

Qualitative Interview – Nonprofit or Partner Organization Staff

The study team will conduct one-on-one qualitative interviews during in-person site visits, or virtual site visits with each participating site. During these visits, trained qualitative researchers will interview human services Nonprofit or Partner Organizations staff. We will audio record and transcribe interviews. The table below provides information about how many people will be interviewed by role, as well as a maximum time allocated for each interview.

Interviewee Role	Sample	Maximum Time of Interview
Nonprofit or Partner Organizations staff	Up to 6 per site (72 total)	60 minutes

The guide that follows provides the universe of potential questions that may be asked to Nonprofit or Partner Organization Staff to facilitate conversations. These guides are not interview scripts and, therefore, do not contain introductory information to be read to the interviewee or directions or guidance for the interviewer. We will add this information to the guides as we prepare interview scripts.

As described in the Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts study design, the study team will tailor interview scripts to each site according to considerations of the interviewee role, the local context, and data saturation and in relation to quantitative and other qualitative data as they become available. Each interview script will select from the universe of questions provided in the attached guides and include only the questions that best meet the priorities/requirements for the given interview. For example, the study team will not ask an interviewee all the questions included in the attached guide. Rather, the study team will ask the interviewee questions that are most relevant given the respondent's position, the context of the site where the respondent works, the degree of saturation achieved for that question across sites, and any available pertinent quantitative or qualitative data.

The study team may change specific wording to account for local context and to improve question comprehension and/or precision, as well as in response to Institutional Review Board review. These changes will not affect participant burden. The study team will determine question order for each individual script after the questions have been selected. Interviews will not last any longer than the maximum time allocated for each interview, and the study team will train interviewers and provide them with algorithms for prioritizing questions to ensure that questions are completed in the allocated time.

ACF Site Visit Master Guide – Nonprofit or Partner Organization Staff Oral Informed Consent

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today as a part of the study being conducted by 2M Research Services and the Urban Institute (the 2M-Urban Team) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). We are speaking with human services leadership, staff, and partners to collect data around the challenges and unique opportunities of administering human service programs in rural contexts. We hope to capture information to develop a rich description of human services programs in rural communities and provide ACF opportunities for strengthening the capacity of human services programs to promote the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities in rural contexts. This information will be used by ACF to provide critical insight into how rural communities have adopted innovative strategies for addressing needs and how these strategies may be replicated in other areas. ACF will also use the information collected to understand technical assistance needs and ways to address those needs.

During this interview, we would like to discuss your experiences with human services programs, the challenges you face administering human services programs in rural communities, and any lessons learned. Our discussion should last approximately (60) minutes. There are no right or wrong answers – we just want to hear about your experiences. You can refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to stop or if you choose not to participate at all.

All information will be kept private and treated in a secure manner and will not be disclosed, unless otherwise compelled by law. The information collected by the 2M-Urban Team will be aggregated and summarized for reporting to ACF and the public. Information about your program and comments from other staff and stakeholders will be aggregated within your site. All analyses will be conducted using a de-identified data file: your identity will not be shared, and the information shared will not be linked to you.

There are no risks to those who participate. Your responses will be reported in aggregate in a case summary that is specific to your community. The benefit of participating in this study is that your organization's experiences will help ACF better understand the challenges and unique opportunities of providing human services in rural communities.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it has a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # for this collection of information is 0970-0XXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

If you have questions about this study after this interview, please email Dr. Dallas Elgin, the study's project director, at delgin@2mresearch.com, or your primary point of contact.

Before we begin, we would like to have your permission to audio record our discussion so that we can ensure our notes are accurate and complete. The audio recordings will be deleted once the project is complete, in September 2022.

Can we audio record this conversation?

- Yes
- No

Do you have any other questions before we begin?

Introduction

- 1) Would you start by telling us a little bit about yourself and your role in (*your organization*)?
 - a. How long have you been working in this role?

- 2) Would you tell us a little more about your organization?
 - a. What kind of work does your organization do?
 - b. What is your organization's mission?
 - c. Where does your organization's funding come from?
 - d. How would you describe the clients your organization serves?
 - e. How long has your organization been working in this community?
 - f. What geographic area does your organization serve?

- 3) As you know, this work focuses on understanding the delivery of human services programs in rural areas. What characteristics or information do you think would be helpful for us to understand about the area you serve?
 - a. What characteristics or information do you think would be helpful for us to understand about the people you serve?

- 4) From your experience, what makes implementing this program in [*your community*] different or unique from implementing it in [*Urban area in same state*]?
 - a. What does a program operating in a rural area need to be more aware of or conscientious of?

Participant Needs - Social Wellbeing

- 5) What are the most significant social wellbeing needs of the people and families your organization serves?
 - a. What are the main ways your organization/program is working to address these issues?

- 6) What social wellbeing needs are not being met by the human services programs offered in your community?
 - a. Why do you think the human services programs in your community are unable to meet these needs?

- 7) How is your organization working to address these unmet needs?

- 8) What are a few other key organizations that are meeting these needs?
 - i. What are they doing to address these needs?
- 9) What gaps remain when it comes to meeting these social wellbeing needs?

Participant Needs - Economic Wellbeing

- 10) What are the most significant economic wellbeing needs of the people and families you serve?
 - a. What are the main ways your organization/program is working to address these issues?
- 11) What needs are not being met by the human services programs offered in your community?
 - a. Why do you think the human services programs in your community are unable to meet these needs?
- 12) How is your organization working to address these needs?
- 13) What are a few other key organizations that are meeting these community needs?
 - a. What are they doing to address these needs?
- 14) What gaps remain when it comes to meeting these economic wellbeing needs?

Participant Needs - Other

- 15) Are there any other significant needs related to human services and human services programs in this community that we have not discussed?
- 16) How have these needs changed over time?
- 17) What other resources and services exist in your community to address these needs?
- 18) When you think about the unmet needs of the population you serve, what do you believe is influencing those unmet needs? (e.g., inability to access services, not enough staff to reach potential participants, not enough funding to support everyone that needs services, political climate)
 - a. How have the things influencing unmet needs changed over time? (e.g., changes in jobs/employment, changes in program funding)

Capacity

- 19) When thinking about the capacity of the human services programs in your area, how would you describe the capacity of these programs to address the needs of your community? Capacity includes

- a. Funding – May include the amount of funding available, how it can be used, the challenges with applying for or receiving funding, etc.
- b. Staff – May include the number or type of staff, ability to recruit qualified staff, funding to pay adequate salaries, training available for staff, etc.
- c. Technology – May include the ability to access/purchase the necessary technology, staff who know how to use the technology, clients who have the ability to use and access the technology, etc.
- d. Physical Resources/Materials – May include government cars or transportation to reach clients, printed materials in different languages, cell phones, etc.
- e. Partnerships – May include the presence of relationships between a number of public and private organizations.

Partnerships

- 20) What role do nonprofits and other community-based organizations play in the delivery of human services?
- 21) Which human services programs does your organization partner with?
- a. How long have you been partners?
 - b. How were these partnerships established?
 - c. In what ways do you work together?
 - d. Would you say this is a successful partnership? Why/why not?

Other

- 22) Unmet need is a multifaceted construct that considers the number of people eligible for services, relative to the actual number of people that receive or has access to services. When you think about the elements of capacity that we have talked about (funding, staffing, technology, physical resources/materials, partnerships) and the unmet needs in your service area, which of these elements are most critical to being able to address the unmet needs in your service area?
- a. What would your community need to address the unmet need in your service area?
- 23) Which of these elements of capacity are the most challenging to address in rural areas? Why?

Service Delivery

- 24) What are the unique characteristics of your community that impact your ability to provide services to your program participants?
- a. Public transportation or transportation in general
 - b. Geographic spread of your service area or where participants are located

- c. Stigma toward using human services programs
 - d. Political climate
 - e. Ease or difficulty of applying for services
 - f. Other priorities (e.g., jobs/unemployment, opioids, childcare, housing)
 - g. Others
- 25) What components of your service delivery approach do you believe work well, given the rural area and residents you serve?
- a. Why do you believe these approaches have been particularly effective?
- 26) What components of your service delivery approach have been more challenging or have not worked so well given the rural areas and residents you serve?
- a. Why do you believe these approaches have been more challenging or less effective?
- 27) In what ways have you had to “adapt” your service delivery to be able to reach and serve the people in your community? (e.g., adaptations to how participants are identified or recruited [recruitment and intake], how staff engage with participants [case management], curricula used, how data are collected and reported)
- a. Why were these adaptations necessary?
 - b. In what ways have you had to adapt your service delivery model to make it work with the capacity (e.g., funding, staffing, technology, physical resources/materials, and partnerships) your organization has to deliver services?
 - c. In what ways have these adaptations helped you reach and serve people in your program?
- 28) What are the most significant challenges or barriers that you and your organization face when delivering programs services in your area?
- a. How have these challenges/barriers impacted your ability to deliver services?
 - b. Which of these challenges do you believe could be addressed by technical assistance?
- 29) What resources or factors exist in your service area that facilitate how you deliver human services in your area?
- a. Resources internal to your program – These could include (but are not limited to) having particular staff or resources, or the way your program or organization is “set up” to deliver services.
 - b. Resources external to your program – These could include (but are not limited to) transportation, smaller geographic spread of participants, existence of partners like Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or nonprofit organizations that provide complementary services or other things.
 - c. How have these factors/facilitators helped or improved service delivery?
- 30) What resources are absent or missing from your area that might impact how your program is implemented?

- a. Resources internal to your program – May include not having enough staff, not having trained/qualified staff, not having enough program support from organizational leadership, competing programs within the same organization
- b. Resources external to your program – No transportation, significant geographic spread of participants, distance from program office to participants, other community priorities

Lessons Learned

- 31) What would you describe as your key lessons learned about delivering human services programs in rural areas?
 - a. What strategies has your program/organization used to improve your ability to deliver services and meet your client's needs?

Recommendations

- 32) What recommendations do you have for improving the coordination and service delivery between human services programs and nonprofit/CBO activities?
- 33) Thinking about what we talked about related to how you and your organization deliver services, what recommendations do you have for improving service delivery in rural areas?
 - a. What resources, support, or assistance is needed or would be helpful to address unmet needs in your service area?
- 34) What changes or flexibilities would be helpful to improve your ability to reach and support the people that use your program/services?
 - b. For example: improvements in things like the way funding is provided or the way the application process works, the way funding needs to be used or allocated, changes or flexibilities in the number or type of staff needed, changes to how program activities need to be delivered, types of data to be collected and reported, etc.
- 35) Thinking about unmet needs in your service area, what recommendations do you have to enable human services programs and their partners to better address unmet needs?
- 36) Rural areas have unique needs and face unique challenges related to delivering human services programs and meeting the needs of people living in rural areas. What types of technical assistance would be helpful to improve your ability to provide services to your rural community/service area and clients?
- 37) How could Federal Government agencies, like OPRE-MCHB, make changes to the way programs or policies are designed and implemented, to improve the capacity of your program to serve rural areas? (e.g., move away from award of funding on per capita basis, more resources for transportation, more staff)