

Intermediary Focus Group Recruitment Email and Discussion Protocol

September 2021

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 and your organization have been identified as a key entity that supports the communication and translation of OPRE information for decisionmakers in policy and practice. As such, we are requesting your participation in **one** of the following 90-minute focus groups to inform OPRE's communications efforts:

- Tuesday October 5, 3:30-5:00 ET
- Friday October 8, 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 for your target audiences;
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 and your constituents.

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 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 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.

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.

- Why and how do you use research with your target audiences?
- How would you describe your target audiences?
- What kinds of resources do you produce that rely upon research?
- Where do you go to find research needed for these resources? (What websites, newsletters, listservs, agencies, organizations.)

Additional questions:

- What formats for research dissemination (for example, executive summaries, info graphics, blogs, tables, charts etc.) best support the development of these products?
- What research dissemination format is most helpful to you in communicating information to your constituents?
- 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 another organization?

Website

- How do you typically find research and resources on OPRE's website?
- How easy is it for you to find resources on the OPRE site?

- What hinders your ability to find OPRE research and resources 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

- 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

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

Use of OPRE's Research

- Think about ways you have used OPRE's research in the past with your key audiences.
 - o Can you think of any examples when OPRE research has been used by your key audience to bring about a change in policy or practice?
 - o 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 you in 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

OPRE is hoping to connect with state and local policymakers who you know use research to inform their decision-making, and perhaps are already familiar with OPRE's research and resources. Can you recommend any state or local policymakers who we could reach out to gather their feedback on topics similar to those discussed with you today?

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!