**Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration
and Evaluation Project (STEDEP)
Discussion Guide for Use with Program Directors**

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[Introduction] STESEP is a demonstration designed to rigorously test innovative subsidized employment strategies aimed at successfully transitioning individuals in several low-income target populations from short-term subsidized employment to unsubsidized employment in the regular labor market. We are interested in employment programs that offer opportunities for substantive, productive work; strategies that couple work experience with wrap-around support services (e.g., child care assistance, skills training, job search assistance, career advancement services); strategies that incorporate pre-employment activities; and strategies that target specific low-income populations, including welfare recipients, low-income non-custodial parents, prisoners re-entering the community, low-income youth transitioning to the labor force, low-income individuals with disabilities, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and English language learners.

We are beginning an exploratory phase to obtain feedback from program administrators and staff, researchers, and policymakers about strategies you feel worth studying, in terms of effectiveness and impact on families and individuals. We are interested in getting your opinion on the most important types of strategies that should be tested around the country within the context of current TANF policies and requirements as well as recent efforts under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). We have two main purposes for gathering your feedback. First, we want to understand better your experiences --especially over the past year-- in considering, implementing or administering subsidized and transitional employment strategies. Second, we aim to recruit and assist in developing demonstrations to test strategies that are of high interest to the field. We want your feedback on types of strategies that should be experimentally tested using random assignment methods. In addition to any strategies or promising approaches you may know of, please be sure to let us know of existing programs that might be appropriate demonstration sites.

Please note that your responses will be discussed internally among the research team and the funding agency (the Administration for Children and Families) but that, to the extent allowable by law, individual identifying information will not be disseminated publicly.

Program Name:
Program Location:
Sponsoring Organization:
Individual(s) Interviewed: (names and titles)
Contract Staff (as appropriate):
Date of Communication:

Module A: Background

A1. [Current role] Please describe your current role in this program.

> *Probe: What is your current role/position in this program? Are you full-time or part-time; paid or volunteer?*

A2. [Qualifications and Experience] Please tell me about your qualification and experience in this area.

Probes: Do you have any education in this area of social welfare administration or workforce development? Do you have experience facilitating activities like this? Any other qualifications or experience? What is your career path?

A3. [Additional Background] Please tell me any other background information that we should know about this program, and your involvement in it.

Module B: Program Description

B1. [Program Description] Please describe your program.

Probes:
- *Target population*
- *Program size (number of participants served annually)*
- *Assessments (barrier identification, short- and long-term employment and career goals, and match participants to work assignments that fit their interests, needs, and circumstances)*
- *Case management (help participants address personal problems that could negatively impact their ability to sustain employment and connect to other social services such as substance abuse treatment)*
- *Life skills and job readiness training*
- *Job coaching*
- *Subsidized job development (types of industry sectors targeted)*
- *Types of subsidized jobs*
- *Wage requirement (minimum wage or higher wage set by employer)*
- *Enhanced worksite supervision (help participants learn basic skills, acquire good work habits, ensure they have significant job responsibilities, receive training)*
- *Work supports (child care and transportation subsidies)*
- *Incentives to participants*
- *Length of subsidized/transitional employment*
- *Unsubsidized job search and job placement activities*
- *Job retention activities*

B2. [Mission] Please tell me about the mission of this program.

Probes: Do you have a mission statement; a vision statement; a strategic plan; a logic model? What are the primary goals of your program?

B3. [Commencement of Activity] Please tell me about how your program began.

Probes: When did your program begin? Was there an organization or entity responsible for getting it off the ground; if so, who? What was the source of initial funding? What is the source of current funding?

B4. [Length of Service] Please tell me about the length of service of this program.

Probes: How long has your program been in existence? Does your program have a set end-date?

Module C: Program Design and Operation

C1. [Initial Program Goals and Design] Please describe the initial program goals, and the initial design, of the program.

Probes: What were the main goals/objectives of the program? How was the program initially designed? Who was involved in the original design of the program?

C2. [Current Program Goals] Please describe the current goals of the program.

Probes: What are the primary goals of your program? Do you have a strategic plan or a logic model? Was that plan modified in any way in response to ARRA funding opportunities.

C3: [Current Program Design] Please tell me how the program is currently designed.

Probes:
- *Voluntary or mandatory participation*
- *Location/setting where component is delivered*
- *Staff responsible for service delivery, i.e.:*
  - *number and type of staff (full-time or part-time; etc.)*
  - *background and qualifications of staff*
- *Are there any gaps in the program design? Is the program (and the components of the program) adequate to address program goals? Are there missing elements that would strengthen program? What are the reasons for gaps (e.g. financial resources, appropriate staff, space constraints, etc.)? [If applicable] Has ARRA funding resulted in a net resource gain for your program?*

C4. [Changes from Initial Design] Please tell me how the program has changed from the original design and goals to the current arrangements.

Probes: Have there been any shifts from original design (changes in targeting, number or type of program components, strategies, etc.)? Have there been any key events or developments that prompted these changes?

C5. [Target Population] Please tell me about the population you serve.

Probes: What are the demographics of this population (race/ethnicity, gender, educational level, etc.)?

C6. [Organizational Structure] Please describe how this program's staffing is structured.

Probes: How is staffing in your program organized? What is the organizational structure? Do you have an org chart?

C7. [Implementation and Service Levels] Please tell me about your service strategy and levels of service, i.e. your recruitment, subsidized/transitional job placement, unsubsidized job placement and retention.

Probes:
a. *What is your program's participation rate, subsidized/transitional job placement rate, and unsubsidized job placement rate?*
b. *Do you have an MIS (Management Information System) in place to track program participants? What does this look like?*
c. *Does your program follow-up with drop-out or non-attendees? How? Does your program have*

targets for drop-outs, and are you successful?

    d.   *Where does your program operate? What are the number and location of program offices/sites?*

C8. [Advisory Board] Tell me about any community board(s) or advisory group(s)?

Probes: What is this group's composition? What are the roles and responsibilities of this group?

C9. [Support Services] Please describe any support services your program provides.

Probes: Does your program offer support services for participants, e.g. referrals; transportation; child care; health care, or mental health care; meals; translation; other services?

C10. [Overall Strengths and Weaknesses of Program] Please tell me about the program features or factors that you believe are most important to its success.

Probes: What people or factors have led to your program's development or success? Are there components of the program that are more successful than others? Do you have any anecdotal or statistical data to demonstrate this success? Are there any areas of disappointment? What people or factors have led to these disappointments?

C11. [Challenges] Please describe the largest challenges this program has faced.

Probes: Were there any challenges that you faced during start up, as compared to currently? Are there any unique challenges of serving this population or community? What future challenges do you foresee?

C12. [Additional Information on Program Design and Operation] Please tell me anything else we should know about this program and its operations.

Module D: Current Evaluation

D1. [Evaluations] Please tell me about any evaluations associated with this program.

Probes: Are there any efforts to evaluate this program (e.g. track attendance, in-house surveys of participants, documentation of how the program is implemented, use of external evaluator, other)? Are there any written documents/reports available?

D2. [Anecdotal Evidence] Please tell me any anecdotal stories you have heard about the outcomes of this program, and perceived impacts.

Probes: What are the perceived impacts and outcomes of this program? What are its major accomplishments?

D3. [Additional Information on Evaluation] Please provide any additional information you may have on research and/or evaluation associated with this program.

Module E: Staffing

E1. [Staff Responsibilities] Please describe the responsibilities of the program's staff.

Probes: Who has responsibility for what?

E2. [Recruitment and Retention of Staff] Please tell me about how you have recruited and retained staff.

Probes: How have you located staff? Has recruitment been easy/difficult? What about retention?

E3. [Staff Qualifications and Qualities] Please describe the qualifications for staff for this program, as well as the qualities you look for in staff.

Probes: Are these qualifications written down? Are they clear to applicants? Is it difficult to find people that meet these qualifications? What about the qualities of potential staff: what do you look for? Is there an ideological or philosophical commitment to certain beliefs that you look for? Are these qualities written down?

E4. [Staff Buy-In] Tell me about the buy-in that staff have to the program.

Probes: Have staff bought into the program's mission? What about the program's design? What about the program's implementation? Have there been disagreements between staff regarding buy-in to specific components of the program (e.g. mission, design, implementation)?

E5. [Staff Training] Tell me about training staff has received.

Probes: Have staff been trained for this program? If so, how have they been trained, and how many have been trained? What is the frequency of training? What topics have been covered in training? Who has provided training? Are there any gaps in training, or training needs? Has staff been trained outside of this program?

E6. [Turnover] Please tell be about the turnover of staff for this program.

Probes: Have you experienced problems with staff turnover? Are there underlying issues related to staff turnover? How have you addressed these problems?

E7. [Additional Information on Staff] Please tell me anything else we should know about staffing for this program.

Module F: Funding

F1. [Sponsoring Organization] Please tell me about this name(s) and type(s) of sponsoring organization(s).

F2. [Sources of Funding] Please tell me about the program's sources of funding.

Probes: What are your current sources of funding? Have any of these sources changed? What do you anticipate are future funding sources? What strategies have you implemented to pursue and secure funding?

F3. [Current Budget] Please describe for me your current budget.

Probes: What is a ballpark estimate of your program's annual budget? Do you have an idea of the breakdown of costs (i.e. for staff, materials, training, etc.)?

F4. [Additional Funding Information] Please tell me any other information we should know about funding for this program.

Module G: Lessons Learned, Participation in Evaluation, and Other Programs

G1. [Lessons Learned] Please share any lessons learned.

Probes: Do you have any advice you would give other programs?

G2. [Participation in Evaluation] We will be reviewing responses from a number of programs, after which we may want to follow-up with you about participating in an evaluation of your program. I can explain more about the evaluation if you would like. Would your program be interested in participating in an evaluation like this? If so, what would be the best may to involve your program?

G3. [Other Programs] Are there other programs you know of that might be interested in participating in a study like this? How would be able to get in contact with these programs?

<u>Program Materials to Obtain</u>
Program Plans/Reports
Organization chart
Logic model
Outreach or recruitment materials
Program newsletters
Evaluation reports or survey results