

ATTACHMENT D – FOCUS GROUP CONVERSATION GUIDE

The Role of Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Post-Hurricane Human Services Relief Efforts

Focus Group Conversation Guide

(Note: This is a guide, not a script. Moderators may vary topics and probes to accommodate particular sites and groups)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group. Your participation is very important to this study. I'm _____ and this is _____. We are researchers from the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization located in Washington, D.C., that studies government programs and makes recommendations to improve them.

The purpose of our study is to learn about how faith-based and community organizations helped hurricane victims like you during and after Katrina and Rita. This study is to help government at all levels and across many agencies understand how such organizations provided assistance during these disasters. We specifically want to understand your experiences with the assistance you received assistance during and after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita from [NAME OF CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION].

As we want to emphasize, your participation in this group discussion is absolutely voluntary. You will receive a \$25 payment to thank you for coming to this meeting, even if you decide not to participate in the discussion after hearing this brief introduction.

The information you give us will be treated in a private manner within the limits of the law. We will use only first names in the discussion. We will not report to any agency or organization the names of who participated in the discussion of those who were invited, and the information that you tell us will not affect your personal relationship with [NAME OF CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION]. We ask that you also respect the others in the group and not repeat anything you hear in the discussion outside the group.

The session will be audiotaped and [name of person] will be taking notes on a laptop computer. However, we will destroy the tapes as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting, and those notes will not use your names. Also, we will not use your names in any of our reports and will disguise your comments so that no one can identify who made specific comments. After the report is written, we will also destroy the notes of the meeting. Although you will sign for your \$25 payment in to account for the funds to our accounting department, we will pass on only a numbered identifier, not your name.

Do you have any question or concerns about what we plan to do? Again, your participation is voluntary and you may leave at any time during the course of the meeting.

PAUSE AND ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS

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Opening Question (1 minute x 9 = 9 minutes): Let's start by going around the table. Try to think back and tell us when you knew you needed help and what help you initially sought.

Cue questions:

Where were you living before the storm? With whom?
(*i.e., number, relationships of people in the household*)

Did you seek help in anticipation of the storm? When the storm hit? After you evacuated?

Introductory (2 minutes x 9 = 18 minutes): Now let's talk about how you came to get help from [CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION], and what help they gave you.

Cue questions:

How did you find, or know to use [CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION]?

[*If congregation*] Were you a member?

Were you referred to them [by whom]?

Had you gotten help from them before?

Was this the first place you went for help?

What services or assistance did you get from them?

How long did it last?

Were you referred on to anyplace else? Did you get the help you wanted?

Transition (3 minutes x 9 = 27 minutes): Now let's talk about how well the assistance worked for you. What help did you seek/what help did you get? If things were not satisfactory, what seemed to be the problem?

Cue questions:

What was the chief aim of the assistance [*e.g., emergency, long term*]?

Did it succeed?

If it was less or not what you sought, what seemed to be the main problem?

Did [ORGANIZATION] try to do something that they were unable to accomplish?

What was the one best thing about the help?

What was the one worst thing about the help you got?

If there were another hurricane or disaster, would you go to [CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION], or to someone else?

Ending (6 minutes moderator sum-up, participant addenda): Let me try to summarize what we've heard

It sounds like most of you came to [CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION] for...

That the main advantages/successes were ..

That the major problems were.....

Is there anything we have missed? [*Summarize purpose of the study: how FBCOs interact/or fail to interact effectively with other organizations and government; what else we could learn from you about how FBCOs deliver services*]

Thank you very much for your participation today. The information that you shared with us will help us better understand the role of faith-based and community organizations in providing relief services after disasters from the perspective of participants. Before you leave, we would like you to sign this form, acknowledging that you have received an incentive payment from us and that your participation in this focus group has been voluntary.