

ATTACHMENT E

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR APPRENTICE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

DRAFT

Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio

Apprenticeship Program Apprentice Focus Group Topic Guide

INTRODUCTION AND PRIVACY

I am/we are researchers with The Urban Institute/Mathematica/Capital Research Corporation, private research organizations based in Washington, DC/Arlington VA which conduct policy-related research on a variety of social welfare and economic issues.

This project is being conducted under contract to the U.S. Department of Labor. Our visit here today is part of the Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio project, a national study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. The study will learn how apprenticeship programs can help improve the skills and employment outcomes of American workers. We are here today to learn about your experiences in the [apprenticeship program name]. In addition to you we are also conducting interviews with program staff and program partners.

We want to let you know that you may choose not to answer certain questions. You may also choose to leave the discussion at any time. Regardless of whether or not you answer all of our questions, you will receive a \$25 gift card to thank you for participating in the focus group. Although we hope you'll stay for the entire discussion, if you need to leave, just let us know, and we can pause and make sure you get signed out and receive your \$25 gift card. We expect this discussion to last about 90 minutes.

We believe there are minimal risks to you to participating in this focus group.

We believe there are no direct benefits to you, but we hope that the findings from this study will benefit the Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio project by providing research insights on how apprenticeship programs can benefit workers.

Although we will be taking notes, when we report information from the discussion, we will not include your name. Information from this discussion may be included in a public report, but none of the information you share will be attributed to you. While we can assure you that no one on the research team will share what you say today outside of this room, we cannot control what other people will do with the information they hear. Because of that, we encourage all participants to think about whether they would be upset if someone repeated what they said outside of the room when deciding to share something with the group. We also encourage each of you to be respectful of one another and treat the information you hear today as private.

Finally, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to record this conversation. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept securely within our small research team. The recording will be deleted once we have developed a full set of notes from the interview.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING INFORMED CONSENT SHEET HANDOUT:

Please check "yes" under statement one on the form we handed you if you agree to participate in today's discussion. Please check "yes" under statement two if you agree to be recorded. Then please initial the piece of paper (don't print your full name).

CONSENT FORM

Statement 1

The information in this form has been explained to me and I know that my participation in the discussion today is voluntary.

- I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION TODAY
- I DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION TODAY

Statement 2

Please indicate whether you consent to being recorded as part of today's discussion.

- YES, I AGREE TO BE RECORDED AS PART OF TODAY'S DISCUSSION.
- NO, I DO NOT AGREE TO BE RECORDED. I UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN STILL PARTICIPATE IN TODAY'S DISCUSSION, AND MY PREFERENCE HAS NO BEARING ON MY PARTICIPATION.

Print Name:

First **Last**

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

URBAN STAFF WITNESS SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Note: This research has been reviewed according to the Urban Institute Institutional Research Board procedures for research involving human subjects.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Basic participant characteristics
 - a. Basic demographics (e.g., age, gender, highest grade completed, employed/unemployed prior to the apprenticeship, etc.)
 - b. Whether the individual is enrolled currently or in past in apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program under the grant
 - c. Whether ever previously enrolled in apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program prior to the grant
- B. How came to be interested/participating in apprenticeship program
 - a. How first heard about the apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship opportunity (e.g., flyer, presentation at AJC, from the employer, word-of-mouth, social media)?
 - b. Working for the employer when you were recruited to the apprenticeship (i.e., incumbent worker)?
 - c. Why interested in enrolling in apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program
 - d. Reservations or challenges might have had to in enrolling in apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program
- C. Their goals for enrollment in program (e.g., earn degree, certification, credits, obtain employment, increase earnings, advance to a new job, upgrade skills, etc.)
- D. Perspectives on the key features of the apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program to date
 - a. Views on eligibility, assessment and intake process
 - b. Views on helpfulness of the on-the-job training component (e.g., duration and intensity, quality and usefulness of instruction received in the workplace, etc.)
 - c. Views on the appropriateness, quality, and helpfulness of the RTI component (e.g., who provides instruction, # of hours, typical schedule, methods of instruction, etc.)
 - d. Description of supports (financial and non-financial) received under the program
- E. Credential(s) attainment and other outcomes to date
 - a. If enrolled in apprenticeship program:
 - i. Has received or do they anticipate receiving: credits, industry recognized credential, degree, etc.); wage increases; a promotion/career advancement
 - ii. If they anticipate completing the apprenticeship (if not, why not?)
 - b. If enrolled in pre-apprenticeship program
 - i. Has received or do they anticipate receiving: credits, industry recognized credential, degree, etc.)
 - ii. On the job experience? What types?
 - iii. Has enrolled in or do they plan to enroll in an apprenticeship program (and if yes, which one?)
 - iv. If enrolled in an apprenticeship after the pre-apprenticeship, how well did the pre-apprenticeship prepare them for apprenticeship training?
- F. Perspectives on program
 - a. Challenges faced in staying in and completing the apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program and how they were overcome
 - b. What liked best and least about their participation in the apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program
 - c. What individual thinks could be improved/changed about the apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship program

- d. Overall, how participation to date has helped (or not helped) the individual to upgrade skills, improve earnings, and move along his/her career pathway
- e. Challenges experienced with your own participation or with the program due to the COVID-19 pandemic

DRAFT