

# State and Local Policymaker Focus Group

## Recruitment Email and Discussion Protocol

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### Email Invitation

OMB Control Number: 0970-0401, Expiration Date: June 30, 2024

Dear [name],

We are reaching out to invite you to participate in a focus group designed to help inform the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation's (OPRE) outreach and communication efforts. Over the next few months, OPRE is developing a Strategic Communications Framework, which will be informed by key stakeholder and audience groups who are the target of OPRE's work.

You have been identified as an individual who uses research—and possibly OPRE research, to inform your decision-making. As such, we are requesting your participation in **one** of the following 90-minute focus groups to inform OPRE's communications efforts:

- Friday October 29, 2:00-3:30 ET
- Friday November 5, 2:00-3:30 ET

Each focus group will include four to nine other individuals and will cover the following topics:

1. Your use of research, where you get research from, and what formats are most helpful;
2. Your perceptions of OPRE's research;
3. Your experience with OPRE's website, social media, and conferences;
4. Your use of OPRE's research; and
5. Your recommendations for making OPRE's research more useful and accessible to you.

Child Trends will be facilitating this conversation to synthesize feedback across focus groups. This conversation will be recorded for note-taking purposes. If you are interested and able to participate, **please RSVP to Naomi Ward at [nward@childtrends.org](mailto:nward@childtrends.org) by September 30th.**

If you have any questions about this work or would like to designate an alternate from your organization, please contact me, Sarah Daily, project director at [sdaily@childtrends.org](mailto:sdaily@childtrends.org) at any time.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this invitation.

Best regards,

Sarah Daily

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: Through this information collection, ACF is gathering information to inform the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation's (OPRE) communications planning in order to improve OPRE's ability to share research findings with its stakeholders. OPRE will seek feedback on stakeholders' experience accessing OPRE research findings through digital and traditional media (including website, social media, earned media, newsletters, conferences, and research products). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per respondent, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This is a voluntary collection of information. agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0401 and the expiration date is 06/30/2024. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Sarah Daily at [sdaily@childtrends.org](mailto:sdaily@childtrends.org).

## Discussion Script

### Introductions

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [Facilitator's Name], and I will be your facilitator for today's discussion. I am a Sr. Research Scientist at Child Trends and direct our Early Childhood Unit on Equity, Quality, and Access. I'm joined by my colleagues, [Facilitator's Name] and [Facilitator's Name], do you both want to take a moment to introduce yourselves?

Thank you. Let's also take a moment to introduce everyone on the line today.

### Purpose and Agenda

As a reminder, the purpose of our discussion today is to gather your insights on how you communicate research in your work, and then to talk more specifically about your perceptions of OPRE's work; how you use their website, social media, and products; and any recommendations you might have for how OPRE might increase the reach and impact of their work.

[Notetaker] will be taking notes during our conversation so we can accurately document this discussion. The information will be used internally by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation to inform their strategic communications planning, with the goal of improving outreach to and engagement with stakeholders. This information is not intended for publication. We will synthesize

themes across focus groups and will not use individual names or affiliations in our analysis. Similarly, we ask that you keep the names, ideas, and affiliations of members participating in this focus group private. We would also like to record this discussion to make sure our notes are accurate. We'll go ahead and start the recording unless anyone objects.

As we get started with the conversation, we want to encourage a discussion among our group, but also welcome your comments in the chat if that is preferable for you.

Do you have any questions for us before we get started?

## **Your use of research**

Let's start by taking a minute to talk in general about your use of research for your work.

- How do you use research in the development, institution, and implementation of policy?
- Where do you go to find the research you need to inform your work? (What websites, newsletters, listservs, agencies, organizations.)
- What research formats (for example, executive summaries, info graphics, one-pagers, blogs, tables, charts etc.) best support your understanding of research for your work?
- What organization or agency is doing an exceptional job of getting research out in formats that you use?
- What attributes of a website, search engine, or product are helpful when supporting access to research?

## **Your perceptions of OPRE's work**

Using the zoom chat feature, please take a moment to list out some of the key words or phrases that come to mind when you think about OPRE, their work and their research.

## **Use of OPRE's tools for engagement (website, social media, conferences, webinars)**

- How do you typically hear about a new OPRE study or resource?
  - Possible probes: The OPRE newsletter, an email alert, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, a listserv, or a specific organization?

### **Website**

- Have you ever accessed research directly from OPRE's website? If so, what was your experience?
- How easy is it for you to find resources on the OPRE site?
- What hinders your ability to find OPRE research on the website?
- What can OPRE do to improve the user experience of its website and make research and materials easier to find?

### Social Media Communications

- Have you ever received social media notifications from OPRE? If so, what was your experience?
- In general, what role does social media play in how you find research products?
- What social media outlets are you most likely to find and or share OPRE resources and tools?
- What would increase your engagement with OPRE on social media?

### Newsletter

- Have you ever received the OPRE newsletter? How often do you use the OPRE newsletters to learn about and access new research, resources, and tools?
- How useful is the newsletter to you and how could it be improved?

### Events

- Have you been to any of OPRE's conferences?
  - If so, which one?
  - Why did you attend?
  - Were you able to gain the information you expected to by attending the conference?
  - What aspects were done successfully/unsuccessfully?
- Have you attended any of OPRE's webinars?
  - If so, which one?
  - Why did you attend?

## Use of OPRE's Research

- Have you ever used OPRE's work to inform your decision-making? What examples can you share?
- Can you think of any ways in which OPRE's research can be made more clear? Useful? Actionable?

## Recommendations

- What is one adjustment you would make to OPRE's communications that would support your work? What would that adjustment help you accomplish?

### *Possible follow up questions:*

- What would enhance your ability to use OPRE's work?
- Are there specific topics or areas you want to see covered by OPRE?
- Are there specific formats you would like to see OPRE use more of in communicating their research?
- Are there specific dissemination channels or strategies you would like to see OPRE use more?
- What could OPRE do to help you better use OPRE research and resources or build capacity to use research?

## Wrap-up

Are there any topics, recommendations, or considerations we haven't discussed that you think would be beneficial to discuss before we close?

Thank you all so very much for your time and input!