

## **Study Information for TANF Program Participants, Tablet Program Participants, and Individuals Likely Eligible but Not Receiving TANF**

### **What is the study about?**

The Urban Institute, a nonprofit social policy research organization, is conducting a study of how [STATE] changed the [STATE TANF PROGRAM] program to respond to COVID-19 and how program participants experienced those changes. The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of how COVID-19 related changes to TANF policy and practice were implemented in one state, and how those changes were experienced by TANF recipients from different racial and ethnic groups.

### **What will I need to do?**

We are talking with people who are currently participating in [STATE TANF PROGRAM] or likely eligible to participate and asking them to share their thoughts and experiences.

This [focus group/interview] will take up to [90 minutes/60 minutes] and gives you an opportunity to share your perspective.

### **Does the [focus group/interview] involve any risk to me?**

There are no major risks from participating. The main risk is possibly feeling uncomfortable discussing your experiences. You can choose not to answer any of the questions that make you uncomfortable. We have very strong security measures in place and will make every effort to protect your privacy. There is a small possibility of someone outside of the study staff hearing or seeing your responses or [someone in the focus group] repeating your answers.

[If focus group/interview is in-person]: Since these [focus groups/interviews] are taking place in-person, the research team has taken precautions to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection but cannot eliminate all risk of exposure. All research team members are fully vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19 and will take COVID-19 tests prior to traveling to [STATE]. Research team members will also wear masks during the [focus group/interview] if preferred by any participant. The team will also offer masks to any participants who want to wear one. [If focus group: Please note that other participants may choose not to wear masks during the conversation.] We also ask that if you are feeling ill prior to the [interview/focus group] that you do not participate in person. The research team can set up a virtual session for those who are not able to meet in person.

### **Will the [focus group/interview] help me?**

Participating in the [focus group/interview] will probably not help you directly, but sharing your thoughts and experiences may help improve the experiences of future individuals and families.

### **Do I have to participate in the [focus group/interview]?**

You do not have to participate in the [focus group/interview] if you do not want to. You can leave the [focus group/interview] at any time. Your participation in the [focus group/interview] will have no effect on services you or your family receive.

[If focus group is virtual: If you take part in an interview using Zoom, you will have the option to share video or keep it off if you wish for your image or background to remain private.]

We would like to record the [focus group/interview] so we can concentrate on what you are saying and to help with our notes. However, if you do not want us to record, we will not. If there is anything you would like to say without being recorded, you can ask to pause the recording at any time.

**Will I receive anything for my time?**

To express our appreciation for your participation, we will give you a \$50 gift card for participating in the [focus group/interview].

**Will you tell people what I say?**

The study team will not share your answers with anyone, unless you say something about hurting yourself or others or if you describe someone else being hurt. [There is a possibility of someone in the focus group repeating your answers, but we will ask all focus group participants to keep this conversation private]. Otherwise, only the study team will read the notes or listen to the recording and no one at [state TANF office], including your caseworker, will hear your answers. We may use some specific quotes in our public reports on findings, but we won't include anyone's name. We do not intend to quote any of the participants we talk with by name, but if for any reason we wanted to quote you by name in a publication, we would ask for your permission first. When the project is over, we will destroy our notes and recordings.

**Questions:**

If you are interested in participating in the study or have questions about the study, you can call the project director, Marla McDaniel at the Urban Institute at 202-261-5678.