

## **STED Procedures for Updating Contact Information**

High response rates are critical to the success of longitudinal studies. Maintaining high response rates in the STED and ETJD projects is an important component in our efforts to reduce non-response bias. Given that we expect a high degree of mobility among the sample members, it is necessary that the research team track sample members over time so that follow-up data can be collected.

For the purposes of this clearance, we will plan to track participants so that they can participate in the 6-month and 12-month follow-up surveys. Below we provide more specific information about the tracking materials and how updated contact information received will be entered into the contact information database.

What is Collected? Sample members will be sent periodic tracking letters on the anniversary of their random assignment date and/or their birthdays asking for updated contact information (see Attachment E in the package and included at the end of this document). These materials remind them of their participation in the study and urge them to report changes in their address or telephone number using a 1-800 telephone number. Due to differences in contractor procedures, some sample members will also be given the option to report this updated information via regular mail using a provided form. The tracking letter will include a randomly generated identification number for the participant to use when calling in to report updated contact information; for sample members that reply via regular mail, the form used for reporting updated contact information is labeled with the randomly generated identification number. Please note that these materials are produced in batches based on date of random assignment or birth date, and creating these materials does not involve the retrieval of information using names or other PII.

How is Updated Contact Information Received? When the sample members respond to the tracking letter via telephone, they will be routed to the survey firm's staff trained in the project's procedures and assigned to work on this survey effort. By design, this routing will occur based on look-ups of the randomly generated identification number. In cases where the sample member is not able to provide his/her identification number, the routing will be accomplished by look-ups based on the sample member's name and/or identification as a participant in the STED survey. For mail responses, sample members are provided with a postage-paid envelope to return the updated contact information forms; these envelopes are externally labeled with a code which allows the survey firm to direct the unopened form to the appropriate staff.

Who Handles and Updates Contact Information? Only staff trained on the project that have signed privacy pledges affirming their pledge to keep participants' information private to the extent permitted by law will be able to update contact information via telephone or mail. These individuals will only have access to the contact information database, and will not access the participants' survey responses.

How is Updated Contact Information Entered Into the Control System? By design, the updated contact information is entered into the study contact information database using the randomly generated identification number to access the sample member's record. All updated contact information received via regular mail will be entered using this method; for sample members that call in and are unable to provide his/her identification number, the appropriate record will be retrieved using a look-up of the sample member's first and last name. The contact information database is the only repository for PII collected from sample members and does not contain any other data collected over the course of the study.

## **Planned Modifications to STED Contract**

The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration's contract includes strong language with regard to data security and the privacy of respondents. Nevertheless, we agree that additional language will strengthen these requirements. We will seek to modify the contract to include even stronger requirements to protect the privacy of study participants. Specifically, we will seek to include the following statements:

The Contractor shall not access data/records/personal information collected for this study for purposes outside of this study.

The Contractor shall not use contact information to retrieve a participant's survey responses or for any purposes other than conducting follow-up data collection.

The Contractor shall ensure that all staff that have access to identifying information sign pledges affirming their understanding of and commitment to ensuring that personally identifying information is kept private to the extent permitted by law.

**Appendix E**  
**Tracking Letters**  
**Updated 10.3.12**

**The Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement:** This collection of information is voluntary and will be used for the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED) Evaluation Project. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-XXXX and it expires XX/XX/XXXX.

Date

FULLNAME  
FULLADDRESS  
CITY, ST ZIP

Dear FULLNAME:

**Thank you** for participating in a study of the *Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED)*, also known as the *[local program name]*! You are receiving this letter because in *[year]* you agreed to participate in the *STED* research study. As you may recall, when you agreed to participate in the study, you were told that you might be contacted by researchers to complete several interviews.

MDRC, a non-profit public policy research firm, is responsible for conducting this research study on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services. Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR), an independent survey firm, is conducting a telephone interview to gather important information as part of this study. We will ask you questions about your lifestyle and employment opportunities. The interview should take *[30 for 6-month survey | 40-45 for 12-month survey]* minutes of your time.

- Your help is valuable. Only you can tell us about your experiences. You will receive a *[\$25 for 6-month survey and \$40 for 12-month survey]* **gift card** for completing the interview. By doing so, you will help us learn whether *[local program name]* is effective at helping people like you.
- Your participation is voluntary. You are not required to complete the interview, and not participating in the interview *will have no effect on your participation in the program.* Once the interview has started, you also may refuse to answer any question without penalty.
- Your information is private. MDRC and DIR staff follow strict rules to keep all information we collect about you private. Your name will never appear in any public document. All of your answers will be kept private to the full extent allowed by law. Your information will be used only for conducting research on *STED* programs. Our staff are trained to protect your privacy.

**You will receive more information about the survey or a call from a DIR interviewer in the next few weeks. We look forward to your participation.** If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please call James Cooper at 1-888-864-1425, ext 138. (weekdays between *[9 AM and 6 PM, Eastern | 6 AM and 3 PM Pacific Time]*).

Thank you for your help on this important project. Please call us to update your contact information (phone number or email address) at any time.

Sincerely,

James P. Cooper  
DIR Project Director  
Decision Information Resources, Inc.  
2600 Southwest Freeway, Suite 900  
Houston, Texas 77098  
jcooper@dir-online.com

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**{RESPONDENT**

**NAME}**

**DIR, the Subsidized and Transitional Employment survey firm, wants to wish you the best birthday ever!**

**Have you moved, changed your name, or phone number since we last spoke?**

**If so, please give us a call at our toll free number:**

**[1-866-874-7055](tel:1-866-874-7055)**

**to update your information for the upcoming survey.**

***We want to stay in touch with you!!!***

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Dear <First Name> <Last Name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Study. About [xxxx] months ago, when you applied to participate in the <PROGRAM NAME> in <CITY> you agreed to be part of a larger research study. The study is being funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and conducted by an evaluation team lead by MDRC and including Abt SRBI.

During the next two and a half years we would like to interview you to see how you are doing. We will contact you twice during this time to administer a survey which will take an average of 35 minutes. In appreciation of your time, you will receive an incentive payment after you complete your interview (\$40 for the first interview and about the same amount for the second interview).

To help us locate you for the next interview we have enclosed a form that we would like you to complete. This form presents the information you provided at program intake. If your address and telephone number is different from the information listed, please make the appropriate corrections. If you have an additional telephone number where we can reach you, please provide that information in the space provided.

Also, please update the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three people outside your household who usually know where to reach you. We would call these friends or relatives only if we cannot locate you at your address. If there are additional contacts, please include them on this form.

After you complete the form, please return it to us in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Or, if you prefer, you may call Abt SRBI toll-free at 1-XXX-XXX-XXXX and give your updated information to an interviewer over the phone.

If you hear a recorded message, please leave your name, telephone number, and the best time to call you. One of our interviewers will call you back very soon.

**A \$2 bill has been included in this letter to thank you for your time and effort.** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and there are no penalties now or in the future if you decide not to participate. All information you provide will be kept private within the extent of the law. Your responses will be combined with other people's responses and will be reported together as a group. No individual responses will be identified.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to call (NAME) at (TOLL FREE NUMBER).

Si le gustaría recibir esta información en Español, favor de llamar a Abt Associates al 1-888-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely yours,

XXX XXXXXXX

Survey Director for Enhanced Transitional Jobs Study

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Date

FULLNAME  
FULLADDRESS  
CITY, ST ZIP

Dear FULLNAME:

**Thank you** for participating in a study of the *Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD)*, also known as the *[local program name]*! You are receiving this letter because in *[year]* you agreed to participate in the *ETJD* research study. As you may recall, when you agreed to participate in the study, you were told that you might be contacted by researchers for interviews.

MDRC, a non-profit public policy research firm, is responsible for conducting this research study. Abt SRBI, a private research firm, is conducting a telephone interview to gather important information as part of this study. We will ask you questions about your lifestyle and employment opportunities. The interview should take an average of 45 minutes of your time.

- Your help is **valuable**. Only you can tell us about your experiences. You will receive a *[\$40 for the first interview and **about the same amount** for the second interview]* **check or money order** for completing the interview. By doing so, you will help us learn whether *[local program name]* is effective at helping people like you.
- Your participation is **voluntary**. You are not required to complete the interview, and not participating in the interview *will have no effect on your participation in the program*. Once the interview has started, you also may refuse to answer any question without penalty.
- Your information is **private**. MDRC and Abt SRBI staff follow strict rules to keep all information we collect about you private within the extent of the law. Your responses will be combined with other people's responses and will be reported together as a group. No individual responses will be identified. Your information will be used only for conducting research on *ERJD* programs.

**You will receive more information about the survey or a call from an Abt SRBI interviewer in the next few weeks. We look forward to your participation.**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or would like to schedule an appointment to participate, please call (NAME) at (TOLL FREE NUMBER).

Thank you for your help on this important project. Please call us to update your contact information (phone number or email address) at any time.

Si le gustaría recibir esta información en Español, favor de llamar a Abt Associates al 1-888-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

XXXX XXXXXXXX  
Survey Director For Enhanced Transitional Jobs Study