Interview Guides for Participating Families that Have Leased-Up

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

Questions for leased-up CMRS and control households have been separated into two separate interview guides. Use the first interview guide if the household was assigned to the CMRS group. Use the second interview guide if the household was assigned to the control group. The consent form is the same for both treatment and control.

How to use probes and prompts: *Probes* should be used if the respondent's answer does not cover the topics listed in the probes. *Prompts* should be used when a respondent isn't sure how to answer a question or seems unsure about what the question is asking. If a respondent provides an answer to a question, whether or not they include mention of the items listed as prompts, then the interviewer should not use the prompts.

Informed consent:

- Prior to arriving for in-person interviews, print a copy of the appropriate consent form for each respondent.
- Offer the family the option of reading this consent form aloud or to themselves. If the family opts to read it to themselves, please verbally recap the key points with the respondent to ensure that they understand.
- Provide a copy of the consent form to the family for their records. For in-person interviews this should be a hard copy and for virtual interviews, this should be via email.
- The following instructions do not need to be read aloud to respondent but prior to the interview, this information should be shared as appropriate:

If you would like translated materials, or to complete the interview in language other than English, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you. If you need information to be presented in an accessible format, for example, Braille, audio, large type, or sign language interpreters, or need a reasonable accommodation (a change or adjustment) so that you can participate, please let us know. Please feel free to ask me any questions you might have.

Interview Guide for Participating Families Who Have Leased Up (Treatment)

This guide is for treatment group families that have successfully *leased-up* with a voucher through the Community Choice Demonstration program, including both existing and new admission voucher families. Make every effort to cover all questions in the guide and use the probes and prompts for in-depth responses.

WARM-UP/BACKGROUND

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

1. Tell me about who lives with you.
    a. How many children live here with you?
    b. What are their ages and what grade are they in?

    [Note that names will be removed/redacted.]
2. About how long have you had a Housing Choice Voucher, also called a Section 8 voucher?
    a. [*Existing voucher families*] How many different apartments/homes have you lived in since you got a voucher for the first time?
3. I would like to learn a little about where you lived before you moved to your current home.
    a. What was your living situation before you moved to this house/apartment?

        [*Existing voucher families*] *Probes:* Single-family house, Apartment?

        [*New voucher families*] *Probes:* Living in own home, Staying with friends or family, Staying in a shelter, or Something else?

        i. [*If living with friend or family*] Was that a temporary arrangement, or were you able to stay there as long as you liked?
    b. About how long did you live in your previous neighborhood before moving to your current home?
    c. *[New admission families*] Did you end up moving with your voucher or use the voucher to stay in the same unit?
4. *[For families that moved]* Can you share the reasons you wanted to move from where you were living before?

5. I would like to know more about why you decided to participate in the Community Choice Demonstration. Thinking back to when you first enrolled, what got you interested in joining the Demonstration?

PHASES 2-3: PRE-MOVE PREPARATION

I would like to talk with you about your experiences with the Community Choice Demonstration. Right now, I want to focus on the time right after enrollment, the pre-move preparation phase. That is, up until the time you started searching for housing.

6. Right after enrolling in the Community Choice Demonstration, the program offers households:

   [Show list of CMRS services to interview respondent]

   > **CMRS**: a one-on-one meeting with a CCD coach where you mapped family systems, identified goals for the move, learned about neighborhoods identified as opportunity areas, and reviewed your credit report, and also follow-on support preparing an application cover letter, options to attend group workshops, and referrals to credit repair or financial coaching services

   Which of the early move preparation services that Community Choice Demonstration offers did you use?

   a. What led you to use [list services respondent indicated that they used]?
   b. Of the services you used, which did you find most helpful?
      i. Why were these services especially helpful?
   c. Which of the services did you find least helpful?
      i. Why were these services not as helpful?
   d. Why didn't you use [fill in services based on response]?

7. I would like to hear about your experiences with the staff you worked with to enroll in the Community Choice Demonstration and prepare for your housing search. In particular, I would like to learn more about the people you interacted with before you started your housing search.

8. Thinking back to before you started your housing search, were you assigned to a particular staff member, or did you interact with various people at the housing authority?

   a. Which of these staff people did you interact with the most?
   b. What did you communicate about with [STAFF MEMBERS]?

c. How did you typically communicate with [STAFF MEMBER(S)]?
Prompts: Scheduled meetings, In-person, Informal calls/texts

d. How often did you speak with them?

e. What was most helpful in your interactions with [Staff Member(s)]?

    i. Can you give an example?

f. What interactions were not as helpful?

    i. Can you give an example?

9. [*New admissions family*] We are going to shift gears a bit here and talk about getting your voucher from [PHA]. Think back to when you got the voucher - think about all the parts of the process - the paperwork you completed, how you communicated with [PHA] staff, etc.

   Tell me about the process of getting the voucher?

   a. What parts of getting the voucher felt easy?

   b. What parts of getting the voucher felt hard?

   [*Existing voucher family*] We are going to shift gears a bit here and talk about getting a voucher to move. Think back to when you got the voucher – think about all the parts of getting the voucher, from the timing for submitting notice to your current landlord to how you communicated with the [PHA] staff.

   Can you describe your experience of getting the voucher to me?

   a. What parts of getting the voucher felt easy?

   b. What parts of getting the voucher felt hard?

10. I am interested in learning about the information you were given from the housing authority or mobility services staff when they issued your voucher to move

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

    b. What were you told about how to go about searching for housing?

    c. What information or resources did they provide, such as information about neighborhoods or a list of units, for your housing search?

    d. Did they tell you how much you could afford in rent?

    e. What were you told about the things that need to happen after finding a unit?

Prompts: Inspection, Request for Tenancy Approval.

11. After receiving your voucher to move, did you have any questions about how to use the voucher that were not answered?

    a. *[If yes]* What questions did you have?

PHASE 4: HOUSING SEARCH

Now I'd like to focus on your experiences with your most recent housing search.

12. The Community Choice Demonstration offers the following services to support households in their searches:

    CMRS: support from a leasing coordinator, unit referrals, unit or neighborhood tours, support negotiating with landlords, coverage of application fees, and assistance with submitting applications.

    Which of these housing search services did you use?

    a. Of these services, which were the most helpful (if any)?

        i. Can you tell me what was helpful about [name service(s)]?

    b. Which of services were least helpful?

Now let's talk about the search itself—what you were looking for, how it went, etc.

13. When deciding where to live, what was most important to you?
    Prompts: The Unit, Neighborhood, Family/friends, Amenities and Services

14. What kind of house or apartment or features were you looking for?
    Prompts: Number of bedrooms, Unit type, Unit features

15. What were the main ways you searched for housing?

    Prompts: Housing authority's list, list from Community Choice Demonstration, Recommendations from friends or family, specific websites

16. How many unit referrals did you receive from the mobility services staff?

    a. How satisfied were you with the referrals you received? Please tell me more about this.

        Prompts: Number of referrals, quality of referrals, referrals matched/did not match household requirements.

17. How many units located in Opportunity Areas have you found on your own?

18. Roughly how many apartments/houses did you seriously think about applying for during your most recent search before deciding to move to your current home?

    a. How many rental applications did you submit to any of those apartments/houses?

        i. [*If 1 or more*] Were any of these units from a list of apartments/homes that the mobility services staff provided for you?

    b. What happened after you applied in each case?

        Prompt: Accepted/denied

        i. [*If accepted*] Did you decide not to move into the unit? Why?

    c. Can you walk me through the experience of applying for a unit?

        i. What parts of applying of a unit felt easy?

        ii. What parts felt hard?

    d. Did you want to move to any of these apartments/homes but could not for some reason?

        i. [*If yes*] What was the main reason you couldn't move to the home you wanted?

        Prompts: Landlord did not accept application, housing authority's inspection; Credit problems; Discrimination

    e. About how long did you search for housing with your voucher before you found the place you're in now?

19. I would like to hear more about the neighborhoods you looked at during your housing search.

    a. After working with the Community Choice Demonstration coach, did you identify any neighborhoods that would work best for you and your family?

    b. Did the coach's suggestions affect your search?

        i. [*If yes*] Can you give an example of how a suggestion affected your search?

    c. How would you describe your search: was it focused on particular neighborhoods or more open?

    d. What did you like about those neighborhoods?

    e. Were there neighborhoods you wanted to avoid?

        i. [*If yes*] Which neighborhoods?

ii. What made you want to avoid them?

f. Did the racial or ethnic make-up of a neighborhood factor into your interest in moving there?

20. Were there opportunity area neighborhoods you thought about or wanted to move to but didn't for one reason or another?

    a. [*If* yes] Why did you not move to any of those areas?

       Prompts: Location, Landlords, Discrimination, Types of housing

21. Did your children's needs factor into decisions about which neighborhoods to search in?

    a. [*If yes*] How did they affect your decisions?

       Prompts: Daycare or childcare, Schools, Medical care, Family, or Community ties, etc.

    b. [*If schools/education identified as a decision factor*] Tell me more about how your children's schooling affected your decisions about where to search for housing.

       Prompts: Academics, School safety, Extracurricular/after-school programs?

    c. Did your children change schools because of your move?

       i. [*If yes*] How did you feel about your children changing schools?

       ii. How did your children feel about changing schools?

22. How did you feel about moving to an Opportunity Area neighborhood when you first started with Community Choice Demonstration?

    Probes: Excited, Worried, Nervous?

    a. When you thought about moving to an opportunity area, what did you think the benefits might be for your family?
       Prompts: unit/building amenities, Neighborhood amenities, Safety

    b. [*Families that moved to OA*] Has your opinion about moving to an Opportunity Area changed since you leased up?

       i. [*If yes*] In what ways has it changed?

       Probes: Changed for the better, Worse?

       ii. Can you share why your opinion changed?

23. How did your children feel about moving when you were doing your search?

Probes: What excited them? What worried them?

a. [*As applicable]* I know that kids sometimes worry about different things depending on their age or their gender. Can you tell me about any worries related to moving that were particular to each of your children?

Let's talk a little bit about your experiences interacting with mobility services staff and landlords during your housing search.

24. How often did you speak with the mobility services staff during your search process?
25. How easy or difficult was it to work with Community Choice Demonstration to get the services you wanted?

    a. [*If easy*] Can you share an example of an instance where you got the services you wanted?

    b. [*If challenging*] Tell me more about a specific example where it was challenging to get the services you wanted.

    Prompts: Communication with staff; Availability of needed service(s), Clarity on services available

26. What was your experience explaining vouchers to landlords during your housing search?

    a. Tell me about your experience explaining Community Choice Demonstration to landlords.

27. Did you encounter any challenges in finding a place you wanted to live that you haven't talked about?

    Prompts: Lease up process, Financial barriers, Location, Housing availability, Landlord issues, Discrimination

I am interested in hearing about how you selected the unit you are currently renting.

28. How did you find the home you are renting? Tell me more about that.
29. Did anyone else help you make the decision to choose this home?

    a. Can you tell me more about the help they provided?

PHASES 5-7: LEASE UP AND POST-MOVE SERVICES

This next set of questions focus on your experiences with leasing up and living in your current unit and the services you have received through the Community Choice Demonstration during this time.

30. Community Choice Demonstration offers the following services to support households as they lease up:

    CMRS: expediting the filing of request for tenancy approval (RFTA) paperwork, arranging expedited inspections, communicating with landlords around signing the lease and arranging key transfers/move-in dates, setting up housing assistance payments, and financial assistance that can be used for holding fees, moving expenses, security deposits, and leasing bonuses for landlords.

    Which of these lease-up support services did you use?

    a. Of services you used, which were the most helpful?

        i. Can you tell me why these services were helpful?

    b. Which of these did you find least helpful?

        i. Why were these services not very helpful?

    c. [*If they mention getting financial assistance]* What did you use the financial assistance for?

    d. Did the program provide enough assistance to allow you to move to an Opportunity Area?

        i. [*If no*] What expenses or barriers do you have that you would need services for to move to an Opportunity Area?

31. Since you leased up, have you had any contact with mobility services or housing authority staff?

    a. [*If yes*] Can you tell me what these were about?

32. I understand the Community Choice Demonstration also offers a post-move check-in to help resolve any issues that have come up since your move-in, such as issues with your landlord, neighbors, or housing quality; questions about your voucher, or to offer additional financial assistance if any funds remain.

    What services or assistance have you used, if any, since moving into your apartment/house?

    a. [*If used services or assistance*] Which were most helpful?

        i. Can you tell me about how [insert services] were helpful? Were there any services that you used that were less helpful?

        ii. Tell me about why [insert services] were not very helpful?

33. What do you like about your apartment/house?

a. What would make it better?

34. How do your children feel about the move?

Probes: What do they like? What don't they like?

35. Is there anything you wish you had known about this house/unit before you moved in?

a. [*If yes*] What do you wish you had known?

36. Do you think you will stay in this neighborhood?

a. [*If no or unsure*] Do you have an idea of where you would like to move next?

i. [*If yes*] What makes you want to move to [that/a different neighborhood]?

b. [*If yes*] What makes you want to stay in this neighborhood?

Probes: Access to services, Safety, Educational Opportunities, Comfort level?, Racial/ethnic make-up

c. How might the services and supports offered by the Community Choice Demonstration help you stay in this neighborhood if you want to?

OVERALL SATISFACTION

37. [*Existing voucher families*] Thinking back to other moves you have made with your voucher, did the services you received through Community Choice Demonstration make any difference compared with your previous experiences? Tell me about that.

a. Thinking about past experiences with landlords and using your voucher, did the services you receive(d) through Community Choice Demonstration make a difference with your interactions with landlords?

38. Of all of the services offered by the Community Choice Demonstration which were the most useful? *[Show list of services]* Tell me more about that.

a. [*For respondent that moved to an opportunity area]* Which services were the most important for your move to an opportunity area? Tell me more about that.

b. Which services were less useful?

i. Why do you think [service] is not helpful?

39. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services that you received during your housing search and since your move?

Probe: Why satisfied or dissatisfied?

a. Overall, how satisfied are you with Community Choice Demonstration [STAFF MEMBER(S)]? Tell me more about that.

CLOSING

40. If you could make changes to improve the kind of services that the Community Choice Demonstration provides people with vouchers searching for housing, leasing up, and moving to an opportunity area, what changes would you make?

    Probes: Type of services, Length of services, Staffing changes?

41. Is there anything I did not ask about your moving experience or Community Choice Demonstration services that is important for me to understand?

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

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

[Discuss compensation and collect future contacts list.]

Interview Guide for Participating Families Who Have Leased Up (Control)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

This guide is for control group families that have successfully *leased-up* with a voucher through the standard Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program services, including both existing and new admission voucher families. Make every effort to cover all questions in the guide and use the probes and prompts for in-depth responses.

WARM-UP/BACKGROUND

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

1. Tell me about who lives with you.
    a. How many children live here with you?
    b. What are their ages and what grade are they in?

    [Note that names will be removed/redacted.]

2. About how long have you had a Housing Choice Voucher, also called a Section 8 voucher?
    a. [*Existing voucher families*] How many different apartments/homes have you lived in since you got a voucher for the first time?

3. I would like to learn a little about where you lived before you moved to your current home.
    a. What was your living situation before you moved to this house/apartment?

        [*Existing voucher families*] *Probes:* Single-family house, Apartment?

        [*New voucher families*] *Probes:* Living in own home, Staying with friends or family, Staying in a shelter, or Something else?

        i. [*If living with friend or family*] Was that a temporary arrangement, or were you able to stay there as long as you liked?

    b. About how long did you live in your previous neighborhood before moving to your current home?
    c. *[New admission families*] Did you end up moving with your voucher or use the voucher to stay in the same unit?

4. *[For families that moved]* Can you share the reasons you wanted to move from where you were living before?

PRE-MOVE PREPARATION

I would like to talk with you about your experiences with getting a voucher from [PHA].

5. [*New admissions family*] Think back to when you got the voucher - think about all the parts of the process - the paperwork you completed, how you communicated with [PHA] staff, etc.

   Tell me about the process of getting the voucher?

   a. What parts of getting the voucher felt easy?

   b. What parts of getting the voucher felt hard?

   [*Existing voucher family*] Think back to when you got the voucher to move – think about all the parts of getting the voucher, from the timing for submitting notice to your current landlord to how you communicated with the [PHA] staff.

   Can you describe your experience of getting the voucher to me?

   c. What parts of getting the voucher felt easy?

   d. What parts of getting the voucher felt hard?

6. I am interested in learning about the information the housing authority gave you when they issued your voucher to move.

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

   b. What were you told about how to go about searching for housing?

   c. What information or resources did they provide, such as information about neighborhoods or a list of units, for your housing search?

   d. Did they tell you how much you could afford in rent?

   e. What were you told about the things that need to happen after finding a unit?

      Prompts: Inspection, Request for Tenancy Approval.

7. After receiving your voucher to move, did you have any questions about how to use the voucher that were not answered?

i. [If yes] What questions did you have?

HOUSING SEARCH

Now I'd like to focus on your experiences with your most recent housing search.

Let's talk about the search itself—what you were looking for, how it went, etc.

8. When deciding where to live, what was most important to you?
   Prompts: The Unit, Neighborhood, family/friends, Amenities and Services
9. What kind of house or apartment or features were you looking for?
   Prompts: Number of bedrooms, Unit type, Unit features
10. What were the main ways you searched for housing?

    Prompts: Housing authority's list, Recommendations from friends or family, specific websites
11. Roughly how many apartments/houses did you seriously think about applying for during your most recent search before deciding to move to your current home?
    a. How many rental applications did you submit to any of those apartments/houses?
       i. [*If* 1 or more] Did you apply to any units from a housing authority list?
    b. What happened after you applied in each case?

       Prompt: Accepted/Denied

       i. [*If accepted*] Did you decide not to move into the unit? Why?
    c. Can you walk me through the experience of applying for a unit?
       i. What parts of applying of a unit felt easy?
       ii. What parts felt hard?
    d. Did you want to move to any of these apartments/homes but could not for some reason?
       i. [*If yes*] What was the main reason you couldn't move to the home you wanted?

          Prompts: Landlord did not accept application; Housing authority's inspection; Credit problems; Discrimination

e. About how long did you search for housing with your voucher before you found the place you're in now?

12. I would like to hear more about the neighborhoods you looked at during your housing search. What did you like about those neighborhoods?

    a. Were there neighborhoods you wanted to avoid?

        i. [*If yes*] Which neighborhoods?

        ii. What made you want to avoid them?

    b. Did the racial or ethnic make-up of a neighborhood factor into your interest in moving there?

13. Were there neighborhoods you thought about or wanted to move to but didn't for one reason or another?

    a. [*If* yes] Why did you not move to any of those areas?

    Prompts: Location, Landlords, Discrimination, Types of housing

14. Did your children's needs factor into decisions about which neighborhoods to search in?

    a. [*If yes*] How did they affect your decisions?

    Prompts: Daycare or childcare, Schools, Medical care, Family, or Community ties, etc.

    b. [*If schools/education identified as a decision factor*] Tell me more about how your children's schooling affected your decisions about where to search for housing.

    Prompts: Academics, School safety, Extracurricular/after-school programs?

    c. Did your children change schools because of your move?

        i. [*If yes*] How did you feel about your children changing schools?

        ii. How did your children feel about changing schools?

15. What was your experience explaining vouchers to landlords during your housing search?

16. Did you encounter any challenges in finding a place you wanted to live that you haven't talked about?

    Prompts: Lease up process, Financial barriers, Location, Housing availability, Landlord issues, Discrimination

    I am interested in hearing about how you selected the unit you are currently renting.

17. How did you find the home you are renting? Tell me more about that.
18. Did anyone else help you make the decision to choose this home?
    a. Can you tell me more about the help they provided?

POST-MOVE

This next set of questions focus on your experiences living in your current unit.

19. What do you like about your apartment/house? Can you tell me more about that?
    a. What would make it better?
    b. How do your children feel about the move?

Probes: What do they like? What don't they like?

20. Is there anything you wish you had known about this house/unit before you moved in?
    a. [*If yes*] What do you wish you had known?
21. Do you think you will stay in this neighborhood?
    a. [*If no or unsure*] Do you have an idea of where you would like to move next?
        i. [*If yes*] What makes you want to move to [that/a different neighborhood]?
    b. [*If yes*] What makes you want to stay in this neighborhood?

    Probes: Access to services, Safety, Educational opportunities, Comfort level? Racial/ethnic make-up.

CLOSING

22. Is there anything that would have made your housing search, lease-up, or move experiences easier?
    a. [*If yes*] What would have made those experiences easier?
23. Is there anything that would make your experience after moving better?
24. Is there anything I did not ask about your moving experience that is important for me to understand?
25. Do you have any final questions for me about the study, or about the research team?

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

[Discuss compensation and collect future contacts list.]