

Instrument 3A: Site Visit 1 Interview Guide for Administrators: Child Welfare Agency Administrators

Instructions

Thank you for joining us today. We would like to invite you to participate in an interview that will last about 60 minutes. We are conducting an evaluation of LifeSet, and today we'd like to learn more about how LifeSet was implemented in New Jersey and your role in the process. Specifically, we will talk about your role and responsibilities, the selection and start up of LifeSet, the program's staffing requirements, among other topics. We will use this information to better understand how the LifeSet program is implemented in New Jersey and the context in which it operates.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You can choose not to answer any question or not participate in the interview at all. There will be no consequences to you if you choose not to participate. We will keep the information you provide private and will not share it with anyone except for research staff working on the study. Additionally, federal law states that 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. The OMB number for this data collection is 0970-0XXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

Background and Role

Current position, professional experience, main responsibilities and role within LifeSet program

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I'd like to start by learning a little bit about you.

1. What is your current position and how long have you been in it?
2. What are your main responsibilities?
3. [If held current position since before March 2020] Are these the same responsibilities you had pre-COVID? If not how did your responsibilities change?
4. How long have you worked at DCF?
5. What other positions have you held at DCF?
6. What role do you play as part of the LifeSet program?
7. Have you worked with former foster youth or other vulnerable youth populations before working for DCF? If so, in what capacity?
8. Have you held other positions – client facing or management – in social services before? If so, what were they?
9. Is there a degree/credential or experience requirement for your position? What is it?

Program Selection and Start Up

Now, I'd like to learn a bit about how New Jersey decided to implement LifeSet and what the selection and start up process was like.

Description of the program selection process

10. How did the decision to include LifeSet in your service provision plan come about? Did New Jersey decide, or was the state approached by the developer, or something else?
 - a. How was the target population identified for LifeSet?
11. What role did DCF leadership play in the selection of LifeSet?
12. What factors were important in selecting LifeSet as a program for transition-aged youth?

Description of the providing agency selection process

13. Our understanding is that each provider serves a specific geographic area. In deciding where to implement LifeSet in New Jersey which was chosen first, the geographic locations or the providers? [Note: interviewer may switch the order in which the next two items are asked based on the response.]
 - a. Can you describe how the providing agencies were selected?
 - i. Who was involved in selecting the provider agencies?
 - ii. Did you have a specific set of criteria?
 - iii. Was there a request for proposal, letter of interest, or some other means that providing agencies applied?

- iv. Who made the final decision about which providing agencies would be selected: Youth Villages or NJDCF?
- v. In what way are the selected providing agencies suited to serve the specific needs and populations in New Jersey?
- b. Can you describe the process of picking locations for the program?
 - i. Were there specific aspects of the population that you were looking to serve? Did you take into account the other available services in the area? The demand in the area? The needs of the youth in the area?

Description of how LifeSet was rolled out to providers

14. Who is part of the team in charge of implementing LifeSet in New Jersey?
 - a. Probe on team members from DCF, other agencies, YV, LifeSet providers
 - b. Prior to remote work restrictions, were team members mostly located at the same office, or were they from around the state?
15. Was a formal plan created for the implementation? If so, can you please describe the plan?
16. What support has DCF leadership provided throughout the implementation process?
17. Did the rollout happen as planned? If not, what changes were made or what was done differently than planned?
 - a. How did external factors, such as COVID or participating in an RCT, impact the rollout?
18. How, if at all, are you continuing to check in on the rollout of LifeSet?
 - a. How will that change as the program continues implementation?
19. Thinking about the initial implementation overall, what went well? What could have been better?

Community Context

Now, I'd like to learn a bit about the typical characteristics of the youth you serve here in New Jersey and any challenges and needs youth face.

Community characteristics

20. Tell me about the transition-aged youth you serve.
 - a. What is the racial and ethnic make-up and range of cultures of the youth?
 - b. What are the primary languages youth speak?
 - c. What is the sexual orientation and gender identity of those that you serve?
 - d. What is their typical child welfare or placement history?
21. Do you serve unauthorized or undocumented immigrants (people who entered the US without legal status, overstayed a visa, or are otherwise unauthorized to work in the US) regardless of their documentation?
 - a. If so, about how many youth do you serve that are undocumented?

Youth challenges and needs

22. Have you noticed differences in what youth from different racial and ethnic groups, cultures, or who speak languages other than English need?
 - a. Probe on: urban vs rural geographic location, linguistic needs of youth, cultural needs of youth, citizenship status
23. What types of transition-aged services and supports are critical for youth? Why?

Climate for youth transitioning from care

24. How, in general, would you describe the context for transitioning out of care in New Jersey?
 - a. Probes: agency supports available, housing/job market, public services
25. Is there anything about New Jersey's system that makes transitioning easier or harder for youth leaving foster care?
26. How does where a youth live affect their ability to transition to adulthood?
 - a. Are there areas of the state that are easier or harder? Can you please describe why?
27. How, in general, do you believe the state supports youth transitioning out of care?
 - a. Probe: enough funding for transition-aged services?
28. In general, would you say that things have improved, worsened, or stayed the same for youth transitioning in New Jersey over the last couple years? Why?

Closing Questions

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I have a couple closing questions.

29. Is there anything that I did not ask about that you think I should know about LifeSet/ services as usual or your experience?
30. Do you have any final questions for me about the study, or about the research team?

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to evaluate the programs and services provided to young adults who are currently or were previously in foster care. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. 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. The OMB number and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-XXXX, Exp: XX/XX/XXXX. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Michael Pergamit at mperaamit@urban.ora.