

ATTACHMENT I.2
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR
PROVIDERS

PROVIDER INTERVIEW

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. During this conversation, we would like to get a better understanding of your role in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Pilot study that we have been hired to evaluate for the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and how your organization serves the pilot participants. We are talking with staff like you at other organizations in your State and in other States to learn first-hand how the pilots are operating on the ground. This information will help us evaluate what works in these pilots and what could be improved, so your input is valuable to us. This discussion will take about 60 minutes.

The information you share with me today will be summarized and combined with information that we will gather from other staff we interview. Nothing you say will ever be linked to your name. I would like to record our conversation today, but that is so I do not have to take many notes and can give you my attention. If you would like to say anything off the record, just let me know and I can stop the recorder. Your participation is voluntary. Do you agree to participate? Can we record the conversation?

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

[Interviewer: Turn on the tape recorder.] Okay, I have now turned on the tape recorder. Can you confirm that you agreed to let me tape this conversation? [Interviewer: Get verbal consent to tape on the tape recording.]

[Interviewer: State your name, the respondent's name, the location, and the date. Also, request the respondent's SNAP case number.]

A. Background

1. What is your official job title or position?
2. What services does your agency or organization provide?
3. What are your primary responsibilities?
4. How long have you been in this position?
 - a. Were you hired specifically for the pilot?
5. What are your responsibilities related to the pilot?
 - a. How are the pilot responsibilities distributed across staff in your organization?
 - b. What percentage of your work week, on average, is spent working with pilot clients?
Has that changed over time?

B. Flow of clients through services

Intake

Can you tell me about how SNAP employment and training pilot participants are referred to you? At what point in the process do you first talk with the clients?

Probes:

1. Do you conduct any outreach or recruiting of participants? If so, describe that process. What criteria are used to target participants? What are the various entry points for participants into the pilot, and in particular into the services you provide
2. When you meet with clients at intake do you use any additional criteria to determine if a client is eligible for the pilot or your particular services? Describe the determination process.
3. At what point in the client flow are participants randomly assigned to receive services? Do you and staff at this organization conduct the consent and random assignment, or is that done elsewhere? Describe the process and your role.
4. Have you experienced any challenges with the random assignment process?
5. What information or instruction is provided to the clients after random assignment? (How much information about the evaluation is discussed?)
6. Are orientation meetings offered or required before enrolling in services? Describe.
 1. Did this process change at all during the pilot? If so, why and how?

Assessment

Does your organization assess clients' readiness and/or eligibility for services?

If your organization assesses clients' readiness and/or eligibility for services, please describe the assessment process for obtaining SNAP employment and training services.

Probes:

1. Are clients assessed before receiving services?
2. Describe the assessment process.
3. How long is the assessment?
4. In what format is the assessment conducted (tests, meetings, group discussions, and so on)? Does your organization use this assessment for other purposes?
5. Who conducts the assessment?
6. What is the result of the assessment (a test score, a training plan, and so on)? How is that discussed with the clients? How are these results used?
7. Are barriers to employment assessed? What types of barriers are most prevalent among SNAP employment and training clients? Do you think the pilot adequately addresses these barriers with the services provided? How? Describe the support services and referrals available. What could be improved?

Employment and training services

Describe the employment and training services that are available to pilot participants and how clients are assigned to specific services.

Probes:

1. Are individual training plans developed? If so, when are they developed and how much input do clients have in the design?
2. How are decisions about program services made? Describe the process. Are programs very structured or do clients have choices? How are participants informed about the universe of service options or providers available? Or are they?
3. How much guidance or advice is provided to participants about selecting employment and training programs and providers? How much input do participants have in deciding what services they receive and by which providers? If there is disagreement about the type of services or location of services a participant should receive, how is that resolved?
4. When services are assigned, how long are clients in services? Do or can clients receive multiple training services? Do services overlap or are they sequential? Describe the flow of services for clients in general. Describe the variation that can happen for certain clients.
5. What challenges do clients face in participating in program services? What are the costs to their participation that might make it difficult for them to participate?

Support services

Describe the range of support services that are available to assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment.

Probes:

1. Describe the value of each type of support service? Are there caps on how much an individual participant can receive for each type of support service? For support services overall?
2. How are participants informed of support services? Do they have to apply for them or do they automatically receive them? Do they need referrals?
3. Describe the process for providing the supports? Is the distribution centralized or do clients have to obtain services from various providers?
4. To what extent do case managers follow up on the referrals?
5. To what extent do any pilot-funded supportive services provided to participants (for example, for child care or transportation) meet participants' costs to program participation and/or employment?
6. Do participants receive any post-program employment retention services? If so, describe. For how long?

Case management

Describe the case management provided to pilot participants.

Probes:

1. How frequently are you in contact with participants? Does this vary over time? Were you provided with guidelines for frequency of follow-up?
2. How much time, on average, do you spend with each participant during each contact?
3. How do you assess clients' service needs?
4. How is case management typically provided (in person, email, or telephone)?
5. What is the range of topics or issues discussed with participants? Which topics or issues are most frequently discussed?
6. What types of case management tools or models are used? Describe.
7. How responsive are participants to case management?
8. Describe how you track or record your activities.
9. Does case management end when program activities are complete? If not, describe the additional types of service provided and for how long. Any post-program follow-up?
10. What type of collaboration between SNAP and various service providers exists to provide participants with cross-organization services?

C. Final thoughts

1. What is your assessment of the pilot? What aspects of the pilot do you think had a positive effect on clients? What aspects had a negative effect? What aspects of the pilot have had a positive or negative impact on your job and your level of satisfaction?
2. Would any specific technical assistance, training, and/or support have been helpful in your role in the pilot?
3. What are the biggest challenges clients face in participating in the program? Are these usually easy or difficult to resolve? Explain.
4. What are the biggest challenges clients face in finding employment either during or after the program? Do you have suggestions for resolving these?

D. Wrap-up

Thank you! This conversation has been very insightful and we appreciate your assistance with our study. If you have any questions after today, please feel free to contact us.

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0604. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate to the Office of Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302.