

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

Evaluation of Transitional Employment Demonstration and Evaluation Project (STEDEP) Discussion Guide for Use with Program Staff

[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 implementing or administering subsidized and transitional employment strategies. Second, we aim to recruit and assist in developing this demonstration 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.

Probes: 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 qualifications and experience in this area, and type of program.

Probes: Do you have any education or particular experience in administering or operating subsidized employment programs? Any other qualifications or experience? What is your career plan in this area?

A3. [Training] Please tell me about training you have received in this program.

Probes: Have you received training while working in this or another subsidized employment or family self-sufficiency intervention program? What has this training consisted of? What is the frequency, topics, and providers of the training? What has been most helpful from this training? Are there any gaps/training needs?

A4. [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-be specific.*
- *Assessments (Barrier identification, short- and long-term employment and career goals, and match participants to subsidized 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)*
- *Job coaching*
- *Life skills and job readiness training*
- *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. [Program Mission/Goals] Please tell me about the mission and goals for this program.

Probes: How are these ideas communicated to staff? Are there staff buy-in?

B4. [Additional Description of Program] Please tell me anything else that is important to know about this program.

Module C: Recruitment, Participation in subsidized/transitional jobs, Unsubsidized Job Placement and Job Retention

C1. [Recruitment] Please describe participant recruitment for this program.

Probes: How are participants recruited for this program? Who recruits them? Are you involved with recruitment? Are there any problems with recruitment? How have those problems been addressed? Does your program have targets for recruitment?

C2. [Recruitment] Please describe employer recruitment for this program.

Probes: How are employers recruited for this program? Who recruits them? Are you involved with recruitment? Are there any problems with recruitment? How have those problems been addressed?

C3. [Participation] Please tell me about participation in this program, specifically how many participants are involved.

Probes: How many participants are involved in your program? What is the average caseload? Does your program have any “participation” targets? If so, how do you track them?

C4. [Unsubsidized Job Placement] Please describe unsubsidized job search and job placement activities.

Probes: What sorts of materials and resources are provided for the job search activities? Are job search coaching services provided? Does the program communicate regularly with employers?

C5. [Job Retention] Please describe job retention activities.

Probes: What strategies are used to increase job retention?

C6. [Additional Information about Recruitment, Participation, and Retention] Please tell me other important things to know about recruitment, participation in subsidized/transitional jobs, unsubsidized job placement and job retention.

Module D: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Perceived Effectiveness of Program

D1. [Overall Strengths and Weaknesses of Program] Please tell me the overall strengths and weaknesses of the program, as you see them.

Probes: What do you perceive to be the program features or factors most important to its success? What people or factors have led to your program’s success? Are there any areas of disappointment? What people or factors have led to these disappointments?

D2. [Challenges] Please tell me the challenges this program has faced, is facing, and/or will face.

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

D3. [Perceived Effectiveness] Please describe the effectiveness of the activities you facilitate.

Probes: What effect do the activities you facilitate seem to have on participants? Do you think they are effective? How effective do you think they are – what is the extent of change you see in your participants? Which activities that you facilitate seem to be most effective?

D4. [Evaluations and Evidence] Please tell me about any data or evidence you have about this program.

Probes: Are you aware of any efforts to evaluate this program (e.g. track attendance, in-house surveys of participants, use of external evaluator, other)? Are there any written documents/reports available? Are there any anecdotal stories you have heard or witnessed as to the outcomes of this program? What are the perceived impacts and outcomes of this program? What are its major accomplishments?

D5. [Additional Information Program Effectiveness] Please tell me anything else we should know about the effectiveness of this program.