

Evaluation of Strategies Used in TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative Grant Programs

Grantee Telephone Interview Guide

<b>Interview Information</b>	
<b>Grantee:</b>	
<b>Program name:</b>	
<b>Interview date/time:</b>	
<b>Respondent:</b>	<b>Additional respondent:</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
<b>Study ID:</b>	

Interview Topics

- A. Background Information
- B. Planning
- C. Target Populations and Economic Context
- D. Partnerships
- E. Outreach and Recruitment
- F. Assessment
- G. Training
- H. Supportive Services
- I. Job Placement and Hiring
- J. Systems-Level Activities
- K. Implementation Challenges and Facilitators
- L. Sustainability and Future Plans
- M. Reflections and Lessons Learned

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 Westat, a social science research firm in Rockville, Maryland. With me today on the phone is [NOTE TAKER'S NAME] who will be taking notes.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) hired Westat and MDRC 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 and maintained partnerships, and what challenges came up along the way and how they were overcome. The major purpose of this interview is to collect your thoughts on how your grant program was designed and implemented, and what worked well and what

did not work well. We plan to use the information to produce reports that describe implementation strategies and the lessons grantees and their partners learned during implementation.

***In preparation for our discussion today, we have reviewed the information that your organization provided in response to the recent Grantee Survey. This will allow us to reduce the amount of information you will need to provide today.***

The interview should last about **60 minutes**. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any specific question. All of your responses will be kept private and used only for this research study. Your name will not appear in any written reports we produce.

[NOTE TAKER'S NAME] is here with me to take notes, but know that the information you share in this discussion will be kept private.

With your permission I would like to record this discussion to help us fill any gaps in our written notes. The recordings, transcripts, and any notes will be stored on Westat's secure server and will be destroyed after the project is complete.

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]

## A. Background Information

---

1. Obtain the following information for each person involved in the interview
  - a. Name
  - b. Contact information
  - c. Title
  - d. Position under the program
  - e. How the long individual has been involved in the program

## B. Planning

---

1. Why did you decide to apply for this grant?
2. What partners were involved in the planning process? What were their roles? What kinds of issues were addressed?
3. What were the chief ways in which the program plan sought to align training with employer needs?
4. Were any challenges experienced during the planning phase? If so, what were they and how were they resolved?

## C. Target Populations and Economic Context

---

1. Why were the target populations selected?
2. Have any the target populations changed since the grant was awarded?
3. Who are the major employers in the grant's target industries?
  - a. Have there been changes to these industries since the grant was awarded?
  - b. Has it been challenging for employers in these industries to find employees to fill open positions? If yes, what has made this challenging?
4. Are there local economic conditions that affected the implementation of the grant? Please describe.

*Probe: Closing or moving of a prominent employer*

## D. Partnerships

---

1. How are the public workforce system, education and training providers, business-related nonprofit organizations, and employers involved in the program?

2. What partners are involved in implementing the program? What are the roles of the involved partners?
3. Which partners do you work with most frequently?
4. What coordination and communication mechanisms are in place for planning and implementing program activities with your partners?
  - a. Who leads these activities?
  - b. Is this process going well? Could it be improved? How?
5. Overall, how is the partnership functioning?
  - a. What are the benefits of this partnership? Have you experienced any successes thus far? Please describe.
  - b. Have you experienced any challenges with the partnership? If yes, please describe.
6. Are there additional partners that were not included in the grant that you feel would have been helpful to have on board?

## **E. Outreach and Recruitment**

---

1. What recruitment and outreach strategies and methods have you used?
2. What has been the response of the targeted population to the outreach?
  - a. How easy or difficult has it been to recruit participants?
  - b. If there were difficulties recruiting the number of participants originally projected under the project, what factors made recruitment difficult?
  - c. Have there been more eligible and suitable applicants than you can serve (e.g., has there ever been a waiting list to get into the program)?
3. Have you made any changes to your recruitment process over the course of the grant?

## **F. Training**

---

1. Have there been any changes to the occupations in which you are training participants? If yes, please describe and explain why changes were made.
2. Does the training try to accommodate the varying needs of participants? If so, how?  
*Probes: evening classes, hybrid (classroom and online) instruction, self-paced, etc.*
3. What has been the response of employers to the credentials obtained by participants?
4. Have there been any changes to the training strategies since the start of the grant? If yes, describe.

5. What are the most common barriers faced by participants who are not completing the trainings?
6. Have any challenges been encountered in delivering the training?

*Probe: Not enough qualified faculty, students dropping out of the training, etc.*

## **H. Support Services**

---

1. Did any partners provide input on which support services should be offered to participants?
  - a. How did this work?
  - b. Which partners provided input?
  - c. What types of recommendations did they make, and why?
2. What are the support services available to participants in your TH/SWFI program?
  - a. Who provides these services? How are they provided?
  - b. For how long are they provided?
  - c. To what extent are these services funded through your TH/SWFI program?
  - d. To what extent have resources been leveraged from partners for supportive services?
3. Are there any limits on the amount of support services that participants can receive? Please describe how this works.
4. Have any changes to these service offerings or procedures occurred over time? Please describe.
5. Do you think the supports that the program offers are helping to reduce barriers to employment and training?
  - a. Are the support services adequate to meet the needs of participants?
  - b. Are there additional support services that should be offered? Please describe.

## **G. Job Placement and Hiring**

---

1. What types of job placement services are offered to participants?
2. Who provides these services? How are they provided?
3. How long are these services provided?
4. Do you offer job development services that are targeted directly to employers? Do you have staff or partners who work directly with employers to try to meet their hiring needs?
5. Have you made any changes to job placement strategies since the start of the grant?
6. To what extent have employers committed to hiring training graduates?
  - a. Have employers kept these commitments so far? Why or why not?
7. What are the main reasons that some program graduates do not find jobs?

## I. Systems Change

---

1. Prior to receiving the grant, what were the major child care challenges encountered by parents in your area when seeking to participate in training?  
*Probes: Lack of qualified child care providers in area, hours needed are not available (evening/weekend)*
  - a. Which of these challenges did you seek to address with the grant?
  - b. How does the grant address these challenges?
2. What types of child care assistance is provided to participants?
  - a. Who provides this assistance?
  - b. For how long is it provided?
3. What systems level objectives is your grant program trying to achieve?
  - a. Which stakeholders or organizations are part of the system in the local area?
  - b. What is your program trying to change, if anything, about the way that these local organizations work together?
4. How successful do you feel the program has been at achieving its systems level goals? What's working as planned? Do you feel you will meet your systems change goals?
5. What has been difficult about pursuing this child care systems change?

## J. Data Collection

---

1. How does your organization track key outputs and outcomes for the project?
2. Have there been any challenges in tracking information or reporting information to DOL?
3. How is data collection managed across partners?
  - a. Have there been any challenges in obtaining data from partners?

## K. Sustainability

---

1. We have some questions about the sustainability of the [name of program]. We understand you [plan/do not plan] to sustain your grant program activities after the grant period ends. Have there been any changes to the sustainability plans? Please explain the reasons for the changes.
2. Ask if the grantee plans to sustain the program:
  - b. Which components of the program does your institution plan to sustain after the end of the grant?
    - i. Participant recruitment

- ii. Job training
  - iii. Support services
  - iv. Job placement
  - v. Partnerships
  - vi. Other
- c. Will there be scaling? What changes, if any, will need to be made for it to be sustainable?
  - d. Will new funding sources be needed to sustain these components?
4. Ask if the grantee does not plan to sustain the program: What are the main reasons you do not plan to continue the program?

## L. Facilitators and Challenges

---

1. Has the program been implemented as envisioned, or is it different than expected? If different, in what ways?
2. To date, what do you consider to be the greatest successes of the program?
3. What challenges have been experienced? Were changes made to try to resolve these problems? If yes, were those changes successful?

*Probe: Have you experienced challenges associated with any of the following areas? If yes, please describe. How did your organization resolve these issues?*

	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
	Recruiting participants	
	Meeting enrollment goals	
	Achieving target graduation/ completion rates	
	Preparing participants to earn credentials	
	Matching graduates with available jobs	
	Increasing earnings for graduates	
	Recruitment and retention of students	
	Job retention	
	Meeting employer/industry needs	
	Trainee satisfaction	
	Forming partnerships	

## M. Reflections and Lessons Learned

---

1. What kinds of TA was most/least valuable to you during implementation?
2. How has participating in this grant program impacted your organization as a whole, if it has in fact done so?
3. If you were going to start the grant over again, is there anything you would do differently?
4. If another community was interested in implementing a program similar to your program, what advice would you give them?
5. Is there anything else that you'd like to share about your experience implementing this program or that you think is important for us to know?

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today. Do you have any final questions or thoughts?