Invitation Phone Call

INTRO.

       Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of ICF, a market research firm working with the Internal Revenue Service (the IRS). We are conducting a paid study to gather feedback and opinions on IRS services.

       The study will consist of an one hour telephone focus group session on [DATE] from [START TIME]-[END TIME]. We ask that you access the focus group from a computer to use a platform that will allow all participants to view the same screen. If you are eligible and decide to participate, you will receive an electronic gift card stipend of $75. The focus group discussion will be strictly for research, and all of your comments will be held private to the extent covered by law. Would you be interested in participating?

    YES – CONTINUE

    NO – TERMINATE

//ASK IF INTRO=YES

I'd now like to ask a few questions to see if you meet the criteria that the focus group is looking for…

Q1. Did you access any of the IRS e-Services products *(i.e., IRS e-file Application, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Matching Application, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Matching Program, and Transcript Delivery System (TDS)* within the past year?

Q2. Do you recall the e-Services registration process that required a re-registration via Secure Access?

Q3. Do you have a computer that you could call in from to access the focus group application?

//ASK IF Q1-3 all=YES

Thank you for answering our questions. Based on your responses, you qualify for the focus group. We would like to invite you to take part in this study. The focus group will be a discussion of taxpayer experiences surrounding the registration process for accessing IRS e-services. You will receive $75 at the end of the focus group for participating.

I'm glad that you will be able to join us! At this point I need to collect or confirm some contact information from you.

First name:

Last name:

Age:

Gender:

Email:

Daytime phone:

Evening phone:

Street:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

READ ONLY IF ASKED

Note: This information is required only as a part of this study. Your information is kept strictly private to the extent allowed by law. Your phone number is required only for a reminder call that will be made prior to the start of the research study).

Thank you. We are only inviting a few people, so if for some reason you are unable to participate, it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible so we can find someone else to take your place. Please call or email *XXX* if this should happen. We look forward to having you participate on [DATE].

We are required by law to report to you the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) Control Number for this public information request. That number is 1545-1349.

Thank you for your time. We will be in touch again the day before the session to confirm your attendance.

//ASK IF Q1-3=NO

TERM. Thank you very much for your time, and thank you for answering our questions. Unfortunately, based on the requirements, we are not able to extend you an invitation. Perhaps we can include you in a future research session. Have a good [*day/evening*].

Invitation Email

Subject: Seeking Paid Volunteers for a Telephone/web Focus Group

Greetings,

ICF, a research and consulting firm in the Washington, DC area, conducts customer satisfaction research and focus groups. We are working with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) this year to discuss issues and rate satisfaction related to e-Services you may access online. Earlier this year, you completed the e-Help survey after making a call to the e-Help desk and indicated that you would be willing to be contacted about possibly participating in future research. The specific purpose of this focus group is to evaluate the new e-Services authentication process that was implemented in December 2017.

We are seeking qualified individuals to take part in a telephone focus group on [date]. The focus group will begin at [time] [time zone] time and will take approximately one hour. We will provide a toll-free number to dial in to and you will also need access to a computer.

If you are selected, you will receive compensation of $75 after the focus group.

If you are interested and available to take part in this focus group, please respond to this email with the following information or call at [PHONE NUMBER] by [DATE] with the following information:

- Your Name
- Age
- Gender

Please leave your phone number so that we can contact you within a few days to ask you a few questions. If you are selected, we will provide more instructions on how to participate.

On behalf of the IRS, we look forward to hearing from you.

<center>**Confirmation Email**</center>

Subject: Telephone/web Focus Group Information

Thank you for volunteering to participate in our telephone/web focus group!

This focus group will take about 60 minutes to complete, and we will send you $75 after the completion of the focus groups as a thank you for your time.

We have you scheduled for our focus group on:

> **Date**: [date]

> **Time**: [time] [time zone]

To confirm you will participate:

****Please reply to this email to confirm that you will be participating in this focus group and that you will have access to a computer.****

Prior to participating in the focus group:

Please review the attached Informed Consent document before you call in. This document details how we will use your responses and your rights as a participant in the focus group. Also, please ensure you will have a quiet area to call in from, free from noise and distraction.

Participating in the focus group:

Please call in to the conference line 5 minutes before the focus group is scheduled to start, so that we can be sure to begin the discussion on time.

> **Call-in Number:** [local call-in number] **Passcode:** [passcode]

You will be greeted by the moderator when you join. Please only use your first name when introducing yourself.

We have only invited a limited number of people to participate in this focus group. **If for any reason you cannot attend, please let us know as soon as possible** by emailing us at [EMAIL] or calling [PHONE NUMBER]. You can also contact us if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Reminder Email

Subject: Reminder: Telephone/web Focus Group

Hello,

This is a quick reminder that you are scheduled to participate in our telephone/web focus group on [date] at [time] [time zone].

If for any reason you cannot attend, please let us know right away by emailing us at [EMAIL] or calling [PHONE NUMBER].

We look forward to speaking with you!

Topic 0: Welcome and Introductions (10 min)

Hello everyone. My name is _____ and I will be your moderator for this discussion. I work for ICF, a market research firm located just outside of Washington, D.C. We have been asked to speak with you today by the Internal Revenue Service or IRS as you likely know them. Right away, I want to let everyone know that I'm not an IRS employee, and I am not a tax expert. I am here to help guide the discussion as a focus group moderator and ensure we get through the questions we have today. I want to hear your honest opinions about the topics we will discuss today. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I'm going to ask. Please just relax and enjoy the discussion.

Please keep in mind that your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. If for any reason you wish to leave the discussion, you may.

Ground Rules

Before we begin, I'd like to review some ground rules for today's discussion. Ground rules are our guidelines for operating so that we can complete our task in a manner that is respectful of everyone and provides all of you with the opportunity to express your thoughts safely and confidentially.

- The OMB Control Number for this study is 1545-1349. If you have any comments concerning the time estimates associated with this study or on how to make this process simpler, we will provide this address to you at the completion of our discussion.

- Everything that you say will be kept private to the extent allowed by law. We will use first names only and names will not be used in any report. Again, all of your comments will be held private to the extent allowed by the law, so please feel free to tell me what you think.

- Your participation in this session is entirely voluntary. You have been invited here to offer your views and opinions so everyone's participation is important. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer but please keep in mind, there are no wrong answers.

- Please speak one at a time.

- It's okay to be critical. I want to hear your views and opinions about whether you like or dislike something. You do not have to reach a consensus, but please be respectful of each other's opinions.

- This session will be audiotaped. This allows us to capture everything that is being said today, and we will include the information in a report to our client. However, we will not tie your name to anything specific you say today.

- There are people who are listening into the discussion. Some are coworkers of mine listening in to take notes on the discussion. Others are from the IRS and are simply listening to hear things first hand before the report comes out; they have all signed an observer confidentiality agreement.

- Again, all of your answers will remain private to the extent allowed by law, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. Nothing will be attributed to any particular person in our report.

- You may excuse yourself from the conversation at any time for any reason.
- Because we're on the phone, I ask that you say your first name before speaking so I know who is speaking. I may call on those I haven't heard from in a while.

General Understanding

We're here today because the IRS wants to know more about your experiences with e-Services. E-Services is a suite of web-based tools that allow tax professionals, reporting agents, mortgage industry and payers to complete transactions online with the IRS. These services are only available to approved IRS business partners and not to the public. The tools include, IRS e-file Application, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Matching Application, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Matching Program, and Transcript Delivery System (TDS). The e-Help Desk assistors are responsible for providing quality service to external customers who may encounter problems or need information about e-Services products.

Are there any questions before we get started?

Topic 1: Use of Websites for Information (5 min)

To get us started, let's simply introduce ourselves, where you're calling from, and what you do.

[participants introduce themselves]

1. Let's start by talking about your time spent online. What are some websites that you visit on a regular basis?
   a. What websites do you use to gain information about U.S. taxes? IRS website? Others?

2. How often do you visit the IRS website, IRS.gov?
   a. Where did you go or what were you looking for on the IRS.gov site?
   b. Were you able to find information that pertained to you?

3. How often do you access the e-Services page of the IRS website?
   a. What products do you access? [e-file application, TIN application, TIN Matching program, Transcript Delivery System, etc]
   b. Were you able to find information that pertained to you?

4. How often do you contact the e-Help line for assistance?
   If called helpline:
   a. What issues have you called about?
   b. How satisfied have you been with the assistance you were given? Were your issues resolved?

Topic 2: Secure Access (40 min)

As you may be aware, as of December 10, 2017, all e-Services users had to re-register and create new accounts using a more rigorous two-factor authentication process called Secure Access. This meant that before accessing certain IRS online self-help tools, users had to go through several steps in the registration process to authenticate their identities. Thereafter, each time registered users return to the tool, they must enter both their credentials (username and password) plus a security code sent via

mobile phone text or the IRS2Go app to receive a security code within the IRS2Go app. We are interested in finding out more about how this new secure access registration process may have impacted you.

5. How many of you remember having to re-register in order to access products on the IRS e-Services page?
   If needed: You would have had to create new accounts if you accessed any e-Services products (i.e., IRS e-file Application, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Matching Application, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Matching Program, and Transcript Delivery System (TDS)) after December 10, 2017
   a. What do you remember about the registration process?
   b. In general, did you find registration easy/challenging? Why?
   c. Did you have any technical challenges with the website? (as suggested on the landing page of e-Services on IRS.gov it is best to use the supported browser)
   d. How long did the registration process take? Were you able to complete it in one sitting?

Now we are going to look at a series of screen shots from the registration process. To jog your memory, these first four screenshots are what you would see when initiating the registration process:

You enter your current username.

The next screen informs you that you need to register in the new system.

The following 3 screen shots show the pages with the information you will be asked to provide

You will need some information about yourself to register

Please have the following information and materials to complete registration:

- Full name
- Email
- Birthdate
- Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN)
- Tax filing status
- Current address

Do you have this information available?

| NO | YES ❯ |

You need a financial account to register

To verify your identity, we will need a number from ONE of your financial accounts. We can use any of the following:

- **Credit Card OR**
- **Mortgage or Home Equity Loan OR**
- **Home Equity Line of Credit OR**
- **Auto Loan**

You will only need to provide the loan account number or a few digits from a credit card number. We only use this information to verify your identity. **You will not be charged any money and are not sharing any account balances or other financial information with us.**

A soft inquiry will show up on your credit report to let you know that the IRS accessed your credit report information. This will not increase or decrease your credit score and lenders will not be able to see this.

If you have placed a credit security freeze with Equifax, you must contact Equifax to have the freeze temporarily removed before continuing. Once registration is complete, you may contact Equifax to resume the freeze.

Do you have this financial information available? (If you don't have the account information on hand, you should answer 'No'.)

| NO | YES ❯ |

You need a mobile device

We'll need one more way to verify your identity. The easiest way is with a mobile phone.

Your phone must be

- A U.S.-based mobile phone number registered in your name
- Able to receive text messages

It may **NOT** be Pay-As-You-Go (prepaid), landline, Skype, Google Voice, or a virtual number.

If you don't have a mobile phone meeting those criteria, you can complete identity verification by receiving a letter in the mail. To complete registration, you will still need a U.S.-based mobile phone capable of receiving text messages, **or an iPhone, iPad, or Android device.**

| CONTINUE ❯ |

6. The username from an existing legacy account must meet the requirements of the newer Secure Access. If you are not prompted to update the invalid username, then you need to call our help desk to resolve the issue. Did anyone experience this? Please tell us about your experience.

The registration process starts with you having to provide some basic contact information:

Let's Get Started!

It sounds like you have all the necessary information available and can begin.

First Name (as it appears on your most recent tax return)

Last Name (as it appears on your most recent tax return)

Email Address

Confirm Email Address

A confirmation code will be sent to your email address. You will need to get the code and enter it on the next screen.

CANCEL   SEND CODE >

7. Did anyone have issues completing this first part of the registration (i.e., providing name, and email)?
   If yes: What issues did you experience?

The next step in the process is entering the confirmation code that would have been sent to your email:

Check Your Email

We just sent a confirmation code to SampleEmail@irs.gov. This code is valid for 15 minutes. Open your email in a new window to get Your confirmation code.

IMPORTANT: Keep this window open to avoid having to start over.

Enter the one-time code we emailed you:

7524-6218

Didn't receive the confirmation code? Resend the email.

CANCEL   CONTINUE >

Help us verify your identity with some basic information   you're the

If we are not able to match the information you enter with our records, you will not be able to use this online service

Personal Information   **Address Information**

All information should match your latest tax return.   Your address must match your most recently filed tax return. Address Help

First Name   **Address Line 1**

Last Name   **Address Line 2 (Optional)**

Date of Birth   **City**

Month ▼   Day ▼   Year

Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Tax ID N   **State / Territory**   **Zip Code**   **Country**

Select ▼   United States ▼

Filing Status

9. Did anyone have issues completing this part of the registration (i.e, providing personal and address information)?
   If yes: What issues did you experience?

The next step in the process is verifying financial information:

We also need to verify a financial account number

To prevent identity theft and protect the security of your tax information, we need you to verify your identify by providing an active account number from **one** of the following types of financial services: credit card, auto loan, mortgage, home equity loan, or home equity line of credit.

Please provide **one** of the following:

○ **Last 8 digits of credit card**

| | -   ✕ |

Note: We are unable to verify debit cards, corporate cards, or American Express cards.

○ **Auto Loan Account Number**

○ **Mortgage or Home Equity Loan Account Number**

○ **Home Equity Line of Credit Account Number**

○ **I don't have a current credit card, auto loan, mortgage, home equity loan, or home equity line of credit**

10. Did anyone have issues completing this part of the registration (i.e., providing financial information)?
    If yes: What issues did you experience?

11. How readily available is this information for you?

12. Which option did you choose to provide? Why did you choose this option over the other options?

13. Did anyone have to lift a credit freeze with Experian? If so, how did this affect your registration process?

14. Currently, you cannot make multiple attempts to pass this financial validation step with the same account number. Accounts will lock for 72 hours and then 90 days at this time. Has anyone experienced this? Please tell us about your experience.

The final step in the process is verifying your phone number. You can either enter your phone number to receive a 6 digit code by text or request to have the 6 digit code sent via mail:

Verify your phone number

To protect your information, we need to send a text message to your mobile phone number.

Your name must be associated with your US-based mobile phone account. We can't verify pay-as-you-go (prepaid) plans, landlines, or virtual phone numbers like Google Voice.

Enter your mobile phone number:

CANCEL   SEND MESSAGE >

A text message will be sent to your phone. Message and data rates may apply. By continuing, you opt-in to receive a one-time code via text message each time you log in. _We won't use your phone number for any other communication._

Don't have a mobile phone or can't verify your phone number? Try these alternative options.

Receive an activation code by postal mail (5-10 calendar days). Selecting this option will allow you to create your username and password, but you won't be able to access the online service today. You'll need to come back to activate your account after you receive the activation code in the mail.

Review options that don't require a mobile phone or an activation code by postal mail. These other alternatives will not allow you to complete registration for this online service.

Once you select to receive a text, the 6 digit code is sent to your phone and you enter it on the screen below:

We sent a text message to your phone

The message contains a 6-digit activation code. Please enter the code below.

6-digit activation code

Try again

CANCEL   CONTINUE >

If you select to have the code sent by mail, you are notified that a code will be mailed to the address that is on file:

Finish your registration by mail

We weren't able to verify your identity using your phone. Let's try something else.

We'll send an activation code by postal mail to your address on file. This should arrive within 5-10 days.

NOTE: To complete your registration with your activation code, you will need a U.S.-based mobile phone capable of receiving text messages **or** an iPhone, iPad, or Android device. This is required to access this online service.

CONTINUE >

Don't have a mobile device? Exit this registration process to see your alternatives.

15. How many of you opted to receive the 6 digit code via text message? What about via mail?
    a. If you completed registration by text:
        • Did you receive the text right away?
    b. If you completed your registration by mail:
        • How did you feel about this?
        • When did you receive your activation code in the mail?
        • Were the steps you needed to take to finish the registration process clear to you?

16. This step requires your name to be associated with your mobile account, and cannot accommodate prepaid plans. Has this been an issue for anyone?

17. Did anyone have any other issues completing this part of the registration (i.e., receiving the 6 digit code to complete registration via text message or mail)?
    If yes: What issues did you experience?

The final step in registering is to log back in with your existing username and a new password. If you had received your 6 digit code via text, this is the final step in registering.

[Mail activators only. Questions for these people resume on following page in red]: If you had opted to receive your 6 digit code by mail, you would enter your existing username and new password, but there are additional steps after this.

Create your user profile

We've been able to confirm your identity. Now you will create a user profile. This is the last step in the process.

Create a Username and Password

Username

Password

Re-enter Password

Choose a Site Phrase

Create a phrase that you will recognize when you login

Choose a Site Image

Select an image that you will recognize when you login.

Choose Your Site Image

18. Did anyone have issues completing this part of the registration (i.e., issues with username, password, etc)?
    If yes: What issues did you experience?

[Ask the following questions if any participants had received their code via mail]

After entering your username and new password, you are notified that your 6 digit code will be sent in the mail.

Activation Needed

Your user profile isn't active yet.

We're sending an activation code to your address of record via US Mail. You need the activation code to complete the registration process and access this application. The letter should arrive within 5-10 calendar days and explains how to activate your IRS user profile.

If you don't receive the letter within 15 days, log in with your username and password to request we resend a new activation code.

RETURN TO IRS.GOV ›

After you receive the code and return to the website, you are prompted to enter your username and password.

First Time Users

If this is the first time you are using this online service, we will need to verify your identity before we proceed.

GET STARTED >

Returning Users

Log in below if you've previously registered through any of the following applications:

- Get Transcript
- Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN)
- Online Payment Agreement (OPA)

Username

☐ Mask username

LOG IN >

Forgot Username

Log in

Verify that your Site Image and Site Phrase below are correct. If the Site Image and Site Phrase are not correct, please do not proceed.

Your Site Image:

Your Site Phrase:
eagle

Password

Forgot Password

CANCEL   SUBMIT >

You are then prompted to insert your 6 digit activation code from the IRS mailing.

Enter Activation Code

When you registered, you requested that we verify your identity with an activation code sent to your address of record via US Mail. Enter your activation code to continue the registration process.

Enter Activation Code

CANCEL   SUBMIT >

Don't have an activation code? It can take 5-10 calendar days to receive your activation code by mail. If you haven't received your code after 15 days, or you lost it, you may ask us to resend the activation code by mail. When you request a new code, your previous activation code will be disabled.

19. Did anyone have issues completing this part of the registration (i.e., issues with remembering their username, creating a password, entering activation code, etc)?
If yes: What issues did you experience?

20. If you forgot your password, there is a "forgot password" feature. Did anyone use this feature?
If yes: Did anyone have issues with this?

After entering the activation code, the final part of the registration process is entering a mobile number or setting up a security code via the IRS2Go app.

Add your mobile phone number

Success! Your activation code is confirmed.
For extra security, add your mobile phone number.

You will receive SMS text messages to this phone number each time you log in. Message and data rates may apply.

Mobile Phone Number

[   ]

[SEND MESSAGE ▸]

NOTE: A text message will be sent to your phone to make sure we have the right number. By continuing, you opt-in to receive a confirmation code via text message each time you log in. We won't use your phone number for any other communication.

Don't want to receive text messages?
Set up a security code using the IRS2Go mobile app instead

Receiving the code via text:

We sent a text message to your phone

The message contains a 6-digit activation code. Please enter the code below.

6-digit activation code

[   ]   Try again

[CANCEL]   [CONTINUE ▸]

Receiving the code IRS2Go app:

In addition to your username and password, we require you to enter a Security Code each time you log in.

Follow the steps below to set up your security code.

You can only set up this security code on **one mobile device** with the IRS2Go app. IRS2Go will generate a new 6-digit code every 60 seconds as a security measure; you'll need this code every time you log in.

On Your Mobile Device

1. Download and open our free **IRS2Go** app.
2. Select the "**Security**" option from the IRS2Go app navigation.
3. Enter the username and key provided below:

    Username: America123
    Key: 4567322
4. Select the "**Add**" button

Verify Your Mobile App Security Code Here

5. Enter the 6-digit code from IRS2Go in the box below, and select the "**Verify**" button.

Enter 6-Digit Security Code

[   ]

[CANCEL]   [VERIFY ▸]

21. How many of you completed the registration with a text message? What about the IRS2Go app? If app: Did you experience any issues with this process?

22. Did anyone have issues completing this part of the registration (i.e., issues with receiving the text, accessing the code via the app, etc)?
If yes: What issues did you experience?

False Close **(5 min)**
Tell participants that you are going to speak with observers to see whether they have any follow-up questions. Check email for questions you need to follow-up on.

Closing
This concludes today's session. On behalf of the IRS, I wish to thank all of you for your participation today. As I mentioned at the beginning:

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that the IRS display an OMB control number on all public information requests. The OMB Control Number for this study 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 let us know and we can email you the address to:

Internal Revenue Service
Special Services Committee,
SE: W:CAR:MP:T:M:S – Room 6129, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20224

Before we go, is there anything else anyone would like to add?

Thanks again!