

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Labor have contracted with MDRC to evaluate innovative subsidized and transitional employment models targeting TANF recipients, noncustodial parents, former prisoners, and other low-income parents. The goal is to better understand what kinds of employment programs are most effective at helping people with these kinds of disadvantages gain and hold regular employment.

As part of our research, we are speaking with program staff members, referral partners, employers, and community stakeholders (in child support, parole and probation, etc) who work with STED/ETJD participants to learn about their experiences with the program and working with subsidized workers through the program. We have attached here an interview guide with a number of questions we would like to ask. It should take about an hour to complete. Your responses to all questions here will be kept completely private; the research staff has been trained in protecting private information and your name will not appear in any written reports we produce. Your responses to these questions are also completely voluntary; you are not required to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. All of the study results will be reported for groups of individuals; no results will be analyzed or reported for individuals.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), 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.

Thanks in advance for your time helping us with this valuable research. If you have any questions or would like any more information about the project, please contact Dan Bloom, the project director, at 212-340-8611 or at dan.bloom@mdrc.org.

Interview Guide: Employers

Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED)
Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD)

Employer Background

1. Tell me about your company, such as the type of work you do, the number of employees you have, and a little bit about the history of the organization.

Local Economic Context

2. How is the local economy doing? How has the local economic climate changed over the past two years?
3. What broad economic trends are affecting your business?

4. Have there been other significant changes in the local economy (e.g. industries closing/new business starting) that have made a difference for employment opportunities in your area?

Program Involvement

5. Describe your involvement with this program. Do you hire participants? Provide training?
6. How did you hear about the program?
7. What were the reasons your organization wanted to participate in this program? Explain
8. How much communication do you have with program staff? With whom do you typically communicate? What is the nature of the communication?

Subsidized Job Placements

9. How many program participants have you placed in subsidized positions?
10. Please describe the type(s) of jobs in which participants work.
 - a. How and when were these positions developed?
 - b. Do any of the TJs offer the potential to convert to permanent FT jobs?
11. What is the nature of supervision on the job (e.g., who provides and in what manner)?
12. How are issues about job performance communicated to program staff?
13. How are issues about job performance communicated to the participant? How are the issues addressed?
14. What types of issues do the participants face related to job performance? (*probe for specific examples and how the problems were resolved*)
15. What happens if participants don't show up for their assignment?
16. How much of a problem is this?
17. How do you monitor attendance and other types of progress/benchmarks?
18. What types of issues do participants need the most help with when it comes to on-the-job performance?
19. How much and what types of contact occur between your organization and the program staff?

Probe for:

- Who connects with whom?
 - How often are you in contact?
 - What is the purpose of the contact?
 - Is the contact formalized (for example, in regularly scheduled meetings or on an ad-hoc basis?)
 - Do you discuss issues/needs of individual clients?
 - Do you keep each other informed on participants' progress?
20. How long do participants stay in the subsidized job? What are the reasons that people leave before their assignment ends (*probe for extent to which people find unsubsidized employment vs. just do not show up*).
21. Have you kept any participants on in unsubsidized jobs? If so, why? If not, why not?

Partnership with the Program

22. Has the relationship between your organization and the program changed since the beginning of the project? If yes, how so?
23. What are the strengths of the partnership?
24. What challenges do you face in partnering with this organization?

Benefits and Challenges

25. What have been the greatest benefits to participating in this program?
26. What have been the greatest challenges to participating in this program?
27. Is there anything else that would be useful for the research team to know?