Interview Guide for Grantee and Sub-grantee Site Visits for the SUPPORT Act Grants Evaluation

This document covers the key topics to be covered in individual interviews with program managers, staff, and partners at grantees and subgrantees implementing the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act grant programs. Each topic indicates which staff will respond (i.e., program managers, program staff, and partners). The purpose of these interviews is to understand implementation of this new grant program to serve individuals and communities with SUD. Interviews will take place at each of the four grantees and eight subgrantees selected for the implementation study. These interviews will take place once and will be supplemented with a Data Collection Planning Interview and a Final Reflection Interview. A table at the end of the document summarizes interview topics by type of respondent (e.g., managers, staff, and partners).

Introductory statement for staff: The evaluation of the Department of Labor's (DOL) SUPPORT Act grant program is being conducted by Abt Associates and MDRC under contract to DOL's Chief Evaluation Office, in partnership with the Employment and Training Administration. The SUPPORT Act provides grant resources to local workforce development boards to address the economic and workforce impacts associated with the high rates of opioid use disorder (OUD) or substance use disorder (SUD) in Florida, Maryland, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The evaluation aims to provide new and critical information on promising practices and implementation challenges in providing services that address both employment and treatment needs for those with OUDs/SUDs. The goal of the evaluation is to document best practices, challenges, and lessons for both policymakers and program administrators. In conducting site visits to each of the programs, we are talking to project directors and staff, as well as partner organizations. We are here to learn about the service delivery of your program model and understand how it operates. Our aim is to learn from your experiences, not audit or rate your programs. This interview will take up to 90 minutes.

Privacy Statement: Before beginning the interview, I (we) want to thank you for agreeing to participate in the evaluation of the SUPPORT Act grant program. I (we) know that you are busy and we will try to be as focused as possible. We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. And, we understand that your participation in this discussion is voluntary and you may choose to not answer some questions.

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. The views you express will be kept private, and nothing we publish in this evaluation will identify you by name. Though we take notes during these interviews, information is never repeated with the name of the respondent. When we write our reports and discuss our findings, information from all interviews is compiled and presented so that no one person can be identified. We also ask that you refrain from sharing anything we discuss today with others to help us ensure your privacy and the privacy of others we are interviewing. Do you have any questions before we begin?

I.   Respondent Information
- Name, title, organization/affiliation, length of involvement with the organization and with the program
- Educational background and prior work experience
- Overall role/job responsibilities

II.   Program Context and Environment—*Program Managers and Partners*

A. Organization background—*Program Managers and Partners*

[Site visitors: Pre-populate with information collected through grant applications, materials sent ahead of time (such as an org chart), knowledge development interviews, organizations' websites, and online survey. Confirm and/or obtain any missing information.]

- Other programs and services offered by organization/agency, including prior experience offering key grant services
- Organization's major sources of funding
- Organization's total number of paid staff, including number of staff and percent FTE, as well as which of these staff are funded through the grant.
- Types of individuals served or targeted, including prior experience serving grant target populations
- Annual number of participants served overall

B. Local substance use disorder conditions—*Program Managers and Partners*
- Trends in of substance use disorder, including types of substances, in areas served by program (e.g., arrests, hospitalizations, overdose, etc.) *[Site visitors: pre-populate from secondary sources, such as* SAMSHSA, CDC *prior to visit]*
- Treatment and recovery service landscape, including availability and accessibility of services
- Effects of COVID-19 on substance use, treatment and recovery services, such as use of telemedicine, changes in capacity, enrollment fluctuations in residential treatment, and vaccine mandates and their impacts on staffing and service access.
- Prior grants and initiatives in area to address high rates of SUD/OUD in area
- History of inter-agency efforts to address high rates of SUD/OUD in area

C. Local economic conditions—*Program Managers and Partners*
- Factors affecting the local labor market:
  - Major industries and employers
  - Recent economic trends (e.g., occupations experiencing earnings and job growth)
  - Unemployment levels, job availability, wage levels
  - Other factors that affect economy (e.g., natural disaster, companies coming or going)
- Factors affecting target population(s)' success in finding and keeping jobs
  - Availability of jobs at their skill level and desired wages
  - Availability of jobs suitable for people in recovery
  - Availability of employers providing support to people in recovery/"Recovery Friendly Workplaces"
  - Policy context, such as fair chance hiring and occupational licensing restrictions
- Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on workforce system service delivery
  - Experience and challenges with virtual service delivery
  - Experience and challenges with other service delivery changes (vaccine mandates, indoor mask mandates, other changes to be determined).
  - Extent to which changes introduced to adapt to COVID-19 are being/ will be maintained.

- Effects of COVID-19 on local labor market:
    - o Effects on labor supply stemming from vaccine mandates, school closures, etc.
    - o Effects of stimulus payments, Child Tax Credit, and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance on workers and labor supply
    - o Effects of business closures or capacity restrictions due to surges and new variants
    - o Other effects of the pandemic on the local labor market

III.   **Program Goals and Structure—***Program Managers and Partners*

A.   **Grant background and goals—***Program Managers*

[Site visitors: Pre-populate with information collected through grant applications, knowledge development interviews, organizations' websites, and web-based survey. Confirm and/or obtain any missing information.]

- Reasons for applying for the grant and interest in developing strategies to integrate SUD treatment and employment services
- Process for selecting subgrantees
- Program service area
    - o Type of service area (portion of a city/county, single county, multiple counties/region)
    - o Size of service area (in terms of geography and population)
    - o Population density (urban, suburban, rural, mixed)
    - o Demographics of the service area (education levels, race and ethnicity, income levels, poverty status, immigration)
    - o Changes in demographics over time
- Goals of grant, at application and changes over time (including due to COVID-19)

B.   **Resources and capacity—***Program Managers and Partners*
- Annual budget and funding sources, including resources beyond grant (e.g., Medicaid, SAMHSA grants, resources from other workforce system programs)
- Other resources required to operate the program such as facilities, technology, and treatment/recovery services
- Stability of funding
- Sustainability and prospects for future funding

C.   **Management and staffing—***Program Managers*
- Grantee and subgrantee roles and coordination
- Management structure
    - o How program is situated/managed within the larger organization or institution
    - o Who has authority over the program
- Number of grant-funded staff and positions *[Site visitors: pre-populate with information collected through the web-based survey]*
    - o Titles
    - o Required experience and qualifications
    - o Primary responsibilities
    - o Number of FTEs by position
    - o Location (at AJC or at partner organizations)
- Staffing needs
    - o Qualifications
    - o Use of staff with lived experience
    - o Staff training needed specifically for the grant
    - o Staff turnover and shortages (generally and due to COVID-19)

D. Partnerships and organizational linkages--*Program Managers and Partners*
[Site visitors: pre-populate with information collected about partnerships through the web-based survey]

- Partnership history and evolution
    - o How and why partnership was developed
    - o Length of the partnership
    - o For pre-existing relationships, how focus of grant changed the partnership, if at all
    - o Changes in partnership over grant period
    - o How focus of grant changed the partnership, if at all
    - *o* Relationships with other organizations like sub-grantee *[ask partners only]*
- Partnership coordination:
    - o Staff responsible for coordination
    - o Schedule and format for coordination meetings
    - o Process and frequency of data exchange between partners
- Partnership challenges and how they have been addressed
    - o Challenges related to differences in mission and culture between organizations/systems
    - o Challenges related to employer needs and context
    - o Challenges related to maintaining partner engagement over time
    - o Challenges related to grant performance measures
- Benefits of partnerships

IV. Recruitment and enrollment—*Program Managers and Staff*

A. Outreach and recruitment—*Program Managers and Staff*
- Target population, including focus on Type I vs Type II participants, successes and challenges around recruiting target population
- Outreach and recruitment strategies (e.g., website, social media, word-of-mouth, fliers, referrals, community events, other agencies/programs)
- Effectiveness of strategies
- Most common way participants are referred to the program
- Differences in strategies for different target populations
- Variation in participant characteristics based on referral source – justice involvement, employment history, readiness for work.

B. Eligibility determination and enrollment—*Program Managers and Staff*
- How individuals apply to the program (including any changes to planned procedures due to COVID-19)
- Application steps and information collected (in what order and by whom)
- Eligibility requirements, including differences for different grant populations
- Use of assessments, including what assessments and how they are used
- Length of application process
- Program enrollment
- Initial services after enrollment

V. Program services—*Program Managers and Partners*

A. Description of services provided—*Program Managers, Staff, and Partners*
[Site visitors: pre-populate with information collected about services provided through the web-based survey]

- Career services
  - o Employment and Treatment Plans
  - o Job readiness skill development (i.e., "soft" skills)
  - o Identifying barriers
  - o Job coaching, matching, placement
  - o Provision of payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests, certifications
- Occupational training services
  - o Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) training
    - State context for Peer Recovery Specialist training
      - ➢ Ability to bill Medicaid for Peer Recovery Specialists services
      - ➢ Career pathway for Peer Recovery Specialists
      - ➢ Availability of Peer Recovery Specialist training programs on Eligible Training Provider List
    - Training details
      - ➢ Eligibility requirements (length of sobriety, background checks, minimum education)
      - ➢ Classroom and practicum hours required
        - ❖ Barriers to completion of classroom training requirements and how they were addressed
        - ❖ Barriers to completion of practicum requirements and how they were addressed
        - ❖ Strategies for integration of peers in clinical placements/with clinical staff
      - ➢ Application, exam, and credentialing process
    - Training challenges and successes
  - o Training for incumbent workers on serving people with SUD
    - Industries/occupations of incumbent workers
    - Engagement of employer in development of incumbent worker training
    - Training content, length, and format
    - Differences between this training and what might otherwise be offered in the workforce system
    - Career pathways in industry/occupation and how addressed in training
    - Training challenges and successes
  - o Other occupational training
    - Industries/occupations targeted
    - How and why industries/credentials were selected
    - Training content, length, and format
    - Differences between this training and what might otherwise be offered in the workforce system
    - Career pathways in targeted occupations
    - Role of employers in developing occupational training curriculum
    - Training challenges and successes
  - o Work-based training services, including subsidized employment or on-the job training OJTs), paid internships, and unpaid work experience
    - Industries/occupations targeted
    - Work-based training schedule, length, and location
    - Differences between work-based training under this grant and what might otherwise be offered in the workforce system
    - Role of employers in developing work-based training opportunities
    - Work-based training challenges and successes
- Employment services
  - o Job search and placement assistance

- o Job development services
- o Job retention services
- Employer engagement and training
    - o Targeted training for Human Resources, mentors, and others
    - o Engagement strategies for involving employers in the grant
    - o How activities and engagement vary depending on employers' level of familiarity with and openness to hiring people with SUD
- Case management and supportive services
    - o Frequency of case management meetings
    - o Case management approach
        - Use of goal-setting models
        - Use of trauma-informed models
        - Tailoring of case management models for people in recovery from SUD
    - o Types of supportive services available and how these differ under the grant
    - o Most common supportive service needs (and how these differ from typical workforce system population needs)
    - o Referrals to other organizations and services, including community-based and government programs, for supportive services
        - Most common referral and extent of coordination with agency referred to
        - Local policies and initiatives to align services, reduce enrollment burden on participants, or facilitate referrals
- Treatment and recovery services for SUD/OUD and mental health
    - o Development and use of individual treatment plan, including which partners are responsible for the plan
    - o Medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD)
    - o Outpatient treatment
    - o Therapy/counseling
    - o Monitoring and support for adherence to treatment
    - o Typical length and intensity of each treatment and recovery service component
- Follow up services provided to participants once they have left the program
    - Mode of follow-up services
    - o Frequency of follow-up contact
    - o Follow up data collected on participants

B. **Service delivery structure—***Program Managers, Staff, and Partners*
For each service listed above:

- Criteria and process for determining which services participants receive, including participant choice, grant/organizational requirements, and staff discretion
    - o Required services/services provided to all participants
    - o Services provided on an as-needed basis
- Service sequencing and duration
- Service provider and location
- Staff involved in service delivery (including co-location of staff)
- Organizational partners in delivering service

VI. **Participant characteristics and participation in services—***Staff*
- Differences in participant characteristics between grant target populations
- Trends or changes in demographics over grant period
- Differences between participants and other workforce system customers
- Participation in services
    - o Utilization of different services and why

- o   Persistence in services and how long people participate
- o   Patterns in utilization or persistence by target population or other characteristics
- o   Challenges with meeting training program requirements, such as attendance.
- Barriers to participants' success in the program; extent to which SUDs are an issue
- Strategies to mitigate barriers
- Participant strengths and facilitators of success in the program
- Engagement and reengagement strategies

VII.   Program performance and outcomes—*Program Managers*

- Successes and challenges meeting grant outcomes and reasons why
    - o   Enrollment in job training and services
    - o   Receipt of supportive services, treatment, and recovery services
    - o   Completion of job training and services
    - o   Entry into employment related to training and services
    - o   Employment retention
- Perceptions on appropriateness of designated performance indicators for grant and why
- Suggested performance indicators

VIII.   Operational Challenges and Successes—*Program Managers, Staff and Partners*
- Challenges the program encountered and how they were overcome, including challenges related to combining treatment and employment services and forming relevant partnerships
- Promising approaches developed by program, including approaches to combining treatment/employment services and forming relevant partnerships
- Areas for improvement; plans for changes and modifications
- [Grantees] Plans to scale up, replicate in other locations across the state

The following table provides a summary of interview topics and potential respondents for each.

Summary of Interview Topics and Respondent Type

Topic	Respondent Type		
	Program Managers	**Program Staff**	**Partners**
Respondent Information	X	X	X
Project context and environment • Organization background • Geographic area served and area demographics • Substance use disorder conditions • Local economic conditions	X		X
Program goals and structure • Grant background and goals • Resources and capacity • Management and staffing • Partnerships and organizational linkages	X		X
Recruitment and enrollment • Target population • Outreach and recruitment • Eligibility determination and enrollment	X		X
Program services • Description of services provided • Service delivery structure	X	X	X
Participant characteristics and participation in services • Demographic information about participants • Trends or changes in demographics over study period • Differences between participants and other workforce system customers • Participation in services • Barriers to participants' success in the program • Strategies to mitigate barriers • Participants' strengths and		X	

factors of success in the program • Engagement and reengagement strategies			
Program performance and outcomes • Program completion rate • Perceptions of appropriateness of designated performance indicators	X		
Operational Challenges and Successes • Ways program has exceeded or fallen short of goals • Promising approaches developed by program • Program's key successes • Challenges encountered and how they were overcome • Areas for improvement; plans for changes and modifications • Sustainability and prospects for future funding • Plans to scale up, replate in other locations across the state	X	X	X