Evaluation of the Section 811
Project Rental Assistance Program – Phase II

Recruitment Letter and Interview Guide – Service Providers

SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEW – RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date:

Dear [SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATION MANAGER NAME]:

I am part of a research team at Abt Associates that is under contract to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a study on HUD's Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) program. The goal of the study is to track the implementation of the program and examine overall housing costs, healthcare utilization and the quality of life of program residents. As part of this study we are conducting interviews with select organizations that provide outreach and referral services, transition services, and long-term services and supports (LTSS) in six states, including [STATE]. We are reaching out to agencies involved in delivering services to PRA participants across the continuum of care.

The purpose of the interview is to understand your perspective on the implementation of the Section 811 PRA program. We will ask about outreach to the PRA target population, the resident application process, the process of tenants transitioning into PRA units, and the provision and adequacy of supportive services to non-elderly people with disabilities. In order to address these topics, we are hoping to speak with those staff members at your organization who manage the delivery of services for non-elderly persons with disabilities and who conduct outreach and referral services for the PRA program.

We will call you in a few days to ask whether you are interested and available for an interview. If you are, we can discuss scheduling and potential interviewees at your organization. We expect each interview to take about no more than 90 minutes. The time for any given respondent will vary depending on the scope of their responsibilities. We expect to conduct the interview in person at a site of your choosing, or by telephone if an in-person interview is not possible.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per response, including the time for scheduling the call, compiling information for the interview, and completing the interview. HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection information unless that collection displays a valid OMB control number 2528-0309, expiring xx-xx-xxxx.

During our visit to [STATE], we will also be conducting in-person surveys with Section 811 PRA residents. We may also ask for your assistance in coordinating with potential survey respondents. Our study is sponsored by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. This study is completely voluntary. We are not conducting an audit. All findings will be reported back to HUD in aggregate form, but given the small number of participating properties it may be possible to identify specific Section 811 sites. Your decision to participate or not will have no impact on your or your organization's ability to participate in the Section 811 program now or in the future. All responses will be kept private. We will not use your name or organization name or the names of any residents in any of our reports back to HUD.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact [SITE LEAD] at [SITE LEAD PHONE NUMBER]. You may also contact the Abt project director, Melissa Vandawalker at (617) 349-2611 or HUD's project officer for this study, Teresa Souza, at (202) 402-5540.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

[SITE VISIT LEAD]

SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEW – INTERVIEW GUIDE

State: _____

Organization: _____

Respondent Name(s): _____

Lead Contact Phone: _____

Lead Contact Email: _____

Date(s) of Interview(s): _____

Name and Titles of All Respondents:

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with us. Abt Associates has been contracted by HUD to conduct an evaluation of the Section 811 PRA program. We are speaking with service providers and referral agencies participating in the program in six of the states that are implementing the program. We are also talking with [GRANTEE] and [MEDICAID AGENCY] and other organizations that have responsibilities for the PRA program.

We hope that you will be candid in the information you provide about the program. The information you provide is crucial to improving programs that provide housing and services for non-elderly people with disabilities. In particular, we are interested in learning about your experience as a service provider or referral agency and how your organization interacts with residents, owners, and state agencies. In addition, HUD will use this information to inform the implementation of future rounds of Section 811 PRA grants.

While we will make every effort to protect your privacy, HUD staff will read our reports, and it is not possible to guarantee complete anonymity given the high level of HUD involvement in the PRA program effort. However, we will not use your name or your organization's name in reporting what we have learned during this onsite visit, and we will combine your responses with those of other organizations.

There may be some questions you may not be able to answer or that are more appropriate for other staff in your organization. Would it be possible for us to contact you or someone else you designate after the interview in case we have missed any necessary information in this interview?

Do you have any questions about the study before we begin?

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATION

(ASK OF ALL SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS)

1. I understand that you are the [POSITION at SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATION]. Is that correct? What are your responsibilities at [SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATION]? Can you briefly describe your experience?

2. I would like to confirm our understanding of your organization's role in the Section 811 PRA program. [ASK RESPONDENT TO DESCRIBE ROLE IN OUTREACH, TRANSITION SERVICES, AND ON-GOING SERVICES. CONFIRM OR CORRECT PRE-FILLED INFORMATION BELOW.]

(SITE LEADS WILL COMPLETE PRIOR TO INTERVIEW. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY. QUESTIONS ON PRA OUTREACH AND REFERRAL SERVICES WILL ONLY BE ASKED OF PROVIDERS WHO PRIMARILY OR EXCLUSIVELY SERVE PRA PARTICIPANTS.)

PRA Outreach and Referral Services	Transition Services	Ongoing Services
• Outreach to potential PRA participants • Refer applicants to PRA program • Conduct eligibility of applicants for PRA program • Refer applicants to specific PRA units	• Assist with locating and applying for affordable housing • Assist with moving: provide furnishing or other household goods • Assist with moving: housing application & interactions with landlords • Provide or establish health or supportive services during transition to new housing	• Provide tenancy support to clients • Provide LTSS to clients

3. I would like to confirm our understanding of who your organization serves, whether they are all individuals targeted for the PRA program in [STATE] (e.g., coming from institution, homeless, at risk) or a subset of these individuals? [SITE LEADS WILL COMPLETE IN ADVANCE.]

4. What is the geographic scope of your organization's work? Do you cover the whole state or just certain regions?

HOUSING LOCATING SERVICES FOR NON-ELDERLY CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

5. How do you work with your non-elderly clients to identify affordable housing options? Do these procedures differ depending on where the client is moving from (from an institution, experiencing homelessness, living with family)?

6. Besides PRA, what other options do your non-elderly clients have for affordable housing in the area you serve?

7. Does the available affordable housing meet the needs of your non-elderly clients? Do they meet client needs for:

    a. Geographic location (city/county, specific neighborhood)

      b.   Unit size

      c.   Access to transportation

      d.   Property characteristics and amenities (including accessibility)

      e.   Availability of health and supportive services

OUTREACH AND REFERRAL SERVICES FOR THE PRA PROGRAM

 (ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED THESE SERVICES IN QUESTION 2 AND WHO WORK PRIMARILY OR EXCLUSIVELY WITH PRA PARTICIPANTS]

Outreach to Potential PRA Participants

Now I would like to talk about your experience serving PRA applicants and residents specifically.

8. Describe the outreach activities that your organization conducts to potential PRA participants.

a. Were outreach activities integrated into existing programs or services or were new outreach programs created for the PRA program?
b. Describe the changes, if any, in tenant outreach methods since the beginning of the PRA program. Why where these changes made?
c. *(IF APPLICABLE)* Do outreach methods differ for different target populations of the PRA program? If yes, describe the differences.

9. Describe any successful strategies for gaining interest in the program from people in the target population.

10. Describe any challenges you have experienced with the outreach and referral process. How have these challenges been addressed?

11. Would you consider the PRA outreach and referral model successful? Why or why not? Are there any operational improvements that you would suggest for any of these activities?

12. Do you see any opportunities or barriers to participating in the PRA program for any specific target population?

13. Do you think the Section 811 PRA program target population is aligned with needs in the state or in the part of the state you serve? Please explain.

Application to the PRA Program

14. Are these procedures specific to the PRA program, or are PRA procedures combined or integrated with applications to other programs for which the applicant may be eligible?

15. What happens once an interested applicant has been identified for the PRA program? Describe how applicants apply for the PRA program and the role of your organization in that process. *(CONFIRM FROM EXISTING DOCUMENTS, IF APPLICABLE.)*

a. How do potential applicants receive applications?
b. How are applications submitted?
c. What agencies and staff process applications?
d. What information and documentation must an applicant provide?
e. Is there a centralized agency or staff person to whom all applicants are referred?

16. We would like to learn more about the eligibility determination your organization conducts for the PRA program. *(CONFIRM FROM EXISTING DOCUMENTS, IF APPLICABLE.)*

a. How is eligibility for the PRA program conducted?
b. When does eligibility determination happen?
c. What tools are used?
d. How are applicants determined to be an eligible member of the target population? (i.e. disability and Medicaid eligibility)
e. How are applicants determined to be eligible under the income requirements?
f. How are applicants determined to be eligible under the age requirements?
g. Do you consider other eligibility criteria for the PRA program in addition to income, age, disability, and eligibility for Medicaid?—For example, do you determine whether the applicant qualifies as a member of the target population because he/she is leaving an institutional setting or experiencing homelessness?
h. How long does it normally take between a referral and eligibility determination?
i. Do eligibility processes or requirements differ by target population?

17. Once a person is found eligible for PRA assistance, are they placed on a waiting list for a PRA unit? If not, why not. If yes:

a. What entity(ies) maintain the list?
b. Is it limited to applicants for PRA units, or does it include applicants for other programs?
c. How often is it updated?
d. How is priority for available units determined?
e. Where do clients stay while on a waiting list?

18. Are there any bridge subsidies available to the clients you work with while they wait for available PRA units?

Referral to PRA Units

19. Describe the process of referring clients to available and appropriate PRA units or properties.

a. What factors (e.g. unit size, accessibility features, etc.) are taken into consideration?
b. Which agencies/organizations are responsible for matching the applicant's requirements to an appropriate, available unit?
c. How many applicants are referred for each available unit?
d. How many unit choices does an applicant have under the program?
e. Are applicants able to tour the property and visit the specific unit before signing a lease?
f. How long does it normally take between when an applicant is determined eligible for the PRA program and occupancy in a PRA-funded unit? Does this differ by disability type or previous living situation?

20. Is your organization involved in conversations with property owners to assist in the screening of PRA applicants? If so, please describe this process. How have you worked with property owners and/or applicants to navigate owners' criteria for selecting tenants?

21. Is your organization involved in determining the quality and adequacy of a housing unit? If yes, please describe your role.

22. From your perspective, what is the quality of units that are being offered by the PRA program? How does the quality of units differ from other affordable housing options for non-elderly people in the area you serve?

   a. Quality of unit
   b. Quality of property
   c. Quality of neighborhood
   d. Accessibility of unit
   e. Accessibility of neighborhood (transportation, amenities, services)

TRANSITION SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED THESE SERVICES IN QUESTION 2.)

Assistance with Moving

23. Do you think there are sufficient resources available for residents as they move into new housing? Describe why or why not. What is missing?

24. Once a participant has determined where to live, describe the process for moving the client into their new home.

   a. Describe your organization's role in the moving in process. How do you interact with [GRANTEE], [MEDICAID AGENCY], property owner, or others during the moving-in process?
   b. How do you ensure timely coordination between available units and applicants who are ready to move into them?
   c. Has this process been different depending on the person's previous residence (moving from an institution or nursing facility, group home, or experiencing homelessness)?
   d. What has worked well about the move in process?
   e. Describe any challenges in the move in process.

Providing or Establishing Transition Services and Supports

25. What transition services and supports are available for clients as they move into new housing, either from your organization or from others? *(Probes: assistance with visiting properties and neighborhoods and completing applications, assistance meeting housing eligibility requirements, assistance with moving, obtaining furniture and house goods, tenant education, housekeeping skills, setting up utilities, accessibility modifications)*

   a. How are transition service needs determined?
   b. Who provides transition services?
   c. Do transition services differ based on target population?
   d. Do transition services differ by type of disability *(Probes: physical disability, mental health disability, intellectual or developmental disability.)*
   e. What funding sources are available to support transition services (e.g. MFP program, Medicaid waivers, state funds)?
   f. Do funding sources vary by population or type of disability?

26. How do clients learn about and access services and supports available to them while they move? Are clients assigned a service coordinator or case manager by your organization (or by others) to help them through the transition to new housing? If yes:

   a. Is this someone different than the person who may help coordinate their other services?
   b. How often do case managers meet or talk with clients?
   c. What assistance do case managers provide?
   d. For how long are transition services provided?
   e. Do you have a case management process that starts with the referral and pre-screening processes so that PRA clients receive assistance from referral through lease up? If yes, describe that process.

ONGOING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED THESE SERVICES IN QUESTION 2.)

Long-Term Supports and Services

27. After your client has moved in, what services does your organization provide and/or coordinate? (Probes: case management, development of individual service plans, access to HCBS waiver services, employment services, transportation)

   a. Do services differ based on target population or type of disability (physical disability, mental health disability, intellectual or developmental disability)? Describe the differences.
   b. What funding sources are available to support LTSS (e.g. MFP program, Medicaid waivers, state funds)?
   c. Do funding sources vary by population or type of disability?

28. How do clients learn about and access services available to them from your organization after they move to PRA units? Describe the process for determining and monitoring a participant's long-term service needs.

   a. Is a service plan developed?
   b. After a service plan is developed, how often is progress checked?
   c. How is it checked?
   d. Who is responsible for monitoring the service plan?
   e. What happens if a resident reports a problem with the services they are receiving?
   f. What happens if a resident reports needing a change to services or additional services? Can you describe that process?
   g. Who is responsible for updating the service plan?

29. Does your organization assign a service coordinator or case manager to work with residents after they have moved into PRA units? If yes:

   a. What is the role of the case manager?
   b. How often do case managers meet or talk with clients?
   c. How often do case managers (or other staff from your organization) meet or talk with property managers?

Availability of Services

30. Have the services you planned to use been available, appropriate, and sufficient for the people you are serving? What is the likelihood these services will continue to be available?

31. Are there services that are difficult to find, in short supply, or that funding streams do not cover? If yes, what are they?

32. Are there any services that are needed by your clients that are not currently covered by waivers or state plan services?

33. Are there any sources of flexible "do what it takes" funding that can be used to cover gaps in what Medicaid or other state programs cover?

34. [IF APPLICABLE] Does receiving PRA rental assistance provide quicker or more flexible access to services (e.g. priority on wait list or more flexible process for enrollment)?

Tenancy Support

35. We would like to learn more about the ongoing tenancy supports your organization provides to your clients.

   a. Do you help clients if they are having any issues with their property managers or landlords (e.g. lease violations, late payments, behaviors that jeopardize tenancy)? Has this been a problem? How has it been addressed?

   b. Do you help P clients if they are having any issues with their neighbors or other people in their building or property? Has this been a problem? How has it been addressed?

   c. Do you help clients if they are having any issues with their property managers or landlords (e.g. lease violations, late payments, behaviors that jeopardize tenancy)? Has this been a problem? How has it been addressed?

   d. Do you help clients if they are having any issues with health or support services staff? Has this been a problem? How has it been addressed?

   e. Do you help clients with certification or recertification for housing assistance?

36. Are there any tenancy support needs that are not being met for your clients? If yes, describe what supports or services are needed. Do you see any difference in tenancy support needs based on type of disabling condition or place of previous residence?

37. [IF APPLICABLE] Would you consider the PRA model successful in continuing to support tenants after they move into PRA units?

   a. Why or why not?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

38. [IF APPLICABLE] Overall, how has your organization's experience with [MEDICAID AGENCY] and [GRANTEE] for the PRA program working?

   a. Describe what works well about the PRA program.
   b. Describe what does not work well about the PRA program.
      c. Are there any operational improvements that you would suggest?

     d.   Is there anything you would change about the way you work with [GRANTEE] or [MEDICAID AGENCY] as part of the PRA program? If yes, what would you change and why.

46. [IF APPLICABLE] What advice would you give to organizations like yours in other states about participating in the PRA program?

47. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to mention about your experience serving your clients or with the PRA program?