

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Focus Group Discussion Guide**  
**Updated 10.3.12**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Labor have contracted with MDRC to evaluate innovative subsidized and transitional employment models targeting TANF recipients, noncustodial parents, former prisoners, and other low-income parents. The goal is to better understand what kinds of employment programs are most effective at helping people with these kinds of disadvantages gain and hold regular employment.

As part of our research, we are conducting small focus group discussions with STED/ETJD participants to learn about their experiences with the program and hear about the kinds of services they've received through the program and their subsidized job. We have attached here a discussion guide with a number of questions we would like to touch on throughout the conversation. This group discussion should take about 45 minutes to complete. All of your responses to questions or comments you make here will be kept completely private by the research team; the research staff has been trained in protecting private information and your name will not appear in any written reports we produce. Your responses to these questions are also completely voluntary; you are not required to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your responses to these questions will in no way affect your participation in the STED/ETJD program or affect your receipt of any kinds of public benefits or services. All of the study results will be reported for groups of individuals; no results will be analyzed or reported for individuals.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-XXXX and it expires XX/XX/XXXX.

Thanks in advance for your time helping us with this valuable research. If you have any questions or would like any more information about the project, please contact Dan Bloom, the project director, at 212-340-8611 or at dan.bloom@mdrc.org.

### **Participant Focus Group Discussion Guide**

Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED)  
Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD)

1. Recruitment -- How did you learn about the program? Was your participation mandatory or voluntary? Why were you interested in the program?
2. Services/preparation - What services did the program provide? How often? How regularly did you participate? Did you feel prepared when you started the subsidized job? What would have made you feel more prepared? What other services did you need/would you have wanted? What do you still need?

3. Subsidized job –Did you have a choice about which job to take? Was this a job you think you could have found on your own? Was it similar/different to previous jobs you’ve had? What did you like/dislike about it?
4. Participation – How regularly do you participate in the program/go to work? When you don’t show up what are the reasons? Have you considered dropping out of the program?
5. Supervision --How much contact did you have with your supervisor? How would you describe your supervisor? What did supervisor help you with? Example of specific feedback, help, conversations.
6. Peer support – Have you met other people through the program/that you work with who have helped you with a job –related issue? With a personal issue?
7. Staff –How well did staff from the program get to know you? Do you feel you have a bond with any of the program staff? Have program staff been helpful?
8. Outcomes –How did participating in this program help you? Did this program or the job you got from it help you learn how to keep a job? Get better job? Did you learn new skills?
9. Unsubsidized job- Are you currently looking for work? Please describe your job search methods (this could be through the ETJD/STED program, through another employment program or service provider, on your own, through friends and family?).