

Attachment C. Executive Director Interview Guide

Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing Program Directors Working with Alternative Rent Rules Group

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

[Shaded and bracketed text indicates notes for the interviewer]

Research team introductory script

My name is _____, and I am with MDRC, the research organization that is working with HUD and your agency on the alternative rent policies and procedures as part of the Stepped and Tiered Rent Demonstration. Thank you for your time. My goal during this meeting is to understand how the alternative rent policies are being implemented. I am also interested in understanding how households understand and experience the alternative policies and their questions about it.

I (we) know that you are busy and will try to be as brief as possible. The public reporting burden for this interview is estimated to average 45 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions and completing the interview.

If you have any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions to reduce this burden, please send them to the Reports Management Officer, Paperwork Reduction Project, to the Office of Information Technology, US. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC 20410-3600. When providing comments, please refer to OMB Approval No. XXXX.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review. We are interested in learning about your experiences. There is no right or wrong answer. Additionally, you can refuse to answer any question, and can stop the interview at any time without penalty. We will protect your responses from disclosure. MDRC will not release your name and identity on any reports or in any discussions with supervisors or colleagues at the housing authority.

Do you agree to participate? Would it be okay for me to record so I don't have to take notes while we're talking? (NAME will take notes as backup to the recording.)

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

[Interviewer: at start of audio, state date, time, & interview #]

I. INTRODUCTION AND STAFF BACKGROUND

1. Please confirm your job title?
2. How long have you been working at PHA? How long have you been in your current role?
 - a. What has your role been in the design and implementation of the [alternative rent policy]?
3. How has your engagement with or responsibilities related to the [Stepped or Tiered Rent] policy changed over time?

II. GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF NEW RENT POLICIES

4. What would you say are biggest advantages of implementing the [alternative rent policy] at [PHA]? Any disadvantages? Please describe.
 - a. Possible probes:
 - i. Are there particular challenges to the standard rent policy that you feel the [alternative rent policy] improves upon?
 - ii. Are there particular challenges to the standard rent policy that you feel the [alternative rent policy] does not improve upon?
5. What were some of the most significant changes to PHA operations required to implement the new rent policy?
 - a. Were these changes anticipated?
 - b. Were any more difficult to implement than others?
6. How do you feel that families will fare under the [alternative rent policy]? Could you tell me more about why you think this?
 - c. Are there certain types of households that you feel may fare better or worse than others?

III. STAKEHOLDER REACTIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

7. How have tenant groups or resident councils or advocacy groups like Legal Aid responded or reacted to the alternative rent policy? Please describe. What issues have they raised?
8. Has the Stepped and Tiered Rent Demonstration implementation required new coordination with other government entities, outside of the PHA Board? Please describe.
9. Have you received or been made aware of any concerns or communications from landlords or landlord associations regarding the (alternative rent policy)? Please describe.

IV. DEMONSTRATION AND MTW PLANNING

10. Could you tell me about why [PHA] leadership decided to pursue applying for the Stepped and Tiered Rent Cohort of the MTW Expansion. What factors influenced that decision?
 - a. Possible probes:
 - i. Is there any particular reason why your agency chose to pursue selection into this MTW Expansion cohort versus others?
 - ii. What about the rent reform MTW expansion cohort was appealing? W
 - iii. What were the perceived benefits of participating specifically in MTW Cohort #2? Of receiving MTW status more broadly?
 - iv. Were there any perceived risks?
11. How did [PHA] decide whether to select a tiered or stepped rent policy? Were both considered? Why or why not?

- a. Probe for perceived tradeoffs.
- 12. How would you describe the PHA's process of planning for and receiving approval for MTW activities, including [the alternative rent policy]?
 - a. Were there any achievements or successes that stand out?
 - b. Were there any challenges that stand out?
 - c. Were there any reactions during the public comment phase on the MTW supplement?
- 13. Other than the implementation of [alternative rent policy], have there been any noticeable effects of MTW status and the use of MTW flexibility on [PHA] so far?
- 14. How would you describe the planning phase between your PHA's selection into Cohort #2 and the launch of enrollment into the STRD?
 - a. Possible probes:
 - i. Where there any achievements or challenges that stand out? Please describe.
 - ii. Were there any challenging alternative rent policy decisions or choices that your agency confronted? Please describe.
 - iii. Were there any staffing challenges that came up during the planning phase? Please describe.
 - iv. What about the process of preparing for demonstration/study enrollment?
 - v. Would you say that the effort and time required for your agency to plan for the implementation of [alternative rent policy]—including the effort to design the policy and receive the necessary HUD approvals—was greater, lower, or roughly equal to what you expected at the time of application? (Probe for efforts that required more work or time than expected.)
- 15. Were the supports provided by HUD, MDRC, ICF (a HUD-contracted technical assistance provider) and other organizations during the demonstration planning phase sufficient to meet the needs of preparing for the launch of STRD? (Probe for differential views on HUD, MDRC, ICF.)
 - d. What additional supports, if any, might have been helpful to receive during the planning stage?
- 16. How has Stepped and Tiered Rent Demonstration implementation affected how the Family Self-Sufficiency program is offered at your PHA?
 - e. (If FSS offerings changed) What has changed? What led the PHA to adopt these specific changes? How do you feel the implementation of those changes is going?

IV. OVERALL REFLECTIONS AND WRAP UP

- 17. What have been the greatest successes of [alternative rent policy] implementation?
- 18. What have been the greatest challenges of [alternative rent policy] implementation?
- 19. Looking forward, are there any particular concerns you have about future implementation of [the alternative rent policy]?
- 20. Is there anything you would recommend changing about any aspects of the [alternative rent policy] that you have not already shared?
- 21. What measures would you recommend to another PHA that was considering implementing the [alternative rent policy]?
- 22. Is there anything else that you would like to share that we haven't covered?
- 23. Do you have any questions for me?