

Appendix C

Program Director Recruitment Letter



Dear [PROGRAM DIRECTOR],

We hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you because [HEAD START PROGRAM] has been so successful in reaching and supporting families experiencing adversities. Given your success, we seek to learn from your program through a case study for the Head Start REACH study. These case studies will help the early childhood field and Head Start programs learn about best practices for identifying and supporting families experiencing one or more adversities. 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.

What is the Head Start REACH study, and who is conducting it?

The Head Start REACH study 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. To meet this goal, [Mathematica](#), an independent research organization with a long history of learning from Head Start programs, will conduct in-depth case studies of six Head Start programs on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). **The Office of Head Start fully supports this endeavor, and strongly encourages your participation (please see the letter of support from the Office of Head Start).**

What do the case studies entail?

To conduct the [HEAD START PROGRAM]'s case study, Mathematica staff will complete the following activities with your program: (1) conduct an initial call with you to provide details about the study (30 minutes); (2) hold a one-on-one conversation with you (60 minutes); (3) hold one-on-one conversations with staff involved in recruiting, selecting, enrolling, and retaining your program's families (90 minutes); (4) conduct a focus group with families enrolled in your program (90 minutes); and (5) request documentation on your program's eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance (ERSEA) policies and related activities. We will complete the following activities with organizations that your program partners with for ERSEA activities: (1) hold one-on-one conversations with staff from up to four of your program's partner organizations (45 minutes) and (2) conduct a focus group with families who are eligible for, but not enrolled in your program (90 minutes). These conversations will help clarify the practices your program uses to identify and support parents, parents' experiences with these practices, and opportunities to expand Head Start's reach for families experiencing adversities.

If you agree to participate, two Mathematica staff will visit your program in spring 2022 for a two-day site visit, and your program would receive a \$200 check as a thank you for your involvement. Parents from your program who participate in focus groups would each receive \$25 gift cards, and staff from partner organizations would each receive \$25 gift cards. The partner organizations that helps us coordinate the focus group with parents not enrolled in Head Start will receive a \$100 honorarium. Although we have planned to conduct site visits, we will be prepared to conduct all data collection remotely via telephone and video conferencing software, if necessary.

To: PROGRAM DIRECTOR]
From: [Recruiter's name and title]
Date: [DATE]
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What are the next steps?

I will call you soon to discuss your program's participation in the study. During this call, we will identify the staff person who should be our main point of contact, discuss the adversities that your program's families are facing, discuss the staff and partner organizations we should reach out to, and confirm any local research review requirements. I will also answer any questions you might have.

Do I need to do anything prior to the call?

In our initial call with you, we will be asking you for the following information. If necessary, please consult with the person in charge of your program's ERSEA activities to verify the following:

- 1.** The adversities that your program targets for recruitment, enrollment, and retention activities
- 2.** The partner organizations that your program works with for the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of families experiencing those specific adversities.

We know you are extremely busy, and we understand this is a difficult time for many. We appreciate your consideration for this study and will remain attentive to your needs, as well as staff's and families' needs. If you have questions about the study or your involvement as a research volunteer, please contact me at X@mathematica-mpr.com or (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

[Recruiter's name and title]