

## Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) Focus Group Research—Participant Rights and Consent Form

### Background Information

This study is conducted by representative members of the DACOWITS staff, who will begin the study by introducing themselves, their roles, and the purpose of DACOWITS. Contact information and an established point of contact will be disclosed during the study.

You have been invited to participate in a focus group sponsored by DACOWITS under the direction of the Department of Defense (DoD). Our goal is to better understand the matters and the policies related to the recruitment, retention, employment, integration, well-being, and treatment of women in the Armed Forces. The information learned in this focus group will be used to recommend ways to improve DoD and/or the Military Services' policies.

### Description of the Research and Procedures

As part of this study, you will be placed in a group of 6–12 individuals. A moderator will ask you several questions while facilitating the discussion. As approved through DoD's Institutional Review Board, this focus group will be transcribed by a note taker present during the study; sessions will not be recorded by video or audio. Your responses will remain confidential, and no names will be included in the final report. You can choose whether to participate in the focus group, and you may stop at any time during the study. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to focus group questions. DACOWITS wants to hear the many varying viewpoints and would like for everyone to contribute their thoughts. Out of respect, please refrain from interrupting others. However, feel free to be honest, even when your responses counter those of other group members.

### Potential Benefits, Risks, and Discomforts

Your participation may benefit you and other Service members in providing valuable insight to inform future policy decisions. No risks are anticipated beyond those experienced during an average conversation.

### Confidentiality and Authorization

No names or other identifying information will be used when discussing or reporting data. The investigators will keep all files and data collected in a secured locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office. Once the data has been fully analyzed, it will be destroyed. Your responses are completely anonymous. No personal identifying information will be collected. Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, your decision will not affect the care, services, or benefits to which you are entitled.

### Participant Rights Statement and Voluntary Consent

Thank you for participating in this important study conducted by DACOWITS and our research contractor for DoD. Our goal is to better understand the matters and the policies related to the recruitment, retention, employment, integration, well-being, and treatment of women in the Armed Forces. Based on

what we learn, we will recommend ways that DoD and/or the Military Services' policies could be improved.

To participate in this study, we are asking you to join today's discussion and give basic background information about yourself by anonymously completing a short survey. The group discussion takes about 90 minutes.

Your decision to participate is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, your decision will not affect the care, services, or benefits to which you are entitled. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer, and you are free to leave this focus group at any time. Your answers are confidential. Please refrain from using individuals' names when sharing stories and examples during today's discussion. We will report data by broad demographic categories, such as female officers or male enlisted. Your name will not be linked to your answers or to any comments you make during the discussion. The discussion will not be videotaped or audiorecorded. Again, we reiterate your answers are confidential.

The DACOWITS members are here today to facilitate the focus group session. The research contractor is here to transcribe the focus group discussion and is a part of the DACOWITS team.

You are expected to respect and protect the privacy of other group participants and not discuss the identity of other participants or anything you hear during the discussion today with anyone outside this focus group. However, keep in mind we cannot guarantee that other participants will honor this expectation.

If you have questions about this study, please speak to a member of the DACOWITS staff following the conclusion of the focus group. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you may leave the room.

If you stay in the room during the focus group, you are thereby consenting to participate in the study.