

Appendix Z

Talking with Clients about the Paycheck Plus Study

Before Random Assignment

Mention why we are doing the study, and how valuable it is:

- *The purpose of Paycheck Plus is to test whether it helps people. Right now, the credit exists because of this study.*
- *We hope that the study will give us hard evidence that it does help people. We hope to make the credit available permanently in the future – to you and other unmarried people like you. We expect that the study will help us do that. There are many examples of programs that are now permanent because of this kind of study. (Jobs Plus is one. SaveUSA has been introduced in Congress. MDRC can give more details.)*
- *By agreeing to be part of the study, you are part of something that could affect the entire community, in NYC and, we hope, the entire US.*

If someone is not sure they want to be in the study, they should not enroll. We don't want them to just take a chance and then drop out if they get assigned to the control group. Therefore, would like to include these messages:

- *Before you sign the consent papers, I want to make sure that you are willing to be part of the study. Would you like more time to read the MDRC consent form now?*
- *Are you willing to commit to being in the study, even if you are assigned to the control group today?*
- *The control group is very important to us. It hurts the study when control group members withdraw right away. Therefore, we only want to enroll people who are sure that they want to be in the study.*

During the consent process, if they have questions or need more time to read things more carefully, please allow time for this. If they are waiting to see you, they can read the consent form while they are waiting.

Answering questions about MDRC

We heard that some clients wanted to know more about MDRC and whether it is legitimate.

Talking points:

- *MDRC has 40 years of experience conducting studies on new programs in the U.S.*
- *They have never released or lost any information on any study participants by mistake.*
- *They never publish individual information on their reports, and they will not share any of your data with anyone, except if you owe child support.*
- *I can show you their web site right now if you are interested (www.mdrc.org/paycheckplus)*
- *(If anyone asks: "MDRC" used to stand for Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation" but they officially shortened it to MDRC. Now everyone just calls them MDRC -- like IBM.)*

Use MDRC brochures

We updated the MDRC web page to include Paycheck Plus name.

Control Group script

Try not to show disappointment on your face when you get this result.

Talking points:

Okay. I see on the computer that you have been assigned to the control group. Let me explain what that means.

- *You will not receive the credit, but you are still a very important part of the study. We are so glad that you have agreed to participate.*
- *We are hoping that doing the study will give hard evidence needed to make the credit permanent -- and available to more people, including you, when the study is over.*
- *You may be invited to take one or more voluntary surveys.*
- *Remember to file your taxes at one of Food Bank's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, where you can get your taxes done free! You will get priority access at these sites. Would you like us to contact you in January with information about these sites?*

If someone wants to withdraw

- *Ask why:
I would like to know what your concerns are. I might be able to give you more information that would address your concern. Maybe we didn't talk enough about the thing that is worrying you.*
- *Ask them to call MDRC before making a final decision*