

# Appendix K: Parent Interview Guide: Implementation Study (Second and Third Site Visits)

This information is being collected to inform the evaluation of the Family Unification Program (FUP) being conducted by a research team at the Urban Institute, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago and Child Trends. This information will be used to inform the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (HHS ACF) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to improve the administration of the FUP program. All the information you provide will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

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*The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Family Unification Program.<sup>[3]</sup> Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. 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 number and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-XXXX, Exp: XX/XX/XXXX. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Michael Pergamit*

## **Parent Interview Guide: Implementation Study (Second and Third Site Visits)**

*Second Site Visit (6-9 months after implementation) and Third Site Visit (18-21 months after implementation)*

**NOTE: At both site visits, interviewers will ask all questions, but the second site visit will probe for more details of the housing search and leasing process whereas the third site visit will probe for more details of the services the family received after they signed a lease.**

We are interviewing you today as a part of an evaluation of the Family Unification Program or as it's called in your community [SITE NAME FOR THE PROGRAM]. The [SITE NAME FOR THE PROGRAM] provides housing vouchers and other services to families involved in the child welfare system. We would like to hear about your thoughts and experiences with the program.

Do you have any questions or comments before we continue?

I am going to turn on the tape recorder now, and we can get started.

**NOTE: From PHA, collect name, contact information, and type of voucher (tenant v. project based).**

### **Current Housing**

First, let's talk about where you are living and the people who live with you.

- Can you tell me about your family and who currently lives with you?
  - Do you have any children who live with you?
  - (If yes): What are their ages? (If not obvious: boys or girls?)
  - [NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If no children currently in the home, choose probes appropriately for each situation.]
  - Are there other family or friends who live with you?
    - o Are they on the lease?
    - o (If not on the lease) Did you invite them to move in or did they invite themselves?
- Are you getting assistance to pay your rent for this home?
  - o If yes: How long have you been living in your current home?

- o If no: Did you ever live in housing where you received assistance with your rent? When? Why are you no longer living there?
- How did you find the home you are currently in?

## Neighborhood

Now let's talk about the neighborhood you are living in.

- Can you describe the neighborhood you live in? Is it mainly apartment buildings? Single-family homes? Some of each?
- Tell me about your neighbors, what are they like?
  - Probe: Are they mostly families with children, adults without children, older adults with grown children?
- Do most of the adults in the neighborhood work?
- What do you like most about living in this neighborhood? Like least?
- Do you have easy access to places you need to go like grocery stores, services or healthcare, parks, etc.?
  - Do you have access to public transportation?
- Do the people you rely on for support live near you? (*probe: for child care, for transportation*)
  - Who do you rely on?
  - What kind of support do they give you?
  - Does living here make it harder or easier to get the support you need from them?
- How safe do you feel living here?
  - (If feels safe): What about the neighborhood makes you feel safe?
  - (If doesn't feel safe): What about the neighborhood makes you feel unsafe?

## Past Housing

- Now let's talk about where you lived before you got your voucher. What was your housing situation right before you got your voucher?
  - o How long were you there?
  - o Who else was living with you?
- (If the parent doesn't describe being homeless): Before you got your voucher, was there a time when you were homeless, either living in a homeless or emergency shelter, in a hotel or motel, or in a place outside such as a car, a tent, a park, or on the street?
  - o **[IF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD]** Were your children with you?
- Before you got your voucher, was there a time when you lived with friends or family because you didn't have a place to stay or couldn't afford a place to stay?
  - o Were your children with you?
- How many times did you move in the two months before you got your voucher?
  - o Were there any specific reasons you moved?

### **Implementation: Voucher Issuance, Housing Search and Lease Up**

***Now that we've talked about your neighborhood and your home, I'd like to know a little more about your experiences with [SITE NAME FOR THE PROGRAM] and looking for housing.***

- To start with, how did you find out about the [SITE NAME FOR THE PROGRAM]?
- Once you found out you were in the program, did you have to fill out an application?
  - If yes:
    - o Can you tell me what the application process was like? Would you say it was easy or hard for you?
      - What makes you say that?
    - o Was the paperwork you had to fill out in order to apply difficult or easy to understand?
    - o Was it easy to get documents together that you needed in order to apply?
    - o What was it like interacting with the housing authority?

- o Did you get any help filling out the application?

If yes:

- Who helped you fill out the application?
  - o *Probe: PHA, PCWA, CoC, Other Referring/Service Partner?*
- How did they help you?
  - o *Probe: Getting documents together, interacting with the housing authority?*

- o Did you receive any help that would improve your chances of getting your application approved, such as paying off money you owed in past rent or utilities?

- o Did you receive a voucher after you first submitted your application or were you denied a voucher and you had to appeal?

If had to appeal:

- Why wasn't your application accepted the first time?
  - o *Probe: rent arrears, utility arrears, missing documents, past criminal justice involvement?*
- Did you have any help with the appeal process?

If yes:

- Who helped you with the appeal process?
- How did they help you?

- Did you have to attend an orientation or meeting at the housing authority to get your voucher?

If yes:

- o Did anyone attend the meeting with you?
  - Who attended with you?
- o Did you have any challenges attending the meeting?
  - *Probe: transportation to the housing authority? (if had difficulty with transportation, ask how got there)*

- Can you describe what happened at the orientation meeting? What kinds of things did they tell you?

*Probes:*

- o *Did they tell you how to find a landlord who would accept the voucher?*
- o *Did they tell you how much rent you'd have to pay?*
- o *Did they help you think about what neighborhoods to look in?*

- Did they tell you what you'll need to do to keep the voucher?

*Probes:*

- o *Did they tell you about who was allowed to live with you?*
- o *Did they talk about recertifying your income?*

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY ONLY APPLY IF THE FAMILY HAD A TENANT-BASED VOUCHER. IF FAMILY HAS A PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER, SKIP TO NEXT SECTION.

Now let's talk about your experiences looking for housing.

- Some people find it hard to find a landlord who will accept a voucher. Did you have any trouble finding a landlord who would accept the voucher?
- Did you have any trouble finding a place you could afford in an area where you wanted to live?
- **[IF CHILDREN ARE IN THE HOUSEHOLD]:** Did you have trouble finding a place that would be good for your children?
- When you found a place you wanted to live, did you have trouble filling out a housing application?
- Did you have any trouble paying application fees?

Now let's talk about types of help people sometimes get when they're searching for housing and when they move into a home. I'm going to go through a list of possible ways that you might have received help during your housing search and when you first moved in. For each type of help you received, tell me who provided it and whether you found them helpful.

Interviewer: if yes to any of the below ask the following two follow up questions:

- Who provided you with this help?
  - *Probe: PHA, PCWA, CoC, [Referral Partner], [Service Partner]*

- Did you find it helpful?
- Did anyone:
  - Provide you a list of other organizations that could help you find a place to live?
  - Provide you a list of landlords that accept vouchers or a list of available properties?
  - Take you on a neighborhood tour?
    - If yes: What types of neighborhoods did they take you to tour?
  - Take you to view apartments or houses?
  - Introduce you to landlords?
  - Help you fill out housing applications?
  - Give you advice on how to talk to landlords?
  - Help you interact or negotiate with landlords?
  - Go over the lease with you?
    - If yes: Did they go over how to comply with the rental lease requirements?
  - Help pay your security deposit, your first month's rent, utility start-up costs?
    - If yes: What did they help pay for?
  - Help paying for moving costs or for furniture or appliances?
    - If yes: What did they help pay for?
- Did anyone help you with your housing search or with moving into housing in a way that I haven't asked you about?

### **Implementation: Post Signing a Lease and Supportive Services**

Now let's talk about after you moved in.

- Since you've lived here, have you had any problems with your landlord or with your neighbors?
  - If yes: What sort of problems?

Interviewer: Ask the following questions whether or not the person said they had problems. They can be skipped if the person already mentioned them.

- Have you had to complain to the landlord about noisy neighbors or messes your neighbors make?
  - How about the other way around? Have any neighbors complained to the landlord about you being too noisy or messes you've made?
  - Has your landlord talked to you about any complaints from your neighbors?
  - Has your landlord talked to you about any issues related to your lease such as maintaining your home or the number of people staying in your home?
  - Has anyone from [SITE NAME FOR PROGRAM] helped you to deal with your landlord?
- Even with a voucher, some people struggle to pay their rent on time each month. How about you, have you been able to pay your rent on time each month?
    - (If had trouble paying rent on time): How many months have you been late or not paid your rent?
    - Has your landlord talked to you about being behind on your rent?
    - Have you worked out a plan with your landlord to get caught up on your rent?
    - Has anyone from {SITE NAME FOR PROGRAM} helped you come up with this plan or help negotiate with your landlord?
  - What about other expenses? Since you moved into this home, have you had any trouble paying your bills for electricity or gas?
    - (If had trouble paying bills): How many months have you been late or not paid your electricity or gas bills?
  - Since you moved into this home, has there been a time when you didn't have access to a working telephone?
    - (If had a time without a working telephone): For how long did you not have access to a working telephone? (*probe: How many times did you not have access to a working telephone?*)
  - Since you moved into this home, has there been a time when you couldn't buy all the food you needed because you didn't have enough money?
    - (If had a time when couldn't afford enough food): How many times were you not able to buy enough food?

- Since you moved into this home, was there a time when you (IF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: or your children) needed medical care but you didn't go because you couldn't afford it?
  - (If didn't go for medical care): How many times have you not gotten medical care for you or your children because you couldn't afford it?
- In general, how difficult is it for you to pay your family's bills each month?

In addition to housing, the [SITE NAME FOR PROGRAM] may provide you with help in other ways. Let's talk about help you might have received for things other than housing. I'm going to go through a list of possible types of help some people receive. You may not have needed some of these types of help, but I need to ask about each type. For each type of help you received, please tell me who provided it and whether you found it helpful.

Interviewer: if yes to any of the below services ask the following follow up questions:

- Who provided this or referred you?
    - *Probe: PHA, PCWA, CoC, [Referral Partner], [Service Partner]*
  - Did you accept the help?
  - Did you find it helpful?
- Did anyone provide or were you referred to:
  - Help furthering your education or getting a job?
  - Help with a domestic violence situation?
  - A place where you lived for drug or alcohol abuse treatment?
  - Other counseling for drug or alcohol problems?
  - **IF CHILDREN IN THE HOME:** Substance abuse treatment for your child?
  - Counseling for yourself, your family, (**IF CHILDREN IN THE HOME**, or your child) to help deal with mental health, behavioral, or emotional problems?
  - Classes to help you learn new parenting skills?
  - Someone, perhaps a nurse, who came to your home regularly to provide you information about children's health and development and help you learn new parenting skills?

- Help getting public benefits such as food stamps, welfare, SSI, WIC, or Medicaid (Interviewer: if the state has names for these programs, substitute those names)?
  - Which benefits are you receiving?
- Help getting child care?
- Help with legal issues around your children such as custody or visitation?
- Help with other legal issues such as a recent arrest or clearing up your record from past arrests?
- Help getting healthcare when you were sick or just wanted a check-up?
- Help with past credit problems such as overdue credit card bills or other debts you owe?
- Classes or counseling about budgeting or money management?
- Is there any other type of help you've gotten that I haven't asked you about?

Interviewer: If any [SITE NAME FOR THE PROGRAM] families participate in [local name for Family Self Sufficiency program], ask the following:

- Did you participate or are you currently participating in [name of local family self-sufficiency program]?
  - If yes:
    - Who offered that program? (if unclear, probe: was it the public housing authority?)
    - Can you describe the program?
      - Probe: What services did you receive through that program?
    - Did you find the program helpful?

## **Parent Information**

*Before we wrap up, I'd like to know a few things about you. Let's talk about whether you're working or looking for work and any education or training you've gotten.*

- Are you working for pay now?

**IF YES:**

- What kind of work/job do you do/have?
- How long have you done/had that?

**IF NO:**

- What are the reasons you aren't currently working?
- Are you currently looking for work?
- How much education do you have? Do you have a high school diploma or GED?
  - (If yes) Have you gotten education beyond high school?
- Have you gotten any education or training since you moved into this home? What kind?

**Big Picture and Reflecting on FUP**

I have just a few more questions to get your thoughts on how the [SITE NAME FOR PROGRAM] has affected you and your family.

- When you received your voucher, you were involved with [LOCAL NAME FOR CHILD WELFARE AGENCY]. Are you still involved with [LOCAL NAME FOR CHILD WELFARE AGENCY]?

If no:

- o When did your case close?
- o Do you think getting a home helped you do what you needed to do to close your case?
  - Is there a case manager from some organization you meet with regularly?

If yes

- What agency or organization do they work for?
  - *Probe: PHA, PCWA, CoC, [Referral Partner], [Service Partner]*
- How often do you meet with them?

- What help do they provide you?
- Do you find them helpful?

If yes:

- Do you think getting a home is helping you do the things you need to do to close your case? Do you meet with your caseworker regularly?

If yes:

- How often do you meet with them?
- What help do they provide you?
- Do you find them helpful?

Is there a case manager from some organization you meet with regularly?

o If yes,

- What agency or organization do they work for?
- *Probe: PHA, PCWA, CoC, [Referral Partner], [Service Partner]*

o How often do you meet with them?

o What help do they provide you?

o Do you find them helpful?

- Besides how having this home affected your case with [LOCAL AGENCY NAME], are there other ways living in this home has changed your family's life? If so, how?
  - o *Probes: your stress level? financial situation? Has it changed how you get help or who you go to for help? Has it helped with any challenges you've faced?*
  - o **IF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD:** *Probes: your parenting or relationships with your children? Has it changed how much time you spend with your children? How has housing affected your children? Has it changed how your children behave? Has it helped with any challenges your children have faced?*
- If you had the opportunity, what would you do to change or improve [SITE NAME FOR THE PROGRAM]?
  - *Probe: What worked well? What didn't work?*
- Is there anything else you want to tell me about any of the topics we've discussed today?

## **Closing**

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

Do you have any questions for me about the study before we finish talking today?