

SUPPORTIGN STATEMENT B

Paperwork Reduction Act Generic Information Collection Submissions for “Collection of Qualitative Feedback through Focus Groups”

1615-0126

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The universe of potential focus group participants under this clearance includes a broad range of potential and actual applicants for immigration benefits (our customers), employers, and stakeholders (such as law enforcement, non-profit groups, and the legal community). The universe of potential participants will be populated from a variety of sources, including external, publically-available data (for instance, published lists of community-based groups) and internal data (for instance, customers who have indicated a willingness to be contacted for feedback). Respondents will be recruited from this universe to participate in the focus groups based on specific characteristics related to the particular USCIS process and/or service under evaluation. For example, a set of focus groups may be held to solicit feedback from USCIS customers who hold a particular visa type; thus USCIS would invite holders of that visa type to participate in a focus group. Similarly, focus groups may be held with external stakeholders (law enforcement, the legal community, community-based organizations, and others) to evaluate the use of a particular USCIS benefit. USCIS will make every effort to hold focus groups in sites

The focus groups will generate qualitative data which will only be used by program managers to change or improve programs, products, or services. Results from the focus groups will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, to produce statistical descriptions (careful, repeatable measurements), or to generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample.

Focus groups are a valuable tool for qualitative data collection; they allow for the efficient collection of information, in-depth exploration of major themes and perspectives, and help develop new insights. Some of these benefits are not available through traditional quantitative surveying. The accuracy, reliability, and applicability of the results of these focus groups will be adequate for this purpose and as such, the samples associated with this collection are not subjected to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples where estimates are published or otherwise released to the public. The specific sample planned for each individual collection and the method for soliciting participation will be described fully in each collection request.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Specific data collection methods and procedures will be provided with each collection request. However, in general, USCIS will use industry standard focus group methods to collect and analyze feedback. USCIS and/or its contractors will develop lists of potential focus group participants. USCIS and/or the contractor will then invite 5-8 respondents per focus group to participate, thus minimizing bias and data collection challenges. USCIS will develop, adequately pre-test, and clear a focus group protocol through a specific OMB collection request, a Privacy Threshold Analysis (PTA), and, as applicable, agency and/or contractor Institutional Review Board(s) (IRB). The protocol will

include a list of standard questions and follow-up prompts for the focus group sessions, as well as introductory comments which share privacy protections and data collection/use information with the participants. The same protocol will be used across all focus groups cleared under a specific collection request. Additionally, participants will be required to sign informed consent forms to participate in the groups and have their comments recorded. To reduce burden, participants who have participated in one USCIS focus group organized under this clearance will not be invited again to another focus group within one calendar year. USCIS and/or cleared contractor staff will facilitate the focus groups. One staff member will record copious notes. In addition, the focus groups will be recorded and later transcribed. Transcribed focus group sessions will be analyzed using commercial qualitative analysis software.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Information collected under this generic clearance will not yield generalizable quantitative findings; it can provide useful customer and stakeholder input, but it does not yield data about customer or stakeholder opinions that can be generalized.

4. Testing of Procedures

Pretesting of focus group protocols may be done with internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with the programs and products. If the number of pretest respondents exceeds nine members of the public, the Agency will submit the pretest focus group protocol for review under this generic clearance.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

USCIS program managers will consult with agency social scientists and/or contractor or university personnel who are well-versed in focus group research methods, including their design, administration/data collection, and analysis, to ensure high quality data are produced. USCIS will provide names and contact information of persons consulted in the specific information collection requests submitted under this generic clearance.