

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 1880-0542)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Focus Groups with High School Seniors, Parents of High School Seniors, and Guidance Counselors

PURPOSE:

The following material is being submitted under the U.S. Department of Education’s (Department’s) Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery (OMB# 1880-0542). This generic clearance provides for the Department to conduct surveys and other studies to evaluate customer satisfaction. The request for approval described in this memorandum is to conduct focus groups with graduating high school seniors, parents of graduating high school seniors, and guidance counselors who have assisted high school seniors in their college search. The purpose of the focus groups is to obtain feedback on the College Scorecard website’s content, design, and functionality. The website is intended to be used by students and their families to quickly and easily find more about a college’s key indicators of affordability and value so they can make informed decisions about where to apply and ultimately enroll. The results of these focus groups will be used by the Department to refine the website so that it is more helpful and useful to consumers.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

The four focus groups are specifically designed to capture the experiences and opinions of the following:

- Focus Group #1: High school seniors (ages 17-19) from schools in the DC metropolitan area, with the majority being in northern Virginia, who are planning to attend a 2-year college in fall 2013; pursuing an associate’s degree or certificate; have started their college search and are considering at least 2 colleges in their search; low to high income with the majority being low to moderate income (defined as 5 or more participants with an annual household income of \$70,000 or below); and mixed race/ethnicity and gender.
- Focus Group #2: High school seniors (ages 17-19) from schools in the DC metropolitan area, with the majority being in northern Virginia, who are planning to attend a 4-year college in fall 2013; pursuing a bachelor’s degree; have started their college search and are considering at least 2 colleges in their search; low to high income with the majority being low to moderate income (defined as 5 or more participants with an annual household income of \$70,000 or below); mixed race/ethnicity and gender.
- Focus Group #3: Parents of high school seniors who will attend a 2- or 4-year college leading to a bachelor’s degree, associate’s degree, or certificate upon graduation (NOTE: participant may be the parent of participating high school senior; however, prefer to recruit groups independently); child has started or will start his/her college search within the next 6 months and is considering at least 2 colleges in search; parent has at least a GED and no higher than a bachelor’s degree; low to high income with the majority being low to moderate income (defined as 5 or more participants with an annual household income of \$70,000 or below); mix of participants that have not attended college and those that have up to a B.A..

- Focus Group #4: High school guidance counselors working in public or charter schools in the DC metropolitan area, with the majority being in northern Virginia, where at least 15 percent of the students are low income (low income is defined as students who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch); have at least 3 years' experience counseling prospective college students; spend at least ¼ of their time counseling students related to the college search process; have earned a master's degree. The group will be of mixed gender. NOTE: Guidance counselors do not have to be identified from the schools that participating high school seniors attend. Groups should be recruited independently of each other.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: David Bergeron

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published? Yes No N/A

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? Yes No

To thank the respondents for their travel to the focus group facility, time, and effort, the participating students and parents will receive \$50 each, and the guidance counselors, who are often more difficult to recruit due to their schedules, will receive \$75.

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Individuals or Households (Participant Screening)	70	8 minutes	9 hours
Individuals or Households (Focus Groups)	36	90 minutes	54 hours
Totals	70	106 minutes	63 hours

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$154,739 (total cost)

The cost of conducting the focus groups will be \$154,739, as a subcontractor under the U.S. Department of Education Postsecondary Education Statistical Analyses and Data Collection contract, which includes monitoring recruitment for four focus groups and coordination of logistics with the focus group facility, facility rentals, protocol and screener development, preparation of OMB and IRB packages, preparation of focus group materials, conduct of the groups and preparation of notes, synthesis, analysis and writing of the report and preparation of PowerPoint presentation, and payment of participant incentives.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?

[x] Yes [] No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

Attachment I describes recruitment procedures.

Attachment II contains the screening instrument for potential focus group participants.

Attachment III contains focus group participant consent forms.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

[] Web-based or other forms of Social Media

[] Telephone

[x] In-person

[] Mail

[] Other, Explain

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? [x] Yes [] No

Attachment IV contains the focus group protocols.

Attachment V contains focus group handouts.

Attachment VI contains screenshots to be used in the focus group.

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.

Instructions for completing Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback”

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Provide the name of the collection that is the subject of the request. (e.g. Comment card for soliciting feedback on xxxx)

PURPOSE: Provide a brief description of the purpose of this collection and how it will be used. If this is part of a larger study or effort, please include this in your explanation.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Provide a brief description of the targeted group or groups for this collection of information. These groups must have experience with the program.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: Check one box. If you are requesting approval of other instruments under the generic, you must complete a form for each instrument.

CERTIFICATION: Please read the certification carefully. If you incorrectly certify, the collection will be returned as improperly submitted or it will be disapproved.

Personally Identifiable Information: Provide answers to the questions.

Gifts or Payments: If you answer yes to the question, please describe the incentive and provide a justification for the amount.

BURDEN HOURS:

Category of Respondents: Identify who you expect the respondents to be in terms of the following categories: (1) Individuals or Households;(2) Private Sector; (3) State, local, or tribal governments; or (4) Federal Government. Only one type of respondent can be selected.

No. of Respondents: Provide an estimate of the Number of respondents.

Participation Time: Provide an estimate of the amount of time required for a respondent to participate (e.g. fill out a survey or participate in a focus group)

Burden: Provide the Annual burden hours: Multiply the Number of responses and the participation time and divide by 60.

FEDERAL COST: Provide an estimate of the annual cost to the Federal government.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents. Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them. If the answer is yes, to the first question, you may provide the sampling plan in an attachment.

Administration of the Instrument: Identify how the information will be collected. More than one box may be checked. Indicate whether there will be interviewers (e.g. for surveys) or facilitators (e.g., for focus groups) used.

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.