

## Appendix E. Telephone Script for Pretest Recruitment

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from Abt Associates Inc. As you may recall, we are under contract to the Department of Housing and Urban Development to carry out the HCV Program Administrative Fee Study. We want to thank you again for your participation in the study's reconnaissance phase. That phase is now complete and we are now beginning a pretest of the study data collection approach.

You should have received a letter from HUD describing the pretest 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 overall goal of this study is to estimate the cost of administering a high-performing and efficient 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.

As you know, we recently completed the reconnaissance phase that collected information on HCV administration and cost drivers to inform the design of a rigorous national study of HCV administrative costs. Using the information from the reconnaissance phase, we developed an approach to collecting data for the full cost study which is scheduled to begin in 2012. We are currently conducting a pretest of the approach.

A sample of four high-performing HCV programs across the country has been chosen to be included in the pretest phase of the study. Your PHA has been selected as one of these four sites.

The pretest will entail data collection at your PHA for a period of two months between January and March 2012. If you participate in the pretest, your HCV program staff will be asked to carry a smart phone provided by the research team for a period of 40 working days. Several times a day, staff will receive notifications from the smart phone asking them a few simple questions about what they are working on at any given point in time. Staff will select the HCV activity they were working on from a preset list of activities on the phone's touch screen. Responding to the notifications takes less than a minute and the information is sent automatically to the research team. The purpose is to collect accurate information on the amount of time spent on different tasks related to HCV program administration.

In total, we expect each staff to spend less than 15 minutes per day responding to notifications from the smart phone, plus up to 90 minutes of training provided by the research team at the start of the

data collection period. All PHA staff working directly on the HCV program activities will be asked to participate in the smart phone data collection, even if they work on other programs in addition to HCV. The research team will work closely with the HCV director to determine which staff should participate. In order to protect participating staff, the information provided by staff through the smart phones will be kept confidential by the research team and will not be shared with other staff or supervisors at the PHA or with HUD.

In addition to conducting the smart phone data collection over two months, members of the study team will also interview the HCV program director, finance department staff, and other HCV program staff as needed to learn about allocation of overhead and non-labor costs to the HCV program and the volume of program activity over the course of a year. Members of the study team will conduct up to three visits to your PHA, for about a day each, over the two-month data collection period.

Because we recognize that participating in the pretest will take time from your staff, we plan to compensate your agency for participating in the pretest. Your agency (and the other two agencies in the pretest) will receive a flat fee of \$2,800 in recognition of the time that your staff spends assembling data for and being interviewed by the research team. We will also provide an amount equal to \$300 per staff for the number of staff participating in the smart phone data collection.

As a reminder, 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 overall or the pretest in particular? [ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS]

Would your agency be willing to participate in the pretest?

[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 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.

[IF AGENCY SAYS YES:] Great, the next step is to start to schedule the pretest site visit. 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.]

Thank you very much. We look forward to working with you on the pretest.