

Appendix A: Protocol for Focus Group

Thank you for joining us today. Before we begin, let me give you some context for our objectives today.

BLS realizes that the basic format of its news releases has not been changed in a long time, so we were wondering if there are changes that could be made to make the releases easier to use, and possibly more useful.

Before we go on, I need to take care of a few housekeeping details, so please bear with me.

- First, I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I'll be asking. The whole point of this discussion is to hear your opinions about the news releases. It doesn't matter whether you have a positive or a negative opinion, both are important to hear.
- Next, I want to assure you that everything we discuss today will remain confidential. Whatever information we obtain from you will not be shared with anyone in a way that identifies who you are. For example, we won't use your name or the names of your organization in the report of the findings that we'll be writing. To facilitate this outcome, I'll just be calling you by your first name, and when you talk about your organization, try not to mention it by name.
- We also expect that you'll treat the information we exchange today as confidential. You should not identify anyone who participates in this group after we're finished today.
- With your consent, we'll be audio-taping the discussion today. This helps reduce the burden of note taking, plus others who could not be here today will be able to hear what you have to say. The only people who will listen to the tape will be BLS research staff. Does anyone have any objection to audio-taping?
- Finally, I want everyone to get a chance to speak when they have something to say. So I ask that you try to keep your comments brief and related to the issue at hand. And I'd appreciate it if you wait until another person is finished speaking before speaking up yourself.

How about if we quickly introduce ourselves? Please tell us your first name, your position, how long you have used BLS data, and which news releases you use.

Questions

1. **What is your general opinion of BLS news releases? If you were asked to give them a grade, A, B, C, or D, what grade would you assign, and why?**
2. **How do you use the BLS news releases?**
Probe: How much of the explanatory, descriptive text do you use?

Probe: What level of user, for example, novice, moderately experienced, very experienced, are the news releases designed for? Why do you say that?

3. How do you use the charts and maps that are embedded in the news release?

Probe: How easy or difficult are they to use?

Probe: Are there any improvements that you would like to see made to them?

4. How do you use the tables in the news releases?

Probe: How easy or difficult are they to use?

Probe: Are there any improvements that you would like to see made to them?

5. How do you use the technical notes that accompany each press release?

Probe: Which audience do you think they are written for?

Probe: Are there any improvements we should make?

6. As BLS considers making changes to the news releases, what changes would you suggest, or that you would like us to investigate?