



**OMB Clearance Package**

**Study of Post-Disaster Outcomes of Renter Households and Rental Housing  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Community Development Block Grants - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)**

**Appendix E: Interview protocol - Renters**

**DRAFT FOR HUD REVIEW**

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## **Appendix E. Interview protocol - Renters**

### **Introduction and consent process**

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I am a researcher with the Urban Institute, a non-profit, nonpartisan research institution in Washington, DC. The Urban Institute received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a study of post-disaster recovery outcomes for rental housing, renter households, and affordable housing residents.

As part of this study, we are visiting communities across the United States that have been affected by disasters to interview stakeholders about disaster impacts to housing and rental markets and renter populations, as well as about views on the impacts and benefits of recovery investment programs such as HUD's Community Development Block Grant—Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program.

This interview is completely voluntary. You may terminate it at any point for any reason and you may decline to answer any question. Your responses will be used to inform our understanding of disaster recovery outcomes for rental housing, renter households, and affordable housing residents.

We will be taking notes during this interview and, with your permission, would like to audio record the interview to ensure we are accurately capturing the information you provide. If you would prefer to not record the interview, we can proceed with written notes only. The notes and recordings will only be accessed by our research team at the Urban Institute and will be stored on a secure, password-protected server at the Urban Institute. The audio recording is not a requirement of participation. HUD will not have access to any of your direct responses, and all information shared will be in aggregate after de-identification. All members of the research team have signed confidentiality pledges. We will protect your identity and will not release your name or any other identifying information beyond the research team. We will not attribute any direct quotes to you. In any reports, documentation, or other work product, your name and identifying information will not be included. However, you should know that we are only speaking with a small number of people, and it is possible someone may be able to identify you from a quote even if though your name will not be given. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your interactions with your employer or any government agency.

There are no direct benefits to your participation other than the knowledge that you are contributing to research to inform future program planning at HUD to improve disaster recovery for rental housing and renter populations in communities affected by disasters.

#### **[if in person]**

If you choose to participate, we recommend that we meet at a location that is agreeable to you and outside the eye or earshot of others.

#### **[if remote/over Zoom]**

We recommend that you participate within a private setting, outside the eye or earshot of others. Even so, we have no way of knowing who may be within earshot or viewing range at your location, so cannot guarantee that non-participants will not hear what you share today. We also recognize that video meetings can be hacked, and though we have taken steps to prevent this from happening, it is still a possibility. Please keep these potential risks in mind if you choose to participate.

#### **[all interviewees]**

We are seeking your approval to participate in today's interview. We want to be sure that you freely consent to participate, that you are aware that you are not obligated to answer any questions, and that you understand the potential risks and benefits of participating.

Do you consent to participate in the interview? [Solicit verbal consent].  
Do you consent to this interview being recorded? [This is not a requirement to continue]  
[if yes, start recording and proceed; if no, proceed without recording]

### **Background Questions**

*Thank you again for your participation in this interview. We will be respectful of time and keep to the [x] minutes we have scheduled.*

*As a reminder, our study is focused on post-disaster recovery for rental housing and renter households. In addition to your community, we are conducting research in two other communities that experienced a disaster in the last 15 years. We are interested in the recovery process for renters and the loss and rehabilitation of rental housing. Our research also has a special focus on renters with low- and moderate incomes and on their housing options.*

*Before we dive into the substance, we have a few questions to better understand your experience living in [community/region] with relation to [main disaster event].*

### **1. How long have you lived in [community]? Please tell us a little about where you live.**

Follow-up if not addressed: Describe neighborhood, type of housing, length of residence.

### **2. Were you living in the community when [main disaster event] occurred?**

Follow-up: If so, were you in your current housing or living somewhere else at the time?

Follow up: If not, when did you move to the community in relation to the disaster? How much familiarity do you have with the recovery and rebuilding process??

*To start, we have a few questions asking you to reflect on the [main disaster event] and consider the **immediate** damages of the disaster, and how the housing market for affordable rental housing—and renters like yourself—were affected by the [main disaster event] in the short term, **approximately one year after the disaster**.*

[If respondent expressed no familiarity with disaster event **skip to question 6**]

### **3. Based on your experience, please describe how the [main disaster event] affected your housing?**

Probe: Did you need to evacuate? If so, where did you go? How did you make the decision evacuate?

Probe: What type of damages were suffered at your home? Were you able to return to the unit or did you need to move? How long did it take before you were able to return home?

Probe: Did you have any issues with your landlord (not letting out of lease, determining responsibility for repairs, refusing entry to inspect your possessions)?

Follow up: How did your experience compare to others in your community? Did you notice any differences or similarities?

### **4. In the year following the disaster, what was your experience looking for rental housing? If you did not move, personally, what did you hear about the experience of friends or neighbors looking for rental housing?**

Follow-up: [if not addressed] What kind of units were available for rent during this period and what shape were they in? Were they more expensive, less expensive, or about the same as before the [main disaster event]? Was it harder, easier, or about the same as before the [main disaster event] to find available units?

**5. Did you notice any changes in who was renting in [community] a year following the disaster? If so, please describe.**

Probe: Think about income and other economic characteristics, demographics, financial distress, rental cost burden or other ways you would describe different groups.

Follow up: Did you notice if other residents were displaced and didn't move back? Where do they live now? Were there new arrivals?

*Let's shift gears to the **longer-term, post-disaster recovery phase**. By longer-term we mean approximately 5 years after the disaster when much of the rebuilding has occurred.*

**6. Thinking longer-term about five years after the disaster, please describe rental housing that was available in [community/region]?**

Follow-up: [if not addressed] What kind of units were available for rent during this period and what shape were they in?

Follow up: Were they more expensive, less expensive, or about the same as before the [main disaster event]? Was it harder, easier, or about the same as before the [main disaster event] to find available units?

Follow up: Do you attribute any of these changes to the disaster? If so, why?

Follow up: Do you think anything besides the disaster led to changes in the rental housing market over this period?

Probe: You could think about significant events such as recessions, other disasters, or other causes like industry openings or closures, and things like this—does anything come to mind?

**7. What about changes in the who was renting in [community] over the long-term?**

Probe: Think about income, demographics, financial distress, ability or inability to pay rent or other ways you would describe different groups. Was this different than immediately before the disaster?

Follow up: Do you attribute any of these changes to the disaster? If so, how?\_

Follow up: Do you think anything besides the disaster led to changes in the renter population over this period?

*Let's shift gears to talk about recovery efforts since the disaster to offset or prevent the loss of rental housing. By recovery efforts, we mean both publicly and privately funded programs, policies, or actions designed to support recovery of rental housing in the short- and long-term.*

**8. How would you describe the supports and resources that you - other renters in your area - needed to recover after the disaster in terms of housing?**

**9. Were you aware of any opportunities to provide input on recovery or redevelopment plans or activities, such as the CDBG-DR action plan? If so, did you participate? What was your experience engaging in these processes?**

**10. Please discuss any experiences you've had with any kind of state, federal, or community-type program to support you with housing needs after [main disaster event]. Are you aware of any programs, and what if any kinds of support did you receive?**

Follow-up: Think about things like rental assistance, hotel vouchers, counseling or guidance, information, help finding housing... [list populated from review of Community Action Plans and case study pre-review], and think about federal and state programs like HUD's CDBG-DR, FEMA, [state name] programs through [agencies], etc.

[If aware]

- How did you find out about them [name examples discussed]?
- In addition to short-term supports, are you aware of any longer-term supports or resources. If so, how did you find out about these types of supports?
- What were your experiences accessing and using these supports? Was it easy or difficult? Did they address your needs? Were there any needs you had that the supports or programs did not help address?
- Did any programs help you feel more secure or prepared about your housing for potential future disasters like [disaster name]? In what ways?

**11. In your opinion, how well have your [community name] officials responded to the disaster, specifically in regard to housing and rental housing? Think about the short-term period (1 year afterward) as well as the long-term period (~5 years afterward).**

Follow up: What about at the state level [or federal, if relevant]-level? in your opinion, how well would you say [agency names/levels] responded to the disaster?

Follow up: Overall, would you say recovery is adequate to community needs?

*To close, we'd like to ask about your recommendations—for other renters as well as local, state, and federal government officials—to improve recovery for people after disasters like [disaster name].*

**12. What do you consider important to support recovery for renters after a disaster like [main disaster event]?**

Probe: Think about things like availability of new housing, affordability of new housing, type of new housing, location of new housing, access to local, state and federal emergency and recovery resources...

Follow up: What lessons or insights would you offer to local decision makers, state, decision makers, and national decision makers to help renters after disasters?

**13. How prepared do you feel [community/region] is for future disaster events like this in terms of rental housing and needs of renters? What does that preparedness look like or what would need to change for you to feel more prepared?**

Closing

**14. That concludes our questions for today. Is there anything else that you'd like to share before we conclude our time?**

Follow-up: If we have additional questions related to this work, could we contact you at a later date?

[Sincere thank you]