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Wiese Research Associates, Inc.
Omaha, Nebraska

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

(Nebraska Department Of Energy)

PROGRAM AWARENESS

Have you ever read, seen or heard anything about the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

What can you tell me about the program?

What first comes to mind?

How did you first learn about the program?

Are you aware of any other schools who have received any grants or loans under the program?

You may or may not be aware that you can get grants or loans from the Nebraska Energy Office to pay for a school building energy analysis/audit or to finance the purchasing of more energy efficient heating and cooling equipment for your school.

Would you be interested in learning more about this program?
Why or why not?

Would you be interested in applying for such a grant or loan?
Why or why not?

What would be the primary factor(s) in your decision as to whether or not to apply for such a program?

Would you be interested in talking to other school officials in your area who have applied for school loans through the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

Why haven't you applied for loans or grants under the program in the past?

What problems, if any, have you heard about or experienced regarding the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

GENERAL AWARENESS OF CURRENT ENERGY USAGE

Have you ever conducted an energy analysis/audit of your energy usage in your current school building(s)?

Do you feel you have already done everything you can to decrease energy usage in your school's facilities?

Why do you feel you have/have not already done a sufficient analysis?

When was the last time you had an energy analysis/audit done for any buildings in your school district?

Are you aware that up to \$2500 per building is available from the State Energy Office to pay for an energy audit?

Would you be willing to re-examine or re-analyze your current energy usage knowing that such funds are available?

Why or why not?

Have you ever seen the results of an energy analysis/building energy audit?

Do you feel that the audits you have been provided have been helpful?

Have they been presented in a format that people who are not technically oriented can easily understand?

One, two and three years after actual improvements have been made schools receive a "scorecard" identifying dollar and energy savings resulting from their building improvements. Were you aware of this ongoing "energy scorecard" information?

When you have received these "scorecards", have you shared the information with other people in your school system?

As you have shared the information, how is it used?

When you submit your energy consumption information to calculate the "scorecard", do you view submitting the information as a help or a hindrance?

What suggestions, if any, would you make to the Nebraska Energy Office regarding energy analysis/building audits?

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

If you could design an ideal program for promoting more efficient energy usage in your school building facilities, what would you recommend?

What do you feel are some of the major benefits of the existing Nebraska School Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

How do you feel the School Loan Program can benefit your school?

Has the program saved money?

Has the program resulted in tax relief?

What do you feel are some of the major shortcomings/problems of the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

How do you feel about the current application process?

Do you feel that the current application procedures for the current no interest loan program are "too burdensome" or do you feel that the application process needs to be streamlined?

What have you heard from others regarding the application procedures?

(If necessary, probe): Do you feel the current no interest loan program is administratively efficient/too complicated? Would you prefer that only a grant program be offered?

PROGRAM INTENT

If you had an updated energy management analysis/audit done for your school facilities which indicated there would be sufficient savings, how likely would you be to go ahead and apply for a no interest loan under the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

Why or why not?

Do you feel you are knowledgeable enough to present the benefits of an energy audit analysis to laypeople in terms that they can understand and recognize as benefits?

What kinds of assistance, if any, would you like to have in understanding or learning more about energy analysis/audits that are now available?

What kinds of ongoing assistance would you be interested in after you have applied for loan monies and made facility improvements?

Would you be interested in attending or sending people to an energy management training session?

What would you like to see included in such training sessions?

How should they be planned/constructed?

What benefits, if any, would you see in sending school personnel to periodic energy management training sessions?

PROGRAM PROMOTION

What do you feel would be the best ways to inform you/your organization about the potential benefits and loan application procedures under the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

(If necessary, probe): How likely would you be to read, heard, or see program information provided to you by:

- 1) direct mail,
- 2) professional association meetings (viz., School Board Association and School Superintendent's Association),
- 3) regional meetings/information seminars,
- 4) word of mouth from other associates in your area,
- 5) the general newspaper/radio/television media?

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

What is the decision-making process in your school district when it comes to applying for these types of no interest loan programs?

Who in your organization is most likely to initiate the loan application process?

Who in your organization is most likely to first notice the potential benefit/need for such a energy efficiency analysis/audit?

Who in your organization would be responsible for preparing the actual loan application and presenting it for final approval?

Who in your organization would make the final decision to apply or not apply?