INSTRUMENT 5 –INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPATING FAMILIES CURRENTLY SEARCHING FOR HOUSING
Evaluation of the Community Choice Demonstration

This guide is for treatment and control group families searching for housing with a voucher.

Note for interviewer: The section transitions are important for clarifying nuanced differences between sections and reducing repetitiveness felt during pretests.

[AFTER CONSENT PROCESS IN ATTACHMENT H]

The tape recorder is now on.

OK, let's start.

WARM-UP/BACKGROUND [ALL RESPONDENTS]

First, I'd like to learn a bit about you, your family, and the reasons you are interested in moving.

1. Please tell me about the number of people who live with you.

    a. How many children live here with you? What are their ages and what grade are they in?

    [*Note that any names mentioned will be removed/redacted*.]

2. Tell me about your current living situation, while you are searching for new housing.

    [*Existing voucher families*] Probes: Single-family house or apartment?
    [*New admission families*] Probes: Living in own home, staying with family or friends, staying in a shelter, or something else?

    a. How long have you lived in this apartment/home/shelter?

3. What is the name of your neighborhood? Can you tell me the zip code?

    a. About how long have you lived in this neighborhood?

    b. [*If living with family or friend*] Can you stay there as long as you like?

4. *[New admission families]* Do you want to find a new place to live, or do you plan to use your voucher to lease where you live now?

    a. *[If new admission family wants to lease in place]* Why? *[Then skip to question 6]*

5. Why are you thinking about moving?

    Probes: Safety, access to various resources, children's wellbeing, school options, ready for a change, problems with prior housing or landlord, in unsuitable housing situation, poor quality of housing unit

GENERAL SEARCH QUESTIONS

The next questions focus on your housing search experiences.

6. Tell me about your current housing search.

    a. How is the search going? What has been going well?
    b. What has been challenging?

7. When deciding where to live, what is most important to you?

    Probes: The home itself, the specific neighborhood, safety, the schools, close to family/friends, other factors?

8. What are the main platforms or sources you are using to search for housing?

    Probes: Using the PHA's list or GoSection 8, searching other online websites for housing listings, asking family or friends, driving around neighborhoods?

    a. [*Treatment group only*] Housing identified by [MOBILITY PROGRAM]?

9. What kind of house or apartment are you looking for?

    a. How many bedrooms?
    b. What kind of home (apartment or house)?
    c. Are you looking for any specific features (e.g., pet-friendly, yard, washer/dryer in unit, parking, first floor, AC, etc.)?
    d. Rent amount or range?

10. Roughly how many apartments/houses have you seriously thought about applying for so far during your search?

    a. What neighborhoods were they in?
    b. Have you submitted any rental applications so far? [*If yes*]
        i. What neighborhoods were they in?
        ii. Were any of these units from a list of apartments/homes that the [PHA] identified for you? [*If yes*] How many did the program identify?
        iii. What happened after you applied? Was your application accepted/denied?
        iv. Did you want to move to any of these apartments/homes but could not for some reason? [*If yes*] What was the main reason you couldn't move to the home you wanted?

        Probes: Landlord did not accept application; other issues with landlord (didn't return phone call/hung up/didn't provide application/etc.); issue with the PHA's lease up process (paperwork, rent amount, inspection); past eviction, foreclosure, or credit problems; location concerns (safety, transportation options, location relative to employment, schools, etc.); landlord interactions; discriminatory actions based on race, ethnicity, family status, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or source of income, etc.; told unit was no longer available?

    c. Have there been other apartments or houses that you considered applying for but didn't?

i. [*If yes]* Why did you choose not to apply?

Probes: Location concerns (safety, transportation options, location relative to employment, schools, etc.); landlord interactions; discriminatory actions based on race, ethnicity, family status, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or source of income, etc.?

NEIGHBORHOOD PREFERENCE QUESTIONS

These next questions focus on your neighborhood-related preferences and experiences in your housing search.

11. [*Existing voucher families*] Did you already have an idea about the area or neighborhood where you want/wanted to live before you asked to move with your voucher?

    [*New voucher families*] Did you already have an idea about the area or neighborhood where you want/wanted to live before you received your voucher?

    a. [*If yes*] Can you tell me more about that? Where did you want to move? Why?

    b. Has that changed at all since you started your search? [*If yes*] How so?

12. Can you list all the neighborhoods in which you are looking for housing?

    Probe: Ask for neighborhood names or zip codes

    a. How did you decide on those neighborhoods?

    b. Are you searching in a limited number of neighborhoods or is your search broader than that?

    c. How familiar are you with these neighborhoods?

    d. Are there neighborhoods you want to avoid? [*If yes*] Which neighborhoods? What makes you want to avoid them?

    e. Does the racial or ethnic make-up of the neighborhood factor into your interest in moving there?

        i. Can you tell me about how it factors into your decision?

13. Have your child/children's needs factored into your decision about which neighborhoods to search in? [*If yes*] How?

    Probes: Daycare or childcare, schools, medical care, family or community ties, etc.?

    a. [*If schools/education identified as a decision factor]* In what ways does your children's schooling affect your decisions about where to search for housing?

    Probes: Distance/commute, teacher quality, school safety, academic programs, extracurricular/after-school programs, college preparation?

    b. Do you expect your children will need to change schools when you move?

    c. What are your thoughts about keeping them in the same school versus changing schools?

14. Have there been other <u>*areas or neighborhoods*</u> you thought about moving to but will not choose for one reason or another?

    a. Why will you not choose one of those areas?

    b. Are there neighborhoods you might want to move to but don't think you can?

        i. [*If yes*] What is the main reason you don't think you can move there?

            Probes: Location concerns (safety, transportation options, location relative to employment, schools, etc.); landlord interactions; discriminatory actions based on race, ethnicity, family status, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or source of income, etc.; issues related to particular housing units?

15. Is anyone else in your life helping you make these move decisions? Family? Friends? Children? Can you tell me more about the help they provide?

[*Treatment Respondents]*

16. After working with the [MOBILITY PROGRAM], did you identify one or more neighborhoods that would work best for you and your family that you were not already considering?

    a. [*If yes*] Which neighborhoods were these?

    b. [*If yes*] Did the coach's suggestions affect your search? [*If yes*] How?

Next, I'd like to get your perspective on the areas on the map that [MOBILITY PROGRAM] staff showed you that are labeled "Opportunity Areas." Do you recall seeing the map?

17. In your opinion, what are the features or amenities that should be available in an "opportunity area"?

    a. How would you describe the benefits of moving your family to an Opportunity Area?

    Probes: Housing features, transportation costs, community/social ties, identity, schools, safety?

    b. What downsides, if any, do you think there are?

18. [Ask if respondent recalls seeing the Opportunity Area Map]

    How do you feel about moving to an Opportunity Area at this point?

    Probes: Excited, worried, nervous?

    a. Has your opinion about such a move changed since you began receiving mobility services? [*If yes*] In what ways?

19. [Ask if respondent recalls seeing the Opportunity Area Map]

    How do your children feel about moving to an Opportunity Area? What excites them? What worries them?

a. [*As applicable]* Does it differ by age (teenagers compared with younger children) or what grade they are in? By gender? In what ways?

Probes: Worries about losing friends; school changes; teachers; other routines/access to family?

[*All Respondents*]

20. What has been your experience so far explaining the voucher to landlords during your current housing search?

    a. [*Treatment group*] Please tell me about your experience explaining [MOBILITY PROGRAM] to landlords?

21. Have you encountered any/any other challenges in finding a place you want to live that you haven't talked about?

    Probes: Issue with the PHA's lease up process (paperwork, rent amount, inspection); eviction, foreclosure, credit problems, transportation, location of employment, landlord interactions, landlords don't want families with children, landlords refuse to take voucher/Section 8, discriminatory actions based on race, ethnicity, family status, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or source of income, etc.; landlord/property manager didn't return phone call/hung up, said unit was no longer available, or didn't provide application to submit, etc.?

22. How confident are you that you are going to find a place that matches everything you are looking for? Why?

PHA SERVICES RECEIVED [ALL RESPONDENTS]

23. [*Existing voucher family*] Please tell me about the process of getting a voucher from [PHA] to move. What was easy? What was hard?

    Probes: Paperwork/certification process, communicating with PHA staff, staff responsiveness and clarity of information?

    a. What questions did you have after you got your moving voucher?

    [*New admissions family*] Tell me about the process of getting the voucher from [PHA]. What was easy? What was hard?

    Probes: Paperwork/certification process, communicating with PHA staff, staff responsiveness and clarity of information?

    b. What questions did you have after you got your voucher?

24. Tell me about any information you have received from [the PHA] about how to use your voucher.

    a. What did they tell you about where you could use your voucher?

    b. Did they tell you how much you can afford in rent?

c. Did they tell you what to expect as next steps after you find a unit?

d. [*Treatment group*] Was the person who provided the information housing authority staff or the mobility services staff? Do you recall their name?

MOBILITY SERVICES AVAILABLE [TREATMENT RESPONDENTS]

Let's shift to discuss the [MOBILITY PROGRAM]. We are interested in learning about your interactions with staff and the services that were offered to you while you are searching for a new place to live and during the process of applying for a new place to live.

25. First, tell me about your decision to join [MOBILITY PROGRAM]. What made you interested in enrolling?

MOBILITY STAFF INTERACTIONS

26. Are you assigned to a particular staff member, or do you interact with various people at [MOBILITY PROGRAM]?

    a. Tell me about how that works. Who do you interact with the most?

    b. What do you communicate about with [STAFF MEMBER(S)]?

27. How do you typically communicate with [MOBILITY PROGRAM] [STAFF MEMBER(S)]?

    Probes: scheduled meetings, in-person, informal calls/texts, who initiates contact

    a. How often do you speak with them?

    b. What do you find most helpful in your interactions with them? Can you give an example?

    c. What do you find not as helpful? Can you give an example?

28. Has your work with [STAFF MEMBER(S)] helped prepare you for your housing search? Tell me more about that.

29. Do you feel like [STAFF MEMBER(S)] understands what you're going through with the search process? Do they listen to your concerns?

30. How easy or difficult is it to work with [MOBILITY PROGRAM] staff to get the help you want for your search? Tell me more about that.

    a. [*If challenging*] Tell me more about a specific instance or example.

    Probes: Communication with staff/reaching staff, availability of needed service(s), clarity on services available?

MOBILITY SERVICES/PROGRAMMING

Let's shift to talk about the services available from [MOBILITY PROGRAM] for your housing search and lease up process, and your experience with the program.

We're interested in hearing about all types of services or assistance available to you from [MOBILITY PROGRAM], even if you don't use them or don't think you will. Later, I'll ask

you about the services you are using; for now, I'm interested in the variety of services you have been offered.

By services we mean the types of help the program staff can provide to help your search, like one on one-meetings with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach, group workshops, help finding apartments/houses in opportunity areas, financial assistance, and help communicating with landlords.

31. What types of services or assistance have been available to you from [MOBILITY PROGRAM]?

    Probes: One-on-one meetings with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach; mapping family systems; help identifying goals for the move; education about the program and opportunity areas; review of credit report; help preparing an application cover letter; group workshops; financial assistance?

32. Which of the services that [MOBILITY PROGRAM] offers have you used so far?

    a. How did you decide to use these services as opposed to the other ones?

    b. Are there other services you think you will use at some point?

    Probes: One-on-one meetings with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach, mapping family systems, help identifying goals for the move, education about the program and opportunity areas, review of credit report, help preparing an application cover letter, group workshops, financial assistance?

33. Have the services from the [MOBILITY PROGRAM] been helpful during your housing search so far?

    a. Which services have been the most useful so far? Tell me more about that.

    Probes: Working one-on-one with a [MOBILITY PROGRAM] coach, help identifying available units, help negotiating with landlords, help assisting with and expediting PHA's lease up process, financial assistance (application fees, security deposits, other financial assistance), navigating perceived discriminatory actions based on race, ethnicity, family status, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or source of income, etc.?

    b. Which services have not been useful, if any? Can you give any examples of something that hasn't turned out to be useful?

    Probes: Specific CMRS, goal is to focus on specific services or types of services?

34. [*If mention receiving financial assistance*] What have you used the financial assistance for?

    a. Does the program provide enough financial assistance to allow you to move to an Opportunity Area? [*If not*] What expenses do you have or anticipate having that you would need help with to move to an Opportunity Area?

35. Has the [MOBILITY PROGRAM] identified any available rental units for you that you chose not to apply for?

    a. [*If yes*] How many units? Why did you decide not to apply for them?

36. [*Existing voucher families*] Thinking back to past moves you have made with a voucher, do the services you are receiving through [MOBILITY PROGRAM] make a difference compared with your previous housing search experiences? Tell me about that.

    a. Tell me more about past experiences with landlords and using your voucher. How do the services you receive through [MOBILITY PROGRAM] make a difference with your interactions with landlords?

37. If you could improve the help [MOBILITY PROGRAM] provides to people with vouchers searching for housing, what changes would you make?

    Probes: Make changes to types of services, how services are delivered, length of services, staffing changes, etc.?

REFLECTIONS ON MOBILITY PROGRAM [TREATMENT RESPONDENTS]

38. Overall, how satisfied are you so far with the services you have received during your housing search?

    Probe: Why satisfied or dissatisfied?

39. Overall, how satisfied are you so far with [MOBILITY PROGRAM STAFF]? Tell me more about that.

CLOSING [ALL RESPONDENTS]

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.

40. Is there anything that I did not ask about your housing search experience or [MOBILITY PROGRAM] services that is important for us to understand?

41. Do you have any final questions for me about the study, or about the research team?

Thank you for your time. I will now turn off the recorder.

[Discuss compensation and collect future contacts list.]