

**Food Safety Behaviors and Consumer Education: Focus Group  
Research**

**OMB No. 0583-NEW**

**Supporting Statement**

**B. Statistical Methods**

**B.1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods**

We will conduct two sets of focus groups with eight groups per set, for a total of 16 focus groups. The sample selection for each set of groups is described below.

**Sample Selection**

For each set of focus groups, we will conduct eight focus groups with English-speaking adults. Set 1 will focus on food recalls, and Set 2 will focus on manufacturer cooking instructions. All individuals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- are adults (aged 18 to 64 years old)
- can read and write in English
- have not cooked professionally or taken ServSafe training
- have not been employed (including immediate family members) by the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the food service or food industry; the health care industry; or a marketing research, advertising, or public relations company in the past 5 years
- have not participated in a focus group or paid research discussion group in the past 6 months

Participants for the Set 1 focus groups (recalls) must meet the following additional criteria:

- do at least half the grocery shopping for the household
- purchased meat or poultry products in the last 30 days
- two to three have had a recalled food at home, and half have NOT had a recalled food at home
- self-report as having a food allergy (two to three recruits)

Participants for the Set 2 focus groups (manufacturer cooking instructions) must meet the following additional criteria:

- prepared processed, frozen food containing meat or poultry in the last 30 days
- do at least half the grocery shopping for the household
- prepare or cook meals 3 or more times a week

We will conduct two focus groups in each location, representing the four Census regions: Richmond, VA (South); St. Louis, MO (Midwest); Buffalo, NY (Northeast); and Albuquerque, NM (West). The locations were selected to represent geographic diversity throughout the four census regions as well as demographic diversity representative of the general population of the United States. Between two and five cities were considered before selecting the final city in each location. Additionally, only locations with two or more market research facilities were considered.

In addition, to increase the homogeneity of the groups, we will segment the groups by education level (high school graduate or less versus some college or more) and age (adults aged 18 to 35 years and adults aged 36 to 64 years). Each of the groups will include a mix of genders (at least two males per group, reflecting that more females than males identify as meal

preparers/grocery shoppers), ages, and races/ethnicities that are reflective of individuals in these locations. Table B-1 identifies the subpopulations and locations for the 16 focus groups so that an acceptable facility could be identified.

**Table B-1. Focus Group Segmentation and Locations**

Set/Topic	Group #	Segmentation	Location
Set 1: Recalls	1	Higher ed, 18–35 years old	Richmond, VA (South)
Set 1: Recalls	2	Lower ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 2: MCI	3	Higher ed, 18–35 years old	
Set 2: MCI	4	Lower ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 1: Recalls	5	Lower ed, 18–35 years old	St. Louis, MO (Midwest)
Set 1: Recalls	6	Higher ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 2: MCI	7	Lower ed, 18–35 years old	
Set 2: MCI	8	Higher ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 1: Recalls	9	Higher ed, 18–35 years old	Buffalo, NY (East Coast)
Set 1: Recalls	10	Lower ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 2: MCI	11	Higher ed, 18–35 years old	
Set 2: MCI	12	Lower ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 1: Recalls	13	Lower ed, 18–35 years old	Albuquerque, NM (West Coast)
Set 1: Recalls	14	Higher ed, 36–64 years old	
Set 2: MCI	15	Lower ed, 18–35 years old	
Set 2: MCI	16	Higher ed, 36–64 years old	

MCI = manufacturer cooking instructions

**Recruitment Procedures for Set 1 and Set 2 Focus Groups**

We will work with a local market research company in each location to recruit potential participants and provide the facilities for hosting the focus group discussions. The data collection will not use statistical methods to select respondents. Instead, the market research companies will use convenience sampling to recruit potential participants who meet the eligibility criteria as defined by the screening questionnaires from their databases and other sources, if necessary (see Appendix A for Set 1 focus groups and Appendix C for Set 2 focus groups). Recruiters at each market research company will use the questionnaire to screen and assign participants to the

appropriate group in each location. A maximum of 12 participants per group will be recruited, resulting in an actual group size of 8 to 10 participants (due to no-shows).

To ensure that we have a sample that meets our criteria and also includes a mix of genders, ages, and races/ethnicities (as appropriate), the local market research facilities will call individuals in their recruitment database who represent a mix of these characteristics. The market research facilities' databases contain information on many different demographic characteristics including household income, location, ethnicity, age, and gender which allows them to target and reach a broad and diverse population. The screening process will then serve to verify demographic variables such as these and identify participants who meet the remaining screening criteria.

The databases maintained by market research facilities are developed through advertisements, word-of-mouth referrals, outreach to various organizations and industries, and Internet list searches, among other means. The databases are constantly refreshed through natural attrition and additions. The market research facilities rely on relationships with special interest groups, industry associations, affinity groups and others to recruit hard-to-reach sample. They also utilize traditional internet techniques such as email campaigns, banner ads, social media techniques, (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn) to source special interest groups if needed, such as lower socioeconomic participants. These strategies will be employed if necessary, to help ensure a diverse mix of individuals within each group to reflect the socioeconomic characteristics of the focus group location.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) plans to conduct the focus groups in person during the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2021 or 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2022 assuming that RTI International, FSIS's subcontractor, is permitted to do so by state, local, and organizational

policy, which is based on continuous review of COVID-19 community transmission and adherence to social distancing guidelines.

Procedures will be in place to protect the moderator and participants from being infected with COVID-19 and to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Recruiting materials will indicate that COVID-19 screening will be part of the screening and eligibility process. Participants who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 4 weeks, have symptoms of COVID-19 (including a temperature above 100°F), interacted with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or are age 65 years or older will not be eligible to take part in the study. On the day of the focus group, a COVID-19 screening tool will be administered, and participants must pass this screening to take part in the study (Appendix H). The moderator and participants will be required to follow the COVID-19 procedures specifically established for this study (see Appendix I). These procedures include wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, and disinfecting high touch areas in between focus groups.

## **B.2. Procedures for the Collection of Information**

Upon arrival at the focus group facility, participants will read and sign an informed consent form (see Appendixes E and F) and a COVID consent addendum (Appendix G) and answer a few questions for COVID-19 screening (Appendix H). An experienced moderator will conduct the focus group discussions and use a moderator guide (see Appendix B for Set 1 focus groups and Appendix D for Set 2 focus groups), which will serve as an outline and provide structure for the focus group discussions. The moderator guide for the first set of focus groups (Set 1) is designed to explore participants' understanding of and response to USDA recall notices and to inform possible modifications to USDA's procedures for communicating information to

consumers on recalls. Throughout the discussion, the moderator will provide handouts to facilitate the discussion (provided in Appendix B).

For the second set of focus groups (Set 2), the moderator guide is designed to explore participants' understanding and use of manufacturer cooking instructions on not ready-to-eat meat and poultry products. During the discussions, participants will be given mock products to aid the discussion (images of products provided in Appendix D).

Each focus group will be audio- and video-recorded. The audio-recordings will be professionally transcribed.

To conduct the analysis, the contractor's task lead will review the transcripts to identify constructs that align with the moderator guide. From these constructs, the task lead will create a codebook. An analyst will code the transcripts using NVivo 12 and the codebook. Using NVivo, a report of the coded constructs will be prepared and reviewed to identify emerging themes. The contractor will summarize these findings in a final report to FSIS. No statistical analyses will be conducted. The research is for exploratory analysis and to inform any potential research into these topics.

### **B.3. Methods to Maximize Response Rate and Deal with Nonresponse**

Each market research company will recruit 12 individuals to ensure 8 to 10 individuals show to participate in each focus group. We anticipate that up to 160 adults will participate in the focus group study. The expected response (show rate) among recruited participants is 83%, assuming 12 people are recruited and an average of 10 participants per group.

To maximize response rate and address possible nonresponse, each focus group participant will receive a \$75 Visa gift card and a free gift (food thermometer and magnet) for their participation and be entered into a drawing for a chance to win an extra \$25 Visa gift card if

they arrive 15 minutes before their group start time. In addition, each local market research company will send confirmation letters with directions and make reminder calls to recruited individuals before the group discussion.

#### **B.4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken**

In June 2020, RTI conducted two pilot focus groups (one for each set of focus groups) with nine adults (four people for the Set 1 group and five people for the Set 2 group) in Research Triangle Park, NC. The purpose of the pilot focus groups was to test the moderator guides and the time allotted for each topic. Based on the pilot focus groups, we made very minor revisions for both sets of focus groups. The following revisions were made for the focus groups on food recalls (Set 1): rephrased one question for clarity, added additional probes, removed redundant questions, and added descriptions for each type of recall that participants will be able to see. We made the following revisions to the focus groups on manufacturer cooking instructions (Set 2): revised text that was repetitive, added additional notes to the moderator to redirect participants at certain areas if needed, and rephrased one question for clarity. The pilot groups confirmed the burden estimate of 90 minutes.

#### **B.5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data**

Sheryl Cates and Jenna Brophy, RTI, will manage the collection and analysis of the focus group data. Laura Scott, an FSIS employee, will review the results of the consumer focus groups.