

INCENTIVE JUSTIFICATION

This document is the Incentive Justification for the Message and Material Testing project for Nonpharmaceutical Interventions.

Determining Payments to Focus Group Participants

The cost of participant acquisition includes two main components, the recruiting fee and the incentive. The recruiting fee is for the time it takes to secure qualified participants for each focus group. The incentive is the payment given to participants as a token of appreciation for their time and involvement with the project. The incentive amount of \$100 per participant is impacted by a number of variables for this project, including the following:

- o Burden on respondent/total participation time of 2 hours: length of time for the focus group (1.5 hours) plus the length of time and effort to work with a technician to set up the web cameras (30 minutes).
- o Coverage of specialized respondents: The specified incentive is needed to improve coverage of specialized respondents who are in the position of authority to make decisions about closing businesses, schools, and/or mass gatherings of at least 1000 people in the event of a flu pandemic. These respondents are critical for this project, as the messages and materials to be tested are targeted for this population to improve their work with the general public.
- o Past experience: The show rate for OMB # 0920-0572 (for which HMTS and the same camera-based online focus group methodology was used) was 91% using the following incentives: General Public- \$125 each; Parents- \$125 each; Business administrators with fewer than 100 employees- \$200 each, with 100 to 499 employees- \$300 each, with 500+ employees- \$300 each. In the current project, we hope to achieve a similar show rate using only a \$100 incentive to all participants.

Cash or checks are neutral (not connected with a company, service or product) and have universal utility. It is usually more cost-effective and efficient to offer a monetary incentive perceived as attractive by the participant, as this mitigates the cost of the recruit. This recruiting fee is a variable cost that has to be paid each time a participant is recruited. Incentives are given to each actual participant and not to those who do not attend the group.

The incentive serves as a tangible thank you to participants for their time and engagement in the project. The amounts need to be high enough that participants feel like it is worth their time to participate and cannot be so low that participants perceive their time and candid responses are under-valued. Likewise, incentives cannot be so high that participants become skeptical. Recruiters know from experience what various segments in the market expect to receive. Highly compensated professionals and very busy individuals have to believe that it is worth their time to participate. Recruiters have no monetary incentive to recommend a payment to participants other than what their experience dictates the market requires, because the payment to participants is just that. The full amount goes to the participants. The recruiter is paid for the time they expect it to take to recruit qualified participants (i.e., participants who meet the research criteria). In our experience, it is most cost effective to pay the recruiter-recommended incentive, as this results in better show rates and lower recruiting fees.

The potential opportunity cost incurred by the high income individuals targeted by our information collection is likely significant, as the hourly wages lost while participating in the focus group could be high. To incentivize this critical population to participate, a larger cash amount is required to offset any potential lost time and associated wages. The sample salaries below show how the \$100 incentive we would like to use in this project compares to the average salaries of the types of participants we need to recruit for this project to make it attractive enough for them to want to participate.

Sample salaries from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Administrators - Large Business

The median annual wage for chief executives was **\$165,080** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

The median annual wage for general and operations managers was **\$94,400** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

Administrators - Small Business

The median annual wage of construction managers was **\$83,860** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

The median annual wage of medical and health services managers was **\$84,270** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

The median annual wage of social and community service managers was **\$57,950** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

Jobs - college degree not required

The median annual wage of firefighters was **\$45,250** in May 2010

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

The median annual wage of food service managers was **\$48,130** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

In May 2010, the median annual wage of brick masons and block masons was \$46,930.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

Jobs - college degree required

In May 2010, the median annual wage of kindergarten teachers was \$48,800 and the median annual wage of elementary school teachers was **\$51,660**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

The median annual wage of civil engineers was **\$77,560** in May 2010

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

The median annual wage of database administrators was **\$73,490** in May 2010.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [date accessed] [www.bls.gov/oes/].