Focus Group Protocol: Subscribers

> **PURPOSE:** Assess ConnectHome subscribers' decision-making process, attitudes, and beliefs regarding internet access, use, comfort-level, and satisfaction with ConnectHome services.

a. Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion today. We are looking forward to talking with you to learn about your experiences using the Internet.

[IF NOT ALREADY COMPLETE: COLLECT SIGNED CONSENT FORM FROM EACH PARTICIPANT]

b. Ground Rules

Before we get started, I'd like to review a few ground rules.

- ▶ Please speak one at a time.

- ▶ We are recording this session to be sure we can accurately remember what everyone says. Only people working on the project will have access to the recordings The Department of Housing and Urban Development will not have access to the identity of the participants and neither HUD nor your Public Housing Authority will have access to the recordings.

- ▶ Since we are recording, please speak in a voice as loud as mine and avoid side conversations.

- ▶ I'd like to introduce my colleague _____ who will be taking notes today in the event that the recordings are not clear. Again, these notes will be kept private and will not identify anyone by name. We need to hear from everyone today, but you don't have to answer every question.

- ▶ There may be times in the discussion where you feel differently from other people and we want to hear about that. There are no wrong answers.

- ▶ Please turn off your cell phones or turn to silent.

- ▶ If you need to leave the room for some reason, please leave so that only one person is up and out of the room at one time- this will keep our group from getting too small.

- ▶ I have a lot of questions to cover and therefore may need to interrupt you to keep conversation moving.

- ▶ This session is confidential; your names will not be associated with anything you say.

c. Icebreaker

Let's start by getting to know each other a little bit. Please go around the table and tell us:

- ▶ Your first name

- ▶ Your favorite food

- ▶ [MODERATOR INTRODUCES SELF AT END]

I want to tell you why we are all here today and why you were selected to participate in this discussion. Everyone here is a subscriber to ConnectHome [or local program name], the program that brings free or low-cost high-speed internet access to people living in public housing. Today I want to talk to you about

your internet use in your home. I want to reiterate that I do not work for the government or your public housing authority and I am not involved in running the ConnectHome [or local program name] program or administering public housing benefits. We are doing a lot of focus group discussions like this across the country and your input will help the ConnectHome better understand how real people like you are using the Internet. I also want to make it clear that while we will be sharing a summary of the feedback from all of the people we talk to with ConnectHome, we will in no way tell the government or your PHA who said what and your name will not be connected to any of the information that you share with us.

[NOTE: LANGUAGE IN THIS PARAGRAPH WILL BE CUSTOMIZED BASED ON INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM EACH PHA ABOUT HOW THEIR PROGRAM IS IMPLEMENTED]

Do you have any questions before we get started? [TURN ON RECORDER]

A. Internet and Technology Access

Let's get started by talking about the internet in general.

As I just mentioned, all of you have been selected for this group discussion because you have gained internet access at home through ConnectHome. [IF NEEDED: We understand that in your community, ConnectHome internet services are provided by <ISPs>… and is <language about type of service provided>].

1. Tell me about when you first got internet access at home through ConnectHome [or local program name]?

    a. When did you first get access through this program?

    b. How did you hear about it?

    c. Was it your decision or someone else in your household who signed up for the program?

    d. What made you decide to sign up through ConnectHome [or local program name]?

        Probe: What were some of the things that led you to sign up-(e.g., cost? Search for a job? Help your child(ren) with their homework?)

    e. Tell me about signing up for internet services through ConnectHome [or local program name] - was it hard? Was it easy?

    a. Let's talk about how often you are going online at home.

2. Now that you've signed up for ConnectHome [or local program name], how often are you using the internet at home?

    Probe: Many times per day? Once per day? Once per week?

    a. What about others in your household, how often are they getting online at home?

3. When you use the internet at home, what kind of devices are you using?

    Probe: Tablet? Laptop? Smartphone? Other?

    a. What about others in your household, what are the different ways they get online at home?

    b. What are your preferences for when you use certain devices? (e.g., use iPad when watching TV or use desktop to pay bills)

Now let's spend a few minutes talking about if and how you were accessing the Internet at home before you had access through ConnectHome [or local program name].

4. Thinking back to before you had internet access through ConnectHome [or local program name], how many of you ever had internet access at home?

   a. SHOW OF HANDS

5. What service were you using to get access to the internet from home? How, if at all, was it different from ConnectHome [or local program name]?

6. What kind of devices were you and others in your household using to get online from home?

   IF NEEDED: Have the devices you use changed since gaining access through ConnectHome?

B. Internet Use

Next I want to spend some time talking about how you use the internet at home.

7. Let's make a list of all the things people use the Internet for when they are signing on from home. [WRITE LIST ON EASEL]

   a. Tell me about the activity that you are doing the most-what are some reasons you do this more than any other activity?

   b. Tell me about an activity that you are never doing online—what are some reasons you do not do these activities online?

DISTRIBUTE STACKS OF INDEX CARDS TO EACH PARTICIPANT (THERE WILL BE ONE CARD PER CELL)

White	Green	Blue	Yellow	Red
Often	Help children with school work (such as doing research or writing and essay)	Find information on schools or training programs for adults such as GED programs, college courses, or other training programs	Search for jobs	Search for health or medical information
Sometimes	Turn in children's homework	Apply for financial aid for adult education or training	Apply for jobs	Find a doctor or other health care provider
Never	Communicate with children's teachers or schools	Participate in online job training courses	Work from home	Communicate with a doctor's office
	Find information about colleges	Attend online courses for earning credits toward a certification or degree	Sell goods or services online	Get your medicine online
	Find information about or apply for financial aid for college		Advertise or operate a business	Access health records or health insurance records online
	Find information on school activities, events or closings			Apply for health insurance benefits online
	Use educational websites			

We have an activity to do, and here's how it works. Each of you will get a stack of colored note cards listing some things that people use the internet for; these are in no particular order. Note that these are only some activities you may use the internet for; there may be lots of other things you do on the internet as well, and that's okay. You'll also get a stack of white cards that have some frequency categories on it for how often you use the internet for each of these things (e.g., often, sometimes, never). What we'd like you to do is to think about the time since you've had ConnectHome [or local program name] service and take a few minutes to sort the cards into groups for how often people in your household use the internet for each of these activities. For example, if you use the internet at home to help your kids with their homework every day, you'd put that in the "often "category. If you have never used the internet to get your medicine online, you can put that in the "never" category. Don't worry- there is no right way to do this and we know everyone uses the internet for different things. This activity is a way to get us all talking about it. As we talk about these things over the next few minutes, it is ok to move them around to different categories- we'll collect them at the end.

[ALLOW 10-15 MINUTES TO COMPLETE]

There are a few specific cards or activities that we want to talk about in a bit more detail.

8. Let's start by talking about the green cards- using the internet for your children's education. What types of children's educational activities are you using the internet for?

    a. How often are you using the Internet at home for these types of activities?

    b. How if at all has having internet access at home affected your children's education?

       Probe: Has it made any things easier? Any things more difficult?

9. What about the blue cards- adult education or training. What types of adult education activities are you using the internet for?

    a. How often are you using the internet at home for these types of activities?

    b. How if at all has having internet access at home affected adult education and training for people in your household?

       Probe: Has it made any things easier? Any things more difficult?

10. What about the yellow cards- employment-related activities. What types of activities are you using the internet for?

    a. How often are you using the internet at home for these types of activities?

    b. How has having internet access at home affected the employment or job opportunities of people in your household?

       Probe: Has it made any things easier? Any things more difficult?

11. Finally, how about the red cards- using the internet for health-related activities- What types of health-related activities are you doing online?

    a. How often are you using the internet at home for these types of activities.

    b. How if at all has having internet access at home affected how you care for your health or the health of others in your household?

       Probe: Has it made any things easier? Any things more difficult?

12. Thinking back to before you had internet access through ConnectHome, what, if anything, is different now that you have access through this program?

    a. Are there things you can do now that you couldn't do before or things that are easier to do now that you have internet access?

    b. What did you think you'd use the internet for at home? Has that turned out to be true?

    c. Are there new challenges you and others in your household are facing now that you have access?

Now is your chance to move around any of the activity cards if you'd like. Once you are done, we'll collect them.

[**NOTETAKER:** Collect cards with frequency card on top followed by cards in that category.]

C. Comfort-level and Skills

Everyone has a different level of comfort in using the internet and computers- and that is OK.

13. How easy or difficult is it for you to use computers?

Probe: On a scale of 1-10 where 1 is it is really easy to use computers and 10 is it is really difficult to use computers- what would you say?

    a.   What are some things that are easy for you? What are some things that are hard or confusing for you?

    b.   Are certain devices (laptop, smartphone, tablet) easier to use than others for you?

14. How easy or difficult is it for you to use the internet?

    Probe: On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is it is really easy to use the internet and 10 is it is really difficult to use the internet- what would you say?

    a.   What are some things that are easy for you? What are some things that are hard or confusing for you?

15. What about the other people in your household, how easy or hard is it for them to use the internet?

    a.   Thinking of the others in your household- what are some of the things they find easy to do online? What are some things they have trouble with?

16. Do you have any safety concerns about using the internet (such as worries about someone stealing your personal information, or worries that the internet may expose your children to inappropriate content)?

Probe: One a scale of 1-10, where 1 is you are not at all worried about using the internet at home and 10 is you are very worried about using the internet at home- what would you say?

D. Training Opportunities

17. Have you or anyone in your household participated in any training or classes about how to use the internet or computers in general?

    a.   **IF YES:** Tell me about those classes. What were they like? Who taught/sponsored them?

18. Would you or anyone in your household be interested in training or classes about how to use the internet or computers in general?

    a.   **IF YES:** What types of things would you like to see in a class like that?

E. Satisfaction with ConnectHome Services

To wrap up, we have a few final questions about how satisfied you are with having internet access at home through ConnectHome.

19. What are some of the things you like about having internet access at home through this program?

20. What are some of the things you do not like about having internet access at home?

    [IF NOT MENTIONED ALREADY]: What do you think about the cost of the service- is it too high? Just right?

[IF NOT MENTIONED ALREADY]: What do you think about the speed of the internet- is it fast enough for the things you are trying to do online?

21. Would you recommend ConnectHome services to your friends or neighbors? Why or why not?

22. Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the ConnectHome service?

Before you go, we'd just like you to complete this quick questionnaire. I know we've already asked you about some of the topics covered in the questionnaire, but this is a helpful way to get some counts of answers to these questions across all of our focus groups. When you are done, please leave it on the table. [DISTRIBUTE DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE].

Those are all of the questions I have for you today. Thank you for taking the time to participate.