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Screener Guide for Spanish Pub 17 Focus Groups

RECRUITING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Recruit for two groups: one with tax practitioners who serve Spanish speaking taxpayers and one with bi-lingual taxpayers who speak and read Spanish.
- Recruit 12 participants for each group (for 9 to show).
- Participants for the tax preparer group must be over the age of 18, who serve taxpayers who speak Spanish and have used the Spanish Pub 17 in the past 12 months.
- Participants for the taxpayer group must be over the age of 18, who speak and read Spanish and have used the Spanish Pub 17 in the past 12 months.
- Recruit for a mix of gender and ages.

Hello, my name is _____. I work for Fors Marsh Group (FMG) and I am recruiting tax professionals or taxpayers to participate in a focus group. May I please speak to you for a few minutes?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is interested in gathering information to better understand your needs and interactions with the IRS to improve IRS services to limited-English proficient taxpayers. We are seeking participants to join a two-hour in-person focus group discussion around this topic. Your participation with this research is voluntary, and your help on this project would be very much appreciated. The information gathered will be used for research purposes only and we will not report any identifying information.

This project has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB Clearance Number is 1545-1349. If you like, I can give you a name and address where you can send comments and questions regarding these time estimates or suggestions for making this process simpler.

***Internal Revenue Service
Special Services Section***

*SE:W:CAR:MP:T:M:S
1111 Constitution Ave, NW IR-6129
Washington, DC 20024*

Your answers to these questions will be held completely private, to the extent allowed by law by FMG, meaning we will not provide your name or any identifying information to the IRS.

If you are interested in participating, I need to ask you some qualifying questions.

For tax practitioners:

1. Do you prepare individual tax returns for taxpayers that speak Spanish?

Yes.....continue to question 2

No..... Thank them and let them go. If they ask, tell them we are only looking for preparers who service taxpayers who speak Spanish because the product we are testing is for Spanish speaking taxpayers.

2. Have you used the Spanish Publication 17 (Your Federal Income Tax) in the past 12 months?

Yes.....

No..... Thank them and let them go. If they ask, tell them we are only looking for preparers who have used the Spanish Pub 17 in the past 12 months.

For questions 3 - 8, recruit a mix of tax preparers

3. Into which of the following categories does your age fall? *May opt-out if they wish to.*

Less than 18Terminate

18 to 33

34 to 44

45 to 64

65 and older

4. Please identify your highest completed level of education. [*May opt-out if they wish to.*]

Some High School

High School Diploma/GED

Some College or Associate's Degree

Bachelor's Degree

Graduate or Professional Degree (M.D., J.D.)

5. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin (ethnicity)?

Yes

No

6.. What is your race? Please select one or more. Are you... ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS

White

Black or African American

Asian

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

American Indian or Alaskan Native

7. Which of these categories does your total annual household income fall into? [*May opt-out if they wish to.*]

Less than \$10,000

\$10,000 but less than \$15,000

\$15,000 but less than \$25,000

\$25,000 but less than \$35,000

\$35,000 but less than \$50,000

\$50,000 but less than \$75,000

\$75,000 but less than \$100,000

\$100,000 or more

8. Record Gender—DO NOT ASK UNLESS UNABLE TO DETERMINE. [*May opt-out if they wish to.*]

Female

Male

When invitation to participate is extended, please restate that they will be participating with other tax professionals.

If yes, invite them to participate in the focus group and give them the date, time and the address of where to attend. Please remind them to bring their reading glasses.

Recruiters: Please use this box to tally the attempts to recruit practitioners. At the completion of the project, we must report to OMB the number of requests or attempts to recruit practitioners for the focus group. After recruiting is completed, give the tally to the moderator of your focus group. The moderator will total the recruit attempts at this forum.

TALLY ATTEMPTS TO RECRUIT PRACTITIONERS FOR FOCUS GROUP

The contractor shall track the number of contacts or attempted contacts with possible participants. The contractor shall indicate by categories the reasons why those who decline to participate do so. This data will be reported to TF&P at the end of recruitment.

For taxpayers:

1. Do speak and read Spanish?

Yes.....continue to question 2

No..... Thank them and let them go. If they ask, tell them we are only looking for taxpayers who speak and read Spanish because the product we are testing is for Spanish speaking taxpayers.

2. Have you prepared your 2016 federal income tax return?

Yes.....continue to question 3

No..... Thank them and let them go. If they ask, tell them we are only looking for taxpayers who prepared their tax return in the past 12 months.

3. Have you used the Spanish Publication 17 (Your Federal Income Tax) in the past 12 months?

Yes.....

No..... Thank them and let them go. If they ask, tell them we are only looking for preparers who have used the Spanish Pub 17 in the past 12 months.

For Questions 4 to 10, please recruit mix of taxpayers.

4. Into which of the following categories does your age fall? *May opt-out if they wish to.*

- less than 18..... Terminate
- 18 to 33
- 34 to 44
- 45 to 64
- 65 and older

5. What was your filing status on your most recent tax return? [Read responses and check one]

- Single
- Married/jointly
- Married/separately
- Head of household
- Widow/widower

6. Please identify your highest completed level of education. [May opt-out if they wish to.]

- Some High School
- High School Diploma/GED
- Some College or Associate's Degree

- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate or Professional Degree (M.D., J.D.)

7. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin (ethnicity)?

- Yes
- No

8. What is your race? Please select one or more. Are you.... [ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS.]

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native

9. Which of these categories does your total annual household income fall into? [May opt-out if they wish to.]

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 but less than \$15,000
- \$15,000 but less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 but less than \$35,000
- \$35,000 but less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 but less than \$75,000
- \$75,000 but less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 or more

10. Record Gender—DO NOT ASK UNLESS UNABLE TO DETERMINE; may opt-out if they wish to.

- Female
- Male

When invitation to participate is extended, please restate that they will be participating with other individual taxpayers.

If yes, invite them to participate in the focus group and give them the date, time and the address of where to attend. Please remind them to bring their reading glasses.

Recruiters: Please use this box to tally the attempts to recruit taxpayers. At the completion of the project, we must report to OMB the number of requests or attempts to recruit taxpayers for the focus group. After recruiting is completed, give the tally to the moderator of your focus group. The moderator will total the recruit attempts at this forum.

TALLY ATTEMPTS TO RECRUIT TAXPAYERS FOR FOCUS GROUP

The contractor shall track the number of contacts or attempted contacts with possible participants. The contractor shall indicate by categories the reasons why those who decline to participate do so. This data will be reported to TF&P at the end of recruitment.

Confirmation Letter

<Insert date>

Dear <insert name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group discussion on <insert date> at <insert time> at <insert facility name>. Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of the focus group so that you can complete some paperwork and have something to eat. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. As a thank you for participating in the focus group, you will be given \$75 at the end of the discussion.

The directions to the facility are attached. We are accessible by public transportation [insert bus number/subway station as appropriate]. If you would like to drive, parking is available [insert information about parking and any costs].

If you have any questions, please call <insert facility manager's name> at <facility phone number>.

Thank you for your time and participation.

[

Reminder Phone Script

To be used no more than 24 hours prior to the scheduled focus group. If participant is not available, leave voice mail message and try back later.

Hello, may I speak to <insert name>? Hi, my name is <insert recruiter's name> and I work for Fors Marsh Inc. I'm calling to remind you about the focus group you agreed to participate in tomorrow at <insert time> at <insert location>. Are you still able to participate? Great! I <mailed/e-mailed> you directions to our facility. Did you receive the directions? **[If no, read directions and follow with an e-mail.] [If yes]** Do you have any questions about how to get to the facility?

Please remember to bring reading glasses if you use them. If you need to cancel for any reason, I would appreciate if you would call me at][insert phone number].

We look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Participant Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to test certain aspects of Spanish Pub 17. By participating in this focus group, you will help us evaluate if the Spanish Pub 17 can be revised and still meet the needs of taxpayers and tax practitioners.

This focus group will take approximately 2 hours. The session will be audio taped using microphones to capture your feedback. This recording will only be used for this study.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. Your answers will be kept completely private to the extent allowed by law for the purpose of this study.

If you agree to help us, please sign below.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Print Name)

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

IRS Media & Publication Spanish Publication 17 (Your Federal Income Tax) Moderator's Guide

I. Welcome and Introductions:

A. Introduction of the moderator.

My name is <insert first name> and I work for Fors Marsh Group who has been hired by the IRS to conduct focus groups on the Spanish Pub 17. I will be your moderator for this session. I will be asking for your input about your experience with using the Spanish Pub 17 to assist you in preparing returns. The Media and Publications Division of IRS is responsible for tax products, services and web pages in languages other than English. We would like your feedback on ways to improve the Spanish Pub 17.

B. What is a moderator?

Explanation of the purpose of the focus group approach — to explore in a semi-structured manner what people think about the issues.

- The group discussion of the issues often generates deeper insights than individual one-on-one interviews.
- A topic-oriented discussion of issues allows the participants to identify the important dimensions that might be lost in a structured interview setting.
- It's interactive so participants can talk back to us—ask what we mean, tell us when a question doesn't make any sense, or means different things to different people.

You will see me referring to this outline during our session. The outline includes all issues I need to raise, and helps me keep the discussion on track. It is important that we cover all the issues. Therefore, I may have to break off the conversation in order to move on to another area in the guide.

C. Ground Rules

Before we begin, I'd like to review some ground rules for today's discussion.

- Everything that you say here will be kept strictly private to the extent allowed by law. We will use first names only and names will not be used in the report. You will remain anonymous and are free to tell me what you think.
- For the IRS to speak with the public, we are required to have approval from the Office of Management and Budget. Their approval number for this project is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please

write to the: **IRS Special Services Section, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:M:S - Room 6526, Washington, DC 20224.** [*Moderator: Post this bullet on newsprint/white board for each session.*] There are no known risks to you for taking part in this focus group session. All the data the IRS collects will be kept private to the extent allowed by law. Your name will never be linked to your comments, nor will it appear in any written reports or publications.

- Sometimes I'll go around the table and ask everyone for their input. At other times, I will just throw a topic open for general discussion.
- Participation—we need to get a full range of opinions, and we need everyone's participation. You are here to talk. I am here to listen. I am not an expert in tax law so I cannot answer questions that involve tax law represented in Form 4562.
- No evaluation—there are no right and wrong answers. We expect differences in how people see things, and we need to know about these differences.
- Feel free to disagree or question each other. The purpose of a group session is that we learn things in group interchanges that we don't get out of one-on-one discussions. If someone says something you disagree with, please let us know.
- If you have a cell phone, please turn it off, or set it to vibrate. We don't want the group to be disturbed and we also need your full attention during the session.
- The session will last about two hours.

All participants will need to sign an informed consent for their participation in the session.

Review consent form, emphasizing anonymity, and use of first names only.

D. Introductions of Participants:

Individual Filers: Please introduce yourself (first name only, please) and tell us how you file your tax returns (e-file, mail, etc.) and why you prefer to file this way.

Tax Preparers: Please introduce yourself (first name only, please) and tell us approximately how many Federal returns you prepare each year for your clients.

E. Discussion

Moderator: Have the participants take a couple of minutes and look at Pub 17 (SP).

How often do you refer to Pub 17(SP) while preparing your income taxes (or those of your clients if you are a practitioner)?

How do you use the Pub 17(SP) while preparing your (or your client's) return?

What sections or topics do you use most often in the Pub 17(SP)?

What topics do you use the least?

What do you like most about the Pub 17(SP)?

What do you like least about the Pub 17(SP)?

What else would you like to see in Pub17(SP)?

The IRS is also considering redesigning Pub 17 (SP) by removing less frequently used chapters, and consolidating chapters with similar information

How would this change affect the preparation of your individual tax return (or your client's returns)?

Would you like or use a Pub 17(SP) that's shorter, more agile, which presents the most frequently used information?

Probe: If yes, how would using a shorter Pub 17 benefit your tax preparation?

Probe: If no, how would using a shorter Pub 17 affect your tax preparation?

Note that this comes at a cost: less frequently used information will be left out, and will be referenced to English or Online sources

Do you use the Pub 17(SP) version in:

- Paper?
- PDF?
- Online/HTML?
- Other?

Thinking of your session tonight, do you have any additional suggestions for improving the Spanish Pub 17?

Thank you for attending the session and sharing your feedback. We really appreciate your time.