

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF FEDERAL STUDENT AID
CREATIVE REVIEW FOCUS GROUPS
10/2011

Purpose of the Research, Need for the Collection, and Planned Use of the Data

The office of Federal Student Aid, working in conjunction with its vendor, Campbell-Ewald, has developed two communications campaigns that will be used to inform the public of its information and services. Previous research studies have shown that the public is largely unaware of the office of Federal Student Aid and unfamiliar with its services as a provider of grants, loans, and work study programs. Additionally, the public holds misperceptions about who is eligible for aid and how aid is obtained. Two communications campaigns have been developed to address these barriers and position the office of Federal Student Aid as the trusted source for information and resources for planning, preparing, and paying for college. Customer input from these focus groups will inform FSA which campaign best resonates with its target audiences.

Target Respondents

We will field this study among students (high school seniors, in-college and nontraditional) and parents from the general United States population, as well as traditionally underrepresented target groups (e.g., African American and Hispanic). We will also field this study with a small sampling of high school guidance counselors, college access professionals, and financial aid administrators.

57 Total Sample

Parents of High School Seniors with household incomes (HHI) under \$30,000 per year

- 3 General Market
- 2 African American
- 2 Hispanic

Parents of High School Seniors, HHI \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year

- 3 General Market
- 2 African American
- 2 Hispanic

High School Seniors, HHI under \$30,000 per year

- 4 General Market
- 3 African American
- 3 Hispanic

High School Seniors, HHI \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year

- 4 General Market
- 3 African American
- 2 Hispanic

In-college students, ages 18 – 24, enrolled in a two or four-year program or trade school

- 4 General Market
- 2 African American
- 2 Hispanics

Non-traditional students, age 25+

- 6 General Market
- 3 African American
- 3 Hispanic

2 High School Guidance Counselors

2 College Financial Aid Advisors

2 College Access Professionals

Collection Procedures

The research will use a combination of focus groups and online, one-on-one interviews in order to minimize costs. The professional audiences (guidance counselors, college access professionals, and financial aid administrators) will participate in online, one-on-one interviews. All other audiences will participate in focus groups in Detroit and Los Angeles.

Focus group participants will be recruited from panels and will receive monetary incentives upon completion of their participation. **The incentive payments are built in and included in the contract price.** Detroit participants will receive \$70 for focus groups. Los Angeles participants will receive \$100. The \$100 incentive is requested for projects in Los Angeles. In LA, we have higher incentives than most markets to help show rates due to the LA traffic and travel time. This compensates for the time most respondents need to take from work for day groups, as well as, deal with Los Angeles traffic. The show rate suffers greatly in this market area, unless the groups are 60 minutes or less. The professional groups (guidance counselors, college access professionals, and financial aid administrators) will not receive incentives.

Pending OMB approval, the focus groups and interviews are scheduled to take place during the week of November 14-18, 2011.

Estimate of the Burden Hours

The collection of information will involve 90-minute focus groups and interviews. With a total of 57 respondents participating, the total estimated burden hours are:

Method	Estimated Hours
In-person group interviews	76.5 hours

Online, one-on-one interviews	9 hours
Total	85.5 hours