

**Request for Approval for the Collection of Customer Feedback”
(OMB Control Number: 1545-1349)**

Attachment 1: Screener Guide, Reminder Script, and Confirmation Letter

Participant Screener for [insert name of city]
Spanish IRS.gov Website Focus Groups

Recruiting instructions:

- Recruit two groups, 5:00pm and 7:30pm
- Each group, recruit 10 participants for a show of 8
- Incentive is: [New York/\$125; Miami/\$100; San Diego/\$85]
- All participants will be Spanish Limited English Proficiency taxpayers who are able to read and write in Spanish
- All participants must be 18 years or older
- All taxpayers must have filed a Form 1040 federal tax return in 2011 **or** 2010
- 50% of the participants must be small business owners who file a form 1040 **with** a Schedule C. (Small business is defined as \$100,000 or less/year)
- 50% of the participants should be individual taxpayers who filed a Form 1040 in 2011 or 2010. (We prefer recent filers.)
- Recruiters a mix of gender and age (18 and older)
- **RECRUITERS: Ask all participants to bring their eyeglasses or wear their contacts if necessary.**

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling on behalf of ICF International, a research and consulting firm in the Washington DC area. We are working with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to gain a better understanding of your needs and interactions with the IRS so that they may improve their services in Spanish. This is an opportunity for you to help the IRS improve services to limited-English proficient Spanish taxpayers.

We are looking for participants to join a 2-hour in-person focus group. Your participation is voluntary and your help on this project would be very much appreciated. As a token of our appreciation for your time, you will receive [insert amount of incentive] after the session.

IF ASKED: (EACH INTERVIEWER WILL HAVE THIS INFORMATION)

If respondents ask how their name was obtained, tell them their phone number was randomly selected from a list of individuals in the local calling area. If respondents are concerned about participating, tell them that our contract with the IRS specifically prohibits me from revealing their last name or any information about them to the IRS or anyone else. Participation in this focus group will not affect your taxes or filing status.

This project has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB Clearance Number is 1545-1349. If you like, I can give you a name and address where you can send comments or suggestions for making this process simpler.

Internal Revenue Service
Tax Products Coordinating Committee
1111 Constitution Ave, NW IR-6526
Washington, DC 20024

Your answers to these questions will be kept completely private to the extent by allowed by ICF, meaning we will not provide your last name or any identifying information to the IRS.

Are you interested in participating?

- Yes
- No [*terminate*]

1. First, could you please tell me what language you and your current household most commonly speak at home?

- Spanish
- Other (*Thank and end call. Refer to terminate text at the end of this script.*)

2. How comfortable are you speaking and reading in English?

- Very comfortable (*Thank and end call. Refer to terminate text at the end of this script.*)
- Somewhat comfortable
- I am uncomfortable speaking or reading English

3. Are you comfortable reading in Spanish?

- Yes
- No (*Thank and end call. Refer to terminate text at the end of this script.*)

4. Did you file a Form 1040, U.S. Individual Income Tax Return for 2010 **OR** 2011?

- Yes
- No (*Thank and end call. Refer to terminate text at the end of this script.*)

5. Have you done any of the following activities on the Internet in the past two weeks?

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Banking | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Social networking (Facebook, Twitter) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Reading the paper or visiting news sites | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Performing information searches | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Making reservations or purchasing tickets | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If all responses are “No” terminate.. (*Thank and end call. Refer to terminate text at the end of this script.*)

6. Which of the following categories best describes your age? [*Recruit for mix*]

- Younger than 18 (*Thank and end call. Refer to terminate text at the end of this script*)
- 18 to 33
- 34 to 44
- 45 to 64
- 65 and older
- Prefer not to answer

7. Who was the main person who prepared your most recent federal income tax return? Was it:

[Recruit for mix]

- You (yourself)
- Family, friend, tax professional, other *[Skip to Q9]*

[If self-preparer in 7, ask:]

8. How did you prepare your most recent federal tax return? *[read list]*

[Recruit for mix]

- By hand
- By computer software

9. Do you:

- Own your own small business (income less than \$100,000; file 1040 with a Schedule C) *[Recruit 5]*
- File a 1040, receiving either a W-2 or Form 1099) *[Recruit 5]*

[Recruit two focus groups, each with a mix of W-2 filers and small business filers.]

I'm glad that you will be able to join us! Again, you will receive [insert amount of incentive]. We will also serve refreshments. At this point, I need to collect some contact information from you. Then we will send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility via e-mail or mail.

What is your mail/e-mail address so that we know where to send this information to?

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail Address _____@_____

We will give you a reminder call prior to the focus group. What is the best number to reach you at?

Phone number _____

We are only inviting a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to participate. Please call *[insert recruiter contact and phone]* if this should happen. We look forward to having you participate on *[insert day]* at *[insert time]*.

Do you have any questions?

Great! Thank you for your time and we will be in touch again the day prior to the focus group. Please remember to bring reading glasses if you use them.

TERMINATE TEXT

Thank you very much for your time, and thank you for answering our questions. Unfortunately, based on the focus group requirements, we cannot extend you an invitation. Perhaps at a later time we can include you in a future focus group. Have a good *[day/evening]*.

Reminder Phone Script

To be used no more than 24 hours prior to the scheduled focus group. If participant is not available, leave voice mail message and try back later.

Hello, may I speak to <insert name>? Hi, my name is <insert recruiter's name> and I work for ICF International. I'm calling to remind you about the focus group you agreed to participate in tomorrow at <insert time> at <insert location>. Are you still able to participate? Great!

I <mailed/e-mailed> you directions to our facility. Did you receive the directions? **[If no, read directions and follow with an e-mail.] [If yes]** Do you have any questions about how to get to the facility?

Please remember to bring reading glasses if you use them. If you need to cancel for any reason, I would appreciate if you would call me at [insert phone number].

We look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Confirmation Letter

<Insert date>

Dear <insert name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group discussion on <insert date> at <insert time> at <insert facility name>. Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of the focus group so that you can complete some paperwork and have something to eat. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. As a thank you for participating in the focus group, you will be given <insert amount> at the end of the discussion.

The directions to the facility are attached. We are accessible by public transportation [insert bus number/subway station as appropriate]. If you would like to drive, parking is available [insert information about parking and any costs].

If you have any questions, please call <insert facility manager's name> at <facility phone number>.

Thank you for your time and participation.

[Insert facility manager's name]
[Insert name of facility] on behalf of ICF International

Attachment 2: Moderator Guide

Spanish irs.gov website Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Introduction and Welcome- 5 minutes

A. Moderator Introduction

Hello! I'm (MODERATOR'S NAME) from ICF International and will be moderating today's group discussion. The purpose of this focus group is to discuss taxpayer preferences for receiving IRS services among Spanish taxpayers.

First, I would like to thank all of you for coming in today. Our discussion will take about two hours. I would like to know your real attitudes and feelings, so please be as open and frank with me as you can. Your comments and suggestions are very important to us and will be used to help the IRS improve services to limited English Spanish taxpayers.

I am not an IRS employee, and I work for ICF International. I was hired to get your perceptions, opinions, and suggestions. There are no correct or wrong answers; so please don't hold back. My job as a moderator is to:

- Help guide the flow of conversation
- Make sure everyone's comments are heard
- Ensure that questions about various aspects of the topic are covered

You will see me referring to this outline during our session. The outline includes all issues I need to raise with the group, and helps me keep the discussion on track. It is important that we cover all the issues. Therefore, I may have to break off the conversation in order to move on to another area in the guide.

B. Ground Rules

Before we begin, I'd like to review some ground rules for today's discussion.

- For the IRS to speak with the public, we are required to have approval from the Office of Management and Budget. Their approval number for this project is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the: IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, IR-6526, Washington, DC 20224. [*Moderator: Post this bullet on newsprint/white board for each session*]
- We are audio-taping the meeting for use in preparing a report about findings. Because we are taping this meeting, I ask that you speak loudly and clearly. If I think you are speaking too softly to be heard on the recording, I will ask you to speak up.
- Please speak just one at a time so everyone has a chance to participate.

- Don't engage in side conversations-- we need for everyone to hear what the others are saying and for everything that's said to be heard easily on the recording.
- Sometimes I'll go around the table and ask everyone for their input. At other times, I will just throw a topic open for general discussion.
- Participation -- we would like to hear from everyone in the group, but you don't have to answer every question.
- No evaluation -- there are no right and wrong answers. We expect differences in how people see things, and we need to know about these differences.
- Feel free to disagree or question each other. The purpose of a group session is for us to learn things in group interchanges that we don't get out of one-on-one discussions. If someone says something you disagree with, please let us know.
- Some observers are present behind the one-way mirror. They want to hear what you have to say about the topics we'll discuss, but we don't want you to feel constrained by their presence.
- If anyone needs to use the restroom, they are located (specify). There is no need to stop the discussion.
- Your participation is voluntary. Therefore, at any point in time you may leave the room.
- If you have a cell phone, please turn it off or set to vibrate.
- The session will last about two hours.

C. *Informed Consent*

All participants will have reviewed and signed the informed consent for their participation in the focus group prior to coming into the focus group room. This will be handled by a designated staff at the focus group facility and confirmed by an IRS staff.

Before coming into the room, you were asked to review and sign an informed consent form for your participation in the discussion. I just want to go over some of the key points on the consent form to make sure we are in agreement.

Moderator: Review consent form, emphasizing audio taping, anonymity, and use of first names only.

D. Introductions -10 minutes

[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]

To get started, let's introduce ourselves. Please tell us your first name, the city you're located in, and whether you prepare your return yourself or use a preparer, friend, relative, etc. Let's start with.....

Discussion and Exercises 90 minutes

Awareness:

1. By show of hand how many of you are aware that the IRS has a website in Spanish with tax information? (Count the number of people)

If yes, Probe:

- How did you learn about the website, that it existed? Family, friends, TV (what station?) radio
- Have you used the website in the last 12 months to search for information?

2. Describe the types of information that you went on to the Spanish irs .gov website to find?

Probe:

Was it tax information to file a tax return, notice information, status of refund, to get a form or publication?

3. Were you able to locate the information you were searching for?

If no, how else did you locate the information?

Probe:

- Did you call the IRS at the 1-800 number, walk in to an office for assistance, ask your tax preparer for help, ask a friend or family member for help
- What factors drove you to choose that method to get assistance?

Web Use:

The next task is to review information that is available in Spanish on the IRS website. Please stay at your computers and go to www.irs.gov.

1. Please try and find information in Spanish? *[Pause and note how many people are able to locate the Spanish section easily]*

2. Let's spend about 10 minutes reviewing the front page of the Spanish website

- What are your initial reactions to the content to the page?
- How useful is this information?
- Are there any topics that you think should be there and are not?
- Are there topics that are missing that you wish were included?

3. What are your reactions to the style of the page?

- Is the font easy to read?
- Is it laid out in way that makes it easy for you to find information? Are the topics organized in a logical manner?
- Is the language easy to comprehend?

Okay now we can do to a series of exercises (three) related to the use of the website:

Note to Moderator: Hand out Scenario 1-Free File. Give the participants 5 minutes to review the form and 10 minutes for discussion.

Were you able to find the Free File application?

Was it difficult or easy to locate?

Probe: Did you read the directions that accompany Free File? Were you able to understanding the directions? Are there any words that were confusing in the instructions?

Note to Moderator: Hand out Scenario 2 EITC. Give the participants 5 minutes to review the form and 10 minutes for discussion.

How did you locate the information for EIC?

Were you able to determine if you qualified for the EIC?

Probe: Did you read the directions that accompany for the EIC Calculator? Were you able to understanding the directions? Are there any words that were confusing in the instructions?

Probe: How helpful was the EITC calculator in determining your eligible credit?

Note to Moderator: Hand out Scenario 3- Order a Form or Publication. Give the participants 5 minutes to review the form and 10 minutes for discussion.

Was it hard or easy to locate the information to order a form or publication? Talk about what made it difficult or easy?

Probe: Did you read the directions that accompany for ordering a form or publication line? Were you able to understanding the directions? Are there any words that were confusing in the instructions?

4. What tax information would you most like to have in Spanish?

5. Do you have a preference for *how* you would like to receive this or access information? i.e. Internet, telephone (text messages), written documents, social media (Facebook, Twitter), workshops, etc

6. *[For those who use preparers]* would you consider preparing your own taxes now that you know there are tools to do it yourself,(i.e. information, Free-File), or would you always use a preparer?

IV. Wrap-up – 5 minutes

We are getting close to the end of our time, but before we wrap up our session, is there anything the IRS can do to improve service to taxpayers like you?