

Supporting Statement
Information Collection Request (ICR) Approval Request to Conduct Cognitive & Psychological Research – Focus Groups/Interviews (OMB# 1545-1349)

Title: 2019 IRS Nationwide Tax Forum Focus Groups: Mis-directed Tax payments

Wage & Investment Division
Accounting and Tax Payment Branch

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Fiscal Service’s IRS Lockbox program helps the IRS collect taxes. The US Treasury, via Financial Agent Agreements, agrees to allow outside financial institutions to process individual and business tax payments. The IRS publishes lockbox addresses in Publication 3891, *Lockbox Addresses*. The IRS identified an issue where taxpayers are sending payments to Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC) instead of the published Lockbox addresses, particularly when using a Private Delivery Service (PDS) (e.g., Federal Express, DHL or United Parcel Service). Focus group discussion regarding assistance in encouraging usage of updated Lockbox addresses, state alignments for individual and business tax forms, and IRS street addresses for Private Delivery Services (PDS).

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The purpose of this project is to gather information from tax professionals regarding mis-directed payments. Participants will provide input on communication strategies and understanding state alignment mailing requirements. Focus group findings will be utilized by W&I as part of their ongoing effort to provide the most up-to-date and accurate resources on appropriate mailing addresses to ensure timely posting to taxpayers accounts.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

Data collection for this project will be completed during in-person focus groups coinciding with the following 2019 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums:

| City, State | Dates |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| National Harbor, MD | July 9-11 |
| Chicago, IL | July 23-25 |
| New Orleans, LA | August 6-8 |
| Orlando, FL | August 13-15 |
| San Diego, CA | September 17-19 |

4. Duplication of Information

This focus group project will provide valuable information that has not been collected during previous focus group projects and is not available in any internal IRS data source.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

Participants for this project will be recruited from individual attendees at the 2019 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums. No small entities will be contacted or recruited for participation in these focus groups.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

If the requirement is not approved, W&I will not receive valuable feedback from tax preparers regarding the appropriate mailing addresses for tax payments. As such, W&I will not know what information is beneficial in helping tax professionals meet the needs of their clients, or what additional information may help make the process of mailing tax payments less burdensome.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. The information collected will be voluntary. The findings from this project could be used in making management decisions regarding the inclusion of additional information within the instructions used to complete IRS tax forms.

8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency

There will be no consultation with persons outside the agency.

9. Payment or Gift

There will be no incentives given for participating in the focus groups.

10. Confidentiality

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure privacy to the extent allowed by law. This includes criteria for disclosure, laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information, as well as its release to authorized recipients.

Focus group participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. The IRS will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy to the extent allowed by law of the focus group participants.

11. Sensitive Nature

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Burden of Information Collection

The focus group will be designed to minimize burden on participants, with each session lasting 60 minutes.

Participant recruitment will take place among attendees at the IRS Nationwide Tax Forums. We anticipate a 25% recruitment acceptance rate, thus we will talk to 240 Tax Forum attendees, to fill 60 total participant spots (12 attendees for each focus group session at five Tax Forums).

The contact time needed to recruit for participants could take up to two minutes, with the resulting burden being $240 \times 2 \text{ minutes} = 480 / 60 \text{ minutes} = 8 \text{ burden hours}$.

For participants, total participation time in focus groups is 60 minutes. The time burden for participants is $60 \times 60 = 3,600 / 60 \text{ minutes} = 60 \text{ burden hours}$.

The total burden hours for the focus group is $8 + 60 = 68 \text{ burden hours}$

| Category of Respondent | No. of Respondents | Participation Time (in minutes)* | Burden (in hours) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Soliciting Potential Participants | 240 | 2 | 8 |
| Expected participants | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Totals | | | 68 |

Estimated Response Rate: 25%

Total Burden Estimate = 68 hours

13. Costs to Respondents

There is no cost to respondents resulting from the collection of information.

14. Cost to Federal Government

The estimated cost is \$8,819.00

15. Reason for Change

No change is being requested. This is a new request.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

This project will use a constant comparison analysis to analyze focus group data. This analysis initially groups data into smaller units and identifies each with a unique descriptor or code. Next, codes are placed into broader categories with the final goal of uncovering overall themes.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

IRS is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval, as this is a one-time, limited-duration collection occurring between July 9, 2019 and September 19, 2019.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

19. Dates collection will begin and end

July 9, 2019 through September 19, 2019

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

Focus group participants will be solicited in-person from individuals attending the 2019 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

A W&I Supervisory Tax Analyst/Senior Tax Analyst researcher will serve as the moderator for the focus group sessions. A IRS employee will serve as a note taker/scribe for the sessions.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

The focus group sessions will be limited to one hour in length, and the session topic will be clearly communicated to potential participants to maximize participation. Participants will be assured anonymity of their responses, thus being free to express their thoughts and opinions.

4. Testing of Procedures

Focus groups are an established and tested qualitative research method. Questions contained within the moderator's guide will be reviewed by the W&I program office to assure the included topics meet the stated project goals. Only minor changes to the moderator's guide are expected following submission of this supporting statement.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

For questions regarding the study or the research and statistical methodology, contact:

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