

**Instrument 4 – STRENGTHING IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSIBLE  
FATHERHOOD (SIRF) PROGRAMS**

**Staff 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. Interviews 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 gather information about your organization/program's involvement in the SIRF study. Over the next hour or so, we would like to walk through specific questions about the topics we provided in advance of the meeting.

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 have 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 keep your remarks completely private—we will not share specific information about you or your remarks 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 remain 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).

## **Current Affiliation and Role**

1. What is your current role at [program name]?
2. What are your main responsibilities in your current role?
3. How long have you been in this position?
4. Have your professional or lived experiences informed your current role? If so, how?
5. Has COVID-19 has affected your ability to do your job to the fullest? If so, how?

## **Organization Overview and Program Context**

*Information about the organization and the context within which the SIRF interventions are implemented will be gathered through early site engagement, customer journey mapping, and regular contact between the SIRF team and the sites during learning cycles. These questions may not be necessary to ask but are included in the event that there are gaps in our understanding that need to be filled.*

1. How would you describe your organization's mission overall?
2. What is the structure of your organization? In addition to fatherhood, what other programming does your organization offer?
3. Describe the array of fatherhood programming offered and how it is provided to fathers. What outcomes are you aiming to achieve? How do fathers' lives change by going through the program? What does the program do to make these changes happen? Probe: ask staff to walk through their theory of change. How are co-parents or partners involved in fatherhood programming?
4. Describe how partners support the implementation of your fatherhood program.
5. How was your fatherhood programming affected by the pandemic? Probe about content of programming and methods it is being offered.
6. How did [the fatherhood program] client flow change with COVID-19? Probe: change in number of fathers enrolling, change in father motivations, change in subsets of fathers enrolling.
7. Have there been any significant community events in the past year that have impacted the program through the fathers who participate or the staff of the program? Describe the social and economic characteristics of the neighborhood, city, or county within which your organization operates.
8. How many total full-time staff are employed by [organization]? How many full-time staff are part of [the fatherhood program]?
9. How many total clients does [organization] serve annually? How many clients does [the fatherhood program] serve annually?
10. What training is available for staff? Probe for onboarding training vs. on-going opportunities, training specific to curriculum vs. broader issues such as cultural competencies.

### **Overview of SIRF Involvement** [for program leadership]

1. What was the primary motivation for [organization/program] to agree to or want to participate in SIRF?
2. What SIRF priority area did your organization explore? What were the primary reasons for selecting this priority area?
3. What approach did you adopt to address the priority area? Probe about the specifics of the approach and how it was implemented.

### **Overview of SIRF Involvement** [for other program staff]

1. What did you have to change to accommodate the approach being tested? What was your organization's usual approach to {enrollment/engagement/retention}?
2. What opinions do you have about the SIRF study overall?
3. Do you have any feedback about the technical assistance provided by the SIRF team during the study?

### **Learning Cycle Experiences**

1. What experience did [organization] or [fatherhood program] have with continuous quality improvement / quality assurance / learn-do-reflect / plan-do-study-act approaches?
2. How did [organization] determine if each learning cycle was successful?
3. What sources of information were used to make decisions? Probe: data from nFORM, observations, conversations with staff or fathers, etc.
4. How have you conducted continuous quality improvement in the past? How has participation in SIRF changed your approach to continuous quality improvement?
5. How did your approach change over time?
6. Think about the changes you expected to see as a result of the learning cycle (e.g., father outcomes, the way staff did their jobs, staff relationships with fathers, activities fathers engaged in, etc.) Did the approach tested result in the outcomes you expected? Why or why not?
7. Describe your organization's experience implementing the approach. Would you say it was implemented as you planned (or with fidelity)? Why or why not?
8. What do you think facilitated any success with the approach you were testing? Probe: what conditions helped? Something at the organizational level? The structure of the program? Staff?
9. What challenges did you face implementing the approach?
10. What kind of reception did the approach get from fathers?
11. How did the approach change or influence fathers? Are there changes that cannot be captured in the data?

12. How did father's experiences in the program differ from staff perceptions (as laid out during customer journey mapping)?

**Lessons and takeaways from the SIRF experience**

1. What primary lessons should the fatherhood field takeaway from the SIRF experience?
2. How could other programs adopt SIRF-like approaches without support from a technical assistance team or a national evaluator?
3. How has the SIRF experience informed your [fatherhood program]'s plans for the future?