FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL FOR POTENTIAL USERS

DRAFT E-Verify Evaluation – Communication and Outreach Study

Focus Group Script
Potential Users Group
March 26, 2013

I want to **thank you** for agreeing to participate and for fitting this session into your busy schedules.

My name is _____ and I work for Westat, a social science research firm in Rockville, MD. Today, I will be the moderator for this 45-minute group discussion.

We are conducting a study of the E-Verify work-authorization program administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in the Department of Homeland Security. As part of the study we are examining the effectiveness of the communication and outreach activities conducted by the program to increase employers' awareness about it. Our purpose today is to obtain input from companies that are not currently enrolled in the Program.

In order to make this an efficient session, here are some guidelines:

- Please talk one at a time.

- Talk in a voice as loud as mine.

- Avoid side conversations with others in the group.

- I need to hear from everyone; however, you do not have to answer every question.

- It is OK to piggyback on someone else's comments.

- Work for equal "air time" so that no one talks too little or too much.

- Allow for different points of view. There are no wrong answers.

- All discussions are private. We will **not use your name or the name of your company** in any reports or notes. I encourage you to speak honestly and candidly so we can hear as many perspectives as possible. To reinforce privacy, can we all agree NOT to share information from the focus group with anyone outside of the group? [WAIT FOR EVERYONE TO SAY "YES."]

With me is a member of the Westat study team, who is taking notes as a backup to the audio recording. The session is being recorded to enable me to write an accurate report, not of who said what but "what was said."

- When you begin to respond to a question or make a comment, please start by stating your <u>first</u> name only, so that I can identify the speaker while also protecting your privacy.

- Please use your phone handset rather than the speaker phone, if possible, when you are speaking. The speaker phone is more likely to distort the sound or pick up background noise.

- We have a number of topics to cover in a short period of time; therefore, I apologize up front if I must interrupt you so we can move on to the next topic. If time permits, I will return to any unfinished discussions.

Are there any questions before we begin? [WAIT FOR RESPONSE]

Let's begin by introducing ourselves. Please tell us your first name, the industry your company represents, and the number of employees working for your company. For example, I am _____ and I work for a social science research company with about 2,000 employees.

1. I understand that you have either researched information about E-Verify or received information about it. Can you briefly describe what E-Verify is?

[IF A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF E-VERIFY IS NEEDED FOR CLARIFICATION: E-Verify is a free Internet-based system that compares information from an employee's Form I-9 to data from U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration records to confirm employment eligibility. Employment eligibility results for most employees are displayed in three to five seconds.]

2. How did you first find out about E-Verify? [PROBE ON PERSON AND MEDIA, IF NOT MENTIONED.]

   • IF HEARD ABOUT IT FROM SOMEONE IN THE COMPANY, THEN PROBE: What position does/did this person hold in your company (e.g., HR representative, CEO, legal counsel, administrative staff)?

   • IF HEARD ABOUT IT FROM MEDIA, THEN PROBE: Where did you hear or read about it (e.g., print, radio, TV, or internet advertisements; PSAs; association outreach events; newsletter articles)?

   • FOR BOTH GROUPS: If you recall what was said about E-Verify, please tell me about it.

3. USCIS, the federal agency that developed the E-Verify Program, uses a variety of communication methods to increase employers' awareness of E-Verify, for example, print, radio, TV, and internet advertisements; PSAs; association outreach events; and articles. Over the past 6 months, do you recall hearing or seeing any messages about E-Verify from the federal government?

   For those of you who said yes:
   • What types of messages were they?
   • If you recall anything about the content of the message(s), please tell me what you remember.

   For those of you who said no:
   • Do you recall ever hearing or seeing anything about E-Verify at all? If so, where and about how long ago was that?

4. Do you know if anyone in your company receives news or information about E-Verify?

   For those of you who said yes:
   - What position do they hold (e.g., HR representative, CEO, legal counsel, administrative staff)?
   - What type of information, if any, about E-Verify do they share with you?
   - How do they share this information?

   For those of you who said no:
   - Who in your company would typically receive information about employment verification?

5. What media sources about E-Verify/employment verification do/would you find most reliable and credible? What makes you say that?

6. Are there any media sources that you find less reliable and credible?

   For those of you who said yes:
   - Which ones?
   - Why do you think these media sources are less credible than others?

7. What are the first questions that come to mind about E-Verify or employment verification?

   - How would you prefer to receive answers to your questions (e.g., website, email, call from customer service, webinar)?

8. Are you a member of any business or professional organizations or associations that might distribute information about employment verification to its members?

For those of you who said yes:
- What ones?

9. Some organizations and membership associations, for example, the Small Business Administration, chambers of commerce, and human resources associations, have provided information about E-Verify to their individual and corporate members. Have you or your company received information or communication about E-Verify through any organizations or membership associations?

For those of you who said yes:
- From what organization(s)?
- What type(s) of information did you receive? If you recall the content, could you elaborate a little?
- How was the information provided?
- Do you prefer receiving information about E-Verify from membership organizations rather than hearing/reading about it from other sources? Why or why not?

10. Some of these same organizations might also provide E-Verify informational or training events. Have you participated in any informational or training events offered through any organizations or membership associations?

For those of you who said yes:
- From what organization(s)?
- What types of events have you attended (e.g., webinars, live E-Verify briefing meetings)?
- How did you hear about the events?

11. What suggestions do you have about how USCIS could communicate with employers that do not use E-Verify?

12. Do you know if your company has had any discussions about participating in
E-Verify?

    For those of you who said yes:
    • What were the main issues discussed?
    • As a result of these discussions, did your company make a decision <u>not</u> to participate in E-Verify, or is it still under discussion?

13. Does your company see any benefits of participating in E-Verify?

    For those of you who said yes:

    • What are they?

14. Does your company see any specific barriers or challenges to participation in
E-Verify?

    For those of you who said yes:
    • What are the barriers or challenges?

15. Has your opinion of E-Verify changed at all over the past few years? If so, how?

16. Do you know who at your company was involved in discussions about whether or not to participate in E-Verify?

    For those of you who said yes:
    • What position do/did these individuals hold (e.g., HR manager, CEO, legal counsel, administrative staff)?
    • How important do you think each of the people in these positions was in making a decision about participation?

17. Do you know what sources of information or resources your company used to help in its decision-making process?

   For those who answered yes, we have several follow-up questions for you:

   - What sources of information or resources did your company use?
       o What do you think was the most useful source of information on
       E-Verify during the decision-making process? The least useful? Why?

   - How easy or difficult was it to get the information your company needed about E-Verify in order to make its decision? What makes you say this?
       o What type of information would have made this decision easier to make?
       o What would be the most effective method(s) of receiving this information (e.g., through information from professional organizations, E-Verify website, PSAs)?

   - What role, if any, did receiving information about E-Verify through the media (e.g., ads, PSAs, association outreach events, website) play in influencing your company's decision?
       - How important do you think communication about E-Verify through these media was in the decision-making process?

18. This question is for everyone. What are the reasons your company is not currently using E-Verify?

For those of you with more than one reason:
- What is the main reason?

19. Would any type of communication messages about E-Verify change your company's opinion about participating? In what way(s)?

20. In the past 3 months, have you participated in any USCIS-sponsored E-Verify webinars?

    For those of you who said yes:
    - In which webinar(s) did you participate?
    - How did you find out about the webinar(s)?
    - What topics were covered in the webinar(s)?
    - What did you like most about this activity? Least?

21. In the past 3 months, have you participated in any live E-Verify training or education events or activities sponsored by USCIS?

    For those of you who said yes:
    - In which event(s) did you participate?
    - How did you find out about the event(s)?
    - What topics were covered in the event(s)?
    - What did you like most about this activity? Least?

22. In the past 3 months, have you visited the USCIS E-Verify ***public*** website that is available for anyone to search?

    For those of you who said yes:
    - What prompted you to visit the website?
    - If you were looking for something in particular, did you find it?
    - What topics did you read about on the website?
    - Did you view any of the instructional videos on the website? If so:

- o What videos did you watch?
- What did you like most about the website? Least?

23. What other topics should be covered in the webinars, live events, USCIS **public** website, or other education tools?

24. What would be the most effective way or ways (e.g., webinars, training events, USCIS public website, videos) of increasing your knowledge and understanding of the E-Verify Program? Least effective?

- Why would this/these method(s) be more effective than other methods in increasing your knowledge and understanding of E-Verify?

25. Have there been E-Verify events or activities that have not been at all effective in increasing your knowledge and understanding of the E-Verify Program?

    For those of you who said yes:
    - Which one(s)?
    - What makes you say they have not been effective?
    - Do you have suggestions for how to improve these events or activities?

Thank you for sharing your opinions with us. This has been a valuable discussion.

We very much appreciate your taking time from your busy schedules to participate in this discussion. Your opinions about this program are very important to us and to the client. Thank you again.