

Guide for Ethnographic Follow-up Interviews (120-180 minutes)

Notes: Ethnographic interviews should follow a conversational style and follow the respondent's lead. Each interview will cover the primary areas in this guide with highly tailored follow-up and probe questions based on the respondent's situation. These questions should be used as the basis for a conversation about these housing topics and other situational factors affecting or affected by the housing situation (including Rapid Re-housing in particular). Depending on the respondent, the conversation is expected to take 2 to 3 hours, with approximately one hour devoted to the photo elicitation module.

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to talk with me again today. As you know, I work for Abt Associates, an independent research company. We are helping the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to do a study to understand the experiences of households that receive rapid re-housing assistance after experiencing homelessness. We appreciate your willingness to stay in touch with the research team over time during and after your rapid re-housing support. Today I want to build on the things we've talked about previously in your interview(s), our visits, and check-in calls.

The interview will take between two and three hours to complete. You can stop the interview at any time and you can choose not to answer any question. Your responses will not affect your eligibility for any program or benefits. The information you provide will be kept confidential and only used for this study. Only members of the research team will have access to the information you share, which is protected from Rapid Re-housing program staff and from everyone else by a Certificate of Confidentiality. The collection of this information has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget. At the end of the interview, you will be paid \$50 [*first follow-up interview*] / \$100 [*second follow-up interview*] payment in appreciation for your time. If you've made a housing photo journal, you'll also be paid \$25 in thanks for your time to prepare that.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 2528-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is approximately three hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

I would like to take notes and audio record the interview to make sure I have an accurate record of what you say. Is that okay with you? Do you have any questions before we start?

Housing history/stability

1. First I'd just like to hear overall how things are going for you and your family living/staying [for sheltered and doubled-up households] here. [*Interviewer: add appropriate probes based on what's shared and use questions from later sections as follow-up now, as appropriate.*]

- a. Have you moved since the last time we talked? If yes, please tell me about the last place you lived. How long were you there? Why did you leave?
- b. Please tell me overall what it's like living/staying here.

For those in own housing

- i. What do you like about this apartment? About this neighborhood?
- ii. What do you dislike about this apartment? About this neighborhood?
- iii. (As applicable) What is it like for your family to live in this apartment? And neighborhood?
- iv. How long do you think you'll be here? Where do you think you'll go when you leave? How will that happen?

For those in emergency shelter

- i. Can you tell me about what brought you to the shelter? (*Confirm if they are still receiving RRH or when shelter entry happened relative to RRH end.*)
- ii. Where were you staying before you were at the shelter? (*Follow up as needed about leaving that housing situation.*)
- iii. Have you been in touch with your case manager from the RRH program? If yes, what came from that? If no, is there a reason why not?
- iv. (As applicable) What is it like for your family to stay in this shelter? And neighborhood?
- v. How long do you think you'll be here? Where do you think you'll go when you leave? How will that happen?

For those doubled-up

- i. Can you tell me how you came to be staying here/with [names/relationship]? (*Confirm if they are still receiving RRH or when doubling up happened relative to RRH end.*)
- ii. Where were you staying before you were here? (*Follow up as needed about leaving that housing situation.*)
- iii. Have you been in touch with your case manager from the RRH program? If yes, what came from that? If no, is there a reason why not?
- iv. (As applicable) What is it like for your family to stay in this shelter? And neighborhood?
- v. How long do you think you'll be here? Where do you think you'll go when you leave? How will that happen?

- c. [All] What is your relationship with the landlord [or leaseholder/owner, if doubled-up] like?
 - i. [If in current RRH] Do you communicate with the landlord directly? Does the program communicate with him/her?
 - ii. Please tell me about your overall experience with the landlord, including their responsiveness to issues in the apartment, treatment of you, etc. Have you had

any issues with the landlord? Or the quality of the housing?

2. [As needed, if not known from previous interviews] How does your housing situation now compare to your housing situation before you went to the shelter and got into [RRH program name]?

Rapid re-housing support

3. Are you still in the rapid re-housing program [Y/N]?
4. [If yes, still in RRH] What does that entail (e.g., services/meeting with a case manager, rental assistance)?
 - a. *Case management follow-up questions:* I'd like to hear more about the kinds of services you've gotten from your case manager and what it's been like for you—both going through the process and how helpful it has been to you. Can you tell me more?
 - Probes as needed:

What kinds of assistance does the cases manager provide to you? What services do/did you receive? Who provided them? Did your case manager help to arrange for services for you? What did the case manager do? Please tell me about your experience with your case manager, for example how she decides what kind of assistance you get and for how long. Has your case manager been involved with your landlord in any way; how? Overall what do you think of the *services* you've received since you got into rapid re-housing? How helpful were the services to you/your children/your family? What do you think would have happened if you had not received these services?
 - a. When you have your next appointment with your case manager, would you be willing for me to come with you?
 - b. *Housing search and move-in assistance follow-up questions:* I'd like to hear more about the housing search and/or move-in assistance you've gotten and what it's been like for you—both going through the process and how helpful it has been to you. Can you tell me more?
 - Probes as needed:

Has your case manager been involved with your landlord in any way; how? Overall what do you think of the *housing search and/or move-in assistance* you've received since you got into rapid re-housing? How helpful was this to you/your children/your family? What do you think would have happened if you had not received it?
 - c. *Rental assistance follow-up questions:* I'd like to hear more about the rental assistance you've gotten through the program and what it's been like for you—both going through the process and how helpful it has been to you. Can you tell me more?
 - Probes as needed:

How long have you gotten rental assistance/help paying the rent? How much is it/how much of your rent does it cover? Has that amount stayed the same since you got into the program or changed (how)? Do you know how the amount of your assistance is/was calculated? Was the amount and length of assistance clear from the start? What about any other expectations from [RRH program]? Do you know what your rent assistance will be moving forward? Do you understand how that's decided? How helpful (or not) is the help you get from [RRH program name] for rent? Do you think your household will be able to

afford to pay the rent for this unit after the RRH assistance ends? For how long do you think you will be able to afford it? Overall what do you think of the *rental assistance* you've received since you got into rapid re-housing? How helpful was this assistance to you/your children/your family? What do you think would have happened if you had not received it?

5. *[If yes, still in RRH]* Is this the only apartment you've lived in since you got RRH support, or have you lived in more than one apartment while you were in [RRH program name]? *[Interviewer note: we do not expect many participants to have moved during their RRH participation.]*
[If moved]:
 - a. How many times have you had to move since you got into the RRH program (that is, since you left the shelter)?
 - b. Please tell me about the reasons that you moved out of that/those apartment(s).

6. *[If program services or rental assistance ending soon]*
 - a. Do you know when your assistance will end? What information were you given about your services/assistance ending? What did you think about the information and communication you got?
 - b. How are you feeling about it coming to an end? *[Interviewer: we are interested in internal states like anxious, nervous, calm/fine, angry, confused, etc.]*
 - c. What do you think you'll do when it ends? (I.e., stay here and cover the rent, get help from others to pay the rent, get roommates, move somewhere else) *[Interviewer: here we are interested in practical next steps they expect to take.]*
 - d. How do you think the end of your services/rental assistance will affect your family?

7. If you think you're going to move, what are the reasons you'll move? (E.g., have to for affordability, to be closer to family or work, want to move to different area, etc.)
 - a. Do you know where you might go? How did you/will you find that place?
 - b. How does/do you think your next housing will compare to where you lived while you were in RRH?
 - c. Do you expect your next housing experience to be different from others you've had because of the RRH program (e.g., from services/support, obtaining a landlord reference, etc.)?
 - d. When you're looking for new housing (or moving), would you be willing for me to come with you?

8. *[If no, no longer in RRH]*
 - a. How have things been—money-wise and otherwise—since your rapid re-housing ended?
 - b. Is there a time when you thought you could use additional assistance (services or rental assistance)? Did you contact the RRH program case manager? Why or why not? Did you receive assistance?
 - c. Have you moved since you left the RRH program? If so, tell me about that.
 - Probes as needed:
How many times have you moved since you left the RRH program? What were the reasons you moved out of your RRH housing? Did you get back your security deposit? How did your (first) moving experience after RRH compare to moving into the RRH

housing—in terms of housing search/finding a unit, working with landlords, getting the lease set up, moving in with friends or family, going to a shelter, or going to an unsheltered location?

9. Overall, what has your experience been with the RRH program?
 - a. What has been the *most helpful* to you?
 - b. What has been the *least helpful* to you?
 - c. Were there services offered to you that you *didn't* use? What were they and what were the reasons you didn't use them?
 - d. Are there parts of the program you found burdensome or difficult? Tell me about those.
 - e. If you were going to give one piece of advice to the people who design or run this program, what would it be?

Financial status, including housing costs/rent burden

10. Overall, how has money been...
 - a. [*Currently in RRH*] since you moved into this unit (with RRH support)? How do you think RRH has changed your financial situation?
 - b. [*Post-RRH*] since you left the RRH program? Do you think that having been part of RRH has affected your financial situation since you left the program? (E.g., through being able to pay off debts, working more, gaining financial management skills/habits)

11. Last time we talked, you walked me through your financial situation with your expenses and income. I want to find out if any of that has changed since our last interview. [*Interviewer: pre-populate the table with their last financial snapshot and note any changes.*]
 - a. **Expenses:** First of all, let's go over your monthly bills. This is the amounts you pay every month for set expenses. You can start by listing off your bills. I'll follow up to make sure we didn't miss anything.

Researcher: ask about these categories if not mentioned:

Category	Last Reported [DATE] <i>Pre-populate this column</i>	Current <i>Use check marks for no change and enter specific changes.</i>
Housing (rent):		<i>Ask: How manageable does that rent feel to you? How long do you think you can pay that much?</i>
Utilities	--	
Heat		
Water		
Electricity		
Phone		
Cable		
Internet		
Other?		

Transportation	--	
Car loan payment		
Car insurance		
Gas		
Car maintenance		
Public transit (bus, train, subway)		
Cabs/car share/paying someone for rides		
Debt payments (other than car)	--	
Credit cards (Visa, Master Card, American Express, Discover)		
Store credit cards		
Loan through a bank		
Student Loan		
Health care related debt		
Other loans		
Money owed to other people		
Additional insurance (renters insurance; disability or life insurance; out-of-pocket health insurance)		
Purchases on payment plans (furniture, electronics, home repairs, etc.)		
Child support		
Other monthly payments?		

12. Have there been any times since you lived here when you...

- a. Had trouble paying the rent? Please tell me about that situation. How many times/how often? What happened? How did you handle it? Did you reach out to your case manager?
- b. Had to skip other bills or expenses to pay the rent? Please tell me about that situation. How many times/how often? What happened? How did you handle it?

13. What else do you spend on every month? Have any of these changed since we last talked?

Category	Last Reported [DATE]	Current <i>Use check marks for no change and enter specific changes.</i>
Childcare and babysitters		
Groceries		
Eating out/ordering in/fast food		
Entertainment and health (movies, concerts, lottery tickets/casinos, books, magazines, gym, classes, etc.)		
Clothes, shoes, and accessories		
Personal care		

Baby or children's supplies		
Money to support other family members (who/where?)		
Deposits to savings, retirement, or investments		
Deposits to savings for down payment on a house		
Financial help for family members		
Other expenses – please specify		

Researcher: [Add up the expenses.] Okay, it looks like you spend about \$_____ per month. Does that sound right?

14. **Income:** Now I'd like to know about money you have coming into the house.

Source	Last Reported Amount (Frequency) [DATE]	Current Amount (Frequency)
Paychecks (self)		
Paychecks (spouse/partner)		
Paychecks (dependent)		
Payment for work in cash		
Other compensation from work (overtime, bonuses, reimbursements, etc.)		
Money from family or friends		
Child support		
Social Security (disability or retirement)		
Public benefits (TANF, SNAP, etc.)		
Annuities/settlements		
Investment income		
Trades in kind		
Gifts/presents		
Other Income – please specify		

Researcher: [Add up amounts] So that sounds like about \$_____ per month. Does that sound about right?

15. **As applicable:** Note any difference between amount spent and amount coming in.

- a. If negative, how do you cover the shortage? How do you decide what not to pay/what trade-offs to make when you come up short?
- b. Are you coming up short all the time, frequently, every so often?
- c. If positive, what do you do with any difference? How do you decide what to spend any leftover on?
- d. Has your financial situation changed since you got RRH/your RRH support ended?

16. *Food Security*: Have you had any times in the last month where you didn't have enough money for food? Please tell me about that.
17. (*Material deprivation*) Have there been times in the last month you or your family had to go without other things (things other than food) because you didn't have enough money? (Probe about medical care, transportation, clothing or personal items, leisure activities, rent or utilities.)
18. Have there been times since the last time we talked that you had to go without something specifically to afford your housing (rent or utilities—*probe*). How did you decide to make that trade-off? How did it affect you?

Housing Photo Journal/Photo elicitation (60 minutes)

Notes: Participants will have previously shared digital copies of 20-30 photos with their Abt interviewer, who will bring print-outs of the photos to the interview. The purpose of having the photos printed out is so that participants can arrange the photos in any way they choose to tell their housing photo journal story. Interviewers should have a copy of the Housing Photo Journal guide with them to reference the prompts and note which categories of prompts participants took their pictures in.

Now I'd like to talk with you about the photos that you took for your housing photo journal. I've printed out the ones you shared with me earlier. Here they are. I'd like to ask you to arrange them in any order you like and then talk me through what they're showing and telling about your life and your experiences with housing.

Questions to move forward discussion:

- Where do you want to start?
- Can you tell me about this picture?
 - Tell me about why you took this picture.
 - Is this picture in response to one of the prompts we sent/which one?
 - What is it showing?
 - Who are the people in this picture?
 - What's happening in this picture?
 - Can you describe what's happening around this picture (that is, what is not in the frame)?
 - How does this picture make you feel about your home and neighborhood?
- What does this picture tell somebody about your home life/neighborhood?
- How does this picture/talking about this picture make you feel? What do you like best about this picture?
- Why do you want to tell me about this picture?
- In what ways is this picture important to you?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- What does talking about this picture feel like?
- What do you like best about this picture?
- What do you feel when you look at this picture?
- Are there any negative parts of your life that aren't included in these pictures?

- What do you want someone looking at this picture to think, feel, or know about your life?
- How do the things in this picture make you feel?
- What do I need to know about your home to understand this picture?