

OMB Approval No.: 0584-XXXX
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APPENDIX C
FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL (ENGLISH VERSION)

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.

SNAP/EXTRA HELP FOCUS GROUP WITH NONPARTICIPANTS

MODERATOR PROTOCOL

MODERATOR NOTE: SOME QUESTIONS WILL BE DEPENDENT ON CURRENT AND RECENT APPLICATION PROCEDURES IN EACH STATE.

1. Introductions and Consent (10 minutes)

- a. Moderator Introduction: Moderator introduces himself/herself and explains purpose and procedures:
 - These focus groups are being conducted with people [PA: who applied for Medicare Extra Help; NM and WA: who applied or are enrolled in a Medicare Savings Plan].
 - The purpose is to learn about your familiarity with, and opinions of, different government programs, especially food benefits.
 - We will discuss the Basic Food/SNAP program here in [STATE] and whether you've had any experience with the program.
 - My role as the moderator is to ask questions, rather than to participate in the discussion or answer questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'd like to hear from everyone, so at times I will make sure that everyone has a chance to say what they think.
 - Everything we discuss today is private to the people in this room and the study investigators. Your name will never be used or associated with any comments. Issues discussed in the focus group may be discussed elsewhere as long as they are discussed in a way that does not identify other participants in this group.
 - No direct benefits are expected from participation in this study other than the opportunity to discuss issues that may be interesting to you. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this study. You may refuse to answer any question you do not wish to answer.
 - Your answers will have no effect on any benefits you may receive.
 - The group is being audiorecorded for the purpose of filling in our notes only.
 - Do you agree to participate? If so, please say "yes" now.

- If you don't want to participate in the discussion, please let us know now.
 - b. Respondent Introduction: Respondents introduce themselves, giving first name, household composition, any hobbies, and years living in CITY/COUNTY.
 - c. CITY/COUNTY: Quality of Life (Ice breaker)
 - Compared to a couple of years ago, is life in this area getting better, staying about the same, or getting worse?
2. General Attitudes about SNAP (5 minutes)
- a. First, we'd like to learn how familiar you are with the [Basic Food/SNAP] program. (IF NECESSARY: This is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the new name for Food Stamps.)
 - How many people have heard of this program? (Count show of hands)
 - (If yes): How did you learn about it?
 - b. What words or phrases come to mind about [Basic Food/SNAP], either positive or not so positive?
 - c. Are you thinking about applying for benefits? (Count show of hands)
 - (If yes): Why are you thinking about applying?
 - (If no): Why are you not considering applying? What might encourage you to apply?

3. Previous SNAP Experience (10 minutes)

I'd like to know about your previous experiences with Basic Food/SNAP.

- a. Have any of you had previous experiences in applying for Basic Food/SNAP?
 - What were those previous experiences like?
 - (IF NECESSARY: What positive words or phrases come to mind about those experiences?)
 - (IF NECESSARY: What negative words or phrases come to mind?)
- b. Around here, what are some of the ways you can apply for Basic Food/SNAP? Where could you go to apply? (IF NECESSARY: This could be a building or hotline or website.)
- c. Where would you go to get information about Basic Food/SNAP?

4. Pilot Experiences (15 minutes)

- a. **PA:** Now think back to when you applied for Medicare Extra Help. After applying for (or receiving) Medicare Extra Help, were you ever contacted by Benefits Data Trust—sometimes called the BDT—about whether you might qualify for SNAP? (IF NECESSARY: For example, someone might have called you at home.)
 - What was this contact like? (IF NECESSARY: What did the caller talk about with you? Did the caller give you any new information? Did you understand why they were calling you?)

NM: Now think back to when you applied for Medicare Extra Help. After applying for (or receiving) Medicare Extra Help, were you ever sent an application that had questions both for the Medicare Savings Plan and for SNAP?

- Did you understand what it was for? What did you do when you received the application? (IF NECESSARY: Did you talk to anyone about it? Did you decide whether or not to fill it out?)

WA: Now think back to when you applied for the Medicare Savings Program, also sometimes called the MSP. After applying for (or receiving) the Medicare Savings Program, were you ever contacted by someone about whether you might qualify for Basic Food? (IF NECESSARY: For example, someone might have called you at home.)

- What was this contact like? (IF NECESSARY: What did the caller discuss with you? Did the caller give you any new information? Did you understand why they were calling you?)

ALL STATES:

- What did you like about being contacted?
 - What did you dislike about being contacted?
 - How did being contacted about your eligibility affect your opinion of the Basic Food / SNAP program? And of the application process?
- b. For those of you who have not yet applied for Basic Food/SNAP, what would need to change about the program or the application process to make you think about applying?

5. Remaining Barriers (15 minutes)

- a. What are some good things about Basic Food/SNAP?
- b. What are some bad things about it?
- c. Let's think for a moment about how much it might cost you to apply for Basic Food/SNAP. If you were going to apply, what would you have to pay for to complete an application? How much would these things cost?
 - (IF NECESSARY: For example, what about transportation, like bus fare or gas, to get to the benefit office?)
- d. What other types of difficulties come to mind when you think about participating in the program? (IF NECESSARY: For example, how much time would it take to find an application? How about to apply?)

What about time to communicate with people at the Basic Food/SNAP office? Is the application easy or difficult to complete? Is it easy or hard to figure out what the application is asking for?)

- For those of you who have seen or filled out an application, how do you feel about providing the information on the application?

- e. Thinking about the costs you discussed, the time it takes to apply, and these other difficulties that you mentioned, do you think all these requirements are reasonable? (IF NECESSARY: Are they too difficult to deal with? Or are they easy to deal with?)
 - Why or why not?
- f. Taking all these requirements into account, would you say that receiving Basic Food/SNAP benefits would be worth it or not worth it?
 - Why or why not?
- g. What stops people like you from participating in SNAP/Basic Food?

6. Recommendations and Closing (5 minutes)

- a. If you could make recommendations or give advice to the people who run the SNAP/Basic Food program, what would you tell them? In your opinion, how could the program be improved?
- b. Overall, what would you say about the current SNAP/Basic Food application procedures for seniors in this county?
 - (IF NECESSARY: What positive things come to mind?)
 - (IF NECESSARY: What negative things come to mind?)