2 Appendix X

Contracting Guidelines for Telephone Data Collection

PRAMS states may choose to contract out the telephone portion or all data collection activities. Because of the nature of the telephone calling and the requirements that evenings and weekend calls must be made, it is often more practical to have this work done by a professional survey research organization that employs a cadre of interviewers.

We have developed these guidelines to assist PRAMS states with setting up a contract mechanism for conducting the PRAMS telephone follow-up data collection. They are designed to ensure that the procedures for conducting telephone follow-up remain consistent with the PRAMS protocol. State PRAMS staff must take an active role in the development and implementation of the contract to be sure that the contractor follows all project protocols. The use of cooperative agreement funds for any contract will need the approval of the Procurement and Grants Office (PGO) at CDC. States are encouraged to submit a draft version of the contract to their CDC Program Manager for comment. States must submit a copy of their contract to PGO at CDC once it goes into effect.

These guidelines are divided into three main sections. The first section describes issues that must be addressed in any arrangement for contracting out PRAMS telephone data collection. The second section describes the responsibilities of the state PRAMS staff and the contractor during the phase leading up to the start of a contractor performing telephone data collection. The third section describes the ongoing responsibilities of the state PRAMS staff and the contractor in relation to the implementation and operation of PRAMS telephone data collection.

I. Issues to Be Addressed in the Arrangement of a Contract

A. Use of Web-CATI System. With the implementation of the standard PRAMS Web-CATI system for 2006 births and beyond, all telephone contractors are required to make use of the standard PRAMS CATI system and may not program their own CATI software for PRAMS.

B. Telephone Number Searches. The contract should specify if the contractor will be responsible for any telephone number searches. In many cases, the state may have access to health department or other databases to search for telephone numbers. The contractor is not likely to have access to these valuable sources of telephone numbers, and this fact should be taken into consideration when determining who will be responsible for locating telephone numbers. If the contractor will conduct telephone searches prior to making calls, procedures will

need to be developed for transferring contact information between the state and the contractor.

A search for telephone numbers should be conducted for each mother who has not responded by mail when telephone phase begins. Sources should be searched by the mother's last and maiden names and, when available, by the father's last name. When searching for telephone numbers, any listing that is a potential match should be used (for instance, J Doe, J E Doe, and Jane Doe for mother Jane Doe).

C. **File Transfers.** With the Web-CATI system, state staff can upload contact information for mothers needing telephone follow-up directly from PRAMTrac and generate the output files in Web-CATI. All interview, comment, and operations data files can be downloaded by the state directly from Web-CATI. No data files need to be transferred between the state and the contractor unless contractor will be conducting telephone number searches. Contractor will need to provide telephone monitoring reports back to the state.

D. **Comment Data.** PRAMS is dedicated to collecting qualitative data provided in respondents' comments made throughout the interview. These are any comments that are made in addition to direct responses to specific questions. Comments may be made at the end of, or throughout the course of, the interview. The comments should be recorded electronically, as the CATI system will allow interviewers to enter comments assigned with specific questions and also has a feature for general comments to be entered at the end of the interview, equivalent to the back page on the mail questionnaire. Interviewers have the option of recording comments on paper and either entering them into the CATI system at a later time or entering them as they are provided during the interview. Each comment should be recorded verbatim, with one exception. No names, addresses, telephone numbers, or e-mail addresses of women or their providers should be recorded.

E. **Operations Data.** CDC PRAMS has developed software for use by the states in monitoring data collection activities for each batch. This tool, PRAMTrac, includes procedures for tracking all mailings and mail results, as well as all telephone calls and call results. The CATI system has been programmed to collect all call information as call attempts are being made. In the rare event the contractor is unable to use the CATI system to make call attempts, the call attempt information and survey data can be recorded on paper. The survey data can later be entered into the CATI system. The call attempt information should be provided to the state at the end of the interviewing period, and the state can enter the call information into the PRAMTrac database at the state office.

F. **Timeliness of Data.** All telephone interviews should be conducted on a timely basis so that the state may download the data files following the close of each

batch (e.g., within two weeks), as these data comprise a portion of the regular batch data that are submitted to CDC on a monthly basis.

G. **Database Backups.** The telephone operations and questionnaire data files will be stored on the CDC CATI contractor's server and will be backed up on a frequent basis. No PRAMS data should be stored on computers maintained by the contractor.

H. **System Interruptions.** Procedures for dealing with system interruptions should be included in the contract (e.g., power outages). The interviewers should always have access to a paper telephone questionnaire in the event of a system interruption.

I. **Virus Protection.** Any computer used for telephone interviewing should have virus protection software for the detection and removal of viruses from the computer and diskettes. The contract should specify the procedures used by the contractor for virus protection.

J. **Interviewer/Supervisor Training.** The contractor should provide training in basic interviewing skills to all of their interviewers. This should include the right to privacy of study participants.

State PRAMS staff should provide training for the interviewers to cover issues that are specific to PRAMS data collection. These issues include the facts that PRAMS is a list sample, mailed surveys are the primary form of data collection, and the telephone version of the survey has been developed to be consistent with the mail survey. These issues also include how to handle sensitive situations, such as discovering during the interview that a woman's infant has passed away. Interviewers should be trained to correctly code responses given by the respondent. This includes any comments made the mother during the interview or at the conclusion of the interview. Training should also cover the recording of all call dispositions made to each woman. CDC PRAMS will provide the Telephone Interviewer Training Manual, Training Video, and the Questionnaire Coding Guidelines for the state to use in this endeavor.

In addition to basic interviewer training, all contract staff will need to receive training on the use of the Web-CATI system. RTI developed CATI system training sessions for interviewers and supervisors. Video recordings of the CATI trainings are available for training new staff. State PRAMS staff and contract staff involved with telephone interviewing are required to participate in these trainings. Prior to the trainings, staff should review the How To manuals that document the CATI system. There is an interviewer version and a supervisor version of these manuals. Supervisors should become familiar with the interviewer procedures and participate in the interviewer training in addition to the supervisor training.

Contract staff should be encouraged to practice using the CATI system in training mode prior to going live with telephone interviews.

K. **Human Subjects Training.** All new project staff, whether contract staff or state employees, participate in all four modules of the PRAMS human subjects training sessions (see **Chapter 3, section 9e**). These sessions cover various issues related to the protection of human subjects in research. The state PRAMS staff should provide human subjects training for all interviewers and supervisors.

L. **Telephone Introduction.** Each state's telephone introductory script has been programmed into the CATI system so that the interviewer is prompted to read the introduction when each call is made. The telephone introduction contains required elements of informed consent and may not be modified by the contractor. The introduction is also used to verify that the interviewer is speaking to the correct person and to introduce the potential respondent to the PRAMS project. See **Appendix G** for further detail.

M. **Callback Procedures.** The procedures should follow the PRAMS protocol for calling potential respondents. Once the numbers are identified, there should be up to 15 attempts per viable telephone number to contact the mother by telephone. The only time there should be fewer than 15 calls to a telephone number is when a call results in a "terminating" outcome (i.e., completed interview, interview refused, language barrier, wrong number). Telephone interviewers should make more than fifteen call attempts **only** if they have a strong lead or a scheduled appointment to call a mother back. The calls should be staggered by day of week and time of day to increase the likelihood of contacting the mother at home. The results of each call should be entered into the CATI system by selecting the correct disposition codes. The CATI disposition codes will be matched to those set up in the PRAMTrac system. **(see PRAMS Implementation Manual).**

N. **Confidentiality and Security.** The telephone contact information provided by the state PRAMS office to be imported into the CATI system contains personal identifiers needed to contact the sampled women. The contract should specify procedures that will be maintained to protect the security and confidentiality of this information. See **Chapter 10, Section 2,** for a thorough discussion of security measures.

O. **Monitoring Procedures.** Quality assurance measures include the monitoring of interviewers. Interviewers should be monitored 10% of the time that they are placing calls. The monitor should determine whether the interviewer is appropriately consenting women, administering the interviews, protecting the mother's confidentiality when speaking with other household members, and keeping data collection forms and their CATI stations secure. In addition, monitors should evaluate whether the interviewee's responses are recorded

accurately. Interviewers should receive regular feedback on their performance, and if problems are identified, remedial action should be taken immediately.

It is likely that the contractor will have procedures in place for monitoring interviewers. These procedures should be at least as stringent as those offered by PRAMS, and should be described in the contract. Whether the contractor uses its own monitoring procedures and forms, or uses the PRAMS methods and forms, a summary of the monitoring efforts for each batch should be provided to the state and to CDC. In addition, the state PRAMS staff should take an active role in monitoring by periodically monitoring a portion of the interviews him/herself. A monitoring report must be included in monthly batch submissions to CDC. An example report and further information on monitoring procedures can be found in **Appendix M (Telephone Interviewer Monitoring Procedures).**

P. Testing the CATI System. In the event of a questionnaire revision or the start-up of a new state, all components of CATI data collection will need to be thoroughly tested. States must submit 30 dummy surveys to the CATI programmers for their testing process. Before the CATI programmers send each state's program to CDC PRAMS, a preliminary check is conducted. CDC PRAMS staff conduct further testing for text, skip patterns and data output. See **Appendix A, Section II (Development of a CATI System)** for detail. PRAMS state projects are responsible for testing the system upon receipt and any time changes are made (such as a questionnaire revision, etc.). In such situations states may wish the contractor to also perform testing of the CATI instrument.

II. Start-up Activities for a Telephone Contract

A. Responsibilities of State Through Start-up Phase.

i. Conduct interviewer training with the contractor staff. Either lead the training or share the responsibility with the contractor supervisor. Share the Interviewer Training Manual and Video.

ii. Provide documentation and training videos for the CATI interviewer and supervisor trainings.

iii. Conduct human subjects training with the contractor staff and submit the training sign-in sheet to the CDC PRAMS Program Manager as verification for completion of the training.

iv. Set up a user account for each state and contract person involved with the telephone surveillance phase, and assign them appropriate access level. The Web-CATI system is set up so that each user has certain access based on the role and duties related to telephone data operations. The administrator

account is initially set up by CATI programmers. CDC PRAMS recommends this person be the state PRAMS Project Coordinator. The administrator then sets up user accounts and access levels for all other state and contract staff. It is possible to have a second administrator at the contract site. This person should be in a supervisory role. The state PRAMS project is responsible for providing information to the CATI programmers on which individual is designated as the primary state administrator.

v. Provide the telephone introductory script, which includes all elements of informed consent, and the telephone questionnaire; the contractor will use the hard copy in the event that the web-CATI system is down.

vi. Provide monitoring forms for the contractor to complete and submit back to the state on a monthly basis.

Protocol Development Task

Identify the state PRAMS staff (e.g., Project Coordinator or Data Manager) who will be responsible for working with the contractor during the start-up phase. This includes all activities **Section II.D** above, including interviewer training and quarterly human subjects training.

<NAME>, <TITLE> from <OFFICE> will have primary responsibility for working with the contractor during the start-up phase of the telephone contract.

Protocol Development Task

Describe the interviewer training procedures. Include materials to be used, length and frequency of training, etc.

Protocol Development Task

Describe quarterly human subjects training procedures. Include materials to be used, length and frequency of training, etc.

B. Responsibilities of Contractor Through Start-up Phase.

i. In coordination with the state PRAMS contact, conduct interviewer training for staff.

ii. Ensure that all interviewers and supervisors participate in human subjects training and that their training is documented on a sign-in sheet.

iii. Participate in CATI trainings (see **Appendix A, Section II.D** for more information)

iv. Identify the roles of each staff person so the state PRAMS project can assign all contract staff a user level.

v. Test the CATI instrument if state is just starting data collection or if there is a questionnaire revision.

III. Ongoing Implementation and Operation of Telephone Data Collection

A. Ongoing Responsibilities of the State

i. Periodically monitor all aspects of contractor activities to assure they are properly carrying out their responsibilities, properly following the PRAMS protocol, and to identify any issues or problems that have arisen.

ii. Assure that a supervisor is monitoring at least 10% of the time that interviewers are placing calls. Monitoring reports should be submitted to the state monthly for each batch. Example monitoring forms are available in **Appendix M (Telephone Interviewer Monitoring Procedures)**. In addition, the state PRAMS staff should take an active role in monitoring by periodically monitoring a portion of the interviews him/herself.

iii. Develop systematic weekly communications with contractor to monitor batch progress such as wrong number report, telephone disposition report, completes, and other information. The CATI system will generate a variety of reports documenting the status of telephone operations.

iv. Conduct training of new interviewers as necessary. Either lead the training or share the responsibility with the contractor supervisor.

v. Conduct human subjects training annually with all interviewers and the supervisor, with the exception of new employees or a breach in protocol.

vi. Participate in monthly meetings with contract staff to examine how the batch went (project protocols followed, staffing and training issues, data system issues, response rates, difficult interviews, etc.).

vii. Provide regular feedback to contract staff, such as telephone portion of OPAL or monthly batch reports and copies of publications or examples of data uses.

Protocol Development Task

Identify the state PRAMS staff (e.g., Project Coordinator or Data Manager) who will be responsible for overseeing the ongoing implementation activities of the contractor as described in **Section III.A** above.

<NAME>, <TITLE> from <OFFICE> will have primary responsibility for overseeing the ongoing implementation activities of the telephone contract.

B. Ongoing Responsibilities of the Contractor

i. Conduct all telephone interviews according to PRAMS protocol. This includes administration of the introductory script with elements of informed consent, monitoring telephone interviews, and adhering to the call frequencies and schedules specified in the PRAMS protocol.

ii. Complete entry of survey, comment, and operations information in Web-CATI on a timely basis following the close of each batch (e.g., within two weeks) so state may download the data files.

iii. Provide the state with a summary monitoring report for each batch.

iv. In coordination with the state PRAMS contact, conduct training of new interviewers as necessary and make sure they are familiar with the Web-CATI system before conducting actual interviews.

v. Ensure that all interviewers and the supervisor participate in annual human subjects training.

vi. Develop systematic weekly communications with state to monitor batch progress such as wrong number report, telephone disposition report, completes, and other information. CDC will provide example reports upon request.

vii. Conduct monthly meetings with interview and state staff to examine how the batch went (project protocols followed, staffing and training issues, data system issues, response rates, difficult interviews, etc.).

viii. Participate in site visits, PRAMS National Meetings, and other project activities as requested.

Protocol Development Task

Place a copy of your contract here.