

# Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Materials

## I. Consent Forms and Informed Consent Script for Interview Participants

### **Public Reporting Burden:**

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All the information we collect will remain confidential. 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.

### **Introduction & Consent Language**

Thank you for coming to this interview for the HUD Technical Assistance Assessment. This study has been funded by HUD to better understand what works well about the TA delivery and receipt process, as well as what challenges exist, and what can be done to improve your experience working with HUD TA. The Urban Institute, a non-profit research organization, was contracted by HUD as an independent entity to conduct this evaluation.

As part of this project, it's important to us to understand your experience with the HUD TA program—both what works and what doesn't-- so that HUD can continue to improve the technical assistance programs that you are involved with.

The interview will last up to **90 minutes**. My colleague [NAME] will be taking notes today to make sure we capture everything you say accurately. We'd also like to record the session today to back up the notes. This recording will be stored on a confidential drive.

If you don't object, we'll go ahead and record; but if you have concerns, we can proceed without the recording.

When all our interviews have been held, the Urban Institute team will summarize the information without revealing any identities of individual interviewees. Urban Institute staff will keep everything that you say during the interview confidential - no one will identify what you said -and choosing to participate or not will have no bearing on your job performance or future employment. We will not be communicating with anyone outside of our research team about what we discuss in this interview, nor will we report whether or not you declined to participate.

You can contact Joe Schilling, Interview Task Lead, directly if you have any questions: 202-261-5982.

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**I understand:**

- Everyone who works on this study has signed a Pledge of Confidentiality requiring them not to tell anyone outside the research staff anything I tell them during the focus group. The only exception is if I tell the facilitator about my intention to harm myself or someone else. The facilitator may be required by law to report this kind of information.
- We will not attribute our responses to you or name you in reports. However, you should be aware that due to your role/perspective/program area, it may be possible for others to identify your comments despite our efforts.
- The interview will be audio recorded if all participants agree to this, but the audio will only be used to back up the notes that are taken during the discussion.
- My participation is voluntary. I only have to answer questions I want to, and I can choose to stop participating at any time.

*Please check the following boxes to indicate your consent for the following:*

- € *I consent to participate in this interview, as described above.*
- € *I consent to be recorded for this interview, understanding that the recording will only be used by research staff, and will be destroyed at the end of this study.*

*Please initial below to indicate that you understand the statements above:*

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*Initials*

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*date*

## II. Letter to TA Providers on Behalf of HUD

To: [HUD TA Provider]

From: [HUD Staff]

Subject: HUD TA Evaluation and Introduction to Urban

Dear [TA Provider Contact],

Thank you for your work as a [past and/or current] technical assistance (TA) provider to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant recipients. HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) awarded a Cooperative Agreement to the Urban Institute to conduct an evaluation of HUD's technical assistance (TA) programs, as mandated by Congress. The Urban Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization based in Washington, DC. Their evaluation will focus on the reorganization of the TA programs under the Community Compass model and management of awardees and activities in administrative data systems specific to HUD TA. It will also assess what TA is provided, how TA is provided, and how effective it is. This is not an evaluation of your work or of your office.

Earlier this year, Urban conducted preliminary interviews with a small number of HUD staff, TA providers and TA customers to inform the design of this research project. Now they are ready to collect the information through data analysis and in-depth interviews. Their team identified your organization as a key resource given your work and experience as a HUD TA provider funded through the Community Compass NOFA.

This letter is to notify you of the next phase of this evaluation project and to ask your willingness to participate in and work with the research team at the Urban Institute. Participation in the research study is voluntary, and no response is necessary at this time. Researchers from Urban will contact you within a few days to schedule interviews with staff in your organization who have experience with the HUD TA process.

Interviews will last approximately 90 minutes and will take place over the phone [unless your organization is in the Washington, D.C. area]. Your information and responses will be reported in aggregate, and not connected to personally identifying information. Urban

will use your staff's insights to develop a complete understanding of your staff's experience with the HUD TA process, which is essential for this evaluation and the continued improvement of its operations.

The interview will involve the following discussion topics: TA process, NOFA and proposal, contract management and program preparations, TA request intake and coordination, delivery of TA, and reporting and oversight of TA. The team members will contact you directly to identify the appropriate staff members who can best speak to these areas. You can expect an email from an Urban team member in the next few days.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the HUD project officer: Lynn Rodgers at 202-402-5735 or [lynn.a.rodgers@hud.gov](mailto:lynn.a.rodgers@hud.gov), or Senior Researcher Corianne Scally, evaluation Project Manager, at the Urban Institute [ Phone: 202-261-5653 or [CScally@urban.org](mailto:CScally@urban.org)]. Thank you very much for your assistance with this important study.

Sincerely,

[HUD Staff]

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### III. Letter to TA Customers on Behalf of HUD

To: [HUD TA Customer]

From: [HUD Staff]

Subject: HUD TA Evaluation and Introduction to Urban

Dear [TA Customer Contact],

Thank you for your work as a [past and/or current] grant recipient for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) awarded a Cooperative Agreement to the Urban Institute to conduct an evaluation of HUD's technical assistance (TA) programs, as mandated by Congress. The Urban Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization based in Washington, DC. Their evaluation will focus on the reorganization of the TA programs under the Community Compass model and management of awardees and activities in administrative data systems specific to HUD TA. It will also assess what TA is provided, how TA is provided, and how effective it is. This is not an evaluation of your work or of your office.

Earlier this year, Urban conducted preliminary interviews with a small number of HUD staff, TA providers and TA customers to inform the design of this research project. Now they are ready to collect the information through data analysis and in-depth interviews. Their team identified your organization as a key resource given your work and experience as a HUD TA customer under the Community Compass model.

This letter is to notify you of the next phase of this evaluation project and to ask your willingness to participate in and work with the research team at the Urban Institute. Participation in the research study is voluntary, and no response is necessary at this time. Researchers from Urban will contact you within a few days to schedule interviews with staff in your organization who have experience with the HUD TA process.

Interviews will last approximately 90 minutes and will take place over the phone [unless your organization is in the Washington, D.C. area]. Your information and responses will be reported in aggregate, and not connected to personally identifying information. Urban

will use your staff's insights to develop a complete understanding of your staff's experience with the HUD TA process, which is essential for this evaluation and the continued improvement of its operations.

The interview will involve the following discussion topics: TA requests and approval, TA delivery, reporting and oversight of TA, and your organization's assessment of TA. The team members will contact you directly to identify the appropriate staff members who can best speak to these areas. You can expect an email from an Urban team member in the next few days.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the HUD project officer, Lynn Rodgers at 202-402-5735 or [lynn.a.rodgers@hud.gov](mailto:lynn.a.rodgers@hud.gov), or Senior Researcher Corianne Scally, evaluation Project Manager, at the Urban Institute [ Phone: 202-261-5653 or [CScally@urban.org](mailto:CScally@urban.org)]. Thank you very much for your assistance with this important study.

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[HUD Staff]

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## IV. Email to TA Providers on Behalf of Urban

To: [HUD TA Provider]

From: Urban Institute

Subject: Interview re Assessment of HUD TA

Dear [TA Provider Contact],

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) awarded a Cooperative Agreement to the Urban Institute to conduct an evaluation of HUD's TA programs as mandated by Congress. The Urban Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, social and economic policy research institute based in Washington, D.C. As a provider of technical assistance (TA) through Community Compass, we would like to find a convenient time to interview you or others in your organization about your experience delivering HUD TA. Our evaluation will focus on the reorganization of the TA programs under the relatively recent Community Compass program at HUD (See attached diagram). It will also examine various aspects of your experiences working as a TA provider. Our project does not involve an evaluation of your work or of your office.

We had already spoken to [members of your organization/ other provider organizations] in the reconnaissance phase of the evaluation. We have also conducted preliminary interviews with HUD staff and a small number of TA customers to inform the design of the evaluation. The assessment is focused on answering three key research questions: 1) what TA does HUD provide, 2) how does HUD provide TA, and 3) how effective is HUD TA in terms of processes and outcomes? We selected your organization because of your experience as a TA provider funded through the Community Compass NOFA.

The interview will involve questions aligned with the identified research questions, including your experiences with: Delivery of TA by TA type (i.e. direct, on-call, trainings, tools and products, etc.), TA reporting and oversight, feedback on TA activities, and general assessment and reflections on HUD TA. The interview will last up to 90 minutes and will take place over the phone. [If your organization is in the Washington, D.C. area, the Urban team may attempt to schedule in-person interviews. We will report findings in aggregate and will not connect them to personal identifying information.



When scheduling for the interview, we would like to follow up over email to confirm the types of TA you provide, the HUD program you receive funding from, and identify the person or persons who can best speak to the topics mentioned above. Given our focus on the types of TA that your organization delivers, we would like to include those staff and/or constructors involved with the preparer, management, execution and evaluation of your TA activities. At any time, we're happy to answer any clarifying questions about the TA assessment and the information we are collecting.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to engage in this evaluation process. Your staff's experience and perspective are invaluable to our work.

Sincerely,

[Urban Staff]

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## V. Email to TA Customers on Behalf of Urban

To: [HUD TA Customer]

From: Urban Institute

Subject: Evaluation and Assessment of HUD TA

Dear [TA Customer Contact],

As a recipient of [DIRECT, ON-CALL OR NEEDS ASSESSMENT] technical assistance (TA) from [PROVIDER], we would like to find a convenient time to interview you or others in your organization about your experience with HUD TA. Last year HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) awarded a Cooperative Agreement to the Urban Institute to conduct an evaluation of HUD's TA programs as mandated by Congress. The Urban Institute (Urban) is an independent, nonpartisan, social and economic policy research institute based in Washington, D.C. Our evaluation will focus on the reorganization of the TA programs under the Community Compass NOFA beginning in fiscal year 2014 to offer a more coordinated approach across several major HUD TA programs. For this evaluation project, we are conducting interviews with HUD Headquarters staff and field staff, along with a sample of TA providers and TA customers. It will also examine various aspects of your experiences receiving HUD TA, through both the project mentioned above as well as some universally available TA. Our project does not involve an evaluation of your work or of your office.

The interview will involve the following topics: TA requests and approval, TA delivery, reporting and oversight of TA, and your organization's assessment of TA. Interviews will last about 60 minutes, and will take place over the phone. [If your organization is in the Washington, D.C. area, the Urban team may attempt to schedule in-person interviews.] In addition to informing the design of the evaluation, information collected through the reconnaissance interviews will be analyzed along with information collected later, with findings reported to HUD. We will report findings in aggregate, and will not connect them to personal identifying information.

Please let us know some dates and time blocks over the next three weeks that work for you and we will coordinate a time to speak. Feel free to invite additional people from your office who might have unique information about the TA experience and let us know if you have

any questions about this interview process. Thank you in advance for your willingness to engage in this evaluation process. Your staff's experience and perspective is invaluable to our work.

Sincerely,

[Urban Staff]

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