



OMB Control No: 0584-0606  
Expiration Date: 03/31/2019

**APPENDIX A-8 Sponsor Qualitative Interview**

DATE OF INTERVIEW: [MM/DD/YYYY]

INTERVIEW START TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ INTERVIEW END TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER ID: \_\_\_\_\_ NOTE TAKER ID: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION (3 MINS)**

Hello, I am [NAME] from Westat, and I am calling about the Summer Meals Study. May I speak with:

Name of sponsor

|  |    |
|--|----|
| R available.....                           | 11 |
| R lives here – needs appointment .....     | 12 |
| R lives at another number or address ..... | 13 |
| Never heard of R .....                     | 14 |
| Phone company recording .....              | 15 |
| Answering machine.....                     | 16 |
| Retry dialing .....                        | 17 |
| REFUSED .....                              | 77 |
| DON'T KNOW .....                           | 99 |

**IF RESPONDENT IS AVAILABLE:**

I would like to ask you some questions about the summer program, to gain better understanding about program operations and factors that affect the decision of sponsors, sites, and households to participate in the program.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. The information you provide will be kept private and will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the research team, except as otherwise required by law. You have the right to stop at any time or skip questions. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect any government benefits or services you or your organization receives – either now or in the future.

The interview should take about 1 hour.

**Do you agree to participate?**

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 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 Services, Office of Policy Support, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302 ATTN: PRA (0584-xxxx\*). Do not return the completed form to this address.

- YES
- NO → ADDRESS ISSUES/CONCERNS ABOUT STUDY. CODE AS REFUSAL.

**Thank you. Before we begin, I would like to introduce my colleague, [NAME] also from Westat. [NAME] will be taking notes while we talk. With your permission, we would also like to record this discussion. The recording will be transcribed so that we can recall exactly what was said and correctly summarize the information you provide. The recordings, transcripts, and any notes we have will be stored on Westat's secure server and will be destroyed after the project is complete.**

**Do you have any questions before we begin?**

**INTERVIEWER: ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT WESTAT/STUDY/TOLL-FREE NUMBER, ETC. AS NEEDED.**

**Do I have your permission to record this discussion?**

- YES
- NO – clarify if willing to continue without recording but OK with note taking. Otherwise end interview.

**IF NO, ADDRESS ISSUES/CONCERNS ABOUT STUDY. CODE AS REFUSAL.**

**INTERVIEWER: Turn on recorder and begin interview**

**INTERVIEWER: ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT WESTAT/STUDY/TOLL-FREE NUMBER, ETC. AS NEEDED.**

## SECTION A. SPONSOR PARTICIPATION FACTORS

I would like to begin our discussion by asking about the reasons for your organization to sponsor summer meals program sites.

A1. Can you tell me why your organization participates in the summer meals program?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

What are the main reasons you decided to participate as a sponsor?  
How many years have you been a sponsor?

A2. What specific group of children do you have in mind to receive free meals at the sites you sponsor?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Is your target audience...

- ...Children in the area?
- ...Children enrolled in a specific program?
- ...Some other subset of children?

A2a. Do all of your sites serve the same target audience?

A3. What role does your organization play in determining if there are activities or programs offered at the meal service sites?

A3a. Have activities or programs changed over time? How? Why?

**IF NO ACTIVITIES:**

A3b. Have you had activities in the past? Do you think more children would attend if there were activities?

A4. Thinking about the history of your organization's participation in the summer meals program, what changes, if any, have you made to the types of sites and children served?

A4a. Have you...  
Added more sites?  
Added different types of sites?

A4b. What other changes has your organization made?

A5. Thinking about the children you serve, who is responsible for marketing the program – (site or sponsor) and what role does your organization play to promote or market the program to families with children so they will attend?

A5a. Do you promote the availability of free meals and snacks, another aspect of the program, or both?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

How are families given information about the menus?

Are they provided the menu in advance?

Do you wish you used other methods to promote the program? Which ones and why? What makes it not feasible for you to use these methods?

- A5b. What methods has your organization used to promote children's attendance at sites?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

How does your organization use...

- ...Social media?
- ...Print?
- ...A hotline?
- ...any other methods?

- A5c. Have these methods been effective/not effective? How do you know?

- A5d. Who is involved in promotion activities and what role do they play?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

What role does [REFER TO EACH PERSON, GROUP, OR ORGANIZATION MENTIONED] play?

What about advocacy groups, State agency staff, other sponsors, etc.?

What guidance do you provide as the sponsor?

- A5e. When does your organization promote the program?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

What schedule (timeline) does your organization follow for marketing the Summer Food Program?

When do you start?

How long does the marketing last?

How has that schedule worked out?

What, if anything, would you change about the schedule? Why?

## SECTION B. SEAMLESS SUMMER OPTION (ASK ONLY OF SFA SPONSORS)

B1. Tell me about the process your organization undertook to decide to participate in [SFSP/SSO (based on survey response)].

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Who was involved in the process?

How long did it take?

How long ago? Do you reconsider every year?

What factors were considered in making the decision?

**IF ORGANIZATION HAS EVER PARTICIPATED IN SFSP/SSO:**

B2. Can you tell me when and why your organization decided to switch programs?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

When did you make the switch? Do you plan to continue?

What did you see as the key benefit to the current program?

What change could be made to the (other) program to make it more appealing?

## SECTION C: SPONSOR/SITE RELATIONSHIP

Let's talk now about how your organization works with the meal service sites you sponsor.

C1. What is your organization's relationship with the sites you sponsor?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Are the sites part of the same organization? Separate entities? Other arrangement?

Is this the case for all the sites you sponsor? If not, why is it different for some sites?

C2. Across the <INSERT # FROM SURVEY> sites your organization sponsors, how many days or weeks do you provide summer meals in Summer 2018?

C2a. How do you decide the number of days/weeks that the meal program will operate?

C2b. Does this vary for sites across your sponsorship? Why?

C2c. What factors are considered when making that decision?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Does your organization consider...

- ...Availability of staff?
- ...Availability of site facilities?
- ...Costs?
- ...Some other factors?

C2d. What would facilitate you keeping the program open more days?

C3. Does attendance at your organization's summer meal sites vary, or is it fairly consistent?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Does attendance vary from day to day, from week to week...?

**Is attendance predictable or unpredictable?**

**Why?**

**IF FLUCTUATES -- SPORADIC/INCONSISTENT:**

**C3a. What seems to cause variation (unpredictability) in attendance?**

**C3b. Do any of your sites offer activities in addition to meals and snacks? What types?**

**IF YES: What impact, if any, do the activities have on attendance?**

## SECTION D. OBTAINING MEALS

Now let's talk about the program at <SITE NAME>, and where they get their meals.

### IF SPONSOR IS NOT PRIMARY MENU PLANNER:

D1. At <SITE NAME>, meals are [provided by a vendor/self-prepared by the site/sponsor]. How would you describe your organization's involvement in the decision to [use a vendor/self-prepare] at <SITE NAME>?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

What role does the vendor/site play in deciding how meals are obtained?  
How do you collaborate? What does that look like?

D2. Who decides which meals to serve (breakfast/lunch/snack/supper)?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

How are these decisions made?  
When are decisions made about using a vendor or self-preparing meals?  
Has your organization's role in deciding how meals are obtained for <SITE NAME> changed over time?

D3. Is your role in decisions about obtaining meals from vendors or self-preparing meals the same across all the sites you sponsor? If no, why not?

### IF SPONSOR IS PRIMARY MENU PLANNER AND SITE USES VENDOR:

D4. At <SITE NAME>, meals are provided by a vendor. Please walk me through the process of how the decision was made to use a vendor to obtain meals for <SITE NAME>, instead of self-preparing the meals.

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

Who made the decision?  
What factors were considered when deciding whether to purchase the meals from a vendor or self-prepare meals?

- [Is/Are] \_\_\_\_ considered? How?
  - **IF THE FACILITIES AT THE MEAL SERVICE SITE (KITCHEN, EQUIPMENT, STORAGE, ETC.):** What type of facilities did you need?
  - **IF COST OF MEALS:** What alternative meal service arrangements did you consider? How much more cost effective was your choice of vendor?
  - Available reimbursement
  - **IF NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED OR EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM:**
    - What process did you use to estimate the number of meals you would need?
    - Did you find your estimate to be on target?
  - **Inconsistency/consistency/variability in daily/weekly attendance**
  - **IF AVAILABILITY OF KITCHEN STAFF TO PREPARE MEALS:** Were you able to explore multiple staffing sources (for example, school employees, temporary employees)?
  - Some other factors

Which factor is most important in deciding how you obtain meals for <SITE NAME>? Why is that most important?

Do you use the same method for all the sites under your sponsorship?

D4. How satisfied or dissatisfied is your organization with the available vendors in your area?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Why? (For example, cost, meal quality, number of vendors to choose from, meal delivery options)

**IF SPONSOR IS PRIMARY MENU PLANNER AND SITE IS SELF-PREP:**

D5. At <SITE NAME>, meals are self-prepared. Please walk me through the process of how the decision was made for the site to self-prepare meals at the site/sponsor, instead of using a meal vendor.

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Who made the decision?

What factors were considered when deciding whether to purchase the meals from a vendor or self-prepare meals?

- [Is/Are] \_\_\_\_ considered? How?
  - **IF THE FACILITIES AT THE MEAL SERVICE SITE (KITCHEN, EQUIPMENT, STORAGE, ETC.):** What type of facilities did you need?
  - **IF COST OF MEALS:** What alternative meal service arrangements did you consider? How much more cost effective was your choice of vendor?
  - Available reimbursement
  - **IF NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED OR EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM:**
    - What process did you use to estimate the number of meals you would need?
    - Did you find your estimate to be on target?
  - Inconsistency/consistency/variability in daily/weekly attendance
  - **IF AVAILABILITY OF KITCHEN STAFF TO PREPARE MEALS:** Were you able to explore multiple staffing sources (for example, school employees, temporary employees)?
  - Some other factors

Which factor is most important in deciding how you obtain meals for <SITE NAME>? Why is that most important?

Do you use the same method for all the sites under your sponsorship?



## SECTION E. PLANNING MENUS

Now let's talk about the menus for <SITE NAME>.

### IF SPONSOR IS NOT PRIMARY MENU PLANNER:

E1. How does your organization assist <SITE NAME> in the menu planning process?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

How are you involved?

When are you involved?

Do you have staff who are dietitians or nutritionists?

Is this the same for all of the sites you sponsor?

### ASK REMAINING QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION ONLY IF SPONSOR IS PRIMARY MENU PLANNER:

E2. What is your organization's menu planning process for <SITE NAME>?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

Who participates in the menu planning process?

In planning menus, what is the role of...

- ...Staff within your organization?
- ...Site staff?
- ...State agency staff?
- .. Any others who participate?

#### IF USE VENDED MEALS:

E2a. How does the vendor participate, if at all, in the menu planning process?

E3. What is the timing of the menu planning process?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

When does menu planning start?

How long does the planning process take?

E4. What resources does your organization use in planning menus?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

Which resources are especially helpful? Why?

What else does your organization need for menu planning, that you don't currently have?

E5. Is the process the same for all of your sites?

E6. Thinking more about how your organization plans menus for <SITE NAME>, what factors are most important?

#### PROBE IF NEEDED:

What about meal pattern requirements? Facilities? Staff? State guidance? Equipment?

Why are these important?

How are they considered?

### IF "HEALTHY MEALS":

E7. What does your organization use as the basis for defining what “healthy meals” are?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Has your organization developed its own definition of “healthy meals,” or adapted one from some other source? Why?

**IF ANOTHER SOURCE:**

Which source?

E7a. What guidelines, if any, does your organization use to set standards for “healthy meals?”

E7b. What do you do to provide healthy meals?

- Fresh foods?
- Variety of foods?
- Certain types of foods? (For example, fruits, vegetables, whole grains)

**IF NO MENTION OF “HEALTHY MEALS”:**

E8. How much focus is placed on serving “healthy meals”?

E8a. Is the focus limited to ensuring the meals meet the meal pattern requirements?

E8b. Do you have a dietitian or nutritionist review the menus?

E8c. What challenges, if any, do you have in serving healthy meals?

E9. When planning menus for <SITE NAME>, how are food preferences of children taken into account?

E10. How does your organization measure or track child preferences and reactions to the menus?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

What process does your organization have in place to monitor how children react to menus/new menu items? (For example, taste tests, surveys, plate waste)

E11. When planning menus for <SITE NAME>, how does your organization plan meals to accommodate local foods and cultural preferences of your participants?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

What are some examples of local preferences you incorporate?  
How do you get input from the children or community about cultural foods to consider?

E12. When planning menus for <SITE NAME>, how does your organization use USDA foods?

E12a. How easy or difficult is it to incorporate USDA foods into the menus?

E12b. What is your organization’s experience with using USDA foods in the menus?

E12c. How does using USDA foods impact your organization’s bottom line?

E12d. Which USDA foods would you like to use, but are not available?

**IF USDA FOODS ARE NOT AVAILABLE OR USED:**

E12e. How do you think you would use USDA foods if they were available? What impact would this have on your menus?

**IF ORGANIZATION CONSIDERED LOCAL FOODS IN MENU PLANNING:**

E13. How does your organization incorporate locally-produced foods into the meals?

E14. What do you consider “local foods” for your program?

...in the State?

...in the county?

...other area?

E15. Is there a State or regional program to promote local foods?

E16. What are the benefits of obtaining and using local foods?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Are there benefits such as the...

- ...Opportunity to provide fresh food?
- ...Opportunity to support the local economy and farmers?
- ...Opportunity for education about food, etc.?

E17. What are the challenges in obtaining and using local foods?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Do you face challenges such as...

- ...Issues with working with farmers?
- ...Unpredictability of obtaining the foods?
- ...Higher costs?

## SECTION F. SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM OVERALL EXPERIENCE

The last topic I'd like to cover today is your organization's overall experience in sponsoring a summer meals program.

F1. For your organization, what is the greatest benefit of participating in the summer meals program?

F2. Overall, how would you characterize your organization's experience as a sponsor?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Has it been a positive or a negative experience? Why?

F3. What is the greatest challenge your organization faces in serving summer meals?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Does your organization lack ...

- Staff?
- Training?
- Budget?
- Equipment?
- Facilities?

How did you decide that this is the greatest challenge? (Are there any other challenges you considered, but decided not to mention? **IF SO:** Why?)

F4. Overall, how would you characterize your organization's experience with the summer meals program?

**PROBE IF NEEDED:**

Has it been a positive or a negative experience? Why?

F5. Would you recommend being a sponsor to other organizations that are considering sponsoring the program, or not? Why?

Thank you for participating in the Summer Meals Study.