

# EHV Evaluation Follow-up Phone/Virtual Interview Protocol for CoCs & Other Partners

## Interviewer Preparation

Please customize the protocol below for your PHA, including all materials in brackets. Prior to the interview, review PHA and CoC survey responses and prepare a short summary of answers and tables relevant to the interview questions below. This can serve as a reference during the discussion. For example, when asking about referral sources, the interviewer can look at the related response from the CoC survey. If a respondent gives a response that differs from what was answered in the survey, this will serve as a prompt for the interviewer to probe more. A template of this summary memo, and guidance on how to use it, will be shared at the data collector training.

## Introduction

Thank you for participating in this important study. My name is [Name] and I am from a company called Social Policy Research Associates, or SPR, which is an evaluation, research, and technical assistance firm based in Oakland, California. Together with our partner, Abt Global, we were contracted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), to learn about the implementation and outcomes of the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program.

Before we get started, I want to make sure that this interview is accessible for you.

This means we will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. We will also use translation services as needed for individuals with Limited English Proficiency. We will also provide

**PRA Burden Statement:** The public reporting burden for this collection of information relating to the Evaluation of Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program is estimated to average 60 minutes per respondent for phone and virtual interviews with CoC and non-CoC partner organization staff. These burden estimates include the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Comments regarding the accuracy of this burden estimate and any suggestions for reducing this burden can be sent to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of the Chief Data Officer, R, 451 7th St SW, Room 8210, Washington, DC 20410-5000 or email: [PaperworkReductionActOffice@hud.gov](mailto:PaperworkReductionActOffice@hud.gov). Do not send completed forms to this address. This agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection displays a valid OMB control number. HUD collects this information to examine the implementation and outcomes associated with the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program, which was created under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. HUD may use this information to help guide any future emergency housing voucher programs and the data could also inform possible changes to the HCV program to serve households who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. This information is voluntary. This information collected will be held confidential pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552 (Freedom of Information Act), 5 U.S.C 552a (Privacy Act of 1974), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

other accommodations, including closed captioning and/or a sign language interpreter, for anyone requesting them.

Do you require information to be presented in an accessible format or reasonable accommodations to participate in this study?

[If No] Thank you. We'll get started then.

[If Yes] Can you describe what accommodations would be helpful for you?

[Note to interviewer: depending on how the respondent answers the above, the following probes and responses can be used to ensure the appropriate accommodation(s) are provided.]

**If closed captioning is requested:** I can set up closed captioning right now. [Interviewer should turn on closed captioning]

**If sign language interpretation is requested:** We can arrange to have a sign language interpreter attend the interview. I will email you now to find a time that works for us to conduct this interview with the sign language interpreter in attendance.

**If Spanish language is requested:** [If interviewer is a Spanish speaking data collector] That is no problem at all. I'm happy to conduct the interview in Spanish. [Interviewer should pull up the Spanish language interview guide and proceed in that language.]

[If interviewer is not a Spanish speaking data collector] That is no problem at all. Thank you for letting me know. We'll need to reschedule this interview for a time when one of our Spanish speaking interviewers is available. I will follow up with an email in a moment with some possible times. I'll make sure to send that email in Spanish as well.

**If another type of accommodation is requested:** Thank you for letting me know. I'll reach out to schedule this interview at another time when [insert appropriate accommodation] is available. [As needed, interviewer should ask for any clarifying details about the accommodation so that it can be set up as needed.]

Now I'd like to give you a little more information about this interview and the EHV evaluation. As part of this study, we surveyed all PHAs and CoCs that participated in the EHV program. [If applicable] Thank you for your agency's participation in that survey. From the PHAs that completed the survey, and in coordination with HUD, we selected 25 PHAs and their partners to participate in these follow-up telephone interviews. Our goal was to identify 25 PHAs/CoC [or other] partnerships that were representative of the larger group and that we believe are well positioned to share information around various approaches to implementing the program. Today's conversation is designed to help clarify and expand on your survey answers and to delve deeper into topics of interest. We will also be talking to leaders from your partner PHA(s) in a separate call. [For CoCs that partnered with more than one PHA] While your organization partnered with multiple PHAs, for this interview we are specifically interested in your experience with [PHA name]. Please keep the conversation focused on that partnership.

We are not auditors, and we are not considering anything related to compliance with the program. We are here to learn about your experience with the EHV program to describe lessons learned and to better explain challenges PHAs and their partners faced in implementing EHV programs, along with their

strategies for overcoming them. We will summarize our findings in a report. We may use quotations or examples you share, but we will not use your name or reference the name of your agency/organization or partner PHA(s) in the report. Participation is voluntary, so you may skip any questions that you are not comfortable answering. There are no right or wrong answers. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

We would like to record our conversation for internal analysis. We will not share any recordings with HUD or outside the SPR-Abt study team. The recordings will be destroyed after our analysis is complete. Do we have your consent to record?

[If yes] Thank you. I'll start the recording now.

[If no] No problem. I'll take some written notes instead.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

## Background

Before we start, I'd like to get a little background on your tenure at your organization and your experience with the EHV program.

- What is your title and how long have you been with your PHA?
- What was or is your role with the EHV program and about how many total months did you work with the program?
- Had you partnered at all with [PHA name] prior to the EHV program? [If yes] In what capacity?

## Partnerships and Targeting

We'd like to learn more about the partnership between your organization and the PHA for the EHV program, as well as how you decided to target EHV's.

### Partnerships

[If survey indicates that the CoC worked with more than one PHA (CoC survey question #1), please remind the CoC that we are specifically interested in their partnership with [PHA name] for this call.]

1. How did your organization and your PHA partner decide which organization would take on different EHV responsibilities?
  - a. How did your organization and your PHA partner resolve any differences of opinion, if any?
  - b. [If survey data indicates the PHA had multiple partners, see PHA survey questions #1-2] What challenges, if any, were there balancing responsibilities or priorities given that the PHA was working with multiple organizations?
2. We would like to better understand the nature of your organization's relationship with your PHA partner over time.
  - a. How has this relationship changed over the course of the EHV program?
  - b. As the EHV program winds down, do you expect your PHA partnership to continue, and if so, how?
  - c. What changes, if any, have you made to how you coordinate with the PHA for other programs (for example, integrating HCVs or vouchers as an exit destination in HMIS)?

3. From our review of the survey [see response to CoC survey question #5g], it seems that this partnership [included/did not include] people with lived experience of homelessness or housing insecurity in the decision-making process around targeting EHV assistance through lived experience groups and/or interviews or focus groups with individuals with lived experience.
  - a. Why did your organization [engage/not engage] people with lived experience in the decision-making process?
  - b. [For those that engaged] What did you learn from this engagement process and how, if at all, did it shape decision making? What suggestions would you have for others in setting up similar groups?
  - c. [For those that did not engage] What might have supported your organization in engaging these individuals?

## Targeting

We'd like to understand more about how the EHV program fit into your organization's strategy for responding to homelessness in your community.

4. In the CoC survey, your organization indicated that the partnership targeted [customize with response from survey question #4] to receive EHV as part of its strategy to prevent and end homelessness.
  - a. What role did your organization play in choosing this/these target population(s) and what role did the PHA play?
  - b. Why did the partnership choose this/these target population(s)?
  - c. To what extent did your PHA partner or your organization weigh equity into this strategy and can you provide any examples?
  - d. How well were you ultimately able to connect these groups to EHV?

[If respondent asks what equity means, use this definition: Equity has the meaning given to that term in Section 2(a) of Executive Order 13985 and means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.]

5. [If in CoC survey question #7, the CoC indicated that 20 percent or more of their referrals were individuals "at risk of experiencing homelessness," ask the following question.] In your survey, your CoC indicated that at least 20 percent or more of referrals were individuals who were "at risk of homelessness."
  - a. How did your organization define "at risk of experiencing homelessness"?
  - b. Why did your organization prioritize this qualifying population?
  - c. How were such individuals referred to the PHA?

## Referrals and Eligibility

Next, we'd like to learn more about how people eligible for EHV were referred to the PHA.

## Referrals

6. [Interviewers should select the version of the question that is relevant based on survey responses]

[If survey indicates program used the CE system method for part or all referrals, see CoC survey question #8] How well did the CE system work for referrals to the EHV program?

- a. [If survey indicates using the CE system was new for PHA, see CoC survey question #3] What challenges did your organization encounter in getting the PHA familiar with the coordinated entry or CE system?
- b. What groups was your organization best able to reach through this referral method? Was a different referral process used for any specific populations who were not specifically targeted by the EHV program through the CoC's CE process?
- c. What populations, if any, do you believe the CE system missed or could have served better?
- d. How did considerations of racial equity affect which referral method your organization chose?

[If the survey indicates the program used some other referral method in place of/in addition to the CE system]

Why did your organization decide to use another referral method [instead of/in addition to] the CE system?

- a. What challenges, if any, were there in getting this system set up?
  - b. What groups were your organization aiming to target through this method and how successful were you in doing so?
  - c. To what extent was equity a consideration when thinking through your organization's referral method(s)?
7. How, if at all, did the households your organization referred to the PHA for the EHV program differ from households you referred previously?
8. What likely eligible individuals did your organization choose not to refer to the PHA for EHV, if any, and why?
- a. What support did your organization typically provide instead?
9. [For VSP or non-CoC partners] How well did the referral process work for targeting the population(s) you serve?
- a. What challenges, if any, did you experience working with your PHA partner with this referral method?

## Eligibility

10. [Review admin data on the percentage of referred households found eligible and customize as needed. For example, if a higher-than-average percentage of referred households were found ineligible, more time or probes could be spent on this.]
- What were the main reasons referred households were found ineligible for the EHV program?
- a. What feedback, if any, did your PHA partner provide on which types of households or how many households were found ineligible after being referred?
  - b. What support did your PHA partner provide to help ensure referrals were appropriate/eligible, and how helpful was this support?
  - c. What happened to households determined not eligible?

- d. How, if at all, did the percentage of household found ineligible change over time?
- e. [For VSP or non-CoC partners] Were more of your organization's referrals than expected found not eligible and why do you think this is?
- f. Describe any discussions or concerns about whether denials were equitable or impacted certain groups more than others.

## Implementation Across Referrals and Eligibility

- 11. What level of staffing and administrative support were necessary to maintain the partnership with the PHA?
  - a. How well was organization able to provide this?
- 12. What additional support besides additional funding (training, staff, TA, etc.), would have been helpful, and why?
- 13. What were the main challenges related to eligibility, targeting, or referring households to the EHV program and how did your organization or the PHA strive to address these challenges?

## Services

Next, we're interested in learning more about how CoCs/other partners supported households once they were accepted into the EHV program.

- 14. It appears that your organization provided [fill in with supports provided as listed in question #14].
  - a. Which of these provided CoC services or supports do you think were the most and least important or effective for EHV households, and why?
  - b. Describe any variation in their value by targeted group or eligible population and why this might have been.
  - c. How did provided services vary, if at all, from what your organization provides through other programs?
  - d. Which EHV services/supports would you like to have access to for other people experiencing homelessness referred to the PHA, if any?
- 15. Your organization indicated that it worked with [fill in with organization type(s) from question #15] to provide the services we just discussed.
  - a. Why did you pick those providers or provider types?
  - b. Are there any population groups/target groups that you think were especially well or poorly served by these providers, and if so, why?
- 16. What was most challenging and what worked well in supporting the housing search process and/or setting up the required supports/services?
  - a. Were any of these more apparent or different than housing search related challenges faced under other programs?
- 17. How, if at all, did your organization weigh in on how the PHA spent its services fees or other funding it received from HUD to support the EHV program?
  - a. What changes, if any, would you have recommended to how they spent these fees?

## Challenges and Strengths of EHV Program

Finally, we'd like to learn more about the challenges of implementing the EHV program, as well as the strengths of the EHV program compared to HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (also known as the Section 8 program).

18. Compared to other housing programs you work with, such as the CoC program (formerly Shelter Plus Care) or the HCV program, how well do you think the EHV Program connected households to rental assistance and ultimately permanent housing?
  - a. To what does your organization attribute any improvement in the number of lease-ups or speed of lease-ups? [Probe: housing search assistance, streamlined application process due to waivers, pre-inspected units, additional fees to recruit landlords/pay holding fees, higher rent payments, portability of vouchers, mandated collaboration with CoC, use of CE]
  - b. [For VSP or non-CoC partners] How well do you think the program supported positive outcomes for the populations you serve specifically?
    - i. How does this compare to positive outcomes associated with other housing programs your organization is familiar with?
19. What did you learn about collaborating with your PHA partner through the implementation of this program?
  - a. What steps or factors would you recommend to other CoCs/other types of partner organizations trying to collaborate with their PHA?
20. What additional actions could be taken, or what additional supports would be helpful, to better incorporate equity in the program?
21. From your perspective, what has been most successful about the implementation of the EHV program and/or your partnership with the PHA?
  - a. To what do you attribute this success?
22. Given all the ways that the EHV program differs from other housing programs, which related services or other factors do you feel were the most successful in connecting households with housing, or with expedited lease up, and why?
23. What recommendations would you make to improve the EHV program or coordination with your PHA partner?
24. What else would you like HUD to know or think about as they consider the success of this program?

Thank you so much for your time. Please feel free to get back in touch if anything additional occurs to you.