

Appendix C. School Food Authority Interview Protocol

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: The SFA may know the intervention/project by a name other than "ART Grant." Prior to the interview(s) with SFA staff, verify data collected from State Agency.

Local Project Name	
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My name is [name], and I'm a researcher at [Abt Associates/Insight Policy Research]. My colleague, [name], is also present to take notes throughout the interview. As you may know, we are conducting a study of projects funded by Administrative Review and Training grants, or ART grants. Your State received an ART grant in (insert year) to help fund the (insert project name).

The purpose of this study is to gather additional information about these projects, including their results and implementation challenges. Your candid responses can identify opportunities for improving the effectiveness of these projects and help FNS better understand their effects on the administration and delivery of child nutrition programs.

We are conducting interviews with a total of 20 States and 60 SFAs for this study. When we complete the interviews, we will summarize your responses with those provided by others in a final report for FNS. We will not use any names in that report or identify any individual respondents.

We expect our conversation will take 60 minutes. Do you have any questions for me about the study or what we will be discussing today?

With your permission, we would like to record the conversation to ensure our notes accurately reflect your responses. Do I have your permission to record our conversation? (IF NO: No problem. You may hear pauses throughout the interview as I may need to take additional time to record and verify your responses by hand.)

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not 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 0584-0524. The time required to complete this information collection 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. 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 (0584-0524). Do not return the completed form to this address.

Confirm permission once recording starts. Note the SFA name and date and time of the call.

- Yes
- No

School Food Authority	
Interview Date	
Time Start	
Time End	

Let's begin with introductions.

I would like to confirm your names and job titles and ask your role in the Administrative Review process.

Name	Title	Role in Administrative Review Process	Length of Time with the AR Process

Planning and Implementation

Extant Data Summary	
State	
Year of Grant Award	
Year of Grant Completion	
Intervention Strategy(ies)	
Goals/Objectives	
Performance Measures	
Grant Activity Summary	

1. I'd like to start with a few questions about your school food service program's level of engagement in the *[local project name]*.
 - a. How, if at all, were you involved in the grant planning or grant application process?
 - b. How did the State Agency involve you in other phases of the project, such as testing, reviewing training materials, etc.?
 - c. What information did the State Agency share with you about the goals of the *[local project name]* and the plans for reaching those goals?

- d. How did the State Agency share information about the *[local project name]* with you?
Probe: For example, via newsletter, email, or through training?
- e. How could the State Agency have communicated more effectively with your school food service program about this project?

Short- and Long-Term Effects

Now I want to ask a few questions about the *[local project name]* and how it affected your school food service program.

2. ***(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If applicable to intervention(s):) [For SFA]*** Have you been through an Administrative Review since the *[local project name]* was implemented? ***(If yes:)*** Please briefly describe the Administrative Review process prior to, and following, the implementation of the *[local project name]*. We are interested in processes directly addressed by the Administrative Review such as the off-site and on-site review process, the corrective action process, and any fiscal action process, if applicable.
 - a. Do you think these changes were helpful or an improvement over the previous process?
3. Did your SFA staff receive any training on the new Administrative Review process as a result of the ART grant intervention? What did the training cover? How did it help?
 - a. What topics have you or staff participated in? In what format was the training provided (e.g., in-person training, State conference, webinar, on-line training)?
 - b. What effect has the training had on errors in the administrative process for SFAs (for example, menu pattern compliance, meal counting and claiming, certification)?
 - c. What feedback have you received on the training and its effectiveness?
 - d. What recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the training?
4. From your perspective, how has the *[local project name]* affected your program operations? ***(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: These may be positive or negative, probe accordingly. Also probe specifically for staff time if not mentioned by interviewee.)***
 - a. What tasks are simpler or less time-consuming for staff as a result of the *[local project name]*?
 - b. How did you determine it was more or less time consuming?
 - c. ***(If not already addressed:)*** Have you experienced any changes in the administrative level of effort since the (local project name) was implemented?

5. ***(IF THE ART GRANT WAS USED FOR TECHNOLOGY:) [For SFA]*** How did staff respond to the new system implemented under the grant?
 - a. How has the use of new technology affected the level of effort? Do you think it saves time? Did it help to streamline procedures? ***(PROBE: What activities increased or decreased the level of effort (e.g., meal claims) through the ART project?)***
 - b. What type of training and/or guidance was provided to the SFA from the State Agency? Was it helpful? Are there improvements that could have been made to how the training was provided?
6. What was the initial opinion by staff of the new technology? Did their opinion change over time? ***(IF THE GRANT WAS USED TO IMPROVE DIRECT CERTIFICATION:)*** Do you think the direct certification process became easier as a result? How so?
7. Does your school food service program participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)? If so, what effect did project activities have on claiming and eligibility?

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

We want to ask about the positive and negative results of the *[local project name]*.

8. From your perspective, what were the major positive results of the *[local project name]*? What were some negative results of the *[local project name]*?
 - a. About how long did it take to see those results?

Challenges and Facilitators of Success

We are particularly interested in learning about challenges related to the *[local project name]* as well as any facilitators of success. (RQ4)

9. From your perspective, what were the top challenges your school food service program experienced during or after implementation of the *[local project name]*?
10. ***(NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER: Relate to specific grant focus:)*** How did you address those challenges?
11. How did your school food service program get program staff buy-in for the *[local project name]* and any associated changes or activities?
12. What type of support did the State Agency offer during implementation of the *[local project name]* (e.g., technical assistance, training, manuals, etc.)? At what point in the *[local project name]* was assistance made available to your school food service program? Did your school food service program have to request the assistance or did the State make it available as part of the project?

13. How effective was the assistance provided by the State? What recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the assistance offered?
14. How has the *[local project name]* assisted you in better managing your school nutrition program?
 - a. What, if anything, was most helpful?
 - b. What challenges were not addressed by the *[local project name]*?

Wrap-up

15. Is there anything we did not ask you think is important for us to know, or you were hoping we would discuss?

Thank you for answering my questions. Have a nice day.

Stop recording and note time interview concluded.