

Instrument 1: SIRF Phone Meeting with Program Staff Protocol

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**SIRF Semi Structured Protocol for Initial Phone Call with Program Staff**

**What is SIRF? What is the purpose of our call?**

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. SIRF is a new study sponsored by the federal government examining the implementation challenges and effective solutions that Responsible Fatherhood programs, or programs like them, face. As you know, since 2006, Responsible Fatherhood programs have been supported by dedicated federal funding from the Office of Family Assistance within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, or ACF. While there is a growing body of research to learn from regarding fatherhood services, research and evaluation efforts have also uncovered implementation challenges associated with recruiting fathers, supporting them to show up for services, and keeping them engaged in services over time, among others. The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation of 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 calling because we are gathering information to understand areas where select fatherhood programs have the potential for improvement, and how local context informs and aligns with SIRF study design priorities. We thought it would be valuable to learn more about the kinds of services you provide to fathers, specifically [insert organization information] and the challenging and successful aspects of service delivery. Over the next hour, we would like to walk through specific questions about the topics we provided in advance of the meeting. Please know that talking with the SIRF team is completely voluntary, and you can choose not to answer any question you don't want to answer, or to leave the discussion entirely. Any information you share will be kept private and will not be used to evaluate you in any way. I'll be taking some notes in order to keep track of what we discussed here today. They'll be stored securely and will not be shared with anyone outside of the SIRF team. Do you have any questions before we get started?

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 # for this information collection is 0970-0356 and the expiration date is 6/30/2021.

About the Staff

- a. What is your current role at [insert program name]?
- a. Prior to this role, have you held other roles at [insert program name]? If so, what were your previous positions?
- b. What are your main responsibilities in your current role?
- c. How long have you been in this position?

### Overview of SIRF and Organizational Priorities

[Research team will provide an overview of SIRF activities, priorities, and timeline. The priorities include identifying and meeting fathers' needs, fostering peer support and networks, improving staff capacity, delivering flexible services, and recruiting fathers to participate.]

- a. Which of the SIRF priority areas are you most interested in exploring?
  - a. How much of a priority is it for your organization to explore new strategies related to identifying and meeting fathers' needs?
  - b. How much of a priority is it for your organization to explore new strategies related to fostering peer support and networks?
  - c. How much of a priority is it for your organization to explore new strategies related to improving staff capacity?
  - d. How much of a priority is it for your organization to explore new strategies related to delivering flexible services?
  - e. How much of a priority is it for your organization to explore new strategies related to recruiting fathers to participate?

### Structure of Program

- a. What services for fathers does [insert organization name] provide?
- b. Walk through a brief history and overview of your fatherhood program.
- c. How will the fatherhood services be structured in the next program year?
  - a. [if grantee] Are any of the required RF fatherhood components (economic stability, healthy relationships, parenting) offered by partner organizations?
  - b. Can a participant start services any time, or are services offered in cohorts?
  - c. How long has the fatherhood program been in operation?
- d. What type of agency or organization operates the fatherhood program? (e.g. social service government agency, social service stand-alone agency, child support agency.) What other services are offered, if any?
- e. Who do you primarily serve? (e.g. non-resident fathers, resident fathers, under 25, over 35, fathers with prior justice involvement, couples, mothers)

- f. How many clients can your program serve at any one time? How many are served at any one time in each service component?
- g. How many new enrollments do you have in an average year?
- h. How is your program staffed? What is the prior professional experience of most staff? (Probe: prior work with community-based organization, prior work with fathers, prior work with systems (child support, criminal justice, etc.)
- i. What are the primary funding sources for the fatherhood services?

#### Program Implementation Challenges

- a. What are the biggest implementation challenges that your program faces?
- b. What challenges do you face recruiting fathers?
- c. What challenges do you face in delivering services?
- d. What challenges do you face engaging and retaining fathers in services?
- e. What are the main barriers fathers face?
- f. How do those barriers affect the implementation of fatherhood services?

#### Program Approaches to Address Implementation Challenges

- a. What are the most effective program components and practices used to address implementation challenges?
- b. How has your program adapted in the past to respond to specific challenges that fathers at [insert program name] have experienced?
- c. What approaches, if any, did your program try that did not work?
  - a. How have those practices been implemented?

#### Use of Data and Experience with Evaluation

- a. How does your program use data to manage the program?
- b. Has your program or organization participated in an evaluation?

- a. [If yes] Please describe the evaluation.
- c. Does your organization have required approval processes to participate in research?
  - a. [If yes] What are the processes?

Referral Sources and Service Partners

- a. What existing referral partnerships does your program have?
- b. Can you describe how you work with your referral partners?
- c. How have the relationships changed over time?
- d. Are there current implementation challenges related to referral sources?
- e. Who are your current service partners?
- f. Can you describe how you work with the service partners?
- g. How have these relationships changed over time?
- h. Are there current implementation challenges related to service partners?
  - a. What are approaches you have tried to address these issues? Were you successful? Why, or why not?

Next Steps

- a. Would you be open to having a follow up conversation with you or other staff so that we can learn more about your program?
  - a. [If yes] We would also like to speak with one or two program participants. Would that be possible?
  - b. [If yes] Can you provide the contact information for who we should coordinate with?
- b. Would you be open to participating in a customer journey mapping exercise with the SIRF team to help us better understand your program processes and challenges experienced by fathers who participate in the program?

- a. [If yes] Can you provide the contact information for who will lead your team during customer journey mapping?
  
- c. Would you be open to engaging in rapid cycle learning by working with the SIRF team to design and implement 2-4 tests to address implementation challenges during the next programming year?

NOTE: The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used 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. 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 information collection is 0970 – 0356 and the expiration date is 6/30/2021. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Charles Michalopoulos; Charles.Michalopoulos@mdrc.org, and Dina Israel; Dina.Israel@mdrc.org; Attn: OMB-PRA (0970-0356).