

Department of the Treasury Focus Group and Usability Test Subject Areas

Discovery: Focus groups

To “field” test Treasury.gov, FinancialStability.gov and MakingHomeAffordable.gov usability and design, we will conduct qualitative research, specifically focus groups, representative of key user populations; namely homeowners and the general public. Sufficient focus groups will help us engage audiences in a safe (non-threatening) environment, where thorough dialog, group dynamics and observation of tasks, we can understand how these individuals, from specific audience profiles, might use the sites to meet their needs.

The facilitated focus groups will provide probing opportunities so we can truly understand the “why” behind participant behaviors (actions) in the course of seeking information on the sites as well as perceptions of the sites. We believe that this approach can validate the design concepts and content while gathering any constructive feedback to complete implementation in the most timely and efficient manner.

Focus groups will be a two hour guided session that follows a pre-determined discussion guide based on the current approved design for Treasury.gov, FinancialStability.gov, and MakingHomeAffordable.gov.

Validation: Usability Testing

Findings from the focus groups as well as previous research will be culminated into tasks designed to validate users’ experiences interacting with Treasury.gov, FinancialStability.gov and MakingHomeAffordable.gov. Throughout the testing, the moderator will identify how quickly and easily website users navigate key interactive functionality/features and determine key content areas and features of interest.

Areas in need of adjustments including navigation, functionality, content, layout and design will be documented. Each participant will also be asked to provide recommendations to enhance user experience.

Initial testing, as covered in this document, will be used to evaluate the following subject areas:

- Basic user information location and retrieving
- Top-line navigation
- Aesthetics
- Economy, i.e. activity was worth the effort for reward achieved
- Total site architecture
- Data visualization components