

EVALUATION OF THE EVICTION PROTECTION GRANT PROGRAM

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS | CONTRACT #:
86614922C00007

Program Participant Focus Group Protocol

PRA Burden Statement: Public Reporting Burden for this information collection is estimated to average 90 minutes, including the time to administer informed consent to focus group participants. The collection is designed to gather information from program participants regarding the services they received under the Eviction Protection Grant Program.

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions to reduce this burden, to Anna P. Guido, Reports Management Officer, REE, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW, Room 8210, Washington, DC 20410–5000. When providing comments, please refer to OMB Control No. 2528–XXXX. HUD may not conduct and sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection displays a valid OMB Control Number.

Program Participant Focus Group Protocol (Rounds 1 and 2)

Moderator: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. My name is _____, and I am a senior researcher with 2M Research (2M), who has been asked by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a study on the Eviction Protection Grant Program.

The purpose of this focus group is to understand your experiences with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME>, which received a grant through the Eviction Protection Grant Program. The Eviction Protection Grant Program provided grants to organizations that provide legal assistance to tenants at risk of, or experiencing, eviction. We are studying the ways in which different organizations have used these federal funds, as well as the overall experience of those who received services from these organizations.

We are particularly interested in any positive outcomes you experienced by working with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> as well as any challenges you may have experienced. We will also be asking you about some details of your experience, such as how you learned about the organization that you worked with, what worked well, and what didn't work well for you.

We will be using the information collected in this focus group to help us understand how <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> provided services as well as their impact on participants.

Permission to Record

Before we begin, we would like to have your permission to record the audio and video of this conversation to ensure our notes are accurate and complete. We will not share the recording with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> or HUD, and we will delete it at the end of the study. Do we have your permission to record this interview?

If all participants agree to be recorded:

Thank you. Now, I am going to start recording (**TURN ON RECORDER**). Can you please confirm that you have agreed to be recorded?

If any participant declines:

Thank you very much for learning more about this study. If you are uncomfortable being recorded as part of this focus group, we would be happy to interview you individually at a later date or release you from participation in this study. We will follow up with you following this focus group to discuss your preference. We appreciate your time today!

Consent to Participate

Ask each respondent: We emailed you an informed consent form to participate. Were you able to review the form before this focus group discussion?

If any of the respondents say “No,” please review the “Informed Consent Form for Participation” with all the participants (See Appendix A).

If all respondents say “Yes,” then proceed directly to the following:

We encourage you to be straightforward and open with the information you share. We will do our best to ensure that all comments are anonymized before they are shared with grantee staff, subrecipient staff, or HUD. Anything you share will mostly be combined with information from other focus groups and interviews. Interesting quotes, however, may be included in the report mainly to illustrate a point. These quotes will be untraceable to the speaker. Instead, we will use pseudonyms to represent speakers. We will also analyze this information using an anonymous data file and will not share your identity with anyone outside the study team. Because **<GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME>** may have recommended you as a participant for this focus group, however, it is possible that some of the staff there may be able to identify your experiences from research reports.

We understand that some of these experiences may be difficult to remember or talk about. You do not need to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. You may stop participating in this interview at any time. If you decide not to participate, that is completely fine. We will use your answers to these questions for research purposes only.

Would you still like to participate in the study? <Ask each respondent for a verbal confirmation>

If you have questions about this study, please email Dr. Hiren Nisar, the study’s project manager, at hnisar@2mresearch.com.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Participation Guidelines

Now, I am going to share some basic guidelines for participation today:

1. We ask that everyone be honest and share your true thoughts and opinions (both positive and negative).
2. Different people in this conversation may have different experiences and opinions (even about the same program). The group should feel free to share **all** experiences and opinions, and there is no need to agree with one another. We are rather interested in hearing about the different types of experiences you may have had.
3. We respect the confidentiality of everyone here and those who are not participating in this conversation. Therefore, we would like to request that you focus on sharing your own experiences, to the extent you are comfortable, and avoid speaking about experiences

apart from your own. Please also refrain from repeating what is shared here today outside this group.

4. We hope that everyone will be respectful of each other's experiences and views during this conversation. We therefore ask that you refrain from speaking when another person is speaking, and refrain from making any negative comments about another person's views.
5. In order to ensure that everyone has a chance to be heard, we ask that you please use the "raise hand" feature on Teams to indicate that you would like to speak. When you are not speaking, we also ask that you use the "mute" feature in order to minimize background noise.
6. We expect the conversation today to last approximately 90 minutes. If at all possible, we ask that all participants participate in the entire conversation and avoid leaving early.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. First, we'd like to know a little bit more about your backgrounds and how you learned about services available at <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME>. Can you each share a little bit about who you are? Also, please share how you learned about <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME>?
2. In your experience, what circumstances led to your being at risk of eviction?

Probe for: What do you think are some of the **major** issues that led to your being at risk of, or subject to, eviction?

3. Now, I'd like to know a little bit more about your experience with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME>, beginning with how <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> informs the community about available services. From your point of view, does <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> do a good job of providing information to tenants? Why or why not?

Probe for:

1. The effectiveness of **different** types of outreach/engagement from the organization (for example, radio ads, 'know your rights' campaigns, door knocking).
2. Any barriers or challenges to getting services from the grantee.
3. Whether they had been working with or considering any other organizations when they needed legal services; whether they pursued rental or financial assistance from any other organizations in addition to seeking legal assistance; and, if so, why they selected this one?

(Possible places they may have found out about the grantee is the court, the service community, word of mouth, or independent searching).

4. Now, we'd like to hear more about whether the services provided by <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> met your needs.

4a) Which services did you find most helpful, and why?

Probe for:

1. For example: services you may have received could be legal advice, legal representation, help negotiating with landlord, help securing rental assistance, help with getting an extension to continue to stay in your home, etc.
2. Did you receive more than one service? Were any combinations of services particularly helpful? How were they helpful?
3. What are the benefits of light-touch (e.g. court navigation, limited advice) versus more extensive services (e.g. full court representation)?
4. What outcomes were you hoping for when you sought legal advice?
5. Did you receive rental or financial assistance, in addition to legal assistance? How did these types of assistance complement legal assistance?

4b) Which services did you find least helpful, and why?

4c) Did the services meet all your needs?

Probe for:

1. How did the services meet your needs?
2. Was there anything you needed/hoped for from <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> that they were unable to provide?

Follow-up: As part of your eviction case, did you go to court and have a hearing in front of the judge?

Probe for:

1. Did an attorney attend the hearing with you?
2. Did you talk with the attorney before the hearing?
3. Did you go to mediation or a settlement conference?
 - a. If so, did an attorney go with you?
 - b. Did the attorney talk to the landlord or the landlord's attorney on your behalf?

Follow-up: Were you satisfied with how your case turned out/got resolved?

5. Did <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> help you connect with other programs or organizations? If so, which ones? How helpful were these connections, and why?

Probe for: Which other services, including housing providers, legal service providers, rental assistance programs, financial assistance, or any other services.

6. What about your experience with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> was **positive**, and why?
Probe for: What were the successes you experienced?
7. What about your experience with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> **could have been improved**, and why?
Probe for: What were the challenges you experienced?
8. Based on your experience, what suggestions or recommendations do you have for <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> about how they might better serve clients facing eviction?
9. How many times has the landlord attempted to evict you?
10. How many evictions have been filed against you by the same landlord?
11. What else would you like to share about your experience with <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> that you haven't had a chance to talk about or that I did not ask about?

Thank you so much for your time today. Your perspectives on the services you received from <GRANTEE OR SUBRECIPIENT NAME> are very valuable, and we appreciate your participation in this study. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions.