

# **Case Studies of Child Care and Early Education Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts**

**Formative Data Collections for ACF Research**

**0970 – 0356**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part A**

**February 2025**

Submitted By:  
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**Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for  
Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

## **Part A**

### **Executive Summary**

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for a generic information collection under the umbrella generic, Formative Data Collections for ACF Research (0970-0356).
- **Description of Request:** This is a new information collection request to conduct virtual interviews with Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) administrators and other key staff from the Lead Agency and partner organizations, as well as focus groups with child care and early education (CCEE) providers. The interviews and focus groups are designed to build the knowledge base on strategies states, territories, and tribes use to build and sustain the supply of CCEE by supplementing the qualitative data findings collected through a web scan and survey with CCDF Lead Agencies (OMB #0970-0356; Survey of Child Care and Early Education Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts; approved 2/1/2023) about their efforts. The primary use of the information from this generic clearance is to inform future research on strategies to build or sustain the supply of CCEE. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
- **Time Sensitivity:** The information collected will be used to inform future evaluation design options in a currently active project that ends in September 2026. To stay on track with our project timeline, our goal is to begin this information collection no later than March 2025.

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### **A1. Necessity for Collection**

States, territories, and tribes are developing and implementing various strategies to build and sustain the supply of child care and early education (CCEE) programs. To learn more about ongoing CCEE supply-building and sustainability efforts, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) has funded the CCEE Supply-Building project. As part of this project, the study team conducted a web scan of publicly available information and a review of policy documents on these initiatives that uncovered 672 initiatives across states and territories and conducted a related survey that received responses from 32 Lead Agencies about 50 strategies (OMB #0970-0356; Survey of Child Care and Early Education Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts; approved 2/1/2023). In the next phase of the project, the research team will select supply-building and sustainability strategies from up to 12 states, territories, or tribes to be the focus of in-depth case studies. This information collection will allow the team to collect in-depth information about 12 strategies through interviews and focus groups conducted as part of case studies. The team will use information from the case studies to make recommendations to ACF about strategies that are ready for future evaluation, and possibly to recommend evaluation designs for future research of the strategies. OPRE has contracted with the Urban Institute to complete this work.

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate this collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

### **A2. Purpose**

#### *Purpose and Use*

The interviews and focus groups proposed in this information collection request are an integral part of the CCEE Supply-Building project. The research team will recruit up to 12 CCDF Lead Agencies to participate in in-depth case studies. Case study data collection will include individual or small group interviews with CCDF Lead Agency staff and other key staff involved in the implementation of the strategies, as well as focus groups with child care providers to learn about their experiences with the strategies.

As such, information collected through this request will be used to inform the development of ACF research. Specifically, the case studies will provide ACF with an in-depth understanding of a set of CCEE supply-building and sustainability efforts that states, territories, and tribes have been undertaking. The research team will use information from the case studies to make recommendations to ACF about strategies that are ready for future evaluation, and possibly to recommend evaluation designs for future research on the strategies.

Findings are also meant to inform ACF's activities more broadly and may be incorporated into study reports or presentations that are shared internally within ACF's offices or made public without attributing findings to any specific state, territory, or tribe.

This proposed information collection meets the following goals of ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections for research and evaluation (0970-0356):

- inform the development of ACF research
- maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant

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- ensure that research products are as current as possible

The information collected is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge on ACF programs. It is not intended to be used as the principal basis for a decision by a federal decision-maker and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

### *Guiding Questions*

This is a qualitative and descriptive study. The guiding research questions are:

1. What are/were the goals, components, activities, and outcomes of the strategy? How does the strategy fit within the overall context of efforts by the state to build and sustain CCEE supply? Is it a standalone effort or is it one component of a multi-component strategy?
2. How does/did the strategy build and/or sustain the supply of CCEE for specific populations of children (e.g., underserved populations and areas as identified in the 2016 CCDF Final Rule and 2024 CCDF Final Rule)?
3. What level of effort and resources are/were needed to implement the strategy? Was the strategy funded using COVID-relief funds? If so, is the strategy still active and what resources were used after COVID-relief funds were no longer available?
4. How was the strategy selected initially and what decision-making processes are/were involved in ongoing decision-making about the strategy (i.e., about changes to the strategy over time, whether and how to fund the strategy after COVID-relief funds expired, etc.)? Who was/which groups were engaged in initial and ongoing decision-making about the strategy? What data sources were used to inform initial and ongoing decisions? How were priority populations figured into these decision-making processes?
5. What data are available to track implementation? What data are available to track increases in or maintenance of the CCEE supply (or quality of supply)? How has the state used available data to inform ongoing decision-making and continuous quality improvement? How has the state used the available data to assess outcomes? What data are needed?
6. What successes and challenges have states experienced designing and implementing the strategies? How have they addressed challenges? What have been the experiences, including successes and challenges, of those affected by or on the receiving end of the strategies?
7. Is the strategy ready to be rigorously evaluated? What evaluation design is appropriate given the current level of evidence, status of implementation, and data available?

### *Study Design*

For this information collection request, the research team will conduct case studies that include virtual semi-structured qualitative interviews and focus groups (Instruments 2-6) to gather in-depth information about up to 12 strategies designed and implemented by CCDF Lead Agencies to build and sustain the supply of CCEE providers. They will recruit CCDF Lead Agencies through email outreach (Appendices A-F) and a telephone or video call with the CCDF Administrator or someone they designate (Instrument 1).

The research team selected a case study design because the qualitative methods will allow them to capture rich, in-depth information on the supply-building and sustainability strategy used by the

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selected sites. During data collection, they will conduct semi-structured interviews with people who developed and/or implemented the strategy. They will also hold focus groups with child care providers who participated in or experienced the strategy.

Given the variability in strategies, it is possible that the selected sites may not use strategies that are applicable to all other states, territories, and tribes. Accordingly, the findings might not fully address the information needs of all CCDF Lead Agencies and program staff working on CCEE supply-building and sustainability efforts. The study is not designed to be representative of or generalizable to a given subpopulation. This limitation will be acknowledged when sharing findings from the study. More details about the rationale of the research team's study design are available in Section B1 of Part B under Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses.

### Exhibit A1. Study Design Overview

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Instrument 1. CCDF Lead Agency Staff Recruitment Call Protocol	<b>Respondents:</b> CCDF Administrator or another Lead Agency staff member designated by the Administrator <b>Content:</b> Overview of the goals and activities involved in being a case study site, assess site's interest in participation, discuss next steps to plan for the visit (if the site agrees to participate) <b>Purpose:</b> Recruit sites to participate in the case studies	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual interview (i.e., phone, video) <b>Duration:</b> 30 minutes
Instrument 2. CCDF Lead Agency Staff Interview Protocol	<b>Respondents:</b> CCDF Lead Agency staff, which may include the CCDF Administrator and other staff involved in planning for and/or with oversight of the strategy <b>Content:</b> Background on strategy, strategy development, implementation details, resources required to implement strategy, data availability and use, implementation successes and challenges, lessons learned, recommendations for future research <b>Purpose:</b> Understand the site's strategy, the initial and ongoing planning and decision-making related to the strategy, implementation, and lessons learned	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual interview (i.e., phone, video) <b>Duration:</b> 90 minutes
Instrument 3. Strategy Implementation Lead Interview Protocol	<b>Respondents:</b> CCDF Lead Agency staff or staff from partner organizations who lead implementation of the strategy <b>Content:</b> Strategy implementation details, resources required to implement strategy, data availability and use, implementation successes and challenges, lessons learned <b>Purpose:</b> Understand the implementation of selected strategies, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual interview (i.e., phone, video) <b>Duration:</b> 90 minutes
Instrument 4. Data and Evaluation Staff Interview Protocol	<b>Respondents:</b> Staff who lead data collection and/or evaluation activities for the strategy <b>Content:</b> Data collection processes, data elements, data storage and accessibility, data use, findings and lessons learned, recommendations for future research <b>Purpose:</b> Understand the availability of data on the selected strategies, how data are used, and findings from the data	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual interview (i.e., phone, video) <b>Duration:</b> 60 minutes
Instrument 5. Child Care Provider Focus Group Guide	<b>Respondents:</b> Child care providers (center directors and/or family child care providers) who received or participated in the strategy <b>Content:</b> Experiences accessing and participating in strategy,	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual focus group (i.e., phone, video) <b>Duration:</b> 75 minutes

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	aspects of the strategy that work well and recommendations for improvement <b>Purpose:</b> Understand the experiences of child care providers who participated in or experienced the selected strategy including successes and challenges	
Instrument 6. Other Recipient Interview Protocol	<b>Respondents:</b> Individuals other than child care providers who are recipients of the strategy; these individuals may include staff from community-based or intermediary agencies who are leading local projects supported by the site's strategy or community engagement group members who helped plan and/or oversee implementation of the local projects <b>Content:</b> Experiences accessing and participating in strategy, strategy development and implementation details, aspects of the strategy that work well and recommendations for improvement <b>Purpose:</b> Understand the experiences of strategy recipients other than child care providers who participated in or experienced the selected strategy including successes and challenges	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual interview (i.e., phone, video) <b>Duration:</b> 60 minutes

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

Information from the interviews and focus groups will be used in conjunction with other information previously gathered through this project (a web scan and survey of CCDF Lead Agencies). These sources of information (web scan, survey, and interviews and focus groups) will be used to produce summaries of up to 12 strategies designed to build or sustain the supply of CCEE.

The survey of CCDF Lead Agencies received approval under #0970-0356 (Title: Survey of Child Care and Early Education Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts; approved 2/1/2023). As appropriate, future information collection requests may be submitted related to the evaluation design plans.

**A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

The data collection plan is designed to efficiently obtain information and minimize respondent burden. The research team will gather data via virtual meeting platforms to reduce the need for respondents to travel and report to an interview session in person. With respondents' permission, the research team will audio record the interviews and focus groups to support note cleaning and analysis. Having the audio recording minimizes the need to follow up with respondents to clarify notes and reduces potential additional burden placed on respondents.

**A4. Use of Existing Data: Efforts to reduce duplication, minimize burden, and increase utility and government efficiency**

The research team's environmental scan task (web scan and survey) revealed no other current or planned efforts to collect systematic, detailed information about CCDF Lead Agencies' supply-building or sustainability efforts. The team will draw upon information collected in the environmental scan (the web scan and survey) and a web search of the strategies conducted by the research team in spring 2024 to pre-populate responses to interview questions included in Instrument 2. CCDF Lead Agency Staff

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Interview Protocol and Instrument 3. Strategy Implementation Lead Interview Protocol. When the research team member leading the interview has information available for any given question, they will ask the respondent to confirm the information, rather than asking them to repeat information they may have already provided.

### **A5. Impact on Small Businesses**

Interview respondents representing organizations that partner with CCDF Lead Agencies to implement the supply-building and sustaining strategies may be small businesses. In addition, child care providers who participate in focus groups may own or work for small businesses. To minimize burden on these individuals, the research team will schedule interviews and focus groups at times convenient for them. The team will use virtual meeting platforms to reduce the need for respondents to travel and report to an interview session in person.

### **A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection**

This is a one-time data collection.

### **A7. Now subsumed under 2(b) above and 10 (below)**

### **A8. Consultation**

#### *Federal Register Notice and Comments*

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published two notices in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of the overarching generic clearance for formative information collection. This first notice was published on August 11, 2023 (88 FR 54614) and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. The second notice published on December 14, 2023 (88 FR 86656) and provided a thirty-day period for public comment. ACF did not receive any substantive comments.

#### *Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study*

The research team did not consult with experts outside of the research team for this phase of the CCEE Supply-Building project.

### **A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

While the qualitative data from focus groups with child care providers and from interviews with other strategy recipients are not intended to be statistically generalizable to the full population, the study's findings will be most relevant for policy and practice if the project team is able to secure participation from a wide range of participants, including those with financial challenges or other barriers to participation. As such, the research team plans to provide child care providers who participate in the focus groups, which are estimated to take 75 minutes, a \$50 token of appreciation in the form of an e-

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gift card. The team will offer a \$50 e-gift card to other strategy recipients (who may include staff from community-based or intermediary agencies who are leading local projects supported by the site's strategy or community engagement group members who helped plan and/or oversee implementation of the local projects). The tokens of appreciation are intended to offset costs of participation in the study (i.e., cell phone or Internet usage) and to help ensure that individuals with more constraints on their ability to participate may take part.

### **A10. Privacy: Procedures to protect privacy of information, while maximizing data sharing**

#### *Personally Identifiable Information*

Personally identifiable information (PII), such as respondents' names, email addresses, phone numbers, and places of employment, will be collected for the purpose of recruiting participants, and for relevant respondents (i.e., child care providers and other strategy recipients), for sending electronic gift cards (e-gift cards). PII will be stored in a secure electronic file separate from data files and accessible only to research staff recruiting for interviews and focus groups and managing e-gift card distribution. Each participant will be assigned a unique study identification number that will be used to label their responses in data files (i.e., interview and focus group transcripts). PII will be excluded from data files used for analysis since the PII is not needed for analysis.

#### *Assurances of Privacy*

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their responses will be shared internally with ACF. The research team will include the name of each state in the summary they produce from each site's case study, such that findings can be connected to a state (with the exception of respondent's work position, as described above). Although respondents' individual identities (i.e., names) will not be disclosed, ACF does know the identities of the Administrator of each CCDF Lead Agency. Further, since the participating Agencies will be identified, ACF will be able to deduce the identity of some interview participants. The team believes such risks to be minimal because the subject matter of the case studies does not represent a funding requirement. Respondents will be informed of the potential for Agency identification.

PII that the research team uses to recruit participants (e.g., contact information for CCDF Administrators obtained from the federal Office of Child Care, contact information for interview and focus group participants shared by points of contact in each state) will be stored separately from the interview and focus group transcripts. The research team will retain PII electronically in a secure shared folder accessible only to approved research team members during the data collection period. The team will destroy PII used for study recruitment and data collection at the end of the contract, per the study's IRB agreement.

As specified in the contract, the research team will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. Information that may be considered personally sensitive will be handled carefully and either will not be reported to ACF or will be reported with caution to avoid any reputational harm. For example, potentially sensitive information will not be connected to PII, such as CCDF Administrators' names and contact information used for recruitment. No public-facing documents will report findings identifiable at the respondent level. The research team will name the states that participated in the public report or brief to provide context but none of the information presented will



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be attributed to a particular state. Rather, the team will describe themes across the states and strategies included in the case studies.

### *Data Security and Monitoring*

The research team has developed a data security and monitoring plan. They will ensure that all its employees and consultants who perform work under this contract are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the requirements. All project staff sign the contractor's staff confidentiality pledge agreeing to follow the Urban Institute's guidelines for data security.

As specified in the contract, the research team will use Federal Information Processing Standard (currently, FIPS 140-2) compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of sensitive information during storage and transmission. The team will securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information, in accordance with the Federal Processing Standard. The team will (1) ensure that this standard is incorporated into the company's property management and control system; and (2) establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process sensitive information. Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with the most current National Institute of Standards and Technology requirements and other applicable federal and departmental regulations. In addition, the research team's data security plan describes procedures for minimizing to the extent possible the inclusion of sensitive information on paper records and for protecting any paper records, field notes, or other documents that contain sensitive or personally identifiable information to ensure secure storage and limits on access.

### **A11. Sensitive Information<sup>1</sup>**

The research team does not anticipate collection of any sensitive information. However, in response to some questions, participants could reveal personal challenges and concerns. Possible risks to providing sensitive information could include a risk to professional reputation or employment should they indicate anything that could be interpreted as critical of their organization and such information is shared beyond the research team. Specifically, reputational harm could result if certain details (such as poor performance of contractors or difficulties with local partners) were shared and attributed to them. However, this is highly unlikely. Although any information shared with the research team could be shared with ACF, sensitive information will not be published in any public documents or shared widely beyond the contractor's research team. Consent language will inform participants that they may skip any question they do not want to answer and for focus groups, the consent language will ask participants not to share what they hear with anyone outside the group.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of sensitive topics include (but not limited to): social security number; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close relationships, e.g., family, pupil-teacher, employee-supervisor; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to respondents; religion and indicators of religion; community activities which indicate political affiliation and attitudes; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers; records describing how an individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment; receipt of economic assistance from the government (e.g., unemployment or WIC or SNAP); immigration/citizenship status.

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No data file containing respondent responses will include any PII. All interview/focus group protocols have been approved by the Urban Institute Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix J).

### A12. Burden

#### *Explanation of Burden Estimates*

Exhibit A2 summarizes the estimated reporting burden and costs for this information collection request. The estimates include time for respondents to participate in interviews and focus groups and are broken down by instrument. In each of the up to 12 case study sites, the research team will collect data from CCDF Administrators, staff from the CCDF Lead Agency and partner organizations who oversee strategy implementation, staff from the CCDF Lead Agency and partner organizations (e.g., university or research organization) involved in data and evaluation efforts, child care center directors and family child care providers, and other strategy recipients who may include staff from community-based or intermediary agencies who are leading local projects supported by the site's strategy or community engagement group members who helped plan and/or oversee implementation of the local projects.

More information about the estimated number of each type of respondent is provided in Supporting Statement B, section B.2. The estimated time per response is based on the research team's experience with similar data collections. Estimates of burden are calculated for each instrument by multiplying the maximum number of expected respondents by the estimated average burden per response (i.e., the amount of time to participate in the interview or focus group).

#### *Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

The research team based average hourly wage estimates on May 2023 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. The following mean hourly wages are used in the team's estimates:

- \$48.19 for administrative services managers in state government (occupational code 11-3012) is used for CCDF administrators and other Lead Agency staff, including strategy implementation lead staff. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes113012.htm>
- \$49.14 for social scientists and related workers (occupational code 19-3099) is used as a proxy for data and evaluation staff. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes193099.htm>
- \$28.44 for education and child care administrators in child care services (occupational code 11-9031), including child care center directors and family child care providers. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119031.htm>
- \$40.10 for social and community services managers (occupational code 11-9151) is used as a proxy for staff other than child care providers who receive or implement strategies, such as a child care resource and referral agency director. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119151.htm>

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**Exhibit A2. Estimated Respondent Burden**

Instrument	No. of Respondents (total over request period)	No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period)	Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)	Total/ Annual Burden (in hours)	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
Instrument 1. CCDF Lead Agency Staff Recruitment Call Protocol	32	1	.5	16	\$48.19	\$771.04
Instrument 1. CCDF Lead Agency Staff Interview Protocol	36	1	1.50	54	\$48.19	\$2,602.26
Instrument 2. Strategy Implementation Lead Interview Protocol	36	1	1.50	54	\$48.19	\$2,602.26
Instrument 3. Data and Evaluation Staff Interview Protocol	36	1	1.0	36	\$49.14	\$1,769.04
Instrument 4. Child Care Provider Focus Group Guide	80	1	1.25	100	\$28.44	\$2,844.00
Instrument 5. Other Recipient Interview Protocol	6	1	1.0	6	\$40.10	\$240.60
Totals:	202			266		\$10,829.20

**A13. Costs**

There are no additional costs to respondents.

**A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government**

The cost of the data collection under this request totals \$343,179. This includes direct and indirect costs for recruiting participants, conducting interviews and focus groups, developing transcripts and analyzing the data, writing internal memos to ACF summarizing findings from each site's case study, outlining and writing an internal-facing report, and briefing ACF on case study findings.

Cost Category	Estimated Costs
Recruitment and Data Collection	\$124,154
Analysis and Final Report	\$219,025
<b>Total/annual costs over the request period</b>	<b>\$343,179</b>

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**A15. Reasons for changes in burden**

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for ACF research (0970-0356).

**A16. Timeline**

Exhibit A3 shows the timeline for the study.

**Exhibit A3. Study Timeline**

Tasks	Date
Recruitment begins	Within one week of OMB approval
Case study data collection	1–24 weeks after OMB approval
Data analysis	6–28 weeks after OMB approval
Memo of findings	2 weeks after data analysis ends; 30 weeks after OMB approval

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

**Attachments**

Instrument 1. CCDF Lead Agency Staff Recruitment Call Protocol  
Instrument 2. CCDF Lead Agency Staff Interview Protocol  
Instrument 3. Strategy Implementation Lead Interview Protocol  
Instrument 4. Data and Evaluation Staff Interview Protocol  
Instrument 5. Child Care Provider Focus Group Guide  
Instrument 6. Other Recipient Interview Protocol

Appendix A. Recruitment Emails to CCDF Lead Agencies and Follow-up Recruitment Phone Scripts  
Appendix B. Project Overview of Data Collection Outreach  
Appendix C. Email to Point of Contact to Schedule Planning Call and Guide for Planning Call  
Appendix D. Overview of Data Collection Activities  
Appendix E. Recruitment Emails to Interview Participants  
Appendix F. Outreach Email to Intermediary or Local Service Organizations to Help Recruit Focus Group Participants  
Appendix G. Focus Group Recruitment Flyer  
Appendix H. Focus Group Contact Form  
Appendix I. Thank You Emails to Interview and Focus Group Participants  
Appendix J. Urban Institute IRB Approval