



MEMORANDUM

DATE: [Date]

TO: [URM Program Manager]

FROM: [Site visit lead for the particular site]

SUBJECT: Recruiting URM youth and foster parents for focus groups for the Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program

We look forward to visiting your program as part of the Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program, and want to thank you for working with us to arrange the visit. As we recently discussed, we would like to ask for your help in identifying and inviting potential participants for two focus groups we plan to conduct during our visit. This memo provides more background information on the nature of these focus groups and guidance on how to invite potential participants.

What is the purpose of the focus groups? As part of the study, we plan to conduct two focus groups in each site: one with youth currently or formerly served by the URM program, and one with foster parents of current and former URM program participants. Together, they will allow the researchers to learn about the perspectives of the youth and families served by the program.

How will the findings from the focus group be used? The study team will use the participants' views to inform one or more reports for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These reports will aim to help ACF and the broader field better understand the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the URM Program.

What will be discussed in the groups? Youth will be asked about their interactions with the URM program, the services and supports they received and how they feel about them, and their experiences adjusting to life in the U.S. Foster parents will be asked about their interactions with the URM program in preparing to become a foster parent for an unaccompanied refugee minor youth, services and supports they and the youth they have fostered received from the program and elsewhere, and how they feel about the services they received.

Who should be invited to participate in the focus groups? We would like each focus group to include about nine participants. We typically recruit

12 people to ensure that about nine will show up, which often involves reaching out to at least 20 individuals. Participants will include the following:

- *Youth focus group.* This group will consist of youth who have been served by the URM program, ages 16 and above, who were placed in the program between seven months and two years before the site visit. We will ask you to identify lists of up to 20 youth for whom you have current contact information, about half of whom were placed into the program more recently (seven to 15 months before the site visit) and about half of whom were placed into the program longer ago (16 to 24 months before the site visit). We ask that you identify youth who are likely to be comfortable discussing the topics to be covered in the focus group, including interactions with the URM program and experiences adjusting to life in the U.S. We will discuss with you any specific characteristics of the youth to invite based on factors particular to your program, such as the language the group will be conducted in.
- *Foster parent group.* This group will consist of foster parents to youth served by the URM program. We will ask you to identify lists of up to 20 parents for whom you have current contact information, including a mix of those with whom a URM youth was placed within the past year, and those with whom a URM youth was placed over a year ago. Again, we will discuss with you any specific characteristics of the youth to invite based on factors particular to your program.

How should I invite participants? We defer to you whether you prefer to reach out by phone, email, or by another means. Regardless of the means, the following information should be provided:

- The time, date, and location of the focus group, as well as the expected length of time commitment involved (about 90 minutes).
- That the purpose of the study is to better understand the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the URM Program.
- That they will be asked questions about the services and supports they receive from the URM program, as well as their experiences adjusting to life in the U.S.
- That participation is voluntary, and they should feel free to not participate if they do not want to. If they do choose to participate, they can choose not to answer any questions they do not want to.
- That the study is being conducted by an outside research firm and not by the government itself.
- Their participation may help improve services for URM youth in the future.
- Those who participate will receive a \$30 gift card as a thank you and as reimbursement for any costs involved, like transportation.

Note: it is **very important** that individuals invited understand that their decision to participate in the focus group is voluntary and do not feel that your program is requiring their participation. It is also important that they

understand the types of topics that will be discussed and understand this activity is different from the regular peer meetings that your program facilitates.

If you have any other questions about the focus groups or how to invite participants for them, please feel free to contact us.