

Guide for [First Name, Last Name] Interview

Name, Location

Interviewee ID: ANON###

Background

- *Add anything that you think may be interesting to know about this person or the program*

Interview agenda

Details about the interviews

- No group interviews; individual only
- Duration: One hour or less
- Recorded if possible
- We have already interviewed members of leadership, and are now interviewing DOL customers.

Main points to cover

1. How did you find out about the service?
2. What has your experience been applying and receiving benefits (financial and medical)?
3. Have you had any points that you felt lost or confused?
4. What has your experience been with the folks in [agency] helping with your case?
5. Where do you go to get questions answered?

How to use this guide

Use the “main points to cover” above as a checklist. Make sure you cover the main points. Beyond that, don’t worry about asking every question. More important questions are in bold to help you prioritize, but it’s no big deal if you miss a bold question.

The interview guide is not a script to follow. The questions are there to fall back on if the participant is not forthcoming with information. Let the conversation flow. It's a good idea to familiarize the questions in this guide ahead of time so you're ready with the questions that are most relevant to what the interviewee is saying without having to refer back to the guide as much.

Good general follow up moves to keep the conversation flowing and get more information:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you give me an example of that?
- How did you feel when that happened?
- So you're saying ... Am I understanding that correctly?
- Why/why not?
- Can you share your screen and show me what you mean?
- Can you walk me through that?

Remember to reassure participants throughout that they are providing helpful information.

Introduction

Thank you for your time today. My name is [name]. I am a UX researcher. This is _____, another researcher, who will be helping me capture notes from our conversation. _____ may chime in with a question from time to time, but mostly it will be you and I talking. You may see in your meeting window that we are "live streaming." Don't worry - we are not broadcasting this conversation publicly. All that means is that there are a handful of other people who are working on this project internally who are listening in. Everything we talk about will stay in our internal circle.

The Department of Labor has asked us to suggest ways that the Black Lung Program might improve the experiences of their customers. We are interviewing claimants, authorized representatives, and survivors who have filed claims to better understand how things are currently working. We are interviewing a mix of people whose claims have been accepted and denied, and also people in different phases of the claims process (for example, people with newly accepted claims versus those who have been receiving benefits for at least a year).

_____ and I are independent researchers, so nothing you say today will hurt our feelings. We want you to be honest so we can learn what's working and what's not working in order to improve the Black Lung Program's customer experience. **I just want to reiterate that your**

participation in this conversation will not impact your benefits or the outcome of any outstanding benefits claims.

[If they haven't signed the consent form yet, have them do that now.]

We will be anonymizing our notes. Nothing you say will be attributed to you. We are doing that to help make the people being interviewed be as comfortable as possible. The purpose of recording is so we don't have to take detailed notes and can focus on our conversation. So, is it okay with you if we record this?

[If yes- start recording here.]

We expect this conversation to take less than an hour. We can take breaks at any time, if you feel the need. If there are any questions you feel uncomfortable answering, just let us know and we'll skip them.

Before we begin, do you have any questions I can answer about the project or our approach?

Questions

[Questions in bold are main questions. Questions not in bold are recommended probing questions.]

Warmup/Establish Rapport Example Questions

1. Where are you calling from today?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

(Depending on how they answer, this could just be a warm up question, or it could lead into talking about their experience with DOL. Follow their lead, see if it's possible to ask more about their story (work experience, experience with Black Lung). If they're not offering that info up front, don't worry about it yet. Build some trust before delving into that.)

Study Questions

3. **[If they are not the claimant] Tell me about the person you filed a claim for.**
4. **If not covered in question 2: Can you tell us a little about your career?**
5. **How did you hear about the Office of Worker's Comp Black Lung program?**
6. **What led to you filing a claim for benefits?**
 - a. What events preceded you filing a claim?
 - b. What were you hoping to obtain benefits for? (financial/medical/other need?)
7. **What did you expect going into the process?**
 - a. How long did you expect it to take?
 - b. Did you think it would be easy or difficult overall? Why?
 - c. Did you think your claim would be approved? Why or why not?
8. **Can you take me through the process you went through to file a claim?**
 - a. When did you first decide to file a claim?
 - b. **Where did you get the initial form? How easy or difficult was it to find? How easy or difficult was it to fill out?**
 - c. **Did you have any questions about the process? Where did you go to get those questions answered?**
 - d. Did you go online at all to learn about the process? (OWCP website?)
 - e. **Did anyone help you with filing the claim?**
 - i. Who helped?
 1. If it was someone from DOL:
 - a. Can you tell me more about that?
 - b. What was your experience with that employee like?
 - c. How did you contact them (phone? In person?)
 2. If it was a family member or attorney:
 - a. What was their role in the process? What did they help you with?
 - b. Did they make any comments about their experience?
 - c. Do you think they would be comfortable talking to us about their experience? (if we need more people to interview)

9. What happened after you filed the claim?

- a. Did anyone follow up with you, either by mail or by phone?
- b. Was it pretty clear what you were supposed to do at this point, or was anything confusing?**
- c. How long was the wait to find out your claim was moving forward?
- d. How long did it take before you started receiving benefits?
- e. How did you check on your claim status?**
 - i. Did you use the online portal to check up on your claim (C.O.A.L. Mine portal)
 - If no- Why not?
 - If yes- Ask if they remember the last time they used the portal and ask how it was. After that say we'll discuss that in more detail later (see Usability portion of this guide)

10. The Black Lung Program requires a medical examination, what was that process like?

- a. Were you able to find a doctor in your area that could do the exam?
- b. How far did you have to travel to get the exam done?
- c. Can you walk me through the process of getting the medical exam and submitting the results?**
- d. Did you have to do any other medical exams for this process (like one for the mining company)?
- e. Did anyone help you with this part of the process? Can you tell me more about that?**

11. Was your case appealed by the mining company?

- a. If yes: What was the appeals process like? Can you walk me through it?**
- b. Did anyone from Black Lung Program/DOL help you with this process?**

12. When did you hear back about the final decision?

- a. How did you feel about the wait time from when you submitted your claim to when you found out your claim was approved?
- b. Did you know what to do next after your claim was approved?**

13. How has your experience been with the BL program since your decision was approved?

- a. Can you describe your experience receiving benefits? (financial and medical)
- b. Have you had any issues with receiving benefits?

- c. When you get medical care, what's the process like?
- d. How often would you say you speak with people in Black Lung program?

14. How important are these benefits to you? What would you do if you didn't receive these benefits?

15. What has your experience been with the folks in the Black Lung program helping with your case?

- a. When's the last time you talked to someone from the BL program?
- b. **Can you walk me through it?**

16. When you think back on your overall experience with the Black Lung program, can you tell me:

- a. **What was the most difficult part of the whole process?**
- b. **What was the easiest part of the process?**
- c. **If we had a magic wand, what could we do to improve this process for you?**

17. If you had to rate your experience with the DOL's Black Lung program on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied, what rating would you give?

5) Very satisfied 4) Moderately satisfied 3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 2) Moderately dissatisfied 1) Very dissatisfied.

Follow up: Why wasn't it lower? and/or What could have been done differently to make the score higher?

Wrap up Questions

- 1. Is there anything else you think I should have asked you about?**
- 2. Do you have any questions for me?**
- 3. Do you know anyone who also has experience filing a claim with the Black Lung program who we should talk to?
- 4. Is it okay if we contact you if we have any additional questions? What's the best way to reach you?**

Great, and if you have any additional questions for me, you can ...

Tell them what their compensation will be and how they will be receiving it.

Thank you for your time today, we really appreciate you sharing your experience with us, and we will use this information to improve the Black Lung Program's services.

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