

APPENDIX E

MASTER CASE STUDY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

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Master Protocol of Questions for SET Case Study Interviews

First, read the following statement to interviewees: “The information you provide will be used to improve services for people interested in self-employment. Under the public burden statement required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, our OMB control number for this information collection is _____, and permission to collect this data expires on _____. Responding to this questionnaire is completely voluntary. The survey will take about 60 minutes for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

| Participants’ Backgrounds |
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| <p><i>What are relevant contextual details regarding the participants?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the participants? • What are the participants’ prior work experiences? • How do participants’ proposed business ideas relate to their prior work experiences? • How do the participants’ original business ideas relate to their current business ventures (if they have one)? • What is the relevance of their prior work experiences to the current self-employment ventures? |
| Participants’ Experiences with SET Services |
| <p><i>What are participants’ experiences with program application, intake, assessment, and referral?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are participants interested in the Self-Employment Training (SET) program? Why did they choose to apply for SET services? • What are participants’ experiences with the orientation sessions? How were the sessions structured and what topics were covered? Did the participants find orientations useful? Which components of the orientation were useful and which ones were less useful? How challenging did the participants find it to complete the program application form? • How did staff assess customers’ needs? • What was the time lag between program entry, assessment, and referral to and receipt of services? |
| <p><i>What are the experiences of SET participants?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are participants’ initial service needs? • What services do they typically use? Do participants have a designated counselor? How much ongoing follow-up do they receive from a designated counselor? • How many receive one-on-one technical assistance (TA)? Which training/TA topics do they access? Are there types of training/TA that participants need that SET does not provide? • On average, how much counseling do they receive? • How many apply for SET seed capital grants? For what kinds of investment do they request seed capital? How many receive seed capital grants? How useful are these grants in helping participants establish or grow their businesses? • How long do they stay connected with the program? What do participants do afterward? • What components of the program are viewed as most and least useful? • With what SET components are participants satisfied or dissatisfied? Why? • Are there needs or issues that the SET program was unable to help them address? |

What were these needs? Why was the program unable to meet them?

To what extent does SET link customers to small business loans and/or others sources of seed capital?

- To what extent do SET participants apply for Small Business Administration (SBA) microloans and other loans? To what extent do they receive loans and from what sources?
- What barriers do candidates find in getting loans or seed capital?
- How much TA do customers receive in applying for these loans? How helpful is such assistance?
- To what extent do SET participants access other sources of seed capital for their business? To what extent do they apply for assistance from other nonloan sources?
- How much TA do customers receive from the SET providers in accessing nonloan sources of seed capital? How helpful is this assistance?

Participants' Experiences with the Self-Employment Venture

What activities do participants conduct in pursuit of self-employment?

- For what length of time do participants pursue self-employment?
- What activities did the participant conduct to pursue self-employment since applying for the SET demonstration?
- What were participants' early experiences with the self-employment venture?
- What were their reasons for persisting with or abandoning self-employment efforts?

What are the aids and barriers to starting or growing a new business?

- What types of assistance or opportunities have SET participants been able to access that were critical in starting or growing their new businesses?
 - What barriers do SET participants encounter in starting or growing their own businesses?
 - Do these barriers vary by the type of community they are in? By the type of business they want to start or grow? By the stage their business is in (for example, start-up or growth phase)?
- Are their demographic groups that experience different or unique barriers in starting businesses? To what extent does SET help address these barriers? How?