

Instrument 4

Community Partner Recruitment Call Protocol

SPRING 2022 HEAD START REACH CASE STUDY SITE VISITS**Community Partner Outreach Call**

In Spring 2022, the Head Start REACH team will ask onsite coordinators at six Head Start programs to set up a call with representatives of up to 4 community partner organizations nominated by the program director. With the help of the onsite coordinator, the team will reach out to these partner organizations and use these talking points to (1) share information about the study, (2) secure their participation in the study, and (3) gauge their willingness to help us recruit Head Start-eligible parents who are not enrolled in Head Start for a focus group.

We will conduct semi-structured interviews with representatives with up to 4 organizations that each of the six Head Start programs partner with but will only conduct a focus group with parents from one partner organization per Head Start program.

A. Introduce yourself

- IDEALLY, THE ONSITE COORDINATOR OR THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR WILL SET UP AND PARTICIPATE IN A THREE-WAY CALL WITH YOU (MATHEMATICA RECRUITER) AND THE ORGANIZATION STAFF PERSON. WAIT FOR THE ONSITE COORDINATOR TO INTRODUCE YOU.
- Hi, my name is [NAME]. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. On behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, I'd like to talk about your organization'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, such as [FILL ADVERSITIES OF INTEREST TO PARTNER AS INDICATED BY PROGRAM DIRECTOR].
- We know that child care can be a huge issue for families facing adversities, and ACF has sponsored this study specifically to look at what more Head Start programs can do to help these families. As part of the study, we are reaching out to community organizations that work with families facing adversities who are eligible for and might benefit from receiving services from a Head Start program. One important component is how community organizations are working with local Head Start programs to help them reach and serve these families. Your insights and experiences working with these families is critical to helping us understand how community partnerships benefit the families. We are hoping you will agree to talk with us about your partnership with [PROGRAM NAME].

B. Study activities

- I work for Mathematica, an independent research organization, which is conducting Head Start REACH on behalf of ACF.
- As part of the study, I would like to conduct a telephone interview with you or whomever within your organization works with [PROGRAM NAME] and knows the most about how your two organizations collaborate. We are particularly interested in learning about how you partner with

[PROGRAM NAME] in recruiting and enrolling families into their Head Start program. Are you the best person to talk with about this?

- IF CORRECT PERSON: Great. The interview will be 45 minutes and can be done by phone at any time that works for you. We will be offering participants \$25 for the person completing the interview. Are you willing to participate in the study?
- IF WE NEED TO TALK TO A DIFFERENT PERSON: Could you tell me who I should reach out to, to let them know about the study? GATHER NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NEW RESPONDENT. Would you be willing to let them know to expect a call from me about the study?
- IF UNWILLING TO PARTICIPATE: We were given your name by [PROGRAM NAME] as one of their partners that they work with most closely. May I ask why you are not interested in participating? TRY TO ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS (TOO BUSY, DON'T REALLY WORK WITH THEM, NEED TO CHECK WITH HIGHER UPS). TRY TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN. IF IT IS A HARD REFUSAL, THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME.
- IF WILLING RESPONDENT: I will send you an email so we can figure out the best time to schedule the interview and so you have my contact information. If you have a particular date and time in mind, I can take that now and get back to you to confirm that it works.
- IF NOT RECRUITING PARENTS FOR FOCUS GROUP FROM ORGANIZATION: That's all I have for today. I'll send you that email so we can get scheduling your interview. Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of this important study.
- IF RECRUITING PARENTS FOR FOCUS GROUP FROM ORGANIZATION: I did want to also tell you about a second piece of the study. As part of the study, we are planning on meeting with parents – both those enrolled in [PROGRAM NAME] and those not enrolled there. Most studies of Head Start focus on families already enrolled in the program and we believe that hearing from non-enrolled parents is very important. Without hearing about their experiences and challenges, it will be difficult for Head Start to be responsive to their interests and needs.

We recognize that you and your organization are the key to this happening. We are hoping to work with you to identify 8-10 families that your organization serves who are eligible to enroll in Head Start but are not currently enrolled. Parents will receive \$40 each to attend a small group discussion, that we call a focus group, for about 90 minutes. Without your involvement and encouragement, it is very unlikely for this to be a success. We will follow your lead as we want to be sensitive to the families' interests, needs and situations.

- To do this piece of the study, we would need to work closely with you. Let me explain a bit further.
 - This study is focused on families who face real challenges and who, might as a result, have different interests and needs for early care and education services. The study is focused on families experiencing homelessness, involvement in child welfare, including foster care, and affected by substance use, mental health issues, and domestic violence. We will ask for your help identifying and recruiting parents who are facing adversities that the study is focused on, but we will never ask you or the parents to tell us which specific adversities they are facing. We will get informed consent from parents prior to their participation.
 - We want to be sensitive to your clients' interests, needs and privacy. We would like you to talk with them first to determine their interest before giving us their names.

- We can be very flexible in how we meet with parents. If it's okay with you, we can hold the focus group at your facility if that makes folks more comfortable. Or we can pick someplace, like a library in the community, to hold the group. We would prefer to use your facility.
- If you or they feel uncomfortable meeting in a group setting with others, we can do the interview one-on-one, either in-person or on the phone. We will offer \$25 to parents who complete the interview one-on-one.
- And lastly, for your help coordinating the focus group effort with your clients, we will be offering your organization an additional \$100.

Is this something you would be willing to help us with?

- IF NO: I understand. Can you tell me what the barrier is? I appreciate your letting me talk through the second aspect, even if you won't be able to help us with it. Okay, so I will send you a follow up email with potential dates and times for our telephone interview.
- IF MAYBE TO FOCUS GROUP: Is there anyone one else within your organization that I can speak to about this? We can speak to this person together, if that's helpful.
- IF YES TO FOCUS GROUP: This is great. Thank you so much. These are the next steps for us:
 1. We would like to discuss the best way to identify some of the families you serve who would be willing to join a focus group discussion. It would be great if you could reach out to parents to determine interest in this group discussion. I am happy to send you a flyer to share with them and some talking points for you to answer their questions.
 2. Ideally, we would like somewhere between 8 and 10 parents (all from different families) that have children under the age of 5 and are not currently enrolled in a Head Start program. We would like you to keep track of who is interested in participating.
 3. We would also like to work with you to find a time and place for the focus groups – this could be at your location if that is okay with your organization and convenient and comfortable for parents. I can let you know when our team is scheduled to come and visit [PROGRAM NAME]. If you think holding the group at your location won't be possible, I'd like to hear your thoughts on the best way or place to do the group. If you think holding a group is not feasible, we can discuss how and where to meet with parents individually.
 4. Once all the logistics are set, we will coordinate with you to send invitations and/or reminders for the focus group or one-on-one interviews with the time and location. We'll ask everyone to sign a consent form before starting the discussion and will give each participant their \$40 gift card at the end of the session.

Do you have any questions for me at this point about the focus group?

IF NO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS: Okay, then I think the next thing for me to do is to follow up with you about your interview and schedule that. [IF DOING FOCUS GROUP] I'll also send additional information about the focus group for you to share with parents and others within your organization and then we can find a time to talk through the logistics for coordinating the focus group.

Thank you so much. Your participation in this important study will contribute to our understanding of how Head Start programs work with agencies like yours to serve families experiencing adversities. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you.