

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.			
a. What is the size (staffing, resources) of a typical ISO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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? 	✓	✓	
b. What types of services are provided by a typical ISO to SNAP-authorized retailers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the menu of available options and the associated costs? 	✓	✓	
c. What is the estimated prevalence of ISOs providing TPP support services to SNAP-authorized retailers nationally?	✓	✓	
d. What is the size of the operations of a typical TPP? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How many SNAP retailers, by retailer type, are served by a typical TPP? 	✓		
e. What percentage of the TPPs' customer base are SNAP retailers?	✓		
f. What is the range of services, including prices offered by TPPs to SNAP-authorized retailers, and what services are most commonly provided? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ *Upfront or one-time activation fees? 	✓		
g. 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.			
a. Under what circumstances do TPPs engage the services of ISOs?	✓		
b. What is the nature of the contractual terms and agreements between the TPPs and the ISOs?	✓	✓	
c. What activities are carried out by ISOs under contractual agreement with TPPs? What is the role of TPPs?	✓		
d. What risk management/control measures are in place and implemented by TPPs to monitor the ISOs?	✓		
e. Under what circumstances do TPPs function in a capacity similar to that of the ISOs?	✓	✓	
f. *How is the EBT addendum used by TPPs/ISOs?	✓	✓	
Objective 3. Describe the nature of the working relationship between ISOs and SNAP retailers.			
a. What is the nature of the contractual terms and agreements between ISOs and SNAP-authorized retailers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ *What are the upfront or one-time activation fees, monthly fees, annual fees, etc.? 		✓	✓
b. What equipment and service purchase options are available to SNAP retailers?		✓	
c. What fee variations are available to SNAP-authorized retailers?		✓	
d. What criteria do SNAP retailers use when selecting ISOs and in what order of importance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What would a non-exempt retailer pay for an EBT-only machines? 		✓	✓
e. What types of services do the ISOs provide SNAP retailers on behalf of the TPPs?		✓	

Research Questions by Study Objectives	Data Targets		
	TPP	ISO	Retailer
f. What services do SNAP-authorized retailers lease or purchase from ISOs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.			
a. How do ISOs market themselves to SNAP-authorized retailers?		✓	
b. Who determines the pricing structure for sale or lease of EBT equipment and the terms for the contract with SNAP-authorized retailers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who is authorized to enter into contracts with retailers and with TPPs? 		✓	
c. What measures are in place by the ISOs to ensure accurate coding and verification of the EBT terminals before distribution?		✓	
d. How and by whom is the information pertaining to EBT equipment collected, recorded, and verified? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.)? 		✓	
e. What information do ISOs report to TPPs and when? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.			
a. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with purchase options from the ISOs?			✓
b. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with contractual terms offered by the ISOs?			✓
c. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with the customer/support services offered by the ISOs?			✓
d. What is the SNAP retailers' overall level of satisfaction with the ISOs?			✓
e. What is the average length of time that they have conducted business with their ISO?			✓
f. 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.			
a. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with purchase options from the TPPs?			✓
b. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with contractual terms offered by the TPPs?			✓
c. How satisfied are SNAP retailers with the customer/support services offered by the TPPs?			✓
d. What is the SNAP retailers' overall level of satisfaction with the TPPs?			✓
e. What is the average length of time that they have conducted business with their TPP?			✓
f. 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.			
a. *What advice would you give new retailers to the SNAP program about selecting POS technology providers and equipment?	✓	✓	✓
b. *What advice would you give existing SNAP retailers about renegotiating contracts or switching POS technology providers and equipment?	✓	✓	✓
c. *What advice would you give SNAP retailers on choosing reputable vendors?	✓	✓	✓
d. *What type of processes are in place to monitor and track retailer fraud?	✓	✓	✓
e. *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.