# Attachment H. Observation Checklist

OMB No. 0584-[NEW]

*Job Search as a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Component*

January 14, 2021

**Project Officer: Danielle Deemer**

Office of Policy Support
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.305.2952
danielle.deemer@usda.gov

OMB Number: 0584-XXXX
Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX

# Observation Checklist

Site teams will use this checklist when conducting observations at the local SNAP offices and E&T providers. To the extent possible, teams will observe key steps in SNAP E&T job search participation: screening and referral, orientation, assessment, delivery of services, or program monitoring. Teams should split to achieve the greatest possible number of observations. Ask clarifying questions about the activities being observed. If questions would intrude upon the observed activity, reserve them until the activity ends. If unable to observe an activity of interest, ask staff to show you how they typically conduct said activity. For instance, if you are observing a screening and the participant is exempt, you may ask staff to show you how they would have referred the client to E&T if the client were mandatory.

Provide a brief introduction to the study before conducting your observation. If a client is present and will provide personal information, such as during a screening, obtain permission from the client to conduct the observation and reassure that any information provided will be considered private. Inform the client that you are there to observe the process and activities and are not interested in recording their personal information.

Make a copy of this checklist to use with each observation. Observations will not be audio recorded, and site teams should expand their notes shortly after conducting each observation.

**Site visitor:** "Thank you for letting me observe your *[activity]* today. My name is *[name]*, and I'm a researcher at Insight Policy Research. We are trying to better understand how SNAP E&T works in *[State]*, so this observation will help us see how *[pick category that applies to activity: application*, *E&T intake*, *job search*, *orientation]* works. We may take a few notes, but we will never share this information with anyone outside our study team, and we will not identify you or use your name in our reporting. [*If client is present*, *add*: We are not interested in collecting any personal information about you and any information we do collect today is considered private.] Do you have any questions?"

| State: | Date of observation: |
|---|---|
| Site location: | Observer: |

*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-xxxx. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 minutes per response, 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 or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the following address: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-xxxx). Do not return the completed form to this address.*

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| Activity observed: | Time/duration of activity: |

## A. Notes

# B. Observation Guide

Below is a list of activities you may observe during your visit. Try to observe at least one of the listed activities. Each activity lists guidelines for what to observe and questions you are likely to address during your observation. Address these questions to the extent possible but also expand your notes to include your impressions of the activity and interactions that occurred.

## Staff and Documents

*[Document for all activities]*

1. Job title of staff member(s) observed.

2. What guidance is the staff member using to complete the observed activity? Describe and ask for a copy.

3. What documents are given to clients during the observed activity? Describe and ask for a copy.

## Screening and Referral

4. Describe the client/worker interaction, whether it seems the client understands the next steps, whether the worker is trying to ensure the client understands the next steps, etc.

5. Describe the mode of the screening (e.g., online, telephone, mail, in person), location if in person, accessibility, and privacy.

6. How was the screening scheduled? How long did it take to complete?

7. Describe how the screening is conducted. What types of questions are asked? How clear do they appear to be to the client? How does the worker respond to questions?

8. Describe how individual exemptions or deferments are determined and whether all possible exemptions are explored by the eligibility worker.

9. Describe what information is given about support services.

    a. [*In mandatory States*] How does the eligibility worker determine whether the expenses required for a client to participate in E&T will exceed support service allotments?

    b. [*In voluntary States*] Describe how the client learns about SNAP E&T job search services. What information is provided? What motivates/dissuades the client from participating? Describe the worker's demeanor when providing information about E&T services and the client's perceived interest.

10. What happens after screening? What information is given to clients? Are next steps clear?

11. Describe referral to E&T provider. How is the provider selected?

12. How much time is the client given to report?

## Orientation

13. Describe the demeanor of the presenter, the clarity of the orientation, the questions clients ask, how the worker responds to questions, etc.

14. Describe the mode of the orientation (e.g., online, in person), location if in person, and accessibility.

15. How was the orientation scheduled? How long did it last?

16. Describe the orientation. What information is provided? By whom? In what format?

17. What information is provided about next steps?

18. Describe other activities included in the orientation (e.g., assessment, workfare screening, soft skills instruction).

## Assessment

19. Describe the introduction to the assessment, client understanding of its purpose, interaction between workers and clients, etc.

20. Describe the mode of the assessment (e.g., online, telephone, in person), location if in person, accessibility, and privacy.

21. How was the assessment scheduled? How long does it take to complete?

22. Describe the assessment(s): test instrument used (e.g., TABE), work experience, education, career interests, barriers.

23. Describe how the assessment results are used (e.g., exemption, component assignment, support services). How did the office staff use the results to decide what component to assign the participant to?

## Support Services

*[May occur during any number of steps in the intake process]*

24. How is eligibility for support services determined? What factors do staff take into consideration when determining the type and amount of support needed?

25. How are support services administered?

26. What is the client's reaction to the support services provided? Do staff think the services are sufficient to allow participation in E&T? What do workers think about the type and amount of support services provided?

27. Does the client need other support services that are not covered? What are they? [*In mandatory States:*] Do staff exempt clients when support services they need are not covered?

## Job Search Activity

28. Where is the job search activity taking place? Describe the environment.

29. What resources are available to facilitate the job search activity (e.g., printers, fax machines, job boards)?

30. How many clients are participating in the job search activity?

31. Describe how the activity is being delivered to the participants. Are clients completing the job search activity independently, or is there a caseworker assisting them? Describe the level of supervision. Are they using an online tool or another method?

32. How is client participation tracked and/or monitored throughout the activity? What information does the provider or participant need to track?

33. How long did the activity last?

34. Describe the demeanor of the job search participant, any interactions he or she has with staff, any question asked and the responses received, etc.

35. Describe both participant and worker impressions of the job search activity. Do any participants or workers comment on their satisfaction with the program?

## E&T Monitoring Systems

36. How does the site track participation in job search activities? Does tracking differ depending on the type of E&T participant (e.g., mandatory, voluntary, ABAWD)?

37. What type of system is the site using to track participation (e.g., manual, local MIS, shared case management system)? Describe the features of this system in detail.

38. Is the system used to maintain data for other programs (e.g., WIOA, TANF)?

39. How does the system track and report nonparticipation?

40. How are data exchanged between different partners?

41. How does the system track outcomes?

## Sanctions

42. Describe the conciliation process and how good cause is determined. What act of noncompliance is being reviewed and what criteria are used to make the determination?

43. Describe how the site issues sanctions for failure to meet E&T job search requirements. How is information provided to clients?