

DOCUMENTATION FOR THE GENERIC CLEARANCE OF PROFESSIONAL TOOLKIT FOCUS GROUP COLLECTIONS

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:
(the collection that is the subject of the 10-day review request)

SURVEY FOCUS GROUP WEBSITE USABILITY TESTING

DESCRIPTION OF THIS SPECIFIC COLLECTION

Specify all relevant information, including

1. intended purpose,
2. need for the collection,
3. planned use of the data,
4. date(s) and location(s),
5. collection procedures,
6. number of focus groups, surveys, usability testing sessions,
7. description of respondents/participants

We have included a copy of the proposed focus group discussion guide at the end of this document.

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

This study will evaluate the new Financial Aid Toolkit website (FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov). The over-arching goal of the evaluation is to offer insights to assist in making the site a go-to and frequently visited resource for individuals and organizations who help students prepare for college and the financial aid process.

The research will assist FSA in evaluating the overall effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, the new site after Toolkit deployment. At a minimum, the research will:

- Identify needs of current and target visitors to the site.
- Determine objectives and challenges of each target segment on the subject of advising students and parents on college financing decisions, the sources of information they rely on, and how they search for that information.
- Gauge overall perceptions of the site, and the degree to which it is or is not valued as a resource for advisors/mentors/counselors.
- Evaluate the site based on its perceived purpose, overall appeal, credibility, degree of informative content, and relevance to target audience needs.

Dates, Locations, and Collection Procedures

The sessions will be conducted on March 12-13, 2014, with recruitment efforts to begin February 18, 2014. The research will be conducted via four online focus groups (each 90 minutes in length). The online group discussions will replicate the experience participants will have when viewing the live website, thus minimizing research bias.

Description of Respondents/Participants

The research will be conducted among three core audiences determined by FSA: guidance counselors, FSA partner organizations, and college access professionals.

Participants for the online groups will be recruited from lists provided by FSA and those who express interest from list serves where FSA will post notifications of the research effort.

4 Total Sample

- 2 High School Counselors online focus groups
- 1 FSA Partner Organization online focus group
- 1 College Access Professionals online focus group

Recruit 8 for 5-8 participants per group.

High School Counselors must have specific responsibility for identification of post secondary student loan and financial aid options and/or providing non-financial advice or counseling to students, e.g., related to careers and college curricula.

FSA partner organization participants must have specific responsibility for coordinating programs for students or advising them on topics related to student loan and financial aid options and/or coordinating programs for students or advising them on topics related to career goals and courses.

College Access Professionals must have specific responsibility for at least one of the following: selection of their school's post-secondary lending options; guidelines for advising students and parents on post-secondary loan options; identifying post-secondary lending options to recommend to students; providing other non-financial advice or counseling to students e.g., related to careers and college curricula; or other financial aid administration.

There are no quotas or exclusions based on awareness or visitation to the FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov website, years of experience in their field, or the ethnicity mix of student populations they serve or advise. We will aim for a broad nationwide geographical mix of participants, and a broad mix of urban/suburban/rural areas/school locations served, but with no hard quotas.

AMOUNT OF ANY PROPOSED STIPEND OR INCENTIVE

To ensure participation in a study of this type, and in accordance with established best practices for qualitative research recruiting, it is normally critical to offer an adequate cash incentive to participants. However, for this particular study, and in accord with FSA's request, all participants will receive a non-monetary incentive consisting of a selection of FSA publications.

BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION (*Number of responses (X) estimated response or participation time in minutes (/60) = annual burden hours*):

Category of Respondent	No. of Participants	Participation Time	Burden
High School Counselors	16	90 minutes	24 hours
FSA Partner Organizations	8	90 minutes	12 hours
College Access Professionals	8	90 minutes	12 hours
Totals	32	270 minutes	48 hours

BURDEN COST COMPUTATION

Category of Respondent	No. of Participants	Hourly Rate	Participation Time	Totals
High School Counselors	16	\$0	90 minutes	\$0
FSA Partner Organizations	8	\$0	90 minutes	\$0
College Access Professionals	8	\$0	90 minutes	\$0
Totals	32	\$0	270 minutes	\$0

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

If statistical methods are to be used, fully describe the methodology, sample selection, expected response rates, and any other concepts needed to provide a full understanding of those methods.

Since this is a qualitative study, statistical methods will not be used.

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