

**NATIONAL STUDY OF THE PROVIDER NETWORK
MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR PROVIDER FOCUS GROUPS**

Draft, November, 2009

Introduction

My name is [NAME OF MODERATOR] and I work for Westat, a research firm, located in Rockville, Maryland. Westat is conducting a study of the provider network under the auspices of the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA). AoA is interested in learning about the characteristics of provider agencies and how providers work with AAAs on activities, such as targeting, planning programs, and outreach. For the study, we interviewed AAA staff and now we are interested in finding out about your organizations.

For those of you who have not previously participated in a focus group, here is a brief description of what will happen. For the next hour, I will pose questions to the group and everyone is encouraged to participate in the discussion. I am interested in what everyone has to say and there are no right or wrong answers.

My colleague [NAME OF NOTETAKER] will take notes during the focus group. She will also audiotape the discussion to ensure that we accurately capture the content of the discussion. Everything you say during the focus group will be kept confidential. Reports of the focus groups will not contain any names and the results will be reported in the aggregate.

Do you have any questions before we begin? I am going to turn on the tape recorder now. Please nod to acknowledge that you know the recorder has been turned on.

First, let's go around the table and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your name, your organization, and the service (s) that you provide to the AAA's clients.

A. Provider Organizations

1. First, I'd like to know a bit more about each of your organizations, especially its basic mission and when and how you became a provider for the AAA. **(Probe on non-profit/profit, government, stand-alone versus umbrella organization if not stated.)** Do you provide services to other organizations (besides the AAA)? If so, please tell us about the other organizations/services you provide and their respective clienteles.
2. Apart from your relationship with the AAA, are you involved with any other organizations in the Aging Network—at the local, state or national levels? **(Probe on which, nature of tie, whether formal or informal.)** Do you belong to any professional provider organizations? **(Probe on which, whether hold offices, how participate.)(If relevant.)** How long have you been part of these organizations?

B. Client Characteristics

1. Can you briefly describe the characteristics of the AAA clients that you serve? (**First let respondent articulate; then probe on characteristics, including Medicaid, minority/underserved, persons with disabilities.**) How has the makeup of your clientele influenced how you provide services? (**If not raised, ask about cuisine, staff, and distance.**) If this has changed in the last 5 years, please say a bit about how and why.

C. Working with the AAA

1. Now I'd like to ask you to talk about your work with the AAA. To start with, overall, how would you describe your working relationship with the AAA??
2. Can you tell us about how you work together in the following types of activities:
 - Targeting clients
 - Conducting outreach
 - Planning programs/activities
 - Carrying out programs/activities
3. Are there any other ways/areas in which your organizations work with the AAA? (**For each type of activity, as relevant, probe for concrete examples and greater depth.**) How has the working relationship with the AAA changed/developed over time??
4. (**Consumer Directed Care – Only for areas that have a consumer directed care option.**)
We understand that the AAA has a consumer-directed care option. What does this mean in operational terms? How, if at all, does having this option affect your working relationship with the AAA?

D. Client Tracking and Invoicing AAA

1. What types of systems do your organizations use to track information about clients and delivery of services? (*paper versus electronic, software, etc.*) How does your system link with the AAA's system? How does this work for billing purposes? What sorts of issues come up in making the two systems work together?

E. Final Question

1. Thank you all for sharing so much information with us. In closing, I'd like to ask each of you a "what if" question. If you could change one thing about your organization's relationship with the AAA, what would it be—and why?

THAT IS ALL THE QUESTIONS WE HAVE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE FOCUS GROUP.