassLive.com and other online sites will also be used to solicit participants.

Respondents will be informed that the survey is being conducted under the authority of Title 13, that their involvement is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by employees involved in the research project.

We estimate that each focus group will last two hours. Thus the maximum burden for this research is 144 hours for the focus groups (6 groups x 72 participants x 2 hours).

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and study design is listed below:

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