

## 2015 NSCG Contact Strategy Focus Group Protocol

### I. Background (5 minutes)

- A. Hello everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_ . Thank you for coming out tonight
- B. Introduce idea of a moderator led discussion
- C. Taping
  - 1. Want to hear from everyone; one speaker at a time.
- D. If you disagree with someone else's comment, that's ok. But please be respectful.
- E. Occasionally I may need to cut someone off to ensure that everyone is heard or to ensure we cover all topics
  - 1. Length: 90 minutes Logistics...bathroom location, beverages, snacks.
  - 2. Please set your phones on silent or turn them off.
  - 3. Cannot answer questions until the end of the group.
- F. Topic: Mailing materials and messaging

Discussions will be based on your opinions of pieces that you receive in the mail, which includes the envelopes and messages that you receive.

There are no right or wrong answers. It's okay to say that you don't know. The goal of this group is to learn about your opinions and experiences so the Census Bureau can improve its methods.

### II. Warm-up (10 minutes)

Please introduce yourselves using your first name and tell us where you live and one activity that you enjoy doing.

Today we will be talking about what you messages you receive in the mail, how you react to them, and what motivates you to open a piece of mail and respond to a request. Your input will affect the way the Census Bureau collects information.

### III. Mail Preferences (10 minutes)

- A. What features of an envelope make it seem important? To what extent do you open all letters? What leads you to open a letter?
- B. Show NSCG envelope:
  - a. When you first see this envelope, what are your first impressions?
  - b. To what extent does this envelope look important?
  - c. If this envelope was mixed in with the other mail you receive at home, do you think you would notice it? How likely would you be to open it?
  - d. What features would help the envelope stand out?
  - e. What features would motivate you to open the envelope? What impact, if any, does the personalization of the name and address have?
  - f. How likely are you to remember receiving this envelope in the mail? Why do you think this?

- i. Do you remember receiving this envelope in the mail? If yes, what was your reaction to it?

#### IV. Letter Content (20 min)

We got this particular group together because we believe that you recently responded to a survey sponsored by the National Science Foundation sent to you by the Census Bureau.

- A. What information do you expect to find in a letter asking you to participate in a survey?
- B. What language do you believe is essential to be included in the letter for you to respond?
- C. What is an ideal letter length that would make you more likely to read it?
- D. What information would motivate you to respond?
- E. How often do you receive survey requests in the mail or via email?
  - a. If at least once, what have you seen in other survey requests that you liked?
  - b. If at least once, what have you seen in other survey requests that you did not like?
- F. Show NSCG letter:
  - a. What are your initial impressions of this letter?
  - b. What is the main point of the letter?
  - c. What, if anything, seems to be missing from the letter?
  - d. Who do you believe is sponsoring the survey?
  - e. To what extent do you remember receiving this letter or other similar letters requesting your participation in the NSCG? If yes,
    - i. What, if anything, about the letter motivated you to respond?
    - ii. Is there anything that could have been included in the letter to motivate you to respond sooner?
    - iii. Do you remember using the URL provided in the letter to visit the website? If not, why not? If you remember going to the website, was the information useful?

#### V. Contacts (15 minutes)

- A. If you were taking a survey and it asked you to provide an email address, what type of email address would you provide?
  - a. Would you provide an address you check regularly or a junk mail account?
- B. How did you feel about the number of times you were contacted to participate in the NSCG? To what extent did you find the contacts to be annoying? To what extent did the additional contacts and reminders influence your decision when to respond?
- C. What are your opinions on receiving survey requests via text? How about survey reminders? What information should the text contain?

#### VI. Branding (15 minutes)

- A. To what extent have you heard of the National Science Foundation?
  - a. In what capacity do you know of the NSF?

- b. What do you believe the NSF does?
- c. What are your opinions of the NSF?
- d. What do you think is important about the NSF?
- e. How is the NSF useful?
- B. What, if anything, have you heard about the National Survey of College Graduates?
  - a. What are your opinions of the NSCG? In what capacity are you familiar with the NSCG?
  - b. What do you think the survey is? What information do you think it collects? Does it sound like a useful survey?
  - c. Who sponsors the NSCG?
- C. If know of the NSF or NSCG, what, if anything, did you know of the NSF before being asked to participate in the NSCG? What, if anything, did you know about the NSCG?
  - a. To what extent did your prior knowledge of the NSF or NECG influence your decision to respond?

**VII. Survey experience (15 minutes)**

- A. Have you ever received a request to take a survey? If yes,
  - a. How likely are you to respond to surveys?
  - b. What factors influenced your decision whether to respond?
  - c. If you received the NSCG in the mail, how would your decision of whether to participate compare with your decision to participate in other surveys you've been invited to participate in?
  - d. If more likely to participate in the NSCG, what are the factors that influenced that decision?
  - e. If less likely to participate in the NSCG, what are the factors that influenced that decision?

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Is there anything else we left out that you would like to add?

Before we end the group, I want to remind you that the Census Bureau is committed to keeping your personal information confidential. Census Bureau employees are sworn for life to protect your confidentiality. Any Census Bureau employee who violates Title 13 is subject to a fine up to \$250,000, a prison sentence up to five years, or both. Does anyone have any questions?

Thank you very much for your participation. You can pick up your incentive from the area where you first signed in.