

Appendix A: RAD PHA Survey/Interview Questions

I. Identifying Information

PHA Name and Code:

POC Name and Title:

Project Name and Code:

Interview Date and Time:

POC Contact Information:

II. Introduction

Hello. Thank you for agreeing to a follow-up interview as part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's, or HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration, or RAD, program evaluation. My name is **[name]**, and I am joined by my colleague(s), **[name(s)]**; we work for Econometrica, Inc., a management and research firm selected by HUD to carry out this RAD program evaluation. Some of you may have been interviewed before about the RAD program. As was explained to you at the time of the first interview, your public housing authority, or PHA, **[name of PHA]**, was randomly selected to be part of HUD's evaluation of the RAD program. Can you confirm who is taking part in this interview from your PHA?

Our main goal with this interview is to explore your experiences with **[project name]** after it has been converted through RAD. We are asking you, as a key member of the PHA, to answer these questions to provide us with an accurate understanding of the implementation of RAD post-conversion. We will focus on several categories, including construction and/or rehabilitation if applicable, administration, financial performance, property management, overall HUD implementation, and some general questions. These questions will explore how your project and your PHA has changed post-conversion and allow us to report to the HUD and Congress on your experience with RAD, and ultimately on the successes and limitations of RAD.

This interview is solely for assessing the RAD program as a whole. It is not for monitoring or evaluating the performance of individual PHAs. All responses will be confidential and will not be attributed to you or your organization. We may use quotes, but will avoid doing so in situations that could allow HUD or others to identify the source of the quote.

As part of our interview process, we would like your consent to record the conversation. This recording is to ensure we are accurately capturing your response and comments. It will not be shared with HUD and will be erased after the report is completed. Do we have your permission to record the conversation? **[Wait for the response. If the respondent(s) does not consent, inform the respondent(s) that at the end of the interview we may need to review some answers in order to ensure we have accurately captured responses.]**

III. RAD Conversion Type

1. To get started, did you use RAD for your project, **[project name]**, for (1) rehabilitation, (2) new construction, or (3) neither (in other words, nonfinancial conversion)?

[Interviewer: The next section is applicable to rehabilitation or new construction projects. Nonfinancial projects should skip to the following section. Please make sure to address the PHA’s project as either a rehabilitation or a new construction project.]

IV. Rehabilitation or New Construction Questions

2. The following questions are related to **[rehabilitation]** or **[new construction]** of properties. These questions will allow us to understand how RAD influenced your initiatives. Would this project have been undertaken without RAD? Why or why not?
3. Were you able to complete the rehabilitation/new construction activities proposed in your RAD application? **[Interviewer: If “yes,” go to Question 6; if “no,” go to Question 4.]**
4. If you were not able to complete the rehabilitation/new construction activities proposed in your RAD application, is your project ongoing or was it canceled? **[Interviewer: If the project is ongoing, ask Questions a, b, and c below; if it was cancelled, skip to Question 5.]**
 - a. Where in the process are you?
 - b. What are the main reasons that the project is still ongoing and not complete?
 - c. Do you have any other comments on the status of the project that would be relevant?
5. If the project was canceled, please explain the circumstances for its being canceled. **[Interviewer: Only ask this question if the answer to Question 4 is that the project was canceled.]**
6. **[Interviewer: Please ask either Question (a) or (b) depending on whether new construction/rehabilitation has been completed (a) or not completed (b). If the answer to Question 3 was “yes,” then you will ask Question a. If the answer to Question 3 was “no” and to Question 4 was “project is ongoing,” then you will ask Question b.]**
 - a. If you completed rehabilitation/new construction, were you able to follow your rehabilitation/new construction plan, or did you have to make significant changes to your plan? If you did make significant changes, what was changed? Please describe and explain the reasons for making the changes. **[Interviewer: Skip to Question 7.]**
 - b. If you did not complete rehabilitation/new construction, have you been able to follow your rehabilitation/new construction plan, or have you had to make significant changes to your plan? If you had to make significant changes, what was changed? Please describe and explain the reasons for making the changes. **[Interviewer: Skip to Question 8.]**

7. If you completed rehabilitation or new construction, which, if any, issues has the RAD conversion addressed?
 - a. All pre-conversion issues. Please elaborate on some of the issues.
 - b. Accessibility requirements (Section 504).
 - c. Lead-based hazards.
 - d. Small units.
 - e. Vandalism.
 - f. Other. Please elaborate on what other issues you addressed.
8. Do you think that the RAD conversion has improved the physical condition of your property? Please describe the most significant improvements. Do you think the RAD project will be able to sustain the physical improvements over the long run out of future project income and reserves?
9. Have you been able to follow your planned schedule for completion or have you experienced significant delays? If you have encountered significant delays, what factors have caused those delays? Note all that apply. Explain in detail delays that were unusual or were unique to the RAD program and the length of the delay (for example, a few weeks, a few months, or several months).
 - a. Financing delays (for example, delays in lender approvals or release of funds).
 - b. Planning and design delays (for example, delays due to changes in project scope).
 - c. Construction delays (for example, delays due to ordering materials, labor shortages, and bad weather).
 - d. Site development delays (for example, discovery of underground storage tanks, asbestos, or lead paint).
 - e. Regulatory/permitting delays (for example, historic preservation, environmental).
 - f. Inspection and Certificate of Occupancy delays (for example, delays due to difficulties with scheduling inspections).
 - g. Administrative delays (for example, HUD-related delays such as slow approvals and responses to program questions).
 - h. Other significant delays. Please explain and indicate if they were related to RAD.
10. If your project experienced significant delays, what would you have done differently to avoid schedule delays?

[Interviewer: The next question addresses efforts made by HUD or other sources of assistance.]

11. If your project experienced significant delays, what efforts did HUD or other sources make to prevent or correct schedule delays? In your opinion, are there additional efforts that HUD or other sources could have undertaken?

V. Administration, Management, and Financial Performance Questions

[Interviewer: Except for the PHA administrative questions, the other questions in this section do not apply if the respondent(s) answered “no” to Question 3 (i.e., did not complete rehabilitation or new construction or project was canceled).]

Thank you for your responses to questions about new construction and or rehabilitation. We are now going to move to questions related to how conversion through RAD has affected your PHA in terms of administration, property management, and financial performance of the property.

PHA Administration Questions

I am going to ask a couple questions about the administration of your PHA.

12. Has RAD conversion affected the administration of your PHA? If so, describe these effects (for example, organizational structure, policies and procedures, reporting requirements, operations).
13. **[Interviewer: Only ask this question if the answer to Question 12 is “yes.”]** If there have been any administrative changes as just discussed due to RAD conversion, have they been beneficial, a burden, or neutral to the PHA? Please give specific examples.
14. What have you done to communicate to residents their Choice Mobility Option and the Right to Return? Have you gotten any questions from tenants about either?

Property Management Questions

[Interviewer: Only ask property management questions if the PHA answered “yes” to Question 3 and is therefore done with conversion. If the PHA answered “no” to Question 3, skip to Question 28.]

15. We are now going to move to questions related to property management. Property management is the operation, control, and oversight of real estate. This does not refer to ownership. It includes activities such as onsite property management, leasing, maintenance, and/or administration. Does the PHA manage the property, or does a new entity manage the property?
16. Have property management policies and procedures changed since converting your property through RAD? Please explain how they have changed, why they have not changed, or if you are uncertain about any changes.
17. Do you have any concerns about how the property is being managed after conversion under RAD? Please explain why or why not.

18. Have you noticed any changes in the following measures—rental delinquency, occupancy/vacancy, turnover, or time on market—since conversion through RAD? Have they increased, decreased, stayed the same, or is it too soon to tell?
 - a. If you experienced a change in the measures, which of the measures (delinquency, occupancy/vacancy, turnover, or time on market) have changed the most?
 - b. Do you have details about that change? For instance, how much did it change?
19. Do you have properties that have not converted through RAD? If so, has RAD had any positive or negative effect on those properties in your portfolio that have remained as public housing?

Property Financial Performance Questions

[Interviewer: Only ask property financial performance questions if the PHA answered “yes” to Question 3 and is therefore done with conversion. If the PHA answered “no” to Question 3, skip to Question 28.]

We are now going to move on to property financial performance questions.

20. In your opinion, has the property reached stabilized occupancy since conversion?
[Interviewer: If yes, ask Question a; if no, ask Question b.]
 - a. If yes, how long did it take from the completion of conversion or rehabilitation/new construction to reach stabilized occupancy?
 - i. Is the stabilized occupancy rate sufficient to meet rent revenue targets?
 - b. If not, how long has it been since completion of conversion or rehabilitation/new construction, and how much more time do you expect to need to achieve stabilized occupancy?
 - i. Once you achieve stabilized occupancy, will it be sufficient to meet revenue targets?
21. Is your property currently earning more, as much, or less revenue (such as Housing Assistance Payments contract payment, tenant payment, and other revenues) than it received before conversion?

[Interviewer: The next three questions relate to operating expenses. To clarify, the definition of an operating expense is an expense incurred in carrying out a real estate project’s day-to-day activities, including utilities, maintenance expenses, security, insurance, asset management, and other short-term costs.]

22. Is your property currently incurring greater, the same, or lower operating expenses than it was paying before conversion? Have there been any changes in expenditures for maintenance, utilities, security, or other property management items?

- a. **[Interviewer: If the respondent answers “I don’t know,” please ask the following question.]** What limitations are you experiencing that cause you to be uncertain of the answer (for example, lack of data or staffing)?
23. Is your property currently earning enough revenue to meet all of its operating expenses? Its scheduled reserves for replacement payment? Its mortgage debt payment? Is it generating positive cash flow after meeting all of its scheduled obligations?
 - a. **[Interviewer: If the respondent answers “I don’t know,” please ask the following question.]** What limitations are you experiencing that cause you to be uncertain of the answer (for example, lack of data or staffing)?
24. In the next 5 to 10 years, how do you expect this project to perform financially?
 - a. Generate positive cash flow (in other words, revenues exceed expenses).
 - b. Just break-even.
 - c. Generate negative cash flow (in other words, revenues insufficient to cover operating expenses, debt service, and reserves).
 - d. Unsure or do not know.
25. If your project generates positive cash flow over the next 5 to 10 years, how do you think you would use that cash flow?
 - a. Invest in the project. How?
 - b. Invest in other projects. How?
 - c. Spend on other affordable housing activities. Which ones?
 - d. Not sure.
26. Has your project faced any of the following financial challenges? Note all that apply. Please provide specific examples for each challenge identified.
 - a. Late payments on debt.
 - b. Insufficient cash flow to fully fund reserves for replacement.
 - c. Unexpected expenditures.
 - d. Unexpected declines in revenue.
 - e. Other challenges (please describe).
 - i. **[Interviewer: If the respondent answered yes to any of the above examples, including other, please ask the following question.]** How did you manage these challenges, and what steps did you take to resolve the situation?
27. Have there been many households for which rent changed after RAD conversion? Are the rent increases being phased in over some time period?
28. In your opinion, why do you think rents did or did not change? Was it due to an increase in unit size? Differences in income eligibility requirements? Some other factors?

VI. General Questions

We are now going to move on to the last section of the interview, which covers general questions. These questions were asked during the initial interview. Now that the conversion process is (mostly) complete, we would like to know your opinions on these same topics.

29. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being worst, 10 being best), how would you rate the conversion process under RAD?
30. What changes would you recommend HUD make to the RAD program?
31. Would you recommend RAD to other PHAs?
32. If you had the chance to do it again, would you still apply for RAD?
33. Are there any lessons learned that would be helpful for other projects preparing to go through a RAD conversion?
34. Did you build any new common areas in your project? If so, please describe them.
35. Is there anything else you would like to share that would help our understanding of the effect of RAD on public housing?