

Attachment 1: Screener Guide

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling on behalf of ICF Macro, a research and consulting firm in the Washington DC area. We are working with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to obtain feedback about the some pages of its website (IRS.gov). We are seeking participants for a focus group we are holding in [insert city].

IF ASKED: (EACH INTERVIEWER WILL HAVE THIS INFORMATION).

If respondents ask how their name was obtained, tell them their phone number was randomly selected from a list of individuals in the local calling area. If respondents are concerned about participating, tell them that our contract with the IRS specifically prohibits me from revealing their name or any information about them to the IRS or anyone else, whether or not they participate in the focus group. Participation in this focus group is voluntary and will not affect your taxes or filing status.

This project has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB Clearance Number is 1545-1349. If you like, I can give you a name and address where you can send comments and questions or suggestions for making this process simpler.

Internal Revenue Service
Tax Products Coordinating Committee
1111 Constitution Ave, NW IR-6526
SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP
Washington, DC 20024

Your answers to these questions will be held anonymously by Macro, meaning we will not provide your name or any identifying information to the IRS.

1. *Would you consider yourself to be fluent in English?*
 Yes.....*Continue*
 No.....*Terminate*

2. *In the past 12 months, have you accessed www.irs.gov to locate information about tax forms, instructions, or publications?*
 Yes.....*Continue*
 No.....*Terminate*

3. *Are you a tax professional? (Individual who prepares 25 or more Federal tax returns each year)*
 Yes*Continue to Q5*
 No.....*Continue*

4. *Are you a small business owner? [Note to recruiter: if someone asks what a small business is, say it is a business with assets of less than \$10 million.]*
 Yes*[recruit 3 small business owners].....Continue*
 No*Continue*

For questions 5-8, recruit a mix of individuals

5. *Into which of the following categories does your age fall?*
 less than 18.....*Terminate*
 18 to 33
 34-44
 45 to 65
 66 and older

6. Please identify your highest completed level of education. [May opt-out if they wish to.]
- Some High School
 - High School Diploma/GED
 - Some College or Associate's Degree
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Graduate or Professional Degree (M.D., J.D.)
 - Opted out

So that we can be sure that all backgrounds are represented in our project, could you please tell me the race or ethnic origin you identify with [1 or more responses OK; note to screener: taxpayer may opt-out if they wish to].

7. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin (ethnicity)
- Yes
 - No
8. Which of the following best describes your race (Accept all multiple answers)?
- White
 - Black or African American
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
9. Record Gender—DO NOT ASK UNLESS UNABLE TO DETERMINE; may opt-out if they wish to.
- Female
 - Male
 - opted out

INVITATION

Thank you for answering our questions. Based on your responses, we would like to invite you to participate in a focus group which will be held in [insert city] [insert date] at [insert time]. The total time will be no more than 2 hours. We will provide everything that you need to participate in the focus group. Your participation is completely voluntary. We will provide you with a \$75 stipend for participating as well as a light meal and refreshments.

Are you willing to participate?

Yes.....

.....Continue

No.....

.....Terminate

I'm glad that you will be able to join us! At this point I need to collect some contact information from you. Then we will send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility via e-mail.

Attachment 2 Moderator's Guide

Focus Group IRS Tax Forms and Publication Landing and Product Pages Moderator's Guide

I. Welcome and Introductions: 5 minutes

A. Introduction of the moderator.

Good evening. My name is <insert first name> and I will be your moderator for this session. I work for ICF Macro. Tonight I will be asking for your input about some of the web pages on IRS.gov. The Tax Forms and Publications Division is responsible for the web pages we will be discussing and would like your feedback on the content and format of the pages. I want to let you know that I will not be asking you any questions about actual IRS forms, instructions, or publications –only about the layout, content, and organization of specific web pages.

The IRS will take into consideration comments from this focus group and others that we are conducting around the country (Baltimore, MD; Atlanta, GA, Kansas City, MO and Ogden, UT)

B. What is a moderator?

Before we begin, I want to let you know that I'm not an expert on the form we will be discussing or any other IRS tax forms. My job as a moderator is to:

- Help guide the flow of conversation
- Make sure everyone's comments are heard
- Ensure that questions about various aspects of the topic are covered

You will see me referring to this outline during our session. The outline includes all issues I need to raise with the group, and helps me keep the discussion on track. It is important that we cover all the issues. Therefore, I may have to break off the conversation in order to move on to another area in the guide.

C. Ground Rules

Before we begin, I'd like to review some ground rules for today's discussion.

- For the IRS to speak with the public, we are required to have approval from the Office of Management and Budget. Their approval number for this project is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the: IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW,

IR-6526, Washington, DC 20224. [*Moderator: Post this bullet on newsprint/white board for each session*]

- We are audio-taping the meeting for use in preparing a report about findings. Because we are taping this meeting, I ask that you speak loudly and clearly. If I think you are speaking too softly to be heard on the tape, I will ask you to speak up.
- Please speak just one at a time so everyone has a chance to participate.
- Don't engage in side conversations-- we need for everyone to hear what the others are saying and for everything that's said to be heard easily on the tape.
- Sometimes I'll go around the table and ask everyone for their input. At other times, I will just throw a topic open for general discussion.
- Participation -- we would like to hear from everyone in the group, but you don't have to answer every question.
- No evaluation -- there are no right and wrong answers. We expect differences in how people see things, and we need to know about these differences.
- Feel free to disagree or question each other. The purpose of a group session is for us to learn things in group interchanges that we don't get out of one-on-one discussions. If someone says something you disagree with, please let us know.
- Some observers are present behind the one-way mirror. They want to hear what you have to say about the topics we'll discuss, but we don't want you to feel constrained by their presence.
- If anyone needs to use the restroom, they are located (specify). There is no need to stop the discussion.
- Your participation is voluntary. Therefore, at any point in time you may leave the room.
- If you have a cell phone, please turn it off or set to vibrate.
- The session will last about two hours.

D. Informed Consent

All participants will have reviewed and signed the informed consent for their participation in the focus group prior to coming into the focus group room. This will be handled by a designated staff at the focus group facility and confirmed by an IRS staff.

Before coming into the room, you were asked to review and sign an informed consent form for your participation in the discussion. I just want to go over some of the key points on the consent form to make sure we are in agreement. Review consent form, emphasizing audio taping, confidentiality, and use of first names only.

E. Introduction of Participants: 10 minutes

Please tell us:

For tax preparers only ask a, b, c, & d. For taxpayers ask: c & d only

- a. Where do you work?
- b. How long have you prepared tax returns?
- c. Approximately how many times in the past 12 months you have gone to www.irs.gov .
- d. What type(s) of information were you looking for?

Thanks for those introductions.

II General Questions about Forms and Publication Web Pages

We are going to be looking at a specific part of the IRS' website -- the Forms and Publications web page and several Product Pages. Look on the left side of your screen and you'll see "Forms and Publications". *Moderator: click on the link on your computer so everyone can see the page they should be on. Go ahead and click on that link, but don't click on anything else.* Note to Moderator that this page can also be accessed by typing in www.IRS.gov/formspubs ("formspubs" must be lowercase).

Take a minute or two and look at this page. Make sure you view the entire page. You may have to scroll down to see every topic on the page. Please don't click on anything just yet.

1. Please give me your initial reactions to this page.
 - o Probe:
 - What did you first notice?
 - What do you like about the page?
 - Is there anything you do not like about this page?
 - Is anything confusing?
 - What are the advantages of viewing a tax product online?
 - What does "PDF" mean?

2. Without clicking on anything yet, if you were looking for a tax product (a form, instruction or publication), what would you click on first? [If they ask for examples, suggest “Form 1040 Schedule B (for interest and dividends” and Form 5405 (first-time homebuyer credit)]
 - o What is the reason you click on that first?

I'd like you to take about 5 minutes and explore the forms and publications portion of this page. That would be anyplace that is in the “white” section. Feel free to click on any of the links in this area. Since we won't be talking about any of the tabs across the top –“Individual,” “Businesses,” “Charities & Non-Profits” please don't click on them. Also, don't click on any of the IRS Resources other than the “Forms and Publications” – which brings you back to this page.

There is a pad of paper and pencil next to you. Feel free to jot down anything you found useful or something you wanted more information about.

Okay so we'll start that 5 minutes now and I'll let you know when it's time to start the discussion.

Okay – let's talk about this page a few minutes.

3. Now that you've had the opportunity to explore the Forms and Publications page, what link did you click on first?
 - o Probe: Why, please explain
4. Tell me what you liked or disliked?
 - o Probe: Why, please explain
5. What did you find confusing?
 - o Probe:
 - What about the blue hyperlinks – is the link text self-explanatory?
 - Did the subpage contain the information you expected?
6. What changes would you make to the Forms and Publications home page?

If you aren't currently on the Forms and Publications home page, please navigate back to it.

Now we're going to locate some specific tax products. I'd like you to locate Form 1040 Schedule E, Supplemental Income and Loss. <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040se.pdf> (*Moderator: Wait approximately 1 minutes*).

7. Did you find the form? What steps did you take? If you didn't find the form, where did you stop? Was there something that confused you?

Let's return to the Forms and Publications home page. Use your back button and go back to the Forms and Pubs page (or click on Forms and Publications on the left menu). *Ask if everyone is on the same page.* Now let's find a different product. Please locate a tax product that contains information about taxes imposed on ozone-depleting chemicals (ODCs). *Moderator Have the participant go back to the landing page to see if they try a different route to find this tax product.*

8. What product(s) did you find? How did you find them? *(If they searched, ask for specifics; did they use the "Find" box? If so, what key word did they insert?).*
- 9 Is this the information you expected to find?
10. Was it easy to find the information?

Use your back button and go back to the Forms and Pubs page (or click on Forms and Publications on the left menu). Next we are going to look at the "Forms and Instructions number (pdf)"page. (This is the second link in the Download Forms and Publications by section.)

- 11 What do you think about the layout?

Probe for their thoughts on the list of files, how they are organized, how they would find the form or instructions they wanted.
12. Did you notice the "Find" feature? Do you think this "find feature" is different from the search at the top of the page? How do you think it is different?
13. What do you think the triangles next to the column labels at the top of the list are for? Did you click on them?
14. Please read the instructions. Are the instructions clear?
15. Is there anything you would delete (information not needed) or anything that is missing?

Use your back button and go back to the Forms and Pubs page (or click on Forms and Publications on the left menu). Please find IRS Tax Map on the Forms and Publication Page. Before you click on this link, can you tell me what you expect to find when you open this link?

On the IRS Tax Map for Tax Year 2010 page click on the [Try IRS Tax Map now](#) link.

16. What did you think when you read the disclaimer about leaving the IRS web site?

Probe: Would reading this disclaimer make you not want to proceed?

What do you think of having to access additional screens to get to the

Tax Map page?

Now click on the Leave IRS Site button link. Please read the information on this page and try to find information on what tests have to be met to claim someone as a dependent?

Moderator: Give the participants 3 minutes to explore this topic.

17. Was the information displayed on dependents what you expected?

18. Do you think you would use this site? If not, please give some reasons for not using this site?

Now let's go back to the Forms and Publication landing page. (*Moderator, the participants can hit the back button and then click on Forums and Publications under Resources on the left side of the page.*)

19. How would you go about ordering a form or a publication from this page?

20. What steps did you use to find out how to order a product?

Please type www.irs.gov/formspubs in the address bar and then click on Forms and Publication by US mail. Please try and order a tax product. Please note how you went about ordering the product. Do not actually order the product. Just go through the process, but don't confirm the order.

III General Questions about Forms and Publication Product Page

Now I'd like you to enter the following URL on the website www.irs.gov/form1040. The URL goes on the Address line at the top of the page.

Please take 3 minutes to explore this page.

21. Please give me your initial reactions to this page.

- o Probe:
 - What did you notice first?
 - What do you like or dislike?
 - Is anything confusing?

22. What do you think about the layout of this page?

- What do you think about the order of the topics?

23. What do you think this webpage is for?

- How would you use it?

24. What do you think about the Comment Section?

- Is the wording understandable?
- Would you know how to add a comment?

25. Is there anything else you would like added to this page?

26. Would you prefer the picklists (Forms and Publications (PDF)) link directly to the product's pdf file or to the product page?

27. Would you prefer to find product pages by the topic covered by the form, instruction or publication? by the title? by the number?

IV. False Close: 5 minutes

Note to Moderator: Explain that you will be back in a minute while you check in with the observers to see if they have any addition questions they would like you to ask.

V. Closing: 2 minutes

Thinking about our discussion tonight, is there anything else you would like to share regarding the Form 1040 we looked at today.

Thank you very much for coming this evening, and for sharing your ideas with us—we really appreciate your time.

Thank You/Wrap Up

Direct participants to area outside of the room to pick up their incentive.