Appendix B.2. Research Objectives and Questions by Data Source

OMB No. 0584-[NEW]

*Assessment of Mandatory E&T Programs*

Month XX, 2018

**Project Officer: Jordan Younes**

Office of Policy Support

Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture

3101 Park Center Drive

Alexandria, VA 22303

703-305-2935

Jordan.younes@fns.usda.gov

Research Objectives and Questions by Data Source

| Research Objectives and Questions | Data Sources | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Document Review | | Site Visits | | | | | | Administrative Dataa |
| Interviews With State and Local SNAP Staff | | | Interviews With E&T Providers | | |
| **Objective 1: Conduct a process evaluation to understand the process for notifying participants and enrolling them in mandatory E&T programs** | | | | | | | | | |
| What reasons do States give for instituting mandatory over voluntary programs? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | |  | |  |
| Who is subject to mandatory E&T in the mandatory State programs? Do States exempt certain groups of individuals or geographic areas from mandatory participation in E&T? If so, why? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | |  | |  |
| How do mandatory States differ from one another in their intake procedures, referral procedures, orientations, and notification processes for mandatory participants? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | |  | |  |
| How do screening mechanisms work in regard to Federal exemptions from work registration and any State-selected exemptions from mandatory E&T? How often are SNAP participants referred to E&T when they should not be?  Generally, how and when are incorrect referrals to E&T discovered, and how are they corrected? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | |  |
| What activities are required for mandatory E&T compliance? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | |  |
| Do mandatory E&T States have the resources to serve the entire eligible population should participation reach 100 percent? If not, what percentage of the eligible population can the States serve? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | |  |
| How frequently do mandatory E&T participants leave the program for the following reasons?   * Participant is sanctioned for failure to comply with requirements. * Participant does not meet deadline to recertify. * Participant begins earning wages that are above the threshold to qualify for SNAP benefits. |  | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | ⚫ |
| **Objective 2: Determine the main reasons why mandatory E&T participants are sanctioned, with particular attention to program dropoff points that result in sanctions** | | | | | | | | | |
| What State E&T policies and administrative practices may affect a mandatory E&T participant’s likelihood of participating in E&T services and the participant’s likelihood of being sanctioned? Features examined may include—   * Group(s) targeted * Screening process used to identify Federal exemptions from work registration and any State-selected exemptions from mandatory E&T, particularly in States that rely primarily on telephone interviews * Intake process, including assessment and assignment to individual E&T components * Referral process, including systems of communication and collaboration between SNAP agencies and E&T partner organizations * Number of locations visited and referrals needed to obtain services * Participant reporting requirements * Notification process * Type of sanction imposed * Length of compliance period before being considered noncompliant * Opportunities for appeal, including formal and informal channels |  | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | ⚫ |
| At which points in the process are participants more likely to be sanctioned? |  | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | ⚫ |
| How clear are the NOAAs, which inform participants they are at risk of being sanctioned? Is due process followed for those who fail to meet program requirements? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | |  | |  |
| How frequently do participants who receive a sanction notice comply before the sanction is imposed? |  | | | ⚫ | | |  | | ⚫ |
| To the extent the information is available, what percentage of sanctioned participants return to SNAP and E&T?   * How quickly do sanctioned individuals return to SNAP, if at all (e.g., never return, short-term absences, long-term absences)? * How long do mandatory participants typically participate in E&T (if data are available)? |  | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | ⚫ |
| **Objective 2 (continued): Determine the main reasons why mandatory E&T participants are sanctioned, with particular attention to program dropoff points that result in sanctions** | | | | | | | | | |
| What are the challenges or obstacles mandatory SNAP E&T participants face in sustaining participation?   * What are the primary barriers clients report to SNAP agencies for not being able to comply upfront (never enter E&T)? * How do reasons differ for those that begin an E&T program but struggle to comply? |  | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | |  |
| What kinds of training do SNAP staff receive on practices for implementing mandatory E&T and sanctions for noncompliance? Features examined may include—   * Who receives training * Frequency of training * Any printed materials * Format of the training (in person, web, required/optional) * Whether retraining is offered/required periodically | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | |  |
| Does the frequency of sanctioning differ in States with light-touch programs versus intensive programs? |  | | | ⚫ | | |  | | ⚫ |
| How are sanction policies/procedures monitored and tracked by the State/local supervisors?   * Are case reviews conducted on sanctioned cases to determine if they were sanctioned accurately? * Does the level of noncompliance remain fairly consistent annually and across the State? If not, how has it changed? Why? * Has the State made any changes to its sanction policies over time to account for high sanction rates identified? | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | |  | |  |
| **Objective 3: Assess how well mandatory programs help SNAP E&T participants gain skills, certificates and credentials; gain stable, well-paying employment; and move toward economic self-sufficiency** | | | | | | | | | |
| How do the services included in State E&T plans compare with the services that participants are offered or actually receive (e.g., job search, job search training, supportive services)? Services examined may include—   * Light-touch services such as job search or job search training * Intensive services such as adult basic education, on-the-job training, or occupational or technical skills training * Case management, success coaching, or career navigation * Support services such as transportation or child care | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | ⚫ |
| How do the services providers offer to E&T participants compare to what participants most frequently receive?   * How do staff determine what services to offer participants? * Are participants told about all services or only a limited amount based on assessments? | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ |  |
| To what extent are mandatory E&T services specifically designed to prepare participants for in-demand jobs in the local job market? | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ |  |
| What metrics do States have in place to determine how well E&T services are moving participants toward economic self-sufficiency?   * Which organizations are tracking and monitoring those metrics? | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ | | | ⚫ |  |

a Research questions addressed by the administrative data analysis may be limited by the data available from SNAP case records, E&T providers, and other State records. The study team will assess the extent to which available administrative data can provide information needed to address research questions during preliminary discussions with States.