FR-6600-N-29D

HUDRD - Qualitative Data Collection for Cohort 2 MTW Expansion- Rent Reform Experiment

Questions and Answers

June 24, 2022

Q: Can you clarify and explain the name of this project?

A: This funding opportunity relates to a project HUD calls the Stepped and Tiered Rent Demonstration (STRD). The STRD is being implemented by 10 PHAs participating in HUD’s Moving to Work (MTW) Expansion. Specifically, these 10 PHAs are the second cohort of the MTW Expansion and they will test alternative rents, or rent reform—hence, the NOFO title reference to “Cohort 2 MTW Expansion- Rent Reform Experiment”. However, HUD more commonly uses the title Stepped and Tiered Rent Demonstration to refer to the project.

Q: Is HUD open to co-designed, participatory research? How much control can we give to the community?

A: HUD is open to participatory research, as acknowledged on page 9 of the NOFO. However, applicants must ensure that this approach does not conflict with other objectives, such as the need for rigorous methods (page 8) and the need to avoid influencing the internal or external validity of the impact evaluation (page 9).

Q: If we mention a project in the narrative do we need to provide the reference information? Can this only go back 5 years?

A: Applicants may mention any projects believed to be relevant. Rating Factor 2 (section V.A.1, page 27) will be assessed based on projects from the past 5 years.

Q: How long does HUD anticipate OMB approval would take for the qualitative research? Would it be possible to add this research onto MDRC’s existing OMB approval as a modification? Are we able to do listening sessions or focus groups with 9 treatment and 9 control at each site as a pilot help to create a more grounded research design?

A: As stated on page 9: “HUD will not prescribe specific information collection approaches, protocols, or instruments. Any information collection efforts conducted by a grantee to address the NOFO objectives will not be subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act.”

Q: Will HUD or MDRC review and approve our research design, data collection instruments, protocols, etc.?

A: Deliverables are discussed on page 10 of the NOFO. They include “(1) a Research Design that shall serve as a technical blueprint for all research activities that will be undertaken to address the research objectives, (2) a Data Collection and Analysis Plan that includes data collection instruments and/or protocols”. HUD will review and approve these deliverables to ensure that the proposed approach is reasonable and compatible with the STRD impact evaluation. Neither HUD nor MDRC will be substantially involved in specific data collection instruments or protocols.

Q: Can applicants name staff in the narrative whose resumes are not included in the five key personnel in the appendix?

A: Yes, but Rating Factor 2b (section V.A.1, page 27) will be assessed based on up to five individuals identified as key personnel.

Q: Beyond help identifying households to recruit, how much collaboration and knowledge-sharing does HUD envision between the qualitative researchers and MDRC STRD impact evaluation team?

A: HUD and MDRC will help qualitative researchers access data. The MDRC evaluation team may also engage with the qualitative researchers to ensure that the qualitative research does not undermine the impact evaluation. Qualitative researchers may be invited to some briefings by the MDRC evaluation team, and MDRC may be invited to some briefings by qualitative researchers. Beyond these activities, HUD cannot commit to more extensive collaboration between the MDRC impact evaluation team and qualitative researchers funded under this NOFO.

Q: Would it be possible for the qualitative researchers to add some questions to MDRC’s follow-up surveys based on qualitative findings?

A: No. HUD plans for a follow-up survey (or surveys) but has not yet funded that work. When that time comes, HUD will ensure that any follow-up surveys are informed by the results from this qualitative research.

Q: Will HUD or MDRC be able to directly share information from the STRD impact evaluation team with the qualitative researchers, such as under a data use agreement?

A: Yes. Each household in the STRD will be asked to provide informed consent. The informed consent forms are not yet finalized but HUD expects the consent to authorize sharing of information with researchers funded under this NOFO. Qualitative research grantees may receive data, under a data use agreement, and must comply with privacy and data security assurances made to study participants at the time of informed consent. HUD anticipates that qualitative researchers will need this information to identify and contact individiduals for qualitative research. HUD does not anticipate that qualitative researchers will need additional information (such as a household’s responses to MDRC’s baseline survey, or HUD/PHA administrative data on income, rent, and household composition) but would consider such a request.

Q: What engagement should qualitative researchers expect to have with the PHAs?

A: The 10 PHAs participating in the STRD have a high level of interaction with the MDRC impact evaluation team; this includes regular communication about the implementation of the new rent policies, as well as structured interviews with PHA staff. To avoid confusion of multiple research teams, HUD does not want researchers funded under this NOFO to conduct qualitative research focused on the PHAs. It would be appropriate to interact with PHAs to recruit research participants, to organize events (such as focus groups), to observe existing events (such as PHA meetings or Resident Advisory Board meetings, and to ensure that the PHA is aware of the qualitative researcher(s) efforts.