**Appendix A. Study Objectives and Research Questions**

**Research Questions by Study Objectives Mapped to the Data Collection Targets**

| **Research Questions by Study Objectives** | **Data Targets** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | TPP | ISO | Retailer |
| **Objective 1. Describe the characteristics of TPPs and ISOs that provide services to SNAP retailers.** | | | |
| 1. What is the size (staffing, resources) of a typical ISO?  * How many clients, including SNAP-authorized retailers, are served by it? * How long has it been in operation? * Does it work with one or more TPPs? * Does it serve a particular store type(s)? * Is it a local, regional, statewide, or national operation? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| 1. What types of services are provided by a typical ISO to SNAP-authorized retailers?  * What is the menu of available options and the associated costs? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| 1. What is the estimated prevalence of ISOs providing TPP support services to SNAP-authorized retailers nationally? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| 1. What is the size of the operations of a typical TPP?  * How many SNAP retailers, by retailer type, are served by a typical TPP? | ✓ |  |  |
| 1. What percentage of the TPPs’ customer base are SNAP retailers? | ✓ |  |  |
| 1. What is the range of services, including prices offered by TPPs to SNAP-authorized retailers, and what services are most commonly provided?  * \*Upfront or one-time activation fees? | ✓ |  |  |
| 1. How does the cost for a similar service provided by an ISO and TPP compare? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| **Objective 2. Describe the nature of the working relationship between the TPPs and the ISOs.** | | | |
| 1. Under what circumstances do TPPs engage the services of ISOs? | ✓ |  |  |
| 1. What is the nature of the contractual terms and agreements between the TPPs and the ISOs? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| 1. What activities are carried out by ISOs under contractual agreement with TPPs? What is the role of TPPs? | ✓ |  |  |
| 1. What risk management/control measures are in place and implemented by TPPs to monitor the ISOs? | ✓ |  |  |
| 1. Under what circumstances do TPPs function in a capacity similar to that of the ISOs? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| 1. \*How is the EBT addendum used by TPPs/ISOs? | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| **Objective 3. Describe the nature of the working relationship between ISOs and SNAP retailers.** | | | |
| 1. What is the nature of the contractual terms and agreements between ISOs and SNAP-authorized retailers?  * \*What are the upfront or one-time activation fees, monthly fees, annual fees, etc.? |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1. What equipment and service purchase options are available to SNAP retailers? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. What fee variations are available to SNAP-authorized retailers? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. What criteria do SNAP retailers use when selecting ISOs and in what order of importance?  * What would a non-exempt retailer pay for an EBT-only machines? |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1. What types of services do the ISOs provide SNAP retailers on behalf of the TPPs? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. What services do SNAP-authorized retailers lease or purchase from ISOs?  * Which services are most commonly purchased and at what cost? Provide the range and average cost of each service. |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Objective 4. Describe the standards of operation used by the ISOs.** | |  |  |
| 1. How do ISOs market themselves to SNAP-authorized retailers? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. Who determines the pricing structure for sale or lease of EBT equipment and the terms for the contract with SNAP-authorized retailers?  * Who is authorized to enter into contracts with retailers and with TPPs? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. What measures are in place by the ISOs to ensure accurate coding and verification of the EBT terminals before distribution? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. How and by whom is the information pertaining to EBT equipment collected, recorded, and verified?  * What data (address, terminal identification, FNS#, etc.) are being captured by the ISOs? * How are ISOs storing the data (terminal, ISO database, TPP database, etc.)? |  | ✓ |  |
| 1. What information do ISOs report to TPPs and when?  * How do ISOs ensure data integrity of the data sent to TPPs? |  | ✓ |  |
| **Objective 5. For SNAP retailers that contract with ISOs, describe their level of satisfaction with their ISOs.** | | | |
| 1. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with purchase options from the ISOs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with contractual terms offered by the ISOs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with the customer/support services offered by the ISOs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. What is the SNAP retailers’ overall level of satisfaction with the ISOs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. What is the average length of time that they have conducted business with their ISO? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. Do most SNAP retailers renew their contract with the same ISO? What terms, if any, do they renegotiate at renewal? |  |  | ✓ |
| **Objective 6. For SNAP retailers that contract with TPPs, describe their level of satisfaction with their TPPs.** | | | |
| 1. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with purchase options from the TPPs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with contractual terms offered by the TPPs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with the customer/support services offered by the TPPs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. What is the SNAP retailers’ overall level of satisfaction with the TPPs? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. What is the average length of time that they have conducted business with their TPP? |  |  | ✓ |
| 1. Do most SNAP-authorized retailers renew their contract with the same TPP? What terms, if any, do they renegotiate at renewal? |  |  | ✓ |
| **Objective 7. Develop a set of best practices to inform FNS’s guidance for retailers on what to consider when selecting, contracting with, and working with vendors that provide TPP services.** | | | |
| 1. \*What advice would you give new retailers to the SNAP program about selecting POS technology providers and equipment? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1. \*What advice would you give existing SNAP retailers about renegotiating contracts or switching POS technology providers and equipment? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1. \*What advice would you give SNAP retailers on choosing reputable vendors? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1. \*What type of processes are in place to monitor and track retailer fraud? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1. \*What processes are in place to control the quality of the data received by TPPs/ISOs? | ✓ | ✓ |  |

*\* Additional questions not presented in the FNS Performance Work Statement.*