

ASK FOR PERSON NAMED ON SNAP LIST

Hello. My name is _____, and I'm calling from Mathematica Policy Research, a private research organization located in Washington, DC. We are conducting a study in Ohio for the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Food Stamp Program in Ohio. You may know this program as Food Assistance. We got your name from Toledo Area Ministries (or TAM), but we are not from TAM or the Department of Job and Family Services.

Let me assure you that this is not a sales call and at no time during our discussion will you be asked to donate money. We would simply like to see if you may be eligible to participate in our study. The purpose of the study is to learn about your experiences with SNAP in order to make the program better for people who are age 55 and older. After our discussion, any personal information we have about you, including your name and phone number, will be destroyed.

I would like to start by asking just a few questions. If you are eligible to participate, I would like to ask some additional questions about your experiences applying for SNAP. If you are eligible to participate, we will send you a \$40 gift card to thank you for your time, and our discussion will last no more than one hour. Your answers to my questions will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, except as required by law, and your answers will not affect any benefits you receive from the government.

Public reporting burden for this screener is estimated to average 60 minutes per response. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Research and Analysis, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302 ATTN: PRA (0584-0558).

Is now a good time to begin?

- Yes.....CONTINUE
- No.....THANK AND TERMINATE

RECORD GENDER:

- Female
- Male

1. When was the last time you applied for food benefits through Food Assistance? Would you say it was within the last month, between one and three months, or longer than three months ago?

- Less than one month
- Between one and three months
- Longer than three months ago (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)
- Never (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)

2. Which of the following categories includes your age?

- 18-34 (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)
- 35-44 (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)
- 45-54 (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)
- 55-59
- 60 -69
- 70 or older

3. Do you consider yourself to be of Hispanic or Latino/a origin?

PROBE: Hispanic or Latino/a origin includes, Mexican American or Chicano/a, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central or South American?

- Yes, Hispanic or Latino/a origin
- No

4. What race do you consider yourself? (**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**)
(**IF R SAYS HISPANIC OR LATINO, JUST WRITE RESPONSE IN THE MARGIN**)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

5. What language are you most comfortable speaking?

- English
- Spanish
- Other

6. (**INTERVIEWER: ASK ONLY IF NECESSARY BASED ON FLOW OF INTERVIEW TO THIS POINT**) How well would you say you understand and speak English? (**READ CATEGORIES**)

- Not at all (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)
- Not well (**THANK AND TERMINATE**)
- Well

- Very Well

Thank you for answering those questions. Now I would like to talk with you about your experiences applying for SNAP. This part of our discussion will last approximately 45 minutes. At the end of our discussion I will send you \$40 to thank you for your time. Would you like to continue now?

- Yes.....CONTINUE
- No.....ASK ABOUT SCHEDULING ANOTHER TIME TO CONTINUE

RECORD INTERVIEW DATE _____

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES LEARNING ABOUT SNAP

You have been asked to participate in this study because you recently applied for food benefits through Food Assistance and you belong to a group that FNS would like to serve better: *people age 60 and older*. To begin this discussion, I'd like to ask you about your current receipt of Food Assistance.

1. Are you are receiving food benefits through Food Assistance right now?

[IF YES]

- For how long have you been receiving Food Assistance?
- How much do you receive per month?
- Is the benefit amount close to what you though you would get?

2. Do you remember applying for Food Assistance?

[IF YES]

- About how long ago did you apply?
 - Were you denied food benefits? If so, do you know why?
 - Are you still waiting to hear whether you will be approved for benefits?
 - Did you decide not to follow through on what you needed to in order to have your application for food benefits considered (like going to the Department of Job and Family Services for an interview or submitting certain documents to go with your application)?

[IF NO]

- Do you remember talking with anyone about whether you might be eligible for Food Assistance?
- Who did you talk with and what did you talk about?

3. Where did you see or hear about Food Assistance in the past few months that made you think about whether or should apply or whether you might be eligible?

Did you...

- Learn about Food Assistance while applying for other benefits?
- Receive a letter about it? Get a phone call?
- See or hear an ad on a billboard, TV, or the radio?
- Learn about it while you were somewhere in the community that you usually go?
 - o Community center, Veterans of Foreign Wars hall, or other gathering place in the community
 - o Senior center
 - o VA/Veteran's groups
 - o Food bank or other food provider
 - o Church or another place of worship

- o Your doctor's office or your hospital
 - Hear about it from someone else? If so, who?
 - o Friend/family
 - o A presentation somewhere (given by whom?)
 - o Referral from another service provider (from whom?)
 - Participate in Food Assistance at some time in the past, before you recently reapplied? (About how long ago did you reapply?)
- 4. What appealed to you most about what you heard or saw about Food Assistance?
 - Availability of benefits
 - Ease of application
 - Ease of using benefits on the Direction Card
 - Offer of assistance from someone outside SNAP office
 - Other (what?)
- 5. Did you call the Food Assistance office or a hotline to learn more about Food Assistance and how to apply? Describe your experience.
 - How did you know where to call?
 - Did you speak with a person or just listen to the automated voice responses? If you spoke with a person, was this person professional? Friendly? Helpful?
 - What information did you get on the phone?
 - Did that information answer your questions?
 - Did that information influence your decision to apply for Food Assistance? (Why or why not?)
- 6. *Before you actually applied*, did you have a pre-screening phone call or meeting where someone asked you questions about yourself to figure out whether you *might* qualify for Food Assistance and how much you could potentially receive in benefits?
 - How easy or difficult were these questions? (When that person asked about your income, assets and expenses, did you tell them exact figures or did you estimate?)
 - Did that pre-screening conversation answer all of your questions? (What did you still need to know?)
 - What did that person tell you about how likely it was that you would qualify? (What was your reaction – did you believe them or were you unsure?)
 - Did that information influence your decision to apply for Food Assistance? (Why or why not?)
- 7. *Before you actually applied*, did you or anyone else use a computer to try to figure out whether you *might* qualify for Food Assistance?
 - Where was the computer that you used? (your home, a library, a community agency)
 - Did someone help you complete the questions? If so, who was that person? What did you find out on the computer about how likely it was that you would qualify?
 - Did you find out how much you might receive?
 - How easy or difficult was it to use the computer to get this information?
 - Did the results of the computer program influence your decisions to apply for Food Assistance?

- If this experience didn't motivate you to apply, why not?
8. Do you think most people in your area know about Food Assistance?
 9. What do you think would make it easier for people like you to learn about Food Assistance?
 - A personal letter? From whom?
 - A personal call? From whom?
 - More ads? Where? (TV , billboards, radios)
 - More flyers? Where?
 - Do you have a preference for someone calling you, sending you a letter, or talking with you face-to-face?
 - Of these ideas, which one would fail to get your attention and why? (For example, some people might not have a phone, might throw out fliers, or might not listen to the radio or watch TV.)
 10. Have there been any times in the past when you thought you would be eligible for Food Assistance but did not apply? Why didn't you apply? What could have changed to encourage you to apply?

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES APPLYING FOR SNAP

11. Think about your most recent application for food benefits through Food Assistance. That is, even if you applied for Food Assistance in the past, I want to talk only about your most recent experience applying. What are some words you would use to describe your personal experience with the application process for the Food Assistance?

PROBE: It could be any word: easy, fun, angry, frustrating, unpleasant, or distressing.

How about "convenient"? Would you say that applying for Food Assistance is convenient or inconvenient? Why?

12. Next, I want to ask about using computers to apply for benefits. Remember, applying for benefits is a more thorough process than a pre-screener that asks you just a few questions. Did you use a computer **to apply for** Food Assistance—that is, either you or someone helping you typed information into a computer rather than filling out a paper application or giving information verbally to a worker in the Food Assistance or Department of Job and Family and Services office?

[IF NO]

- Would you be willing to use a computer to apply for Food Assistance? (IF NO: Why not?)

[IF YES]

- Where did you complete the computer application? Why did you go there, and how did you know to go there?
- Were the procedures clear or confusing?
- Do you think applying by computer is easier or harder than a paper application? Why?
- How long did it take you to complete the application on the computer? Was this the right amount of time or too long?
- Once you submitted the application by computer, what else did you have to do? (For example, did you have to copy and submit verification documents, sign and submit something, have a phone or in-person interview, or something else?)
- What did you like about this process? What would you change?
- Would you do the application this way again?

13. Let's talk about applying for benefits over the phone. Did you apply for food benefits through Food Assistance over the phone (that is, you provided information for the application when you received a phone call or dialed toll-free phone number)?

[IF NO]

- Would you be willing to apply for Food Assistance over the phone? (IF NO: Why not?)

[IF YES]

- How did you know who to call to be able to apply over the phone?
- Were the procedures clear or confusing?
- Do you think applying by phone is easier or harder than a paper application? Why?
- How long did it take you to complete the application by phone? Was this the right amount of time or too long?
- Once you submitted the application by phone, did you have to copy and submit verification documents, sign and submit something, have a phone or in-person interview, or something else?
- Was the person who answered the phone professional? Friendly? Helpful?
- What did you like about this process? What would you change?
- Would you do the application this way again?

14. [IF RESPONDENT DIDN'T APPLY USING A COMPUTER OR OVER THE PHONE]
How did you apply for Food Assistance?

- Did you fill out a paper application? Where?
- If not at a SNAP office, why there? How did you know you could go there? Were you familiar with this place? How comfortable were you going there?
- Was it what you expected? Why not?
- How long did it take? The right amount of time? Too long?

- After you submitted the paper application, did you have to copy and submit verification documents, sign and submit something, have a phone or in-person interview, or something else?
 - Were the staff you encountered at this office professional? Helpful?
 - If you had to do it again, would you start your application at that organization? What would you change about what they do?
 - Are there other organizations that should provide Food Assistance applications? Which organizations and why?
15. When you worked on your application, did you need or ask anyone for help with completing it?
- Were you able to get assistance?
 - Who provided assistance? A Food Assistance or Department of Job and Family Services worker? Community partner staff? A family member or friend?
 - [If not family or friends] What kinds of things did they help you with?
 - [If not family or friends] Please describe your impression of the assistance.
 - Were staff helpful?
 - Would you agree, disagree, or have no opinion about whether staff at the organization were professional, fair, and knowledgeable?
 - Is there some kind of help that you wish you had gotten with the application but did not receive? Please describe.
16. After you completed the application questions, did you need to submit documentation other than your application? This could include documentation of housing, income, or expenses.
- Describe the process of submitting this documentation. What did you have to submit? Did you need to make a special trip to the Food Assistance or Department of Job and Family Services office? If not, how did you submit your documentation?
 - Did you find this process easy or difficult? Why?
 - Did you have to make copies of the documentation? If so, was it easy or difficult to get copies made? Where did you go to get the copies made?
17. Now think about what happened after you turned in your application and your documentation. Did you have an interview with a worker?
- What was the purpose of this interview? (What did you talk about?)
 - Where did you go for the interview? Did you go to the Food Assistance or Department of Job and Family Services office, meet with someone at another location [*or at home*], or get interviewed over the phone?
 - [If in person:] Did you have to make a special trip to the office for that interview, or were you already there?
 - How long did it take? Does that feel like the right amount of time, fast, or too long for an interview?
 - How would you rate the program staff that you encountered during this interview? READ RATING SCALE (1-5, "EXCELLENT," ETC.) Why?
 - What would need to change to make their rating a 1?

18. Overall, if you had to rate the application process for Food Assistance, which number would you pick? Why? What would need to change to make the program a 1?
19. Is there anything else that you would change about the Food Assistance application process to make it easier to apply for benefits?

OPINIONS FROM PRIOR PARTICIPANTS (15 MINUTES)

1. So far, we have been talking about the application process for your most recent application for food benefits through Food Assistance. Have you gotten food benefits through Food Assistance in the past, before this most recent application?
(That is, were you receiving Food Assistance and then stopped receiving them at some point before your most recent application?)
2. Thinking about the previous times you participated, how long ago did you participate? Were you living here at that time, or were you living in a different area or a different state?
3. Thinking about the last time you applied for food benefits through Food Assistance **in this area**, what did you have to do to apply?
 - Did you have to go to a local Food Assistance or Department of Job and Family Services office? How many times?
 - Were office hours convenient for you?
 - How did you get to and from the office?
 - The last time you applied, did anyone help you complete your application? Who?
 - If you did not go to a local welfare office, how did you submit your application? The last time you applied, did you have the option of applying on a computer or by phone?
 - What kind of documents did you need to provide along with your application? Was it difficult or easy to find these documents and to submit them?
4. Now think about your experience applying for food benefits through Food Assistance this time. Was it about the same as last time? Was it easier? Was it more difficult?

WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experiences, or are there other thoughts you had during our discussion that you would like to mention before we finish? Specifically:

What other changes in the Food Assistance would help people age 60 and older apply for food benefits?

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas. This discussion has been very useful in helping us learn more about the Food Assistance Program in Ohio.

Before we finish, let me make sure I have the correct spelling of your name and also get your address and phone number(s) so that we can send you a \$40 gift card to thank you for your participation in this study.

FIRST AND LAST NAME: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

ALTERNATE PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____

PERSONAL E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____