

Appendix D. Telephone Script

Hello, this is _____ calling from Abt Associates Inc./Quadel Consulting Corporation/Phineas. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has contracted with us to carry out a study of administrative costs in the housing choice voucher program.

You should have received a letter from HUD describing the study a few days ago. Do you recall receiving that letter?

[IF PHA RECEIVED THE LETTER]: Good. Why don't I start by asking if you have any questions after reading the letter? [ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT COME UP.]

[IF PHA DID NOT RECEIVE THE LETTER]: No problem, it should be coming soon and I can also forward you a copy by e-mail.

The goal of this study is to estimate the cost of administering a high-performing HCV program. The study will provide HUD with insights into the factors that affect HCV program administrative costs, which will enable HUD to develop a new formula for providing agencies with administrative fees. We expect that the new formula will reimburse agencies for the full spectrum of tasks they carry out.

The study will proceed in two phases. The first phase is a reconnaissance phase with the goal of collecting information on HCV administration and cost drivers to inform the design of a rigorous national study of HCV administrative costs. The first phase of the study began in October 2010 and will last until March 2012. The second phase is the full cost study, which will take place in 2012.

A sample of 60 high-performing HCV programs across the country has been chosen to be included in the reconnaissance phase of the study. These have been chosen to reflect the diversity in program size and geographic location nationwide, and to include a mix of HCV-only agencies as well as agencies that run both voucher and public housing programs. Your PHA has been selected as one of these 60 sites.

Your participation will involve allowing us to visit for 3 to 4 days to talk to staff at your agency about your program. Topics will include: program size, tenant characteristics, leasing goals and activity, waiting list, selection preferences, briefing, issuance, search assistance, market conditions, HQS, rent reasonableness, landlord outreach, expanding housing opportunities, and financial capacity. While on site we will also review a sample of intake files and a sample of participant files. Prior to going on site, we will also ask to review written documents related to HCV program administration, such as the Administrative Plan, as well as HCV program staff rosters and budget documents.

[INSERT BETA-TEST PARAGRAPH HERE FOR BETA-TEST SITES.]

Any information we collect through the site visits will be used to inform the full national study of HCV program administrative costs, which will take place in 2012. Agencies that participate in the

first phase of the study are likely to participate in the full cost study as well, although the final sample for that study has not yet been determined.

The information collected through the study will be used for this research study only and not for any other purpose. None of the information that you provide to the research team during any phase of the study will harm or count against your agency in any HUD performance assessment or funding decisions. In the unlikely event that the study uncovers an area where the program is not being operated according to the regulations, HUD will notify the agency but will not take further action unless the agency continues to operate the program in violation of the regulations.

Do you have any questions about the study? [ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS]

Would your agency be willing to participate in the study?

[IF AGENCY SAYS NO:] Would you like me to provide more information on what will be required so you can think about it further? [IF YES, SEND INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE AND LIST OF DODCUMENTS TO BE COLLECTED PRIOR TO THE SITE VISIT AND ON SITE.] [IF NO]: Thanks very much for your time.

[IF AGENCY SAYS NOT SURE:] I will send you some more information on what will be required of your agency. Then we can schedule a time to talk again. [SEND INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE AND LIST OF DODCUMENTS TO BE COLLECTED PRIOR TO THE SITE VISIT AND ON SITE AND SCHEDULE NEXT CALL.]

[IF AGENCY SAYS YES:] Great, the next step is to start to schedule the site visit. I will send you a list of the items we will be covering in the interview and the documents we'd like to see on site, and then we can talk again about when to schedule the visit and which PHA staff need to be involved. Are you the right person to be the main source of contact for the study, or would you like to designate someone else? [IDENTIFY MAIN SOURCE OF CONTACT AND NEXT STEPS – E.G., TIME TO CALL BACK TO DISCUSS FURTHER ONCE PHA HAS REVIEWED THE INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE AND LIST OF DODCUMENTS TO BE COLLECTED PRIOR TO THE SITE VISIT AND ON SITE.]

Thank you very much. We look forward to working with you on this study.

Paragraph Inserted for Beta-Test sites:

Five of the 60 PHAs in the study sample have been selected for testing alternative methods of measuring the staff time spent on HCV program front line activities. Your agency is one of the 5 agencies selected for this purpose. This means that in addition to the site visit described above, staff from the Abt Associates team will be on site for another 5-day period. During this period, a sample of HCV program front line staff will be asked to do two of the following activities: (1) be observed as they go about their work by a trained time and motion observer, (2) complete a detailed timesheet for 5 days documenting time spent on different HCV program tasks, (3) respond to periodic text messages from a hand held device provided to them by the research team. We expect that these activities will take staff approximately 15 minutes per day to complete, plus one hour of training provided by the research team at the start of the week. In order to protect participating staff, the information collected through the timesheets, direct observation, and text messaging will not be shared with any other staff (including supervisors) at the PHA.

Documents to be Requested from PHA

Documents Requested to be <u>Sent in Advance</u> :	Documents Requested to be <u>Available on Site</u> :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Plan and other policies and procedures documents for the HCV program <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant briefing packet <input type="checkbox"/> Information packages or other materials provided to program landlords <input type="checkbox"/> Current and prior payment standards and exception rates by bedroom size <input type="checkbox"/> Current and prior utility allowance tables <input type="checkbox"/> Written protocol describing how tenant files should be organized (if available) <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational staffing chart <input type="checkbox"/> Inspection fail rate <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant performance reports, such as leasing and success rates, reexamination and inspection timeliness, quality control and customer service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> HCV program waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Portability log book (or other system used to track portability) <input type="checkbox"/> Any quality control reports from the most recent three years <input type="checkbox"/> HAP register (to be used for selecting sample of continuing participants for file review, unless available in advance) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary roster <input type="checkbox"/> Budget for administration <input type="checkbox"/> Database of comparables used for rent reasonableness determinations <input type="checkbox"/> Paper client files or access to electronic files (as applicable)