

## **E.5 - Follow-Up Interviews with Stores with Scanning Technologies that Meet the Federal Requirement: Interview Guide**

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 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 30 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.

### **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview for the SNAP EBT Scanner Study. This project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service to better understand how the 2014 Farm Bill requirement to use scanners at checkout to accept SNAP benefits will affect small business owners. By collecting this information, we can better understand and help minimize the burden of this requirement on small business owners.

This interview will take about 30 minutes and will include questions about the type of scanning technology used in your store, costs to purchase and operate it, your experience with installing and using the technology, and any economic or operational benefits to using scanners.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary, and the information you provide will not have any impact on your authorization to accept SNAP benefits. At the end of the interview, I will give you a \$20 Visa gift card. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. You can decline to answer questions if you don't have the information or if you prefer not to respond. Your responses will be kept private, and any reports prepared with the information you share will not include your name or the name of your business. Your responses will not be shared with anyone outside the research team, except as otherwise required by law. With your agreement, I would like to record the interview to ensure I capture the information you share accurately.

Do you have any questions about the interview or use of the information before we begin?

Do you consent to proceed with the interview and to have it recorded?

### **Interview Questions**

#### **1. Please show me your cash register system and scanning technology you are using and describe how it works.**

Probes:

- a. How long have you had this scanning technology?
- b. Did you choose it or was it selected by somebody else, for example, the previous store owner or one of your suppliers?
- c. *[If respondent chose scanning technology]* When you chose this technology, did you consider other options? If yes, why did you select this one? If no, what factors do you wish you would have considered when you selected this technology? About how much time did you spend deciding which technology to purchase?
- d. *[If respondent did not choose the scanning technology]* Have you made any updates to the scanning technology or considered replacing it? If so, why?
- e. Where do you get information about the types of scanning technologies available? *[If not mentioned]* Do you get information from vendors, retailer associations, or

wholesale distributors? Do/would you hire a consultant to help with selecting a scanning technology? What other ways would you like to get this type of information in the future?

- f. How do you keep the scanning technology up to date with the items in your store's inventory? How does it identify the items that are eligible to be purchased with SNAP?

**2. Thinking back to when the scanning technology was installed, or if you've made updates, I'd like to know what changes you made in the store to set it up and what you experienced during the installation or update.**

Probes:

- a. Did you need to make physical changes, such as adding or removing registers, moving checkout areas, enlarging checkout space, or making electrical/telephone upgrades when it was installed?
- b. How long did it take to install [or update] the scanning technology in your store? Were you able to operate with normal business hours during the installation?
- c. Who did the installation [or update]? Did you have any problems working with them? *[If yes] Please describe the problems.*
- d. Was your business disrupted when it was installed [or updated]? *[If yes] Please describe the disruptions.*
- e. Overall, how easy or difficult was it to get it installed [or updated] and operational? What made it *[easy, difficult]*?

**3. I'd like to learn about the costs of installing [or updating] and operating the scanning technology. It is okay to provide estimates or a range if you don't know the exact amount. Just tell me it's an estimate. According to the information on the survey, you *[own or lease]* the scanning technology. Is that correct?**

Probes for owned scanning technologies:

- a. Approximately how much did it cost to purchase [or update] the scanning technology?
- b. Were there additional costs for the installation [or update], for setting up the inventory database, or other "one time" costs? *[If yes] What were these costs for and approximately how much were they?*
- c. How many years do you think it will last—from the time of purchase [or update] to the time you will have to replace it?
- d. *[If Question 2 indicates there were renovations or changes in checkout areas needed] For the changes you needed to make *[restate what was shared by respondent]*, approximately how much did those changes cost?*
- e. Were any costs associated with training store personnel to use the scanning technology? *[If yes] Can you estimate the cost? *[If unable to estimate the cost]* About how many hours did the trainer and the store employees spend on training?*
- f. Do you have ongoing costs for training store personnel to use the scanning technology? *[If yes] Can you estimate the cost? *[If unable to estimate the cost]* About how many hours do the trainer and the store employees spend monthly or annually for the ongoing training?*
- g. Who maintains the scanning technology, for example, updating the database of items in your inventory or periodic software updates? *[If maintained by employees] About how many hours do employees spend on maintenance per month or per year? *[If**

*maintained by an external provider*] What is the monthly or annual cost for these services?

- h. Do you pay any other monthly or annual costs for operating and maintaining the scanning technology, for example, software license fees, service agreement? *[If yes]* What is the average monthly or annual cost for operation and maintenance?
- i. Have you incurred costs that you did not anticipate when you purchased and installed [or updated] the scanning technology? *[If yes]* What were the costs for and approximately how much are they?
- j. Have you had any cost savings from implementing [or updating] this scanning technology? *[If yes]* Please describe these.
- k. Do you feel the cost of the scanning technology was worth it or not? Please explain.

Probes for leased scanning technologies:

- a. What is the cost for the lease? *[If not mentioned]* Is that a monthly or annual cost?
- b. What, if any, setup and maintenance services are included with the lease? *[If not mentioned]* Does the cost for the lease cover setup and maintenance of the database of items in your inventory? Does the cost for the lease cover training employees to use the scanning technology? *[If yes]* Does this cost include ongoing training for employees?
- c. *[If the lease does not include maintenance]* Who maintains the scanning technology, for example, updating the database of items in your inventory or conducting periodic system software updates? *[If maintained by employees]* About how many hours do employees spend on this per month or per year? *[If maintained by an external provider]* What is the monthly or annual cost for maintenance services?
- d. *[If the lease does not include training]* Were costs associated with training store personnel to use the scanning technology? *[If yes]* Can you estimate the cost? *[If unable to estimate the cost]* About how many hours did the trainer and the store employees spend on the training?
- e. *[If the lease does not include ongoing training]* Do you have ongoing costs for training store personnel to use the scanning technology? *[If yes]* Can you estimate the cost? *[If unable to estimate the cost]* About how many hours do the trainer and the store employees spend monthly or annually for the ongoing training?
- f. Did you incur any “one time” or additional costs not included in the lease when it was installed [or updated], for example, setup of the inventory database? *[If yes]* What were these costs for and approximately how much did they cost?
- g. *[If Question 2 indicates renovations or changes in checkout areas were needed]* For the changes you needed to make *[restate what was shared by respondent]*, approximately how much did those changes cost?
- h. Have you incurred costs that you did not anticipate when you installed [or updated] the scanning technology? *[If yes]* What were the costs for and how much were the costs?
- i. Have you had any cost savings from implementing [or updating] the scanning technology? *[If yes]* Please describe these.
- j. Do you feel the cost of this scanning technology was worth it or not? Please explain.

**4. I'd like to hear about any technical issues or problems you have when using the scanning technology either at the time it was installed [or updated] or during the time you've been using it.**

Probes:

- a. Have you had technical issues with the scanning technology? *[If yes]* Please describe them. How *[do you/would you]* get help when technical issues occur?

- b. Have you had problems with keeping the inventory database up to date or with having the scanning technology correctly identify items as eligible for SNAP? *[If yes]* Please describe the problems and tell me how you handle them when they occur.
- c. Are employees trained through online or in-person training? Have you had any problems with employees learning to use it when it was implemented or when you hire new employees? *[If yes]* What is challenging for the employees?
- d. Have you had any other issues or problems we haven't discussed? *[If yes]* Please describe those.

**5. How well does this scanning technology meet your needs? What makes you feel it *[does/does not]* work well for your business?**

Probes:

- a. Does this scanning technology meet your needs for accurately transacting SNAP sales, for example, identifying SNAP-eligible items? *[If not]* What improvements are needed?
- b. How are you using this scanning technology for your business activities, such as tracking SNAP purchases or inventory control? Are there ways it could be more helpful, for example, other data you would like to have?
- c. What benefits, if any, have you experienced with your scanning technology? *[If not mentioned, probe: quality control, improved inventory control, increased sales, faster checkout time, improved customer service.]*
- d. Do you have any plans for changes in your business that would require system upgrades or modifications? *[If yes]* Please describe these.
- e. What negative business impacts, if any, are there from using the scanning technology? *[If any]* Please describe these.

**6. Would you recommend your scanning technology to other stores that do not have scanners but might be considering them? If so, why. If not, why?**

That concludes my questions. Would you like to share any other information regarding scanning technologies?

Thank you very much for your time and for the information you shared. With your permission, I would like to take photographs of your register system and scanning technology, checkout lanes, and *[insert items from final checklist]*.

**Observation Checklist for On-Site Interviews**

1. Take pictures of register system and scanning technology (do NOT include store personnel or customers in pictures)
2. Take pictures of checkout lanes (do NOT include store personnel or customers in pictures)
3. Take pictures of any relevant documents such as instructions for store personnel on use of scanning technology and procedures for updating the inventory database and identifying SNAP-eligible items in system.
4. Collect information on observable items included in the survey:
  - a. Number of cash registers
  - b. Type of hardware used (PC/Mac/iPad/mobile device)
  - c. POS terminal to see if a chip card can be used
  - d. Any other items that are relevant, based on interview responses

