INSTRUMENT 5 - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPATING FAMILIES CURRENTLY SEARCHING FOR HOUSING

**Evaluation of the Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration**

This guide is for treatment and control group families searching for housing with a voucher through the mobility program or with usual Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program services, including both existing and new admission voucher families.

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to evaluate the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, 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 collection of this information has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under OMB No. XXXX-XXXX, which expires on MM/DD/YYYY. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to XX at XXXX@XXX or NNN-NNN-NNNN.

**[AFTER CONSENT PROCESS IN ATTACHMENT H]**

The tape recorder is now on.

OK, let’s start.

# WARM-UP/BACKGROUND [All Respondents]

First, I’d like to learn a bit about you, your family, and the reasons you are interested in moving.

1. Tell me about who lives with you.
2. How many children live here with you? What are their ages and what grade are they in?

[*Note that names will be removed/redacted*.]

1. Tell me about your current living situation, while you are searching for new housing.

[*Existing voucher families*] Probes: Single-family house or apartment?

[*New admission families*] Probes: Living in own home, staying with family or friends, staying in a shelter, or something else?

1. How long have you lived in this apartment/home/shelter?
2. What is the name of the neighborhood? Can you tell me the zip code?
3. How long have you lived in this neighborhood?
4. [*If living with family or friend*] Can you stay there as long as you like?
5. *[New admission families]* Do you want to find a new place to live, or do you plan to use your voucher to lease where you live now?
6. *[If new admission family wants to lease in place]* Why? *[Then skip to question 5.]*
7. Why you are thinking about moving?

Probes: Safety, access to various resources, children’s wellbeing, school options, ready for a change, problems with prior housing or landlord, in unsuitable housing situation, poor quality of housing unit

# HOUSING SEARCH [All Respondents]

1. Tell me about your current search for housing with your voucher. About how long have you been searching for housing?
   1. How is the search going? What has been going well?
   2. What has been challenging?
2. What are the main ways you are searching for housing?

Probes: Using the PHA’s list or GoSection 8, searching other online websites for housing listings, asking family or friends, driving around neighborhoods?

[*Treatment group only*] Housing identified by MOBILITY PROGRAM]?

1. [*Existing voucher families*] Did you already have an idea about the area or neighborhood where you want/wanted to live before you asked to move with your voucher?

[*New voucher families*] Did you already have an idea about the area or neighborhood where you want/wanted to live before you received your voucher?

1. [*If yes*] Can you tell me more about that? Where did you want to move? Why?
2. Has that changed at all since you started your search? [*If yes*] How so?
3. [*Treatment group*] Did that change at all after you enrolled in [MOBILITY PROGRAM]? [*If yes*] How so?
4. What neighborhoods are you looking in?

Probe: Ask for neighborhood names or zip codes

1. How did you decide on those neighborhoods?
2. Are you limiting your search to those neighborhoods or are you open to different places?
3. How familiar are you with these neighborhoods?
4. Are there neighborhoods you want to avoid? [*If yes*] Which neighborhoods? What makes you want to avoid them?
5. Does the racial or ethnic make-up of the neighborhood factor into your interest in moving there?
6. When deciding where to live, what is most important to you?

Probes: The home itself, specific neighborhood, safety, schools, close to family/friends?

1. Have your children’s needs factored into your decision about which neighborhoods to search in? [*If yes*] How?

Probes: Daycare or childcare, schools, medical care, family or community ties, etc.?

* 1. [*If schools/education identified as a decision factor]* How does your children’s schooling affect your decisions about where to search for housing?

Probes: Distance/commute, teacher quality, school safety, academic programs, extracurricular/after-school programs, college preparation?

1. Do you expect your children will need to change schools when you move?
2. What are your thoughts about keeping them in the same school versus changing schools?
3. Is anyone else in your life helping you make these move decisions? Family? Friends? Children? Can you tell me more about the help they provide?
4. What kind of house or apartment are you looking for?
5. How many bedrooms?
6. What kind of home (apartment or house)?
7. Are you looking for any specific features (e.g., pet-friendly, yard, washer/dryer in unit, parking, first floor, AC, etc.)?
8. Rent amount or range?
9. Roughly how many apartments/houses you have seriously thought about applying for so far during your search?
10. What neighborhoods were they in?
11. Have you submitted any rental applications so far? [*If yes*]
    1. What neighborhoods were they in?
    2. Were any of these units from a list of apartments/homes that the [PHA] identified for you? [*If yes*] How many did the program identify?
    3. What happened after you applied? Was your application accepted/denied?
    4. Did you want to move to any of these apartments/homes but could not for some reason? [*If yes*] What was the main reason you couldn’t move to the home you wanted?

Probes: Landlord did not accept application; other issues with landlord (didn’t return phone call/hung up/didn’t provide application/etc.); issue with the PHA’s lease up process (paperwork, rent amount, inspection); past eviction, foreclosure, or credit problems; location concerns (safety, transportation options, location relative to employment, schools, etc.); discriminatory actions based on race, ethnicity, family status, or source of income; told unit was no longer available?

1. Have there been other apartments or houses that you considered applying for but didn’t?
   1. [*If yes]* Why did you choose not to apply?

Probes: Location concerns (safety, transportation options, location relative to employment, schools, etc.); landlord interactions, discriminatory actions based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ethnicity, family status, or source of income?

1. Have there been other areas or neighborhoods you thought about moving to but didn’t choose for one reason or another?
2. Why did you not choose one of those areas?
3. Are there neighborhoods you might want to move to but don’t think you can?
4. [*If yes*] Tell me more about those neighborhoods.
5. What is the main reason you don’t think you can move there?
6. What has been your experience so far explaining the voucher to landlords during your current housing search?
7. [*Treatment group*] Please tell me about your experience explaining [MOBILITY PROGRAM] to landlords?
8. Have you encountered any/any other challenges in finding a place you want to live that you haven’t talked about?

Probes: Issue with the PHA’s lease up process (paperwork, rent amount, inspection), eviction, foreclosure, credit problems, transportation, location of employment, landlord interactions, landlords don’t want families with children, landlords refuse to take voucher/Section 8, discriminatory actions based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ethnicity, family status, landlord/property manager didn’t return phone call/hung up, said unit was no longer available, or didn’t provide application to submit, etc.?

1. How confident are you that you are going to find a place that matches everything you are looking for? Why?

# OPPORTUNITY MOVE INTEREST [Treatment Respondents]

Next, I’d like to get your perspectives on the areas [on the map] that [MOBILITY PROGRAM] staff showed you that are labeled “Opportunity Areas.”

1. What does “Opportunity Area” mean to you? What features or amenities would opportunity areas include?
   1. How would you describe the benefits of moving your family to an Opportunity Area?

Probes: Safety, access to various resources, children’s wellbeing, school options, ready for a change, problems with prior housing or landlord, in unsuitable housing situation, poor quality of housing unit?

* 1. Do you see any downsides to moving to an Opportunity Area?

1. How do you feel about moving to an Opportunity Area at this point?

Probes: Excited, worried, nervous?

* 1. Has your opinion about such a move changed since you began receiving mobility services? [*If yes*] In what ways?

1. How do your children feel about moving to an Opportunity Area? What excites them? What worries them?
   1. [*As applicable]* Does it differ by age – teenagers compared with younger children or what grade they are in? By gender? In what ways?

Probes: Worries about losing friends; school changes; teachers; other routines/access to family?

# PHA SERVICES RECEIVED [All Respondents]

1. [*New admission families*] Tell me about the process of getting the voucher from [PHA]. What was easy? What was hard?

Probes: Paperwork/certification process, communicating with PHA staff, staff responsiveness and clarity of information?

* 1. What questions did you have after you got your voucher?

1. [*Existing voucher families*] Please tell me about the process of getting a voucher to move from [PHA]. What was easy? What was hard?

Probes: Paperwork/certification process, communicating with PHA staff, staff responsiveness and clarity of information?

* 1. What questions did you have after you got your moving voucher?

1. Tell me about any information you have received about how to use your voucher.
2. What did they tell you about where you could use your voucher?
3. What did they tell you about how to go about searching for housing?
4. What information or resources did they provide, such as information about neighborhoods or a list of units, to help you search for housing?
5. Did they tell you how much you can afford in rent?
6. Did they tell you what to expect after you find a unit?
7. [*Treatment group*] Was the person who provided the information housing authority staff or the mobility services staff? Do you recall their name?

# MOBILITY SERVICES AVAILABLE [Treatment Respondents]

Let’s shift to discuss the [MOBILITY PROGRAM]. We are interested in learning about your interactions with staff and the services that were offered to you while you are searching for a new place to live and during the process of applying for a new place to live.

1. Tell me about your decision to join [MOBILITY PROGRAM]. What made you interested in enrolling?
2. What types of services or assistance have been available to you from [MOBILITY PROGRAM]? We’re interested in hearing about all of them, even if you don’t use them or don’t think you will. Later, I’ll ask you about the services you are using; for now, I’m interested in the variety of services you have been offered.

By services we mean the types of help the program staff can provide to help your search, like one on one-meetings with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach, group workshops, help finding apartments/houses in opportunity areas, financial assistance, and help communicating with landlords.

Probes: One-on-one meetings with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach; mapping family systems; help identifying goals for the move; education about the program and opportunity areas; review of credit report; help preparing an application cover letter; group workshops; financial assistance?

1. Are you assigned to a particular staff member or case manager for help with your housing search, or do you interact with various people at [MOBILITY PROGRAM]?
2. Tell me about how that works. Who do you interact with the most?
3. What do you communicate about with [STAFF MEMBER(S)]?
4. How do you typically communicate with [STAFF MEMBER(S)]?
5. How often do you speak with them?
6. How do you stay in touch with them?

Probes: scheduled meetings, in-person, informal calls/texts, who initiates contact

1. What do you find most helpful in your interactions with them? Can you give an example?
2. What do you find not as helpful? Can you give an example?
3. Has your work with [STAFF MEMBER] helped prepare you for your housing search? Tell me more about that.
4. Do you feel like [STAFF MEMBER] understands what you’re going through with the search process? Do they listen to your concerns?
5. How easy or difficult would you say it is to work with [MOBILITY PROGRAM] to get the help you want for your search? Tell me more about that.
6. [*If challenging*] Tell me more about a specific instance or example.

Probes: Communication with staff/reaching staff; availability of needed service(s); clarity on services available?

# EXPERIENCE WITH Comprehensive mobility-related services [Treatment Respondents]

I’d like to hear more about the types of help that you have available from [MOBILITY PROGRAM] for your housing search and lease up process, and your experience with the program.

1. Which of the services that [MOBILITY PROGRAM] offers have you used so far?
2. How did you decide to use these services as opposed to the other ones?
3. Are there other services you think you will use at some point?

Probes: One-on-one meetings with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach; mapping family systems; help identifying goals for the move; education about the program and opportunity areas; review of credit report; help preparing an application cover letter; group workshops; financial assistance?

1. Have the services from the [MOBILITY PROGRAM] been helpful during your housing search so far?
2. Which services have been the most useful so far? Tell me more about that.

Probes: Working one-on-one with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach; help identifying available units, help negotiating with landlords, help assisting with and expediting PHA’s lease up process; financial assistance (application fees, security deposits, other financial assistance); navigating perceived discriminatory actions based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability ethnicity, family status, or source of income, etc.)?

1. Which services have been less useful to you so far? Can you give any examples of something that hasn’t turned out to be useful?

Probes: Specific CMRS, goal is to focus on specific services or types of services?

1. [*If mention receiving financial assistance*] What have you used the financial assistance for?
2. Does the program provide enough financial assistance to allow you to move to an Opportunity Area? [If not] What expenses do you have or anticipate having that you would need help with to move to an Opportunity area?
3. After working with the [MOBILITY PROGRAM], did you identify one or more neighborhoods that would work best for you and your family?
4. Which neighborhood(s) have you focused on?
5. Have the coach’s suggestions affected your search? [*If so*] How?
6. Has the [MOBILITY PROGRAM] identified any available rental units for you that you chose not to apply for?
7. [I*f yes*] How many units? Why did you decide not to apply for them?
8. [*Existing voucher families*] Thinking back to past moves you have made with a voucher, do the services you are receiving through [MOBILITY PROGRAM] make a difference compared with your previous housing search experiences? Tell me more about that.
9. Tell me more about your past experiences with landlords and using your voucher. How do the services you receive through [MOBILITY PROGRAM] make a difference with your interactions with landlords?
10. What would make the program better? If you could improve the services that [MOBILITY PROGRAM] provides to help people with vouchers search for housing and lease up, what changes would you make?

Probes: Make changes to types of services, how services are delivered, length of services, staffing changes, etc.?

# REFLECTIONS ON MOBILITY PROGRAM [Treatment Respondents]

1. Overall, how satisfied are you so far with the services you have received during your housing search?

Probe: Why satisfied or dissatisfied?

1. Overall, how satisfied are you so far with [MOBILITY PROGRAM STAFF]? Tell me more about that.

# CLOSING [All Respondents]

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.

1. Is there anything that I did not ask about your moving experience that is important for us to understand?
2. Do you have any final questions for me about the study, or about the research team?

Thank you for your time. I will now turn off the recorder.

*[Discuss compensation and collect future contacts list.]*