Appendix G. State MCS Staff and Administrators Interview Protocol

OMB No. 0584-XXXX

*Modernizing Channels of Communication
With SNAP Participants*

March 2, 2020

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Modernizing Channels of Communication With SNAP Participants:
State MCS Staff and Administrators Interview Protocol

PURPOSE: *This protocol will be used to assess the experiences the staff responsible for running the MCS has had while implementing the tools and to understand the challenges and barriers to implementation. This will be 90-minute interview.*

As you know from our previous discussions, we are conducting a research study to better understand States' use of mobile communication. During today's discussion, we wish to update what we know about your State's mobile communication strategies—or MCS—and learn more about your experiences, best practices, and lessons learned. For the purposes of this study, MCS include text messaging, mobile applications participants can download on a smartphone or tablet, and websites that are optimized for viewing on mobile devices.

We are talking with many people in States around the country, so I would like to audiorecord this conversation to help me remember who said what so I don't need to worry about taking notes. Only people working on this study will have access to the recordings.

As a reminder, your participation is completely voluntary (not required) and will not affect your job in any way. If you chose not to participate or chose not to answer any questions, you will not be affected in any way. The time required to complete this interview is estimated to average 90 minutes. Would it be ok if I record our discussion?

A. Recap Background on State's MCS Implementation

1. Since we last spoke on the phone, you informed us that your role(s) was (were) [INSERT ROLE(S)]. Have any of your roles or responsibilities changed?

 [REFERENCE STATE-SPECIFIC SUMMARY OF MCS PROGRAM AND SERVICES] Just a reminder that we are hoping to learn about [Insert name of case study site's text messaging platform, app platform, and/or

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mobile optimized website name].

2. Does this sound accurate?

B. History and MCS Implementation Rollout

When we spoke on the phone, you described the history and original goals for launching mobile communication in [STATE]. [PROVIDE BRIEF SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM INTRODUCTORY CALL]. I have a few follow-up questions about the MCS implementation and rollout. Again, we are hoping to learn about [case study site's name of text messaging platform/ mobile application platform, and/or mobile-optimized website] for the following topics.

1. Do any aspects of this (these) tool(s) interact with other State assistance programs?

   a. [IF APPLICABLE] Is the administration of these various benefits coordinated? If so, who is responsible for coordination?

   b. [IF APPLICABLE] What was the process of integrating your initiative with other programs in your State?

   c. [IF APPLICABLE] What was the process of integrating the initiative from your program with the State's eligibility system?

   d. [IF APPLICABLE] What sort of initial coordination or ongoing communication occurs across agencies to ensure these multiprogram functions work properly?

2. Did you encounter any data security or privacy issues when developing or implementing these tools?

   a. [IF APPLICABLE] How do you obtain consent to participate in these communication mechanisms from clients in the State?

3. Tell me about the uptake of these mobile communication tools among SNAP participants.

   Probe: Have they been popular? Has uptake varied over time?

   a. What types of advertising, marketing, or incentives have you used to promote these tools?

      Probe: What has worked best to get the word out?

C. Functional Components of Each MCS

I want to learn a bit more about the specific MCS functions that are available in your State. As a reminder, this depiction of your State's MCS is based on information available from public sources. Our preliminary review was last updated in [INSERT DATE].We realize that each State has developed a unique approach for designing and implementing MCS.

[SHOW STATE-SPECIFIC JOURNEY MAP HIGHLIGHTING AVAILABLE FUNCTIONS AND SUMMARIZE INFORMATION SHARED DURING INTRODUCTORY CALL]

1. Is this list of available functions still accurate?

   Probe [IF APPLICABLE]: Has anything changed since we last spoke?

   Probe: Is anything missing?

   a. Does this (these) tool(s) facilitate interactive/two-way communications between participant and the State?

b. Which of these functions are the most commonly used?

c. Which ones have you had challenges with?

2. How has this (these) tool(s) evolved over time?

    Probe: Has the list of functions available to participants changed throughout the testing period or implementation period? Did you decide to add or change any components or functions? What were the motivating factors?

3. What additional functionality would you like to add to the State's MCS? Why?

    Probe: What barriers or challenges prevent you from implementing these currently?

D. Involvement of Community Partners

1. When we last spoke, you described partnerships with [PARTNER NAME(S)]. Has anything changed with those relationships since then?

2. Thinking about your relationships with these partners, what has worked well in these partnerships? What has not worked so well?

    Probe: Would you do anything to improve these partnerships?

    Probe: What other partners should be involved with the implementation of your MCS, if any?

E. Effect of MCS Implementation on State Operations

For our next set of questions, which are about the effects of these tools on [STATE] operations, we are hoping to learn about [case study site's name of text messaging platform/ mobile application platform, and/or mobile-optimized website] for the following topics.

1. How, if at all, has implementing this (these) tool(s) influenced the way your State conducts business?

    Probe: Has implementation of this (these) tool(s) influenced staffing, workflow, client demand for face-to-face local offices, and/or workload? Has it influenced case management? Which areas were most affected?

    Probe [IF APPLICABLE]: If your State has any view-only functions in place, what value do those have to your State?

2. How have this (these) tool(s) influenced participants' experience with SNAP?

    Probe: Are there specific aspects of being able to manage their cases that would have positive impacts on clients? Are there potentially negative impacts?

3. What portion of case management activities can clients complete via their mobile devices?

F. Evaluation and Monitoring (if applicable)

With regard to evaluating and monitoring your State's MCS, you described [SUMMARIZE EVALUATION RESULTS/ DATA FROM INTRODUCTORY CALL, IF APPLICABLE]

1. Have any additional actions resulted from these takeaways?

2. Based on our initial conversation, [INSERT SUMMARY OF MCS IMPLEMENTATION GOALS FROM INTRODUCTORY CALL], has there been any additional progress toward meeting your original program goals?

G. Lessons Learned and Best Practices

1. Thinking about your planning and implementation of these tools, what were some of the best practices and biggest successes?

2. What were some of the challenges that arose during the implementation?

   a. What strategies worked best to address these challenges?

3. Have there been any unintended consequences of implementing these MCS in your State?

4. If another State was considering implementing an MCS approach similar to yours, what advice would you give that State?

   Probe: What types of infrastructure, stakeholder buy-in, and resources might a State that has not yet implemented an MCS need to plan and implement an approach like this? What do you wish you had known before starting this initiative?

5. How could FNS help support successful MCS development and implementation in other States?