

Evaluation of Strategies Used In TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Grant Programs

Partner Telephone Interview Guide

Interview Information	
Grantee:	
Program name:	
Partner:	
Interview date/time:	
Respondent:	Additional respondent:
Title:	Title:
Study ID:	

Interview Topics

- A. Background Information
- B. Planning
- C. Partnerships
- D. Outreach and Recruitment
- E. Assessment
- F. Education and Training
- G. Supportive Services
- H. Job Placement
- I. 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 addressed challenges along the way. As a key partner on [NAME OF PROGRAM] we will ask about your involvement with the grant application, training activities, and support services provided to participants, and for your feedback on the program and its participants. We plan to use the information to produce reports that describe

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implementation strategies across the grantees and 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 Partner 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

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if partner was involved in writing of the grant proposal or design of the grant program]

1. We understand that your organization had a role in the design of [name of program]. If yes, what was your role?
 - f. What was the problem that this program aimed to address?
2. What other partners were involved in the planning process? What were their roles/how were they involved?
3. Were any challenges experienced during the planning phase?
 - a. If so, what were they and how were they resolved?
 - b. What factors facilitated or helped program planning?
4. Has the program been implemented as envisioned, or is it different? If different, in what ways?

C. Partnerships

1. What are your roles and responsibilities for the [name of program]?
2. Have you worked with [grantee] before?
 - a. How did you become involved with the [name of program]?
 - b. Who at your organization was involved in the decision to participate?
 - c. Did your organization have any concerns about participating in the project? If yes, what were they, and were they addressed?
 - d. Is there an MOU in place? What are the terms of the MOU?
 - a. Other than [grantee] do you work closely with any of the other organizations that are working with [grantee] on the [name of program]? If yes, please describe.
3. What coordination and communication mechanisms are in place for planning and implementing the program activities with your partners?
 - a. Who leads the coordination?

- b. Is the coordination process going well? Could it be improved? How?
- 4. 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.

D. Outreach and Recruitment

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if partner is involved with outreach and recruitment]

- 1. We understand that your organization has a role in outreach and recruitment for [name of program].
 - a. If yes, what is/was your role?
 - b. On what specific target populations does your outreach and recruitment focus?
- 2. What recruitment and outreach strategies and methods were/are being used?
- 3. What recruitment sources or efforts worked really well with regard to recruiting participants? What challenges did you face in recruitment?
- 4. 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 have been difficulties recruiting the number of participants originally projected under the project, what factors have made recruitment difficult?
 - c. Have there been more eligible and suitable applicants than the [name of program] could serve (e.g., is there a waiting list to get into the program)?
- 5. Have you made any changes to your recruitment process over the course of the grant?
- 6. What are the barriers to education, training, and employment for the target population?

E. Eligibility Determination

- 1. Do you conduct any part of the eligibility determination/screening process for [name of program]?
 - b. If yes, explain. Describe the process.
- 2. Have eligibility requirements changed over time? If yes, please describe.

F. Education and Training

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if partner is involved with 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. How does the training accommodate the varying needs of participants?
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? 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? Please describe.

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

G. Support Services

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if partner is involved with supportive services]

1. We understand that your organization provided input to [name of program] about the types of support services to be provided.
 - a. Please describe your involvement in providing input.
 - b. What types of support services do you think need to be provided?
2. We understand that your organization provides support services for [name of program].
 - a. Which services are provided?
 - b. When and where are the services available to participants?
 - c. Is there enough supply to meet the demand?
3. Are there any limits on the amount of supportive services that participants can receive? Please describe how these work.
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? Please describe.
 - a. Are the supportive services adequate to meet the need of participants?
 - b. Are there additional supportive services that should be offered? Which ones?

H. Job Placement

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if partner is involved with job placement]

1. We understand that your organization has a role in job placement for [name of program].
 - a. If yes, what is your role?
 - b. What types of job placement services does your organization provide?
2. Have there been any changes to job placement services since the start of the grant? If yes, describe.
3. To what extent do participants find employment in the areas for which they are trained?
4. To what extent do participants have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to obtain employment in the target industry?

I. Hiring

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if partner is involved with hiring]

1. We understand that your organization has a role in hiring program participants.
 - a. If yes, do you give preference to hiring program graduates? Explain how that process works.
 - b. How many participants have you hired and for what positions?
 - c. Have your entry requirements or hiring practices for these positions changed at all, relative to what they were prior to the start of the grant?
2. What are your impressions of program graduates?
 - a. Do the employee(s) have the skill set needed to adequately prepare them for employment?
 - b. How do the skills of graduates compare to those of candidates for the same or similar positions?
 - c. How likely is that the program graduates will be able to advance to higher-level positions at your organization or at another organization?
 - d. Have you experienced any problems with the program participants you have hired?
Probe: Low retention, poor skills, poor performance
3. To what extent are the social support services provided by the program effective at alleviating barriers (e.g., childcare and transportation issues, criminal record, language difficulties) and helping participants to stay in jobs?

J. Systems-Level Activities

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Ask only if organization is a partner of SWFI.]

1. Since the [name of program] developed and began its operations, have there been changes in the systems by which low- and middle-skilled parents seeking job training access child care? Please describe.
2. Have there been any changes in the organizations involved in training and child care?
3. Have there been any changes in the way your organization interacts with other organizations providing training and child care?
2. What are the remaining barriers to low- and middle-skilled parents accessing child care to enable them to participate in training and employment? From your perspective, how might those barriers be overcome?

K. Sustainability

1. We have some questions about the sustainability of the [name of program]. Are you planning to continue to offer components of the program after grant end date?
 - a. Which program activities does your organization plan to be involved with after the end of the grant?
 - b. Will there be scaling? What changes, if any, will need to be made for it to be sustainable?
 - c. Will new funding sources be needed to sustain these components?
 - d. If you do not plan to continue the program, what are the main reasons?
2. Are there some components of the program that will be difficult to maintain? Please explain.

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 resolve these problems? If yes, what were they, and were they successful?

M. Reflections and Lessons Learned

1. How has participating in this grant program impacted your organization as a whole, if it has in fact done so?
2. If you were going to start the grant over again, is there anything you would do differently?
3. If another community was interested in implementing a program similar to your program, what advice would you give them?

4. 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?