

Appendix F: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Comments

[The following comments on Parts A and B of the draft Supporting Statement were provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service on April 3, 2012.]

I. Study Purpose/Justification

The purpose of this study is clearly stated. All terminology and concepts related directly to this study are thoroughly defined and explained. The argument for the usefulness of the results is also well written.

II. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures outlined in this document all seem appropriate. One issue that may be brought up is the \$30 gift to the focus group participants. It is stated that the \$30 gift does not want to be used as coercion to participate. Will the \$30 payment be made clear to participants during their recruitment phone calls or will it be unknown to the participants until they receive the payment at the completion of the focus group. I'm guessing that may need to be discussed in that section. I would recommend laying out exactly when participants are made aware of the gift.

Also, the selection of the 6 states to be used for the quantitative analysis may need more information. It is stated that the 6 states will be selected based on variations among the states as far as program and policy administrative practices, involvement with CBO's, location of caseloads (urban vs. rural), and also availability of linked longitudinal administrative data. I would recommend being more specific in this area. If it is known at this point, I would state that 1 of the 6 states will have received a waiver allowing CBO to conduct interviews. Another 1 of the 6 will have a sufficient mix of urban versus rural caseloads and so on for each of your selection criteria. Also, if there are multiple states that meet a certain criteria, will a random selection be used to select one for the study or else what method or criteria will be used?

Finally, I also think you should discuss how you will select the one state that will be used for additional analysis using linked microdata on earnings. You note seven states as potential candidates. Will one of these seven be randomly selected or will there be some other criteria used?

III. Maximizing Response Rates

When contacting participants by phone to recruit participation for the focus groups, is there a plan for how many follow up attempts will be made to one phone number if no answer is received? Also, if a voicemail will be left or if the participant is busy and prefers to call back, is there a phone number the participant can call back at their own convenience to set up the arrangements for the focus group? If voicemails will be left, the wording that will be left in a voicemail should be documented with the other recruitment scripts so that all members of the research team will use the same wording and include the same information in their

messages? A little more information on the phone follow up procedures would probably be helpful.

III. Data Collection Instrument (Interview Materials)

The interview materials are very thorough and appear to be designed appropriately to collect the necessary information. No other comments for this section.

V. Statistical Methods for Summary

There is no information on the type of results that will be tabulated related to the quantitative side of the study. This could be brief if it will just be basic frequencies or cross tabulations, but if there are any plans for more complex analysis or summaries, it should be documented.