

Attachment G.3 Community-Based Organization Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you so much for participating in this important study. My name is [NAME] and I am from a company called [SPR/Mathematica Policy Research], which is a [describe organization]. We were hired by the Food and Nutrition Service at the US Department of Agriculture to conduct a study on the effectiveness of different strategies to improve access to SNAP among elderly individuals. We are not auditors—we are just here to learn about your experiences with these strategies and with different types of SNAP clients. We are talking with many people in and outside of the SNAP agency about this issue.

We will summarize our findings in a report, but no comments will be linked with respondent names in the report, and we will not be sharing information with others, including your supervisors or State or Federal staff, except as otherwise required by law. Participation is voluntary so you may skip any questions that you are not comfortable answering and there are no right or wrong answers. We will be taking notes throughout our conversation so that we can remember the information you provide when we are writing our report. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Background

Before we start I'd like to get a little background.

1. How long have you been with [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]?
1. What is your official title and what is your current role here?
2. Have you held any other positions here in the past? Please describe.
3. In one or two sentences, what is your organization's mission?
4. About how many people does your organization serve in some way in a typical year? At a given point in time?

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Efforts to Increase Access to SNAP or Other Food Sources for the Elderly

1. Besides SNAP, what kinds of food supports are available to elderly individuals in this community? For example, congregate meal centers, home delivered meals, or food pantries.

- What sources of support do elderly individuals tend to use most often and why?
- Which least often and why?

2. In your experience, what are the reasons elderly people in this community don't apply for SNAP even though they may be eligible?

- How aware are elderly people in your community about the availability of SNAP?
- Where do elderly typically get information about SNAP?
 - What kind of efforts, if any, does the SNAP agency conduct to help the elderly apply for SNAP?
 - What kind of outreach, if any, does your organization conduct? What kind of information, if any, do you provide?
 - What kind of outreach, if any, do other organizations in the community conduct?
- Based on your interactions with elderly individuals, what do they know and think about the process for applying for SNAP?
 - How accurate is their understanding of application and eligibility determination policies and processes? Describe any inaccuracies and why you think they exist.
 - What kind of positive and negative experiences with the process have you heard about?
- Based on your interactions with elderly individuals, how willing are they to accept government assistance?
 - What do they think about SNAP generally and who it is intended for?
 - How do they perceive their level of need?
 - How much do they think they will benefit from assistance and how do they weigh that value?

3. In addition to any outreach we already talked about, describe any work your organization does to increase food access for the elderly or facilitate access to SNAP. [Interviewers: use the following probes to gather details on the organization's activities around the practices listed here:]

Assist with the SNAP application process?

Provide referrals to the SNAP agency or other organizations?

Provide food for free or at a reduced cost?

Other?

- When did your organization start providing this/these service(s) and why?
- Which and how many staff provide this/these service(s)?
- Describe the take-up of this/these service(s).
 - o How many individuals use the service(s)?
 - o How has service use changed over time and to what do you attribute these changes?

4. Is your organization connected to or aware of any other efforts outside of your organization to improve elderly access to food or SNAP benefits?

- When was each implemented and what is the current status?
- What was the motivation behind the effort?
- What agencies or organizations are involved?
- What activities are taking place?
- Who is the target audience and how are they reached?
- What messages about SNAP are being disseminated?

Interviewer— In advance of the interview, mark the interventions currently in place in the table below. Cycle through questions 5-16 for each intervention, one at a time. For States with an ESAP, treat the ESAP as the intervention, rather than each of its components.

	Check if State Implemented Intervention
Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP)	
Standard Medical Deduction (SMD) amount	
Community Partnership Interview Demonstration (CPID)	
Combined Application Project (CAP)	
Standard CAP with SNAP application received from SSA	
Modified CAP with use of the SSI/State data exchange (SDX) to identify potentially eligible cases	
36-Month Certification Demonstration	
Elderly/Disabled Recertification Interview Waiver	

We have been meeting with staff and administrators at the local SNAP office learning about efforts they have made that may facilitate access to SNAP for the elderly, including *[interviewer: list the interventions we know about in the State]*.

5. How familiar are you with the [INTERVENTION]? *[Interviewer: If respondent is not familiar with the intervention, do not proceed to question 6 but instead ask about the next intervention. If the respondent is not familiar with any interventions, skip to question 17]*

6. What is your understanding of how the [INTERVENTION] is intended to work?
7. From your perspective, how well is it working as intended? Why or why not?
8. Why do you think the SNAP office implemented the [INTERVENTION] and do you think it is serving its purpose? Why or why not?
9. From your perspective, how, if at all, has the [INTERVENTION] changed elderly clients' access to or participation in SNAP? Their satisfaction with SNAP?
 - In what ways has the [INTERVENTION] affected different types of elderly clients differently (younger, older, living alone, non-English speakers, etc.)?
 - How, if at all, do you think other aspects of the policy or program environment (such as other SNAP changes or the economy or the availability of other assistance programs) have contributed to these changes? [Probe on policy changes you learn about in other interviews such as the existence of telephone interviews, online applications systems, call centers, streamlined applications related to the Affordable Care Act, etc.]
10. In what ways, if any, has the [INTERVENTION] changed the way you work with elderly individuals to increase access to food support? Why or why not?
11. When and how did you first hear about the [INTERVENTION]?
12. To what extent, if any, were you (or other community stakeholders that you know of) involved in the planning or roll-out of the [INTERVENTION]?
 - How and in what ways?
 - How well did this process work?
 - To what extent do you feel your contributions were valued and valuable?
13. How much and what kind of communication has your organization received from the State or local SNAP office (since) about the implementation and operation of the [INTERVENTION]?
 - Do you attend any meetings related to the [intervention] or at which the [INTERVENTION] may be discussed? If yes, who attends the meetings and what kind of information is provided?
 - Do you receive reports or status updates? If yes, who provides the reports and what kind of information do they contain?
14. In what ways, if any, has your organization's relationship and coordination with the SNAP agency changed since the implementation of the [INTERVENTION]? Why or why not?

15. In what ways, if any, have your organization's relationships and coordination with other community organizations that address food security or the needs of elderly individuals changed since the implementation of the [INTERVENTION]? Why or why not?
16. In what ways, if any, has the [INTERVENTION] made the work you do with elderly individual easier or more challenging?

Interviewer: Cycle back to question 5 for each intervention; after asking about familiarity with each intervention, skip to Lessons Learned.

[Ask questions 17-21 of respondents who were not aware of any of the interventions. For the period of time, fill in the amount of time that has passed since the first intervention was implemented in the State. If there are large gaps between the implementation of multiple interventions, ask about both time periods as relevant. For example, “In the late 2000s...” and “In the last couple of years...”]

17. In the last [xx period of time], have you seen any changes in SNAP that have affected the elderly population you work with? Please describe those changes and how they have affected the elderly.
18. In the last [xx period of time], have you seen any changes in the extent to which or how the elderly population has applied for SNAP? What kinds of changes and to what do you attribute them?
19. In the last [xx period of time], have you seen any changes in how elderly SNAP participants interact with the SNAP office once they are receiving benefits? What kinds of changes and to what do you attribute them?
20. Within the last [xx period of time], in what ways, if any, has your organization’s relationship and coordination with the SNAP agency changed? To what do you attribute any changes?
21. Within the last [xx period of time], in what ways, if any, has your organization’s relationship and coordination with other community organizations that address food security or the needs of elderly individuals changed? To what do you attribute any changes?

Lessons Learned and Best Practices to Reach the Elderly

1. In your opinion, what are the most effective methods of increasing access to SNAP among the elderly population?
2. What has not worked very well?
3. What are the barriers and challenges related to the elderly and their food and nutrition needs that are not being addressed in your area?
 - Why aren’t they being addressed?
 - What would be needed to address them?
4. Is there any segment of the elderly population that is not being reached? *[Probe about non-English speaking populations if relevant.]*
 - Why aren’t they reached?
 - What would be needed to reach these people?

5. What challenges have you faced during your work to increase food access for the elderly or to facilitate access to SNAP?

- What would you do differently next time?
- What successes have you had?
- Where is your work heading going forward?