

Appendix J. Business Not-For-Profit Community Partners Interview Protocol

OMB No. 0584-XXXX

*Modernizing Channels of Communication
With SNAP Participants*

March 2, 2020

Project Officer: Andrew Burns

Office of Policy Support
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.305.1091
Andrew.Burns@usda.gov

Modernizing Channels of Communication With SNAP Participants: Business Not-For-Profit Community Partners Interview Protocol

PURPOSE: This protocol will be used to assess the role other stakeholders and community partners played in the development, testing, and promotion of the MCS. Through their secondhand experiences, the stakeholders and community partners will provide critical information about the challenges and successes of the MCS for SNAP participants. This will be a 60-minute interview.

Thank you for your willingness to speak with us. My name is [NAME], and I am from a company called Insight Policy Research. Insight is a research firm hired to talk to you and other stakeholders about the mobile communication strategies—or MCS—in [STATE]. 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. In collaboration with the sponsor of this data collection U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service, we are conducting a research study to better understand States’ use of mobile communication. During today’s discussion, we want to update what we know about your State’s MCS and learn more about your experiences, best practices, and lessons learned. Your State SNAP office noted the important role your organization played in the implementation of the MCS, which is why we are talking with you today.

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 1 hour. Would it be ok if I record our discussion?

A. Recap Background on State’s MCS Implementation

1. Please start by introducing yourself and telling me about the mission of your organization in relation to the SNAP MCS.

Probe: How long have you been in this role at the organization?

2. Tell me about how your clients use [INSERT NAME OF MCS].

B. History and MCS Implementation Rollout

1. Tell me about the history of MCS in your State.

Probe: Who led the initiative? Was there a champion?

2. Based on your experience working with SNAP participants, tell me about the uptake of these mobile communication tools among SNAP participants.

Probe: Has the MCS been popular among participants? Has this varied over time?

3. How, if at all, does the State's MCS align with other State priorities, programs, or tools?

Probe: Do any aspects of the strategy interact with other State assistance programs?

4. What plans do you have for the future?

Probe: Are there future functions you hope to include on each of the platforms? What barriers or challenges prevent you from implementing these currently?

C. Involvement of Community Partners

1. What was your organization's role in the development, testing, outreach, marketing, implementation, or evaluation of the State's MCS?

2. What has worked well in this partnership with the State? What has not worked so well?

Probe: Would you do anything to improve this partnership?

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

D. Functional Components of Each MCS

I want to learn a bit more about the specific MCS functions that are available to SNAP participants in your area. 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].

1. *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 1 hour 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*

[SHOW STATE-SPECIFIC JOURNEY MAP HIGHLIGHTING AVAILABLE FUNCTIONS]

1. Can you confirm that this list of available functions is accurate?
Probe [IF APPLICABLE]: What level of functionality does the app provide? Can clients only view information about their cases (view-only), or are they also able to upload documents, report changes, or submit recertification applications?
Probe: Is anything missing from this list?
2. How have your State's MCS and the features of different components evolved?
Probe: Has the list of functions available to participants changed?
3. [IF APPLICABLE] How have your State's MCS and the features of different components evolved?
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?
4. What functions would you like to see added to the MCS?
5. What are the current limitations of the app?

E. Ease of Use: Text Messaging

Now I want to learn more about your opinions on how easy it is for SNAP participants to use the text messaging component, based on your experience working with SNAP participants.

1. [FOR STATES WITH NO TEXT MESSAGING CAPABILITIES:] Based on our understanding, there is no text messaging option available for communication between SNAP participants and the State; however, do you or any other groups (outside of the State) use mobile communications (e.g., text messaging) to communicate with clients?

[ASK THE REMAINDER OF QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION IF TEXT MESSAGING IS AVAILABLE FOR SNAP-RELATED ACTIVITIES]

2. What types of messages or notifications do SNAP participants receive from the SNAP office?
Probe: What are the messages about?
 - a. How easy is it to understand the text messages?
 - b. What, if anything, do SNAP participants find to be confusing or unclear about the text messages? What could be done to improve it?
3. What, if anything, is missing from the text messages?
Probe: Is there anything SNAP participants say they would change about the text messaging service?

F. Ease of Use: Mobile App (if applicable)

Now I want to learn more about your opinions on how easy it is for SNAP participants to use the mobile app, based on your experience working with SNAP participants.

1. [FOR STATES WITH NO STATE-SPONSORED MOBILE APP:] Based on our understanding, there is no SNAP mobile app sponsored by the State; however, do you or any other groups (outside of the State) use mobile apps to communicate with SNAP clients?
2. To the best of your knowledge, what functions do clients typically use on the mobile app?
Probe: What types of documents do they submit through each platform?
3. How easy is the mobile app to use?
Probe: How helpful are the features of the app?
4. Is the mobile app content well organized?
Probe: Does the ordering or display of the app pages make sense?
5. What functions are missing from the mobile app?
Probe: Is there anything SNAP participants say they would change about the text messaging service?
6. What, if anything, do SNAP participants find to be confusing or unclear about the app? What could be done to improve it?
7. What types of messages or notifications do SNAP participants receive from the SNAP office via the mobile app? What are they about?
Probe: What is the content of the messages?

G. Lessons Learned and Best Practices

1. What were some of the challenges that arose during the testing and implementation?
 - a. What strategies worked best to address these challenges?
2. Have there been any unintended consequences of implementing these communication strategies in your State?
3. 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 without an MCS need to plan and implement an approach like this? What do you wish you had known before starting this initiative?
4. What additional support or resources would be helpful from the State SNAP office?