

Descriptive Study of the URM Program: Interview Guide for Community Partners [General]

Guidance for Review of URM Site Visit Interview Guides

The Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program information collection request includes five interview guides (Attachments D-H). The different guides focus on different sets of respondents, and each respondent will participate in only one interview during the site visits. There are some subjects that will be useful to cover with different sets of respondents, and therefore many questions are identical or similar across the guides (specifically Appendices D, E, G, and H). To help reviewers know which questions are shared across all guides, we have included a parenthetical note for each question that is asked across multiple interview guides. An asterisk indicates that the corresponding question contains small differences from the other guides, but the question is still very similar. For example, multiple guides contain questions asking the respondent to describe their place of work, but the wording is slightly different: the guide for interviewing school staff asks the respondent to describe their “school,” while the guide for interviewing staff of other types of partners asks the respondent to describe their “organization.”

Below are some examples to illustrate what we mean:

Example 1: What is your official job title? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, G, and H)**

Example 2: Please briefly describe your school, including the programs and services your school provides. **(Asked in Appendix G*)** Here, the asterisk indicates that “school” is replaced by “organization” in other guides, but the basic structure of the question is the same.

**DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS (URM) PROGRAM
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS OF STAFF OF URM PROGRAMS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

You are invited to participate in an interview for a study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program. This form will help you decide if you want to participate in the study.

Background

Researchers from two companies, MEF Associates and Child Trends, are conducting the study under contract to the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its goal is to better understand the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the URM Program.

What will I need to do?

We are talking with individuals who help implement or operate URM programs, as well as individuals who help implement or operate other programs and services accessed by unaccompanied refugee minors in the same communities. This interview will take about 60 minutes. Interview topics focus on features of your organization; services provided by the URM Program; services youth who are part of the program receive from other organizations; partnerships between local URM programs and other organizations and agencies; the experiences of youth in the program as they adjust to life in the U.S.; and data that might support future evaluations.

What are the risks and benefits of participating in this interview?

There are no significant risks to your participation. Sometimes people feel uncomfortable answering some questions. If that happens, you do not have to answer them.

Participating in the interview will not help you directly, but sharing your thoughts and experiences may help improve the services offered through the URM Program.

Will you share information from the interview?

Only the study team will see the notes or hear the recordings. Your name will not be listed in any published reports, and comments will not be attributed to you. Your answers will be kept private to the extent permissible by law. We will destroy the notes and recordings at the end of the study.

Do I have to do the interview?

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. Your participation will have no effect on your employment.

Questions:

If you have questions about the study, you can call the project director, Sam Elkin at MEF Associates at 703-838-2722.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, you can contact Child Trends' Institutional Review Board (IRB), a group that reviewed this study for your protection, at 1-855-288-3506 or by e-mail at irbparticipant@childtrends.org.

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to document features of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program and the provision of services to youth served by that program. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, collaboration, 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 control number for this collection is XXXX-XXXX and it expires XX/XX/XXXX.

DRAFT

DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS (URM) PROGRAM
VERBAL INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS OF STAFF OF URM PROGRAMS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

We are members of the research team conducting the “Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program.” Its purpose is to better understand the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program. The study is funded by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees and funds the national URM Program. As part of the study, we are visiting several URM program sites across the country. We are talking with individuals who help implement or operate the programs, as well as individuals who help implement or operate other programs and services accessed by unaccompanied refugee minors in the same communities.

Before beginning our discussion, we want to thank you for agreeing to talk with us today. We know you are busy and we will try to be as focused as possible. The interview will take about 60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no penalties for choosing not to take part in the interview. Although your answers are important to the study, you can refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview at any time. Our aim is to learn from your insights and experience, not to audit or judge your agency or programs. You will not benefit personally by participating, however, what we learn from you can help improve the services URM Program provides to youth. Your answers will be kept private to the extent permissible by law. Information you provide will not be shared with other staff at your program or organization. Only the study team will have access to the information you provide through this interview. Your name will not be listed in any published reports, and comments will not be attributed to you. Instead, your information will be combined with information provided by others. However, because of the relatively small number of organizations participating in the study, there is a possibility that a response could be correctly attributed to you. [If a group interview, add: Respecting the privacy of other people in the group is important; please do not talk about anything people say here. We cannot guarantee that others in the group will keep private what is said here.]

If it is alright with you, we would like to record the interview, so we can fill in our notes and make sure we accurately report your thoughts and opinions. If anyone objects to our recording the discussion, please let us know now. You can also ask us to pause the recorder at any time during the interview.

We are very pleased to have you here today, and we thank you for your time and your opinions. Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

I. Background on respondent and organization

To start, I'd like to learn about you and your organization, with a specific focus on your work with URMs. *[Note to interviewer: If necessary, define URM and the URM program for respondent. If the respondent is not familiar with URM youth specifically.]*

1. Please briefly describe your organization, including the programs and services your organization provides. **(Asked in Appendices D and H*)**
2. What is your official job title? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**
3. Please briefly describe your current position and job responsibilities. *[Note to interviewer: Ask for org chart]* **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**
4. What geographic region does this organization serve? **(Asked in Appendices D* and H*)**
5. Please describe your role working directly with URM youth. **(Asked in Appendix H)**
6. How many staff members does your organization have? How many of them work on programs related to URM youth?
7. Tell us about your partnership with the URM program/[URM program organization]. **(Asked in Appendix H)**

Probe: How long has your organization been partnering with [URM program organization]?

Probe: How/Why did your organization begin partnering with [URM program organization]?

Probe: In what ways do your missions overlap?

8. What are the main sources of funding for your program? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
 - a. Are the services you provide funded through ORR/URM program? If so, which services?
 - b. What other funding sources do you use to provide services to URM youth? **(Asked Appendix H)**

II. Characteristics of URMs Served

I'd like to ask you some questions specifically about the youth you serve generally and the services you provide to URM youth, as well as how you partner with [URM program organization].

1. Can you please describe the general populations of youth that you serve?

Note to interviewer: If the respondent is familiar with URM youth, ask questions 2-3.

2. What percentage of the youth you serve are URM youth?
3. How would you describe the population of the URM youth you serve? **(Asked in Appendices E and H*)**

Probe on country of origin, ethnicity, language, age, religion, length of time in the U.S., legal status/pathway to status (e.g., overseas, UAC, SIJS, trafficking victim)

Note to interviewer: Determine whether the respondent can distinguish between refugees, UACs, etc. and if so, ask for how many of each they serve.

- a. Has this changed over time? **(Asked in Appendix H)**

Note to interviewer: Tailor the following questions depending on whether the respondent can speak specifically about URM youth. If the respondent can speak about youth who have similar experiences to URM youth (e.g., refugees who are not unaccompanied), consider asking these questions about the groups they serve more broadly. If the respondent cannot speak about URM youth or similar groups, skip questions 4-7.

4. In your experience, what are the strengths of these youth when they arrive in the U.S.? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
 - a. How do their strengths differ from other youth that you serve? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
5. What are their needs? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
 - a. How do their needs differ from other youth that you serve? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
6. What challenges do they face? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
 - a. How do those challenges differ from other youth that you serve? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
7. How do strengths, needs, and challenges differ by youth characteristics? **(Asked in Appendix H)**

Probe on pathway into program, immigration status, country of origin, age, ethnicity, language, religion, and/or populations of youth the respondent referenced in previous responses.

III. Services Provided to URM Youth

Note to interviewer: Tailor this section according to the knowledge of the respondent and whether they are able to distinguish URM youth from other youth. If not, ask more generally about immigrant/refugee youth they serve.

Now I'd like to discuss the services your organization provides to URM youth.

1. Can you please describe how URM youth get referred to or connected with your program?

Probe: Where do these referrals come from?

Probe: What information do you receive on the URM youth before providing services to them?

Probe: Do you work with all URM youth that are referred to your organization?

2. What are the key services your agency provides to URM youth. Please describe the major services. **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**

Note to interviewer: Tailor as appropriate given previous knowledge of the partner organization gained during arranging the interview. Probe on some or all of the following:

- i. *Healthcare*
 - ii. *Counseling*
 - iii. *Mental Health assessment and treatment*
 - iv. *Education (i.e., classes offered by the organization itself, and services to support the URM's success in school, such as tutoring)*
 - v. *Social adjustment and cultural orientation services*
 - vi. *Services for preservation of ethnic and religious heritage*
 - vii. *Connection with public resources (e.g., food or housing assistance)*
 - viii. *Employment/training/job readiness*
 - ix. *Legal services*
 - x. *Life skills/preparation for independent living*
 - xi. *Family tracing/family reunification*
 - xii. *Permanency services*
 - xiii. *Other services*
3. How do the services provided vary for different groups of youth in the URM program? **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**
- Probe on pathway into program, immigration status, country of origin, age, ethnicity, language, religion, and/or based on respondents' previous answers on variation by population.*
- a. If so, how?
4. What steps, if any, does your organization take to ensure that staff are prepared to serve URM youth... **(Asked in Appendix H*)**
- a. In a culturally competent manner?
 - b. Considering potential histories of trauma?
 - c. With diverse language needs?
5. From your perspective, are there any gaps in the services that your organization provides to URM youth?
- a. If so, what are these gaps?
- Probe: why do these gaps exist?*
- Probe on policies, funding structures, capacity, eligibility requirements*
- b. Are other organizations able to provide services to address those gaps? If so, which organizations?

IV. Partnerships

We'd like to learn about the partnership you have with [URM program organization] and how this partnership is structured. [Note to interviewer: Tailor if necessary based on background questions above about the history of the partnership between the URM program and this organization.]

1. Can you describe the structure of your partnership with [URM program organization]?

Probe: What type of service agreement do you have?

Probe: Is it formalized (e.g., MOU)?

Probe: Are responsibilities for your organizations clearly defined? If so, what are the respective responsibilities of your agencies?

Probe: Who in your agency oversees this partnership?

2. What other organizations does your program partner with to deliver services to URM youth, if any?

Probe: What services do they deliver, or how do they contribute to the services that you deliver?

- a. Can you describe the relationship you have with these partner organizations?

3. How often do you meet with staff members from other organizations with whom you partner to discuss/coordinate services for URM youth?

Probe on URM program agency, education providers/schools, other services providers (e.g., medical providers, mental health providers), child welfare agency, other providers described in Question 9.

4. Can you describe these meetings that you have with other providers?

Probe: What topics do you discuss?

Probe: What are the outcomes of these meetings?

5. Other than these partners, are there other organizations that you frequently refer URM youth to for services you do not provide in house?

- a. If so, what are they?

V. Promising Practices and Challenges

Note to interviewers: If respondent does not distinguish between URM youth and other youth, tailor this question to be more generally about the youth they serve.

I'd like to learn about promising practices that your organization implements in serving URM youth, as well as challenges you face in serving these youths.

1. What practices do you think your program does particularly well?

- a. What services/programs do you think other programs could benefit from learning about?
2. What practices do you think [URM program organization] does particularly well?
 - a. What services/programs do you think other programs could benefit from learning about?
3. What has worked well in partnering with [URM program organization]?
 - a. What do you think can be improved?
4. What are the major challenges that you face in providing services to URM youth?
 - a. How is your agency addressing these challenges?

VI. Context on Local Communities and Service Landscape

This section will need to be tailored, depending on the type of organization. This will be done prior to the interview. Interviewers will only ask questions 1-5 for partners for whom serving immigrants/refugees are central to the mission of their organization.

Now I'd like to hear about the local community you serve, as well as the other services available in the community.

1. Are there communities of refugees (including adults and families) who have been resettled in the area over the past few years? From what countries? Has this changed over time? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**
 - a. What other immigrant groups are there in the area? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**
 - b. What are the predominant languages spoken in the area, other than English? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**

Probe on country of origin, ethnicity, language, religion, legal status.

- c. How many individuals from each of these communities have you served in the last year? **(Asked in Appendix H*)**

Probe: For each of the following, probe on variation between populations:

- Education levels
- Prevalence of health issues
- Prevalence of mental health issues
- Immigration status
- Service needs
- Family composition (e.g., sibling groups, more/less likely to have family members in the US)
- English language ability

- *Other challenges*
2. What are the challenges facing the immigrant and/or refugee groups in your community? **(Asked in Appendix H)**
 3. How would you describe the level of community support for refugees and immigrants in the area? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**
 4. How does the local environment for refugees affect your ability to provide services to URM youth? **(Asked in Appendix D)**

Note to interviewers: If respondent is not familiar specifically with URM youth, but serves immigrants and/or refugees as part of the mission of their organization, tailor these questions to be more general. If the respondent is not familiar with URM youth and does not serve immigrants/refugees as their mission, ask these questions more generally about the population of youth they serve.

5. How would you describe the range and availability of services for URM youth in the area?

Probe on other community organizations and religious institutions that may provide support to URM youth.

 - a. In your judgment, how helpful are these organizations to the URM youth you serve?
 - b. Where are the gaps in available services in the community?
 - a. Are these gaps specific to URM youth or issues with general service availability in your community?
 - b. Are there any initiatives or efforts underway to address these gaps?
 - c. How do these services vary for URM youth with different characteristics?

Probe on pathway into program, immigration status, country of origin, age, ethnicity, language, religion, and/or based on respondents' previous answers on variation by population.
6. Can you describe your interaction with the child welfare system in this community?

Probe: What are the primary ways in which you work with the child welfare system?

VII. Outcomes and Evaluations

Note to interviewers: If respondent is not familiar specifically with URM youth, ask these questions more generally about the population of youth or immigrants/refugees they serve.

Now I'd like to hear about the goals your programs help URM youth achieve and how your program defines success.

1. In your view, what are the goals that your program helps URM youth achieve?
 - a. How do you think your programs helps URM youth achieve these goals? **(Asked in Appendix H*)**

2. What outcomes do you currently measure? **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**
3. Thinking not just of the outcomes you measure, how would you define when a youth served by [URM program organization] had succeeded? **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**

Probe on self-sufficiency, well-being (including specific elements such as employment, education, housing, health/mental health, reunification/connection to family or community.

- a. How might this differ by youth characteristics?

Probe on pathway into program, immigration status, country of origin, age, ethnicity, language, religion, and/or previous populations the respondent discussed.

4. Are you aware of any evaluations or research projects currently in progress regarding your organization's program/services? With a focus on URM youth?
 - a. Other research efforts in the community beyond your organization which may be relevant to URM youth?

VIII. Data

Now I would like to ask you about the data your organization collects.

1. What data do you currently collect on the characteristics of, services provided to, and outcomes of the youth in the URM program? **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**
 - a. How frequently do you gather it? **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**
2. What systems do you use to maintain and store these data? **(Asked in Appendices D, E, and H)**
3. Do you collect data on youth after they leave the program? **(Asked in Appendix H*)**

Probe on reasons they might leave early (e.g., family reunification, move away for work)

Note to interviewers: Ask about data documentation, forms used to collect data.

4. How do you use this data? **(Asked in Appendices D and E)**

Probe on reporting (particularly on reporting to URM program or to any refugee agencies), program improvement/evaluation, fundraising.
5. Do you and [URM program organization] share data? **(Asked in Appendix H)**

Probe: What data do you share with [URM program organization]?

Probe: What data do they share with you?

Probe: Do you have a formal data sharing agreement? What does it cover?