

ATTACHMENT B5a: DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE

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DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE

Introductory Script

Hello, my name is _____. I am from the [Urban Institute/ Support Services International], a nonprofit research organization located in Washington, DC. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this group discussion. [Introduce colleague—second site visitor.]

We're here today because the Urban Institute, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is studying the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. The purpose of this study is to describe the population of people participating in the FDPIR program; explore trends in FDPIR participation; examine key aspects of FDPIR operations, and learn about participant satisfaction with the program.

We're especially interested in learning how people choose between different food assistance programs and what you think about the food and services you receive from FDPIR and other food programs. All of you are either current or former food program participants or could be eligible for FDPIR or SNAP/ Food Stamps, but are not enrolled. Some of you responded to an advertisement to participate for this discussion group, and for others, your tribe provided your contact information for inviting you to this discussion group.

The information we collect will be useful to the USDA, Congress, and tribes in understanding changes in FDPIR participation and ways that FDPIR and other food assistance programs can work together to meet the nutrition needs of those who live on reservations and/or tribal service areas.

I want to remind you that your participation in the group discussion is voluntary; we want to stress that your participation is not required in order to continue receiving benefits or to receive them at any point in the future. We very much appreciate your willingness to come today. This session will last approximately one and a half hours. You will receive \$25 as a token of our appreciation, even if you decide not to stay to participate in the discussion.

This is a discussion, not a survey, so you can feel free to talk amongst yourselves and respond to what others are saying. Please make sure to be respectful of other people's opinions.

Importantly, we ask everyone here today to respect people's privacy. What is said in the room should stay in the room. Information from this discussion will be included in a report to USDA, but all information you give us will be kept entirely private. We will use only first names in today's discussion; we will not identify you even by first name in our records, and we will not tell program staff what you said. The information that you tell us will not affect your relationship with the program and will not affect your benefits in any way.

We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it. So we will be taping the session and [name of person] will be taking notes on a laptop computer. However, we destroy the tapes as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting, and those notes will **not** use your names. Does anyone have an objection to taping this group? Also, as we said, we will not use your names in preparing any reports and will disguise your comments so that no one can identify who made specific comments. We will ask you to sign for your \$25 in order to account for our financial disbursements, but we pass on only a coded identifier, not your name, to our accounting department.

Do you have any questions or concerns about what we plan to do? Again, your participation is voluntary and you may leave at any time during the course of the meeting.

PAUSE AND ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS

GETTING STARTED

Ok, we're just about ready to get started. Discussion groups like this may be new to many and perhaps all of you—so let me make a few general points about what to expect. As the facilitator, I just ask the questions and moderate the discussion. What's really important is for all of you to speak up and participate so that we can have a lively and informative discussion. This will be an informal discussion. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions we ask. We are interested in learning each of your opinions. We very much appreciate your input.

It is important that only one person speak at a time so that we can follow what each of you say. There may be times during the discussion when I need to interrupt--either to ask you to explain what you have just said more clearly, or to move on to the next question to keep us on schedule. Again, this happens just to make sure that everyone has a chance to answer each of the questions, and that we listen to what each person says. We're hoping that each of you will speak up, and tell us your thoughts and feelings. In the past, most people have told us they enjoy these discussion groups very much because it gives them a chance to share their experiences and hear about others' experiences. Your participation here is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question if you wish.

We will talk for about 1 to 1 and a half hours. There will be no formal breaks. Please feel free to get up at any time to stretch, go to the bathroom, or get something to eat or drink. At the conclusion there is a very brief information form to complete. Following the discussion (or at any point during the discussion should you decide to leave before its conclusion) we will distribute the \$25 and you will be asked to sign a receipt form.

Once again, we are very pleased to have you here today. Are there any questions before we get started?

Note to facilitator: When a question asks "how many," be sure to say the count out loud so that it is recorded on the tape.

If a discussion group participant chooses to leave at any point, they are still entitled to the \$25 as a token of our appreciation. Have an assistant ensure they sign the receipt and complete the information form, then give them the incentive gift.

To start, ask, "Does everyone know each other? And then go around the room with first name introductions.

Discussion Group Guide

A. Program Participation, Household Characteristics, and Access to Food Assistance

- A1. How familiar are you with the nutrition assistance programs that are available in your area, including FDPIR and SNAP/Food Stamps?

MODERATOR: PROBE USING LIST OF NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, IF NECESSARY

- A2. How easy is it for you to get to the FDPIR office to apply or certify, or recertify? How easy is it for you to get to the nearest SNAP/Food Stamps office?

- A3. How easy is it for you to get to grocery stores or FDPIR distribution points?

PROBE: How far is the grocery store from your residence?

- A4. How many food stores on or near the [reservation/tribal service area] do you have to choose from and how often do you go to them?

- A5. How would you describe your households' facilities for storing and preparing food?

Probes: space for storage, including refrigeration, freezers, cooking appliances, etc.

- A6. How would you describe your health and the health of the other members of your household? Are there any dietary needs or restrictions?

B. Contribution to Food Supply

- B1. For those enrolled in FDPIR, do you get most of your food from the FDPIR package? Of all the food in your house, about what portion comes from FDPIR? Probe: All? Nearly all? About half? Less than half? Where else do you get food from?

MODERATOR: PROBE USING LIST OF NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, IF NECESSARY

- B2. Are there other nutrition assistance programs available near the [reservation/tribal service area]?

MODERATOR: PROBE USING LIST OF NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, IF NECESSARY

- B3. Please describe them:

Probe: Are any of these programs provided by a Tribal agency on the [reservation/tribal service area]? How big of a role do they play in ensuring adequate food supplies for low-income residents?

C. Reasons for Participating in Food Programs

- C1. For those of you who currently participate in FDPIR, why did you decide to enroll in that program?

PROBE:

Is food access a factor? / Distance to shopping options?
Program eligibility requirements?
Quantity of food?
Quality of food?
Food choice?
Program-related services (e.g., nutrition education, recipes, cooking classes, home delivery)?
Access to, or coordination with, other programs?
How the program is perceived?
Participant characteristics (i.e., age, household size, etc.)

- C2. For those of you who do not currently participate in FDPIR,

C2a. Have you ever participated in FDPIR?

C2b. Why did you decide not to apply for FDPIR, or to leave FDPIR?

PROBE:

Quantity, quality, variety of food unsatisfactory
Better access to SNAP/Food Stamps
More benefits in SNAP/Food Stamps
Program eligibility requirements for FDPIR (e.g., more burdensome / restrictive than for other food assistance programs)
Lack of related services offered through FDPIR (e.g., nutrition education, recipes, cooking classes, home delivery)
Negative perception of the FDPIR program
Household characteristics (i.e., age, household size, etc.)

- C3. For those of you who have ever participated in FDPIR, how does it compare to other food assistance programs you have participated in?

- C4. Have you switched between FDPIR and SNAP/Food Stamps? And if so, why?

PROBE: Preference for types of food, availability of desired foods, variety of foods available, value of food provided by each program

C4a. How often have you switched between the two programs?

D. FDPIR Operations

- D1. For those currently participating in FDPIR, how does the program contact you about services and programs, new opportunities and changes to the service? Could this be better?
- D2. For those not participating in FDPIR, do you ever learn about the program through any form of public communication, such as public announcements, newsletters, web sites, advertisements, local radio? Are there any other forms of outreach that you can think of?
- D3. For those currently participating in FDPIR, are any other types of programs or services conducted or made available in the same locations as FDPIR?
- D4. For those of you who are participating in FDPIR, does the program make any nutrition or educational programs available? Do they provide literature or any other kind of information about preparing foods (FDPIR package or other), health tips, cooking techniques, etc.?
- D4a. Has this information changed your eating habits? Why or why not?
- D5. Are any other services provided at the same time the FDPIR food package is distributed?
- D5a. [IF YES]: What are they?

E. Participant Satisfaction

- E1. What parts of FDPIR do you think work well?
- E2. What do you like best about FDPIR?
- E3. Do you think the nutrition education activities and information sources are worthwhile? Why?
- E4. What nutrition education or information would you like to receive?
- E5. How do you think FDPIR could be improved?
- PROBE for changes to distribution process (i.e. facility, frequency), quality and types of food, interaction with program staff
- E6. If there was one thing about FDPIR that you could change or one thing they should focus more on or expand, what would it be?

Probes for Factors Affecting Program Selection/Participation:

Delivery Modes

FDPIR - warehouse pick-up, stores, remote delivery sites (e.g. tailgates), home delivery
Once per month, spread over month
SNAP - electronic transfer used at grocery stores; accessibility of stores accepting SNAP or Food Stamp benefits; spread over month

Co-location of programs/services

FDPIR - administrative office located near WIC, TANF, etc.; program certification offered at food pick-up sites; health/fitness or nutrition-related programming offered at food pick-up sites

Food

FDPIR - amount, type (staples, 'regular,' traditional), ease of preparation, labeling (generic v. commercial), degree of choice, unwanted products, fresh produce/meat, nutritious value
SNAP - amount, type, ease of prep, prices, choice, nutritious value

Eligibility

FDPIR / SNAP - criteria, ease/difficulty proving eligibility, frequency, residency (on res/near res/ineligible for FDPIR due to location), income variability over year, benefits cliff

Participant Characteristics

FDPIR / SNAP - age, HH size, cooking ability/interest, employment status, and receipt of TANF, Social Security, SSI, and WIC (might steer to one program over other)

Other Factors

Seasonal factors (winter > snow affects delivery/pick-up options OR increased lay-offs lead to participation increase; summer > out of town OR children home from school); proximity to nearest grocery / access to transportation; interactions with program staff (un/comfortable); word-of-mouth 'news' about programs; general perceptions of programs (e.g., food v. welfare)

List of Other Nutrition Assistance Programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps
- WIC - Women, Infants, and Children
- Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (Free and Reduced Price Breakfast/Lunch)
- Summer Meals
- Elderly Nutrition Program
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program