

PHONE SCRIPT FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Hello, may I speak with **[insert customer name]**?

[When customer is confirmed:] My name is _____. I'm calling from Westat, a research company working on an independent assessment being conducted by the law firm of Jackson Lewis LLP relating to 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 a focus group discussion that we would like you to participate in. It will be about how fairly the USDA provides technical and financial assistance to its customers.

First, let me ask you if you are represented by counsel in a claim or lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture or one of its agencies?

A. Yes

Counsel for the 3 lawsuits commonly called: 1) Love, 2) Keepseagle, and 3) Pigford II have consented to permitting individuals represented by them to decide whether or not they want to participate in these focus groups.

1. Are you a plaintiff in one of those lawsuits?

a. Yes, continue with the questions below.

b. No. Thank you for your time. Because you are represented by counsel and have a claim or lawsuit against USDA or one of its agencies, and we do not have your counsel's consent, we are unable to ask you to participate in the focus group.

B. No

Continue with the questions below.

Did you receive a letter in the mail with details about the focus group?

A. Yes.

→ Would you be interested in participating in the focus group?

Yes. → That's great. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this independent assessment. The focus group discussion will take 2 hours and will take place at **[insert name of place and address]** on **[insert date]**. You will receive a \$50 Target gift card for your participation. Your individual responses will be kept confidential, except as 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 in any way in your dealings with the USDA. Will you need a language interpreter for the focus group session? [If yes—what language should the interpreter speak?] Will you need any type of accommodation [If yes—what type of accommodation?] We will be sending you 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 focus group discussion. It will take 2 hours and will be about your experience applying for a particular program, your opinion of the equity of the USDA business processes, and any barriers and successes of the application process. It will take place at **[insert name of place and address]** on **[insert date]**. You will receive \$50 Target gift card for your participation. Your individual responses will be kept confidential, except as 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 in any way in your dealings with the USDA.

Would you be interested in participating in the focus group?

___ Yes. → That's great. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Will you need a language interpreter for the focus group session? [If yes—what language should the interpreter speak?] Will you need any type of accommodation [If yes—what type of accommodation?] We will be sending you 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 Westat. I am calling you again because I previously left a message regarding participating in a focus group discussion about USDA program financial and technical assistance and did not hear back from you. Hearing your views and opinions about your experience 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 a focus group discussion about the USDA program financial and technical assistance? Our number here is XXX.XXX.XXXX.

REMINDER!

[Insert Date]
for the
United States Department of Agriculture
Focus Group Discussion
at the

[Insert Name of Place]
[Insert Address]

Registration: 12:45 pm – 1:00 pm
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Light refreshments will be provided

Westat
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