

Recruitment Email and Script from Research Team to Recruiters of TANF Program Participants, Tablet Program Participants and Individuals Likely Eligible but Not Receiving TANF

Researchers from the Urban Institute are working with the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to understand how COVID-19 related changes to TANF policy and practice were implemented in [Name of State], and how those changes were experienced by TANF clients from different racial and ethnic groups.

As part of that study, we will be conducting [focus groups/interviews] with [TANF program participants/ tablet program participants/individuals likely eligible but not receiving TANF] to better understand COVID-19 related policy and practice changes particularly aimed at improving TANF clients' access to internet service and technology (e.g., smartphones and tablets) to facilitate their engagement with TANF staff and services and individuals' perceptions of the TANF program.

We request your assistance identifying [TANF program participants, TANF program participants who are taking part in and have received a tablet and internet service through the tablet program/individuals likely eligible but not receiving TANF]. We also ask your assistance to help us identify possible days and times that might be most convenient for the [focus group/interview]. If needed, we will provide potential dates or Doodle Polls to facilitate scheduling. **We also request your assistance finding a space to hold the conversation that will accommodate all participants, such as a conference room or large office.**

If you have any questions about the focus group or the larger study, please contact XXX.

Thank you.

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Please use the following script to inform the [TANF program participants/TANF program participants who have received tablets as part of the tablet program/individuals likely eligible but not receiving TANF] about the [focus groups/interviews].

Researchers from the Urban Institute are working with the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to understand how COVID-19 related changes to TANF policy and practice were implemented in [Name of State]. They are especially interested in whether and how [Name of state TANF program] has helped families access the internet or get devices like tablets, laptops, or smart phones that improve families' ability to get what they need and participate in [Name of state TANF program] virtual services during COVID-19. The study is also interested in whether families of different racial and ethnic backgrounds have had a harder or easier time with [Name of state TANF program] service changes and accessing the internet during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of that study, researchers will be holding a [interview/focus group with about 5-8 [TANF program participants/TANF program participants who have received a tablet as part of the tablet program/individuals likely eligible but not receiving TANF] to hear your opinions about the program and virtual services from [Name of state TANF program].

[If focus group: The focus groups will be 70-to-90 minutes long. If interview: The interview will be about 60 minutes long.] The researchers will give you a \$50 gift card as a thank you for your participation.

Participation is voluntary and responses will be kept private (in that the researchers will not report or identify the names of anyone they speak with). Choosing to participate or choosing not to participate will not affect any services you receive now or in the future. *But, please understand that given technical limitations with Zoom, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of what might be said.* [If focus group: Please do not repeat anything heard in this discussion outside the group. We also request that participants do not take screenshots or record the conversation. While the research team pledges to keep your responses private, other participants in this discussion may not.]

[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.

Do you want to hear more about possible participation in the [focus group/interview]? IF YES → Do you give me permission to share your name, phone number and/or email address with the research team, which they will need to include you in the virtual focus group? IF YES → I will be following up to schedule a time that works for you.