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# **CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS DEMONSTRATION STUDIES – TASK ORDER #1**

## **OMB CLEARANCE PACKAGE Part B**

MARCH, 2012

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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## **PART B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has contracted with the Urban Institute and its teaming partner (MDRC), its subcontractors (Decision Information Resources (DIR), GeoDa Group, Strategic Economics, Center for Neighborhood Technology, and Case Western Reserve University (CWRU)) and its consultants (Dr. Ingrid Ellen, Dr. Ann Forsyth, Dr. George Galster, and Dr. Deborah McKoy) to set the stage for a longitudinal resident tracking survey of a representative sample of residents who reside in Choice Neighborhoods. The goal of the survey is to track resident outcomes, including housing location and quality; and resident physical and mental health, safety, employment, and education. To assess these outcomes, we plan to survey a representative sample of 905 households who live in the Choice Neighborhood focal housing development and 1,700 other residents who live in the Choice Neighborhoods. Our methodology for selecting the sample is described below.

### **B1. Respondent Universe, Sample Selection and Expected Response Rates**

#### **B1.1. Respondent Universe**

The respondent universe consists of all households living in the Choice Neighborhood focal development housing and all other households in the Choice Neighborhood. We will use the number of housing units as a proxy for the total number of households in the Choice Neighborhood. According to neighborhood-level data from the 2010 Decennial Census, there are 8,201 units in Iberville/Treme (New Orleans), 12,114 units in Woodlawn (Chicago), 3,547 units in Dorchester (Boston), 965 units in Yesler (Seattle), and 5,590 units in Eastern Bayview (San Francisco).

#### **B1.2. Sample Selection**

Among the five FY 2010-11 finalists for Choice Neighborhoods implementation grants, New Orleans, Chicago, Seattle and San Francisco are large projects, with 841, 504, 561, and 256 units, respectively. From these large sites, we will collect a random sample of 225 completed focal development surveys in New Orleans, 200 in Chicago, 250 in Seattle, and 150 in San Francisco. Boston is a smaller Choice Neighborhoods site and it aims to redevelop 129 units. We will obtain 80 completed surveys in Boston. Table B1 shows the sampling frame, which is the number of households that will need to be randomly selected in order to obtain these target numbers of completed surveys with an 80 percent response rate..

The neighborhood resident survey will be implemented in all of the sites. Because we are not in possession neighborhood residents' names and addresses, our survey firm will randomly select addresses at each site from address-based sampling frames. We will contact selected households by phone or in person and we will recruit an adult member of the household who is responsible for financial matters and knowledgeable about the household in general (i.e., head of household). Samples

sizes for the neighborhood resident samples will range from 200 to 400, depending on the size of the neighborhood. In large Choice Neighborhoods like those in Chicago, New Orleans and San Francisco, we will randomly select households for 300 completed surveys, and we will oversample household near the focal development, for an additional 100 completed interviews. In smaller Choice Neighborhoods, like those in Boston and Seattle, there will be no stratification of the sample for the survey of neighborhood residents. We will randomly select households for 300 completed surveys in Boston and 200 completed surveys in Seattle. Table B1 summarizes the respondent universe, sampling frame, and the sample size for the focal development resident and neighborhood resident surveys.

**Table B1: Respondent Universes, Sampling Frames, and Sample Sizes**

	Focal Development Households			Neighborhood Households		
	Universe Size <sup>1</sup>	Sampling Frame	Sample Size	Universe Size <sup>2</sup>	Sampling Frame	Sample Size
<b>New Orleans</b> .....	821	281	225	8,201	500	400
<b>Chicago</b> .....	504	250	200	12,114	500	400
<b>Boston</b> .....	129	100	80	3,547	375	300
<b>Seattle</b> .....	561	313	250	965	250	200
<b>San Francisco</b> .....	256	188	150	5,590	500	400
<b>Total</b>	2,271	1,131	905	30,417	2,125	1,700

1. Choice Neighborhood Round 2 Applications
2. 2010 Decennial Census

### **B1.3. Expected Response Rates**

DIR will target a focal development survey sample size of 225 completed surveys in New Orleans, 200 surveys in Chicago, 250 surveys in Seattle, 150 surveys in San Francisco, and 80 surveys in Boston. We aim to complete 400 neighborhood surveys at each site in New Orleans, Chicago, and San Francisco; 300 in Boston; and 200 in Seattle. We assume an 80 percent response rate for the focal development and neighborhood household surveys at each site. We will use a variety of creative and tailored tracking methods throughout the study period to update sample-member contact information to achieve the response-rate goals. DIR has successfully achieved high response rates on many studies with low-income populations, many over 80 percent.

### **B2. Procedures for the Collection of Information**

The focal development and neighborhood surveys will occur over a 12-week data collection period, beginning in November 2012 or as soon as OMB clearance is received. The survey subcontractor, DIR, will have responsibility for all computer-assisted telephone interviewing and field data collection and will ensure consistent and high-quality data. The interview approach is a call-out/call-in survey method

whereby interviewers from the centralized computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) center make initial attempts with complete interviews with the designated respondents by phone. If unable to locate or contact the respondent by phone or convince them to complete the interview, on-site recruiters (called “field locators”) make direct contact with residents and facilitate their calling DIR’s CATI center to participate in an interview conducted by DIR telephone center staff. DIR will collect as much of the data as possible through telephone interviewers working from their centralized, monitored telephone interviewing facility. This method allows DIR to hire field staff who are most comfortable and effective working in low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods and convincing sample members to participate in surveys. These are not necessarily the same individuals who are most effective in conducting complex structured interviews. Therefore, DIR finds the approach of using those field staff to facilitate respondents calling DIR’s CATI center to be most effective. DIR has used this approach successfully for surveys in housing developments in Los Angeles, Dayton, Baltimore, and other cities, and is currently using it in three boroughs in New York City.

At the beginning of the fielding period, an advance letter is sent to each sample member approximately 3 days before the scheduled launch of the survey to alert them to the upcoming survey. Any letter returned as undeliverable from the advance letter mailing initiates tracking and locating activities even before the survey starts. Once the actual telephone survey period begins with calls being made from DIR’s centralized CATI center in Houston, TX, sample members with disconnected numbers or phone numbers that cannot be confirmed are also tracked. Trackers will use a variety of sources to update contact information for hard-to-locate sample members. Alternate contacts provided by the sample member will be queried first to try to identify an updated address or telephone number for the sample member.

Although it is the responsibility of field locators to find sample members and convince them to participate in the study, field staff will not be conducting the survey. Instead, field staff will facilitate calls to the CATI center and provide the sample members with the incentive (gift card) upon completion of the telephone survey. Some sample members are more likely to complete the survey if they receive an in-person visit and immediately receive their incentive upon completing the survey.

Field locators are trained to first determine whether a landline is available in the household before attempting to initiate a call from the cell phone. If no landline is available, then the field locator is prepared with a DIR-provided cell phone for the respondent to use to call into the CATI center. As more and more homes forego landlines in favor of cell phones only, we increasingly find that the DIR cell phones are used to call into the CATI to complete interviews.

In the event that a landline is not available and attempts to use the cell phone have failed (for example, inside of a high-rise building with a spotty cell-phone signal), field staff are instructed to offer to go with the respondent to a location where a cell-phone signal can be maintained or to take the respondent to a public landline, either at a restaurant or at some other public facility where privacy can be assured. Field

staff may offer to purchase a sandwich and drink or some other inexpensive meal for the respondent as a show of good faith.

### **B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and to Deal with Issues of Non-response**

DIR's trained field locators will help to attain response-rate goals with the population for this study. We expect to be unable to reach approximately 60 percent of the sample members by phone. Field locators are experienced (or will be thoroughly trained) in techniques for finding hard-to-reach populations, such as speaking with alternate contacts, neighbors, friends, or other people in the community. The locators will use original contact information or any updated information for the sample members and the alternates to conduct in-person home visits. To uncover further leads regarding the sample members' whereabouts, field locators will also use standard field methods, such as communicating with gatekeepers and neighbors, postal delivery persons, and other residents in the area to help identify local gathering places where sample members may be found. It will be important for locators to try to obtain a nickname or street name, if applicable. The field locator can communicate possible leads about the sample member, family members, or friends to the DIR tracking team for additional assistance in obtaining a good address for an in-person visit and a good time for contacting the person. The field locator will continue to make efforts to find the sample member directly in order to initiate a call to the CATI center when the sample member is located. DIR will hire and train English speaking as well as bilingual locators.

In addition to hiring and training experienced CATI interviewers and field locators for the project, DIR will use the following techniques to maximize response rates:

*Maximize use of updated contact information from alternate contacts and organizational sources.* Use contact information collected by the program including alternate contact information from the files of the program at the time of respondent enrollment; hopefully someone whom the respondent identified as likely to know how to find him or her. This has proven to be an effective approach in helping to find hard-to-locate individuals. Also using any updated information that can be obtained from online search databases, other agencies possibly involved with the respondent, and other resources will be central to maintaining fresh contact information to facilitate locating sample members.

*Incentives for sample members.* Sample members will receive a \$50 incentive for completing the survey. DIR will mail the incentives to respondents as either a cash card (for example, American Express, Visa, or Mastercard) or check after the interview is recorded as complete in the database. Alternatively, respondents who complete an interview with a field locator present can be given their incentive at the completion of the interview. Based on experience, we expect that these incentives will likely enhance cooperation with the data-collection effort. A store gift card (such as Walmart or Target) may appeal to some sample members; however, it could be difficult to select a gift card that appeals to the wide array of sample members and is equally useful in a store available in all parts of the cities in this study.

DIR will inform respondents that they will receive their incentive payment in 2 to 3 weeks after completing the survey. Respondents will be asked to update their contact information at the end of the survey to ensure that they receive their incentive at their correct mailing address and in a timely manner. This will also assist in obtaining updated contact information that can be available in the event of a later wave of surveys. In most cases, field locators will be able to give the respondent their gift card immediately after completing the survey.

*Gatekeeper incentives.* DIR remains creative and flexible in its approach to finding and contacting sample members to complete surveys. We propose setting aside a small amount of money to provide a \$10 key-informant or gatekeeper incentive for specific cases in which an individual is a crucial and critical link to finding the sample member and convincing him or her to complete the survey. Field locators will be trained to offer this incentive only if there is just one link to the hard-to-locate sample member. Use of this key informant incentive must be approved by the data-collection manager on a case-by-case basis before the incentive is offered to the gatekeeper. Key-informant incentives will be provided after the sample member has completed the survey; the informant incentive is separate from the sample-member incentive. DIR expects the key-informant incentive to be necessary in no more than 10 percent of the total number of field-initiated completed interviews.

*Staff training.* Data-collection staff must have a thorough understanding of the study purpose and the research goals in order to be effective in persuading respondents to participate. Interviewers will be trained on how to answer potential questions that respondents and gatekeepers might have, such as how long the interview will be or how the analyzed data will be used. Interviewers will be provided with an easy-to-reference guide of approved FAQs that will address concerns likely to be raised by respondents and that give appropriate responses to each. Responses to anticipated questions will also be incorporated into the CATI instruments and the training materials.

*Conversion and avoidance of refusals.* Interviewers and field locators will be thoroughly trained on how to approach the first contact, what to say first, and how to respond quickly if a respondent begins to refuse. Refusal avoidance is a learned technique and will be addressed in both the CATI and field interviewer trainings. DIR will carefully construct (and modify as appropriate) the introductory script for the telephone interview to increase the likelihood that the respondent will remain on the phone long enough to hear the introduction and agree to participate. We recognize that despite these efforts, some respondents will still refuse to participate. DIR will maintain databases to track survey data and will generate regular reports to identify nonrespondents. A senior interviewer or field locator trained to address respondents' concerns about completing the interview will be assigned to contact the nonrespondents and attempt refusal conversion.

*Timing of cases sent to tracking and field.* The timing of cases from the CATI center to tracking and the field will be monitored closely. Each case will be attempted by the CATI center 8 to 10 times before

moving to tracking if there is no confirmation that the number is valid. Careful monitoring of the transition of cases between the tracking unit and the CATI interviewers and field locators will be important to finding updated information about sample members and obtaining completions.

#### **B4. Pre-testing of Procedures and Methods**

The questionnaire for the Choice Neighborhoods Demonstration study pulls from a number of well-tested and previously-used instruments. Therefore, the pretests of these instruments are expected to focus on ensuring that the question flow and skip patterns work well and that the time required to complete the instrument is accurately estimated. Based on these considerations, each instrument will be administered to nine or fewer individuals and therefore will not require prior OMB approval.

#### **B5. Individuals or Contractors Responsible for Statistical Aspects of the Design**

The agency responsible for receiving and approving contract deliverables is:

Office of Policy Development and Research, Program Evaluation Division  
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The organization responsible for administering the online survey of grantees and subgrantees is:

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The organizations responsible for statistical design of data that will be collected are:

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