

Appendix 7

AIP Participant Communications

DRAFT LETTER

AIP Interviews for the US Department of Agriculture

Dear _____ [insert name of recipient]:

The law firm of Jackson Lewis LLP has been engaged to conduct an **independent** assessment of the effectiveness of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs in reaching diverse populations in a non-discriminatory manner. As part of this independent assessment, interviews of the Approved Insurance Providers ("AIPs") will help Jackson Lewis obtain views, opinions, and experiences of how effectively USDA is equitably and fairly providing technical and financial assistance to all customers and potential customers through the Risk Management Agency (RMA) throughout rural America. There will be two types of AIP interviews. The first type will be to interview the AIP itself ("AIP Company Interview"). The second type will be interviewing several of your agents/brokers ("Agent Interviews").

Your organization was selected to participate in an AIP Company Interview because your company is one of the 16 private-sector insurance companies that sell, service, and administer RMA insurance policies. The interviews will explore issues related to your organization's experience with selling, servicing, and administering crop insurance to producers with a focus on both (a) non-discrimination, and (b) outreach to minorities, women, and other underserved populations. Examples of topics include the following:

- The application process for particular policies;
- Nature, extent, and success (or not) of outreach to minority and female customers;
- Incentives for agents/brokers to outreach to and equitably serve minority and female customers; and,
- Barriers and successes of the outreach, application, and claims processes, including accessibility, equity, fairness, and accountability.

The interview of your organization will take about 1-2 hours. We ask that your company designate an individual to be interviewed who is the most knowledgeable about your company's outreach and marketing efforts aimed at minority and women farmers and ranchers, as well as programs and processes to assure non-discriminatory treatment of all customers and applicants.

While participation is voluntary, we hope your organization will participate because its responses are critical to provide Jackson Lewis a complete picture of USDA programs. In addition, the individual your organization selects to be interviewed can decline to answer an interview question if he or she does not want to answer it. Information your organization gives us during the interview will be confidential, and will not be disclosed without your organization's permission to anyone other than those working on the project, except as otherwise required by law. The information collected during the interviews will be aggregated for analysis and reporting. No individual AIP identifying information will be reported.

If you have any questions about the study, _____ can be reached by telephone at _____ or by email at _____@_____.com.

A member of the Jackson Lewis Assessment Team will contact your organization soon to confirm participation in the interview, who from your organization will be interviewed, and that person's contact information. We will need to know if the person you select to be interviewed is represented by counsel in a lawsuit against the USDA or one of its agencies. This is so we will not ask the person selected to do anything without his/hers counsel's consent. Meanwhile, if you have questions, please call _____ at _____.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Please see attached Public Burden Statement

DRAFT LETTER

AIP Individual Broker/Agent Interviews for the US Department of Agriculture

Dear _____ [insert name of recipient]:

The law firm of Jackson Lewis LLP has been engaged to conduct an **independent** assessment of the effectiveness of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs in reaching diverse populations in a non-discriminatory manner. As part of this independent assessment, interviews of the Approved Insurance Providers ("AIPs") brokers, agents and other employees will help Jackson Lewis obtain views, opinions, and experiences of how effectively USDA is equitably and fairly providing technical and financial assistance to all customers and potential customers through the Risk Management Agency (RMA) throughout rural America. There will be two types of AIP interviews. The first type will be to interview the AIP itself ("AIP Company Interview"). The second type will be interviewing agents/brokers ("Agent Interviews").

You have been chosen to participate in an Agent Interview because you sell, service, or administer RMA insurance policies. The interviews will explore issues related to experience with selling, servicing, and administering crop insurance to producers. Examples of topics include the following:

- The application process for particular policies;
- Nature, extent, and success (or not) of outreach to minority, female, and other underserved customers;
- Incentives for agents/brokers to outreach to and equitably serve minority, female, and other underserved customers; and,
- Barriers and successes of the outreach, application, and claims processes, including accessibility, equity, fairness, and accountability.

Your interview will take about 1-2 hours.

While participation is voluntary, we hope you will participate because your responses are critical to provide Jackson Lewis with a complete picture of USDA programs. In addition, you can decline to answer any interview question if you do not want to answer it. Information you give us during the interview will be confidential, and will not be disclosed without your permission to anyone other than those working on the project, except as otherwise required by law. The information collected during the interview will be used for analysis and reporting. No individual identifying information will be reported.

If you have any questions about the study, _____ can be reached by telephone at _____ or by email at _____@_____.com.

A Jackson Lewis Assessment Team member will contact you soon to confirm participation in the interview on (____) at (____). Meanwhile, if you have questions, please call _____ at _____.

PHONE SCRIPT FOR APPROVED INSURANCE PROVIDERS

Hello, may I speak with **[insert AIP representative's name]**?

[When representative is confirmed:] My name is _____. I'm calling from Jackson Lewis LLP. We have been engaged to conduct an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs in reaching diverse populations in a non-discriminatory manner. You should have recently received a letter about interviews we will be conducting with AIPs. The interview will explore issues related to your organization's experience with outreach, selling, servicing, and administering crop insurance to producers in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. We would like your organization to participate in an interview. Did you receive a letter in the mail with details about the interviews?

A. Yes.

→ Would your organization agree to participate in an interview?

Yes. → That's great. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this independent assessment. The interview will take between two and three hours and will be conducted in person. It is tentatively scheduled to take place on ____ at ____ o'clock at _____. As we mentioned in our letter, we would like to interview the individual who is the most knowledgeable about your company's outreach, marketing, and servicing activities aimed at women and minority farmers and ranchers. Could you please give me the name and contact information of the person who will be chosen to speak on behalf of your organization? Your organization's responses will be kept confidential, except as may be required by law, and your organization has the right to refuse to answer any questions. We will be sending a reminder postcard and making a follow-up reminder phone-call.

No. → Okay, may I ask you the reason why? **[Record reasons (refer to non-response answers)]**: _____. Thank you for your time.

B. No.

→ Okay, let me tell you a little about the AIP interviews. The interview will explore issues related to your organization's experience with selling, servicing, and administering crop insurance to producers in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. The interview will take between two and three hours and will be conducted in person. It is tentatively scheduled to take place on ____ at ____ o'clock at _____. Your organization's responses will be kept confidential, except as may be required by law, and your organization has the right to refuse to answer any questions. If your organization chooses not to participate, this will not affect your organization in any way in its dealings with the USDA.

Would your organization be interested in participating in an interview?

__ Yes. → That's great. We would like to interview the individual who is the most knowledgeable about your company's outreach, marketing, and servicing activities aimed at women and minority farmers and ranchers. Could you please give me the name and contact information of the person who will be chosen to speak on behalf of your organization? Thank you for agreeing to have your organization participate in this study. We will be sending a reminder postcard and making a follow-up reminder phone-call.

__ No. → Okay, may I ask you the reason why? **[Record reasons (refer to non-response answers)]**: _____.
Would you like us to resend the letter? Is your organization at this address **[insert address]**? I will re-mail the letter today and call back on **[insert date]**. Thank you for your time. **[End call]**.

Keep getting voicemail:

Hello, this is **(Name)** from Jackson Lewis. I am calling you again because I previously left a message regarding your organization's possible participation in an interview which is part of an independent assessment about USDA program financial and technical assistance and did not hear back from you. Hearing your organizations' views and opinions is very important to us. My name again is **(Name)**. Please call me at XXX.XXX.XXXX.

Contacting a supplemental contact:

I'm trying to reach X, and X put down your name as an additional contact. Can you get the message to X that we are trying to get **[name of Approved Insurance Provider]** to participate in an interview that is part of an independent assessment about the USDA financial and technical assistance programs? Our number here is XXX.XXX.XXXX.

PHONE SCRIPT FOR APPROVED INSURANCE PROVIDERS AGENTS/BROKERS

Hello, may I speak with **[insert person's name]**?

[When person is confirmed:] My name is _____. I'm calling from Jackson Lewis LLP. We have been engaged to conduct an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs in reaching diverse populations in a non-discriminatory manner. You should have recently received a letter about interviews we will be conducting with AIP agents and brokers. We would like you to participate in an interview. The interview will explore issues related to your experience with outreach, selling, servicing, and administering crop insurance to producers in a fair, non-discriminatory manner. Did you receive a letter in the mail with details about the interview?

A. ___ Yes.

→ Would you be interested in participating in an interview?

___ Yes. → That's great. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this independent assessment. The interview will take between one and three hours and will be conducted in person. It is tentatively scheduled to take place on ___ at ___ o'clock at _____. Your responses will be kept confidential, except as may be required by law, and you have the right to refuse to answer any questions. If you choose not to participate, this will not affect your organization or you in any way in its/your dealings with the USDA. We will be sending a reminder postcard and making a follow-up reminder phone-call.

___ No. → Okay, may I ask you the reason why? **[Record reasons (refer to non-response answers)]**: _____. Thank you for your time.

B. ___ No.

→ Okay, let me tell you a little about the AIP agent's/broker's/employee's interview. The interview will explore issues related to your experience with selling, servicing, and administering crop insurance to producers in a fair, non-discriminatory manner. The interview will take between one and three hours and will be conducted in person. It is tentatively scheduled to take place on ___ at ___ o'clock at _____. Your responses will be kept confidential, except as may be required by law, and you have the right to refuse to answer any questions. If you choose not to participate, this will not affect you or your organization in any way in your/its dealings with the USDA.

Would you be interested in participating in an interview?

___ Yes. → That's great. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We will be sending a reminder postcard and making a follow-up reminder phone-call.

___ No. → Okay, may I ask you the reason why? **[Record reasons (refer to non-response answers)]**: _____.

Would you like us to resend the letter? Are you at this address **[insert address]**? I will re-mail the letter today and call back on **[insert date]**. Thank you for your time. **[End call]**.

Keep getting voicemail:

Hello, this is **(Name)** from Jackson Lewis. I am calling you again because I previously left a message regarding your possible participation in an interview which is part of an independent assessment about USDA program financial and technical assistance and did not hear back from you. Hearing your views and opinions is very important to us. My name again is **(Name)**. Please call me at XXX.XXX.XXXX.

Contacting a supplemental contact:

I'm trying to reach X, and X put down your name as an additional contact. Can you get the message to X that we are trying to get **X** to participate in an interview that is part of an independent assessment about the USDA financial and technical assistance programs? Our number here is XXX.XXX.XXXX.

REMINDER!

[Insert Date]

Approved Insurance Provider Interview
For the
Jackson Lewis, LLP Independent Assessment of
United States Department of Agriculture
at the

[Insert Name of Place]

[Insert Address]

at

_____ **a.m/p.m**

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