

Appendix A-3: INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT--INTERVIEWS

Note: This introduction is to be used at the beginning of each interview with SNAP administrators, SNAP caseworkers, and community-based organization (CBO) representatives.

Thank you for participating in this study and taking the time to talk with us. I know that you are busy and I will try to be as focused as possible. My name is ____ and this is _____. We work with the Urban Institute [or MEF Associates], a research organization located in the Washington, DC area. We are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, gathering information from states and localities related to churning among recipients of SNAP benefits (or food stamps). For this study we are defining churning as a SNAP case that closes and then re-opens within 4 months. The goals of the study are to improve our understanding of the rates, causes, and costs of churning among SNAP participants and to examine policies and practices that might help reduce churning or the costs associated with it for SNAP agencies and clients.

As you know, this on-off-on cycling in the SNAP caseload is an important policy issue, in terms of the benefit loss to households who may have remained continuously eligible, the burden to them (in time and expense) of re-entering the program, and the administrative costs to program agencies associated with case closings and re-openings. Our study will analyze administrative data as well as information from interviews and focus groups in six states, including yours. The other states are _____. In each site we visit, we will speak with SNAP administrators and staff and with community-based organizations. We will also conduct focus groups with SNAP participants who have stopped receiving SNAP benefits and then started again. Our study will culminate with a report to FNS in July 2014, and we expect that report to later be made publicly available.

I have many questions. We are talking with a number of people, so please do not feel as though I expect you to be able to answer every question. We want to make sure you know that your participation today is completely voluntary – you are free to decide whether or not to participate in the discussion and you can always choose to not discuss any particular issue.

When we write our reports and discuss our findings, we will ensure that the information from all the people we spoke with cannot be traced back to those persons. No individual will be quoted by name or by title. The goal is to find common themes across all the interviews, not to report the responses of any particular individual. Please remember that our aim is learn from your experiences, not to judge your work in any way. Are you willing to participate in this interview?

We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it. So, **with your permission, we will be recording the interview**, and [name of person] will also be taking notes on a laptop computer. We will not use your name in preparing any reports and will ensure that **no one could identify you as the source of any specific comments**. Do you have any objection to our recording the interview? During the discussion, if you would like to stop the recording while you make a particular comment, please let us know.

We have scheduled this meeting for [1 hour – LENGTH OF INTERVIEWS WILL VARY BY TYPE OF RESPONDENT. INTERVIEWERS SHOULD REFER TO SCHEDULE]. Is that still convenient?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

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 5 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.