

Request for Approval under the “Fast Track Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: FT 0704-0553)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Stakeholder Focus Group Study

PURPOSE:

This project is sponsored by the Office of People Analytics’ Defense Testing and Assessment Center (DTAC) as part of a larger effort to evaluate the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and the Enlistment Testing Program (ETP). This larger evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of the tests currently administered within the ASVAB, with an overall objective of providing insight into their utility, quality, and potential modifiability. The various study results will inform recommendations for what tests should be administered as part of the ASVAB in the future (i.e., a next generation ASVAB).

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) has been contracted by DTAC to conduct a focus group study of our various stakeholders. The study aims to gather perspectives regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the ASVAB/ETP from a variety of stakeholders/users through a series of targeted focus groups. The long-term goal of this effort is to consolidate the information gathered in these focus group sessions and to use it to develop a shared vision among the stakeholder groups for the next generation of the ASVAB/ETP. Refer to the focus group facilitation script below.

Following the focus groups, the plan is to form and convene an ASVAB Stakeholder Advisory Committee to help guide decision-making about changes to introduce in next generation testing. The objective is to synthesize findings and develop a pathway forward that will converge on a possible solution that will be acceptable to all.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Focus groups will be comprised of representatives from a range of stakeholders with interests in the ASVAB/ETP. The stakeholder groups reflect program users from three different categories: U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)/military, education-related personnel, and examinees. The DoD/military stakeholders are not part of this request for approval given their status as federal employees. The education-related personnel consist of employees from the federal government [Department of Education, DoD/military educational service specialists (ESSs)], state and local governments (State Boards of Education, high school guidance counselors, high school teachers, community college instructors), and associations for career counseling professionals (e.g., National Career Development Association), with only the latter two categories being included in this request for approval. For the examinee realm, we are requesting approval to conduct focus groups with high school students, who are at least 18 years of age and took the ASVAB as part of the Career Exploration Program (CEP) at their school, and their influencers (parents, guardians, or other family members), both of which are included in this request for approval. We also plan to conduct focus group with individuals who took the ASVAB as part of their application to the military and recruitment into a military service branch (i.e., applicants and recruits – who must be at least 18 years of age) as well as their influencers, with only the applicants and influencers of applicants and recruits as part of this request for approval (recruits are considered part of the military). For both the educational and examinee realms, our approach

aims to incorporate participants dispersed throughout the country to ensure regional representation in the focus groups. For clarity, a table of stakeholders and their inclusion in this request for approval is presented below.

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Group	Inclusion in Request for Approval
DoD/Military	DoD policymakers, Military Service Representatives (policymakers, recruiters, classifiers, trainers, etc.)	N/A
Educational	Department of Education	N/A
	Education Service Specialists (ESSs) – DoD and Military	N/A
	State Boards of Education	Included
	Education Personnel (guidance counselors, teachers, community college instructors)	Included
	Career Counseling Professional Associations	Included
Examinees	CEP Students (at least 18 years old)	Included
	Military Applicants (at least 18 years old)	Included
	Military Recruits	N/A
	Influencers of CEP Students, Applicants, and Recruits	Included

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

☐ Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form ☐ Customer Satisfaction Survey
☐ Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) ☐ Small Discussion Group
☒ Focus Group ☐ Other: _____

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Dr. Mary Pommerich, Acting Director, Defense Testing and Assessment Center

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? ☒ Yes ☐ No

2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Refer to the DHRA 03 (Survey Data and Assessments [July 28, 2021, 96 FR 40498]) and PIA (Survey Database, [December 18, 2020], DHRA/OPA)

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? ☒ Yes ☐ No

We have received authorization from the DoD to offer a small incentive of \$20 to all non-governmental employees who participate in a focus group for this study.

We requested to offer a \$20 incentive because it was deemed a fair and attractive incentive for the 2-hour time commitment being requested for participation. It was also consistent with the incentive that was offered to participants of other ASVAB research studies, which had similar time requirements for participation.

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Education Personnel	60	2 hours	120
High School Students (at least 18 years of age) and Influencers (parent/guardian)	60	2 hours	120
Totals	120		240

PUBLIC COST: The estimated annual cost to the public is based on the annual cost to the Federal government, which is \$65,300. This figure includes personnel hours for DTAC and HumRRO project team members as well as the cost of incentives (\$20 * 120 participants = \$2400).

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

We have received agreement of support from key personnel within the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) in DoD Headquarters as well as those from the ASVAB Career Exploration Program (CEP) and Accession Policy Directorate in the Office of the

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, for the recruitment of educational and examinee stakeholders for our study's focus groups. That is, these key personnel have agreed to assist in introducing our research team and study to relevant individuals within certain stakeholder groups to seek their participation in a focus group as well as support with the recruitment of participants for other stakeholder groups, as appropriate. For example, DoD Headquarters personnel will request on the behalf of DTAC that MEPCOM ESSs who participated in one of our study's focus groups assist with identifying up to 12 high schools dispersed throughout the four targeted regions of the country (Northeast, South, West, Midwest) that are actively participating in the CEP. Given the MEPCOM ESSs maintain CEP-related communications with high guidance counselors within their regions as part of their job, we anticipate them making an introduction between our research team and high school guidance counselors. See email template that will be used by MEPCOM ESSs to introduce the high school guidance counselors to DTAC-HumRRO team and the research effort.

Once a connection is established, our team will send a follow-up communication to provide more information about the research effort and seek voluntary participation in a focus group. We will also request their voluntary support with the identification and recruitment of high school students (18 years or older) that participated in the CEP, high school teachers, and community college instructors (as appropriate) to participate in additional stakeholder focus groups. We anticipate the recruitment will occur through the high school guidance counselors so that the only information we require is an email address for sending the calendar invitation, which eliminates the collection and storage of personally identifiable information. The CEP students will be encouraged to invite one of their influencers (parent, guardian) to attend the focus group with them or in a separate focus group. See HumRRO's email template to HS guidance counselors and to focus group participants below.

We plan for a similar approach to be used for the focus group with military applicants. The MEPCOM ESSs (or military recruiters with whom we already have a connection) will assist in identifying and seeking the participation of military applicants (at least 18 years of age) for a focus group. The applicants will be encouraged to invite one of their influencers to attend the focus group with them or in a separate focus group.

Similarly, DTAC's has obtained confirmation from key personnel within the ASVAB Career Exploration Program and Accession Policy offices to support the identification and recruitment of voluntary participants for focus groups with State Boards of Education and career counseling professional associations. Both offices frequently interact with individuals from these stakeholder groups as part of their operations. Leveraging these connections, our research team and study will be introduced to key education policymakers at state agencies and professional associations dispersed throughout the four targeted regions of the country. Our team will send a follow-up communication to invite them to voluntarily participate in the focus group and seek their support in recruiting additional participants, as appropriate.

Overall, our sampling approach will be one of convenience in which DoD personnel within MEPCOM, ASVAB Career Exploration Program, and Accession Policy will use their existing connections to identify and seek voluntary participants for the stakeholder focus groups relevant to their position as well as provide additional support in the recruitment of voluntary participants for focus groups with stakeholders within high schools and community

colleges. Individuals will be requested to voluntarily participate for up to two hours in a virtual focus group.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Web-based or other forms of Social Media
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ In-person
- ☐ Mail
- ☒ Other, Explain

A virtual focus group will be conducted for up to two hours with each stakeholder group, consisting of approximately 12 volunteer participants. Each focus group meeting will be facilitated by project researchers from our contractor, the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), who will use Microsoft Teams, a web-based virtual meeting software that is free to participants for attending virtual meetings. In the event Microsoft Teams is not a viable option for some participants, HumRRO will evaluate and select an equivalent option to host the meeting and/or provide individuals the option to participate via audio only.

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? ☒ Yes ☐ No