

# NWS Extreme Heat Social and Behavioral Science Research

## Focus Group Guide

### Public Burden Statement

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with an information collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless the information collection has a currently valid OMB Control Number. The approved OMB Control Number for this information collection is 0648-XXXX, which expires on XX/XX/20XX. Without this approval, we could not conduct this NWS Extreme Heat Survey. Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be approximately 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection. All responses to this information collection are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Kimberly McMahon, Public Weather Services Program Manager, DOC/NOAA/NWS/AFS, 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301-427-9692, kimberly.mcmahon@noaa.gov.

### Moderator Introduction (2 min)

*The moderator will put this in the chat at the start of the session: From EO 13985 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>), The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.*

Hello, my name is X, and I will be moderating our discussion today. We are interested in your expertise communicating with underserved populations about extreme heat.

**NWS mission:** The National Weather Service or “NWS” is an agency of the United States federal government that is tasked with providing weather forecasts, warnings of hazardous weather, and other weather-related products to organizations and the public for the purposes of protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy.

The **NWS Extreme Heat Social and Behavioral Science Research Project** includes focus groups, a larger scale public survey, and a literature review. The project scope is to expand NWS knowledge of public perception and understanding of heat to inform and improve NWS’ national and local level heat communication and messaging.

### Project team:

- **Climate Resilience Consulting** is a social enterprise working with nonprofits, corporates and governments on climate resilience strategy.

- **Abt Associates** is a global consulting and research firm that strives to improve the quality of people's lives. We partner with clients and communities to advance equity and innovation—from combating infectious disease, mitigating climate change, to evaluating programs for measurable social impact.

### **Focus Group (FG) Questions**

*As people are entering the web conference room, invite to use the chat feature at any time during the discussion.*

#### ***FG Questions***

Introductory Questions, interview style

1. What is your title or a short description of your position?
2. In one sentence, what role does your organization play in extreme heat, behavior change, and/or public communication and messaging?
3. In your community or role, what groups are of greatest concern/risk from extreme heat exposure?

Now we would like to learn more about how you and your organization research or work with historically underserved groups in your community to communicate about extreme heat. The next series of questions focuses on messaging to reach those communities. This focus group is a diverse group of participants. In answering these questions, please respond from your point of view and perspective. We look forward to a discussion among all participants as you answer these questions.

Open Ended Questions, discussion style

#### **A) How are you using hot weather forecasts and information to support your decision making?**

##### **Probes:**

- **What is particularly useful or actionable in your decision making and/or for your community or stakeholders?**
- **What further weather/forecast information (that you don't currently have) would support your decision making?**
- **How can NWS support your or others' messaging?**

Academic/Think Tank probing question: How are you using weather forecasts and information? Clarifying question: On what timescales? What is particularly useful? What further information (that you don't currently have) would support your research?

#### **B) What are some of the heat messaging challenges you face as you support underserved communities? [For those who do not support directly: What barriers**

**exist in the day-to-day practices of those who support the heat-health of underserved communities?]**

Academic/Think Tank probing question: What heat findings exist regarding messaging challenges and barriers in underserved communities?

**C) What communication methods, community partnerships, and other mechanisms enable effective heat messaging?**

Academic/Think Tank probing question: Same as above.

**D) How have you or how would you like to tailor messaging for the underserved groups you serve (indicate which underserved group(s) you are referring to in response to this question)?**

**Probe:**

- **Are there innovative techniques you've explored to supplement your more traditional messaging strategies?**

Academic/Think Tank probing question: In your research, what have you discovered about tailoring messaging to underserved groups? (Indicate which underserved group(s) you are referring to in response to this question)? Have you found innovative techniques that supplement more "traditional" messaging strategies?

**E) In your research or experience, why do (or do not) underserved community members undertake safety measures to protect themselves from heat?**

**Probes:**

- **What actions do they take?**
- **What barriers to action have you seen?**
- **What actions would you like to see them take?**

Academic/Think Tank probing question: Same as above.

**F) Who should we involve as a society to better address heat concerns?**

**Probe:**

- **Which other groups have we not mentioned so far that we might involve or consider as a heat messaging audience?**

Academic/Think Tank probing questions:

- What should we be doing to better address heat concerns?
  - *If focus group participants start talking about a whole-of-government or generalized action, ask them to specify the agency and kind of expertise they are thinking of.*

Moderator close: We will email you when the final report is posted on the NWS site in late 2023. If there is something else you would like from us or to share with us, please email [joyce@climateresilienceconsulting.com](mailto:joyce@climateresilienceconsulting.com).