

ATTACHMENT K – FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BENCHMARK AND TRACKING SURVEYS

Project Background

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the nutrition assistance programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of FNS is to provide children and needy families' better access to food and a more healthful diet through its food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts. The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is the cornerstone of the food assistance programs. Approximately 26 million people¹ receive FSP benefits. However, more than 16 million eligible individuals do not use these resources.²

In 2003, FNS contracted with Fleishman-Hillard (FH) to help reposition the FSP as a nutrition assistance program, and in turn increase the national food stamp participation rate, motivating hard-to-reach audiences to apply for benefits so that their families may have access to healthier foods and nutrition education. To help accomplish this, in 2006 FH, along with advertising partner GMMB, conducted 11 qualitative focus group sessions across the United States with current FSP participants, consumers who are eligible but not participating in the FSP, and higher-income adults. During these focus groups, FH/GMMB obtained reactions and feedback to proposed program names, potential slogans for the FSP, potential program messages/radio advertisements, as well as two Spanish-language television ad concepts.

Research Objectives

With the proposed name change currently before Congress in the USDA Farm Bill, we propose conducting a national survey to gauge the public's awareness of the Program name change should it occur. More specifically, a quantitative survey will establish a baseline measure of current Program awareness and ultimately, changes in awareness if the FSP name is changed. If Congress approves the proposed name change of Food and Nutrition Program, outreach efforts regarding the new name will take place. These surveys will provide a measure of the public's perceptions and support of the name change as well as feedback on FNS' communication efforts.

STAKEHOLDERS REPRESENTED AND SURVEY DESIGN

We propose conducting a national benchmark and tracking survey, which will be used to assess the public's awareness and perceptions of the new Program name and to assess FNS' outreach efforts in communicating the name change. We propose conducting the survey(s) with at least 2,000 U.S. adults (per wave).

Demographic Composition of Survey Participants

For the benchmark and tracking surveys, each wave will represent a nationally diverse (and fairly representative) mix of consumers based on characteristics such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, occupation, presence of children in the household, household income, and education. The continental 48 States will be represented.

¹ *Reaching Those in Need: Food Stamp Program Participation Rates in 2005*. USDA, FNS. October 2007.

² *Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: 2006 Summary*. USDA, FNS. June 2007.

The survey results will allow us to look at responses from different target audiences such as lower-income households, elderly, or African Americans.

Identification of Survey Participants

Approximately 2,000 individuals (18 and older) will participate in each wave of the benchmark and tracking survey. Using random-digit dialing, individuals will be invited to participate in the survey. The survey will remain in the field for up to two weeks and the survey vendor will make up to three call backs to potential participants.

Attachment G shows the questionnaire interviewers will follow. All survey questions are unique to this study and have been developed by FH/GMMB.

Participant stipend:

- Participants will not receive a stipend for participating in the survey.

Confidentiality:

- The participants will be informed of confidentiality and privacy act provisions before participating in the survey. The participants will be told the length of time the survey will require of them.
- The identity of participants will remain confidential, and the participants will be assured that their name will never appear in any reports to the USDA.
- The USDA's sponsorship of the research will be revealed to the participants during the survey.

Pretest of Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire has been developed (see Attachment G). Upon approval of the name change by Congress, FH/GMMB will test the survey questionnaire in order to assess the clarity of our questions and their relevance to the target audiences. This exercise will also determine how well the organization of the questionnaire flows from one question to another. We will implement this test by having a professional survey vendor conduct the survey with 30 participants, selected by random-digit dial. Time required for the pre-test is included in the burden table.

During the pretest surveys, the professional research staff members who conduct the surveys will take notes and evaluate each question within the guide based on:

- How clear and easy it is for consumers to understand (i.e., where appropriate, we can include questions during the pretest to assess consumers' cognitive understanding of key questions).
- The extent to which the question is relevant and meaningful to respondents.
- How well one questions flows to the next.

Survey Length

Each survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete (on average).

Burden Hours

Estimated burden hours take into the account the amount of time required for participants to complete the survey.

Estimated Burden Hours Associated with the Benchmark and Tracking Surveys

Table 3: Survey Burden

Affected Public	Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Number of responses annually per Respondent	Total annual responses (c x d)	Estimate of Burden Hours per response	Total Annual Burden Hours (e x f)
U.S. Public: Individuals over the age of 18	Benchmark Survey: General U.S. Public	2000	1	2000	0.167	334
U.S. Public: Individuals over the age of 18	Tracking Survey: General U.S. Public	2000	1	2000	0.167	334
U.S. Public: Individuals over the age of 18	Pre-test Survey	30	1	30	0.167	5
U.S. Public: Individuals over the age of 18	<i>non-response</i>	200	1	202	0.167	34
Total						707

Time Frame

We will conduct the benchmark survey when FNS' outreach efforts on the name change begin. The survey(s) will be conducted over a two week period. The tracking survey(s) will be conducted six months to one year after the name change and subsequent outreach efforts. A second tracking survey may be deployed after the initial tracking survey to gauge whether or not awareness has continued to increase or if it has reached a plateau.

Data Collection

The interviewer will use a telephone survey script to conduct each interview. (See Attachment G.) The survey vendor will create a computer-assisted telephone interviewing program to collect the responses. The program will be tested by FH/GMMB researchers prior to deployment of the survey.

Data Analysis

The responses from the benchmark and tracking surveys will be analyzed by the FH/GMMB research staff.

- Tabulate, review, and analyze the findings from the survey.
- Identify any significant differences among subgroups (e.g., lower-income households vs. upper-income households).
- Review verbatim responses to obtain insightful comments to be included in paraphrased quotes within the report.

Survey Reports

The survey reports will be narrative and include the following key sections:

- Introduction and explanation of survey methods (in tabular form), dates, and participant profiles.
- Executive summary of key findings and their communication implications.
- Detailed findings segregated into relevant and meaningful sections or chapters (for example, awareness the name change and support of the change).

Findings from the report will provide FNS with a current measure of the public's awareness of the new program name. These findings will help guide FNS in developing additional outreach and communication efforts.