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Post-School Outcomes Data Collection Guide: Training Interviewers

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IDEAs that Work
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The purpose of this **Post-School Outcomes Data Collection Guide** is to assist states and districts as they train interviewers to collect post-school data on former students who had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Specifically, this interviewer guide was designed to address questions and issues that will be addressed by state-level and district-level staff who supervise the post-school data collection effort by interviewers who contact former students and/or their families. To ground this description, staff who work on the New York State post-school data collection system describe their model of training interviewers to collect data in an accurate, confidential, and uniform manner. This Guide includes four sections:

Section One provides a brief overview of the Federal Requirements related to collecting post-school outcome data.

Section Two describes the specific New York Survey interviewer training process and provides details about being an interviewer. Design and implementation of interviewing former students is conducted through the Potsdam Institute for Applied Research (PIAR) at State University, New York in Potsdam. PIAR brings experience implementing the New York State Longitudinal Post School Indicators Study (NYSLPSI) since 1996 for the New York State Education Department (NYSED)[1]. PIAR is currently under contract with New York State to coordinate post-school outcomes interviewing. For additional information, contact piar@potsdam.edu or 315-267-2718.

Section Three is a series of questions for states to consider when designing interviewer training. Each question includes general information and an example from New York.

Section Four provides sample New York templates and resources including interviewer job description and advertisement, interviewer confidentiality memorandum of understanding, and an introduction letter to student.

This Guide complements other National Post-School Outcomes Center (NPSO) tools available to assist states in developing practical, efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable strategies for collecting and using data to improve secondary, transition, and post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. This Guide may be used in conjunction with the Post-School Data Collection Protocol: Stage 1 Additional NPSO tools to assist states to address this requirement are available at the NPSO Web site http://www.psocenter.org

Section One: Brief Overview of Federal Requirements

The federal reporting requirements for Special Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) require State Education Agencies to submit a six-year State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The plan includes Monitoring Priorities and Indicators. The post-school outcomes data collection indicator (#14) is in the Part B monitoring priority and reads:

Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

States must the design a process to collect information on the post-school experiences of former students with disabilities. This indicator is one that allows states to sample.[2] Depending upon the

laws in your state, rigorous data collection guidelines may apply, as might stringent human subject protections. Whenever in doubt about the need for review by a Human Subjects Review Board, submit the plan for review.

Section Two: Description of the New York Survey Interviewer Training Process

One of the most critical aspects of implementing a state post-school data collection system is establishing the way in which data will be collected from or about student leavers after they exit the public school system. In many instances those data will be gathered by interviewers who contact the former student and/or his or her family member by phone to determine if the student is working and/or continuing in some sort of educational program. Phone interviewers are critical as they provide the data on which the state's post-school outcomes reports are based. Thus, if interviewers do not gather those data in an accurate and uniform manner, the results may be inaccurate and misleading, and could lead to erroneous conclusions regarding the post-school outcomes of former students. To ensure accurate data collection, interviewers must be trained in the nuances of conducting interviewers and coding responses.

Interviewers need orientation to the purpose and requirements of post-school data collection, specific survey materials such as survey booklets, tracking materials, computerized/web based surveys, emergency procedures, start and end dates, and how supervision will be provided. Interviewers may work independently or as part of an interview team. Some teams are organized by school district or building and others may be organized regionally.

In New York, interviewers work from a Call Center located at SUNY Potsdam. In the past regional teams were issued portable computers containing the electronic survey questionnaire.

All training and supervision of interviewers reinforce the following critical three principles: volunteer nature of the interview, confidentiality, and accuracy. The following information is provided to interviewers during training.

Being an Interviewer in New York

Being an interviewer is a major responsibility. Every survey must be administered objectively and consistently while protecting the rights of respondents. You will be gathering information from, or about, students with disabilities who left school last year. The information you collect will be compiled and reported to districts, the state, and federal governments. Important decisions will be made based on these reports and recommendations. Ethically, you must assure that each survey is *voluntary*, *confidential*, and *accurate*. These principles are critical to protect former students and to ensure the accuracy of the information you collect.

Voluntary

The first way in which youth are protected is to ensure that responding to the survey is *voluntary*. Some states request signed consent from students and their parents (or guardians). In New York State, students and their families received information from their school district about the survey and are given a chance to opt out of it. These potential respondents will also be told during the introduction to the survey that participation is voluntary and that they can refuse to participate or refuse to answer any of the questions. In New York State, a refusal by the youth or their parents will be final.

When you contact a former student and their family, remember that participation is voluntary but very important. Always be prepared to communicate this. Be prepared to respond to the question “Do I have to do this?” or “Why should I do this?”

Confidential

The second way in which youth are protected is to ensure that all personal information about respondents is *confidential*. All paper and electronic information containing personally identifiable information must not be available to anyone outside of the survey team. Information collected during an interview is also protected.

As an interviewer you must be careful to always protect confidentiality. Never leave survey materials in a public place or allow someone outside the survey team to look at them. Notify your supervisor if you lose any confidential materials. Never talk about who you interview and what they say. If you need help to code responses specific to a respondent, talk to someone on your survey team. Even if you and a co-worker both know a respondent well, you cannot discuss the content of their interview, so don’t reveal the respondent’s name. Interviewers in New York State receive training about confidentiality and are asked to sign a memorandum of understanding. A sample of this form is included in Section Four. Talk to your supervisor if you have any questions about what information is protected.

Accuracy

The *accuracy* of the information you collect is dependent on many factors such as:

- Consistent survey administration by each interviewer.
- The way you and the respondent understand the purpose of the survey.
- What you and respondents believe are the correct answers to the questions.
- The ability of the respondent to understand the questions and your ability to understand their responses.
- The honesty of everyone involved.

It is important that you read questions exactly as they appear in the survey. In New York, we tell interviewers to only rephrase questions, or explain them, to help a respondent who cannot understand them as they are written. We practice this rephrasing during training. Rephrasing must preserve the neutral character of the original question. Interviewers also have time to read and review all survey materials and practice asking questions and choosing responses during training. Unless rephrasing is needed, ask questions exactly as written every time. Asking questions inconsistently results in inconsistent understanding and inconsistent responses. For example, Employment Section Question 1 on the NPSO Center Survey[3] is “Right now are you working?” If it is sometimes phrased this way and sometimes asked “You are working now, right?” very different responses may result. The first question is asked neutrally, the second implies that work is expected, and that “yes” is the correct answer.

An example of appropriate rephrasing would be, “Do you work?” or “Do you have a job?” and if the response is “Yes,” then follow up with “When do you work?” Depending on the respondent’s understanding and responses, additional questions might be needed before a complete answer to the original question “Right now are you working?” is understood. The rephrasing and probing did not change the essential content or neutrality of the original question.

Your tone of voice should be neutral and calm. Keep the pace of the survey slow enough to ensure that respondents do not feel rushed to come up with an answer or respond before they fully understand each question. Remember that many people with disabilities will be able to respond if you just give them enough time to understand, process, and respond to each question. Use the first few questions of each interview to gauge the proper pace.

In order for the respondent to give accurate answers, you need to develop rapport and trust with them. Some may need to be reassured from time to time that their answers are private (confidential) and will not be repeated or reported to their parents, staff at school, or anyone else. Be a sensitive listener. If they do not trust you they may withhold information, which they are free to do. Establishing a survey based on trust is critical to getting as much information as possible. This trust must not be a deception. Respondents may also need reassurance they are not being "graded" and that they should give the most accurate answer possible.

Respondents may be inclined to give you the "right" or socially acceptable answer. Keep your tone of voice and language formal and accepting. When you ask them if they are working, they know that social norms value work and may say they are working even if they are not. To get the truth, you need to establish that you are accepting and not judgmental. Do not be too friendly and never be critical of responses. Encourage each individual's participation, not particular types of responses. For example, if they tell you that they are working and you say "That's great" they will be more inclined to give you the answer they think you think is important or correct.

As an interviewer you must be vigilant not to influence the responses and you must record responses accurately, representing the respondent's perceptions. Never think you know what their next answer will be. Be patient and wait for their response. Never initially limit the responses you consider. If you are not sure what exactly a respondent means, take the time necessary and discuss that response with them to assure you select the appropriate response code. In New York, some questions offer a list of responses that are read to the respondent, others are asked as open-ended questions. After reading an open-ended question interviewers are told to listen to the answer and then pick the response code best representing the answer.

The New York Survey Process

The survey protocol developed in New York is short and takes most people fewer than 10 minutes to complete. Each workstation in the PIAR Call Center has a computer, phone, and headset. The introduction script, directions, survey questions, responses, and wrap-up script are all displayed on the computer monitor. The computer displays questions in the correct order following question branching automatically. During training interviewers are given the time necessary to become comfortable using the survey software.

Who do I interview?

At PIAR, interviewers receive a list of whom to contact for an interview. These lists are both printed and electronic. There is a separate Interview Sheet for each person on the list. Each contains the following information: the exiter's and parent's or alternate's name and contact information, their preferred language[4], and accommodations that might be needed. Interview Sheets also have space to record each attempt made to contact and complete an interview, space to note new contact information, and space for notes and comments. Most of this information is also entered into the computer record.

How do I contact former students and their families?

Phone numbers are available on the Interview Sheets and computer screen. We conduct interviews by phone from the Call Center. A paper survey is sent to former students who don't have a phone or when one is requested.

When should I call?

When you start calling former students, try on different days and times. You need to be persistent and creative. Take into account holidays, meal times, and special events. Vary the time you attempt to call.

Generally, don't call before 9:00 in the morning or after 9:00 at night. Weekday evenings from 5:30 to 9:00 are times when former students are often available. People not available during the week may be reached on the weekend. As a last resort, try early morning or late evening calls. If none of these time periods are productive, set the questionnaire aside and try a few days later. It is sometimes necessary to follow up on several new phone numbers before you get to talk to the former student. Before you start interviewing, find out how many attempts you should make before you give up and what to do if none of the phone numbers reach the former student. Interviewers in New York will make a minimum of twenty calls at different times and days of the week until contact is made. The decision to make additional calls will be made on a case-by-case basis if there has been no contact after twenty calls. Use of "call grids" track all attempts by time and day.

What will the phone calls be like?

We send a letter about one month before interviewing begins to remind former students and their families that we will be calling and why. You may need to make several calls before someone answers. Once someone answers, expect that they will likely think you are trying to sell them something and may hang up. Quickly and politely explain who you are and why you are calling. You will be provided an introduction script during training. This script will contain information about why the survey is being collected and why it is important. Follow the script to verify that you have the correct household and family/former student. Often your call is an interruption. If necessary, provide a chance to set up an appointment.

Sometimes you will get an answering machine. Follow a script to leave a message that includes a toll-free number. Other times the phone will just ring. If you discover a number is disconnected or no longer reaches the former student, try alternate numbers. Find out what to do if none of the numbers you were given reach the former student. No matter what the result, make notes about the call. These notes should include the date, time, and result of the call. In New York we review the day and time of all calls to strategically plan future calls.

What can I say to encourage participation?

During training, interviewers receive a script that contains common questions and proper responses. The script:

- Informs them that the survey is voluntary.
- Tells them they can refuse to answer any particular question.
- Assures them that the survey is important to their school district and the state.
- Assures them that what they say is protected and will be kept private and confidential.
- Explains that their name won't appear in any report and that their responses will be combined with many other surveys.
- Notifies them that they can have someone help them answer any part or all of the survey.

If I cannot interview the former student, can I interview someone else?

In New York interviewers are told to interview the former student whenever possible. However, because of the types of questions asked, it is acceptable to interview their parents or guardians. Occasionally the former student's disability makes participating in a phone survey difficult. It is sometimes effective to have the former student on one phone and their representative (often a parent) on another. If this is not enough of an accommodation, it may be necessary to interview someone else. Ideally, the former student will tell you who they want to speak for them. It is helpful to ask who usually speaks with and for them. Many times you will not find out what accommodation is necessary until you call. These calls can be awkward so go slowly, apologize as appropriate, and try to determine who the best representative will be. You may eventually call the home of a youth with a disability who needs assistance with almost every aspect of their lives. Asking a parent if you can talk to them, if they are working or going

to college can be very upsetting to a parent who is reminded, by the questions, of things their child may never do. Be sensitive and listen. Explain that the same survey questions are asked of everyone, and that the accomplishments of their child, no matter how modest, are valued. Similarly, some youth who respond to the survey may also become upset during the survey. You ask if they are working, which they desperately want to do, but have not been able to find a job or get the help they need. It is understandable that they might be very upset by the question. This rarely happens, but if it does, it may be necessary to stop the interview, talk with them until they calm down, and then end the call and note why. In New York, we discuss these calls with the interviewer and decide if a supervisor should call the household.

How do I know which questions to ask?

Not only is it important to ask questions as they are written, but that you ask them in the correct order. Survey questionnaires have a prescribed sequence that changes based upon the responses given. These changes are called "skip patterns" or "question branching." For example, the first question on the NPSO Center Survey is "Right now are you working?" Obviously follow-up questions need to be different based upon how this first question is answered. The NPSO Center Survey instructs you to go to Question #5 if the answer is "No" or to Question #2 if the answer is "Yes." Know and follow the branching pattern established for the survey. Electronic surveys will go to the next question automatically. At PIAR, surveys are computer-based with paper surveys as a backup. Power and computer failures do occur.

How do I ask different types of questions?

The survey and your training will explain if you should read just the question or the question and possible/acceptable responses. Some questions will be open-ended questions and you record responses word for word. You may ask the question; listen to the response, and then pick the response code best representing that response. Some items will only allow you to record one response; others may allow more.

What should I do if I think they have misunderstood a question or the responses available?

There are questions you can ask to help clarify responses. These are called "probes." In New York we discuss and practice this in training. Here are several examples:

"Can you be a little more specific?"

"I'm not sure I am entirely clear about what you mean. Could you explain it a little more?"

"Could I read back what I have written to be sure I have understood exactly what you wanted to say?"

"Could I reread the question and the answer I've written down just to be sure I have gotten everything you wanted to say?"

"I think I may not have read the question correctly, so may I read it to you again to be sure?"

How do I record responses?

It is important that responses to each question are coded the same way by every interviewer. Be familiar with each question's response codes. Practice using the survey questionnaire, asking questions, and recording responses.

What if I make a lot of calls and never get the survey completed?

On one extreme, you may have made many calls and left a number of messages but never spoken to anyone. In some of these cases people are using Caller ID or answering machines to screen their calls. In others, calls have been made at the wrong times of day, or day of the week. On the other extreme, you may have spoken to the former student (or their family) several times about the survey, but they never completed it or refused the survey outright. At a certain point these are coded as refusals. In New

York, this decision is based upon the number of contacts and the judgment of the interviewer. If the interviewer thinks there is any chance of getting an interview if a few more calls are made, that is what is done. We expect interviewers to make over twenty attempts to contact former students and complete interviews. This number will vary from state to state.

How do I submit complete and incomplete surveys?
At PIAR, because the surveys are computerized, completed surveys are automatically submitted electronically. Completed paper surveys are entered into a computerized survey and submitted electronically as well. Know how to submit surveys for processing.

Ongoing training and support
At PIAR, interviewers are told to contact their supervisor with critical questions or problems. Trainers and supervisors meet with small groups of interviewers after they have completed a few interviews. This gives interviewers the opportunity to review their training, ask questions, and get help. It also allows them to compare how various situations were handled and discuss accurate response coding. Additional topical training is provided regularly.

Section Three: Questions for states to consider when designing interviewer training

The following common questions come from New York State Education Department (NYSED) experience. To frame these questions, it is helpful to understand the general structure of NYSED's system. PIAR is currently implementing the NYSED plan for SPP #14[5]. NYSED has decided that, at this time, PIAR will conduct interviews from a call center in Potsdam, NY and that districts will not be expected to conduct interviews with their former students.

Districts contact PIAR about all aspects of implementing Indicator #14. PIAR has found it important to provide district staff email and phone support including clear directions, convenient technical assistance, reasonable timelines and polite reminders to submit required data to the NYSED. About 10 to 15% of districts have needed persistent reminders and/or extensive technical assistance to submit the information requested.

How will all former students with IEPs be included (e.g., youth who are independent and youth who need support in every aspect of their lives)?
Keep the language and concepts as simple as possible while respecting respondents with typical language ability. Preparing an alternate version of the survey for respondents who cannot understand the "standard" version may be used as an accommodation, thus assuring that interviewers phrase questions consistently. Establish interviewer guidelines for its use. If you decide to have interviewers rephrase questions and response codes as necessary on their own to accommodate respondents, have them practice this during training.

In New York, the survey questionnaire has been developed using simple language. Most concepts are basic and more complex concepts are broken into a series of simpler questions. While some of the question series are complex (e.g., questions on employment), skillful interviewers can help respondents through these. Sound hiring, training, and supervision yield skillful interviewers who can address this issue.

How will interviewers know what accommodations will be needed?
PIAR found it important to ask schools to indicate what accommodations will be needed during the interview. Knowing which respondents were eligible for the statewide Alternate Assessment can also help identify those most likely to need accommodation. Ideally, develop alternate surveys or multiple formats ahead of time.

Districts are asked to indicate if each former student will need any accommodations to participate in the survey. PIAR sends former students and their family two letters before attempting to interview them. The first letter is sent as soon as the list of 2005-2006 Exiters is complete to welcome them to the survey and remind them why responding is so important. The second letter is sent right before interview calls start to remind them who we are and why we will be calling. In these letters we also ask former students to update contact information and if they want accommodations to participate. Once calling begins, interviewers discuss with respondents their need for accommodations or assistance.

What happens when the youth or parent refuses to be interviewed and there are other respondents available?
This is both a legal and ethical issue. Legally, if the youth is under 18, or if guardianship has been established, a refusal from a parent or guardian is final. Be sure to decide how interviewers should handle these situations and include ethical guidelines in their training. One of the artful parts of interviewing is trying to provide enough information to whoever answers the phone to get to talk to the intended respondent.

PIAR uses the former student's date of birth and the date of a phone call to calculate if they are 18 years old to determine if their parents need to be involved in making the decision about participation. Once a parent, guardian, or youth refuses to respond, we will consider that a refusal for all. Interviewers are encouraged to talk to the former student (if over 18) before getting a formal refusal from someone else.

How will exiters without phones or internet access be included?
It is important to ensure that all those identified have the opportunity to respond. Here are some effective strategies:

- Meet with the former student and/or their family at their home or in the community.
- Ask the former student and or their family to come into school to complete the interview.
- Provide a prepaid phone card.
- Send a paper survey that is accessible and in the preferred language. Provide clear directions on how to return it and include an addressed, postage-paid envelope.
- Send a local or toll-free number to use to call in when they are at a place with a phone and tell them what days and hours to call.
- Suggest that they visit their Public Library or community One-Stop Center and ask to use a computer there.
- If they are known to attend day programming, attempt to contact them there.

Does the survey need to be available in languages other than English and ensure cultural sensitivity?
It is important to allow people to respond in their native language. Development of materials in multiple languages and that are culturally sensitive are issues commonly addressed by all states. Consider your states' policies regarding translation and address these issues as you develop the survey and supporting materials. Remember that the ability to respond in English may be very different between the student and a family member.

Districts in New York are asked to provide information about students' preferred language. The survey and letters will be translated into Spanish and other languages as needed. We will also employ interviewers who can meet respondent's language and cultural needs.

What reasonable accommodations and accessible materials will be needed?
To increase the greatest response of former students, provide materials and surveys in accessible formats given the students disability (e.g., Braille, large print) and/or accommodations as needed.

In New York, districts are asked if former students will need accommodations to participate. Additional information about needed accommodations is gathered through initial contact with respondents and their families. In the past, some former students or their families ask to see the questions prior to agreeing to be interviewed. In such cases, the questions are provided. Paper surveys may also help respondents participate in a phone survey. For example, a respondent with short auditory memory can read along and reflect on the questions. TTY is available to accommodate those respondents who use them.

When will surveys be collected or interviews conducted?
The federal instructions allow data collection April 1st through September 30th. New York will conduct interviews during the first three months of this period. This allows the collection of data over the fewest number of days possible and reduces the possible effects on results of seasonal changes in employment and other factors. Shortening the interview cycle also helps to contain costs. Collecting data early in the cycle allows more time to prepare reports for submission.

PIAR has interviewers available seven days a week early morning through evenings. Hours are shortened on weekends and holidays. Interviewers log attempts to contact the household and note the result. It is critical that until someone in the household is contacted, attempts be made strategically across days of the week and times during each day. Once someone in the household is contacted, enlist their help in contacting the former student.

Who conducts the interview?
Some states contract with university research centers or private survey services. Small states that have available funding and few districts and exiters may have fewer challenges than one with hundreds of districts, thousands of exiters to interview, and very limited funding. In other states, districts submit survey data using a prescribed survey with central supervision. The level and type of support varies from state to state. Some states plan on using existing statewide networks (i.e., transition networks or State Monitoring Sections) to implement or supervise the implementation of data collection.

In New York, interviewers are hired to work for a central call center at SUNY Potsdam. The majority of these are college students (undergraduate and graduate) but school and other community members are also recruited. Efforts are made to recruit multilingual interviewers through the Foreign Languages Department and from among international students attending school in Potsdam.

How many interviewers should be employed?
Using the fewest number of interviewers possible makes training and supervision easier (and likely less expensive) while increasing the likelihood that survey questionnaire and protocol are followed consistently by every interviewer. It takes a number of completed surveys before interviewers are effective.

New York employs about 20 full- and part-time interviewers for a cohort pool of 5,000 to 6,000.

What are the qualifications for interviewers?
Interviewers need to know about communicating with youth with disabilities and about their post high school experiences. They need to know when and how to provide reasonable accommodations. They need to be organized and have the technical skills to use the survey materials. It is essential that they understand and follow survey and confidentiality procedures even if they disagree with them. Interviewers need to value discovering and recording the facts from the respondent's point of view and to be available during the evenings and weekends.

How are interviewers recruited, hired, and trained?
Recruitment and hiring should occur with sufficient time to provide adequate training prior to interviewing. Some states recruit and hire university students; others recruit current or former special education teachers or other school or district personnel. Advocacy or parent groups may also be recruited. Regardless of how interviewers are recruited and hired, training must be thorough and consistent. This is easy if interviewers are trained centrally and extremely difficult if they are distributed in many sites around the state. If interviewers are distributed around your state, regional training sessions along with distance learning strategies can help. Ideally, interviewers should be observed during their first few interviews to help ensure that they understand, and follow, the survey protocol. Training will be enhanced by ongoing and regular checks with interviewers to answer questions. Small group meetings allow for discussion of challenges and effective solutions. E-mail can be a convenient and effective communication/training tool.

Training includes formal structured presentations, practice, observation, and feedback as well as less-structured strategies. Our interview team includes experienced and new staff. Experienced interviewers mentor new staff. During practice sessions and in the call center, professional and supervisory staff observe and support interviewer's skill development. During regular staff meetings interviewers can raise issues and receive information about how to best address them. These meetings also allow for targeted training.

Where will interviewers work and/or conduct interviews?
Interviewers need the necessary materials (e.g., data collection protocol whether paper or electronic, operable and secure computer if one is to be used, access to local resources if they are to be provided) and a space in which they can confidentially conduct the interview and record the data in a consistent and uniform manner.

Our interviewers work from a central call center. This is convenient because interviewers:

- Are trained and supervised in one location
- Work in a private and quiet location
- Are not overheard by anyone outside the survey team
- Have a secure place to store confidential information.

How will interviewers be supervised?
Interviewer supervision should be established during planning and clearly communicated. Supervision should ensure consistency and confidentiality in data collection and storage. Supervision should provide ongoing support to problem solve issues as they arise.

We have found that supervising and communicating with our centralized interview team or a few regional teams[6] is relatively easy. The PIAR Call Center is in the same building as the Institute. This allows both formal and informal opportunities for contact with interviewers by other PIAR supervisors and other staff. A PIAR supervisor is on site much of the time and one, or more, is on call at all other times. There are lead interviewers on each shift who take the lead dealing with questions, emergencies, and reporting to the PIAR supervisor[7].

Section Four: Sample New York Forms and Resources

This section provides sample New York templates and resources including interviewer job description and advertisement, interviewer confidentiality memorandum of understanding, call grids, introduction letter to student, and interviewer's student sheet.

New York Interviewer Job Description
CALL CENTER INTERVIEWER

Position Overview

Responsible for initiating calls to potential survey respondents using a computerized system and prepared script. Documents and records information in accordance with established procedures and guidelines.

Essential Job Functions

- Initiate calls to potential survey respondents utilizing pre-established guidelines and procedures.
- Interview potential survey respondents utilizing pre-established guidelines and procedures.
- Document responses to survey questions utilizing pre-established guidelines and procedures.
- Document results of call efforts for each survey respondent utilizing pre-established guidelines and procedures.

Requirements

- Good communication and organizational skills.
- Computer/keyboarding skills.
- Phone skills.
- Listening skills.
- Documentation skills.

NOTE: This job description is not intended to be all-inclusive. The employee may perform other related duties to PIAR Call Center interviewing.

New York Personnel Ad for Student Interviewers

The Research Foundation of SUNY, a not-for-profit educational corporation, invites applications for temporary Telephone Interviewers to staff the Call Center of the Potsdam Institute of Applied Research. Responsibilities include completing a phone survey of former high school students using a computer. Keyboarding and good communication skills are required. Training will be provided. The employment period will begin on or about May 25, 2005 and will continue to August 31, 2005 with a possible extension to September 15, 2005. Interviewers will need to be available a minimum of 15-30 hours per week, from 2:00 PM – 9:00 PM, including weekends. Ability to speak Spanish a plus. Starting salary is $6.50 per hour with the possibility of an increase after a two week probation period. Please send a letter of interest and resume to Potsdam Institute of Applied Research, SUNY Potsdam, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY 13676. For questions, call Debbie Hammond at (315) 268-3468. The Research Foundation of SUNY is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Memorandum of Understanding
Confidentiality of Records and Information

State University of New York
Potsdam, New York

As an employee of the State University of New York at Potsdam,

I, _____, understand that all the information contained in records or files or otherwise by virtue of my employment is presumed to be confidential. I understand that the unauthorized release of such information, whether to parties internal or external to the University, is strictly prohibited and may lead to dismissal from my position on the first offense.

Further, I understand that certain information is not authorized for release to other employees within the University unless there is a legitimate educational need. Such information includes, but is not limited to, applicant information, transcripts and test scores, interview results, medical information, and affirmative action matters.

If I am in doubt about a request for information, I understand that it is my responsibility to discuss the request with my supervisor prior to a decision to release the information.

My signature denotes that I have read and understand the above Memorandum of Understanding and that unauthorized release of confidential information may lead to dismissal on the first offense.

Signature of Employee: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Letter of Introduction to Student

(NYSLPSI) New York State Longitudinal Post-School Indicators Study

Dear _____,

Five years ago, we began a study for the NY State Education Department to determine what helps young people to succeed.

You were randomly picked from school districts throughout New York State to participate in this research study. “We last included your story during our and hope you will update us this year.” We last included your story during our «last_contact» and hope you will update us this year. This spring we begin our five-year-out interviews to see how and what you are doing.

The results of these interviews are being used by the New York State Education Department to improve education in New York State. School districts use results to improve their programs. The NYSLPSI Study has been presented at meetings in Washington, D.C., Oregon, and Virginia as well. Your input makes a difference!

The main questions we are trying to answer are:

-Did high school help you to set goals and accomplish them?
-If you decide you need help to accomplish your goals, is help available?
-Has your high school education resulted in you being able to work, to continue to learn, and to participate in your community?
-What high school courses and activities made a difference for you?
-What is making a difference in your life since high school?

Si usted prefiere una copia de esta carta en español, nos llame por el número gratis 1-888-419-2697 y podemos proveérsela.

So far, we have interviewed students as seniors in high school and one and three years later.

How many students have been interviewed to date?

NYS Class of 2000	**NYS Class of 2001**
Senior Surveys = 1361	Senior Surveys = 3332
PSI 1 year later = 1240	PSI 1 year later = 3826
PSI 3 years later = 1719	PSI 3 years later = 2711

We need your help to ensure that the information we gather is complete and represents all of New York’s young people. You have valuable information and insight to share. It is important that you be interviewed. If you participate, your story is told. If you refuse to be interviewed, your story is lost.

Your responses make a difference!

Please verify or correct the information on the enclosed contact sheet and send it back to us in the return envelope as soon as possible. Any identifying information about you will be kept strictly confidential.

Please call our toll free phone number at 1-888-419-2697 if you need help with filling out the contact sheet or if you have questions. Some of the young people who will be interviewed have disabilities. If you have a disability and need help to participate, it will be provided.

We appreciate your quick response, and thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Robert Shepherd
NYSLPSI Statewide Coordinator
RS/lbINTERVIEW

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SUNY Potsdam
Potsdam, NY 13676
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(Footnotes)

[1] Information about this study is available from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) at http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/dandr.htm or from the National Post-School Outcomes Center http://www.psocenter.org/ and click on “state profiles” in the left navigation bar.

[2] This Guide does not cover clinical research methods or information about sampling. Please visit http://www.psocenter.org/data_collection.html for guidance on sampling.

[3] This is available from the National Post-School Outcomes Center (www.psocenter.org). The link to this survey can be found at http://psocenter.org/data_collection.html. Scroll down to the Post-School Data Collection Protocol Stage 1 link. There is a valuable introduction on its second page.

[4] In New York, fewer than 10% of respondents will need the survey conducted in languages other than English. Over 90% of these use Spanish. The survey (and other materials) are translated into Spanish and other languages as indicated.

[5] Information about this plan can be found at http://vesid33.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/indicators/14.htm. Information about other indicators is available at http://vesid33.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/home.html. Further Directions for Collecting Data in NY is available at http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/14postschool.htm

[6] PIAR has years of experience fielding and supervising small teams of regional interviewers. Contact PIAR at piar@potsdam.edu to request additional information.

[7] Additional information about recruiting, training, or supervising interviewers can be requested from PIAR at piar@potsdam.edu.