

APPENDIX E3: REFUSAL CONVERSION: ENGLISH

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NUTRITION ASSISTANCE AND FARMERS/FARMERS MARKETS STUDY

REFUSAL CONVERSION STRATEGY AND SCRIPT: ENGLISH

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 25 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. 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 Service, Office of Research and Analysis, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302 ATTN: PRA (0584-xxxx). Do not return the completed form to this address.

Telephone Research Center (TRC) and field interviewers will document the verbatim reason for a refusal, and the strength of a refusal in the Non-Interview Report Form. TRC and field supervisors will review such refusals and assign these cases to either experienced telephone or field interviewers for a second contact attempt. All interviewers will be trained to answer respondents' questions and concerns and establish rapport. Some suggested answers for frequently asked respondent questions follow.

- *What is this SURVEY about?*
This survey is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service. Westat, a survey research firm based in Rockville, MD, is conducting the study. We're interested in learning better ways of promoting the use of farmers markets among SNAP recipients. Your answers will help the USDA improve access to farm fresh foods among SNAP recipients.
- *How long will the interview take?*
The interview will take about 25 minutes. You may decide to stop at any time, or skip any questions you prefer not to answer. Participation is voluntary.
- *What type of questions will you ask me?*
We will ask questions about your market and participation in USDA nutrition assistance programs.
- *How do I know you will keep this information private?*
Only a few people from USDA/FNS and the research team will see your answers. Your name will be kept separate from your answers. Your answers will be combined with those from the other participants so that no individual's answers will appear alone in the report.

APPENDIX E3: REFUSAL CONVERSION: ENGLISH

- *What will be done with the information I provide? How will the survey results be used? Why should I participate?*

The information and opinions you share will help us better understand reasons for and barriers to participation in USDA nutrition assistance programs by farmers markets and direct marketing farmers. In order to do that, we need to talk with farmers' market managers and direct marketing farmers.

APPENDIX E3: REFUSAL CONVERSION: ENGLISH

- *Who do you work for?*
I work for Westat, a survey research firm in Rockville, Maryland.
- *How do I know this is a legitimate survey?*
This study is being conducted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition. You can call my supervisor at [XXX-XXX-XXX] to verify the legitimacy of the survey.
- *What is SNAP?*
SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is a government assistance program to help low-income households pay for food. SNAP used to be called the Food Stamp program.
- *How did you get my (unlisted/cell phone) number?*
The USDA directory of Farmers' Markets includes the markets' phone number.
- *Who can I contact at the USDA?*

Kelly Kinnison
Office of Research and Analysis
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APPENDIX E3: REFUSAL CONVERSION: ENGLISH

Handling Respondent Refusals

In any survey, there are always some respondents who refuse outright to be interviewed and some who indirectly indicate that they will not participate. Identifying why a person may decline to participate if they do not express it explicitly will help the interviewer gain the respondent's cooperation. Respondents typically refuse or are hesitant to participate for the following reasons:

- Fear of Survey, the Interviewer, Use of the Data

Respondents tend to fear things they don't understand. By having the purpose of the study and what the data will be used for clearly in mind, the interviewer can alleviate the respondent's fears. Some respondents may think an interviewer is trying to sell them something, or "casing their house." For any such situations, the field interviewer should simply show the respondent his/her photo I.D. badge (if at the door) and field and/or TRC telephone interviewers can provide him/her with the supervisor's telephone number, and suggest s/he call to verify the authenticity of the study and the legitimacy of the organization.

- Perceived Invasion of Privacy

It is possible that a respondent is willing to participate in the survey but tells the interviewer that s/he is unwilling to discuss certain subject areas. If this should happen and the respondent is adamant about answering questions dealing with certain subject areas, the interviewer should explain to the respondent that he or she is required to ask every question because they are very important but that if s/he feels very strongly about not answering certain items s/he may refuse when the question is asked.

- Hostility Towards the Sponsor

If the respondent is hostile toward government funded surveys or the USDA, the interviewer should reiterate the general purpose of the survey. The interviewer should tell the respondent that his/her views and experiences may get overlooked if/she decides not to participate in the survey.

It is always helpful to preface a rebuttal to a respondent's objection with a token agreement or understanding of his/her viewpoint, e.g., "I can understand that," or "You certainly have a right to feel that way." That takes the respondent off the defensive and usually works as well as a more detailed rebuttal.

- Cost in Time and Energy

APPENDIX E3: REFUSAL CONVERSION: ENGLISH

The timing of the interview, may also affect the respondent's participation. Should the interviewer make contact at an inconvenient hour, or if the respondent becomes annoyed as a result of this contact, the interviewer should quickly and apologetically back off and attempt to make contact at a time more convenient for the respondent. It is always a good strategy for the interviewer to reiterate that he or she knows that the respondent has a busy life; we appreciate his/her time and would really like the respondent to participate in this important study.