OMB Control Number: 0970-0531
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Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse Feedback Sessions Protocols

Feedback Session A: Workforce development professionals who oversee workforce and job training programs

Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Logistics (5 minutes)

Hello, and welcome. My name is [Insert Name], and I am a [Insert Title] at [Insert Organization]. We are working with the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), to find ways to make the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse more useful to workforce professionals like yourself. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is a website that provides information on evidence-based approaches to help individuals with low incomes find jobs.

I will be facilitating our discussion today. With me is [Notetaker's Name], who will take notes to ensure we capture all your insights. To ensure accuracy in our notes, we will also be recording the audio from this session. Before we begin, I want to remind you that participation in this session is voluntary and appreciated. We will be providing a small honorarium of $100 as a token of appreciation for your time and expertise. Before we get started, let's do a quick round of introductions. Please share your name, your title, and your organization. Please also provide one sentence describing your role within your organization.

Please let [Technical Assistant's Name] know if you experience any technical difficulties during today's meeting. They are here to assist you. While we encourage you to turn on your cameras for a more engaging discussion, it is not required. As we ask questions feel free to jump in to answer directly by unmuting, use the hand-raising feature, and/or message in the chat to share your thoughts.

Informed Consent Notification

Before we begin our session, we will go over some important details about the information we are collecting and how we will use this information. As I mentioned, our goal is to get feedback on how to enhance the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for use by workforce development professionals.

Taking part in this feedback session is voluntary. If you decide to participate but change your mind, you may stop and exit the feedback session at any time. You do not have to give a reason for doing so if you decide to leave this session early, and there will be no negative consequences for ending your participation.

If you decide to take part in this session, we will ask you questions about your role and work, how you use evidence in that work, and what your evidence needs are related to your work. This session will last approximately 90 minutes.

Any information we collect about you will be kept private. To protect your privacy, we will destroy any recording of this session once we have verified our notes for this session. Only the Pathways to Work team will have access to the recording. We will not identify you by name in any reports that result from this feedback session.

By continuing to participate in this session, you are indicating that you understand the purpose of this feedback session and your role in it. You also acknowledge that you have been informed of your rights and the voluntary nature of your participation. You understand that this session will be recorded and used for research purposes and that all your responses will be kept private. If you agree to these terms, please type "I agree" in the chat. You may also unmute yourself and say "I agree" instead of typing.

As we start our discussion, please keep your microphones muted when not speaking to avoid background noise. If the conversation gets lively and you're finding it hard to chime in, please use the "raise hand" feature.

Alright, let's get started. We're now starting the recording. (Notetaker begins recording)

Purpose of the Feedback Session and Agenda for Today (5 minutes)

The purpose of today's session is to learn about how workforce development professionals use research to inform their program and services strategies and support their programs. This feedback will help the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse team identify opportunities to strengthen the Clearinghouse for users like you so that it can become a trusted and easy-to-use source of evidence for those who oversee programs that deliver workforce services.

Before we start our session, I am going to give you a bit of context on the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse collects studies that examine the labor market effects (such as employment and earnings) of programs, or interventions, that serve individuals with low incomes. It assesses the quality of these studies and summarizes their findings, focusing on employment-related outcomes and intervention (or program) details. You can access Pathways to Work by visiting its website at the following address: https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/.

Just to orient you on how we will spend our time together, we will ask questions on three main topics:

- Understanding if, how, and when you use research in your work
- Exploring how you find and access findings from research
- Understanding your preferences and outstanding needs you have around research to support your work

Disclaimer

Before we begin, please take a minute to read the text that [Notetaker] has just put into the chat. This text shares some important information about our plan for collecting information today. We are collecting this information as a part of our work on the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse. Through this information collection, ACF is gathering information to improve the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov)

website. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per respondent, including the time for preparing for the session, reviewing instructions, and participating in the session. This is a voluntary collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 9/30/2025. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Amelia Popham at Amelia.Popham@ACF.hhs.gov. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

Background and context: participants' experience using research findings in their work (30 min)

Context Setting

Many of the questions we have for you today are about how you might be or could be using research to inform your work. The term 'research' can mean different things to different people. For example, let's say someone asked us for research to show that a particular job training program is working. Some might consider research to be a systematically conducted study that compares the outcomes of a group that receives the "treatment" (the program or services being studied) to the outcomes of a group that does not receive the treatment. For others, research might be statistics or facts in a news report about the workforce program.

However, when we refer to 'research' in the context of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, we're referring to the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are achieving their goals. In general, these studies compare two groups of people – one that receives the program or service, and one that doesn't – to see if the program made a difference. These studies focus on whether programs help improve people's employment, earnings, public benefit receipt, or education and training outcomes. That's the kind of 'research' that the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse collects and organizes to make it easier for people to find. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse gathers this research, rates the quality of it, and makes this research available to the public. A key goal of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is to help people who run employment and training programs for people with low incomes assess and use research so that they can make evidence-informed decisions as they design or adapt their programs, to improve the odds that people they serve succeed in the labor market.

Now, let's move to learning more about you and your work.

1. **Background and Work:** Can you describe a typical day in your role? What are your main responsibilities?
2. **Services and Population:** What kinds of services does your organization offer? How would you describe the clients you serve?

Next, let's talk about how you might use research findings in your work. Many workforce development funders have increasingly asked organizations like yours to use findings from research studies to support program development and continuous improvement.

3. **Personal Research Use**.
    a) Can you think of a recent time when you used or wanted to use research findings to inform your work? Remember, when we use the word "research," we mean the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are helping the individuals who participate in these programs achieve their goals. What information did you need, and what decisions did that research inform?

   b) If you think about all the different roles you play, what are some areas of work in which you might use research findings?
      i. **Probe**: For example, how might you use research findings to (1) inform strategic planning, budgeting and resource allocations, day-to-day service delivery decisions, (2) learning more about the problem your organization is working to address and/or the people your organization serves, (3) identifying new ways of addressing a problem, (4) providing justification to policymakers/board/funders about your organization's current policies/practices/programs, (5) confirming a hunch about how to improve your program, and/or (6) facilitating conversations with colleagues about program improvement.
4. **Decision-making process**: We are interested in exploring the ways in which findings from research may help you make decisions about your program and how to best serve individuals with low incomes.
   a) Can you tell us more about how your organization makes decisions about what services, interventions, and/or programs to offer the individuals you serve?
      i. **Probe**: For example, do you have an annual strategic planning process that happens on a regular cycle? Does your team meet regularly to determine what programs, services, or interventions to offer your participants? What information do you use to inform those decisions?
   b) Which members of your team are involved in your strategic and day-to-day decision-making processes about your program? What information do they need to make decisions about your program?
      i. **Probe**: Is there a particular time of year or part of your planning cycle where it would be especially useful to have information from research to inform your decision-making process?
5. **Use of Research Findings in Decision-making:** In an ideal world, how would you like to use research to inform your decision-making? What would help your team more easily or more effectively use findings from research when making decisions?
   a) **Probe**: For example, what changes to the format, delivery, or content of research studies or summaries would help your team more easily or effectively use research findings in the decision-making process?

Accessing research: trusted sources, challenges, and potential solutions (20 minutes)

Now, we'd like to learn if and how you currently access research on workforce programs, interventions, and services:

6. **Personal Research Access.** Do you currently access research findings about programs or services to inform your work? If so:
   a) Where do you go to find research you find helpful or useful?
      i. **Probe**: What makes research useful to you? How do you determine if research is credible?
   b) How do you typically get research: Do you actively seek out research or do others send it to you? If latter, who sends it and how? On average, how much time do you have to find, read, and apply findings from research to your operating environment?
7. **Strengths.** What do you like about the content that your go-to sources share?
   a) **Probe:** What do you think about the presentation or format? What makes these sources easy to find?
   b) **Probe:** Can you describe a time when you used research that was easy to act on? What made the research findings easy to act on?
8. **Challenges:** Can you tell us more about any challenges you've experienced when trying to find and use relevant research (e.g., no research findings on topic of interest, findings are hard to understand, different studies have conflicting information)?

Research needs: products and content (20 minutes)

Next, we want to delve into the types of research products that serve you best:

9. **Research Products:** What kinds of research products do you prefer (for example: one-pagers, briefs, infographics, evaluation reports, data sets, conference presentations, webinars, podcasts)? What makes research findings easy to apply in your operations?
10. **Content Needs:** On what topics or strategies do you most want or need research or data to support your program?
11. **Dissemination Preferences:** What are the most effective ways to share information from research, including what works for the individuals you serve, with you and your teams? Are there particular channels (i.e., newsletters, websites, emails from your leadership) that you engage with more actively than others?

Wrap-up and Next steps (10 minutes)

Thank you so much for sharing your time and insight with us today. Your input will be synthesized and incorporated into a summary report for ACF to inform enhancements to the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. Before we close today, is there anything else we should consider or anything else we have not asked about?

Thank you again and have a great rest of your day.

Feedback Session B: Frontline staff directly responsible for delivering TANF or workforce development services

Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Logistics (5 minutes)

Hello, and welcome. My name is [Insert Name], and I am a [Insert Title] at [Insert Organization]. On behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), thank you for joining us today for this feedback session on research use and needs for human services professionals. The information you provide today will help shape OPRE's thinking on improving access to and use of research findings through its Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse, which provides information on evidence-based approaches to help individuals with low incomes find jobs.

I will be facilitating our discussion today. With me is [Notetaker's Name], who will take notes to ensure we capture all your insights. To ensure accuracy in our notes, we will also be recording the audio from this session. Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that participation in this session is voluntary and appreciated. We will be providing a small honorarium of $100 as a token of appreciation for your time and expertise. Before we get started, let's do a quick round of introductions. Please state your name, your title, and your organization. Please also provide one sentence describing your role within your organization.

Please let [Technical Assistant's Name] know if you experience any technical difficulties during today's meeting. They are here to assist you. While we encourage you to turn on your cameras for a more engaging discussion, it is not mandatory. Please feel comfortable using the hand-raising, chat, and direct messaging features to contribute.

Informed Consent Notification

Before we begin our session, we will go over some important details about it and what it involves before you agree to participate. The purpose of today is to get feedback on how to enhance the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for use by staff who are directly responsible for delivering case management and workforce services to individuals with low incomes. You have been asked to participate because you provide direct services to individuals with low incomes.

Taking part in this feedback session is voluntary. If you decide to participate but change your mind, you may stop and exit at any time. If you decide to stop and leave the session early, you do not have to give a reason, and there will be no negative consequences for ending your participation.

If you decide to participate in this session, we will ask you questions about your role and work, how you use research in that work, and what your research needs are related to your work. This session will last approximately 90 minutes.

Any information we collect about you will be kept private. To protect your privacy, any recording of this session will be destroyed upon verification of our notes for this session. Only the Pathways to Work team will have access to the recording. You will not be identified by name in any reports that result from this feedback session.

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As we start our discussion, please keep your microphones muted when not speaking to avoid background noise. If the conversation gets lively and you're finding it hard to chime in, please use the "raise hand" feature.

All right let's get started. We're now starting the recording. (Notetaker begins recording)

Purpose of the Feedback Session and Agenda for Today (5 minutes)

The purpose of today's session is to learn about how and if frontline staff who deliver case management and workforce development services use insights from research studies to inform their program and services strategies and support their programs. This feedback will help the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse team identify opportunities to strengthen the Clearinghouse for users like you to become a trusted and easy-to-use source of information for those who are directly responsible for delivering services to individuals with low incomes.

Before we start our session, I am going to give you a bit of context on the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse collects studies that examine the labor market effects (such as employment and earnings) of programs and interventions that serve individuals with low incomes. It assesses the quality of these studies and summarizes their findings, focusing on employment-related outcomes and intervention (or program) details. You can access Pathways to Work by visiting their website at the following address: https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/.

Just to orient you on how we will spend our time together, we will ask questions on three main topics:

- Understanding if, when, and how you use research in your work
- Exploring how you might find and access research
- Understanding your preferences and outstanding needs you have around research to support your work

Disclaimer

Before we begin, please take a minute to read the text that [Notetaker] has just put into the chat. This text shares some important information about our plan for collecting information today. We are collecting this information as a part of our work on the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse. Through this information collection, ACF is gathering information to improve the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov) website. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per respondent, including the time for preparing for the session, reviewing instructions, and participating in the session. This is a voluntary collection of information. agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 9/30/2025. If

you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Amelia Popham at Amelia.Popham@ACF.hhs.gov. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

Background and context: participants' work and their experience using research (30 min)

Context Setting

Many of the questions we have for you today are about how you might be or could be using research to inform your work. The term 'research' can mean different things to different people. For example, let's say someone asked us for research to show that a particular job training program is working. Some might consider research to be a systematically conducted study that compares the outcomes of a group that receives the treatment to the outcomes of a group that does not receive the treatment. For others, research might be statistics or facts in a news report about the workforce program.

However, when we refer to 'research' in the context of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, we're referring to the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are achieving their goals. In general, these studies compare two groups of people – one that receives the program or service, and one that doesn't – to see if the program made a difference. These studies focus on whether programs help improve people's employment, earnings, public benefit receipt, or education and training outcomes. That's the kind of 'research' that the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse collects and organizes to make it easier for people to find. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse gathers, rates, and makes this research available to the public. A key goal of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is to help people who run employment and training programs for people with low incomes assess and use findings from research so that they can make evidence-informed decisions as they design or adapt their programs, to improve the odds that people they serve succeed in the labor market.

Now, let's move to learning more about you and your work.

1. **Background and Work:** Can you describe a typical day in your role? What are your main responsibilities?
2. **Services and Population:** What kinds of services does your organization offer? How would you describe the clients you serve?

Next, let's talk about how you use research findings in your work. Many workforce development funders have increasingly asked organizations like yours to use findings from research studies to support program development and continuous improvement. It is less clear how and if findings from research are used in day-to-day service delivery.

3. **Personal Research Use**.
    a) Can you think of a recent time when you used or wanted to use findings from research to make a decision about how to serve a client? Remember, when we use the word "research," we mean the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are helping the individuals who participate in these programs achieve their goals.
        i. What was the decision, and what information did you use to determine your next steps?
        ii. What other information would have been helpful?
    b) As you think about your role, how might you use research findings to inform your work and serve clients?
        i. **Probe**: For example, how could you research to (1) learn more about the population you are serving and their needs, (2) identify potential strategies to serve clients, (3) learn more about a problem you are facing and potential options to address it, (4) providing justification to colleagues about your approach to your work, (5) confirming a hunch

about how to improve your program, and/or (6) facilitating conversations with colleagues about program improvement?

4. **Decision-making process**: We are interested in exploring the ways in which findings from research may help you make decisions about how to best serve individuals with low incomes.
    a) Can you tell us more about how your organization makes decisions about what services, interventions, and/or programs to offer the individuals you serve?
        i. **Probe**: For example, do you have an annual strategic planning process that happens on a regular cycle? Does your team meet regularly to determine what programs, services, or interventions to offer your participants? What information do you use to inform those decisions?
    b) Which members of your team are involved in your strategic and day-to-day decision-making processes about your program? What information do they need to make decisions about your program?
        i. **Probe**: Is there a particular time of year or part of your planning cycle where it would be especially useful to have information from research to inform your decision-making process?
5. **Using Research Findings in Decision-making:** In an ideal world, what information would you need to figure out if a service strategy or intervention would work for a particular client? Or in a particular environment or context?

Accessing research: trusted sources, challenges, and potential solutions (20 minutes)

Now, we'd like to learn about the sources you rely on to inform your decisions to serve clients:

6. **Accessing Research:** Do you currently access research findings about programs or services to inform your work? Why or why not?
    a) Where do you go to find information (i.e., internal emails, external websites, newsletters, trainings, conferences, presentations, webinars, podcasts) on which service strategies work to serve the individuals you work with?
    b) How do you typically access research? Do you actively seek out research or do others send it to you? If the latter, who sends it and how?
    c) Have you ever received training or professional development related to improving practices, such as discussing research results, reviewing best practices, or receiving information and statistics on your program?
        i. If you have received training or professional development that discussed research results, was it useful? Why or why not?
        ii. Who provided this training and/or professional development?
    d) How much time do you usually have to find, consider, and apply findings from research to your work environment? Are some kinds of research findings or products easier to apply than others?
7. **Strengths:** If you have a favorite source of helpful information, what do you like about the content that these sources share? What do you like about the presentation or format of that information?
8. **Challenges:** Can you recall when you wished you had access to research about how to best serve a client?
    a) **[If desired more information]** What kind of information would have been useful?
    b) In the past, what has prevented you from accessing research findings that could inform your work?
    c) What makes it hard to use research findings to inform your day-to-day work?

Research needs: products and content (20 minutes)

Next, we want to delve into the types of products that serve you best:

9. **Research Products**: What type of information do you find most helpful when learning a new skill or concept at work?
    a) **Probe:** Do you prefer detailed guidelines, summaries, or a hands-on approach?
10. **Content Needs:** On what topics or strategies do you most want or need research or data to support your program?
11. **Adapting the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for Frontline Staff:** The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is a searchable database on research-based approaches for helping individuals with low incomes find jobs. If OPRE wanted to make this database more useful for frontline staff, what about the presentation, functionality, or content of the database would be important for our team to consider?
12. **Dissemination Preferences:** What are the most effective ways to share information about what service strategies work to serve individuals with low incomes with you and your team members?
    - **Probe:** Are you more likely to engage with research if you hear about it through industry groups (i.e., National Association for Workforce Boards, American Association for Community Colleges), American Public Human Services Association, trusted advisors, webinars sponsored by government agencies, newsletters, your leadership, or other sources of information?

Wrap-up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Thank you so much for sharing your time and insight with us today. Your input will be synthesized and incorporated into a summary report for ACF to inform enhancements to the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. Before we close today, is there anything else we should consider or anything else we have yet to ask about?

Thank you again and have a great rest of your day.

Feedback Session C: TANF Administrators or State-Level TANF Staff

Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Logistics (5 minutes)

Hello, and welcome. My name is [Insert Name], and I am a [Insert Title] at [Insert Organization]. On behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), thank you for joining us today for this feedback session on research use and needs for TANF professionals. The information you provide today will help shape OPRE's thinking on improving access to and use of research through its Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse, which provides information on evidence-based approaches to help individuals with low incomes find jobs.

I will be facilitating our discussion today. With me is [Notetaker's Name], who will take notes to ensure we capture all your insights. To ensure accuracy in our notes, we will also be recording the audio from this session. Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that participation in this session is voluntary and appreciated. We will be providing a small honorarium of $100 as a token of appreciation for your time and expertise. Before we get started, let's do a quick round of introductions. Please state your name, your title, and your organization. Please also provide one sentence describing your role within your organization.

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Informed Consent Notification

Before we begin our session, we will go over some important details about it and what it involves before you agree to participate. The purpose of today is to get feedback on how to enhance the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for use by TANF administrators or their state-level TANF staff.

Taking part in this feedback session is voluntary. If you decide to participate but change your mind, you may stop and exit anytime. If you decide to stop and leave the session early, you do not have to give a reason, and there will be no negative consequences for ending your participation.

If you decide to participate in this session, we will ask you questions about your role and work, how you use research in that work, and what your research needs are related to your work. This session will last approximately 90 minutes.

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As we start our discussion, please keep your microphones muted when not speaking to avoid background noise. If the conversation gets lively and you're finding it hard to chime in, please use the "raise hand" feature. We may call on participants directly to share their insights if we have quieter moments.

Alright, let's get started. We're now starting the recording. (Notetaker begins recording)

Purpose of the Feedback Session and Agenda for Today (5 minutes)

The purpose of today's session is to learn about how human services professionals use research to inform their program and services strategies and support their programs. This feedback will help the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse team identify opportunities to strengthen the Clearinghouse so that users like you can become a trusted and easy-to-use source of research for those who oversee programs that deliver human services programs.

Before we start our session, I am going to give you a bit of context on the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse collects studies that examine the labor market effects (such as employment and earnings) of interventions that serve individuals with low incomes. It assesses the quality of these studies and summarizes their findings, focusing on employment-related outcomes and intervention (or program) details. You can access Pathways to Work by visiting their website at the following address: https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/.

Just to orient you on how we will spend our time together, we will ask questions on three main topics:

- Understanding if, how, and when you use research in your work
- Exploring how you find and access research to inform your work
- Understanding your preferences and outstanding needs you have around research findings to inform your work

We truly appreciate your time and look forward to gaining a deeper insight into how Pathways to Work Clearinghouse can best serve your research needs.

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Amelia.Popham@ACF.hhs.gov. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved today's feedback session. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

Background and context: participants' work and their experience using research (30 min)

Many of the questions we have for you today are about how you might be or could be using research to inform your work. The term 'research' can mean different things to different people. For example, let's say someone asked us for research to show that a particular job training program is working. Some might consider research to be a systematically conducted study that compares the outcomes of a group that receives the treatment to the outcomes of a group that does not receive the treatment. For others, research might be statistics or facts in a news report about the workforce program.

However, when we refer to 'research' in the context of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, we're referring to the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are achieving their goals. In general, these studies compare two groups of people – one that receives the program or service, and one that doesn't – to see if the program made a difference. These studies focus on whether programs help improve people's employment, earnings, public benefit receipt, or education and training outcomes. That's the kind of 'research' that the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse collects and organizes to make it easier for people to find. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse gathers, rates, and makes this research available to the public. A key goal of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is to help people who run programs for people with low incomes assess and use research so that they can make evidence-informed decisions as they design or adapt their programs, to improve the odds that people they serve succeed in the labor market.

Now, let's move to learning more about you and your work.

1. **Background and Work:** Can you describe a typical day in your role? What are your main responsibilities?
2. **Services and Population:** How would you describe the clients you serve in your TANF program?

Next, let's talk about how you might use research findings in your work.

3. **Personal Use of Research**.
    - Can you think of a recent time when you used or wanted to use research findings to inform your work?
        i. What information did you need, and what decisions did those research findings inform?
    - Do you use research to inform your TANF program or state plan? If so, how?
        i. If you think about all the different roles you play, what are some areas of work in which you might use research findings (e.g., strategic planning, budgeting and resource allocations, day-to-day service delivery decisions, understanding a problem your TANF program faces, justifying program decisions to internal or external audiences)?
    - Have you or your team ever been asked to provide proof of your program's effectiveness by your state legislature or other external audiences? If yes, what research findings, data, or other information did you use to respond to those requests?
4. **Using Research in the Decision-making process**: We are interested in exploring the ways in which findings from research may help you make decisions about your TANF program and how to best serve individuals with low incomes .
    - Can you tell us more about how your agency makes decisions about how services, interventions, and/or programs to offer the individuals you serve?

        i. **Probe**: For example, do you have an annual strategic planning process that happens on a regular cycle? Does your team meet regularly to determine what programs, services, or interventions to offer your participants? What information do you use to inform those decisions?
    - Which members of your team are involved in your strategic and day-to-day decision-making processes about your state's TANF program? What information do they need to make decisions about your program?
    - Is there a particular time of year or part of your planning cycle where it would be especially useful to have information from research to inform your decision-making process?
5. **Using Research in Decision-making:** In an ideal world, how would you like to use research to inform your decision-making? What kinds of information would you need and how would you access this information?

Accessing research: trusted sources, challenges, and potential solutions (20 minutes)

Now, we'd like to learn if and how you currently access research on workforce programs, interventions, and services:

6. **Personal Research Access.** Do you currently access research findings on workforce programs, interventions, and services? If so:
    - Where do you go to find research you find helpful or useful?
        i. **Probe**: What makes research useful to you? How do you determine if research is credible?
    - **Probe:** How much time do you have to find, read, and apply findings from research to your work environment? Are some kinds of research findings easier to apply than others?
7. **Strengths.** What do you like about the content that your go-to sources share?
    - **Probe:** What do you think about the presentation or format? What makes these sources easy to find? What makes them easy to act on?
    - **Probe:** Can you describe a time when you used research that was easy to act on?
8. **Challenges:** Can you tell us more about any challenges you or your staff have experienced when trying to find and use research (e.g., no research findings on topic of interest, findings are hard to understand, different studies have conflicting information)?
    - What familiarity do these staff members have with common research terms and methodologies?

Research needs: products and content (20 minutes)

Next, we want to delve into the types of research products that serve you best:

9. **Research Products:** What kinds of research products do you prefer (for example, one-pagers, briefs, info-graphics, evaluation reports, data sets, presentations, webinars, podcasts, etc.)? What makes research findings easy to apply in your operations?
10. **Content Needs:** On what topics or strategies do you want or need research to support your work related to TANF?
11. **Dissemination Preferences:** What are the most effective ways to share information about research findings with you and your teams? Are there particular channels (i.e., newsletters, websites, emails from state or agency leadership) that you engage with more actively than others?
    - **Probe:** Are you more likely to engage with research if you hear about it through industry groups (i.e., National Association for Workforce Boards, American Association for Community Colleges), American Public Human Services Association, trusted advisors, webinars sponsored by government agencies, newsletters, your leadership, or other sources of information?
    - **Probe: Consumption Preferences**: How do you prefer to consume research-based information, such as through detailed reports, executive summaries, infographics, webinars, or other formats?

- **Probe: Frequency**: What frequency of updates or new research products would be most useful for your work?

Wrap-up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Thank you so much for sharing your time and insight with us today. Your input will be synthesized and incorporated into a summary report for ACF to inform enhancements to the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. Before we close today, is there anything else we should consider or anything else we have yet to ask about?

Thank you again and have a great rest of your day.

Feedback Session D: State and local policymakers

Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Logistics (5 minutes)

Hello, and welcome. My name is [Insert Name], and I am a [Insert Title] at [Insert Organization]. On behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), I want to thank you for joining us today for this feedback session on research use and needs for policymakers. The information you provide today will help shape OPRE's thinking on improving access to and use of research through its Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, which provides information on evidence-based approaches to help individuals with low incomes find jobs.

I will be facilitating our discussion today. With me is [Notetaker's Name], who will take notes to ensure we capture all your insights. To ensure accuracy in our notes, we will also be recording the audio from this session. Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that participation in this session is voluntary and appreciated. We will be providing a small honorarium of $100 as a token of appreciation for your time and expertise. Before we get started, let's do a quick round of introductions. Please state your name, your title, and your organization. Please also provide one sentence describing your role within your organization.

Please let [Technical Assistant's Name] know if you experience any technical difficulties during today's meeting. They are here to assist you. While we encourage you to turn on your cameras for a more engaging discussion, it is not mandatory. Please feel comfortable using the hand-raising, chat, and direct messaging features to contribute.

Informed Consent Notification

Before we begin our session, we will go over some important details about it and what it involves before you agree to participate. The purpose of today is to get feedback on how to enhance the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for use by state and local policymakers. You have been asked to participate because of your role in state or local policymaking.

Taking part in this feedback session is voluntary. If you decide to participate but change your mind, you may stop and exit anytime. If you decide to stop and leave the session early, you do not have to give a reason, and there will be no negative consequences for ending your participation.

If you decide to participate in this session, we will ask you questions about your role and work, how you use research in that work, and what your research needs are related to your work. This session will last approximately 90 minutes.

Any information we collect about you will be kept private. To protect your privacy, any recording of this session will be destroyed upon verification of our notes for this session. The recording will only be accessed by the Pathways to Work team. You will not be identified by name in any reports that result from this feedback session.

By continuing to participate in this session, you are indicating that you understand the purpose of this feedback session and your role in it. You also acknowledge that you have been informed of your rights and the voluntary

nature of your participation. You understand that this session will be recorded and used for research purposes and that all your responses will be kept private. Please type “I agree” in the chat if you agree to these terms. You may also unmute yourself and say “I agree” instead.

As we start our discussion, please keep your microphones muted when not speaking to avoid background noise. If the conversation gets lively and you’re finding it hard to chime in, please use the “raise hand” feature.

Alright, let’s get started. We’re now starting the recording. (Notetaker begins recording)

Purpose of the Feedback Session and Agenda for Today (5 minutes)

The purpose of today’s session is to learn about how policymakers use research to inform their state and local human services and workforce development programs. This feedback will help the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse team identify opportunities to strengthen the Clearinghouse for users like you so that it can become a trusted and easy-to-use source of research for policymakers.

Before we start our session, I am going to give you a bit of context on the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse collects studies that examine the labor market effects (such as employment and earnings) of programs, or interventions, that serve individuals with low incomes. It assesses the quality of these studies and summarizes their findings, focusing on employment-related outcomes and intervention (or program) details. You can access Pathways to Work by visiting their website at the following address: https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/.

During this session, we will ask questions about:

- If, how, and when you use research to inform your work
- How you find and access research
- Your wants and needs related to research findings and research products

We truly appreciate your time and look forward to gaining a deeper insight into how Pathways to Work Clearinghouse can best serve your research needs.

Disclaimer

Before we begin, please take a minute to read the text that [Notetaker] has just put into the chat. This text shares some important information about our plan for collecting information today. We are collecting this information as a part of our work on the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved today’s feedback session. Through this information collection, ACF is gathering information to improve the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov) website. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per respondent, including the time for preparing for the session, reviewing instructions, and participating in the session. This is a voluntary collection of information. agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 9/30/2025. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Amelia Popham at Amelia.Popham@ACF.hhs.gov. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

Background and context: participants’ work and their experience using research (30 min)

Many of the questions we have for you today are on how you might be or could be using research to inform your work. The term 'research' can mean different things to different people. For example, let's say someone asked us for research to show that a particular job training program is working. Some might consider research to be a systematically conducted study that compares the outcomes of a group that receives the treatment to the outcomes of a group that does not receive the treatment. For others, research might be statistics or facts in a news report about the workforce program.

However, when we refer to 'research' in the context of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, we're referring to the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are achieving their goals. In general, these studies compare two groups of people – one that receives the program or service, and one that doesn't – to see if the program made a difference. These studies focus on whether programs help improve people's employment, earnings, public benefit receipt, or education and training outcomes. That's the kind of 'research' that the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse collects and organizes to make it easier for people to find. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse gathers, rates, and makes this research available to the public. A key goal of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is to help people who run employment and training programs for people with low incomes assess and use research findings so that they can make evidence-informed decisions as they design or adapt their programs, to improve the odds that people they serve succeed in the labor market.

Now, let's discuss the role of research in your work.

1. **Background and Work:** Please tell us more about the organization you are a part of or work for. To what extent does your organization make or inform policies on state or local human services programming? On state or local workforce development programs?
    - Please tell us more about your role and your main responsibilities.
2. **Services and Population:** What are the priority groups that your organization is trying to serve through employment and job training services in your state or local community?

Next, let's talk about how you might use research in your work. We would like to understand how and if state and local policymakers are using research and data to inform their work.

3. **Personal Research Use**.
    - Can you think of a recent time when you used or wanted to use research findings to inform your policymaking work? Remember, when we use the word "research," we mean the results of studies that assess whether workforce programs or services are helping the individuals who participate in these programs achieve their goals. What information did you need, and what decisions did that research inform?
    - Do you use research to inform policy discussions related to workforce development and human services programs? If so, how?
        i. **Probe**: For example, how might you use research findings to:
            a. inform policy development, budgeting and resource allocations, or determine which legislative decisions are allowable,
            b. learn more about the societal issues or problem your organization is working to address and/or the constituents your organization serves,
            c. identify new ways of addressing complex social or economic problems,
            d. provide justification to other policymakers, stakeholders, or the public about your organization's current policies/practices/programs,
            e. validate or confirm existing policy assumptions or a hunch about how to improve your program,

f. and/or facilitate conversations with colleagues about policy improvements.

4. **Policy-making process**: We are interested in exploring the ways in which findings from research may help you make or inform policies related to human services and/or employment and training programs for individuals with low incomes.
    - Can you tell us more about how your organization's policymaking process?
        i. What information do you use to inform policy decisions?
        ii. Which members of your team are involved in making decisions about human services and/or employment and job training policies or policy implementation? What information do they need to make these decisions?
        iii. Is there a particular time of year or part of your policymaking cycle where it would be especially useful to have information from research to inform your policymaking process?
5. **Using Research in Decision-making:** In an ideal world, how would you like to use research to inform your decision-making or policy discussions as it relates to human services or workforce programs? What would help your team more easily or more effectively use findings from research when making policy decisions about human services and/or employment and job training programs?
    - **Probe**: For example, what changes to the format, delivery, or content of research studies or summaries would help your team more easily or effectively use research findings?

Accessing research: trusted sources, challenges, and potential solutions (20 minutes)

Now, we'd like to learn if and how you currently access research on workforce programs, interventions, and services:

6. **Personal Research Access.** Do you currently access research about human services and/or workforce development programs to inform your work? If so:
    - Where do you go to find research you find helpful or useful?
        i. **Probe**: What makes research useful to you? How do you determine if research is credible?
    - How do you typically access research? Do you actively seek out findings from research? Do others send it to you? If the latter, who sends it and how?
    - On average, how much time do you have to find, read, and apply findings from research to your operating environment? Are some kinds of research findings easier to apply than others?
7. **Strengths.** What do you like about the content that your go-to sources share?
    - **Probe:** What do you think about the presentation or format? What makes these sources easy to find? What makes them easy to act on?
    - **Probe:** Can you describe a time when you used research that was easy to act on? What about that research (i.e., content, format, presentation) made it easy to act on?
8. **Challenges:** Can you tell us more about any challenges you or your staff have experienced when trying to find and use research (e.g., no research on topic of interest, findings are hard to understand, different studies have conflicting information) related to human services or workforce programs?

Research needs: products and content (20 minutes)

Next, we want to delve into the types of research products that serve you best:

9. **Research Products:** What kinds of research products are easy to understand (for example, one-pagers, briefs, info-graphics, evaluation reports, data sets, conferences, presentations, webinars, podcasts, trainings, etc.)? What makes research findings easy to use to inform policy discussions and decisions?
    - **Probe**: Do you need them to be a certain length, include key pieces of information, use graphics and other visuals to communicate content, etc.?

- **Probe**: What key factors do you look for in research to determine its applicability to your work?

10. **Adapting the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for Policymakers:** The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is a searchable database on evidence-based approaches for helping individuals with low incomes find jobs. If OPRE wanted to make this database more useful for state and local policymakers, what about the presentation, functionality, or content of the database would be important for our team to consider?
11. **Content Needs:** On what topics or strategies do you most want or need research or data to inform your policy discussions and decisions related to human services and/or employment and job training programs?
12. **Dissemination Preferences:** What are the most effective ways to share information from research studies with you and your teams?
    - **Probe**: Are you more likely to engage with research findings from certain information sources or channels? What would make you more likely to implement strategies that were found to have worked?

Wrap-up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Thank you so much for sharing your time and insight with us today. Your input will be synthesized and incorporated into a summary report for ACF to inform enhancements to the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. Before we close today, is there anything else we should consider or anything else we have not asked about?

Thank you again and have a great rest of your day.

Feedback Session E: Researchers, such as evaluators and university-based academics

Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Logistics (5 minutes)

Hello, and welcome. My name is [Insert Name], and I am a [Insert Title] at [Insert Organization]. On behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), I want to thank you for joining us today for this feedback session on research use and needs for researchers and evaluators. The information you provide today will help shape OPRE's thinking on improving access to and use of research through its Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, which provides information on evidence-based approaches to help individuals with low incomes find jobs.

I will be facilitating our discussion today. With me is [Notetaker's Name], who will take notes to ensure we capture all your insights. To ensure accuracy in our notes, we will also be recording the audio from this session. Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that participation in this session is voluntary and appreciated. We will be providing a small honorarium of $100 as a token of appreciation for your time and expertise. Before we get started, let's do a quick round of introductions. Please state your name, your title, and your organization. Please also provide one sentence describing your role within your organization.

Please let [Technical Assistant's Name] know if you experience any technical difficulties during today's meeting. They are here to assist you. While we encourage you to turn on your cameras for a more engaging discussion, it is not mandatory. Please feel comfortable using the hand-raising, chat, and direct messaging features to contribute.

Informed Consent Notification

Before we begin our session, we will go over some important details about it and what it involves before you agree to participate. The purpose of today is to get feedback on how to enhance the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for use by researchers. You have been asked to participate because you are a researcher.

Taking part in this feedback session is entirely your choice. If you decide to participate but change your mind, you may stop and exit at any time. If you decide to stop and leave the session early, you do not have to give a reason, and there will be no negative consequences for ending your participation.

If you decide to participate in this session, you will be asked questions about your use of evidence clearinghouses, opportunities to enhance the content of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, and options for improving researcher engagement with it. This session will last approximately 90 minutes.

Any information we collect about you will be kept private. To protect your privacy, any recording of this session will be destroyed upon verification of our notes for this session. The recording will only be accessed by the Pathways to Work team. You will not be identified by name in any reports that result from this feedback session.

By continuing to participate in this session, you are indicating that you understand the purpose of this feedback session and your role in it. You also acknowledge that you have been informed of your rights and the voluntary nature of your participation. You understand that this session will be recorded and used for research purposes and that all your responses will be kept private. Please type "I agree" in the chat if you agree to these terms. You may also unmute yourself and say "I agree" instead.

As we start our discussion, please keep your microphones muted when not speaking to avoid background noise. If the conversation gets lively and you're finding it hard to chime in, please use the "raise hand" feature. We may call on participants directly to share their insights if we have quieter moments.

Alright, let's get started. We're now starting the recording. (Notetaker begins recording)

Purpose of the Feedback Session and Agenda for Today (5 minutes)

The purpose of today's session is to learn about how researchers and evaluators use evidence clearinghouses, like the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse, to inform their research. This feedback will help the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse team identify opportunities to strengthen the Clearinghouse for users like you so that it can become a trusted and easy-to-use source of research for researchers and evaluators.

Before we start our session, I am going to give you a bit of context on the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse collects and systematically assesses the quality of studies that examine the labor market effects (such as employment and earnings) of programs, or interventions, that serve individuals with low incomes. The Clearinghouse summarizes these studies' findings, focusing on employment-related outcomes and intervention (or program) details. You can access Pathways to Work by visiting their website at the following address: https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/

During this session, we will ask questions about:

- Use of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for research
- Research gaps and opportunities
- Engagement with the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse

We truly appreciate your time and look forward to gaining a deeper insight into how Pathways to Work Clearinghouse can best serve your needs.

Disclaimer

Before we begin, please take a minute to read the text that [Notetaker] has just put into the chat. This text shares some important information about our plan for collecting information today. We are collecting this information as a part of our work on the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved today's feedback session. Through this information collection, ACF is gathering information to improve the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov) website. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per respondent, including the time for preparing for the session, reviewing instructions, and participating in the session. This is a voluntary collection of information. agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 9/30/2025. If you have any

comments on this collection of information, please contact Amelia Popham at Amelia.Popham@ACF.hhs.gov. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

Use of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse for Research (30 minutes)

This section will explore how the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse can be enhanced to support research.

1. We would like to begin by understanding how you may be using the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse in your work. Can you describe a time where you used the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse to inform your research work?
    - If so, how well did the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse meet your needs in this instance?
    - If so, what did you find useful about the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse? What did you find challenging?
    - As you think about your role and future work, how could the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse be adapted to better meet your research needs?
    - If not, why haven't you used the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse to inform your research?
2. For what purposes do you visit evidence clearinghouses in conducting your work?
    - If you use them, how frequently do you use evidence clearinghouses in your research, and what prompts you to use them?
3. What features of evidence clearinghouses do you find most beneficial for your research projects?
    - Please describe any content that is or would be especially useful.
    - Please describe any website functionalities that are especially helpful.
    - Please describe how particular presentations of findings may be especially helpful.
4. Does the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse provide sufficient information to synthesize evidence across individual studies easily?

Understanding Evidence and Identifying Research Gaps and Opportunities (20 minutes)

Let's discuss how Pathways to Work Clearinghouse can help researchers understand the existing evidence base and identify and fill research gaps.

5. Have you used the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse to understand the existing evidence base and/or identify existing gaps in the literature? Have you used the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse to support other activities?
6. What topics or areas of research do you believe require more attention within the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse?
7. Can you suggest any strategies for the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse to encourage research that fills these gaps?
8. Are there specific types of information or data you need that are currently lacking in the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse?
9. What kinds of evidence summary or research products do you want to see produced by the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse?
10. What strategies could help disseminate research findings, evidence summaries, and research products to the research community (i.e., newsletters, webinars, podcasts, etc.)?

Researcher Engagement with the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse (20 minutes)

This section will focus on increasing researcher engagement with the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse.

11. What features could motivate researchers to engage more with the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse?

12. What might motivate researchers to conduct and report research in line with the Pathways to Work evidence standards?
13. How can the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse facilitate the better dissemination of research findings to a broader academic audience, including emerging scholars and researchers based at universities and non-profits?
14. What challenges do you face when accessing or contributing to the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse?
15. How can the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse form stronger relationships with academic institutions and research organizations?
16. What methods of communication would you prefer the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse to use to keep you informed about new evidence and research products?

Wrap-up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Thank you so much for sharing your time and insight with us today. Your input will be synthesized and incorporated into a summary report for ACF to inform enhancements to the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. Before we close today, is there anything else we should consider or anything else we have not asked about?

Thank you again and have a great rest of your day.

Feedback Session F: Individuals with lived experience

Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Logistics (5 minutes)

Hi everyone! Thanks for attending our feedback session today about the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse was created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE). Part of OPRE's job is to understand which employment and training programs can help individuals with low incomes find jobs. The Pathways to Work Clearinghouse is a website that collects information on research about programs, strategies, and services that have been found to help individuals with low incomes find jobs. We are bringing together this group to discuss the Pathway to Work Clearinghouse.

As individuals who have taken part in the kinds of programs that the Clearinghouse wants to understand, your insights will help our team learn what information should be included in the Clearinghouse and how that information could be best shared with people interested in employment and job training programs. The information you share with us today will help us make the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse research products better. We anticipate that your insights will help us make changes to the Pathways to Work website that are expected to go live in Spring 2025. We also hope that strengthening our research products will help employment and training programs use strategies and services that will lead to better employment and earnings results for the people these programs serve. We will be providing a small honorarium of $100 as a token of appreciation for your time and expertise.

I'm [Your Name], and I'll lead our talk. [Notetaker's Name] is also here to record what we discuss. To ensure accuracy in our notes, we will also be recording the audio from this session. We're glad you're here. Before we start, let's all introduce ourselves. Could you please share your name and tell us which part of the country you're joining us from today?

If you have trouble connecting to or contributing to the meeting, tell [Technical Assistant's Name]. They're ready to help. You don't have to turn on your camera if you don't want to. Feel free to raise your hand, chat, or message if you're going to say something.

We'll keep what you say private. However, we would like to record this session to have accurate notes, but only if you're OK with it. It's OK if you don't want to be recorded.

Informed Consent Notification

Before we start, we need to go over some things about this session. We're here today to talk about how we can make the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse better.

Joining this conversation is totally up to you. If you decide to join but then change your mind, that's okay. You can leave at any time. If you decide to leave early, you don't have to tell us why, and nothing bad will happen.

If you decide to stay, we'll ask you some questions. We want to know about your background and what proof or facts you'd be interested in seeing when choosing a job training or related programs. This conversation will take about 90 minutes.

We promise to keep any information that you share with us private. We are recording this session to make sure we don't miss anything, but we'll destroy the recording once we've checked our notes. Only the Pathways to Work team will be able to listen to the recording. We won't use your name in any reports we write about this session.

By staying in this session, you're saying that you understand what this conversation is for and what your part in it is. You also know that you have rights and that it's your choice to be here. You understand that we're recording this session for research and that we'll keep everything you say private. Does anybody have any questions?

If you're okay with all of this, please type "I agree" in the chat. If you prefer, you can unmute yourself and say "I agree" out loud.

To avoid background noise, please turn off your mic when you're not talking. If you want to speak but others are talking, please use the raise your hand function.

OK, let's begin. We're going to start recording now. (Notetaker starts recording)

Purpose of the Feedback Session and Agenda for Today (5 minutes)

Today, we want to hear about your experiences in job training and related programs, like [Insert Example], so that we can understand how research can be used by different people to make the programs better. d. As current and former participants in these programs, you have valuable insights on how these programs can be improved from a customer perspective. Since the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse shares research on these programs, we would also like to learn more about how you think about research and how we can present research to help people make choices about which job training and related programs might be best for them. We will use the information you provide today to shape our plans to improve the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse research products. We also have a big website update scheduled for next year, so your feedback will help us organize information about what programs and strategies work to help individuals get and keep jobs.

Today we will talk about:

- Your experiences in receiving job training and related services
- The purpose of the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse and how information in the Clearinghouse may help people choose job training and related programs
- What do you think about when you hear "research"
- How do you want to learn about the facts, data, or research that shows if a job training or related program is working or not

Thanks for giving us your time. We can't wait to hear what you have to share.

<u>Disclaimer</u>

Before we begin, please take a minute to read the text that [Notetaker] has just put into the chat. This text shares some important information about our plan for collecting information today. We are collecting this information as

a part of our work on the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved today's feedback session. This information collection, ACF is gathering information to improve the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov) website. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per respondent, including the time for preparing for the session, reviewing instructions, and participating in the session. This is a voluntary collection of information. agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 9/30/2025. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Amelia Popham at Amelia.Popham@ACF.hhs.gov. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

Understanding Your Experience (30 minutes)

Let's talk about your experience with job training or related programs.

1. Can you tell us what it was like for you in the job training or related program?
    - **Probe**: When you first joined the program, what did you think it would be like? Did it turn out that way?
    - **Probe**: Was there anything you wish you had known before starting the program or while in it?
2. What did the program share with you about what you were likely to get out of the program (i.e., you likelihood to connect with a job, get a license, etc.)? Was it easy to understand the information the program and its staff were sharing?
    - **Probe**: Looking back, what information do you think could have made your time in the program better?
    - **Probe**: Is there any information you wish you had while you were in the program?
    - **Probe**: What do you wish the staff knew or understood better about people in the program?
3. What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about enrolling in a job training program?
4. If you were going to join another job training program, what would you want to know beforehand?

How Jobs Programs Use Research (10 minutes)

When we talk about "research," we're talking about information that we've gathered and looked at carefully to see if a program is really achieving its goals, like helping people get jobs. We can get this research by asking people in the program and the people who run it about their experiences and by looking at data or facts. The research included in the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse compares two groups of people – one that receives the program or service, and one that doesn't – to see if the program made a difference. These studies focus on whether programs help improve people's employment, earnings, public benefit receipt, or education and training outcomes. This research helps us understand what types of employment and training programs are working and what might need to change to improve them.

Job training programs use research to find better ways to help people. They also contribute to creating research on their program to check if they're doing a good job at reaching their goals. Research helps us see which strategies are working and which ones aren't for the people in the program. This way, we can keep making the program better and more helpful for everyone involved. Staff use findings from research, too. For example, a case manager might use information from research to see if there are things they can do to improve how they serve people.

How you Engage with Research (10 minutes)

Let's talk about what research means to you.

5. What does 'research' mean to you?
    - **Probe**: Are you aware of any examples of research findings that you or a program you participated in have used? If so, what were they? Have you ever been involved in creating research findings by participating in a research study?
6. Has there been a time when you saw proof or research findings that a program you were participating in worked?
    - **Probe**: If so, what questions did you have about that proof? How was it presented to you? Did this proof influence your decisions about participating in the program? How did you know the program was working for you?

Now, let's discuss what information you find helpful when searching for job training programs.

7. What kind of proof or facts do you want to see when looking at starting a job training program?
8. Is the information you get about programs clear and helpful? What would make it better?
9. Do you look for information on a program's success when choosing a job training program? If so, what's the most important thing you look for in the information about a program's success?
10. If given the opportunity, how would you want to be involved in shaping the way programs share information about their success in the future?

The Best Way to Provide You Research (20 minutes)

Finally, we want your feedback on what information you wish to receive during and after participating in a job training program.

11. How would you like to get information about how successful a job training program is?
    - How would you like to receive the information? Would you like to receive it via a phone call, text, email, letter, or some other means?
    - What is the most reliable way to reach you if a job training program has important information for you?
12. What kind of information do you wish the program staff you interacted with had when working with you? Is there any information about the program or related services you wish you were told about that you never received or wish you knew earlier?
13. Did staff in your program share information on how certain services or programs could help you improve your employment, earnings, or education? How was that information communicated and was it easy to understand?
    - **Probe**: On what topics in particular would you have appreciated more or clearer information?

Wrap-up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Thank you so much for talking with us today. We're going to share what you told us with the team that is working to improve the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse. They will include your feedback in their thinking about how to make the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse a useful tool for individuals who are looking to enroll in job training programs. Before we end, is there anything else you want to say or any questions we didn't ask?

Thanks again, and I hope you have a great day.