

# Focus Group Protocol: Non-Subscribers

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**PURPOSE:** Assess the decision-making process, attitudes, and beliefs regarding internet access, use, and comfort-level, of individuals who have not subscribed to ConnectHome.

## **a. Welcome**

Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion today. We are looking forward to talking with you to about your opinions regarding internet use.

[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 lives in a community participating in ConnectHome, which is a program that brings free or low-cost high-speed internet access to people living in public housing. However, those of you who are

here do not currently have access to the internet at home. Don't worry- it's fine that you do not have access to the Internet at home. We just want to talk to you about what you think about using the internet at home, and to learn more about your decisions in this area. 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 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 ConnectHome better understand what real people like you think about 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 the ConnectHome, we will in no way tell the government 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. Perceptions about the Internet

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

1. Tell me what you think about the internet- is it a good thing, a bad thing, both, or neither? Why?
2. Give me a show of hands- how many of you ever go online? What are the main things you are doing online?
3. How often are you using the internet?  
**Probe:** Many times per day? Once per day? Once per week? Never?
  - a. Which things are you doing more and which are you doing less?

## B. Comfort-level and Skills

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

4. How easy or difficult is it for you to use computers?  
**Probe:** On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is it is really easy to use computers and 5 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?
5. How easy or difficult is it for you to use the internet?  
**Probe:** On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is it is really easy to use the internet and 5 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?

6. 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?
7. 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 1-5, where 1 is you are not at all worried about using the internet at home and 5 is you are very worried about using the internet at home- what would you say?

## C. Internet Use

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8. Where do you typically go to get online (home, work, library, other)?
  - a. For those of you who are going online from home, what type of connection are you using to get access to the internet (e.g., WiFi, neighbor's access, 3G data plan through your cell phone)?
  - b. Give me a show of hands—of those of you who access the internet at home,
  - c. And another show of hands— how many of you do this only using your cell phone??
9. When you use the internet, what kind of devices are you using?

**Probe:** Tablet? Laptop? Smartphone? Other?

- a. Do you use different devices in different places? (e.g., desktop at the library vs cell phone at home)
10. Do others in your household get online?
  - a. **[IF YES]:** How often? Where?
  - b. What are the different devices they are using?

Next I want to spend a few minutes talking about getting internet access at home, compared to all of the other places you can access the internet.

11. Let's do a show of hands- How many of you have ever had internet access in your home? By that I mean, through WiFi or a dial-up connection, not just through your cell phone data plan?
  - a. **[IF NO]:** For those of you who said no, what are some reasons you've never had internet access at home?
  - b. **[IF YES]:** For those of you who said yes, what are some reasons you no longer have access at home?
12. What are the benefits to having internet access at home? (Why do some people want internet access at home?)
13. What are the downsides? (Why do some people not want internet access at home?)
14. **[FOR THOSE WITH NO ACCESS AT HOME]** What, if anything, do you think might be different if you had internet access at home?

- a. What are the things you might be able to do that you can't do now?
  - b. Would you imagine any new challenges you and others in your household might be facing if you got access?
15. [FOR THOSE WITH CELL ONLY ACCESS AT HOME] What are the pros and cons to accessing the internet from your phone?

We all know there are a lot of pros and cons to having access to the internet at home. Now let's spend a few minutes talking about all the things people may use the Internet for specifically while at home.

16. We might have covered some of this already, but -Thinking of people you know, what are the things they are doing online from home? **[WRITE LIST ON EASEL]**
- a. On this list, what are some of the most common things people are doing online?
17. In general, how, if at all, can the internet make people's lives easier?
18. What are some ways, if at all, that the internet can make people's lives harder?

Now I want to get your opinions on using the internet for a few specific activities.

19. Let's start with your children's education. This could include things like helping your children with their homework, talking with their teachers, looking for information about local schools, or applying for financial aid. Do any other activities come to mind that people could use the internet for in this area?
- a. Have you ever used the internet to do things related to children's education? Have others in your household ever used the internet for this?
  - b. How, if at all, does not having internet access at home impact your ability to meet your children's educational needs?
- Probe:** Are you meeting these needs somewhere else?
20. What about education or training-related activities for the adults in your household. This could include things like looking for information on training programs or GED programs, applying for financial aid, or taking online training courses. Do any other activities come to mind that people could use the internet for in this area?
- a. Have you ever used the internet for things related to adult education or training? Have others in your household ever used the internet for this?
  - b. How, if at all, does not having internet access at home impact your ability to meet your households' adult education and training needs?
- Probe:** Are you meeting these needs somewhere else?
21. How about for employment or job-related activities, like searching for or applying for jobs or selling things online. Do any other activities come to mind that people could use the internet for in this area?
- a. Have you ever used the internet for things related to employment or jobs? Have others in your household ever used the internet for this?
  - b. How, if at all, does not having internet access at home impact your ability to meet your household's job and employment needs?

**Probe:** Are you meeting these needs somewhere else?

22. Finally, what about health- things like looking for a doctor or filling your medication prescriptions online- do any other activities come to mind that people could use the internet for in this area?
  - a. Are those ever things you've used the internet for? Have others in your household ever used the internet for this?
  - b. How, if at all, does not having internet access at home impact your ability to meet your household's health needs?

**Probe:** Are you meeting these needs somewhere else?

## D. Training Opportunities

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23. 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?
24. 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. Awareness of ConnectHome and Wrap-Up

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25. Before today, have you heard of ConnectHome [or local name], an initiative working to bring free or low cost high speed internet to people living in public housing? [NOTE: CUSTOMIZE DESCRIPTION BASED ON LOCAL PROGRAM]
  - a. [IF YES]: What have you heard? Where did you hear about it?
  - b. Are you interested in a program like that?
26. [FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED]: What are some of the reasons you are not interested in the offer from ConnectHome to receive free or low-cost high-speed in-home internet?
  - a. Would you take up the offer if it were different? For example, if it included more training or hardware or lower cost connection? If so, what differences in the offer would make you more likely to accept it?

**Probe:** If the ConnectHome offer included free or low cost high-speed internet as well as a device (e.g. computer, laptop, tablet), would that affect your interest in participating?

To conclude, I have one final exercise. **[DISTRIBUTE POSTCARDS]**

Imagine your friend calls you and tells you about a new program in the community to get free or low-cost internet access at home. Your friend has some questions or concerns about whether this is a good idea- what would you tell him? Please write 1-2 sentences of advice for your friend explaining why he should or should not sign up for the new program.

Before you go, we'd just like you to complete this quick questionnaire. 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.