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NON-HVRP VETERAN INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Hello, it's nice to meet you. Let me start off by thanking you for your service to our country.

My name is _____. I work for _____, an independent research organization. I do not work for any of the agencies that might be providing you with assistance. This interview is for me and the research team to learn about services available to veterans in this community and any experiences you might have with the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), which you might know better as <local program name>. We are collecting this information as part of a study funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The study's purpose is to understand more about how available services help veterans like you.

Do you have any questions about my organization or my affiliation with any local programs?

The interview will last about 45 minutes. I will be asking questions about your military experience, your housing and work situation, your thoughts on employment-related services you have received, and what might be helpful to you in the future. Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and you can choose to not answer any questions and you can stop the interview at any time. I want to repeat that we do not work for any of the agencies running local programs, and, if you choose to participate in this study, we will never give your individual answers to anyone outside the research team. Your participation will in no way affect your employment services, or other services you may be receiving, and is very important to our work to improve programs for veterans.

Please remember that we are interested in your experiences and opinions; there are no right or wrong answers. My hope is that you will feel comfortable talking with me, but, if at any time I ask you a question and you don't feel comfortable talking about the topic, feel free to say so and we will move on. You will receive \$25 for the time you have taken to participate.

After the interview, we will type up the notes and make transcripts of the discussion. Should the Department of Labor request to see any of our notes or transcripts, we will remove all personally identifying information to prevent those outside the research team from knowing who provided the information. The de-identified information may also be included in a report. The information you provide will be kept private and only used for this study to the extent allowed by the Privacy Act of 1974.

This is a chance, however, to have your voice and opinions heard.

Before we begin, I need to go over this consent form with you. It gives you more information about the research study and a telephone number you can call if you have questions later. [Read consent form, include consent for recording]

Do you have any questions? [If agreed to recording, begin recording now]

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1290-XXXX. Comments can also be mailed to: U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, S-2312, Washington, DC 20210. **Note:** Please do not return the completed interview guide to the email or mailing address.

A. Introduction

- I'd like to start with your military service. Can you tell me a little about it?
 - What branch of service were you in?
 - When did you start your military service?
 - How long did you serve?
 - Where did you serve?
 - What were your main duties?
 - How many tours of duty?
 - And, how long has it been since you left the military?
 - What is your discharge status?
- Can you tell me about where you are living right now?
 - How long you have been living there?
 - How long do you expect to stay there?
 - Who, if anyone, do you live with?
 - Have you experienced homelessness in the past year?
 - How, if at all, has your situation changed since the pandemic?
- Are you currently working? [AND] Are you in an educational or training program?
 - How long have you been doing this work/in program?
 - Where are you participating in the program? Who is the provider/employer?
 - What are you doing at this job/in this program?
 - How many hours per week do you spend on job/program?
 - o How, if at all, has that changed with the pandemic or stay-at-home orders?
 - Are you able to complete your work/program hours from your home or are you still reporting to your workplace/program?
 - o [If remotely] What have been the challenges of working/participating remotely?
 - o [If reporting to a physical location] What are the challenges of reporting to the location? Probes: transportation availability, protective gear at work
 - Do you expect employment/program to continue? If yes, for how long?
- [If not currently working] How long has it been since you last worked?
 - Were you working before the pandemic/stay-at-home order [depending on state in which veteran resides]?
 - o If yes, what were you doing? How long employed? How many hours per week?

- o Were you able to access unemployment benefits when you stopped working?

B. Experiences with employment-related programs, services received, and effectiveness of those services

- What types of employment-related services have you participated in?
 - Types of services to probe on: counseling, money management classes, trainings and workshops, apprenticeships and on the job training
 - o If training, for what occupation?
 - Have you received assistance with accessing tools, certificates, or uniforms for work?
 - Have you received assistance with transportation or rides? For what types of meetings was this assistance provided?
- For each of the services you mentioned:
 - What program or agency provided the service? Where did you access them?
 - How were you referred to the service or program?
 - Were you assigned a caseworker as your point of contact for the program(s)?
 - o During stay-at-home orders, how did you meet with your caseworker? Did you connect by telephone or video conference?
 - o Is there something more that you needed from your caseworker that you were not able to get because of communicating by phone or video?
- Which of the services or support have been most important or useful to you? Why?
- [If not discussed:] What activities/services have you participated in through the local <American Job Center local name>? Please describe your experiences there.
 - How were you connected to the center? Had you visited an <AJC> before?
 - How long have you been getting help from the <AJC>?
 - What type of services did (have) you receive? Were they helpful?
 - Did the availability of any of these services change as a result of the pandemic or stay-at-home orders?
 - Who are you working with there? Do you have a specific point of contact there?
- I am interested in learning about other types of assistance you have received. What types of assistance have you received?
 - Probe: Unemployment benefits?
 - Probe: What services have you received from the VA? Probe for health care, employment assistance, housing, other.
 - Probe: What types of housing assistance have you received? From what agency?

- Probe: Health related programs? Which ones?
- Probe: Other programs? Which ones?
- Which of the types of assistance you have received from these various sources been most helpful?
- [If employed or employed immediately prior to COVID-19 pandemic] Can you tell me some of the good things about your work/job (or the work/job you held before pandemic/stay-at-home order)?
 - Are/were you happy with the type of work you are/were doing?
 - Are/were you happy with your salary? Working conditions?
 - How does/did this compare to previous jobs?
 - What are/were things you would like to see change about your current/pre-pandemic job?
 - Is/was there anything that makes/made you want to leave your current/prior job?
 - Do/did you see opportunities to advance in your current position, or move forward in a career path?
- [If not employed]
 - What have been the biggest challenges to finding employment? In what ways, if any, has the pandemic affected these challenges?
 - o Probe: Is lack of housing a challenge to finding and keeping employment?
 - o Probe: Is lack of transportation a challenge to finding and keeping employment?
 - o Probe: Is your health a challenge to finding and keeping employment?
 - o Probe: Is using substances a challenge to finding employment?
 - o Probe: Is having a criminal record a challenge to finding and keeping employment?
 - What types of jobs are you looking for?

C. Pathways to HVRP and employment services

- Have you ever heard about <the HVRP program>?
 - If yes, do you recall how you heard about it? From whom?
- Were you ever referred to <the HVRP program>? If so, which agency referred you? [VA, SSVF, AJC, local vets organization, other?]
 - Were you interested in participating in the program? If so, what interested you in the program?
 - Did a friend recommend it? What did he/she say about it?
 - Did a <HVRP program> staff person approach you about it? What did he/she say about it?

- What is your understanding of who is eligible to enroll in <the HVRP program>?
 - What is required in terms of veteran status? In terms of homelessness status?
 - o Do you know if you are eligible for the program?
- [If understood to be eligible] Did you choose not to enroll? If so, why?
 - Were you worried you may not be eligible? Why?
 - Were you worried about how it might affect your participation in other services? Why?

D. Wrap up

- In what ways, if any, would you say that the services you participated in affected your current employment and housing situation? How have they helped? How have they not helped?
 - How about long term?
 - Are there services you needed that would have better prepared you (and your family) to manage the pandemic or stay-at-home orders?
- Has the change in your circumstances impacted your relationship with family members? Friends? Significant others? (better, worse, same)
- What types of services may be helpful to you as you gain more employment experience and skills in the future?
- Is there anything about your experience with employment-related services that I should know about that I have not already asked you?

Thank you!