

3/1/2018

NATIONAL FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY EVALUATION

Study Participants Interviews

[Protocol 4: Study Participant Interviews]

Introductory script

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response for this Government agency staff 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 2528-0296, expiring xx-xx-xxxx.

The information requested under this collection is protected and held private in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 402, 5 U.S.C.552 (Freedom of Information Act), 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974) and OMB Circular No. A-130.

[Note to interviewers: Please read the following script.]

My name is _____, and I am with MDRC, the organization that is conducting a study about the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Our goal today is to learn about your experiences in FSS. I will try to be as brief as possible.

The interview today should last about 90 minutes.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and there is no right or wrong answer – we just want to understand your experiences. There are no program consequences (i.e., loss of benefits) for deciding not to participate in the interview, or for deciding not to answer any particular question. Also please note that your name will not be associated with any information you provide.

We will be taking notes so we can later recall your perspectives more accurately. In addition, so we can stay focused on the conversation, we would like to record today's discussion. If at any point you would like me to pause or turn off the recorder, please let me know. I want to let you know that MDRC will not use your name in any reports or in any discussions with housing authority staff. For your participation in this interview you will receive \$40.

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Do you have any questions before we begin?

(Interviewer: at start of audio, state date, time, & interview #)

1. How long have you had a voucher?
2. How did you first learn about the FSS program?
3. Why did you decide to enroll in FSS? What drew you to the program?
4. How long have you been in the FSS program?
5. Did you come into the program with clear goals in mind? Did your case manager help you figure out your goals? Explain.
6. What are your FSS goals? How did you pick these goals? Did you work with your case manager to develop your initial or current goals?
7. Have your goals changed since you have been in the program? Why?
8. Did your case manager help you figure out how to achieve your goals, or did you already have a good idea about that? Explain.
9. How would you assess your progress toward your goals? Take one or two specific goals (employment and other) and discuss. What are the main influences behind your progress? [Probe: your own motivation? Own effort? Help from your case manager? Resources that FSS has provided?]
10. Have there been times when you were not working on your goals? What was the reason(s)?
11. Which goals have been easier / harder to meet? Why? What help have you received from the program to make it easier for you to work toward your goals (to get at how the program helps with goal attainment)
12. What's your current work status? Are you currently working or looking for work? Are you looking for a better job or advancement in your current job? Are you engaged in job training to help achieve that goal?
13. Given what attracted you to FSS, has the program met your expectations thus far? In what ways has it been different - better or worse - from what you expected?
14. Has the program been able to offer you useful services? Which ones have been most useful? Are there any services you hoped to receive that weren't available? Which ones?

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15. How often do you meet or communicate with your FSS case manager? Does that feel like the right frequency? Would you have preferred to communicate more or less often? Explain.
16. Do you usually reach out to your case manager or does she/he usually reach out to you? How satisfied are you with the way you communicate? What would you change?
17. What are the main issues you raise with your case manager or for which you need their help?
18. Are you familiar with the FSS escrow saving account? What do you think about this feature of the program? Do you like it? Why?
19. How do you get information about the status of your account? How often do you get this information?
20. Do you track your escrow balance? Do you know your current balance? Approximately, how much in escrow do you think you have?
21. When your income goes up, do you end up better off even though rent goes up too?
22. Do you factor rent increases into your decisions about work? Does the escrow account make that decision easier or harder?
23. What more do you need to do to receive the escrow in your account? Have you discussed this with your case manager?
24. Have you thought about what you might spend the escrow funds on?
25. What is the most important thing that motivates you to continue to stay involved in the FSS program?
26. If you could make changes to the FSS program, what would they be? What other help would you like to receive from the program?
27. Have you recommended the FSS program to other Section 8 voucher holders that you know? If yes, why, and what have you told them? If not, why not?

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