

**GenIC Clearance for CDC/ATSDR
Formative Research and Tool Development**

**Focus Group Study of U.S. Adults' Knowledge,
Attitudes, and Practices of Foodborne Disease
Outbreaks and Illness Prevention**

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Supporting Statement B

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The information collection targeting consumers will involve only qualitative methods, cognitive interviews and focus groups, which are not intended to yield results which can be generalized to the overall population. Results of this research will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, to produce statistical descriptions, or to generalize the information beyond the scope of the sample.

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This information collection will employ a non-probability sample. The participants will be selected using quota sampling to ensure that the sample includes enough individuals with particular characteristics to ensure representation of the target audience.

In the United States, 2017 census data estimates indicate 6,216,589 people living in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-Virginia-Maryland-West Virginia Metro Area (US Census Bureau, 2017). The EurekaFacts participant database includes tens of thousands of individuals in the DC Metro area and is constantly refreshed and updated through independent participant outreach methods in both English and Spanish. These efforts ensure that the research participants recruited by EurekaFacts are not “professional focus group respondents,” instead they are individuals with limited to no experience with qualitative research. For this effort, EurekaFacts will recruit an array of diverse adults of all ages, including a mix of:

- Socioeconomic status (Low, Medium, High SES)
- Educational attainment levels
- Gender
- Ages (18-75 years old)
- Urbanicity (urban, rural, suburban residency)
- Adults with and without children

EurekaFacts will employ a recruitment strategy that integrates multiple outreach/contact methods and resources such as Internet ads, individual emails, telephone recruiting, and on-site location-based recruiting. Furthermore, EurekaFacts will implement snowball referrals from personal and community networks during general recruitment efforts and after completing focus groups.

The four focus groups and four hybrid groups (combination of cognitive interviews and focus groups) will include participants from the general population as well as older adults. The 54 participants will be divided into these groups such that general population and older adults will be included in both the focus groups and the hybrid groups.

Attachment A describes the complete sampling plan.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

Respondents will be screened using the pre-approved screener script to be programmed into a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) system to ensure that the screening procedure is uniformly conducted, instantly quantifiable, and may be checked and monitored throughout the recruitment effort. If the respondents meet the recruitment criteria, potential participants will be provided with a study description. Screening interviewers will inform respondents about the study objectives, purpose, and participation requirements of the data collection effort, the activities that it entails, and, if applicable, any potential risks associated with participation. If respondents agree to participate in the study, EurekaFacts will collect all contact information, including telephone numbers, email, and postal contact information.

Four focus groups and four hybrid groups (combination of cognitive interviews and focus group discussion) will be conducted.

- Cognitive interviews will assess the effectiveness of the CDC warning message, particularly in terms of consumer understanding of the message and likelihood of behavioral change; explore causes for any ineffectiveness; as well as assess the usability of web-based messaging.
- Focus group discussions will further examine effectiveness of the warning messages as well as help generate ideas for CDC warning communications that meet the needs of different audiences.

Two of the focus groups will explore and identify participant perceptions, knowledge, attitudes about foodborne illnesses, outbreaks, risks, and prevention, as well as their knowledge, attitudes, and practices about food items that pose a high risk of contamination. The other two focus groups will address warning communication messages with participants, especially in terms of their preferences with tone, format, and placement of risk communication messages. Separate groups will allow, if needed, the organization of participants into different subgroups based on any socio-demographic criteria that may affect their understanding, behavioral impacts, or perception of the messaging. Separation of participants into homogenous groups may help avoid distortion and bias of their opinions which may occur if there is a socio-demographic mix. The focus group moderator will encourage participants to relate to each other, share attitudes, and provide candid opinions regarding their understanding of foodborne disease and the CDC warning communication.

The cognitive interviewing method is a common technique used to test comprehension of communication materials and surveys. This method allows us to explore how respondents understand, process and act upon information presented in the communication materials, targeting the same cognitive processes involved in processing warnings: comprehension, recall, and judgment. Thus, cognitive interviewing seems to be especially appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the messages and

help understand and identify the reasons for their ineffectiveness. This method was proven reliable and useful during assessments of warning effectiveness in several studies (Wolf et al., 2007, Davis et al., 2006). Past research conducted by EurekaFacts staff compared the effectiveness of cognitive interviewing versus focus groups, and demonstrated that cognitive interviews yielded more detailed, relevant and useful data as compared to data gathered from a focus group (Sugovic, Nooraddini, and Sherehiy, 2016).

The contractors will conduct two hybrid group sessions with 4 to 5 participants in each group for each project objective; knowledge & practices (n = 9) and preferred communication strategies (n = 9), resulting in a total of 18 participants in the hybrid group. The hybrid group will consist of two parts. In the first part, the contractor will conduct short one-on-one structured “cognitive” interviews that will evaluate participants’ understanding of the warning message presented on the CDC website, along with assessing usability of the website. The second part will follow focus group methodology and will explore the participants’ knowledge about foodborne illness and participant practices and participants’ preferred design and understandability of the foodborne illness warning messaging. The contractor will also conduct 2 standard focus groups with 9 participants in each group for each project objective; knowledge & practices (n = 18) and preferred communication strategies (n = 18), resulting in a total of 36 participants in the standard focus group. See Table 1:

Table 1 – Organization of Focus Group Methodology

Methodology	FG Objective – Knowledge & Practices	FG Objective – Preferred Communication
Number of Standard Focus Group Sessions	2 Focus Groups (9 participants each)	2 Focus Groups (9 participants each)
Number of Hybrid: Cognitive Interview and Focus Groups	2 Hybrid groups (4 - 5 participants each)	2 Hybrid Groups (4 – 5 participants each)

During the first part of the evaluation session all one-one one interviews will be conducted simultaneously to prevent overburdening participants with a long wait until the focus group discussion.

The interview session will last for 40 minutes and the focus group will last for 45 minutes, with a 15-minute break in between. Thus, the total length of the evaluation session will not exceed the 100-minute timeframe.

3. Methods to maximize Response Rates and Deal with No Response

The following procedures will be used for the focus groups and hybrid groups to maximize cooperation and achieve the desired participation rates:

- EurekaFacts professional recruitment staff will recruit participants.

- Reminder letters/e-mails will be sent to participants with directions to the research site and reminder phone calls placed 1 to 2 days prior to the scheduled data collection.
- A token of appreciation will be provided to thank participants for their time and participation in the study
- If a participant declines to participate, a replacement will be selected from the pool of eligible participants

4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be undertaken

No pre-tests are planned for this effort.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

The individuals consulted on technical and statistical issues related to data collection are listed below. The data will be collected by EurekaFacts and analyzed by the EurekaFacts team.

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