MULTI-CASE STUDY:

PREPARATORY CALL WITH HEAD START DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS

Protocol Contents

Reminders to Interviewers:

Before starting the interview:

(1) **For large grant recipients with multiple delegates**, make sure you understand which delegates/centers the protocol is focused on.

(2) **Pre-populate the eligibility questions with appropriate program data.**
- Date conversion request was approved,
- Number of slots converted, and
- Type of slots converted

(3) **Use pre-populated information to make an initial eligibility determination.**
The eligibility determination may change on the call if the grant recipient indicates that our information is not correct. However, if they confirm all information, this initial determination will help expedite the call.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today. My name is [*insert lead facilitator name*] and I will be facilitating this discussion today. I am from [*MEF Associates/Urban Institute*], an independent research organization contracted by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to conduct this research project. I am joined by my colleague(s) [*insert colleague(s) names and organizations*]. We are working on a project titled "*The Conversion of Enrollment Slots from Head Start to Early Head Start.*" The goal of the project is to build the knowledge base around the conversion of enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start (EHS). The information that comes from these conversations will be summarized in reports for the Office of Head Start (OHS) and may be used to inform decisions about how to best support programs who are considering conversion.

For Program Administrators

We're contacting you because we think PROGRAM NAME is eligible to participate in the data collection for this project. This would involve virtual one-on-one and group interviews with your staff in Fall or Winter 2022 to learn more about how PROGRAM NAME converted enrollment slots.

- The plan for today's call is for us to share a little more about the goals of this research project.

- Then, I have a few questions about your program to help us understand whether PROGRAM NAME is eligible to participate.

- Today we will ask you questions related to the timing of your conversion requests, the number of conversions you've completed, the size of these conversions, and your program's history in providing EHS services. We will use this information to determine whether your program is eligible to participate. Therefore, we may share this information with ACF staff.

For Coordinators

We're contacting you because we have invited PROGRAM NAME to participate in the case studies for this project. This would involve one-on-one and group interviews with staff from PROGRAM NAME in Fall 2022 to learn more about how PROGRAM NAME converted enrollment slots. DIRECTOR NAME has agreed to have PROGRAM NAME participate in the case studies and suggested that you might be available to serve as the "Coordinator" and help us coordinate some of the activities.

- So, the plan for today's meeting is to share a little more about the goals of this research project.

- Then, I would like to discuss the role and responsibilities of a coordinator and answer any questions you may have.

- The information we collect during our interviews—including our conversation today—will only be used for research purposes. It will NOT be used for reporting or monitoring.

- You should feel free to interrupt me at any point to ask questions.

Before we begin, I need to cover a few logistical items:

- This call should take no more than an hour to complete.
- This interview is voluntary. You may skip any questions at any time.
- If your program is eligible and participates in the case study, we will compile and summarize information from the interviews, including this one, without identifying organizations or individual respondents by name. That said, we will provide some non-identifying information, such as respondents' titles/roles, when discussing findings in our reports so, it's possible that a discerning reader could figure out from whom a piece of information originated.
- An agency may not conduct or sponsor a federal study, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is xxxx-xxxx and it expires xx/xx/xxxx.
- We do not think participating in this interview poses any risks to you or your program. This project will benefit researchers, funders, program administrators, and policymakers in developing and supporting understanding of the conversion process. Information from this project will be used to improve technical assistance to Head Start programs interested in converting enrollment slots.
- We ask that you participate from a private setting, out of earshot or viewing by those not participating in the study. While we take appropriate steps to ensure security, we cannot guarantee full confidentiality on the basis that Zoom and other internet platforms are out of our control.

Do you have any questions?

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

One last thing, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to record this interview. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept within our small research team and stored in a secure location that only the research team has access to. **Is it okay with you if we record the interview?**

- (If consent given) We will begin recording now. (Notetaker presses record)
- (If consent is not given) We will not record this interview.

Before we get started, let's do quick introductions. Can you please introduce yourself by sharing a little bit about your role and your history with [PROGRAM NAME]?

QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

Purpose of Research Project

First, I would like to quickly review the purpose of the research project. Please stop me at any time if you have questions.

- The main goal of the project is to build the knowledge base around the conversion of enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. Our charge is to gather information from programs to better understand how and why programs convert enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start, and to learn about the process.

If we move forward with your program…

- We will conduct one-on-one and group interviews to hear the perspectives of program staff who were involved in the conversion process. We will work with you to figure out who the best people are to engage in these conversations— but they might include Head Start staff, community partners, governing representatives, or regional Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) providers and federal office staff. We might also include state or local early care and education leaders to learn more about the early childhood context in your area. That is, we are interested in learning about the local supply of infant and toddler care, preschool-aged care, and state and local early childhood policies. We will work with someone you designate to be a Coordinator to help identify interviewees on your staff and schedule 60-90-minute interviews to limit any disruption caused by our study team.

- These conversations will happen remotely either over the phone or over video conference.

- We will also collect and review relevant documents and materials, including your program's Program Information Report (PIR) and information you have submitted to the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), such as your request to convert enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start.

- Your program is one of several programs that we are working with for this research project. *Note to interviewer: If the grant recipient has delegates, specify which delegate we are focusing on.* For the purposes of this interview, we are specifically interested in understanding how [DELEGATE(S) NAME(S)] experienced conversion.

- As a token of appreciation for participation in the case study, if we move forward with [PROGRAM NAME], we will offer [PROGRAM NAME] $300.

Do you have any questions so far?

Assessing Eligibility and Fit with Sample

To begin, I have a few questions about the history of ==PROGRAM NAME=='s conversion.

TIMING OF CONVERSION APPROVAL:

According to HSES data, ==PROGRAM NAME== applied to convert enrollment slots on ==DATE==. This request was then approved on ==DATE==. Is this accurate?

We want to be sure we are speaking with people who were directly involved with that conversion. Were you the Program Director at ==PROGRAM NAME== during this time?

- *If no: If you are unsure of how to answer any questions on our call today, please just let me know. We can schedule another call with additional program staff, if needed.*

HISTORY WITH OTHER CONVERSION REQUESTS:

Has ==PROGRAM NAME== submitted any other requests for conversion? We're interested in knowing whether ==PROGRAM NAME== submitted any requests prior to OR after the request that was approved on ==DATE==. IF YES, <u>for each request</u> ask…
  - o When did you prepare the request?
  - o When did you submit the request?
  - o Did the conversion require Central Office review?
  - o Was the request approved? If yes, when? If not, why not?

How—if at all—did ==PROGRAM NAME== modify or adapt services during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Probe: new services added; existing services downsized, expanded, or eliminated
- *If yes:* How did these adjustments factor into the decision to convert enrollment slots from HS to EHS (remember, we are referring to the conversion request that was approved on ==DATE==)?

CONVERSION SIZE:

Next, I have a few questions related to your request for conversion that was approved on ==DATE==.

- *Note to interviewer, use the month and year of the eligible request that was approved between 12 – 18 months ago. This is especially important if they have developed multiple requests.*

According to the information we have, PROGRAM NAME was <u>approved</u> to convert ==#___== Head Start slots. These slots were converted to:

- **#____** of Center-based slots (**____%** of slots)

- **#____** of Family Child Care slots (**____%** of slots)

- **#____** of Home-based Program slots (**____%** of slots)

- **#____** of Locally Designed Program slots (**____%** of slots)

- **#____** of Pregnant Women slots (**____%** of slots)

Is this accurate?

<u>HISTORY PROVIDING EHS SERVICES:</u>

Next, I have a few questions related to PROGRAM NAME's experience providing Early Head Start services.

When did PROGRAM NAME first start offering Early Head Start?

Have you always offered Early Head Start services?

> ***If no:* Why/how did you begin request Early Head Start services?** Probe:

- Current conversion request?
- Prior conversion request?
- EHS expansion?
- EHS-child care partnership?
- Other?

***If program offered Early Head Start services prior to focal conversion:*
What type of Early Head Start services did PROGRAM NAME offer <u>before</u> the conversion request was approved on DATE?**

- Center-based
- Family Child Care
- Home-based Program
- Locally Designed Program
- Services for Pregnant Women

Has the number of slots for Early Head Start services changed over time?
Probe:

- Did they increase, decrease, or stay the same?
- What prompted the change?
- Which program models were affected by these changes?
  - Center-based
  - Family Child Care
  - Home-based Program
  - Locally Designed Program
  - Services for Pregnant Women

<u>OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS</u>

Is <mark>PROGRAM NAME</mark> participating in any other research or evaluation projects (now or in the near future)? If so, when?

- *If yes:* **Do you have any concerns about participating in this study as well? We want to be sure we are not overburdening you or your staff.**

Discuss Participation

Thank you so much for providing this information. At this point, the next step is to confirm that you are willing and able to have <mark>PROGRAM NAME</mark> participate in the study.

What is your program's process for approving participation in a research study? Probe:

- Who is involved in making the decision? *(e.g., policy council, board of trustees)*
- How long does the approval process take?
- What information do you need from our team?

Do you have any questions for me?

Next Steps

If director confirms interest in participating, proceed with this section.

As a next step, [once <mark>PROGRAM NAME</mark>'s participation has been approved,] I will be sending you an email within the next day or so to gather some additional information, including:

- Names of staff who played a key role in developing your conversion request and implementing the conversion itself.
- The name and contact information of the staff person you'd like to designate as the coordinator for the case study. We will not contact this person until everyone on our side and yours has approved <mark>PROGRAM NAME</mark>'s participation in the case study.
- There are also a few documents related to the conversion process that we're hoping you can share with us. The email will include a list of these documents.
- We will also ask you to confirm some information that we obtained about your program from sources such as the Head Start Enterprise System.
- We ask that you please respond to this email within 2 weeks. *[Note to interviewer, you may acknowledge that this might take additional time if the program needs to obtain approval from the policy council or others.]*

We plan to use the information you share from the phone call today and this follow-up email to make our final decision about including your program in the study. We

want to be transparent that there is a chance your program may not be selected. We will send a follow-up email to let you know either way.

Will you please confirm your email address for me?

In case I need to follow up with you for any reason in the meantime, what is the easiest way to contact you—by phone or email?

Do you have any questions at this point? If questions or concerns come up, please feel free to contact me at [PHONE or E-MAIL ADDRESS].

Thank you for participating in this important research project. We appreciate your cooperation, and I look forward to working with your program.

QUESTIONS FOR COORDINATORS

Purpose Of Research Project

First, I would like to quickly review the purpose of the research project. Please stop me at any time if you have questions.

- The main goal of the project is to build the knowledge base around the conversion of enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. Our charge is to gather information from programs to better understand how and why programs convert enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start, and to learn about the process.

- **How familiar are you with conversion of enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start? Is this terminology that your program uses?** For some added context, [PROGRAM NAME] submitted its request to convert slots in [MONTH/YEAR] and received approval to do so in [MONTH/YEAR]. This request included converting [#] slots from Head Start to [#] slots in Early Head Start to infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in [CENTER/FAMILY/HOME VISITING]. We want to learn about the process of developing this conversion request, as well as how it's been going providing services to infants, toddlers, and pregnant women.

- **Did you work at PROGRAM NAME during this time? In the same role or a different one?**

- For the case study, which will take place in Fall 2022, we will conduct 60-90-minute one-on-one and group interviews to hear the perspectives of program staff who were involved in the conversion process. We will work with you and the program director to figure out who the best people are to engage in these conversations—but they may include Head Start staff, community partners, governing representatives, or regional TTA providers and federal office staff. We might also include state or local early care and education leaders to learn more about the supply of infant toddler, preschool-aged, and other early childhood care as well as early childhood policies in your state and community. We will work with you to limit any disruption caused by our study team.

- These conversations can happen over the phone, video conference, or in-person (abiding by COVID safety protocols). We understand that some programs have COVID policies that limits who can visit. We are not planning to be in classrooms or engage directly with children and families.

- We will also collect and review relevant documents and materials.

- Your program is one of several programs that we are working with for this research project. *Note to interviewer: If the grantee has delegates, specify which delegate we are focusing on:* For the purposes of this interview, we are

Do you have any questions so far?

Role of Coordinator

Next, we would share a little about what the coordinator role will entail.

- This person will be responsible for helping us to prepare for the data collection. This may include activities like helping introduce us to interviewees and scheduling. We will work with you to develop a plan. The plan will include a schedule for all interviews, as well as a list of documents that our team is requesting.
- We want to have a good working partnership with you because you will be the primary point of contact for our research team.

Confirm Participation

Thank you so much for providing this information.

At this point I'd like to confirm that you are willing and able to serve as the Coordinator?

Do you have any questions for me about this role?

Timing of Interviews

Finally, we wanted to ask if there are any times in the next few months when we should definitely <u>not</u> schedule interviews with staff from the program? Probe for:
- Holidays
- Professional development days
- Monitoring visits
- Other research projects
- Other?

Is it possible to get a copy of the school calendar or program calendar? We can include this request in our follow-up email.

Next Steps

As a next step, **I will be sending you an email that includes:**

- A list of staff who DIRECTOR NAME identified as having played a key role in conversion—including early decisions about whether to apply, the request itself, or EHS service delivery after conversion was approved.

- We would like your help with introducing us to these individuals and helping us with scheduling, as needed. Their participation is voluntary. To help you with this scheduling, we'll send you a document that includes a scheduling template to record the dates and times of interviews once they are confirmed with staff. We'll also send you some materials that you can share with staff to explain the purpose of this project and what an interview with us would entail.
- *[If needed because we haven't received these from the director.]* There are also a few documents related to the conversion process that we're hoping you can share with us. The email will include a list of these documents.
- We ask that you please respond to this email within 2 weeks.

In case I need to follow up with you for any reason, what is the easiest way to contact you—by phone or email? *Confirm email address and phone number.*

Do you have any questions at this point? If questions or concerns come up, please feel free to contact me at [PHONE or E-MAIL ADDRESS].

Thank you for participating in this important research project. We appreciate your cooperation, and I look forward to working with you and your program.