

**Instrument 5 - STRENGTHING IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSIBLE  
FATHERHOOD (SIRF) PROGRAMS**

**Father Semi-Structured Discussion Topics**

*Towards the end of the study period, after multiple cycles have finished, the SIRF team aims to interview staff and fathers from each site. Each interview will be informed by previous information collected by the site. May be conducted over Zoom/phone or in-person.*

### **Introductory script:**

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a researcher with MDRC/MEF/Insight Policy Research. We're contacting you on behalf of the Strengthening the Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs (SIRF) project. The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded MDRC and its partners MEF and Insight Policy Research a contract to test innovative approaches to overcome these challenges. The funding for this project comes from the Office of Family Assistance within ACF.*

*Today, we are meeting to learn more about your participation in [program name / organization name]. Over the next hour or so, we would like to walk through specific questions about how you learned about [program name], your experiencing enrolling and participating in the program.*

*Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary. You do not to answer any question you do not wish to answer, and you can stop the interview at any time. You won't be penalized for not answering any of the questions we ask. If you are uncomfortable or need to leave the interview for any reason, please let us know.*

*I'll be taking some notes in order to keep track of what we discussed here today. MDRC will be keep this conversation completely private—we will not share specific information about you or your remarks to the program or with anyone outside of our research team, and your names won't be attached to any publications we put out in the future. Notes will be stored securely.*

*I would like to record today's discussion, but—again—all of your comments will be kept private. Only the research team will hear or read anything that is said here. We like to record these discussions so that we can fully capture everything you say. Would this be OK with you?*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: The purpose of this information collection is to gather preliminary information about the fatherhood field and explore with fatherhood programs the research questions that are of interest and the design options that are feasible. 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. This is a voluntary collection of information. The answers you give will be kept private. An 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 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 07/31/2022. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Charles Michalopoulos; Charles.Michalopoulos@mdrc.org, and Dina Israel; Dina.Israel@mdrc.org; Attn: OMB-PRA (0970-0531).

### **About the Participant and his first interaction with the program**

1. How many children do you have? How old are they?
2. When did you first participate in services at [organization]?

### **Recruitment**

1. How did you first learn about [organization]?
2. Why did you want to participate? Were you encouraged to participate to satisfy some mandate from a court/probation or parole/child welfare? What was it that drew you to the program? What did you want to accomplish?

### **Enrollment**

1. What was the process to enroll in the program?
2. What challenges, if any, did you face to enroll in the program? Is this something that was made harder because of COVID-19?
3. How did the program help you through the challenges to enroll? Probe for activities attributable to learning cycle interventions if applicable.
4. Is there anything the program could've done differently during the recruitment or enrollment process?

### **Engagement**

1. What services/workshops/activities have you participated in at [organization]?
2. Did you encounter any trouble showing up for your first day of services? If so, how would you describe this trouble? Probe: community/neighborhood issues, personal scheduling conflicts, motivation, etc.
3. How did the program help you through the challenges to attend services the first day? Probe for activities attributable to learning cycle interventions if applicable.
4. Is there anything the program could've done to make you feel more motivated to show up after the first day?

### **Retention**

1. How often do you come to [organization] for services? What motivates you to keep coming back? Probe for activities attributable to learning cycle interventions if applicable. Probe: has your motivation for attending the program changed over time?
2. Do all the fathers you started programming with still attend? If not, do you have a sense of why those fathers stopped attending? what could the program have done to support them in returning?
3. What challenges do you or other fathers face to coming back to the program day after day? Is this something that is made worse by COVID-19?
4. What could the program do to support you or other fathers better to keep engaged in the program? What suggestions do you have for making it easier for fathers to achieve outcomes?

5. How do program staff go about forming relationships with you and other fathers? Do you feel that program staff truly understand you, where you are coming from, and what you need?

### **Wrap Up**

1. How has your life changed by being involved in [fatherhood program]? How has the program helped to make these changes happen? Probe about changes in relationship with children, co-parent/partner, employment, etc.