

INSTRUMENT 6: OTHER GRANT RECIPIENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The CCEE Supply Building research team will use this protocol to conduct interviews with individuals involved in designing/implementing/overseeing projects or strategies funded under the overall state strategy. Interviews may be conducted one-on-one or jointly.

This protocol is a guide, not a script. All respondents may not be asked all questions. Interviewers will tailor questions to the specific strategies and roles and responsibilities of the respondents. Interviewers will add probes to further explore the responses provided.

(Note: In the following section, the interviewer will not read words in parentheses)

(Introduction) Thank you for agreeing to speak with us today. My name is [NAME], and I'm joined by my colleague, [NAME]. We're from the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Washington, DC.

(Who is leading the research and funding it) The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (we will reference the Administration for Children and Families as ACF) contracted with the Urban Institute to lead a project called "Understanding Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts of the Child Care and Early Education Market."

(Purpose) As part of the larger project, we are conducting case studies of several states about supply-building or sustainability strategies we identified through a web scan or survey. The goal of the case studies is to document and share information about the strategies and to use the information to inform recommendations for future research of child care and early education supply-building and sustainability strategies.

(Requirements) Over the next hour, we will be asking you a series of questions designed to gather information regarding a strategy your state is implementing so we can learn more. You may not know the answer to every question, and that is fine. If there are any questions that you don't feel knowledgeable about or don't feel comfortable answering, just let us know and we will move on.

(Voluntary) This interview is voluntary. There will be no consequences if you decline or stop the interview. If you need to take a break at any time, please let us know.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response. This information collection is voluntary. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Urban Institute, 500 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20037.

(Consent to record) We'll take notes during our discussion, but if it's okay with you, we would also like to record this interview to help fill in our notes. If you would like me to stop recording at any time during the interview, please let me know. We will delete the recording once our analysis is complete.

(What we will do with the data) We will share the information that we gather during the interview with our federal project officers at the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, which is the research arm of the Administration for Children and Families (we will reference the Administration for Children and Families as ACF going forward), as well as staff at the federal Office of Child Care within ACF. Following the case studies, we will prepare and share with ACF written memos describing each strategy and our findings from interviews and focus groups. We may also use the information to develop a public report or brief that summarizes what we learned across all the states that participate in case studies.

(Privacy) Importantly, we will identify your state in our memorandum to ACF. We will not identify you by name. If we quote you in our memorandum or describe something you shared, we will never use your name or attribute the quote in any way that someone could identify you. If we produce a report or brief that is available to the public, we will keep your identity and the identity of all individuals we interview private. In addition, we will name the states that participated in the public report or brief to provide context but none of the information presented will be attributed to a particular state. Rather, we will describe themes across the states and strategies that participate in the case studies.

(Risks and benefits) There are no anticipated personal risks or benefits to participating in this research. After completing this interview, you will receive a \$50 e-gift card as a thank-you. We'll share more about that at the end.

(OMB statement) An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-0356, Exp: 01/31/2027.

(Virtual interview/Zoom statement) We ask that you participate in a private setting away from earshot or viewing by unauthorized persons which includes family members, and we want you to understand that given the technical limitations of Zoom and similar internet platforms, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of what might be said.

- Do you have any questions?
- Do we have your consent to proceed with our interview?
- Do we have your permission to record?

(If the interviewee says yes) Thank you. If you are ready, I will start recording now.

(If the interviewee says no, research assistant will be prepared to take close-to-verbatim notes.)

Today we will be discussing [STRATEGY], which is [brief description of strategy that uses language tailored to the participant and might be based on the language that we heard CCDF Administrators/Strategy Leads tend to use when doing outreach]. Are there any questions you would like to ask about what we mean by [STRATEGY], or is there another way you tend to think about this program?

[If STRATEGY involves providing support/funding to implement or design projects at the local level] As part of [STRATEGY], we know you might also have experience with [implementing/designing/participating in] [project/name of project] in your communities. We also want to learn about your experiences with these projects. We will refer to [STRATEGY] as the statewide effort and [project/name of project] as what you are doing in your local community(ies).

Before we begin, let me provide you with a brief 'roadmap' of what we'll cover today. We'll start with questions [STRATEGY AND PROJECT] and your experience planning [PROJECT]. Next, we will discuss [STRATEGY AND PROJECT] implementation and ongoing planning, and successes and challenges in the implementation process. We will wrap up with any additional thoughts on lessons learned. Sound good?

Background

1. First, please tell me a little about yourself:
 - a. [If local implementers/grant recipients/intermediaries] Please describe your role as it relates to [STRATEGY] and how long you've been in this role, the name of your organization (if relevant), and anything else you think might be helpful.
 - b. [If member of a community engagement group] Please describe your role on [community engagement group specific to strategy], including how long you have [participated/served], if you represent a broader community in your role, and anything else you think might be helpful.
2. Next, please tell me how you first learned about [STRATEGY] and when you first [applied and received grant/got involved in the community engagement group/got involved in implementing STRATEGY]. Your best guess on the timing is fine.
3. Are you still [receiving funds or other supports/and so on from STRATEGY/participating in the community engagement group/involved with STRATEGY implementation]? If not, when did [it/your participation] end?

Description and Planning

Next, I would like to learn about your experiences with [STRATEGY].

4. From your perspective, what are the goals of [STRATEGY]? How is it supposed to help child care providers, families, children, or others in the community who might benefit?
5. What motivated [you/your organization/your community] to [apply/get involved]?
6. Now tell me more about the [project] [you/your organization/your community] is/was [designing/delivering/overseeing].
 - a. [If STRATEGY includes a grant] How did you use funds from [STRATEGY]?
 - b. What does [project] implementation involve?

- c. What is [project] intended to do?
 - d. Who is eligible to [receive/participate in/apply for project]?
 - e. Where is [project] implemented?
7. [If STRATEGY includes a grant] How are/were funds disbursed? Was this a one-time award or do/did you receive ongoing payments? What has the way funds are/were disbursed meant for your [project/organization/community]?

The next set of questions are about the project you developed/implemented as part of the overall strategy.

8. Where did the idea for [project] come from?
(Probe on whether it was used somewhere else and adapted or was newly developed.)
9. What information did you use to inform the design/adaptation of the [project]?
(Probe on whether they used program administrative data, surveys or interviews with child care providers, listening sessions or focus groups with families, interviews with key partners and other interested groups, and so on.).
10. What key organizations, partners, or groups were involved in designing/adapting the [project] and what are their roles?
(Probe on whether parents, providers, or other community members involved. If so, probe on how they were involved and why the decision was made to have them involved.).
- a. Do you have a role in coordinating with them? If so, what is your role? What does coordination of these people or groups involve? What is the purpose?
11. Is this [project] part of a broader effort in your community to build or sustain child care and early education supply?
- a. If so, what other efforts are underway?

Implementation and Ongoing Planning

Now I would like to learn more about who delivers and receives/participates in [project/strategy] and how [project] has changed over time.

12. What key organizations, partners, or groups have been involved in implementing the [strategy/project] and what are their roles?
- a. Do you have a role in coordinating with them? If so, what is your role? What does coordination of these people or groups involve? What is the purpose?
13. Which types of organizations, providers, families are receiving/participating in [project]? How does that compare to who you intended to reach?
14. How has [project] changed from [YEAR], when it was initially developed/funded, to [March 2025 or last year of funding if no longer active]?
- (Probe on whether the key activities have changed, the focus population, the selection criteria, funding levels, and so on).*
- a. Why did you make the changes? What information did you use to inform the changes?
(Probe on pandemic influence, reaction to early implementation or outcome data, reaction to parent/provider/community feedback, changes in funding source, etc.).

(Probe on whether they used program administrative data, surveys or interviews with child care providers, listening sessions or focus groups with families, interviews with key partners and other interested groups, and so on).

- b. Were groups (other your agency/organization) involved in the decisions to make these changes? If so, which groups were involved? What were their roles?

(Probe on whether parents, providers, or other community members involved).

- 15. Have you had to submit reports or data about [project] to [CCDF LEAD AGENCY] or any other organizations (such as an intermediary or a research organization)?

- a. If so, what kind of information do you have to report? How frequently? How easy is it for you to prepare and submit reports or data? Have you experienced any issues with this process?

- 16. Aside from this interview, has [CCDF LEAD AGENCY] or any other organizations (such as an intermediary or a research organization) asked for your feedback about [STRATEGY]?

- a. If so, how did they ask for your feedback (for example, in a survey, interview, focus group or listening session)?

Implementation Successes and Challenges

My last set of questions are about what has been going well and what challenges you have faced.

- 17. What has been most successful?

- a. From your perspective, has [STRATEGY] supported efforts to expand and sustain access to quality child care and early education? If so, how has it benefited providers, families, and children?

(Probe on whether the grant has helped increase slots, expand or improve facility/home, support staff with increased compensation or benefits or professional development, increased staff retention, improved quality of the environment, and so on).

- b. From your perspective, has [project] supported efforts to expand and sustain access to quality child care and early education? If so, how has it benefited providers, families, and children?
- c. Have you collected feedback (e.g., through surveys, interviews, listening sessions) from [providers/grant recipients] about what has been successful about [project]? If so, what have you learned?

- 18. What issues or challenges have you faced?

(Probe on any challenges related to timing, application process, reporting requirements or other data collection, and so on).

- a. What challenges have you faced related to [STRATEGY]?
- b. What challenges have you faced related to [project]?
- c. [If member of a community engagement group] Did you/have you faced any barriers to involvement? If so, what were they? Were efforts taken to alleviate these barriers?

- d. Have you collected feedback (e.g., through surveys, interviews, listening sessions) from [providers/grant recipients] about what has been challenging about [project]? If so, have you learned? How did you work to address this, or how did you communicate these challenges to the state?
- 19. [If STRATEGY has ended]: Has the end of [STRATEGY] affected your [project]? If so, how? Has it affected children and families and their access to high quality child care and early education? If so, how?
- 20. What advice would you give another state agency or community organization interested in implementing [project]?
- 21. What advice would you give another organization interested in [applying for/participating in/accessing STRATEGY]? Would you recommend it? Why or why not?

Wrap Up

Thank you! Those were all my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences that we didn't discuss?

As a thank-you for participating, we will send a Visa e-gift card to the email address you provided when you signed up to participate in this study. Please check your email inboxes and junk folders for a message with the e-gift card. You can use this gift card for any online purchases. You should receive it within the next two weeks. If you don't receive it or have any questions, please contact us at [email address]. I will put this email address in the Chat box for you.

Thank you again!