

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

Text Ed Study Informed Consent Form

You have the opportunity to participate in a project called the *Text Ed* study. This research project will test an innovative text messaging system called *Text Ed*, designed to help you apply for financial aid and enroll in college. The *Text Ed* messages will provide important information and reminders to help you in the college application and enrollment process. The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has contracted with MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization, and Dr. Lindsay Page from the University of Pittsburgh to conduct this study at select Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) nationwide. In addition, MDRC is subcontracting with [TBD technology partner] to provide text messaging services.

How the study works:

To test the effectiveness of the customized text messages, clients who agree to be in the study will be entered into a simple lottery. The lottery will place each client into one of two groups:

- **The EOC Services Group.** Clients in this group will have access to all of the EOC programs, supports, and services typically provided at [insert site name].
- **The EOC Services plus *Text Ed* Group.** Clients in this group will receive the *Text Ed* messages (in English), as well as access to all of the EOC programs, supports, and services typically provided at [insert site name].

You will have a roughly 50% chance of being assigned to the “EOC Services Group” and a roughly 50% chance of being assigned to the “EOC Services plus *Text Ed* Group.” The decision is made by a computer and is not based on clients’ personal characteristics or background.

Who is eligible for the study?

You can participate if you:

- Are age 18 and over
- Go through the EOC’s intake process during the study’s enrollment period
- Have already earned a high school diploma or equivalent and are not currently enrolled in college
- Intend to enroll at a postsecondary institution or program by the fall of 2020
- Are willing and able to receive text messages in English from EOC staff (about 1-2 messages per week) with the understanding that standard messaging rates may apply.

Potential benefits of participating:

- Your participation will help Education Opportunity Centers like [EOC site] and other programs learn about whether text messaging can help individuals like yourself who are seeking to enroll in college and obtain financial aid.

Data to be shared with the study team:

If you agree to take part in the study, the background information you provided at intake will be shared

with the MDRC study team. You will also be asked to provide some additional information via a Baseline Information Form which will also be shared with the MDRC study team. Updates to the information you provide via the Baseline Information Form may also be shared with the MDRC study team by EOC staff.

Using some of the information you provided when you signed up at the EOC, the study team will obtain college enrollment information from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database and financial aid information (specifically, whether or not you submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the award amount) from the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid (FSA) database. If you are placed in the "EOC Services plus *Text Ed* Group," the study team will also collect details of the *Text Ed* text messages.

Your participation is voluntary:

Your participation in the study is voluntary, and will not affect your access to the regular EOC programs and services at [EOC site]. If you join the study and are selected to receive the *Text Ed* messages, you may choose to stop receiving the messages at any time. You may also ask to opt out of the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study, any information collected by the study team before that time may still be used for the study. If you choose not to participate in the study, you may still access regular EOC programs and services, but you will not have the opportunity to receive the *Text Ed* text messages.

Confidentiality:

All information collected by MDRC for the study will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Your name, the name of your EOC, or the names of EOC staff will not be used in published reports.

Paper research records that include identifying information such as names, addresses, or Social Security Numbers will be kept in locked filing cabinets at MDRC. Electronic identifying information will be kept on secure servers operated by the Department of Education, to which only a limited number of study team staff will have access. Data collected by the study team for this project will be available only to members of the study team and the Department of Education.

A restricted use file with project data will be created that could be used by other researchers, but it will not include any of your personal identification information (for example, name, date of birth, Social Security Number). To obtain access to the restricted use file, researchers would need to submit an application that explains how they will use the data and justification for requesting the data. If an application is approved, researchers would be subject to strict rules regarding the use of the data.

All data collection activities will be conducted in full compliance with the Department of Education regulations to maintain the confidentiality of data obtained on private persons and to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects as contained in the Department of Education regulations. These activities will also be conducted in compliance with other Federal regulations including the Privacy Act of 1974, P.L. 93-579, 5 USC 552 a; the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 USC 1232g, 34 CFR Part 99; and related regulations, including but not limited to: 41 CFR Part 1-1 and 45 CFR Part 5b and, as appropriate, the Federal Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (34 CFR 97).

Potential discomfort and risks:

All study team employees at MDRC have had training on protecting the confidential and personal information collected. Although there are always some risks when personal data is collected, MDRC has put many safeguards in place to securely store this data and maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the personal information being collected.

Withdrawal from the study:

As mentioned above, you can withdraw from this study without any penalty at any time by emailing TextEd@mdrc.org or calling 1-800-221-3165. Please note that texting a request for messages to stop will end the messages, but you will still need to email TextEd@mdrc.org or call 1-800-221-3165 to withdraw from the study. If you withdraw, any information collected by the study team before that time may still be used for this study.

Who to call if you have any questions:

If you have any questions about this study or about your rights as a research subject, you may email the study team at TextEd@mdrc.org or call 1-800-221-3165.

What does signing this form mean?

I have read and understand the information above. I know that my participation is voluntary and that all information about me will be kept confidential. I know that I can stop being in the study at any time. By consenting to participate in this study, I give my permission for the EOC to communicate with me via text message at my cell phone number. I understand that standard messaging rates will apply, and that I can opt out of receiving the *Text Ed* messages at any time.

MDRC will use my name, Social Security Number, and Date of Birth to request academic records data from the National Student Clearinghouse. I understand that the privacy of my education records is protected under FERPA. I further understand that I may waive that protection and give access to my records. I agree to waive my rights under FERPA, and I give my permission for any college or university which I attend to release my academic records and Social Security Number to MDRC for this research for up to five years after being randomly assigned.

Name of Client (Please Print)	Date of Birth	Date
Signature of Client		

Notice of Confidentiality. Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for the study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific Education Opportunity Center (EOC) grantee or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your EOC to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are 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 XXXX-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 5 minutes including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collected. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-XXXX.

OMB NO.:
EXPIRATION DATE: