

INSTRUMENT 3: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE – MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY STAFF

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Home Visiting Career Trajectories

Key Informant Interview Guide – Management & Supervisory Staff

Key Informant Name:	Agency:
Title:	Email/Phone Number:

NOTE: Before reading the text below, the interviewer will distribute two copies of a consent form (Attachment A). The consent form will include the OMB control number and expiration date. The interviewee will sign and return one copy to the interviewer, and can keep a copy for his or her own records.

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today. My name is [NAME] and I'm here with [NAME]. We're from The Urban Institute, a policy research organization in Washington, DC. We have been funded through a collaborative effort between the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a study about the state of the home visiting workforce, including home visitors' characteristics, qualifications, and career pathways.

As part of this study, we are conducting a small number of key informant interviews with home visiting program managers and supervisors as well as focus groups with home visitors. In addition to conducting the interviews and focus groups, we are fielding an online survey of home visiting staff throughout the country to learn more about home visitor demographics, education and training, and experiences working as a home visitor.

We are here today to conduct an interview as part of the case study portion of our project. Over the next 90 minutes, we will be asking you a series of questions designed to obtain in-depth information regarding your home visiting workforce including the qualifications of staff, methods for recruitment, criteria for hiring, training and career development opportunities for your staff, as well as challenges and successes around staff retention. As I mentioned, we will be hosting focus groups with home visitor staff as well.

It is important for you to know that this interview is voluntary; you can refuse to speak with us and there will be no consequences for declining. You can also stop the interview at any time. We have a series of questions to guide our discussion; you may not know the answer to every question, and there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. If there are any questions that you don't feel knowledgeable about or don't feel comfortable answering, just let us know and we will move on.

The information we gather during our interviews will be used in memos to OPRE and HRSA, and will inform a final report that captures findings from all components of this study. Importantly, we will consider the information we gather today as private, and none of what you share with us will be

attributed to you in any way, without your prior permission. We'll be taking notes during our discussion, but if it's okay with you, we would also like to record this interview.

Do you have any questions? Do we have your consent to proceed with our interview? Do we have your permission to record?

Before we begin, let me provide you with a brief 'roadmap' of what we'll cover during the interview. We'll start with a small number of questions about you, your background, and your role at [AGENCY]. We will then ask a series of questions designed to understand the characteristics of your home visiting staff, explore factors that you believe contribute to strong home visiting staff recruitment, discuss training and professional development opportunities for your staff, and your experiences with home visitor retention at your agency. We will also explore your perceptions of what future actions may be important if your agency hopes to strengthen its ability to retain high quality home visiting staff, including staff salaries, benefits, working conditions, training opportunities, and advancement potential so as to support effective recruitment and retention. We will wrap up with any additional thoughts you have on related topics, which we may not have raised.

Does this sound all right to you? Do you have any questions?

Great, let's begin.

NOTE: Where "PROBES:" are listed, the interviewer will pause after asking the question to allow the interviewee to answer before probing about specific topics if they have not already been mentioned.

A. Interviewee Background

Let's start with a few background questions about you and your agency.

1. Why don't you start by telling us about what made you decide to get into the field of early childhood home visiting?
2. Could you tell us a bit about your agency?
 - a. What is the overall mission of your agency?
3. What programs do you run out of this agency (if any other than home visiting)? Can you please describe them?
 - a. To what extent do the programs interact?
 - b. Do multiple programs share staff?
4. Tell us more about the home visiting program you run at this agency.
 - a. How long has it been operating?
 - b. How is it funded? (State and/or local agencies, federal funders, foundations, others?)
 - c. Who is your target population and what are the goals of the program with this population?
 - d. What are some of the challenges facing the families you work with?
5. Now, can you tell us a bit about your role at [AGENCY]?
 - a. What are your specific responsibilities?
 - b. In what capacity do you work with or manage the work for home visitors?
 - c. How long have you worked here?

6. Did you work as a home visitor before you assumed a management position?
7. If so, how did you transition into this role?
 - a. How was that transition? Was it smooth, or were there some challenges?
 - b. Did you feel prepared for this new role? (*Probe*: please explain).
 - c. Did you receive any specific management training? If yes, tell me more about that?

B. Home Visiting Staff

Next, we'd like to learn a bit about your home visiting staff, and we have a series of questions to give us a general sense of who you employ.

8. How many home visitors does the agency employ?
 - a. How many are part time vs. full time?
9. What are the experience levels and qualifications of the staff who work here?
 - a. Education levels?
 - b. Language and/or cultural competencies?
 - c. Prior experience with your program's target population?
 - d. Previous home visiting experience?
10. On average, how many years have they worked for this agency?
 - a. Have they worked in other programs your agency funds? Or were they primarily external hires?
11. Does the agency currently have any home visiting vacancies?
 - a. How long have they been open?
 - b. What barriers/challenges do you anticipate (if any?) in filling these positions?

C. Factors Affecting Home Visitor Recruitment

Let's now talk about [AGENCY]'s home visitor hiring processes and factors you believe support effective recruitment.

12. What is the agency's process for recruiting and hiring home visitors?
 - a. How and where are jobs posted?
 - b. Is recruitment an ongoing process, or is it cyclical?

13. What specific qualities are sought out in home visitors?

[PROBES:]

- Education/Credentials
- Language Proficiency
- Experience
- Personal characteristics
- Flexibility
- Other

14. Can you walk us through the hiring process?
- How are resumes screened?
 - How many interviews are conducted and with whom?
 - Do you conduct background checks and, if so, why?
 - Do you include role-play activities in the hiring process?
 - How many references do you request/require?
 - Other considerations?

15. What do you believe are the agency's strongest attributes that support the recruitment of home visitors?
[PROBES:]

In your opinion, how important are factors like:

- Opportunities for professional growth?
- Opportunities to provide high quality services to families?
- Competitive salary and benefits?
- Recruitment bonuses?
- Predictability in hours and scheduling?
- Flexible hours?
- A safe work environment?
- A strong sense of teamwork?
- Other factors?
- In-service trainings?

16. How effective, overall, do you think this agency's current recruitment efforts are?
- Do you think the agency is typically able to reach and hire the most talented staff available on the market?
 - What challenges does the agency face in recruiting the most talented staff?
 - How does the home visiting model you're implementing here affect the staff you can recruit?
 - To what extent is association with the model or "brand" important in recruiting high quality staff? How about the agency's "brand"?
 - Are there things you think the agency could do to improve recruitment? Please describe.
 - What experience do the agency's 'most promising' staff come with?

D. Factors Affecting Home Visitor Retention

Next, I have some questions about how home visitors are brought onto the job, and then a series of questions related to retention of home visiting staff.

17. First, can you walk me through the on-boarding process for new hires?
- What sort of training do new hires receive? Is it onsite or off? Do you utilize professional trainers or other staff?
 - Is there a process for new hires to shadow more experienced staff?

18. What would you estimate is the average tenure of the agency's home visiting staff? Is this shorter than you would prefer, or in line with your expectations?
19. How has the turnover rate changed in recent years? If so, to what do you attribute that change?
 - a. How do you think turnover in this agency compares to other home visiting agencies?
 - b. Do you perceive that high rates of turnover occur with particular types of staff? Staff with a particular set of experiences? Or staff of a particular tenure?
20. How is compensation determined? Who is responsible for deciding how compensation is structured? (include initial salary levels, increases, benefits)

Next, I'd like to ask you about a series of factors that may affect home visitor retention. We're interested both in why home visitors leave their positions and why they stay. In your opinion, to what extent do the following factors impact retention of home visitor staff?

21. Factors related to onboarding new hires

[PROBES:]

- Training?
- Mentorship/Shadowing?
- Caseload?
- Management/Supervision?

22. Factors related to compensation

[PROBES:]

- Salaries? Salary adjustment over time?
- Benefits (including vacation, sick leave, worker's compensation, educational support/tuition reimbursement, retirement benefits)?
- Retention bonuses?
- Overtime pay?
- How does compensation compare to other home visiting agencies in the area?

23. Factors related to work burden and schedules

[PROBES:]

- Caseload?
- Overtime work?
- Flexibility in hours and scheduling?
- Shift rotation?

24. Factors related to professional growth

[PROBES:]

- Goal setting and opportunities for advancement?
- Professional development portfolios?
- Opportunities for continuing education and/or professional growth?

- Mentorship programs?
- Any external professional development resources?

25. Factors related to workplace environment

[PROBES:]

- Work setting (including safety at work sites)?
- Traveling to work sites?
- Reimbursement for mileage or a company car?
- Organizational and job stability (i.e. secure funding for home visiting positions)
- Staff tenure and status (is there a notable hierarchy and how does it manifest/play out?)
- Other work conditions?

26. Factors related to management and workplace climate

[PROBES:]

- Extent to which home visitors feel valued and listened to?
- Autonomy (e.g., what do home visitors have control over in their roles and day-to-day activities)?
- Staff collegiality?
- Extent of “compassion fatigue”?
- Other factors?

27. Some programs we’ve talked to have staff that stay for many years, whereas others have identified high rates of turnover. Thinking about home visitors in this agency who have been in their positions for a long time, what are the major reasons why they stay?

[PROBES:]

- To make a difference in the world?
- To improve early childhood well being in their community?
- Other factors?

28. How do demands to adhere to model fidelity help or hinder the agency’s ability to recruit and retain high quality staff?

- a. Do you receive any support/assistance from the model developers?
- b. State or local agencies?

29. Are there other factors we haven’t discussed that have an impact on this agency’s ability to recruit and retain high quality staff?

30. We just spent a good amount of time discussing how various factors affect retention of home visiting staff. Thinking back on those factors, what do you see as the most important ones?

- a. What is the leading reason you hear of for why home visitors leave this job?

E. Career Advancement

Let’s talk a bit now about the career trajectories of home visiting staff.

31. How long do home visitors in the agency typically stay in this position? Is that what you’d hope? Longer? Shorter?

32. Think about someone who has been here for a long time, how many years have they been here?
- Have they remained in the home visitor position or moved jobs?
 - What do you think the reasons are for them having been here that many years?
 - Is that typical? Why or why not?
33. For those who get new jobs, where do most home visitor staff move on to?
[PROBES:]
- Something in the same field? Or something different?
 - In a more advanced position?
 - Do they become home visiting managers?
 - Do they go on to grad school?
 - Do they go on to work in other programs w/ the same target population, but not in a 'front line' occupation like home visiting?
34. What do you imagine to be the ideal career path for home visitors?
- How does the agency help facilitate that trajectory?
 - What are some things the agency could be doing but doesn't? Why?
35. What trajectories do the agency's 'best' staff follow as their careers proceed?

F. Possible Solutions and Future Actions

Let's talk about what actions [AGENCY] could take in the future to improve its recruitment and retention of home visitors.

36. What strategies do you think [AGENCY] could take to improve recruitment of home visitors?
37. What strategies do you think [AGENCY] could take to improve retention of home visitors?
38. Are there any categories of factors/changes that you think are more feasibly accomplished than others? For example:
- Are changes to salaries, raises, benefits, and overtime affordable for the agency?
 - Is it feasible to improve working conditions, and can it be done at a reasonable cost?
 - Is there room for improvement in workplace culture so that home visitors feel valued and listened to?
 - What other strategies might your agency consider to improve recruitment and retention?

G. Wrap Up

And finally, a few wrap up questions...

39. Looking back at your experiences here, what have been the most important lessons you've learned and persistent challenges you've faced in trying to recruit and retain high quality staff?
- What challenges has the agency succeeded in overcoming? How?
 - Which challenge has the agency not been able to overcome? Why not?

40. How about fostering home visitors' career growth?

41. And finally, are there any issues we haven't discussed that you think are important for us to know?