



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 F: Interview protocol - Landlords

DRAFT FOR HUD REVIEW

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Appendix F. Interview protocol - Landlords

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 in [community/region] with relation to [main disaster event].

1. Please briefly describe the portfolio of rental housing properties you own/manage [community/region]?

Follow-up: [if not addressed] How many units? What affordability levels?

Follow-up: how long have you been a landlord in [community]?

2. How would you describe your familiarity with [main disaster event]?

Follow-up: Did you experience it personally?

Follow up: How would you rate your level of familiarity with immediate impacts and response related to housing? What about the longer-term rebuilding and recovery?

*We would like to start by asking you to reflect on [main disaster event] and consider the **immediate** effects of the disaster. We would also like you to think about the response and recovery in the **short term**—meaning approximately the first year after [main disaster event].*

[If the respondent expressed no familiarity with the immediate impacts of and response to the main disaster skip to question 7]

3. Based on your recollection, please describe the immediate impacts of [main disaster event] on renters and rental housing and an approximate timeline of the recovery process? We are interested in the properties you own and manage, as well as any observations about housing in community more broadly?

Probe: Consider severity of damage; types of housing with the most severe damage; most affected populations, most affected neighborhoods, as well as any indirect impacts of the disaster.

Follow up: Did you observe any differences in the disaster damages for rental housing as compared to owner occupied housing? What about for higher-income vs low-moderate income residents? If so, to what degree?

Follow up [if not addressed]: Thinking about the immediate disaster response period, cleanup process, and post-disaster recovery and rebuilding phases, approximately how long was each phase?

Follow up: Did you observe any differences in the recovery timeline for rental housing as compared to owner occupied housing? What about for higher-income vs low-moderate income residents? If so, do you have any sense why that was?

5. A year after the disaster, what if any changes did you observe in [community/region]'s rental housing market? You could think about things like availability, quality, accessibility, and affordability of housing...

Probe: Were there any changes in your portfolio of rental properties? Such as number of units available, price, etc

Probe: What about rental housing more broadly in the community? 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?

6. Now let's turn to the residents themselves, approximately one year after the disaster, what if any changes did you observe in the people who were renting housing in [community/region]?

Follow up: were you able to bring the residents back to your property?

Probe: Did you notice any changes in residents at your properties? Think about income wealth, demographics, financial distress, ability or inability to pay rent or other ways you would describe different groups

Probe: What about renters more broadly in the community? Think about income and wealth, 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: Who was 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.*

7. Thinking longer-term (about 5 years), what if any changes did you notice in [community/region]'s rental housing market, as compared to immediately before the disaster?

Probe: Were there any changes in your portfolio of properties? Such as number of units available, price, etc

Follow up [If not addressed]: What about rental housing more broadly in the community? 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?

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

Follow up: What if any other factors 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 of population influxes or losses, and things like this —does anything come to mind?

8. What about changes in the rental population? How similar or different was the rental population 5 years after the disaster compared to immediately before the disaster?

Probe: Did you notice any changes in residents at your properties? Think about income wealth, 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: What other factors 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.

9. How would you describe the supports and resources that you - and your tenants - needed to recover after the disaster in terms of housing? Consider short and long term needs...

Probe: Think about things like recovery, rebuilding, or retrofit resources; insurance; related funding or grant opportunities; planning or technical assistance; emergency resources; renter assistance..."

10. Were you aware of any opportunities to provide comment or feedback on recovery or redevelopment plans or activities, such as the CDBG-DR action plan? Think about things like identifying new housing types and locations, special considerations for renters, and things like this. If so, did you participate?

11. After [main disaster event], what if any awareness did you have about programs or resources to help do things like make repairs and conduct property retrofitting? What about resources to help with longer-term mitigation [like buyouts, elevations (depending on disaster)]?

[If aware]

- How did you find out about them [name examples discussed]?
- Did you make use of any of these programs or resources? From which [offices/agencies/organizations]? Why or why not?
- What were your experiences accessing and using these supports? Was it easy or difficult? Did they address needs for your properties and tenants? Were there any needs you had that the supports or programs did not help address?
- How did insurance factor into your recovery process?
- How well do you think these programs and supports specifically address the needs of rental properties and renters in the face disasters like [disaster name]?
- Did any programs help you feel more secure or prepared about your properties for potential future disasters like [disaster name]? In what ways?

12. 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: To what degree did local ordinances or policy encourage redevelopment? Restrict?

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 needs of renters?

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

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

Probe: Think about things like resources to support retrofits, redevelopment, new development, buyouts, vouchers, rental assistance, insurance access to local, state and federal emergency and recovery resources, organizational or staff capacity...

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

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

Closing

15. 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]