

**SEBTC EVALUATION
April 2011 Site Visits
School Food Authority Interview**

INTRODUCTION

My name is [X], from [Abt Associates/Mathematica Policy Research].

As you may know, Abt and Mathematica are working together to evaluate the Summer EBT for Children demonstrations for the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA. My colleagues and I are visiting each of the five sites and collecting information from a wide range of stakeholders involved in the demonstration in order to learn about the process of implementation, the challenges you encountered, and lessons learned. I want to start by thanking you for taking time to speak with us today. Your perspective and insights on these issues are very helpful.

For stakeholders not receiving grant funds: Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You may refuse to answer any question and may stop the interview at any time.

Our reports to FNS will describe the range of responses expressed by staff, and may list the names of agencies and partners who contributed information, but we will not quote you or anyone by name or title. However, because of the relatively small number of organizations participating in the study, there is a possibility that a response could be correctly attributed to you.

I expect our conversation will take approximately 90 minutes.

[OPTIONAL IF INTERVIEWER CHOOSES TO RECORD:] I want to be sure I am keeping track of everything you are saying. May I record our discussion so that I can listen to it later when I write up my notes? No one outside of our research team will have access to the recording. [IF YES:] Thank you. It will be helpful if you speak up, speak clearly, and speak one at a time. [IF NO:] That's no problem. I'll take notes as you talk, but I may sometimes need to ask you to slow down or repeat so that I can get all the information.

First, do you have any questions for me about the project in general or what we will be discussing today?

A. BACKGROUND ON RESPONDENT

- A.1 What school/school district (SD)/school food authority (SFA) do you work for?
- A.2 What is your position? What are your day-to-day responsibilities?
- A.3 How long have you worked for the school?

B. DEMONSTRATION PLANNING AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Organizations involved in application process.

B.1 Where you or others at the SFA involved in the application process for the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

[If so, probe:]

- How did you become involved?
- What was your role?

Impetus for applying.

B.2 Why did your school choose to participate in the demonstration grant?

[Probe:]

- Was the decision to participate made at the district-level or the school-level?
- Did you have input into the decision?
- What considerations were discussed before making the decision to participate?

B.3 What opportunities did the grant present?

[Probe:]

- What did you hope to achieve by participating?
- Did you receive any funding from the grant?

B.4 Where there any challenges posed by the requirements of the grant?

[If so, probe:]

- How did you overcome or deal with those challenges?

The planning process and issues addressed.

B.5 Once your state received the grant, where you involved in the planning process?

[If so, probe:]

- How did you become involved?
- What was your role?
- During what period were you involved in the planning process?
- What were your main issues of focus and/or concern during the planning process?
- What challenges did you encounter during the planning process? How were they addressed?

[If not, probe:]

- How did you hear about the program?
- When did you become involved?

C. LOCAL CONTEXT

Local schools.

C.1 How many elementary, middle, and high schools are in your SFA?

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

C.2 I'd like to ask some questions about the summer feeding options available to children attending these schools.

C.3 How many SFSP sites were sponsored in your area?

[Probe:]

- Where are your sites typically located? (for example, community centers, parks, playgrounds)
- Are all of your sites open sites?
- For how many weeks were the programs open in 2010?
- Did any issues arise during the summer of 2010?

Other existing summer feeding options.

C.4 Do you know of any other summer feeding options (such as Seamless Summer Feeding Program, NSLP, kids' cafes, Child and Adult Care Food Programs) available in your community during the summer of 2010?

[If so, probe:]

- Can you describe those programs?
- Which organizations administered the programs?
- How many children were typically served by each?

C.5 Was the SFA involved in any of these programs? [If so,] In what way?

Gaps in summer food services.

C.6 Do you know of any gaps that exist in the availability of summer food services for children in your area?

[If so, probe:]

- How large is the unmet need?
- What are reasons for the gaps in services (e.g., limited funding, not enough sites, poor transportation to sites, not open the full summer, limited outreach, lack of awareness, stigma, limited hours or days of operation, parents concerns' about neighborhood safety, lack of program activities)?

D. BASIC PARAMETERS OF THE SUMMER EBT MODEL

Now, I'd like to talk about the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME].

Level of EBT benefits.

D.1 What do you think of the \$60 per child monthly benefit level specified by FNS?

[Probe:]

- Do you believe the level is too high, too low, or appropriate?
- What do you think about children of all ages receiving the same amount of benefits and that multiple children in a household each receive the full benefit (no accounting for economies of scale)?

Mix of benefits in WIC sites.

D.2 What has been the reaction of participating organizations to the WIC foods selected for the demonstration?

[Probe:]

- Overall mix of foods
- Split between food and cash voucher for fruits and vegetables
- Same types and amounts of food for children of all ages

E. PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Organizational structure to administer the demonstration.

E.1 What are your and/or your SFAs responsibilities as they relate to [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

E.2 Have your responsibilities changed from what was proposed in the grant application?

[If so, probe:]

- How have your responsibilities changed?
- Why did they change?

Agreements between organizations.

E.3 Do you have agreements or contracts in place between your SFA and [GRANTEE]?

[If so, probe:]

- Do these agreements or contracts identify the goals, objectives, roles, and responsibilities as they pertain to the demonstration?
- Have these agreements been formalized? [Can we get copies?]

Staffing structure.

E.4 How many staff members from the SFA are involved in the demonstration activities?

E.5 What are their roles on the project?

[Probe:]

- What type of backgrounds and qualifications do each have?
- E.6 Were any new staff members hired as a result of the demonstration?
- E.7 Where any new skills required by staff to carry out demonstration services?
- E.8 Did staff receive training to carry out their new responsibilities?
- E.9 Has the staffing structure changed since the grant application?

[If so, probe:]

- How has it changed?
- Why did it change?

- E.10 Has there been staff turnover?

[If so, probe:]

- In what positions and for what reasons?
- What were the effects of this turnover?

Communication between grantees and key partners.

- E.11 How often and for what reasons do you communication with [GRANTEE]?

- E.12 Have there been challenges to maintaining communication?

[If so, probe:]

- In what ways and for what areas could communications be improved?

- E.13 What forms of communication and collaboration have been most helpful? In what ways?

Successes and challenges of the partnerships

- E.14 What have been the most effective elements of your partnership with [GRANTEE], and why? What has worked best in this partnership?

- E.14 What aspects of this partnership could be improved?

- E.15 What have you learned about establishing and maintaining this partnership?

F. IDENTIFYING ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND HOUSEHOLDS

Identifying children eligible for FRP meals.

- F.1 Who at the SFA was responsible for identifying children eligible for FRP meals (e.g. the food service department, the central administration or both)?

- F.2 What was the process for identifying eligible children?

[Probe:]

- What data sources were used?
- Did you need to combine data from multiple databases?
- Are data on children who are directly certified maintained in the same database as data on children who submit a school lunch application?
- If not, what were the implications?
- Were you able to pull the most recent contact information from the student records database?
- Were you able to provide all the data elements requested by [GRANTEE]? If not, which were unavailable?
- How many staff hours did the process take?

F.3 What criteria did you use for including a child in the file of eligible children?

[Probe:]

- What grades were included? Was pre-k included? Were seniors included?
- Were any students excluded from the file even if they qualified for FRP meals?
- What cutoff date did you use for school lunch applications to be included?
- How often is direct certification conducted? Did you include students from the most recent certification?

F.4 What is your impression of the quality of the data from each source that you used?

[Probe:]

- How often is data from school lunch applications entered into your database?
- How often is student contact information updated?
- How and for what purposes is contact information updated?

F.5 In what month did the process of identifying eligible children begin?

F.6 Where there any challenges in compiling the data?

[If so, probe:]

- Have they been resolved?
- How were they resolved?

F.7 How many children were identified in your SFA?

Aggregating data into household level files.

F.8 What was the process for consolidating the child-level data into a household-level file?

F.9 Did you have a household or family identifier in their data already?

[If so, probe:]

- What was the identifier (e.g. SNAP ID, family ID used by the district)?

[If not, probe:]

- How did you match children to households?
 - Did you match by certain variables such as parent/guardian name or address?
 - Was the matching done manually or electronically?
- F.10 How did you handle it when more than one family lived in the same household?
How many of instances did you identify in your SFA?
- F.11 How difficult was it to create the household file for the [GRANTEE]?
- [Probe:]
- How many staff hours did it take?
 - Over what calendar period?
- F.12 Were there any challenges in compiling the data (e.g. matching children without [SNAP/WIC] identifier, difficulty matching parent/guardian names, addresses, and telephone numbers across databases)?
- [If so, probe:]
- Were they resolved? How?
 - Do you have any concerns about the quality of the resulting file?
- F.13 How many households did you identify in the target area?

G. OUTREACH AND CONSENT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION AND EVALUATION

Outreach and recruitment efforts.

- G.1 Where you involved in any outreach efforts to raise awareness of the demonstration?
- [If so, probe:]
- What outreach efforts did you conduct?
 - What methods did you use (e.g., mail, flyers, radio, television)?
 - Who developed the materials for the outreach?
 - How widely were the materials and information distributed?
 - Did materials address potential concerns about immigration status and benefit receipt?
 - Were materials distributed in multiple languages? Which ones?
 - Over what period was the outreach conducted?

Consent distribution and collection process.

- G.2 Were you involved in distributing forms to and collecting forms from parents/guardians to give their consent to share their child's information for random assignment and administration of the benefit?
- [If so, probe:]
- What was your role?

- When were the consent forms distributed?
- How long did households have to respond?

Tracking and managing receipt of consent forms.

G.3 Were you involved in tracking the response to these consent letters?

[If so, probe:]

- What approach did you use to track receipts?
- How were returned letters handled, if addresses were incorrect?
- How are re-mailing or follow-up needs assessed, if returned forms are incomplete or missing information?
- How are the data stored and cleaned?
- Who has access to the data?
- What aspects of consent management and tracking have been successful?

Consent return rates [IF ACTIVE CONSENT REQUIRED] for active sites.

G.4 How many consent packages did you send in the initial distribution?

G.5 What percentage of households that were sent the initial distribution returned consent forms with complete information?

G.6 What percentage returned forms with incomplete or missing information?

G.7 What percentage of letters were returned undeliverable?

G.8 Was an attempt made to determine the correct address and then mail the consent forms again?

Consent return rates [IF PASSIVE CONSENT REQUIRED.]

G.9 How many consent packages did you send in the initial mailing?

G.10 What percentage of households that were sent mailings opted out or responded that they did not want to be part of the demonstration?

G.11 Was there any effort to encourage these households to reconsider?

G.12 What percentage of letters were returned undeliverable?

G.13 Was an attempt made to determine the correct address and then mail the consent forms again?

Maximizing consent response, [IF ACTIVE CONSENT REQUIRED].

G.14 Were you involved in contacting households to increase the response rate?

[If so, probe:]

- What outreach efforts did you conduct? What was your role?
- Who led the recruitment efforts (e.g., state/local agency, CBOs, school staff)?

- What proportion of households was contacted again after the initial distribution?
- Did you contact all households that did not respond? Or some subset?
- What type of contact did you make with these households?
- How often did you contact households?

G.15 How successful were efforts to contact nonresponsive households?

G.16 What challenges have you faced in encouraging household response? Did you overcome them and how?

Household reaction to the EBT benefits.

G.17 In general, how have households responded to the materials that were sent about the program?

[Probe:]

- About how many inquires/calls have you received?
- What kinds of questions did parents ask?
- What types of concerns were most often discussed?
- Did this vary by school, age of the child, or some other factor?
- Did parents tend to be more positive or negative about the program?

G.18 What has been the reaction of households to the \$60 per child monthly benefit level?

[Probe:]

- Do they believe the level is too high, too low, or appropriate?
- Has this affected the consent rates for the demonstration in any way? If so, how?

Lessons learned from consent process [ASK IF PROCESS COMPLETE].

G.19 What aspects of the consent process could have been improved? Why?

G.20 What advice would you give others about tracking and managing consent information?

G.21 What kind of technical assistance or support would have been most useful?

H. TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Experiences of school staff and community partners with training.

H.1 Have you received any information or training for the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

[If not, ask:]

- What types of information or training would have been helpful?

[If so, ask the remainder of this section:]

- H.2 What type of information or training did you receive (e.g., information materials distribution, one-on-one, group, computer)?

[If you received written information, probe:]

- What was the focus of the materials (e.g., developing lists of eligible children, the use of benefits and EBT cards, outreach and education to eligible households)?
- When did you receive them?
- Was the level of information sufficient to understand the program and complete your role?

[If you received training, ask the remaining questions in this section:]

- H.3 What was the focus of the training (e.g., developing lists of eligible children, the use of benefits and EBT cards, outreach and education to eligible households)?
- H.4 Who conducted the training?
- H.5 How long was the training?
- H.6 Was there any follow-up training provided?
- H.7 Was the level of training sufficient to understand the program and complete your role in the demonstration?
- H.8 Was the type of training appropriate?
- H.9 Would you suggest conducting more/less of certain types?
- H.10 What changes would you suggest the state makes to the training in the future (i.e., content, timing, length, location)?

I. SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

Successes.

- I.1 Thus far, what have been the greatest successes of the early phases of the demonstration?
- I.2 What factors contributed significantly to this success?
- I.3 What, if anything, could be done differently to improve the planning process or the initiation of the program?

Challenges.

- I.4 Thus far, what have been the biggest challenges during the early phases of the demonstration?

- I.5 Have these challenges been resolved? If so, how? If not, why?
- I.6 What could [STATE] have done differently during the planning process or the initiation of the program?

J. IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONAL COSTS

Matched, volunteer, and donated resources [Ask if SFA is receiving grant funds].

- J.1 Have any resources been used beyond the grant to support implementation of the grant?

[If so, probe:]

- What was the source?
- How much was used?
- How were these resources used?

- J.2 Are volunteers involved in providing services?

[If so, probe:]

- Can you estimate how much volunteer time was spent?
- What was the role of these volunteers?

- J.3 Were any other resources donated for the demonstration (e.g. office space, materials)?

[If so, probe:]

- What were they?
- Who donated them?
- How much was used?

Matched, volunteer, and donated resources [Ask if SFA is not receiving grant funds].

- J.4 What resources have been used to support implementation of the grant?

[Probe:]

- How much was used?
- How were these resources used?

- J.5 Are volunteers involved in providing services?

[If so, probe:]

- Can you estimate how much volunteer time was spent?
- What was the role of these volunteers?

- J.6 Were any other resources donated for the demonstration (e.g. office space, materials)?

[If so, probe:]

- What were they?
- Who donated them
- How much was used?

Staff time spent on [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME].

J.7 What percentage of your time do you typically spend on the program?

[Probe:]

- Has this changed over time?
- How did the percentage compare before the school year ended compared to after the school year ended?
- How much of your time is charged to the grant?
- How much is paid by other funding sources?
- Do you work overtime hours on the project? If so, how much is paid versus unpaid?

CLOSING

Is there anything you think is important for the FNS to know about the [STATE]'s [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME] demonstration that we did not ask about?

Thank you for your time and helpful feedback. The information you have shared will be valuable to our team as we look across states and localities for themes and ideas that we can share with FNS.

Are there any questions you have for me before we finish?

END OF INTERVIEW