

Appendix C: Partnership Program Focus Group Protocol and Moderator's Guide

INTRODUCTION

(Welcome participants) - Thank you in advance for choosing to participate in this research. We greatly appreciate your time and participation.

(Introduce moderator/recorder) - My name is _____ and this is (introduce co-moderator and/or recorder) _____. We work for ICF International, an organization that conducts research to evaluate programs like the Partnership Program. We will be visiting with several representatives of 2010 Census Partner organizations in other geographic areas as well. At the end, we will assemble everything we have learned from all our visits into a report that will be provided to the Census Bureau.

(Explain Partnership Program) - The Census Bureau established the Partnership Program as an integral component of the communications campaign. The 2010 Census Partners delivered to members of their community a message that the Census is safe and essential to serving local needs. At one point over 4,000 partnership personnel across the country were working to establish national, state, local, and tribal partnerships with trusted third party voices such as governments, businesses, non-profits, and faith-based institutions, among others.

(Focus participants in on objectives) - The goal of our discussion today is to improve the Partnership Program during the years leading to the 2020 Census. In other words, we want to know what will work, what will not work, and ways that the program can be enhanced and be made more engaging. You are in an excellent position to help us with that because you can inform us about your organization's experience as a Census Partner. Your perspectives are of great value to us no matter how involved your organization was compared to other organizations.

(Explain focus group procedure) - The session today will last 90 minutes, and we will not take a formal break. Please feel free to leave the room at any time if you need to. Each of us has a role to play.

- I serve as an impartial data gatherer and discussion regulator (if applicable)-, with help from my co-moderator _____.
- Our note-taker serves as a recorder of what you are saying — please know that s/he is not recording your names.
- You serve as experts based on your experience with the Partnership Program.

Please note that we cannot conduct this focus group unless the protocol and the informed consent forms display valid OMB Control Numbers. Furthermore, you do not need to participate unless the protocols and forms have a valid OMB Control Number displayed. The OMB Control Number is: 0607-XXXX. The collection expires September 30, 2011.

(Voluntary Participation/Privacy Act) - Your participation is voluntary – if you choose not to participate, or if you don't wish to answer a question, there won't be any negative consequences to you. No data or response will be linked to any individual by name. If we quote something you said in our report, we will not identify you or your specific organization as the source of the quote. We will analyze your responses as part of a group, such as a group of non-profit organizations, or a group of mid-sized for-profit businesses.

We are asking all of you to maintain confidentiality, and we also need to know that we can count on each of you. Can we all agree that what is said in this room stays in this room?

(Hand out informed consent document to participants and review with the group) This is a statement for you to sign. It assures us that you are volunteering to participate and it assures you that we are taking steps to keep your information private. Please read the statement and sign it before we get started. *(Allow 2-3 minutes for participants to read and sign. Obtain signed agreement from all participants)*

(Explain ground rules) - To make our discussion go smoothly, it helps to lay out some ground rules:

- Please speak clearly and one at a time.
- Please avoid sidebar conversations.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- We want to hear the good and the bad.
- We respect and value differences of opinion.

I will read some questions throughout the session for you to discuss. Feel free to expand beyond these specific questions in your answers. The best focus groups are those where participants feel free to explore ideas without limiting them to specific answers.

(Check for participant questions) - Are there any questions before we begin?

QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS

Note: Throughout the questions, if the Focus Group participants all represent a single organization, we'll substitute the actual name of that organization for "your organization." So, for example, we'd say "about how Target became involved..."

1. We'd like to start by talking about how organizations can become involved in the Partnership Program – the decision process you go through to sign up as a Partner. Let's discuss how organizations may become aware of the program, what may prompt people to sign up, and how you see the program in the overall context of your organization's marketing and publicity program? Let's talk about awareness first:

1a. Awareness – How can organizations become aware of the program? What is the most effective way for your organization to become aware of a program like Partners?

1b. Decision – Take a look at a list of some factors that may prompt organizations to participate (on flip chart or handout sheet). Which of these is important for you? Of all of them, which would you say is the most important?

- To make people more aware of the importance or significance of the Census
- To ensure a fair representation of a target population (a population of particular interest to your organization)
- To ensure a fair share of federal funding for a target population (a population of interest to your organization)
- To build the perception of your organization as a good public citizen
- To gain exposure or press attention for your organization
- To further your organization's goals for community networking
- Other factors?

1c. Context – How do you see the program fitting into your organization's overall marketing and publicity program?

2. Now we'd like you to share feelings about being a Partner and some general experiences you think you will have from continuing to be a Partner.

2a. General - What is your general feeling about being a Partner?

2b. Communication - Representatives from the Census may do some or all of these things: answer your questions, provide suggestions, review your efforts and provide feedback, and provide instructive tips from other organizations. Do you think feedback from representatives will be useful to partners? How can partners use the feedback? Do you think that direct access to a Census representative will be helpful? If so, what type of communication modes do you prefer? For example, do you prefer personal contact via telephone or via email?

2c. What materials or processes do you think are necessary for the Partnership Program to be a success?

2d. Materials - The materials provided by the Census for Partners to use are a key part of the program. What types of materials should be developed, and is the best way for Partners to obtain these materials? Which materials do you think will be most useful or most popular, and which will be less useful or popular? (To help you think of materials, we've provided a list on a handout [or whiteboard]). Do you think you will design any materials of your own? How well do you think that will work?

2e. Other support - Other than financial support, materials, or assistance from your partnership representative, is there any additional support that the Census can provide that may assist the Partners in the program?

2f. Community response - How do you think your target community will react to your Partner activities? Do you think the community's views of your organization will change as a result of your Partner activities? Do you think the community's views of the Census will change as a result of your Partner activities?

2g. Staff response - How widely do you think individual participation will spread through your organization? How do you think the staff members involved in Partner activities at your organization will feel about participating? Will it add a burden to their normal work? Will they enjoy the activities? Can you give us some examples?

3. Now let's pull all these things together and talk about what Census can do to develop the Partnership Program as a strong and successful program. In your answers to these questions, we hope to find creative suggestions for ways to attract and engage Partners in the years leading to the next Census, with the understanding that financial support may not be feasible as a mainstay. Keeping this in mind:

3a. As Partners, what do you think is necessary for the Partnership Program to be a success?

3b. Has your organization used any Census data in any way? How may the CB help you to utilize the vast amount of diverse census data from the 2010 Census and hundreds of other ongoing data programs?

3c. Are you interested in continuing your partnership with Census during the intercensal years and through 2020? If so, what mode of communications – such as websites, listserv group list, social network sites, etc. do you like to use?

5. If we've missed any topics today, do you have anything to add?

CONCLUSION

(Remind the group that we ask them not to discuss any comments they heard in the group today).

This concludes our discussion. Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions and experiences with us. Your thoughts are valuable to our efforts to inform the Partnership Program on these matters. We will now ask you to sign the receipt for the \$50 payment made to you today.