SEBTC EVALUATION
April 2011 Site Visits
EBT Processor 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 [XX] 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

[RECORD NAME OF FIRM]

A.1   What is your position at [FIRM]?

B. PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B.1   What units of the organization are or will be involved? What are their current areas of responsibility for the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME] demonstration? How do you expect that the responsibilities will change over the project phases?

B.2   What changes to the contract with the State were made? What was the process? [Get copy of amendments etc.]

B.3   Are subcontractors involved?

[If yes, probe and get copy of subcontracts:]
- What are their roles?
- Why are they used?

B.4   What is the current staffing structure for the [SEBTC] project?

[Probe:]
- How many staff members are involved in each unit of the organization?
- What roles do key staff members play?
- What type of backgrounds and qualifications do they have?
- What roles do support staff play?
- What type of backgrounds and qualifications do they have?
- Were any new staff members hired as a result of the demonstration? If so, which ones?
- What new skills are required of existing staff to carry out demonstration services? Did these staff need training to carry out their new responsibilities? If so, what training did they receive?

B.5   Has there been staff turnover since the grant application?

[If so, probe:]
- In what positions and for what reasons?
- What were the effects of this turnover?

B.6   How often do you communicate with [GRANTEE] and for what reasons? Have there been challenges to maintaining communication?

[If so, probe:]
- In what ways and for what areas could communications be improved?
- What forms of communication and collaboration have been most helpful? In what ways?

B.7   What are the most effective elements of the partnership with [GRANTEE], and why? What has worked best in this partnership? What aspects of this partnership could be improved? What have you learned about establishing and maintaining this partnership?

C. DEMONSTRATION PLANNING AND APPLICATION PROCESS

C.1   Was your organization involved in the application for the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME] grant?

[If yes, probe]
- What was your organization's role in the application?

- What kinds of staff were involved?
- What parts of the application did you work on?

C.2   How was your organization involved the planning for the demonstration and evaluation?

[Probe:]
- What kinds of staff were involved?
- What parts of the process did you work on?

C.3   What were the main issues of focus and/or concern during the planning process?

C.4   What challenges did you encounter during the planning and application process? How were they addressed?

D. EBT SYSTEMS PREPARATION

D.1   Are changes to the EBT system or third-party processor (TPP) systems needed to implement [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

[If so, probe]
- What changes are needed?
- What is the status of these changes?
- What tasks remain to be done?

D.2   Are changes to the point of sale (POS) system programming or data loads needed to implement [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

[If so, probe]
- What changes are needed?
- What is the status of these changes?
- What tasks remain to be done?

D.3   Are changes to the interactive voice response (IVR) system, customer service scripts, or user website needed to implement [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

[If so, probe and request documentation of new scripts and screens]
- What changes are needed?
- What is the status of these changes?
- What tasks remain to be done?

D.4   Are changes to the settlement and reconciliation processes needed to implement [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]?

[If so, probe]
- What changes are needed?
- What is the status of these changes?
- What tasks remain to be done?

D.5   Please describe the work that has been done on the changes to the EBT system, the POS system, or the IVR system so far.

- Who is involved with this process?
- What design, development, implementation, and testing steps have been completed? How long did this take?
- What activities took the most effort?
- What issues were encountered?

D.6   What is the status of system preparations?

- What is the schedule for completing preparations and going live?
- What are the critical milestones and when are they scheduled to happen?
- What do you see as the main challenges remaining?

F. INFORMING HOUSEHOLDS ABOUT RANDOM ASSIGNMENT RESULTS AND ENROLLING THEM IN THE [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME]

F.1   What is the plan for creating records for [SEBTC] households on the EBT system?

[Probe:]
- Will households with existing records be identified? How?
- How will new records be created?
- What role will your organization have?
- Who else is involved?
- What will happen when?

F.2   What preparations for enrolling households [SEBTC] have you completed?

[Probe:]
- How long did this take?
- What activities took the most effort?
- What issues were encountered?

F.3   What is the plan for issuing benefits [SEBTC] households on the EBT system?

[Probe:]
- Will the process be the same for households with existing records and new households not already receiving SNAP/WIC? If different, how?
- What role will your organization have?
- Who else is involved?
- What will happen when?

G. DISTRIBUTING EBT CARDS

G.1
- Who else is involved?
- What will happen when?
- How long did this take?
- What activities took the most effort?
- What issues were encountered?

G.2   How will the initial EBT cards be distributed to the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME] households (by mail, in person, pick up, etc.)?

[Probe:]
- Who else is involved?
- What will happen when?

G.3 households activate their cards and obtain their Personal Identification Number (PIN)?

[Probe: activated upon receipt or upon use, or call a number to activate; assigned vs. selected PIN; security]
- Who else is involved?
- What will happen when?

G.4   Will the EBT card distribution and activation processes for [SEBTC] be different from the usual SNAP/WIC process in [State]?

[If yes, probe:]
- How are these processes different?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of these different processes?
- Which process is better for the program administrators, and why?
- Which process is better for the participants, and why?

H. TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS

H.1   your organization provided training to staff at the participating schools or community partners for the demonstration?

[If yes, probe:]
- What type of training did you provide (e.g., information materials distribution, one-on-one, group, computer)?
- What topics did the training cover?
- Who conducted the training?
- Who participated in the training?
- How long was the training?

H.2   Does your organization plan to provide training to staff at participating schools or community partners for the demonstration?

If so, please describe the plans (topic, audience, providers, methods, and timeline).

I. TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I.1   Has your organization been involved with the development of informational or training materials or plans for participants in the [SEBTC]?

[If yes, probe:]
- What topics are covered by the materials and training plans?
- What types of materials will be provided (e.g., information packets, one-on-one, group, computer, web-based)?
- Who prepared the materials and/or training plans?
- Will materials or training be offered in multiple languages? Which languages will be included?
- Has any training been conducted so far? If so, please describe what has been done so far and what is planned for the future.

J. TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR RETAILERS

J.1   From a retailer's perspective, will the [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME] be different from [SNAP/WIC]?

[If so,]
- What will be the differences?
- When will retailers begin encountering these differences?

J.2   What are the plans for providing informational materials or training to retailers?

[Probe:]
- Will all [SNAP/WIC] retailers in the demonstration areas receive information/training?
- What types of retailer personnel will receive information/training?
- What topics will be covered?
- How will informational materials and training be provided?
- What languages will be used?
- How often will training occur?
- How long will training last?
- Who will provide the materials and training?
- [For WIC sites] How will information on the WIC food package for [SEBTC PROGRAM NAME] households be communicated to retailers?

J.3   Has any training been conducted so far?

[If so,]
- Please describe what has been done so far (audience, topics, materials, languages, timing, providers).

J.4   Will there be changes to the existing EBT retailer hotline for [SEBTC] ?

[If so,]
- What are the plans (dedicated vs. shared number, staffing, hours of operation, staff training)?

K. SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

K1.   Thus far, what have been the greatest successes of the early phases of the demonstration?

       [Probe:]
       -    What factors contributed significantly to this success?
       -    What, if anything, could be done differently to improve the planning process or the initiation of the program?

K.2   What have been the biggest challenges of the early phases of the demonstration?

       [Probe:]
       -    Have these challenges been resolved?
       -    If so, how? If not, why?
       -    What could [STATE] have done differently in the early phases of implementation to meet its goals more effectively?

L. IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONAL COSTS

L.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?