APPENDIX B: PRE-TESTING PROCEDURES AND HIGH LEVEL FINDINGS

After NWBC and the research team agreed on a draft survey instrument, the researchers conducted preliminary pre-test interviews with small business owners to assess the clarity of the survey questions and identify possible points of misunderstanding. This approach allowed the researchers to test the validity of survey questions by uncovering patterns of interpretation, and to identify sources of participant difficulty, such as accuracy of recalling information, comprehension of particular terms, and lack of appropriate response options. In addition, the researchers were able to test the length of the survey and identify areas of redundancy.

DEVELOPING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

The pre-test interview guide was divided into eight sections, the same sections reflected in the draft survey. The guide included probes used to evaluate how participants comprehend and reply to the survey questions. Because the draft survey included many questions, the team did not develop probes for each survey question. Instead, the guide included a "think-aloud" approach in which participants were asked to describe what they were thinking as they answered each question. This technique was used to understand participants' thought processes.

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

To identify interviewees, the research team contacted local government offices and nonprofit organizations that work with small business owners for a list of potential business owners. The team also identified potential interviewees through a convenience sample of personal contacts. In total, nine pre-test interviews were conducted with a demographically diverse mix of business owners across the United States. The demographic profile of each participant is shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Demographic Profiles of Interview Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Location	Receipt Range
1	Female	34–44	Baltimore, MD	$35,000–$74,999
2	Female	45–64	Glen Ellyn, IL	$150,000 +
3	Male	65+	Glen Ellyn, IL	$150,000+
4	Female	34–44	Oakland, CA	$150,000+
5	Female	18–33	Berkley, CA	Less than $34,999
6	Female	45–64	Arlington, VA	$150,000+
7	Female	34–44	Silver Spring, MD	Less than $34,999
8	Male	34–44	Columbia, MD	$150,000+
9	Male	34–44	Dallas, TX	$150,000+

To ensure that all potential interviewees were eligible to participate in the survey, the research team developed a screening guide. To be eligible, participants must be (1) an owner of a small business and (2) involved in managing day-to-day operations. The team used the remaining screening guide questions to ensure that a diverse mix of business owners was recruited to participate in the interviews. The following characteristics were used:

- Type of business
- Location of business
- Range of business receipts
- Age

- Gender
- Race and ethnic origin

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

Two IMPAQ team members conducted the interviews, with one leading the discussion and the other taking notes. All of the interviews, except one, were conducted in-person, with the lead interviewer face-to-face with the participant and the note taker calling into all of the interviews.

Prior to the interview, the interviewer greeted each participant, provided background information, and explained the purpose of the interview. Next, the interviewer reviewed an informed consent statement with the participant, including a request for permission to audio-record the interview. After the participant consented, the 60-minute interview proceeded.

First, the participants were provided with a copy of the survey and asked to read each question as if they were taking the survey, and to think aloud as they answered each question. In addition, the interviewer used verbal probing techniques to further understand how participants interpreted specific terms and to explore areas of confusion. These techniques helped the interviewer assess the overall structure of the survey, evaluate the clarity of the questions, and identify redundancies.

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS OF THE PRE-TEST INTERVIEWS

The research team reviewed the interview notes and used the audio-recordings to compile and analyze the findings. The team presented NWBC with a detailed analysis on February 14, 2017.

This section provides an overview of the high-level findings that were used to revise and refine the survey instrument. The findings highlighted a need to clarify specific terms and reorganize the survey to eliminate redundancies and to group similar topics. For example, respondents did not have a uniform understanding of following terms: "ownership," "trade secrets," and "local." To ensure that questions were interpreted in the same way by all participants, the team recommended providing a definition of terms.

The team also identified redundancies in Section A: Ownership Identification and in Section D: Ownership Questions. To streamline the survey, the team suggested combining these sections and reorganizing the order of questions so that similar topics are grouped together. Exhibit 5 shows three examples of redundancies found in the survey.

Exhibit 2. Examples of NWBC Survey Question Redundancies

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
▪ QD3: What year did you become an owner of [BUSINESS]? ***AND*** ▪ QB2: How many years has [BUSINESS] been under its current ownership?	▪ QA2a: Are you a plurality owner of your company (Plurality means the largest owner but not necessarily owner of more than 50% of the company)? ***AND*** ▪ QD1: What percentage of the business do you own?	▪ QE5: Given a stable personal and economic climate, what goals would you pursue for your business? Do you want your business to: ***AND*** ▪ QE5a: Given a stable personal and economic climate, do you expect your business to: