

Attachment 5 (Supplement): Introductory Script for Discussions

Introductory Script for Discussions
National Evaluation of SAMHSA's PATH Program

Do not read the words in italics aloud throughout the document; they are there to provide context or instructions.

The key informants for this session are... [list the roles/ positions of participants]

Introductory Script:

Welcome and thank you for participating in the PATH Program site visit. We appreciate your taking the time out of your busy day to meet with us.

My name is _____ and I will be conducting the interview/discussion. I am a [position title] at SAMHSA's Office of Evaluation. _[Name], who also works at the Office of Evaluation as a [position title], is assisting with the interview by taking notes and helping with the forms.

First, could you all sign in? *[For in person]* We have a sign-in sheet that is being passed around *[or for virtual meetings]* Please type in your first and last name into the chat box to sign in.

Pass around the sign-in sheet or, if it is a virtual meeting, request that all participants type in their first and last name into the chat box to "sign in."

The legislation that established PATH required that PATH be evaluated every 3 years. That's why I may occasionally refer to this as the 'Triennial' evaluation.

- The objectives of the evaluation are to ensure that the services provided were appropriate and well-administered by the grantees; and to allow an opportunity to recommend changes to the program design or operations.
- The information for the evaluation comes from the PATH annual reports, a web survey of State PATH Contacts, or **SPCs**, and in-person discussions and interviews with the grantees, providers, clients, and stakeholders.
- The final evaluation will be published as a report and be available on the SAMHSA website. Earlier this year, we released the 2023 triennial evaluation, which is available on the SAMHSA website. The interviews that we're doing now are for the 2026 evaluation.

For consumers and community stakeholders (who do not receive PATH funding): Before we start, we will give you a consent form, which is to give you information to decide whether you want to participate in this discussion.

Pass out the consent form to consumers and community stakeholders. Provide time for each respondent to read informed consent, complete, and ask question; for consumer focus group, read through the consent form.

All your comments will be reported in aggregate form and your names will not be associated with your comments. You can refuse to answer any of my questions for any reason. Your honest feedback is important to the success of the PATH program and to those it serves.

The discussion will take approximately 2 hours, but we can take a break during that time if you'd like.

I want to point out a couple of things before we begin.

- Throughout this interview, when I refer to the “PATH program” or “your program” I am specifically talking about the PATH program which is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- When I refer to “Consumers” or “Clients,” I am specifically referring to the individuals served by the PATH program.

To ensure that the interview/discussion goes smoothly, please observe these guidelines:

- Give everyone a chance to contribute, we want to hear from everyone
- Please speak one at a time, we might miss an important comment if we are all speaking one at a time.
- Treat everyone's ideas with respect—don't criticize.
- Minimize side conversations and, as much as possible, this includes electronic devices – please keep your cell phone away or on vibrate.
- Keep focused on the topic or question.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Overview of Themes

We have organized our questions around themes to address the evaluation's primary questions. The purpose of these themes is to provide qualitative information to give context to help us understand the quantitative information (data) that we obtain from the PDX reports and the web survey. It also gives us an opportunity to hear directly from you and others that participate in PATH. The other main reason is to gather information that can be used to improve the PATH program. Not everyone is asked the same questions; it depends on your roles. The themes include:

- A. The biggest challenges faced by the homeless population in general.
- B. The way the PATH program was implemented in your state, taking into account the local context.

- C. The biggest barriers/challenges faced by your program and successful approaches used to overcome them.
- D. Your program's use of the PATH data.
- E. Feedback from grantee and provider staff about the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) system and the proposed transition to mandatory use of the HMIS csv file to upload annual data. For PDX: how it is used and how it could be more user-friendly.
- F. The clients/consumers understanding of the services offered by PATH, what they think about the program, and their feedback on how it could meet their needs better.
- G. Topics that weren't covered but that interviews think should have been included. We would like to know, if you could tell Congress one thing about PATH in their community, what it would be.

Introductions, roles and history with the PATH program

Instructions: The purpose of these questions is to provide a picture of the individuals who are participating, their relationship to the PATH program and their experience/history with the program

- a. Introductions, title, and number of years with the PATH program

This is followed by the questions for the specific discussion group.