

**DIRECT EXPRESS®  
IN-DEPTH TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS  
WITH DIRECT EXPRESS® CARDHOLDERS**

**DISCUSSION GUIDE 2015**

**I. Introduction**

**5 minutes**

- Interviewer's introduction.
  - Introduce self and KRC Research.
- Explain interview format:
  - KRC is conducting interviews on behalf of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.
  - KRC is an independent research firm and does not work for the Department of the Treasury, Social Security Administration, or other federal agency.
  - This interview is for research purposes only. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just looking for your opinions about some of the things we'll be talking about.
  - Everything you say is confidential and your individual responses will not be shared with anyone as allowed by law. Your participation is voluntary and should take about 45 minutes to one hour.
  - Inform participant we are audiotaping the discussion.

**II. Satisfaction With the Direct Express® Card**

**15 minutes**

Today we are going to talk about your experiences with the **Direct Express®** card and how you use it. To start I want to ask you a few general questions.

- About how long have you been using the **Direct Express®** card for your benefit payment?
- Did you receive your federal benefit payment by check before signing up for the **Direct Express®** card or have you always received your benefit payment on the card?
  - **[IF RECEIVED CHECK PREVIOUSLY.]** In what ways is the **Direct Express®** card better than receiving a paper check? What are its benefits?
  - In what ways was receiving a check better than the **Direct Express®** card?

- Overall, how satisfied are you with the **Direct Express®** card now that you are using it? Why?
- What are the things you dislike about the **Direct Express®** card? (**PROBE EXTENSIVELY**)
  - What recommendations do you have to improve that?
- What do you like most about the **Direct Express®** card?
  - What are the most important benefits of the **Direct Express®** card to you personally?

### **III. Communication**

**10 minutes**

- First, how did you learn how to use the **Direct Express®** card?
  - Where did you get most of your information about how to use the **Direct Express®** card?
  - Did anyone help you learn how to use the **Direct Express®** card or help you find information about it? If so, who?
- How well do you feel you understand how to use the **Direct Express®** card? Why?
  - How comfortable do you feel using it? Why?
- Where did you learn how to use your **Direct Express®** card?

#### **PROBES**

- The materials that came with the card in the mail?
  - The Direct Express website ([www.usdirectexpress.com](http://www.usdirectexpress.com))?
  - The Social Security Administration [OR INSERT PAYING AGENCY.]?
  - Had a debit/EBT card before?
  - Word of mouth?
  - Calling the 1-800 customer service number?
- How closely did you read the materials that came in the mail with your card?
    - In what ways were the materials that came in the mail with the card helpful? Anything else?
    - In what ways could it be improved? Anything else?
  - Do you recall seeing annual notices in the mail or occasional postcards with information about the **Direct Express®** card? [**IF YES.**]

- o How helpful was this material in telling you something new about the **Direct Express®** card? Why?
- o What specifically do you recall learning about the **Direct Express®** card from these materials?

#### **IV. Usage**

**15 minutes**

Now I'd like to change topics and ask you about how you use the **Direct Express®** card.

Let's talk about how you use the **Direct Express®** in a typical month.

- When you get a payment on the **Direct Express®** card, walk me through exactly how you go about paying your bills and making purchases. **(PROBE EXTENSIVELY.)**

**PROBES:**

How do you pay your rent?

How do you pay your bills like your electric bill or your phone bill?

How do you buy groceries and other items?

- Do you take all your money off the card at one time each month? Why?
  - o What would encourage you to use your card for purchases and paying bills instead taking all your money in cash each month?
- Do you mostly get cash at an ATM to buy things at grocery stores and other places, or do you use your **Direct Express®** card at the store?
  - o **IF ATM AND CASH:** Why do you go to an ATM and take out cash instead of using your **Direct Express®** card?
    - What are the advantages of using cash instead of the **Direct Express®** card to **make purchases**?
    - What are the advantages of using cash instead of the **Direct Express®** card to **pay bills**?
  - o **IF DIRECT EXPRESS CARD®:** Why do you use the **Direct Express®** card instead of cash? **(PROBE FOR BENEFITS OF THE DIRECT EXPRESS® CARD OVER CASH.)**
    - What are the advantages of using the **Direct Express®** card instead of cash to **make purchases**?

- What are the advantages of using the **Direct Express®** card instead of cash to **pay bills**?
- What other ways have you used the **Direct Express®** card?
- What questions do you have, if any, about how to use the **Direct Express®** card?
- Have you had any problems using the **Direct Express®** card? What were they?
- How has the way you use the **Direct Express®** card today changed compared to when you first began using it?
  - Do you use your **Direct Express®** card instead of cash to make purchases more often than you used to? If so, why?
- Based on your experience with the **Direct Express®** card, what advice would you give to others to improve how it works?

#### **IV. Awareness**

**15 minutes**

Now, I am going to ask you a few questions about different features of the **Direct Express®** card. After I read each one, please tell me whether you were aware of that feature or not before today. If you are not aware of that feature, it's perfectly fine, just say so.

- You can receive one free ATM withdrawal per month for each deposit without paying any fees if you use an ATM within the **Direct Express®** network.
- You can make purchases at grocery stores, restaurants, or other retail locations with no fee on the card.
- You can get cash back from grocery stores or other retail locations with no fee on the card.
- You can pay many bills like utilities and cable television by phone.
- You can make purchases over the Internet.

**PROBE ON ITEMS INTERVIEWEE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT.**

- Did anything surprise you on this list? What? How likely are you to do that in the future?

**V. Conclusion (TIME PERMITTING)**

---

Thank you for your time today. Is there anything else you would like to add or recommend about the **Direct Express®** card?