

## INTERVIEW SKIT OUTLINE AND SCRIPT

### 1. INTRODUCTION [Time: 1 minute]

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We are going to eavesdrop on a portion of an eligibility interview with Ms. Ellen Johnson, a single mother with three children: Bobby Johnson (8), Julie Johnson (4) and Frank Edwards (1). Ms. Johnson works full time as a veterinary tech at the local animal hospital. On the application that Ms. Johnson completed she certified that she does not receive any child support. As we “tune in” to the conversation the interviewer is asking additional questions on this topic. As you listen to this discussion, think about what questions you would ask based upon Ms. Johnson’s responses and write down 2 or 3 aspects of the situation that make this discussion challenging.

This skit is not included in the materials you have received, but will be provided to you as part of the notes for the conference call. So just pretend you are observing the interview as it really happens.

### 2. SCRIPT [Time: 2-3 minutes]

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**BILL:** Ms. Johnson, I would like to ask some questions now about some possible sources of income, in addition to your job. Your application says that you do not receive child support from the children’s father. Is that correct?

**ELLEN:** Yes, he doesn’t send me money like he used to.

**BILL:** When did you last receive child support?

**ELLEN:** It was quite a while ago, I don’t really remember when.

**BILL:** Ms Johnson in order to understand your financial situation, I’m going to need to ask some detailed questions about child support payments. Okay?

**ELLEN:** Okay.

**BILL:** Would you say that you’ve received any child support in the past 12 months?

**ELLEN:** Yes, but not regular.

**BILL:** About how many times would you say that you received child support in the past 12 months?

**ELLEN:** Oh, maybe 5 or 6 times.

**BILL:** When did you last receive a payment from Robert?

**ELLEN:** I guess about two months ago.

**BILL:** How much was that payment?

**ELLEN:** \$175

**BILL:** How much was the payment before that?

**ELLEN:** It was about the same.

**BILL:** Would you say that Robert pays an average of \$175 every other month?

**ELLEN:** That would be about right.

**BILL:** Is there any kind of legal agreement for child support payments to be made for the children?

**ELLEN:** No.

**BILL:** Is there a divorce settlement that requires any type of alimony or child support payments?

**ELLEN:** No, Robert and I weren't married. He used to send me \$100 every month for Bobbie and Julie, but then he kind of stopped paying regularly when Frank was born. He was mad about me living with Eddie....That's Frank's father.

**BILL:** How much child support does Eddie pay?

**ELLEN:** He hasn't paid any in about 2 months because he got laid off.

**BILL:** How much support was he contributing?

**ELLEN:** About \$150 per month.

**BILL:** Is he helping with any bills or expenses now?

**ELLEN:** No.

**BILL:** Have you attempted to file for child support enforcement from Robert or Eddie?

**ELLEN:** No, I don't want to get them upset at me.

**BILL:** Do you expect Eddie to resume child support payments?

**ELLEN:** Yes, when he goes back to work.

**3. WRAP UP [Time: 1-2 minutes]**

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**Q: What made this discussion challenging?**

- The topic requires that the interviewer clarify who the fathers are of Ms. Johnson’s children – a potentially awkward conversation.
- Mrs. Johnson tends not to be too talkative and to talk in generalities. This makes it harder for the interviewer to get the facts on the table.
- Mrs. Johnson didn’t seem to be aware of steps she could take to compel the fathers to assist her. This raises the issue of how much counseling an interviewer should or should not do.
- Child support often is not provided regularly. This makes it harder to talk about and also harder to anticipate in the future.
- It is more challenging to document something that is NOT happening.
- It is not always easy to pin some people down.

**Cautions and Tips:**

- Be careful about not getting further into a family’s social history than is necessary to obtain the required information.
- Be careful not to come across as disbelieving or suspicious...the objective is to get the facts.