

Appendix D – Apprenticeship Program Apprentice Focus Group Recruitment Materials: Recruitment Email and Informed Consent

Research to Support the Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship - 102212 -0001-001

Initial recruitment email

Hello [name],

We hope this email finds you well. We are a team of researchers at the Urban Institute, a non-profit, independent social policy research organization. We're working on a project, under a contract from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the U.S. Department of Labor to gather insights into how apprenticeship programs can be more inclusive of people with disabilities, and how inclusive apprenticeship programs influence the outcomes of registered apprentices, including both those who identify as having a disability and those who do not. We are interested in learning directly from apprentices about their experiences, including both apprentices who identify as having a disability and those who do not. We identified you as a potential participant due to enrollment in [registered apprenticeship program].

We want to invite you to participate in a group conversation by video call. The conversation will be approximately 90 minutes long and will include up to nine other registered apprentices. Participation is voluntary and not affiliated with your registered apprenticeship program. That means that you do not have to participate. It also means that if you do choose to participate you can choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating at any time. Your employer will not know whether you choose to participate, and participation will have no consequences for your apprenticeship program. You will receive a \$25 gift card as a thank you for your participation.

If you are interested in participating, please respond to this email indicating your interest and the best phone number that we can reach you at to schedule the interview and answer any questions that you have. A member of our study team will then confirm whether there is space available, and if so, we will send you a scheduling link to identify times that work for you over the next few weeks to set up the group video call.

Information collected from the conversation will be kept private by the research team, and no quotes will be directly attributed to you. **To protect your privacy, we will not identify the name of your apprenticeship program when we report our findings.**

We understand that it's a busy time with everything surrounding COVID-19, and we greatly appreciate you taking the time to speak with us. We look forward to hearing from you,

[team names]

Follow-up phone call script

Hello [name],

We appreciate your interest in learning more about participating in our study. As a reminder, participation in this study is voluntary and is not affiliated with [apprenticeship program]. That means that you do not have to participate. It also means that if you do choose to participate you can choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating at any time. Your employer will not know whether you choose to participate, and participation will have no consequences for your apprenticeship program. The conversation will be approximately 90 minutes long and will include up to nine other registered apprentices.

Information collected from the interviews will be kept private by the research team, and no quotes will be directly attributed to you. To save time on the call, we would like to take 5-10 minutes to talk with you about the study, interview guidelines, and a Zoom tutorial.

First we want to make sure you understand the research project.

We are researchers with the Urban Institute, a private research organization based in Washington, DC which conducts policy-related research on a variety of social welfare and economic issues.

This project is part of the Research to Support the Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship project, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. The study will learn how apprenticeship programs can be more inclusive of people with disabilities, and how inclusive apprenticeship programs influence the outcomes of registered apprentices, including both those who identify as having a disability and those who do not. We are conducting a focus group to learn about your experiences in the [apprenticeship program name]. In addition to our conversation with you, we are also conducting interviews with program staff and program partners.

Informed Consent

Participation is voluntary and not affiliated with your registered apprenticeship program. That means that you do not have to participate. It also means that if you do choose to participate you can choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating at any time. Your employer will not know whether you choose to participate, and participation will have no consequences for your apprenticeship program. Regardless of whether or not you answer all of our questions, you will receive a \$25 gift card as a thank you. Although we hope you'll stay for the entire discussion, if you need to leave, just let us know, and we can pause and make sure you get signed out and receive your \$25 gift card.

Would you prefer to have a gift card to Amazon.com, CVS, Target, or Wal-Mart?

What is a reliable email address where we can send the gift card?

We expect this discussion to last about 90 minutes.

To make sure that you understand what we are asking, could you explain in your own words what you are being asked to do and what it means when we say that your participation is voluntary? Do you have any questions?

Privacy Statement: We consider what you say in the focus group as private and will do everything we can to secure the privacy of the information you provide. Although my colleague and I will be taking notes, when we report information from the discussion, we will not include your name. We do not share these notes with anyone outside of our research team, including Department of Labor, and we will destroy these notes after the end of our project. When we compile our reports, the names of individual respondents will not be

included. If we choose to quote you, you will only be identified as “an apprentice.” You will not be quoted directly by name in any of our reports.

Information from this discussion may be included in a public report, but none of the information you share will be attributed to you. While we can assure you that no one on the research team will share what you say outside of this conversation, we cannot control what other people will do with the information they hear. Because of that, we encourage all participants to think about whether they would be upset if someone repeated what they said outside of this conversation when deciding to share something with the group. We also encourage each of you to be respectful of one another and treat the information you hear as private. We also ask that you consider using headphones or finding a private space to talk so that other people cannot hear or see this conversation.

Potential risks may include the possibility that other focus group participants could divulge your participation and statements, although we believe these risks of participating in this study are minimal.

We believe there are no direct benefits to you, but we hope that the findings from this study will benefit the Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs more broadly by providing research insights on how apprenticeship programs can be more inclusive.

Do you have any questions?

Finally, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to audio record this conversation. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept securely within our small research team. The recording will be deleted once we have developed a full set of notes from the interview.

Next, we will ask for your consent to participate in the focus group discussion.

Do you agree to participate in the group conversation or focus group?

Do you consent to being recorded as a part of this group conversation or focus group and do you understand that if you choose not to be recorded you can still participate in the focus group and that your preference has no bearing on your participation?

There are a few things we ask that you keep in mind, since the conversation will be virtual and will involve more than one person:

- 1) Please enter the Zoom call at the start time. We will not be admitting people 5 minutes after the start of the call.
- 2) Please do your best to ensure privacy in your space/room while participating in the conversation. This can be an indoor or outdoor space that is as private from other people as possible. We recommend that if you are unable to be alone in a space that you plan to log on using headphones.
- 3) If possible, please participate in the video portion of the Zoom call.
- 4) Please do not use the virtual background option.
- 5) To respect others' privacy, please do not record, take screenshots, or otherwise document the contents of the discussion. And please do not discuss the conversation with others.
- 6) The research team might change the name you log on to Zoom with to a participant ID prior to letting you into the Zoom meeting in order to protect your privacy. If so, we will let you know the ID that you have been assigned.

Do you have any questions about these guidelines? Do you agree to these guidelines?

If you have questions or need additional information before agreeing, please contact us at dkuehn@urban.org.

We also want you to know that this research has been reviewed according to the Urban Institute Institutional Research Board procedures for research involving human subjects.

[If the apprentice consents]: We will send the call-in information for the group conversation by email. We understand that it's a busy time with everything surrounding COVID-19, and we greatly appreciate you taking the time to speak with us. We look forward to speaking with you,