

**Re-Engagement Center
Project Director Interview Protocol**

Assent Script

Thank you for taking time today to talk with us about your program. We are interviewing staff from several programs like yours across the country to learn as much as possible about your work. The U.S. Dept. of Education has asked us to develop a resource guide on programs designed to reconnect out-of-school youth (often called re-engagement centers) so that others who want to set up similar programs don't have to reinvent the wheel. The guide will be broadly disseminated and help build awareness about programs like yours. Do you have any questions about the purpose of the research?

In this interview, we are going to focus on the purpose of your program, the strategies you are using to re-engage disconnected young people, how you operate, and the results of your work. We want to learn about what's working, and also about the challenges you've faced to make the resource guide as informative as possible. It will not take more than 90 minutes, does that work for you? Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. The contractor will not provide information that identifies a subject or district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. If we include any specific references to your program in the resource guide, we will make sure to gain your permission first. We would like to tape-record the interview, but your name will not be included in the transcripts, and the tapes will be kept in a secure location in our offices at Johns Hopkins. Please let me know if there's any point at which you would like me to turn off the tape recorder. Are you willing to participate in the interview? [hand out written consent form if not already signed] We need your signature on this form to indicate that you understand the purpose of the research and that you are participating of your own free will. [collect form(s)]. Thank you, let's get started.

Questions

1. Fast Facts
 - a. What year was [program name] established?
 - b. Where is the program located? (i.e. school, district office, community center, multiple locations?)
 - c. How many young people are you currently serving? How many do you serve annually? What is the age range?
 - d. Is [program name] the only re-engagement center serving the school district? (skip this question if already addressed in background materials sent prior to interview)
 - i. If yes, does it also serve youth in other districts?
 - ii. If no, how many other centers/programs are there? Does each operate independently? If not, how are they linked?

2. Information about Youth Served

- a. Describe the youth your program serves? Does your program target a particular group or groups? [e.g. in/out of school; recently dropped out; AfAm males/females, ELL/migrant, teen parents, in welfare or justice systems, LGBT, homeless?
- b. How do youth hear about your program?

3. Start Up

- a. How did [program name] get started? who initiated it? how did it unfold?
- b. When your program started, was there any data analysis that guided decisions about which youth most needed your program services in your community?
 - i. if yes, please describe.
- c. What were the main challenges to starting up your program?

4. Purpose, Goals, Objectives

- a. What is the purpose of your program? At the end of the day, what are you trying to accomplish?
 - i. Does your program have specific goals or objectives? What are they?
- b. Would you call [program name] a re-engagement center?
 - i. If yes, what makes it a re-engagement center?
 - ii. If no, what makes it different from a re-engagement center?

NOTE: Approach questions in following Sections 4 through 7 in two rounds—first a quick run through to get the basic information and then circle back to clarify and go for more depth as needed.

5. Service Approach/Strategies

How does [program name] work now? What do you do to re-engage youth?

- a. What are your outreach and recruitment strategies?
 - i. Do you advertise the program? How?
 - ii. What information or data do you use to know whom to recruit?
 - iii. Where does the data come from (school district? Agencies?) How do you access it? If it's given to you, how often do you receive it? Is it easy to get, or difficult?
 - iv. What are the challenges to your outreach/recruitment efforts?
- b. How does your intake and assessment process work?
 - i. Are there specific procedures, protocols, or instruments you use to understand your clients' background and needs (e.g. academic history, socio-emotional wellbeing)?
- c. How does your referral and placement process work?
 - i. What information plays a role in determining referrals/placements?
 - ii. Who "receives" your clients?
 - iii. Are placements immediate or do they take a while? How long typically?
- d. Do you provide any direct service?
 - i. Counseling?
 - 1. What kind?
 - a. Career/College

- b. Academic
 - c. Health, Mental Health
 - d. Social service—e.g. child care, housing,
 - 2. What are the goals of the counseling you provide?
 - ii. Instruction?
 - 1. What kind?
 - a. Credit recovery?
 - b. Proficiency (focused on passing assessments)?
 - c. Blended (computer & classroom)
 - d. Dual enrollment?
 - e. Career/internship?
 - 2. What is the goal (GED, HS Diploma, Post-Sec enrollment)?
- e. Does your program follow-up or provide ongoing case management?
- f. How are these processes (recruitment, assessment, referral, direct service) inter-related? How do students move through them?
 - i. Do you have a flowchart or picture? (if not already provided)
 - ii. Are there any weak links? Please describe.
- g. Do youth ever cycle through your program more than once?
 - i. If yes, do you have different strategies for working with them?
- h. Are parents or families involved in your program? In what ways?
- i. Apart from what you have already mentioned, are there other ways in which technology is used in your program?
 - i. Are any services provided online? How does that work? Is it effective?
- j. Does your program use particular strategies or have specially designed programs or approaches to address the unique needs of the different youth subgroups you serve? (e.g. in/out of school; recently dropped out; AfAm males/females, ELL/migrant, teen parents, in welfare or justice systems, LGBT, homeless)
- k. From the experience of your program, what have you learned are the most effective strategies for re-engaging youth?
 - i. Academic, behavioral, career preparation
- l. Are there any ineffective strategies that centers should avoid?
6. Internal Organization
- a. How many staff members do you have (including yourself)? What are their roles?
 - b. Do you have an organizational chart you can share with us? (If not already provided)
 - c. Is there a training program for staff?
 - d. Can you describe what you do in a typical day/week?

- e. Are there any ways you would change your current staffing to increase your effectiveness?

7. Partners

- a. How are you connected to the school district? (if not already clear)
 - i. How does your program connect to other district dropout recovery efforts?
 - ii. Are there particular schools or school/district staff that serve as sources of either recruitment or placement for youth in your program?
- b. Who are your main partners in your work? What roles do they play?
 - i. Agencies (city, state, federal)
 - ii. Non profits
 - iii. Institutions of Higher Education (colleges, universities, technical programs)
- c. How do you coordinate your work with your partners?
- d. Is your work integrated with other academic or social service providers? How does that work?
- e. Is there anything you would change to improve how your program works with your partner organizations and other service providers?

8. Costs and Funding

- a. What does it cost to operate [program name]?
 - i. What are the biggest cost areas?
 - ii. Do you know how much the program costs per student served?
- b. How is [program name] funded?
 - a. School district, private/foundation, state or federal (e.g. workforce investment, national service, HSGI)?
- c. Do any of your funders' goals and objectives for your program conflict with your goals and objectives that you described earlier? Do they conflict with each others (if you have multiple funders)?

9. Outcomes/Impact

- a. How do you know when a student is successful in your program (or as a result of participating in your program)
- b. How do you measure your impact?
 - i. E.g. # youth referred; # youth re-engaged; GEDs; HS diplomas; job placement; college readiness; postsecondary enrollment/diploma
 - ii. E.g. improved literacy, numeracy, credit recovery, academic tenacity and persistence, social skills, job skills
- c. What outcomes have you achieved on those measures? (if not already answered)
- d. Do you know how many students who go through your program drop out again?
- e. Are there any other outcomes you have achieved you'd like to share
 - i. E.g. community impact, coalition building, influencing policy
- f. Is there an independent evaluation of [program name]?
- g. Do you use the information/data you gather through the course of your work to:
 - a. Reflect on and improve your program?
 - b. Inform others in the district and/or community about the unique needs of the young people you serve?

h. In an ideal world, how would you track the impact of your program?

10. Sustainability

- a. What is the future of [program name]?
 - i. Who is carrying this, is there someone responsible for either institutionalizing and/or sustaining?
 - ii. Are there funds to sustain it? For how long?

11. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- a. Are there any other challenges you've encountered in your work that you would like to share?
- b. What words of advice would you give someone who wanted to create a program similar to yours in their community?

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