

Instrument 1

Program Director Recruitment Call Protocol

SPRING 2022 HEAD START REACH CASE STUDY SITE VISITS**Program Director Recruitment Talking Points**

In Spring 2022, the Head Start REACH team will use these talking points to (1) secure the program's participation in the study; (2) provide information about planned data collection activities; (3) identify staff who conduct eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance (ERSEA) activities; (4) indicate which documents will be the most useful to review to obtain information about the program's ERSEA work and which staff will be able to provide those documents; (5) identify up to four partner organizations that the program targets for ERSEA efforts; and (6) request that the director identify a person on their staff who will serve as an on-site coordinator.

A. Introduce yourself

Hello, my name is [NAME]. I am calling on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to talk about your program's participation in the Head Start REACH study. Head Start REACH is a study that aims to improve understanding of how Head Start programs recruit, select, enroll, and retain families experiencing adversities. By retain, I mean efforts to maintain the attendance and enrollment of families in the program. As part of this study, we are taking an in-depth look at programs that have demonstrated success in reaching and supporting families facing one or more adversities.

- We recently sent you a letter informing you that your program was selected to be part of this study. As we indicated in the letter, your program was selected after talking to experts in the field who recommended your program as being one that was doing an exceptional job in serving families facing adversities. Did you receive this letter?
- IF THEY HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE LETTER, OFFER TO SEND IT TO THEM AND PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE STUDY
- IF THEY HAVE RECEIVED LETTER: And have you had a chance to go over it?
- Is this a good time to talk? I would like to answer any questions you may have about Head Start REACH and discuss the logistics of the study with you.

IF ASKED HOW MUCH TIME WILL BE NEEDED FOR THIS CALL, SAY ABOUT 30 MINUTES

IF THEY INDICATE NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME, TRY SETTING APPOINTMENT FOR FOLLOW UP CALL BEFORE YOU END THE CALL

ALLOW TIME FOR QUESTIONS, RESPOND OR DEFER UNTIL LATER IN THE CALL WHEN THE TOPIC IS PRESENTED.

B. Case study activities

- I work for Mathematica, an independent research organization, which is conducting the Head Start REACH study on behalf of ACF.

- I want to make clear that I am calling about [PROGRAM NAME], which I understand has [NUMBER] grants, GRANT NUMBER(S) [#], and PROGRAM NUMBER(s) [#].
- We will interview program directors and staff involved in the recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention of families into your program. You may refer to these staff as ERSEA staff and staff who help maintain the enrollment of families in the program. We will ask parents directly about their experiences in your program. In addition, we will also talk with staff in partner organizations that your program works with and with Head Start eligible parents in those organizations who are not enrolled in your program.
- This information will help us understand how Head Start programs are supporting the recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention of families experiencing adversities.
- We will get informed consent from parents and staff prior to their participation. We will also ensure that all information is kept private to the extent permitted by law. We will ensure all information is only reported in summary form and will not attribute any information to you or your program. We will ask for your program's help identifying and recruiting parents who are facing adversities that the study is focused on, but we will never ask your program or parents to tell us which specific adversities they are facing. Only Mathematica staff will collect data for this study. Data from the interviews and focus groups will be transmitted to the [Child & Family Data Archive](#) or a similar data archive at the end of the study so it can be used by other researchers. No personal information that could identify you or your program will remain in the interview notes that are shared with the data archive.
- If you agree to participate, two study team members will visit your program in spring 2022. The visit will last 1-2 days. If we need to conduct our visits virtually, we will do one-on-one interviews via Zoom or telephone, review documents remotely, and set up virtual focus groups.
- We would like you to identify a person who could be our main contact who can help us schedule interviews and the focus group, as well as handle any logistics. I will refer to this person as an on-site coordinator.
- As a thank you for your program's participation, your program will receive a \$200 check that you can use however you choose.
- Do you have any questions before I provide more details? [RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS]
- In this call, I'll tell you about the data we will collect for the study and ask you to identify an on-site coordinator. This person could be at the program or center level – they must be in a good position to connect us to staff and parents with whom we need to speak for the study. We will also ask you to indicate which adversities your program focuses on for ERSEA activities and ask you to identify staff who conduct ERSEA work for your program. Finally, we will ask you to identify partner organizations that your program works with for the recruitment and enrollment of families facing adversities.

C. Data collection components

- We will talk to the following people one-on-one or in small groups:
 - Program directors and ERSEA staff: We will conduct a 90-minute interview with staff responsible for ERSEA-related efforts. These interviews can be either one-on-one or small groups of two or three, based on respondents' roles and preferences. IF ASKED: These interviews will include questions about your program's ERSEA policies; recruitment, selection, enrollment, and

retention approaches and how they are tailored for families facing adversities; staff training and support related to ERSEA and adversities; and partnerships that support the program's recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention efforts.

- Parents enrolled in Head Start: We will conduct a 90-minute group discussion (that I will refer to as a focus group) with 8-10 parents enrolled in your program. Parents will receive a \$25 gift card for participating in the focus group. IF ASKED: We will ask parents about their experience with program enrollment, details of the recruitment process, reasons for enrollment, and their experience participating in the program after enrolling.
- Partner organization staff interview: We will conduct 45-minute one-on-one interviews with a staff person from up to 4 community organizations that your program works with around recruitment and enrollment, such as homeless shelters, McKinney-Vento liaisons in school districts, or child welfare agencies. Staff will receive a \$25 gift card for participating in the interview. IF ASKED: We will ask partner organization staff about their experience working with your program, their understanding of Head Start eligibility criteria, procedures for sharing information with families about available ECE options, and strategies for enrolling families facing adversities into your program.
- Parents not enrolled in Head Start: We will conduct a 90-minute focus group with 8-10 parents from one of the community partner organizations that your program works with. We will offer parents the option of a one-on-one interview and will include one parent per family. Parents will receive a \$40 gift card as a token of appreciation for participating in the focus group or a \$25 gift card for a one-on-one interview. The community partner organization will receive a \$100 gift card as a thank you for helping us locate these parents. IF ASKED: We will ask parents about their knowledge of Head Start and other child care options, reasons for choosing alternate care, and the partner organization's role in helping them choose child care.
- We will work with the on-site coordinator to find a time and place for the focus groups, ideally at one of the Head Start centers that is convenient for parents to access, and at a convenient time of day. We will work directly with the partner organization to find a time and place for the focus group for parents at their organization.
- We will ask parents to sign a consent form when they arrive at the focus group location. Our team members will also respond to any questions parents have about the study.

D. Identify on-site coordinator

- We think it will be helpful if you could identify someone who will be our main point of contact. This on-site coordinator is someone you designate to work with us. The on-site coordinator should be available to help us identify and recruit parents currently participating in your program for the focus group, help us find a convenient time and space to conduct the focus group, help us schedule and coordinate staff interviews, and potentially help connect us to partner organizations that your program works with.
- Do you know who you would like this person to be?
- With your permission, after you speak with them, I'd like to contact this person to explain our study procedures and their role. GET THE OSC'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION BUT WAIT FOR PERMISSION TO CONTACT THEM.

E. Information about adversities

- Now I'd like to understand which adversities your program focuses on for ERSEA activities. Let me first clarify what I mean by families experiencing adversity: Adversities is a broad term that refers to a wide range of circumstances or events that pose a threat to a child or caregiver's physical or psychological well-being. The adversities that families experience are often intertwined with poverty, may co-occur, and are affected by systematic factors, such as structural racism. Common examples include (but are not limited to) families experiencing homelessness; involvement in child welfare, including foster care; and affected by substance use, mental health issues, and domestic violence.
- Can you tell me which adversities your program prioritizes? NOTE NAMED ADVERSITIES. IF MORE THAN TWO NAMED, ASK WHICH TWO THE PROGRAM PRIORITIZES
IF OTHER ADVERSITIES NAMED: We are going to ask you about [ADVERSITY], but we understand that families may experience multiple adversities that influence their recruitment, enrollment, and retention.
- What percentage of families experiencing [ADVERSITY 1] are enrolled in your program? Your best guess is okay. NOTE PERCENTAGE
- What percentage of families experiencing [ADVERSITY 2] are enrolled in your program? Your best guess is okay. NOTE PERCENTAGE
- Does your program serve families experiencing other adversities? Which ones? NOTE OTHER ADVERSITIES AND PERCENTAGES

F. Identify ERSEA staff and ERSEA documents

- Now I'd like you to think about staff who would be able to provide the most useful information about your program's activities related to recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention. These may be program-level staff or center-level staff.
- Does your program have one or more full-time staff dedicated to ERSEA work? Or is ERSEA work split across multiple staff? To what extent are center-level staff involved in ERSEA work?
- Please tell me the names of up to four staff who will be able to provide the most information about your program's recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention efforts.
- Please provide the following information for each staff person named:
 - a. NAME
 - b. CONTACT INFORMATION (phone number and email)
 - c. How long has [STAFF PERSON] been doing ERSEA work?
 - d. What percentage of [STAFF PERSON'S] time is spent on ERSEA work?
 - e. What are their other responsibilities?
 - f. Which aspect of recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention is [STAFF PERSON] focused on?
 - g. Does [STAFF PERSON] work directly with families?

IF MORE THAN FOUR STAFF NAMED, TRY TO GET A SENSE OF WHICH FOUR WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE MOST INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM'S ERSEA EFFORTS. THIS COULD BE STAFF WHO HAVE THE MOST EXPERIENCE WITH ERSEA, WHO WORK

DIRECTLY WITH FAMILIES, AND/OR FOCUS ON MORE THAN ONE AREA (RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT, RETENTION)

- Do you have suggestions for grouping any of these staff together (based on level and similar responsibilities) or is it best to have one-on-one interviews with each of them?
- We'd also like to review documents related to your program's ERSEA efforts. These could include your program's ERSEA policies, selection criteria, recruitment materials, enrollment forms, and a copy of your most recent community needs assessments as well as documents summarizing information from your community needs assessment (for example, change in scope or 5-year applications). Which staff will be able to provide these documents?

G. Identify partner agencies

- Next, I'd like to learn about the agencies or community organizations that your program is partnering with for the recruitment and enrollment of families experiencing [ADVERSITY 1] and [ADVERSITY 2].

- a. Can you name 4 partner organizations that your program works with the most for the recruitment and enrollment of families experiencing [ADVERSITY 1] and/or [ADVERSITY 2]

IF NEEDED: These could include partnerships with homeless shelters; McKinney-Vento liaisons in school districts; the local judicial system; child welfare agencies; local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices; local churches; community action agencies; health advisory committees; and the local department of human services.

- b. Do these partners provide any support with helping maintain families' enrollment or attendance in your program?
- c. Do you think any of these partners would be able to participate in the study? As a reminder, we will conduct one-on-one interviews with staff from up to 4 partner organizations; we will conduct a focus group with Head Start-eligible parents from one partner organization. Which of these organizations would be most open to participation? ATTEMPT TO GET THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR TO NAME AND RANK 4 THAT WE SHOULD TARGET FOR RECRUITMENT

ASK ABOUT EACH OF THE UP TO 4 ORGANIZATIONS:

- a. Do you have a formal arrangement with [PARTNER ORGANIZATION]? By formal arrangement, we mean written procedures or a memorandum of understanding.
- b. How long have you been working with them?

I was hoping that you or the on-site coordinator and I could call your contact at these partner organizations together to help them understand the importance of the study and encourage their participation. Would you prefer to do this call with me or would you prefer the OSC to do so?

H. IRB needs

- a. Research review boards typically review research studies to ensure that participants' rights are protected. Mathematica has obtained approval from the IRB or Institutional Review Board for the Head Start REACH project. Are there any additional local IRBs that will need to review the study materials and procedures prior to the site visit? IF YES, NOTE INFORMATION

I. Next steps

- a. IF NO OSC NAMED: Okay, I will wait to hear back from you about who you would like to designate as your program's on-site coordinator. Do you have a sense of when you might decide? I would like to get in contact with them as soon as possible to let them know about the study and arrange a time to discuss their coordination role.
- b. IF OSC NAMED: I think the next step for me is to reach out to the person you named as your program's on-site coordinator. Would you like to let them know to expect my call?
- c. In case I need to follow up with you for any reason, what is the easiest way to contact you—by phone or email? **CONFIRM THAT THIS PERSON IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE YOUR REGULAR CONTACT**
- d. Do you have any questions at this point? If questions or concerns come up, please feel free to contact me at [PHONE or E-MAIL ADDRESS].

Thank you. Your participation in this important study will contribute to our understanding of successful approaches for the recruitment, selection, enrollment, and retention into Head Start of families experiencing adversities. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with your program.