

## VERBAL CONSENT FOR STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TESTING IDENTIFIED ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS IN FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS (FATHERHOOD TIES) EVALUATION

[Name of the program] is partnering with MDRC, a nonprofit organization, to learn how to better support fathers in their program. The project is called Testing Identified Elements for Success in Fatherhood programs, or Fatherhood TIES. [Name of the program] is one of 5 fatherhood programs involved in this project.

As part of the study you are being asked to participate in an interview to share your experiences with the program.

### Why is the study being done?

This study will help us test innovative approaches to overcome implementation challenges and to learn more about fathers' experiences at [Name of the program] to better support fathers achieve their goals. The TIES study is being conducted by MDRC with their partners MEF Associates and Abt Associates.

### What is involved in the study?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a staff member who has knowledge of the services offered at [Name of the program] and how they are implemented. The study team will gather information about your roles and responsibilities, and your experience with TIES programming. This will last about 60 minutes.

### What are the risks of participating?

There are no physical risks associated with the study. Your participation will not affect your employment. Every effort will be made to not attribute what we learn specifically to you or any of your colleagues, but we will use some of what we hear to work with you and others at [Name of the program] to strengthen the program. There are no monetary costs to you for being a part of the study. The information we learn is not intended to assess your individual performance.

### Are there benefits to participating?

There are no direct benefits to you for being a part of this study. We hope the information learned from this study will help [Name of the program] to strengthen the services it delivers and also help other fatherhood service providers improve services to benefit other fathers in the future.

### Will my information be kept private?

Records that identify you will be kept private. You will not be identified by your name in any publication. Though, we may quote your remarks but not identify you. When sharing information with your site liaison for the purposes of program improvement, every effort will be made to not attribute what we learn specifically to you or any of your colleagues. All data will be stored on secured servers or in locked filing cabinets. The researchers will follow strict policies to keep your information private.

{for Zoom interviews} You can decide whether you want to use video during the interview, but it is not required. We would like to record the discussion for note-taking purposes, and only the research team will hear or read anything that is said here. We will not record video.

### What about my right to decline participation?

Participation in this interview is voluntary. You may choose not to be in the study without any penalty. Your decision not to participate in the study will not affect your employment at **[Name of the program]**.

**Whom do I call if I have questions?**

MDRC and Fatherhood TIES can be reached at [FatherhoodTIES@mdrc.org](mailto:FatherhoodTIES@mdrc.org) or at the Fatherhood TIES hotline (855) 907-6696.

**Statement of consent to participate in the study**

*We will now request your permission to continue. By agreeing to continue, you agree that the purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, risks and benefits have been explained. You have been allowed to ask the questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told whom to contact if you have additional questions. You agree to participate in this study. You have been told that you can request a copy of this document.*

**Do you agree to participate in this interview?**

Yes or No.

PRIVACY STATEMENT: The consent is covered by the Privacy Act. This means that your participation is voluntary, so you can decline to participate. If you decide to decline to participate, your employment will not be affected. The purpose of this study is to find out which parts of fatherhood programs are the most effective at improving the lives of participating fathers and their children and co-parents. The information you provide may be shared with state and federal agencies and researchers involved in similar work. The legal authority for this project is Social Security Act Title IV-A § 403 [42 U.S.C. 603] (a) (2). If you would like more information about this project, please see Systems of Records Notice (SORN) 09-80-0361, OPRE Research and Evaluation Project Records.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: The purpose of the described information collection is to gather preliminary information about the fatherhood field and explore with fatherhood programs the research questions that are of interest and the design options that are feasible. This is a voluntary collection of information. The answers you give will be kept private. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # for the described information collection is 0970-0622 and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Dina Israel; [Dina.Israel@mdrc.org](mailto:Dina.Israel@mdrc.org), and Michelle Manno; [Michelle.Manno@mdrc.org](mailto:Michelle.Manno@mdrc.org); Attn: OMB-PRA (0970-0622).

## Fatherhood TIES Staff Interview Protocol

*Today's interview will cover a few different topics. We'd like to start with some background questions and then talk about your role and responsibilities, about the organization, the program, staffing, and the context of the community where services are offered.*

*As a reminder, all questions are optional. You don't have to answer any questions that you don't feel comfortable or want to answer.*

### Background

1. Can you tell us a little about your background and how you came to be in this role?

### Job role and responsibilities

2. Tell me about your role at [Organization]
  - a. What are your main responsibilities in your current role?
  - b. Have you had any specific training for this position?
  - c. What percentage of the time are you working on Fatherhood TIES? What are your primary responsibilities working on Fatherhood TIES?

### Organizational and community context and characteristics

#### General organizational characteristics/perception questions

*Now I want to invite you to share your thoughts about [Organization], [Name the program], and the [Fatherhood TIES intervention] specifically.*

3. How would you describe your organization, its mission, and the services it offers?
  - a. What is [Organization]'s background in providing fatherhood services in the community?
  - b. Where does [Fatherhood TIES] live in your organization? How was that decided?
  - c. Do you have a sense of why [Organization/name the program] chose [parent coaching/system navigation/financial coaching] for this study?
4. What's it like working on Fatherhood TIES?
  - a. How many staff work with Fatherhood TIES? How many staff work with the business-as-usual group?

### Staffing, training, and supervision [For Program Directors and/or Program Managers]

*The next questions are about program staffing and management. How were you involved in program management and staffing? If not involved in program management and staffing, skip to the Community Context Section.*

5. How is [name the program] staffed?
  - a. What is the management structure?
  - b. What are the key positions and how many staff do you have in each position?
  - c. Are there unfilled positions?
  - d. Has there been staff turnover? What are the primary reasons for staff turnover?
6. What was it like finding and retaining qualified staff for [Fatherhood TIES]?
  - a. Were there any specific position(s) that were challenging to fill/retain?
  - b. Were any existing program staff recruited for [Fatherhood TIES]?
  - c. How do staff reflect the fathers being served? *Probe about demographic characteristics and lived experiences.*
7. What does it take for staff to be successful at their jobs here? *Probe about lived experience, knowledge of community*
  - a. What does it take for staff working on [Fatherhood TIES] to be successful?
8. How do new staff learn about [Fatherhood TIES] and the program model?
9. Does [Fatherhood TIES] require any specific staff development or training?
  - a. How often are these trainings? Provided by whom?
  - b. Are there any other staff development/trainings that you think would benefit staff working on the program?
10. Tell me about how [Fatherhood TIES] is managed within the larger organization? *Probe: What was your experience like interfacing with research team? What was your experience like collecting and reporting out relevant [Fatherhood TIES] data to research team/funders?*
11. How do [Fatherhood TIES] staff work with business-as-usual staff? *Probes: Do they discuss client progress together?*

### Community context

12. Can you describe the area where you provided services? *Probe: Urban versus Rural, how far away do fathers typically live? Is there efficient or accessible public transportation?*

13. What is the service landscape like for fathers in this area? *Probe about other programs or organizations in the area that provide similar services to fathers.*
  - a. Are there any services similar to [Fatherhood TIES] offered to the community?
14. Can you describe any social or community factors that contribute to the service needs of fathers in your program? *Probe about justice system, child support, public assistance, access to education and employment, housing, mental health, etc.*

### Economic context

15. Are you aware of any recent economic trends in your area such as increasing employment/unemployment, new industries, staffing needs, etc. What do you think might be driving these trends?
16. What are some common jobs that fathers you provide services for have? What kind of jobs are they seeking?
17. What are some of the major industries and employers in your programs county/city?
18. How would you describe the cost of living in your program's county/city? *Probe rent/housing, food, gas, wages etc.*

### Recruitment, eligibility, and enrollment

#### Recruitment and Eligibility

19. Are you involved in program recruitment? If so, how?
  - a. [If involved] Can you tell me about what program recruitment is like?
  - b. [If involved] How do participants typically hear about [Name the program]?  
*Probe: Advertising, referrals from case managers, word of mouth, etc.*
20. What do you think draws participants to [Name the program]? Are there common goals they hope to accomplish?
21. How would you describe the target population for [Fatherhood TIES]?
22. What are the eligibility requirements for [Fatherhood TIES]? What are the eligibility requirements for the study?
  - a. Have you made any changes to the eligibility criteria since launching the program? Why?
23. Were there common reasons that applicants are found not to be eligible for services? What are they?

24. If an applicant is not eligible for or interested in services, what happens then? *Probe about referrals, handouts, or other guidance*
25. How often do participants decide that they are not interested in [Fatherhood TIES]? What are the main reasons they decide not to participate?

## Enrollment

26. After someone is determined eligible and has expressed interest, what happens next? What does the intake and enrollment process look like for [Fatherhood TIES]?
27. What information do you gather about Fathers during the intake process?
- What forms, applications, or releases are completed? When?
  - Are any documents required (e.g. ID, proof of address, SSN)? Do you provide assistance with acquiring these documents?
    - How often do you find yourself helping participants acquire documents? What are some reasons they do not have necessary documentation?
28. What are the next steps for a father after they enroll in [Fatherhood TIES]? *Probe orientation, caseload assignment, initial activities/services*
29. Have you noticed a gap between program enrollment and the start of services? If so, what does it look like?
- [If yes] how do you keep fathers engaged during this period?
  - [If yes] what are some reasons for gaps of time between enrollment and the start of services?

## Services

### Program overview and Service quality and fidelity

30. Tell me about [Fatherhood TIES services and activities] offered by your program. What types of services or activities fall under [Fatherhood TIES]?
- In your own words, what are the goals of this service?
  - How are [Fatherhood TIES] services different from the business-as-usual services?
31. What outcomes do you expect to see for fathers who receive [Fatherhood TIES] services? *Probe short-and long-term goals*
32. Which staff provide these services? What are [their/your] caseload?

33. Where and how do [staff/you] communicate with participating fathers? *Probe phone, building, worksite, etc.*
34. How often do [Fatherhood TIES] staff meet with fathers?
- What are the meetings about?
  - How often and how long are they?
  - Are they initiated by staff or fathers?
  - What topics are covered in meetings?
35. Do you have a sense of how much [Fatherhood TIES] participants engage with staff and services relative to business-as-usual participants?
- [If yes] What are some reasons for this difference?
36. In your experience, how has working on [Fatherhood TIES] been different from working on the other (or typical) services provided by your organization?
37. To what extent does [Fatherhood TIES] interface with other services or programs in your organization? Do TIES staff coordinate with other case workers or staff?
38. How do you think Fathers participating in [Fatherhood TIES] have felt about the services they have received?
- Are there any particular elements of [Fatherhood TIES] that you think Fathers find most useful, or gravitate towards the most?
  - Are there any elements of the [Fatherhood TIES] that you think aren't the most useful for Fathers?
    - Are there any elements that are challenging for fathers?

## **Program engagement and completion [Content, Quality]**

### **Engagement**

39. What does engagement with the program look like? What does consistent engagement, moderate engagement, and minimal engagement look like?
- What is your general sense of how many Fathers participating in the program are consistently, moderately, and minimally engaged? Is this what you expected at the start of the program?
  - What do you think are some reasons why some fathers are more engaged than others?

40. Once a father is enrolled, what helps them succeed in participating in [Fatherhood TIES]?
41. Are there points in the program where participants typically drop off or need less frequent assistance from staff?
  - a. What are some reasons Fathers drop off or need less frequent assistance at this/these points?
42. Can you describe any guidelines or expectations [Fatherhood TIES] has about attendance, participation, and/or communication?
43. What happens if a father stops attending/engaging with [Fatherhood TIES] services?
  - a. If a father stops participating in [Fatherhood TIES] services or communicating with program staff, what steps do you take to reengage them?
44. Were there any aspects of [Fatherhood TIES] that kept fathers engaged? What did it seem like fathers were most enthusiastic or excited about?
45. Do you have a sense of how fathers utilized any materials or resources provided by [Fatherhood TIES] with regards to:
  - a. Their coparents
  - b. Their children
  - c. Any child-support system related obligations
46. Do you think there were any components of [Fatherhood TIES] that weren't as useful or engaging for fathers? What were they, and why do you think they weren't useful?

### Completion

47. What does it mean or look like for a father to complete the [Fatherhood TIES program]?
48. What do fathers express as their primary barriers or challenges to completing [Fatherhood TIES]?
49. Do you keep in touch with fathers after they leave [Fatherhood TIES]? If so:
  - a. How do you stay in touch?
  - b. How often?
  - c. How are they doing?

### Operational successes and challenges

50. To what extent is your program meeting its [Fatherhood TIES] goals? Why is it meeting, exceeding, or falling short of them?



- a. How would the program need to change to better meet these goals?
  - b. How do you determine whether or not [Fatherhood TIES] is meeting its goals?  
*Probe: data sources, nFORM, etc.*
51. Have you made any changes to [Fatherhood TIES] goals since launching?
52. Are there any approaches/partnerships/training/staffing that the program is not currently offering that you think could improve the program?
53. What have been some key successes you've had in implementing the program/doing [Fatherhood TIES] since [study launch]?
- a. What factors have contributed to these successes?
54. What have been the main challenges you have encountered in implementing the program?
- a. How have you addressed these challenges?
  - b. What would you need to further address these challenges? *Probe: resources, staff, partners, policy changes, systems reform, etc.*
55. How has being part of the study affected your organization?
56. How would you describe leaderships staff's support for the program?
57. Were there any challenges with buy-in from staff when implementing the program?
58. Is there anything about [Fatherhood TIES] that you would like to keep after the study ends?