

NWS Extreme Heat Social and Behavioral Science Research

Focus Group Guide

Public Burden Statement

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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.