

Communication Template for MEPCOM ESSs to Seek Support from High School Guidance Counselors

TO: High School Guidance Counselors
FROM: [MEPCOM ESS Providing Support]
RE: Request for Research Support on Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

The Defense Testing and Assessment Center (DTAC) of the Office of People Analytics within the Department of Defense (DoD) is conducting an evaluation study to inform the modernization of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), which is administered in high schools as part of the Career Exploration Program (CEP). Given your high school's participation in the CEP, I am seeking your support to participate in a virtual focus group as well as assist with identifying and recruiting high school students and their influencers (parents/guardians) who completed the CEP and high school teachers. Please refer to the attached study overview for more information.

Please consider supporting this important research effort and respond to me with your interest. I will then share your name and email address with the lead researchers from HumRRO, who will follow up to request availability to schedule the focus group with high school guidance counselors across the country as well as initiate the request for support in recruiting high school students and teachers. Individuals completing the focus group study will receive a \$20 honorarium as incentive to participate in the study.

Very respectfully,
[MEPCOM ESS Providing Support]

Attachment

ASVAB/ETP Stakeholder Focus Group Study – Overview

Purpose: The ASVAB Modernization Evaluation project is sponsored by the Defense Testing and Assessment Center (DTAC) of the Office of People Analytics within the Department of Defense (DoD) as part of a larger effort to evaluate the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and the Enlistment Testing Program (ETP). This larger evaluation, led by Dr. Mary Pommerich, Deputy Director DTAC, is a comprehensive evaluation of the current ASVAB to gain insight into its utility, quality, and potential modifiability. The ultimate outcome will be recommendations for what subtests should be administered as part of the ASVAB in the future (i.e., a next generation ASVAB).

The current project, being conducted by our contractor the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), is designed 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. We will consolidate the information gathered to develop a shared vision among the stakeholder groups for the next generation of the ASVAB/ETP. 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.

Approach: Focus groups are comprised of representatives from a range of stakeholders with interests in the ASVAB. This includes military/DoD stakeholders (policymakers, trainers, classifiers, recruiting operations command, recruiters, occupational/ functional/community managers, National Guard Bureau), education stakeholders (education service specialists, Department of Education, State Boards of Education, career counselors, high school counselors, high school and community college

teachers), and examinees (applicants, recruits, students, influencers). See graphical representation on the next page.

Status: To date, we have conducted focus groups with nearly all DoD and military stakeholder groups: Accessions Policy, Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM), Joint Advertising Marketing Research & Studies (JAMRS), Manpower Accession Policy Working Group (MAPWG), and policymakers, Recruiting Operations Command, and Training Command at each of the service branches. As we finish the focus groups with the remaining military stakeholder groups, we are initiating focus groups with stakeholders in the education realm.

Request: We are requesting the support of high school guidance counselors in three ways:

1. Serve as a participant in a focus group with high school guidance counselors.
 - We are seeking 10-12 high school guidance counselors, representative of high schools across four U.S. regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, West), to participate in a virtual focus group using Microsoft Teams, lasting up to two hours, for sharing perspectives on the ASVAB (e.g., what they like about the ASVAB, what they dislike about the ASVAB, what potential changes would be important to consider, how do potential changes impact them).
2. Identify high school students to participate in a focus group.
 - We are seeking support in recruiting 2-3 high school students (at least 18 years of age) per school, who have completed the ASVAB as part of the Career Exploration Program (CEP), and their influencers (parents/guardians) to participate in a virtual focus group using Microsoft Teams, lasting up to two hours, for sharing perspectives on the ASVAB (e.g., what did they like about their experience, what did they dislike about their experience, did they feel prepared to take the ASVAB, what changes to the ASVAB would they like to see made).
3. Identify high school teachers and community college instructors to participate in a focus group.
 - We are seeking support in recruiting 2-4 teachers at the high school and community college (if applicable) level to participate in a virtual focus group using Microsoft Teams, lasting up to two hours, for sharing perspectives on the ASVAB (e.g., what did they like about the ASVAB, what did they dislike about the ASVAB, does the ASVAB align to the course content, do their students feel prepared to take the ASVAB, what changes to the ASVAB would they like to see made).

Risks: There are no known risks to participating in our focus groups. None of the information collected during the focus groups will be sensitive or private to the participants nor the high school. All information obtained from focus group participants will be confidential, maintained using secure methods, and summarized at the relevant stakeholder group level (i.e., no personal identifying information will be included). The research study has been approved by HumRRO's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects in research. Similarly, the research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the DoD Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) Human Research Protection Program (HRPP).

Benefits: All focus group participants will be offered a small \$20 incentive for their participation in this study.

STAKEHOLDERS FOR TARGETED FOCUS GROUPS

Military/DoD Realm

- MAPWG Service Representatives
- Accession Policy/MEPCOM /JAMRS
- Service policy-makers
- Recruiting operations commands
- Military trainers
- Managers of entry-level jobs
- Recruiters
- Classifiers
- National Guard Bureau

Educational Realm

- Education Service Specialists
- Department of Education
- State Boards of Education
- Career counseling organizations
- High school counselors
- High school and community college teachers

Examinee Realm

- Applicants
- Recruits
- Students
- Influencers

Communication Template from HumRRO to Seek Recruitment Support from High School Guidance Counselors

Dear [Name],

As [Name of ESS] indicated, we are seeking your support for an important research study. My name is Kimberly Adams, and I am one of the lead researchers at the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO). I'm writing on behalf of Mary Pommerich, Deputy Director of the Defense Testing and Assessment Center (DTAC) within the Office of People Analytics (OPA) of the Department of Defense (DoD). The purpose of my email is to request your assistance in identifying individuals to participate in upcoming focus groups designed to gather information about student experiences with the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) within the Career Exploration Program (CEP).

The objective is to gather perspectives from a diverse list of stakeholders to develop a shared vision for next generation testing as it relates to the ASVAB. We initiated the research by conducting focus groups within the military realm including DoD representatives as well as stakeholders from the United States Air Force, Space Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard. We are now in the process of planning focus groups with stakeholders at the high schools that participate in the CEP. I've attached an overview of the study (same as the one previously provided by [Name of ESS]) for more information.

Each focus group will comprise 12 individuals dispersed across the country to ensure a variety of perspectives are captured while providing sufficient opportunity for each participant to contribute. The focus groups will last up to 2 hours and be conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams during the timeframe of [Month and Month] 2021. Additionally, a \$20 incentive will be provided to individuals who participate in this focus group study. In support of this research effort, we need your assistance in identifying participants for these focus groups.

Please provide me the name and email address for:

- 2-4 high school students (at least 18 years of age) who participated in the Career Explorations Program (CEP) and are willing to voluntarily participate in our focus group,
- CEP students' influencers (parent/guardian) to voluntarily participate in a similar focus group,
- 2-4 high school teachers, and
- 2-4 community college instructors.

Please provide this information at your earliest convenience, but no later than [Month Day], 2021.

As a reminder, none of the information collected during the focus groups will be sensitive or private to the participants nor the high school. All information obtained from focus group participants will be confidential, maintained using secure methods, and summarized at the relevant stakeholder group level (i.e., no personal identifying information will be included).

If you have any questions or would prefer to have a conversation to better understand our research study or request, please send me potential dates and times for us to meet.

Thank you,
Kimberly Adams, PhD

Manager, Talent Assessment and Analytics Program
HumRRO
direct: 703.236.4303
kadams@humro.org

Communication Template to Invite Focus Group Participants

Dear [Name],

You have been identified by add name to voluntarily participate in an upcoming focus group to share your perspective about the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and your experience taking it as part of the Career Exploration Program (CEP). The focus group is being conducted by the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) on the behalf of the Defense Testing and Assessment Center (DTAC). The objective of the study is to develop a shared vision for next generation ASVAB. To ensure a variety of perspectives are captured in this shared vision, we are conducting a series of focus groups and interviews with representatives from a diverse list of stakeholder and user groups. Please refer to the attached project description.

We are writing to request your participation in the [Military Applicants/Examinee/Influencer/Teacher] Focus Group, to be scheduled between Month Day and Month Day, 2021. Individuals completing the focus group study will receive a \$20 incentive. At your earliest convenience, please confirm your availability to participate in a virtual focus group, lasting up to two hours, to be held using Microsoft Teams, with other [applicants/students/influencers/teachers] on the following dates/times:

Date and Time
Option 1
Option 2
Option 3
Option 4
Option 5

I will coordinate across the focus group participants to select a date and time that works for all interested participants. If none of these options work, I will send additional options.

If you have any questions, please contact me via email (kadams@humrro.org) or direct (703.236.4303).

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kimberly Adams, PhD

Manager, Talent Assessment and Analytics Program

HumRRO

direct: 703.236.4303

kadams@humrro.org