

Changes to the Street Outreach Program (SOP) Data Collection Project

Type of Change:

Non-substantive

Justification of Proposed Changes:

Computer assisted personal interviews were being recorded in order to capture answers to open-ended questions that might be too long for interviewers to type. The answers to the open-ended questions collected during the pilot study ranged from one word to two sentences; interviewers reported being able to easily type the answers into the computer tablets. The open-ended questions require the interviewer to read a script about audio recording the answers, which proved cumbersome and awkward during the pilot study. Therefore, in order to simplify the data collection interview protocol, it is proposed that the audio recordings be discontinued.

Description of Proposed Changes:

Consent forms. Information about audio recording computer assisted personal interviews has been removed from the consent forms.

Focus group questions. One question was removed because it was confusing to respondents. One question was added to better understand the services respondents might seek to obtain permanent housing.

Since the open-ended questions did not yield detailed responses, a fourth focus group is proposed for each site for a total of 4 four (2 female, 2 male) per each site.

Interview questions. Information about audio recording computer assisted personal interviews has been removed from the interview protocol.

Based on the pilot test in the Omaha site, 5 questions about the respondent's current homeless situation, events that led to becoming homeless, and main reasons for becoming homeless were removed from the computer assisted personal interview. In addition, one question asking about gift card preference was removed. Five questions about satisfaction with the SOP agency were added to the computer assisted personal interview. Given the elimination of the 6 questions, the 5 new questions will not add to the response burden.

Based on the feedback obtained from community agencies during the data collection training that took place with all 11 grantees, we have: 1) changed the wording of some questions to increase clarity; 2) eliminated 3 questions; 3) added 8 new questions; and 3) added 16 followup questions to existing questions. Based on the practice interviews conducted during 3 days of training with the 11 grantees, the additional questions and response categories add an additional 1 minute and 40 seconds to the interview. Since interviews conducted during the pilot test averaged 45 minutes, the addition of these questions will not increase response burden.

The 8 new questions ask about new topics for which information is lacking but deemed important by the community agencies to inform their work. The questions are on the following topics: overdose (2 questions); law enforcement (2 questions), weapon use (3 questions), and ethnicity (1 question).