Instrument 2: Listening Session Topic Guide

Email to Participants: This email will be sent in advance to potential participants and the contractor will also review this material and seek oral consent.

Dear [Name],

My name is [NAME], and I am a part of a team of researchers from the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Washington DC. The US Department of Health and Human Services has funded us to do a study to increase understanding among youth service providers, the government, and others about how programs like the Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Demonstration Program (or RHY PDP) are designed and operated. The study also addresses how projects form partnerships and social service networks to support young people at risk of experiencing homelessness.

As part of this study, and due to your role in an organization that is involved with a RHY PDP project, **we are inviting you to participate in a virtual listening session**. In this email, we describe the listening session and explain what participation entails. If you are willing to participate, we'll also ask you indicate your availability below.

We are interested in how different organizations and RHY PDP grantees work together to promote cross-sector collaboration and innovation in service delivery. By conducting this listening session with partners across all 10 demonstration sites, we hope to learn how the relationships among RHY PDP were formed, and how partnerships in the broader community have formed in different contexts and geographies.

We value your perspective and expertise, so we hope you'll consider the opportunity to share them through this listening session. The session will take up to 90 minutes and will occur virtually on Zoom. Your participation is voluntary. You don't have to participate if you don't want to. You may also leave the conversation at any time. There are no consequences regardless of what you decide. Your responses will contribute to our effort to identify opportunities to improve homelessness prevention and services for youth at risk of experiencing homelessness. The purpose of the listening session is to learn from your insights and experience. There are no right or wrong answers.

We will be taking notes during the listening session. We will treat any information you share as private. Everyone on the research team has signed a pledge promising to never share your name with anyone outside of our team. We won't identify you in a quote or tell anyone what you said today. We will share our findings with our funder and will produce one or more reports. Information from all listening session participants will be combined so that no one person can be identified. That said, it's still possible someone could guess who provided a response. We will do everything we can to avoid this but want you to be aware of this small possibility.

If you would like to participate, please let us know which session(s) you would be available to join:

- Listening Session 1: [Insert date/time options]
- Listening Session 2: [Insert date/time options]

We would also like to record the discussion so we can listen to it later, when we write up our notes, and make sure we captured information accurately. No one besides our research team will hear the recording. We will only record the discussion if everyone agrees. If you have any objections to recording the listening session, please let us know now by responding to this e-mail. You can also decline recording at the time of the listening session, via private chat feature.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out to Co-Principal Investigators Anne Farrell (afarrell@urban.org) or Michael Pergamit (mpergamit@urban.org) for any questions about the study or listening sessions.

Listening Session Outline and Description

Listening Session Introductions: *Research team provides an overview of the study and the purpose of the learning session (under 10 minutes) aloud.*

Hello all. Thanks for joining us. I'm [name], and I am here with my colleague(s), [name(s)]. As you may know, we are from the Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Washington DC. The US Department of Health and Human Services has funded us to do a study to increase understanding among youth service providers, the government, and others about how programs like the Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Demonstration Program (RHY PDP) projects form partnerships and social service networks to serve young people at risk of experiencing homelessness.

We've scheduled 90 minutes for this session and hope you can stay with us! This session is voluntary. You do not have to be here and can stay quiet for any question, as you see fit. We will start with introductions and some general discussion, followed by two breakout groups. The first breakout session will be organized by role (what system or program you are mainly affiliated with) and the second will be by site. We sent this and additional information by email. and want to refresh your memory, make sure you understand what participation means, and obtain your oral consent.

The listening session concerns how different organizations in the RHY PDP projects work together toward cross-sector collaboration and innovation in services—and we wish to gather your reflections on how the RHY PDP is going so far. By conducting this session across all 10 sites, we hope to learn how the relationships among RHY PDP partners and broader communities have formed.

We will take notes and share our findings—but we will never share anything that identifies you or would enable anyone to identify you. There are no right or wrong answers. Our goal is for all of us to learn with and from each other and eventually to inform other prevention programs. You are the pioneers—the first-ever group of federally funded youth homelessness prevention demonstration programs.

We're doing everything possible on our end to ensure the privacy of the information you share (including having this conversation in private spaces), but due to the technical limitations of Zoom, we cannot ensure that it stays private from people who may overhear on your end.

In addition, we want everyone to feel comfortable sharing their ideas. We'll ask that *what is said here*, *stays here* and encourage everyone to *hold onto and share what is learned*. In this way, if we all agree, we can maintain a safe space and leave the meeting having learned.

All of this being said, we have taken ample precautions to ensure your privacy, but we cannot guarantee the security of this call or any individual's commitment to not repeat what is said. Do you have any questions before we begin?

If there were objections in email about recording, inform the group that only handwritten notes will be taken. If no prior objections sent over email:

As we mentioned, we would like to record this listening session so we can listen to it later when we write up our notes to make sure we captured everything accurately. No one besides our research team and the transcription vendor will listen to the recording. We will only record the discussion if everyone agrees to. If you have any objections to us recording our discussion, please use the chat feature to let us know privately. We will take a short pause to ensure everyone has time to decide.

Brief pause (less than one minute).

If there are no objections, begin recording. If there are objections, inform the group that only handwritten notes will be taken. Begin discussion.

I. **Polls:**

1. Which of the following best describes your organization's relationship with the local Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Demonstration Program (RHY PDP) project?

    a. Member of RHY PDP grantee organization/team
    b. Youth advisory board partner, or similar
    c. Housing or homelessness service partner
    d. School system/education partner
    e. Child welfare partner
    f. Referral source/provider
    g. Law enforcement/incarceration partner
    h. Behavioral health or healthcare partner
    i. Other partner. Please specify.

<Display results, discuss as indicated>

2. From what system or source do most of your referrals come from? That is, how are young people first identified or referred to the PDP?

    a. Housing or homelessness service partner
    b. School system/education partner
    c. Child welfare partner/provider
    d. Other referral source/provider
    e. Law enforcement/incarceration partner
    f. Behavioral health or healthcare partner
    g. Self-identified
    h. Referred by another young person
    i. Other (specify): _____

<Display results, discuss as indicated>

II. Breakout Session #1 (Partnerships and Collaboration)
Broken out *by partner type/role in PDP* (30 minutes)

1. Partnership and reach

- Representation of partners in RHY PDP
- Exploration of partner reach, size, and gaps
- Grantee and partner representation/participation in working groups on homelessness, foster care, juvenile justice, health, or other connected systems

2. Decision-making process and collaboration

- Processes and engagement in a collaborative decision-making process
- Extent of co-design of project activities and programs with young people with experience of housing instability or homelessness

3. Roles and responsibilities within partnerships

- Clarity in roles and responsibilities in RHY PDP project partnerships
- Referrals to other community-based agencies

II. **Review and break:** Participants reconvene for a short debrief and break. (Debrief 5 mins, Break 5 mins = 10 minutes)

III. **Breakout Session #2 (Benefits, Challenges, and New Collaborations):** Broken out *by site* (30 minutes)

1. **Benefits of RHY PDP partnership**

   - Ways RHY PDP partnerships met or exceeded its goals
   - Mutual benefits of RHY PDP partnerships
   - Positive changes to existing community partnerships
   - Coordination and collaboration across partners

2. **Challenges with RHY PDP partnership**

   - Ways RHY PDP partnerships have fallen short of its goals
   - Challenges RHY PDP partnerships have encountered and how they were overcome
   - Areas for improvement; plans for changes and modifications
   - Advice for partnership building in other communities interested in similar interventions

3. **Collaboration beyond RHY PDP and Supports for Young People**

   - Sustainability
   - Access to services in the community
   - New partnerships or collaborations as a result of RHY PDP project
   - Lasting impacts of RHY PDP partnerships
   - Interest in future partnerships

IV. **Review and Wrap-up:** Participants reconvene for a short debrief and wrap-up. (10 minutes)

Thank you! If you have any questions about today's listening session, please contact the study's Principal Investigator, Anne Farrell (afarrell@urban.org).