

Appendix E. Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding Between Abt Associates Inc. & [PHA]

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between Abt Associates Inc. and [PHA] concerning participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Fee Study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This MOU describes the terms and conditions associated with the PHA's participation in the study. Each party is signing this agreement in good faith and with the expectation of fulfilling its obligations as described in the MOU. This agreement is contingent on HUD exercising its authority to approve continued implementation of this study.

Study Background

The goal of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Administrative Fee Study is to estimate the costs of administering a high-performing HCV program and to use those cost estimates as the basis for developing a new administrative fee formula. The Administrative Fee Study will carefully measure the time that PHA staff spend on each core activity needed to operate an effective HCV program and also collect accurate information on the labor and non-labor costs of operating the program. The cost data collected through the Administrative Fee Study will be used to develop estimates of administrative costs per activity and to analyze the factors that cause costs to vary across PHAs. This information will form the basis for a new administrative fee formula.

The first (reconnaissance) phase of the Administrative Fee Study included site visits to 59 presumed high-performing HCV programs across the country to confirm each program's high-performer status and collect information on HCV administrative processes and cost drivers. This phase began in April 2011 and is now largely complete.

The second phase of the study, which took place between February and May 2012, was a pretest of the data collection methods that will be used in the full Study. Four high-performing HCV programs participated in the pretest.

The final phase of the study is the full study, in which up to 60 high-performing HCV programs will participate. **This MOU is for [PHA]'s participation in the full study.** The study involves four major activities. These are:

1. Collecting information on **HCV program staffing** to prepare for the time measurement data collection. This information will be collected via email and over the telephone prior to the start of Random Moment Sampling (described below).
2. Collecting information on **voucher units allocated and under lease** and on **transaction counts**, that is, the number of times different HCV program actions (such as new unit inspections) are taken over a given period of time.

3. Measuring the time that HCV program staff spend working on HCV program-related activities using **Random Moment Sampling (RMS)**. Each staff participating in RMS will be provided a hand-held device (a smart phone) that he/she will use to multiple notifications each day. The notifications will ask the staff what activity he/she is working on at a given period of time and the staff will respond through a series of touch screens. Each notification will take a few seconds to respond to. Staff will receive approximately 15 notifications per day over a continuous two-month period (40 working days).

4. Collecting information on **HCV program costs** and on **overhead costs** shared with other programs (as applicable). This information will be collected by email, telephone, and (in some cases) in person.

We will use the data collected through the study to develop estimates of program costs and the new administrative fee formula.

HUD has contracted with Abt Associates Inc. and with subcontractors Resource Systems Group, Inc. and Phineas Consulting, LLC to carry out the Administrative Fee Study. These three organizations constitute the Abt Study Team. The Administrative Fee Study is expected to be completed by June 2014.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Study Team and Participating PHAs

Major responsibilities and expectations for both Abt Associates Inc. and its subcontractors, Resources Systems Group, Inc. (RSGI) and Phineas Consulting LLC (hereby known as the Abt Study Team), and for participating PHAs are listed in this section. For the purposes of this agreement, we use the following definitions for parties involved in the Study.

PHA: the public housing agency participating in the Study.

PHA Study Liaison: Individual designated by the PHA to serve as a point of contact for the Abt Study Team for the data collection period.

Study: Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Fee Study.

Abt Study Team: Abt Associates Inc. and its subcontractors RSGI and Phineas Consulting LLC.

Abt Study Liaison: Abt staff person designated by the Abt Study Team to coordinate Study activities with the PHA.

Project Director: Abt Associates' Project Director for the Study.

The Period of Performance for this MOU is expected to begin [mm/dd/yy] and continue through [mm/dd/yy].

Abt Agrees To:

1. Train PHA staff in the Study data collection procedures

The Abt Study Liaison and other members of the Abt Study Team will provide thorough training to the PHA staff who will be involved in data collection through RMS. Abt will provide an initial in-person training session and follow-up training with individual staff as needed. Abt will also provide a training manual to each PHA staff participating in the RMS data collection.

2. Provide support to PHA staff during the RMS data collection period

Abt will provide the PHA with an email address for the Study as well as telephone numbers of the Abt Study Liaison and other Abt Study Team members as appropriate to answer questions that come up during the data collection in a prompt and timely manner.

3. Ensure Confidentiality

No personal identifying information from any interviews or other data collection conducted by Abt with PHA staff will be used in any report or data provided to HUD. Information collected will not be attributed to a single PHA or PHA staff person but will be presented in the aggregate and analyzed across a range of variables.

4. Support PHA throughout Study Implementation

The Abt Study Liaison will work with the PHA Study Site Liaison to ensure the study implementation is well-planned and to address any concerns identified throughout the course of the study. In particular, the Abt Study Team will regularly review participation in the RMS data collection and a member of the Abt Study Team such as the Abt Project Director or the Abt Study Liaison will discuss concerns with the PHA Study Liaison to mitigate barriers to successful study implementation and to ensure that the PHA can adhere to the data collection protocols. In addition, Abt will provide the PHA Study Liaison with an email address for the Study as well as telephone numbers of the Abt Study Liaison and other Abt Study Team members as appropriate to answer questions that come up during the data collection in a prompt and timely manner.

PHA Agrees To:

1. Coordinate with the Abt Study Site Liaison and Abt Study Team to implement the study

The PHA will assign a PHA Study Liaison to serve as the point of contact between the PHA and the Abt Study Team. The PHA Study Liaison will be expected to communicate regularly with the Abt Study Liaison about study implementation issues or concerns. The PHA Study Liaison will also be expected to communicate with the PHA staff participating in the data collection to help ensure that staff are sufficient motivated to comply with the study's data collection, in particular RMS.

2. Provide information on HCV program staffing prior to the start of RMS

The PHA will provide the Abt Study Team with a listing of all staff who work on the HCV program, including name, title, role(s), and daily work schedule. This information is critical to the RMS data collection and therefore needs to be provided promptly.

3. Provide information on HCV program transaction counts

The PHA will provide the Abt Study Team with data on voucher units allocated and under lease and data on transaction counts related to the HCV program for a specified period of time. A transaction count is the number of times an HCV program action—such as a new unit inspection—is performed in a given period of time—such as the previous two months. The Abt Study Liaison will discuss with the PHA which transaction counts the PHA is able to provide. The PHA will be expected to provide the data items within two weeks of the conclusion of the RMS data collection period for the two months corresponding to the RMS period.

4. Provide information on HCV Program Costs and Overhead Costs

The PHA will provide the Abt Study Team with recent financial statements, employee-level information on salaries and benefits for all HCV program staff for the past fiscal year and at the time of data collection, employee-level information on salaries and benefits for overhead staff (or staff assigned to the Central Office Cost Center), and documentation of other costs of operating the HCV program for the past fiscal year, including costs of equipment, supplies, contracted labor, and support functions shared with other parts of the PHA. The Abt Study Team will collect this information by email, telephone, and/or in-person, and will expect to have access to the PHA's financial staff and fee accountant as needed.

5. Participate in 40 consecutive days of RMS data collection

All HCV program staff will be expected to participate in 40 days of RMS data collection. Each staff will receive a hand-held device (smart phone) and training from the Abt Study Team on how to use it. The staff will be expected to keep the device with them at all times while they are working for the PHA and to respond promptly to notifications they receive through the device (within 15 minutes for most activities).

All staff will receive 10-15 notifications per day for 40 consecutive work days (a two-month period). Each notification will take less than a minute to respond to, so that staff will be expected to spend no more than 15 minutes per day in total responding to RMS notifications.

All staff who support the HCV program, including supervisors, will be required to participate, up to a maximum of 100 staff. (If an agency has more than 100 staff working on the HCV program, the study team will work with the PHA to identify a sample of 100 staff to participate in the RMS data collection.) All staff will be expected to respond promptly and accurately to the notifications for the entire 40-day period (excepting times when staff are sick, on vacation, or otherwise not working). The accuracy of the cost estimates developed through the study is contingent upon staff complying fully with the RMS data collection activities.

6. Notify the Study Team of Local Concerns

The PHA Study Liaison is expected to notify the Abt Study Liaison promptly if there are any local concerns regarding the implementation of the study.

PHA Compensation:

[PHA] will receive compensation in recognition of the administrative effort provided in participating with the study. The compensation is expected to be used to defray personnel costs due directly to this information collection. The payment is phased based on meeting the data collection requirements identified in this agreement.

Payment terms:

1. \$2,800 once the preparations for RMS data collection are complete and RMS data collection has been underway for two weeks; and
2. An amount equivalent to \$300 multiplied by the number of staff that complete RMS data collection (not to exceed \$30,000) to be provided when the RMS data collection is complete and the PHA has provided the all requested transaction count and cost data. The final amount will be determined based on the number of staff responding to all RMS notifications over the 40-day data collection period. Cases in which a staff member responds to all RMS notifications for part of the 40-day period but is not able to complete the data collection will be discussed between the PHA and Abt Study Team. In most cases we anticipate that the PHA will receive partial payment reflecting the number of weeks the staff participated in the RMS data collection.

Changes to the Agreement:

We anticipate that over the course of the study, some modifications or additions may need to be made to this agreement. It is understood that the terms may be adjusted with written amendments as agreed upon by both parties.

Signatures

The following people have read this Memorandum of Understanding and acknowledge the terms and conditions regarding participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Fee Study.

Kathleen Heintz, Abt Associates Inc. Division Vice President	Date
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PHA Authorized Signature, Title	Date
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Study Team Contact Information

For further information about the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Fee Study, please contact:

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