

Instructions for Site Visitors

This appendix contains the following sections:

1. Consent form
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 - Purpose of focus group
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DRAFT

**DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS (URM) PROGRAM
INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP OF URM YOUTH**

We invited you to be part of a focus group for a study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program. This form will help you decide if you want to participate in the focus group.

What is the study about?

Researchers from two companies, MEF Associates and Child Trends, are doing the study. We want to learn about the services that URM programs (and other programs like it) give to youth like you. The study will help us learn more about how well the URM program is working.

What will I need to do?

We are inviting you to be in a focus group. A focus group is like a group interview. This focus group will take about 90 minutes. It will include other youth served by the program. We want to learn about how the program is working, so it is important to hear from the youth it is supposed to help. If everyone agrees, we would like to record the group.

If you agree to be in the focus group, we will ask you about:

- Your interactions with the URM program
- How they set you up with a place to live
- What supports and services they have given you
- How satisfied you have been with the services they gave you
- Your experiences adjusting to life in the U.S.

You will receive a \$30 gift card for participating.

Could bad things happen if I am in the focus group?

You may be uncomfortable answering some questions. If that happens, you do not have to answer them.

Will the focus group help me?

The focus group will not help you directly. By sharing your thoughts, you may help the URM Program become better for other youth like you in the future.

Will you tell people what I say?

Only the study team will see the notes or hear the recordings. We will put everyone's answers together and will not use any names. We may use some specific quotes without names. We will destroy the notes and recordings at the end of the study. We ask that you not repeat what is said today outside of this group.

We will keep your information as private as possible, but there are some things we cannot keep private. For example, if you tell us that you or another person is being hurt by someone, or that you intend to hurt yourself, we will need to tell appropriate URM program staff to protect you or the other person. If it is a URM program staff member who is hurting someone, we will need to tell someone in charge of them.

We have a Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. This means that we will not give to anyone or use any information or documents that may identify you in any federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other action, suit, or proceeding without your permission. However, even with the Certificate of Confidentiality, we would still have to release information in some situations required by law, such as if the researchers learn of child abuse and neglect, or harm to yourself or others.

Do I have to be in the focus group?

Being in the focus group is voluntary. You do not have to be in the focus group if you do not want to. Even after the group starts, you can leave at any time if you change your mind. Being in the focus group will not affect services you get from the URM program, or any other organizations.

Questions:

If you have questions about the study, you can call the project director, Sam Elkin at MEF Associates at 703-838-2722.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, you can contact Child Trends' Institutional Review Board (IRB), a group that reviewed this study for your protection, at 1-855-288-3506 or by e-mail at irbparticipant@childtrends.org.

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to document features of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program and the provision of services to youth served by that program. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, collaboration, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is XXXX-XXXX and it expires XX/XX/XXXX.

Participant Information Form

1. What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Other (_____)

2. How old are you? _____

3. What is your nationality? Where do you have citizenship? _____
(Name of Country)

4. When did you enter the U.S.? _____ / _____
Month Year

5. What was your status when you entered the URM program?

- Refugee brought to the U.S. as an Unaccompanied Refugee Minor
- Became eligible for the URM program after entering the U.S. based on some other status (e.g., Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, Asylee status, etc.)
- Prefer not to say

6. What is your native language? You may say more than one. _____

7. Where do you currently live?

- With a foster family
- With relatives
- In a group home
- On my own
- Other _____

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Introductory Script

[To be administered one-on-one by second study team member]

Hello, my name is _____ and I'll be leading our discussion today. My job today is to ask a few questions and learn from you about your experiences. I'll make sure the conversation keeps focused on what we are interested in learning about.

Thank you for being part of this focus group. Today's discussion is part of a study to learn more about the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) program, which is run here by [NAME OF LOCAL PROGRAM]. We want to learn about the program from you, hear about your experiences and opinions, and learn how to make the program better for other youth in the future.

Two groups are working together to conduct this study, MEF Associates and Child Trends. I am from, _____. [Alternative if outside facilitator will lead the focus group in another language: They hired me to lead this discussion.] I will ask you about the types of services you received from [LOCAL PROGRAM NAME] and your experiences with those services and adjusting to life in the U.S. The information you share today will help us better understand how services are provided to youth like yourselves. As a gift to thank you for your participation, we will give you a \$30 gift card.

We will take notes during our talk and if everyone agrees, we will record the group. But we will not share those notes and recordings with anyone outside our research team, not even at [LOCAL PROGRAM NAME]. To help respect people's privacy, I am going to ask that when talking about someone, you use their first name only, not their full name. I need to let you know that if you tell me that you or another person is being hurt by someone, we will need to tell a caseworker or another appropriate staff member. If it is a URM program staff member who is hurting someone, we will need to tell someone in charge of them.

Even if we need to say something, we would only tell the reason we are worried about you or someone else. We would not talk about anything else you said.

*We also **strongly ask** that you and all other focus group participants not discuss what is said today with others outside of the group. However, we cannot guarantee that everyone here will do that.*

I have a little bit more to read to you but do you have any questions about what I have said so far?

This discussion will take about 90 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You can leave if you want to, even after we start. Being in the group will not affect services you get from [LOCAL PROGRAM NAME], or any other organizations. So if you decide you want to leave, you will not lose any services. If you do choose to participate, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, or that make you feel uncomfortable.

Do you have any questions for me right now? If you have questions later, the phone numbers for Sam Elkin at MEF Associates and the Child Trends Institutional Review Board are on the forms we have given you.

Do you agree to participate in the focus group? If you do not want to participate, you are free to go. [Ask for verbal confirmation.]

If NO: *OK, thank you for coming today. You are free to go.*

We would like to record our group discussion today so that we won't miss anything that you say. We will use the recording to fill in our written notes, but then the recording will be destroyed. If at any time you would like to say something that you do not want to be recorded, just say so and we will turn off the recorder.

Is it ok with you to record the focus group? We will only use the recording to fill in our notes. [Ask for verbal confirmation.]

If NO ask: *Remember, we can pause the recording if you want to say something that you do not want recorded. Would you be ok with us recording the focus group if you have the choice to stop the recording later?*

If still NO: *That's ok. We won't record the group.*

Ground Rules:

Before we begin, let me go over a few things about how we would like to handle the discussion today:

- *This discussion is meant to be informal and relaxed.*
- *We won't have any breaks, but if you need to get up to use the restroom, stretch or get a drink, please do so as needed. The restrooms are located [xxx].*
- *To help keep things private, we will only use first names today. You should also only use first names for each other.*
- *The whole reason we are doing this group is so we can hear from you. So if you don't understand any of our questions, please let us know. We can repeat any question or explain anything that is not clear.*
- *There are no right or wrong answers. You can say positive and negative comments about your experiences.*
- *It is okay to share your opinions or thoughts even if they are different from what others have said. As I said, there are no right or wrong answers or comments. We want everyone to participate, and the opinions and experiences of everyone in the room are important. We want to hear different perspectives.*
- *Let's try to talk one at a time so that we can be sure to hear everyone's thoughts.*
- *Everyone's thoughts are important, and we'd like to hear from all of you! I know some people talk more than others, so I'll sometimes encourage everyone to say their thoughts.*
- *You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If at any point, you want to pause the recording while you make a specific comment, please tell me.*
- *If anything the group talks about makes you feel upset or anxious, you can take a break. You can also talk to a case manager if you feel upset or anxious during the interview.*
- *We have talked to each of you individually about this, but we want to remind you that your participation is voluntary. You can decide to leave at any point, and no one will be upset.*
- *The discussion today is private. Please do not talk about what you heard after you leave the focus group.*
- *Just like at the movies, I'll ask that you please silence your cell phones now.*

Do you have any questions before we start?

Focus Group Questions

Warm Up/Introductions

Please introduce yourselves by telling us four things: your first name or nickname, your nationality, how long you have been in the United States, and your favorite new song right now. *[Ask of all participants]*

I. Arrival and Initial Services

1. Please tell us a little bit about how you first learned about the URM program at *[URM program organization]*.

If needed, probe on how they learned about the program (e.g., resettled as a refugee by the organization, referred by another program or by a lawyer) and information provided. Note - we do not need all participants to respond.

Do not probe on how they arrived in the U.S.; however, leave time for them to discuss if they bring it up.

2. What were your first interactions with *[URM program organization]* like? What did they do for you at the very beginning?

Probe: When you first began working with them, was it what you expected?

II. Living Situations

We would like to hear a little about your living situation here in *[city where focus group is happening]*.

1. I am going to ask you, by a show of hands, what kinds of places you have lived in since you became part of *[URM program organization]*. For example, with a foster family, in a group home, things like that. I know you may have lived in more than one place since then, so feel free to raise your hand more than once.

- With a foster family?
- With family members?
- Group home?
- An independent living program?
- Anything else?

2. How did *[PROGRAM]* tell you about where you would be living?

- a. Did *[PROGRAM]* arrange everything about where you would live, or were you involved in the decision? If so, how so?

Probe as needed by placement type, based on how many hands were raised for each.

For foster families, probe on whether the placements were with a family from their own culture or that spoke their own language.

3. After they set up a place for you to live, what help or assistance does [URM program organization] give you to make sure things go well there?

Probe: What did [URM program organization] do?

4. Did any other organizations or people other than [URM program organization] give you any help to make sure things went well for you in your new living places?

Probe: Who? What did they do?

5. Overall, how do you feel about where you are living?

III. Services

Now we want to hear about some other services that [URM program organization] might provide.

1. How often do (or did) you meet with the staff of [URM program organization]? What did you do when you met with them?

Probe: Did you continue to meet with them after placement? More often or less often?

2. What help does (or did) [PROGRAM] provide you in enrolling in school?
 - a. What school, grade, or program did you enroll in?
3. What other kinds of things has [PROGRAM] done to help you? For example, did you take any classes or workshops at [PROGRAM]? If so, what were they?

Note to interviewer: For each type of service they talk about, use the following probes:

Can you talk about what these services/activities were like?

Did you get them here or did they refer you somewhere else?

Did you feel they were helpful? Why or why not?

After each, follow up with "anything else?"

If the participants don't bring it up themselves, probe on the following (time permitting):

- *Services to help you get a job*
- *Counseling (if anyone is comfortable talking about it)*
- *Setting up with a mentor*
- *Ongoing support for your education*
- *Health care*
- *Connecting with an attorney*
- *Preparing to live on your own*
- *Anything else?*

IV. Satisfaction

1. Thinking about your experience with [URM program organization], how satisfied have you been overall with the services or help you have received?
 - a. In your opinion, how well does [PROGRAM] work with youth like you? *Note to interviewer: Probe on how participants would rank their satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 5, if needed to stimulate discussion.*

Probe on ability of program to meet the needs of youth who speak different languages, come from different cultures and backgrounds, and have different religions.
 - b. Do you think you got the services you needed from [PROGRAM]?

Probe: Are there services you needed but did not receive?

Probe: Are there services you needed but had to go elsewhere to get?
2. Are there ways you think the program could be improved? If so, what are they?
3. One thing we are trying to learn from our study is how to measure when programs like [URM program organization] have really helped the youth they serve. How would you define “success” for youth in this program?
 - a. In what ways do you think [URM program organization] has helped you succeed here? Do you think they could do more?
4. What advice would you give the people who run programs like this one so they can better help youth like you?

V. Adjustment to the U.S.

We would now like to hear a little bit about your adjustment to life in the U.S., and how it has been living here.

1. Looking back since you arrived, what has been easy about adjusting to life in the U.S. and in [city where focus group is happening]?
 - a. What have been the best things about coming here?
2. What have been the hardest or most challenging things about adjusting to life in the U.S. and in [city where focus group is happening]?

Probe, if needed, on language challenges, making friends, succeeding in school, things that are different here from their home country.

 - a. Has [URM program organization] helped you try to address these challenges? If so, what have they done?
3. Some youth who have come to the U.S. like to stay connected to their culture. What are the ways you have done that here?

Probe on community organizations, religious organizations or places of worship, sports teams, and music/dancing. For each, ask if they participate, what they do when they participate, and how often they do it.

- a. Has [URM program organization] done anything to help you stay connected to your culture? If so, what have they done?
4. Do you have any family members in the U.S.?
 - a. [For those who say yes] How hard or easy is it to connect with them? How do you stay connected? How often do you communicate with them?

Probe: By phone? Social media?
 - b. Has [URM program organization] done anything that has helped you keep connected to others in your family or to people from your country or part of the world? Have they done anything that has made it harder to keep those connections?
5. Let's go quickly around the room, and have each of you tell me if you're in school (and if so, what kind of school), if you're working (and if so, what kind of job), both, or if you're doing something else.
6. What are your personal goals for your life in the U.S.?
 - a. How do you feel about your progress towards those goals?
 - b. Has [URM program organization] done anything that has helped you towards those goal? Anything that has gotten in the way?

VI. Conclusion

1. Before we end, is there anything else you could like to say that you wanted to say earlier, but didn't get to say?

Thank you very much for your time. We discussed a lot today. The information you shared will help the Administration for Children and Families and others to know more about and improve programs like [PROGRAM].