**EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES USED IN TECHHIRE AND SWFI GRANT PROGRAMS
SITE VISIT TOPIC QUESTIONS FOR THE SIX RCT SITES**

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you again for taking the time to talk with me today. My name is [INTERVIEWER'S NAME] and I work for MDRC, a research company in New York City. With me today is [NOTE TAKER'S NAME] who will be taking notes.

PURPOSE: The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) hired MDRC and our partner Westat to conduct a study to describe how TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grantees and their partners designed and implemented their grant programs, built partnerships, and what challenges came up along the way and how they were overcome. The final product will be a description of the implementation strategies, an analysis of what lessons grantees and their partners learned during implementation, and a study of the impacts of TechHire and SWFI on the program participants.

HOW YOU WERE SELECTED: In the sites included in the RCT analysis, we are interviewing key staff from the grantee organizations as well as the partnering organizations.

INFORMATION TO BE COLLECTED: The reason for these interviews is to collect your thoughts on how each grant program was designed and implemented, what role each partner played, and what worked well and what did not work well. We will ask about the training program, the support services provided to participants, employment services and job placements, and the program's participants.

RISKS AND PRIVACY: There is little risk to being part of this study. We use all data we collect only for the purposes we describe. Your name will not be linked to any of your responses. In our reports we may include quotes from our respondents, but we will either ask your permission before including a quote that could be attributed to you or we will present the quote in such a way that you could not be identified. Participating in the interview may not help you individually, but it may help DOL better understand how to improve employment and training programs in the future.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your participation is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not have any impact on your position or your organization's partnership on the grant. You can take a break, skip questions or stop participating at any time.

[NOTE TAKER'S NAME] is here with me to take notes, but know that the information you share in this discussion will not be shared with any of your colleagues, and will be kept private.

We have planned for this discussion to last 60 minutes. Is that still okay?

With your permission I would like to record this discussion to help us fill any gaps in our written notes. The recordings, possible transcripts, and any notes we have will be stored on MDRC's secure server.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per respondent. Send comments concerning this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office, Room 2218, Constitution Ave., Washington, DC 20210. 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 OMB control number for this information collection is 1290-XXXX. .

Do you have any questions? [ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS]

May I turn on the audio recorder now?

[TURN ON RECORDER] Now that the recorder is on, do you still give your consent to be recorded?
[WAIT FOR VERBAL CONSENT]

Content Area	Questions*	Interviews			
		Grantee Mgmt. Staff	Grantee Support Staff**	Employer Partners	Other Partners
I. Introduction					
	1. What is your role at [organization], and how long have you been in this role? 2. What is your role with regard to the [TH/SWFI program]?	X	X	X	X
II. Program Start-Up					
A. General **B. Staffing and Roles** **C. Goals** **D. Funding**	3. Why did your organization decide to apply for a TH/SWFI grant or choose to participate in [TH/SWFI program]? 4. What did the first six months of implementation look like? 5. How would you describe your organization's role on the grant? 6. Have there been any changes to the staffing structure at your organization since the start of the grant? 7. Within your larger organization, who would you say has been the project champion of [TH/SWFI program]? 8. How would you describe the overall goals for the [TH/SWFI program]? Have these goals changed over time? 9. How did the team determine which components or services to include in the design of [TH/SWFI program]? How do those components relate to the program's goals? 10. Apart from the TH/SWFI grant, are there other sources of funding supporting [TH/SWFI program] components and services? Describe.	X	X	X	X
III. Targeted Geographic Area and Populations					
A. Service Area Context	11. What geographic service area does [TH/SWFI program] cover? Why was this area selected? 12. What are the major industries and/or large employers in the area? 13. Have any major events recently impacted the economic environment, such as big employer closings or moves? 14. What are the demographics of the service coverage area (e.g.,	X	X		

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B. Target Population	race/ethnicity, immigrants, income level)? 15. How did the team decide which populations to target for [TH/SWFI program]? Has the target population changed at all over time?				
IV. Partnerships					
A. General **B. Employer Partners**	16. How did you select which organizations to partner with? 17. What challenges have you encountered in building or maintaining partnerships for this grant? 18. What financial or in-kind contributions have partners offered? 19. Are other local employment service networks (e.g., American Job Centers) involved with the delivery or management of the program? 20. In your opinion, which organizations are your strongest grant partners? 21. What services, if any, does the program provide to employer partners? 22. What are the responsibilities of employer partners in [TH/SWFI program]? 23. Are employer partners hiring from the program? Why or why not? Do any employers have hiring quotas with the program? 24. Are employer partners shifting any recruitment efforts to be more domestically focused rather than international? 25. Are program graduates guaranteed jobs or promotions with any employers?	X	X	X	
V. Participant Recruitment					
	26. Describe the program's efforts to recruit participants. 27. In marketing your program to potential participants, what do you think is your most effective "pitch" to draw people in and motivate them to enroll?	X	X	X	X

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	28. Have recruitment strategies changed over time? If yes: why, in what ways, and what was the effect of the change? 29. What challenges have you encountered in recruiting participants? 30. Are there any recruitment "best practices" that you think would be helpful for other organizations to know if they were to try to implement a similar program? 31. Are there programs offered in your community that are similar to [TH/SWFI program]?				
VI. Intake and Assessment					
	32. How long does the intake process take, from the moment a person expresses interest in applying to establishing his/her eligibility? 33. Describe the intake and assessment process for incumbent workers. How, if at all, does the process for incumbent workers differ from the process for all other eligible individuals? 34. Have eligibility criteria changed over time? Has the way that staff establish eligibility changed over time? 35. Once eligibility is established and random assignment has occurred, what is the next step for individuals assigned to the program group? When are individuals considered to be "enrolled" in the program and tracking starts for them in the DOL MIS? 36. Does the program have any further interactions with individuals randomly assigned to the control group?	X	X	X	X
VII. Training Services					
A. Training	37. For what occupations are people most commonly trained by [TH/SWFI program]? 38. What are the most common modes of training - class-based, online, or offered on the job?	X	X		X

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B. Participant Engagement	39. Who provides the classroom-based training? Are any individuals in the classes not enrolled in [TH/SWFI program]? 40. Does [TH/SWFI program] provide basic skills training – basic math, literacy, or English language skills? 41. What is the typical sequence of activities in training? 42. Have any training services changed over time? How and why? 43. How are on-the-job placements made? Are participants ever guaranteed a regular, unsubsidized job at their work training placement upon completion of the program? 44. How is the training similar to or different from other training offered in the community? 45. If the employment landscape shifted – a new major employer established a base here, or a major employer shut down – how might the training program adjust to such a shift? 46. How do you determine if a participant is having trouble attending trainings or keeping up with the work? In these cases, what steps are taken to keep participants engaged? 47. What options are available to participants who, for various reasons, cannot complete the program? 48. How seriously do you feel participants take their training classes?				
VIII. Support Services					
A. Child Care	49. What are the major child care challenges encountered by local parents who are seeking training or education? 50. What were the biggest gaps in child care assistance in the local community? 51. Describe the child care assistance provided by [TH/SWFI program]. 52. Have any changes to child care assistance or procedures occurred over time for [TH/SWFI program] participants?	X	X	X	X

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B. Other	53. How is the TH/SWFI child care assistance similar to or different from child care assistance offered by your organization or in the community? 54. Describe the other major support services available to enrolled participants. Are any requirements placed on participants in order for them to receive these support services? 55. What services or supports are available to participants after they complete training (e.g., job search, job placement)? 56. Have any changes to these service offerings occurred over time? 57. How are the support services similar to or different from other support services offered by your organization or in the community?				
IX. Partner Feedback					
A. Impressions B. Working with Lead Grantee	58. Do you employ any graduates of the program? If no, why not? If yes, in what types of positions are they employed? 59. What are your impressions of the skills of program graduates? 60. To what extent are the support services provided by the program effective at alleviating barriers to employment for participants? 61. How satisfied are you with the program? 62. How has collaborating on this grant benefited your organization (e.g., more skilled workers, reduced recruitment costs, etc.)? 63. Did you have a relationship with the grantee prior to partnering with them on this grant? 64. Do you plan to collaborate with the grantee after the end of the grant period? If so, in what ways? 65. What are the challenges to continued collaboration?			X	X
X. Performance Management					
	66. How do you assess the quality and effectiveness of the training that the program offers?	X	X		

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	67. How do you assess the quality and effectiveness of the child care assistance offered? 68. How do you assess the quality and effectiveness of the other support services offered? 69. How do you track and assess the performance of your partners? 70. How do you track and assess the employment outcomes of program participants?				
XI. Reflections and Sustainability					
A. Reflections **B. Sustainability**	71. What kinds of technical assistance was most/least valuable to you during implementation? 72. How has participating in this grant program impacted your organization as a whole? 73. What do you believe have been the program's greatest successes to date? The program's main challenges? 74. If you were going to start the grant over again, is there anything you would do differently? 75. If another community was interested in implementing a program similar to [TH/SWFI program], what advice would you give them? 76. Are you planning to continue to offer this program past the current grant end date? If so, are you planning on making any program modifications? If not, why not? 77. Are there other approaches, strategies, or services that you believe would contribute to better outcomes for participants?	X	X	X	X

These are the general topics we will touch upon in interviews, and questions will be reworded and/or omitted as appropriate to the interviewee. For example, grantee staff will be asked why their organization decided to <u>apply</u> for the grant, while partner staff will be asked why they decided to <u>collaborate</u> on the grant. Some questions are appropriate only for particular respondents, and will be omitted for all others. For example, some questions about the hiring of program participants will be relevant only to employer partners. Finally, some questions will be asked only during

Round 1 or Round 2 site visits, while others will be asked during both visits to assess change over time. All such adjustments will be handled on a protocol-by-protocol basis.

**Grantee support staff may include data analysts, training instructors, or other staff at the lead grantee's organization who support the management and implementation of the grant program.