

## **APPENDIX B: IN DEPTH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (CONSENT FORM AND INTERVIEW GUIDE)**

### **Housing Search Study**

#### **CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research:** Housing Search Study

**Contractor:** The Urban Institute

**Sponsor:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**About the Study:** The purpose of this study is to identify how renters in the Washington, D.C. metro area search for housing and make decisions about where to live. We are interested in talking to people who recently searched for rental housing within the D.C. metro area, whether or not they actually moved to a new home. We are interviewing people who have already participated in one or more Housing Research Study phone interviews about their recent housing search.

In this study, we are interested in learning what the housing search process is like for renters—that is, what people look for in a place to live, and how people make decisions about where and how to search. We are also interested in why people move, and the things that people think are important when they are making decisions about where to move.

In this document, we are asking for your agreement to participate in an in-person interview to talk about some of the same topics that you discussed on the phone. If you agree to participate, we will conduct an interview with you, here in your home or wherever you are most comfortable, to ask you about a variety of topics related to your recent housing search, including your neighborhood, how you found the home you are currently living in, why you decided to move, and the information you used during your search. Each interview will take approximately one hour to complete. We anticipate that 48 people will participate in this part of the study.

**Compensation:** Upon completion of this interview you will receive \$100.00.

**Risks and Discomforts:** Some of the questions may be personal. For example, we will be asking you to talk about your neighborhood, your current home, the things that might have made your search difficult, and the reasons you needed or decided to move. Although we try to minimize the risks to research participants in this type of study, some people may be uncomfortable answering some of the questions, and it is okay for you to skip any questions that you feel particularly uncomfortable about. You will be compensated no matter what.

**Benefits:** Although the research we are conducting will not directly benefit you, it will provide us with a better understanding of how people search for housing. This may help the Department of Housing and Urban Development and others understand ways to design programs or studies in the future.

**Alternatives:** Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

**Confidentiality:** All information we obtain during the research phase of this project will be treated confidentially to the extent possible by law: That is, only people associated with the research team will even know that you participated in the study, let alone your answers to our questions, without your prior approval. The Urban Institute’s Institutional Review Board and officials from the funding agency retain the right to review the data collected in this study to ensure that it is being conducted in an appropriate manner. All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

**Your answers to these questions will be tape recorded and transcribed, and then transferred to a secure computer.**

Your name will be changed to an ID number for the purposes of analyzing the data from the study. The only information linking your name to this ID will be stored and locked in secure desk, away from your survey answers, and accessible only to the research team. The digital recording we make today will be erased as soon as the data are entered into the computer.

**Questions:** If you have any questions, please feel free to call Molly Scott at (202)261-5888. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the Urban Institute Institutional Review Board at (202)-xxx-xxxx.

**Legal Rights:** You are not waiving any of your legal rights by signing this consent form.

**Signatures:** Your signature indicates that you have read (or been read) the information provided above, that you understand the information in this consent form, and that you decided to participate. You will receive a copy of this form.

_____	_____
Name of participant	Date
_____	_____
Signature of participant	Date
_____	_____
Signature of person obtaining consent	Date
_____	

ID Number of Participant

## Housing Search Study In-Depth Interview Guide

[NOTE: Refer to DIR respondent interview report for phone interview responses. Review responses for context and background on each respondent's recent move. If a move was completed, use Module 1. If a move was not completed, use Module 2].

[NOTE: Complete informed consent.]

### INTRODUCTION [ALL]

Thank you for letting us come and talk with you today about your housing search. As I mentioned earlier, I'd like to talk to you about some similar questions as the ones you answered on your phone interview[s], and to hear more about how your housing search went.

### MODULE 1: COMPLETED MOVE [FOR NON-MOVERS SKIP TO MODULE 2, p.6]

#### SECTION 1: INTRO/OPENING

- 1. I'd like to start by talking about how you feel about the move, overall. Moving can be hard. Some people have a great experience and some people find it very stressful. How about you? How did your move go?**

How do you feel about how it turned out?

What made it [easy/stressful]?

Do you feel like it turned out the way you wanted it to? Tell me more about that.

How was the process? Hard? Easy?

[NOTE: use this introductory question to encourage open conversation and establish move experience and context for move. Probe for emotional context and perception of move process. Responses may continue through remaining discussion. More specific questions below in CONSTRAINTS/TRADEOFFS]

#### SECTION 2: RECENT MOVE DECISIONS

*A really important part of our study is understanding how people end up living where they do, why they might move from one place to another, and how they search for housing. In this section I am going to ask you to tell me about how you decided to move into the place you live in now, and about your housing search.*

*[NOTE: Some questions may be repetitive, depending on how information emerges from previous questions. Tailor as needed or use questions as additional probes if some information about move and context for move has already been provided]*

**2. [Confirm neighborhood and address, if interview is not in current home]. Tell me the whole story of how you ended up [here/your new home], starting from when you knew you wanted or needed to move.**

Why did you decide to move?

*[If not covered] What was happening in your life that made you want/need to move?*

What was the first thing you did when you knew you were moving? What did you do next?

How did you hear first about this house/apartment?

How did you first contact the owner/manager?

*[Probe for specifics of how unit was found: if on the internet, which website? If word of mouth, who was the person who told you about it? Did you know the landlord or owner? Additional questions on process below.]*

**3. Tell me more about why you moved.**

Why did you want or need to move?

Some people move for positive reasons, and some people move because they feel like they have no choice. How was this move for you?

*[If involuntary: would you have stayed there if you could have?]*

**4. Am I right that you [changed neighborhoods/remained in the same neighborhood]? Tell me more about this. Why did you [stay/change]? *[NOTE: Record prior neighborhood, if different]***

How did you end up in this neighborhood?

*Did you deliberately try to [stay in the same neighborhood/move to this neighborhood]?*

What was more important, the house/apartment or the area it was located in?

Did you consider other neighborhoods? *[Record neighborhoods]*

Which neighborhoods did you avoid searching in?

What do you like about living here?

What are things that you don't like so much?

*What kinds of people live here?*

*What mix of folks were you looking for? What tends to make you feel the most comfortable?*

*What mix of folks tends to make you feel a little less comfortable?*

*[Note: Probe for neighborhood characteristics and ties to the neighborhood; probe for racial/ethnic composition if not raised. Neighborhoods may come up naturally throughout the interview, but this is main area to probe for neighborhood characteristics and role in decision-making if the respondent does not bring it up indirectly through other responses. If not noted, probe for whether unit considerations were more important than neighborhood.]*

Use **Map PROP** here!

### Section 3: Search Strategies

5. **Tell me more about your search, and how you found out about houses/apartments that were available. Some people look in the newspaper to find out about housing, others use the internet or word of mouth. I'd like to hear more about how you did this.**

Use **Cards PROP** here

Give respondent set of index cards with search key words and ask them to sort into two piles: resources used and not used. Walk through pile of resources used for more information and sample search.

Let's start with ... [Go through each card selected]

- a. If on-line/internet sources:
  - Which websites?
  - What did you search for? Which search terms/key words did you use used?
  - [Probe for neighborhoods? Rent range? Unit size? Other unit features?]
  - How did you contact these listings? [phone vs. email?]
  - How effective do you think this approach was for you?
  
- b. For print/newspapers:
  - Which newspapers?
  - When did you look? Daily, weekly?
  - What did you look for in the ads? [rent range? Location? Type of unit?]
  - How did you contact these listings? [phone vs. email?]
  - How effective do you think this approach was for you?
  
- c. For *real estate agent/professional service*:
  - How did you find the agent/service? [if from a personal contact, who? relationship?]
  - How did you or [name] choose which listings to see?
  - How did you communicate with the landlord/manager? [probe for through the agent, in person?]
  - How effective do you think this approach was for you?

[Probe for how the respondent searched: specific search terms, ways of responding to listings or pursuing information, searches based on neighborhood location vs. unit characteristics]

**[Note:** *If respondent indicates they searched in a particular way—get the respondent to do so. For example, if they select/say “look at the ads in the newspaper” pull out your newspaper and go to the*

rental ads, ask them to show you how they peruse the ads and judge which kinds of ads to pursue and which to ignore. Same with internet. Pull up the website and enter search terms and view ads].

d. For word of mouth:

*We are very interested in how people might get information or help for the search from word of mouth, through their friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, or other people in their lives. Tell me more about the people you talked to about your search and your choices*

Let's start with .... [go through cards with groups indicated]

Who were you referring to? [Get names, relationship, race/ethnicity]

Tell me a bit about [contact name]. How do you know them?

What type of information did you get from [contact name]

What did you talk to [each person] about?

About how many units did you find this way? [Calls? Visits?]

What else did they help you with?

[Probe for information about neighborhoods vs about units, or help making the decision vs. information about available housing. Probe for race/ethnicity of relationships/contacts whenever possible.]

e. What other sources did you use that I haven't asked about?

f. Why didn't you use [refer to cards not selected]?

Have you ever used these in the past?

#### Section 4: CONSTRAINTS AND TRADEOFFS

*I'd like to hear a bit more about how the search went for you. Places you looked at or thought about but didn't end up moving to, and the things you needed to keep in mind when you were searching for a place to live or deciding where to move.*

**6. Tell me about any [apartments/homes] you looked into, but didn't work out for one reason or another.**

What about places you considered but decided against?

What about places you wanted to live in but couldn't for some reason?

Why didn't they work out?

Which listings have you seen and then disregarded?

Why did you rule them out?

**7. What about neighborhoods you looked into, but didn't work out for one reason or another.**

What about places you considered but decided against?

What about places you wanted to live in but couldn't for some reason?

Why didn't they work out?

Which neighborhoods did you go look at but then disregarded?

Why did you rule them out?

*[NOTE: These may be duplicative; bring up neighborhoods specifically if they do not come up during discussion of units that were ruled out during the search. If they have been discussed, disregard question 7 on neighborhoods.]*

**8. Some people say that certain aspects of their personal situations really limit the kinds of places they can live—large families, for example, families in which someone has a criminal record, families with bad credit, or don't have money for a deposit. Families who have been evicted, or families who have to live close to childcare, a sick relative, work, a particular bus line....things like that. How about for you?**

What are things that might have made your search complicated?

How did they limit the kinds of places [units /neighborhoods] you looked at or considered living in?

How did you deal with them in your search?

*[probe for types of units/specific neighborhoods considered? Information sources?]*

*[NOTE: May build off of previous responses. Probe for emotional context if not already discussed, and probe for search strategies in response to personal situations: types of units, neighborhoods, information sources.]*

**9. Sometimes people start out with one idea in mind for their move and then need to change gears, or change their minds after they start looking for housing. Did this happen to you?**

How did your original ideas about where you wanted to search or move change during the search?

Why did you need to make changes?

What were the things that were deal breakers for you?

*[Probe for compromises or tradeoffs made about neighborhoods and units]*

**10. What are some things that you wish you had known before you started searching, or while you were looking for housing? What would have been helpful to you?**

What might have made your search easier?

What information might have helped?

What would you have done differently if you could?

*[Probe for information about ways to search, neighborhoods to look in, financial support for the search or help from other people.]*

Section 5: FUTURE

**11. As we close, I'd like to hear about any plans for your next move. How long do you think you'll stay in this [apartment/home]?**

When do you think you might move again?

Why that timeline? *[Or, milestone for move]*

What will you try to do differently the next time?

What did you learn from this search that you will try for the next one?

Where do you think you will be living in five years?

*[NOTE: timeline for move may be based on a milestone such as a new job, a child's age or school grade/stage. Probe for goals for move is not year/date timeline. May be duplicative with previous discussion; probe for information or resources that might have helped move if not raised previously.]*

**12. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we end? Anything that you think I've missed or that I should know? Is there anything I should I have asked that I didn't?**

**[Skip to closing, p.11]**



## MODULE 2: NON-MOVERS

*[Refer to DIR Report. Only CSS respondents that stopped their search without moving should be included in this module. Verify that respondent is still at the same address. If changed address, record both addresses and use MOVER module.]*

### SECTION 6. STOPPED SEARCHING

*I'd like to talk to you about the housing search you recently made, even though you didn't end up moving. We'd like to hear about why you wanted or needed to move in the first place, why you changed your mind about it, and how you were searching while you still thought you might move.*

#### **13. Tell me about why you stopped looking for a new place to live.**

Why did you decide to stop looking?

How was your search going up to that point?

How do you feel about where you are living now?

Would you have preferred to move?

When do you think you might start looking again? *[probe for timeframe or milestone, such as new job, change in family composition, child's age/school level]*

*[Probe for personal reasons, emotional context, financial, changed circumstances, frustrated with search. Probe for whether stopped search is viewed as a positive or negative outcome.]*

### SECTION 7: RECENT SEARCH DECISIONS

*A really important part of our study is understanding how people end up living where they do, why they might move from one place to another, and how they search for housing. In this section I am going to ask you to tell me about your housing search before you stopped looking.*

#### **14. [Confirm neighborhood and address, if necessary]. Tell me the whole story of why you originally tried to move, from the moment when you knew you wanted or needed to move.**

What made you decide to move?

What was the first thing you did when you thought you were moving?

What did you do next?

*Some people move for positive reasons, and some people move because they feel like they have no choice. How was it for you?*

#### **15. Tell me more about where you were looking to move when you were still searching. What were you thinking you wanted to do at the time?**

What neighborhoods were you looking in?  
Did you want to change neighborhoods, or stay in the same neighborhood?  
What do you like about living here?  
What are things that you don't like so much?  
Did you consider other neighborhoods? [Record neighborhoods]  
Which neighborhoods did you avoid searching in?  
What kinds of people live here?  
What mix of folks were you looking for? What tends to make you feel the most comfortable?  
What mix of folks tends to make you feel a little less comfortable?

[Note: Probe for neighborhood characteristics and ties to the neighborhood; probe for racial/ethnic composition if not raised. Neighborhoods may come up naturally throughout the interview, but this is main area to probe for neighborhood characteristics and role in decision-making if the respondent does not bring it up indirectly through other responses.]

## SECTION 8: SEARCH STRATEGIES

**16. Tell me more about how you were searching before you stopped. How did you find out about houses/apartments that were available? Some people look in the newspaper to find out about housing, others use the internet or word of mouth. I'd like to hear more about how you did this.**

Use **Cards PROP** here

Give respondent set of index cards with search key words and ask them to sort into two piles: resources used and not used. Walk through pile of resources used for more information and sample search.

Let's start with ... [Go through each card selected]

- a. If on-line/internet sources:
  - Which websites?
  - What did you search for? Which search terms/key words did you use?  
[Probe for neighborhoods? Rent range? Unit size? Other unit features?]
  - How did you contact these listings? [phone vs. email?]
  - How effective do you think this approach was for you?*
  
- b. For print/newspapers:
  - Which newspapers?
  - When did you look? Daily, weekly?
  - What did you look for in the ads? [rent range? Location? Type of unit?]
  - How did you contact these listings? [phone vs. email?]
  - How effective do you think this approach was for you?*

- c. For *real estate agent/professional service*:  
How did you find the agent/service? [if from a personal contact, who? relationship?]  
How did you or [name] choose which listings to see?  
How did you communicate with the landlords/managers? [*probe for through the agent, personally?*]  
How effective do you think this approach was for you?

*[Probe for how the respondent searched: specific search terms, ways of responding to listings or pursuing information. Probe for how effective different strategies were, if not already stated elsewhere.]*

**[Note:** *If respondent indicates they searched in a particular way—get the respondent to do so. For example, if they select/say “look at the ads in the newspaper” pull out your newspaper and go to the rental ads, ask them to show you how they peruse the ads and judge which kinds of ads to pursue and which to ignore. Same with internet. Pull up the website and enter search terms and view ads.]*

- d. For word of mouth:

*We are very interested in how people might get information or help for the search from word of mouth, through their friends, family, neighbors, coworkers or other people in their lives. Tell me more about the people you talked to about your search and your choices.*

- Let's start with .... [go through cards with groups indicated]  
Who were you referring to? [Get names, relationship; race/ethnicity]  
Tell me a bit about [contact name]. How do you know them?  
What type of information did you get from [contact name]  
What did you talk to [each person] about?  
About how many units did you find this way so far [calls? Visits?]  
What else did they help you with?

*[Probe for information about neighborhoods vs about units, or help making the decision vs. information about available housing. Probe for information on whether or not to keep searching. Probe for race/ethnicity of relationships/contacts whenever possible.]*

- e. What other sources have you used that I haven't asked about?  
f. Why didn't you use [refer to cards not selected]?  
Have you ever used these in the past?

## Section 9: CONSTRAINTS AND TRADEOFFS

**17. Tell me more about places [apartments/homes/neighborhoods] you looked into, but didn't work out for one reason or another.**

What about places you considered but decided against?  
What about places you wanted to live in but couldn't for some reason?  
Why didn't they work out?  
Which listings did you look at and then disregard?  
Why did you rule them out?  
Were there places you tried to see but couldn't?

*[Neighborhoods may emerge during discussion of places that were ruled out during the search. Probe for neighborhoods if they do not come up on their own]*

**18. Some people say that certain aspects of their personal situations really limit the kinds of places they can live—large families, for example, families in which someone has a criminal record, families with bad credit, or don't have money for a deposit. Families who have been evicted, or families who have to live close to childcare, a sick relative, work, a particular bus line....things like that. How about for you?**

What are things that might have made your search complicated?  
How did you deal with them when you were still searching?  
How did they limit the kinds of places you looked at or considered living?  
Was this part of why you stopped searching?  
What kinds of help would have made the search easier, or go better?

*[NOTE: Refer to first interview question. Probe for information, financial help, other resources that may have helped the search be more successful or change the outcome, if relevant.]*

**19. Sometimes people start out with one idea in mind for their move and then need to change gears, or change their minds after they start looking for housing. Did this happen to you?**

How did your original ideas about where you wanted to search or move change during the search?  
What were the things that were deal breakers for you?  
Was this part of why you stopped searching?

*[Probe for compromises, tradeoffs about neighborhoods or units]*

**20. What are some things that you wish you had known before you started searching, or while you were still looking for housing? What would have been helpful to you?**

What might have made your search easier?  
*What might have changed how things turned out for this move?*  
What information might have helped?  
What would you have done differently if you could?

*[Probe for information about ways to search, neighborhoods to look in, financial support for the search or help from other people. If relevant, probe for things that may have changed decision to stop searching, or resulted in a move.]*

## Section 10: FUTURE

### 21. As we close, I'd like to hear about any plans for future moves.

When do you think you might move again?

Why that timeline?

What will you try to do differently next time?

*What have you learned from this search?*

*What would be helpful for the next search?*

*[If not already discussed, probe for information about ways to search, neighborhoods to look in, financial support for the search or help from other people. If relevant, probe for things that may have changed decision to stop searching, or resulted in a move]*

### 22. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we end? Anything that you think I've missed or that I should know? Is there anything I should I have asked that I didn't?

## CLOSING [All]

Thank you for talking so freely about your life and your experiences. I really appreciate your time and everything you have told me. I'll leave a copy of the consent form for you, as well as my card and phone numbers for you to call in case you have any questions. You can contact us at any time. **We may be in contact you over the next few months, and would like to take down some information so we can be in touch with you.**

Use **Future Contact Sheet PROP** here!

If you think of anything you forgot to tell me, just call. Thanks again!