

## **Choice Neighborhoods Protocol: Resident/Neighborhood Leader**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I am <NAME>, a researcher at <ORGANIZATION>, and this is <NAME> from <ORGANIZATION>. Before we begin, I want to tell you a few things about this study and your participation in it. Please feel free to ask me any questions you might have as I move through the introduction.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) contracted the Urban Institute and researchers at Case Western Reserve University to evaluate the Choice Neighborhoods program (Choice). Choice provides resources for local communities to help distressed neighborhoods develop affordable housing, provide access to a range of services for residents, and increase opportunities and safety. The study aims to understand the strategies and outcomes associated with Choice implementation for housing, residents, and neighborhoods in nine communities. We are collecting information and data from several sources, including a resident survey, neighborhood observations, program documents, and interviews.

We are conducting interviews with people such as yourself to understand the process and experience of those who were involved in or affected by Choice in this community. The interviews will provide valuable perspectives on what has been achieved through Choice and what the challenges have been with implementation. Your insights are important for this study. We are not evaluating your [agency/organization] but are focused on implementation and outcomes of Choice activities.

The questions in the interview have been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated at up to 90 minutes, including preparation and follow-up. The OMB control number is XXXX-XXXX, expiring XX-XX-XXXX. 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.

Your participation in this interview is **voluntary**. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may choose to skip any questions you don't want to answer, and you may stop participating at any time. We will not release your name or any other identifying information beyond the research team and will not include your name or identifying information in our report and documentation. If you are in a position that makes it so you are the only person or one of few people who would know certain information, it is possible someone reading the report might infer the source - you should be aware of the possibility. Note that researchers are required to take steps, including reporting to authorities, to address a situation where they believe someone they speak to may harm themselves or others. *[If conducting the interview via a videoconference platform: We also recognize that video meetings*

can be hacked, and though we have taken steps to prevent this from happening, it is a possibility.]

With your permission, we will audio record the interview, which we will have transcribed to ensure we have an accurate account of what is said. [NAME] also will be taking notes. Only members of the research team will be allowed to review the recording, transcript, and notes, and all members of our team have signed a confidentiality agreement. We will destroy the recording, transcript, and notes at the conclusion of the project.

Do you have any questions about the study or today's interview?

Do you consent to participate in the interview?

Do you consent to be recorded?

[FOR RESIDENT LEADER: You will receive a \$40 gift card as a thank you.]

### ***Introduction***

**[Prior to the interview, identify whether the respondent lived at the original target development or not. If they did not and/or cannot speak to changes resulting from Choice Neighborhood implementation, ask for their perspectives on current conditions.]**

*To start, we are interested in learning about your background in the neighborhood.*

- 1) How long have you lived in [NEIGHBORHOOD]?**
- 2) Have you had any formal roles in the neighborhood, such as sitting on advisory committees, a neighborhood council, etc.?**
  - a. If so, what role or roles?
  - b. How long did you serve in that/those position(s)?

### ***Resident Outcomes***

*The policymakers who designed the Choice Neighborhoods program intended that residents who lived in [name of the original target development] before redevelopment, 'original residents,' would experience improvements in their lives because of changes that took place. We are interested in your perspective on changes residents experienced related to housing, employment, income, education, health, and safety.*

- 3) Given your sense of the community, do you think the original residents have experienced a change in their life circumstances from ten years ago, prior to redevelopment?**
  - a. If so, in what areas of their lives have they experienced the greatest changes?  
Probes: housing, health, education, safety, access to jobs, parks, neighborhood amenities
  - b. What were the greatest changes experienced by children and youth under 18?

- i. What factors do you think have led to the changes?
- ii. What changes, if any, would you attribute to the Choice Neighborhoods efforts?
- c. If residents' lives haven't changed all that much, why do you think that is?

*We'll shift to questions about each component of the Choice Neighborhoods program: Housing, People, and Neighborhood.*

## **Housing**

**4) I'll start by asking about the buildings. How do the redeveloped housing buildings differ from [NAME OF ORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT]?**

- a. What do you think are the most significant changes in the buildings' designs from what was here before?
- b. Do the new designs connect the redeveloped housing to the surrounding neighborhood better than the old housing did?
- c. Are the new designs more open to the street?
- d. Compared with the prior layout, do the new designs increase the defensible space in and around the building? By *defensible space* I mean physical design that makes it easier for building management and residents to keep an eye on or control the areas around their building.

**5) Did the quality and features of housing units change after [NAME OF ORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT] was redeveloped? How?**

*Probe:* unit layouts, size of rooms, number of bedrooms, kitchen features, bathroom improvements, heating and cooling improvements, etc.

- a. Describe the changes.

**6) Did the approach to property management and maintenance change after redevelopment? If so, in what ways?**

*Probe:* change in property managers, communication between management and residents; responsiveness to maintenance requests; maintenance of entryways, hallways, shared spaces; expectations and rules, etc.

**7) Did the approach to building security change after redevelopment? If so, in what ways?**

**Prompts:** front desk staff, security guard, security cameras, etc.

- a. What security measures are in place now?

## **\*\*\* Neighborhood**

*The next few questions focus on the neighborhood. Please think about the neighborhood before the COVID-19 pandemic, so before late winter or early spring 2020, when talking about any changes related to Choice Neighborhood implementation.*

**8) Has the neighborhood changed since redevelopment? In what ways? Probes:**

improvements to sidewalks, lighting, or connections with surrounding areas; vacant lots or abandoned buildings; parks or playgrounds; businesses or job opportunities; increase in income diversity of neighborhood residents; etc.

**9) Has neighborhood safety changed since redevelopment? In what ways?**

*Probes:* area feels safer / less safe; crime has decreased / increased; police are more / less present; no change

**10) Have these changes affected neighborhood residents (original and new)? In what ways?**

- a. [BASED ON LOCAL CHANGES, ASK A VARIATION OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS] Do people use public spaces in the neighborhood?
  - i. Do you think people feel safer now compared with the time before Choice redevelopment?
  - ii. Do neighborhood residents have better access to businesses or amenities, such as parks, playgrounds, or gardens, than they did before?
- b. Do you think neighborhood changes have affected residents from the target development differently than they have affected other neighborhood residents? If so, how?

***Household relocation, stability and satisfaction***

*The Choice Neighborhood program aims to provide residents with choices about where they live, including the ability to return to the redeveloped housing or to relocate permanently. We are interested in how grantee teams supported the goals of relocation and re-occupancy.*

**11) For original residents who lived in [NAME OF THE TARGET DEVELOPMENT THAT WAS DEMOLISHED], what is your general sense of where most of the households are living now? *Probe:* dispersed, clustered in another area, returned, etc.**

**12) From your vantage point, what factors contributed to where original residents are living now?**

*Prompts:* housing availability, housing affordability, neighborhood familiarity, location of family/friends, ability to find accessible housing that meets their needs, etc. etc.

**13) What types of help and support did residents get to find housing and move from their original unit, and with any subsequent moves?**

- a. Can you share a couple of examples of people's experiences with moving support?

**14) From your perspective, did the length of time between when relocation and demolition took place and when the new units were available for move-in affect people's decision to return to the redeveloped housing?**

- a. *If yes:* What do you base that on? Can you give an example?

**15) What were some of the greatest successes with regards to relocation strategies and supports?**

*Probe:* strategies that were especially helpful, accessibility, location, timing of support

- a. What factors led to the success?

**16) What were some of the greatest challenges with regards to relocation strategies and supports?**

*Probe:* barriers difficult to overcome, timing of relocation, planned vs. unplanned moves, having accessible housing options

- a. What factors led to the challenges?

### **Case Management and Supportive Services**

- 17) We understand that the following services were provided as part of the Choice program in [NEIGHBORHOOD]. [REVIEW LIST OF SERVICES AND PROVIDERS WITH RESPONDENT] Does this list seem complete? Is there anything missing?**
  - a. Were any specific services or supports especially helpful for residents? Which ones?
    - i. In what ways were they helpful?
  - b. Were there any specific people or organizations who were especially helpful? Who / Which ones?
    - i. In what ways were they helpful?
  - c. Were there any challenges with supportive services?  
*Probe: types of services available, location, quality, length of time a service was available, etc.*
  - d. Were there needs for services that were not provided?
    - i. What types of services were needed but not offered?
- 18) What was your involvement with the case management services?**
  - a. Did you use those services?
    - i. *If yes:* Did you find them helpful? In what ways?
  - b. Did you experience any challenges with case management?  
*Probe: availability, location, quality, length of time a service was available, etc.*
  - c. Were there improvements over time?
- 19) Did you or anyone in your household use any of the specific programs or services, such as the employment, education, youth, and health services?**
  - a. *If yes:* Which ones? Did they meet needs that you or a family member had? How so?
  - b. Did you or a family member experience any challenges with these supportive services?  
*Probe: types of services available, location, quality, length of time a service was available, etc.*
  - c. Were there improvements over time?
  - d. Were there needs that were not met?
    - i. Can you give a couple of examples of unmet needs?
- 20) Now, I'd like to get your perspective on particular types of services offered to residents.**
  - a. What is your sense of the quality of the employment-related services? How beneficial do you think they were?
  - b. What is your sense of the quality of services intended to help people access health care and health insurance? How beneficial do you think they were?
  - c. And, what is your sense of the youth education-related services intended to support families' efforts to reach early learning and education goals? How beneficial do you think they were?

### **Wrap-Up**

- 21) In summary, could you please share some of the major successes with the redevelopment of [ORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT]?**

- a. With housing?
  - b. With the services and supports for residents?
  - c. With changes made in the neighborhood?
- 22) What were the major challenges with the housing redevelopment? Services and supports for residents? The neighborhood changes?**
- 23) How did the people and organizations implementing Choice address or overcome those challenges?**
- 24) Overall, what recommendations do you have to offer to other Choice grantees and to HUD about the Choice Neighborhoods program (efforts to make improvements to housing, resident outcomes, neighborhoods)?**
- 25) Do you think this neighborhood has benefited from the Choice Neighborhoods efforts?**
- a. *If yes: In what ways? / If no: Why not?*  
*Prompts: housing quality over time, who will live here, resident well-being, neighborhood amenities, neighborhood investments*
- 26) Is there anything about the Choice Neighborhoods program we haven't discussed that is important for us to understand?**