

Attachment H. Final D-SNAP Site Observational Tool

OMB No. 0584-[NEW]

*Best Practices in Disaster Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program (D-SNAP) Operations and
Planning*

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Final D-SNAP Site Observational Tool

Purpose of this Document: This observational tool is intended to serve as a guide to study team observers who will be conducting in-person site visits to observe the locations where disasters and D-SNAPs took place. Site visits will be not be conducted during a disaster. The observation is designed to be conducted as key staff involved in D-SNAP implementation provide a walk-through tour of the D-SNAP site (OMB Control No: 0584-0083, expiration date 08/31/2023) and the local area previously affected by the disaster. As such, the observational exercise will include an interview/discussion component during the tour. Study team observers will use this document to take notes throughout the exercise.

Instructions to Study Team: This tool has three parts: a cover sheet to be populated with general information on the D-SNAP, a section for documenting observations about the local area that was affected by the disaster, and a section for documenting observations at the D-SNAP site itself. Using this tool as a guide, observers will gather key information ahead of the observation, observe the area previously affected by the disaster and the D-SNAP site itself, and ask clarifying questions of D-SNAP implementers participating in the observation during the tour. Observers will give special attention to accessibility, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) compliance, provisions for safety and human needs, security, and protections for program integrity during the walk through of the D-SNAP site. Depending on how the site visit is organized, the observer may begin by observing either the D-SNAP site or the disaster area first.

Observers should prepare for the observation by reviewing all documentation in advance, including the D-SNAP request, D-SNAP post-disaster report, D-SNAP State plan, and any materials provided by the D-SNAP site. These materials may include blueprints or other diagrams of the D-SNAP site, maps of the area affected by the disaster, promotional materials, signage used at the site, road closure information, or other materials. This review will help observers confirm, clarify, or probe for additional details during the observation as needed. If these materials have not yet been provided, observers should request them during or following the observation.

If possible, observers should also create a Google MyMap of the D-SNAP site(s) and bring it along during the observation. The map will help the State and local staff answer questions about the affected area, traffic closures, parking, and other issues by identifying them on a map to improve recall.

Not all items will apply to every D-SNAP. Study team observers should adapt the observational tool to each State's unique situation. Observers should also be sure to use plain language, refrain from using jargon, and endeavor to use the State's agency's own programmatic terminology wherever possible. If the staff permits, the site team will photograph the site, taking care to avoid including individuals in the photographs. Camera icons throughout the tools indicate suggestions for elements to photograph where possible. Where possible and useful, the observer may sketch locations and process flows. This information will be used to better understand how managers and staff implemented the D-SNAP consistent with or contrary to (for example, improving upon) the State's plans and the process described during interviews.

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 4 hours 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.

A. General D-SNAP Information

This information should be filled out before the observations of the disaster area and the D-SNAP site.

D-SNAP Information

State: _____

Disaster type: _____

Approval date: _____

Application period: _____

Benefit period: _____

Number of applicants: _____

Number of recipients: _____

Which D-SNAP waiver options were chosen? (Check all that apply)

- Food loss only was considered a qualifying disaster expense
- People who worked but did not live in the area may apply
- Automatic supplements were provided to ongoing SNAP households
- Disaster Standard Expense Deduction (DSED) was used

Application Site Information

Building/site name: _____

Address: _____

Point of contact: _____

What type of site was used?

- Local SNAP office
- Another State agency building
- Local government agency building
- Community-based organization
- School
- Other _____

Observation Information

Date of observation: _____

State/local agency staff: _____

Insight staff: _____

FNS Staff: _____

What resources were available to review before the site observation? (Observer should bring any items that are useful to the observation.)

- ___ State D-SNAP plans ___ D-SNAP waiver requests ___ D-SNAP reports
- ___ Maps of disaster area ___ Site blueprints or building plans
- ___ Announcements and promotional materials ___ D-SNAP site signage
- ___ Staff training manuals and handbooks on D-SNAP operations and processes at site
- ___ Photographs ___ Media reports ___ D-SNAP process maps

D-SNAP Site and Disaster Area Observation Tool

[Reintroduce site visitors and the study if needed.] My name is *[name]*, and I'm a researcher at Insight Policy Research. Insight is conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to identify and document D-SNAP best practices from across the country. This study will equip FNS and States with data demonstrating how to best plan for and implement D-SNAP programs across different disaster types, administrative contexts, and geographic settings. My colleagues and I are currently visiting *[STATE]* and four other States to collect information from a wide range of stakeholders involved in planning and implementing a D-SNAP program.

[If already introduced to staff participating in observations, start here.] I want to start by thanking you for taking the time to speak with us today and give us a tour of the D-SNAP site and the area affected by the disaster. We have reviewed your State's D-SNAP plan and documentation from the disaster and talked with staff involved in D-SNAP planning and implementation. Today, we would like to see where the D-SNAP actually took place and understand how it was implemented on the ground. These observations and your perspectives and insights will help us better understand how D-SNAP policy and planning work on the ground.

Your participation in this observation exercise is voluntary, and your responses will be kept private, except as otherwise required by law. Be assured that there will be no penalties if you decide not to respond. The information you provide us today will be summarized and combined with information gathered from other people we talk to into a report that will be shared with FNS and the public. You will not be named in this report or any other project deliverables; however, the specific disasters and States we are studying will be identified. Data collected from the study will also be shared with USDA research and administrative staff, but your name will not be included in the information shared. You may refuse to answer any question, and you may stop the discussion at any time.

Before we continue, can you please read the following Privacy Act Statement?

[Facilitator note: Provide the respondent(s) with a copy of the statement from page 6 of this tool; States have already agreed to participate in this study.]

We will take notes over the course of the observations so that we can remember what you have told us. If it's okay with you, we may also take some photos of the D-SNAP site or area affected by the disaster to aid in our analysis and report writing. We will not include any identifiable individuals in our photos and will request the State SNAP office review the photos, if any, included in the report. Would that be okay?

Do you have any questions for me about the project in general or what we will be discussing today?

[Instructions to observer: You may begin with either the disaster area or the D-SNAP site observation. Not all questions will apply to all disaster areas, D-SNAPs, or sites. Observers should ask follow-up questions and take photographs (if permitted). Make any additional notes or sketches that will help document the observation and inform analysis, findings, and reporting. Wherever possible, ask to see the surroundings, built environment, or space that is the subject of the question.]

Privacy Act Statement

This information is being collected under the authority of The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended through Pub. L. 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014 [7 U.S.C. 2026], which provides the legislative authority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP). Section 17 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 provides the authority to FNS to conduct research to help improve the administration and effectiveness of SNAP. Disclosure of the information is voluntary. The information collected from States and interview participants will enable FNS to identify best practices in administering D-SNAP. Under the Privacy Act of 1974 and the System of Record Notice FNS-8 USDA/FNS Studies and Reports, any personally identifiable information collected will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. The information may be shared with SNAP contract researchers and USDA SNAP research and administrative staff with identifying information removed.

A. Area Affected by the Disaster

1. Affected Area

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What was the overall geographic area affected by the disaster? | |
| 2. Were different areas affected at different times or in different ways? For instance, did storm damage affect certain areas while flooding affected others? | |
| 3. Which areas were affected the most? | |
| 4. How many counties (or zip codes) received a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance? Of those, which were part of the D-SNAP?

<i>Reminder to observer: These are often the same counties served by the D-SNAP but not always. Some D-SNAPs may serve some but not all counties.</i> | |
| 5. What part of the disaster area is being observed for the purpose of this study? | |
| 6. How is the area being observed (by foot, by car, etc.)? | |
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2. Infrastructure and Access to Food and Services

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|--|--|
| 1. Were there power outages? Where and how long did they last? Which areas were most affected? | |
| 2. Were roads closed because of the disaster? Do you remember which ones? | |
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2. Infrastructure and Access to Food and Services

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|--|--|
| <p>3. How did these closures affect people's ability to move from place to place and provide for their needs (access services, purchase food, etc.)?</p> | |
| <p>4. Were commercial channels of food distribution interrupted? That is, were grocery stores closed, or were roads so impassable that products could not make it to shelves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If so, for how long? When did they reopen? | |
| <p>5. Were schools closed? If so, how many? For how long?</p> | |
| <p>6. Were any special steps taken to ensure children receiving free and reduced-price lunches had enough to eat while schools were closed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If yes, can you describe the communication with the schools? | |
| <p>7. Were local SNAP offices closed? If so, how many? For how long?</p> | |
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3. Observable Ongoing Impacts

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Is disaster damage still observable?</p> | |
| <p>2. Are buildings damaged?</p> | |
| <p>3. Are businesses closed?</p> | |
| <p>4. Are homes unoccupied?</p> | |
| <p>5. Are roads, bridges, public transit, or other transportation infrastructure still affected?</p> | |
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4. Context for Site Selection

Note to observer: If possible, before the site visit, create a Google MyMap of the D-SNAP site(s) to help the State and local staff answer the questions below on a map for improved recall.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Where is this D-SNAP site positioned in relation to where the disaster struck?
(Indicate on Google MyMap; identify names of locations, mileage, or indicate on</p> | |
|--|--|
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4. Context for Site Selection






Note to observer: If possible, before the site visit, create a Google MyMap of the D-SNAP site(s) to help the State and local staff answer the questions below on a map for improved recall.

map where possible.)	
2. Where is it positioned relative to other D-SNAP sites? (Indicate on Google MyMap.)	
3. Did this site experience damage from the disaster (e.g., debris on property, fire damage, downed power lines)?	
4. Was the built environment in the immediate vicinity damaged? (Probe for: parking lot(s), neighboring buildings, entry roads)	
5. Were there closures of public spaces in the vicinity of the site because of damage sustained in the disaster (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants, bus depots, subway stations, gas stations, parks, libraries)? (Indicate on Google MyMap.)	
Note to observer: If needed, use the Google MyMap or another map of the vicinity to aid the respondent in answering this question.	
6. Were homes uninhabitable in the surrounding areas? (Indicate on Google MyMap.)	
7. Was temporary housing provided? If so, where? How close to the D-SNAP site? (Indicate on Google MyMap.)	
8. Were FEMA, Red Cross, or other relief organizations operating? If so, where? (Indicate on Google MyMap.)	
9. How close to the D-SNAP site?	

B. D-SNAP Site

1. Exterior Signage, Arrival, and Entry

1. How did people find out about this site?	
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<p>2. How did people coming to the site know they were at the right place? Was there any special signage to identify the site as operating D-SNAP?</p> <p>3. How were people informed of the hours of operation?</p> <p><i>Reminder to observer: If copies of signs or photographs of signage are not already in hand, consider asking for them at this time.</i></p> 	
<p>4. How did most people get here? (Did people walk, drive, or take public transportation?)</p>	
<p>5. What is the parking capacity of this site?</p> <p>6. Was there a plan for overflow parking? If so, could you please describe?</p> 	
<p>7. Is this site accessible by public transportation? If so, how? <i>[Note: Collect any route information]</i></p> 	
<p>8. Was there a designated area or process for cars or vans to drop people off (e.g., elderly, disabled)?</p> 	
<p>1. Exterior Signage, Arrival, and Entry (continued)</p>	
<p>9. Did you have police, security, staff, or volunteers outside the building to help manage traffic and the flow of people into and out of the D-SNAP site?</p>	
<p>10. Is the building entry wheelchair accessible? Describe (i.e., ramp, lift).</p> 	

11. Were applications available to be picked up and brought back later? Were applications filled out online in advance? Were there D-SNAP application drop boxes?



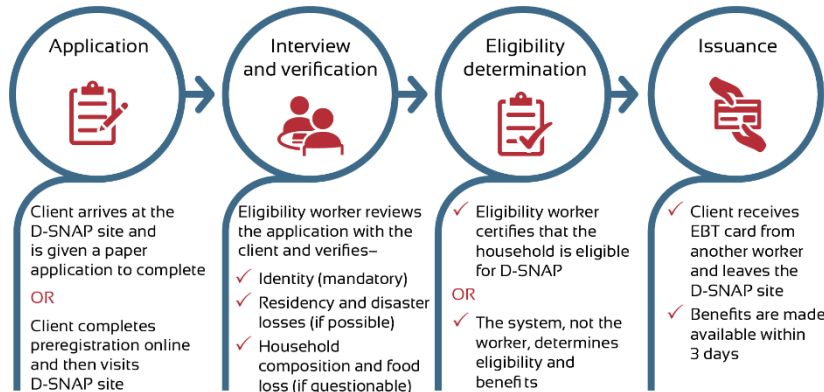
12. Did you run into any challenges with how signage, accessibility, or parking was set up? If so, how did you handle them?

2. Physical Space

1. What is the capacity of this site? [Probe depending on the type of site: Did the physical space change in any way during the disaster that could accommodate more or fewer people?]

2. Tell me about how this space was used to process D-SNAP?

Instructions to observer: Describe the physical space that was used. If site diagrams are not available, use this space to take detailed notes and/or draw a diagram of the site and indicate the location of entrances, waiting areas, bathrooms, flow through the process, etc. Identify each part of the D-SNAP application process (at a minimum, each item provided in the figure below). Use additional pages as needed.



3. How many bathrooms does the site have?

4. How many of those bathrooms are wheelchair accessible?

5. How many infant changing tables are available?



2. Physical Space (continued)

6. Is there a place to protect those in line or those filling out applications from the elements? Could you show us this part of the site and describe how it was used?



7. Did the site have adequate power? How (e.g., electricity, generator)?

8. Could the site provide for human needs such as air conditioning/heat, available seating, drinking water, snacks, etc.? Please describe.

Air conditioning/heat Yes No

Available seating Yes No

Drinking water Yes No

Snacks Yes No

9. How was security handled? Did existing onsite staff provide security and crowd control? Were police on site?

3. Staffing

What types of staff were on site? We will walk through some common staff roles; please tell us if they were part of the process.

Note to observer: Ask if each type of staff was on site. The State may have a different term for this role, which should be noted. Some staff may have played more than one role. Include any notes to help clarify the role or function on site.

Staff role	Yes	No	Number	We called them...	Notes
Site manager(s)					
Assistant site manager(s)					
Supervisors					
Eligibility workers					Did you have bilingual eligibility workers? What influenced your decision to have bilingual eligibility workers? How many were bilingual? Which languages did they speak?
Anti-fraud staff					
EBT issuance workers					
Application screeners					

3. Staffing (continued)

What types of staff were on site? We will walk through some common staff roles; please tell us if they were part of the process.

Note to observer: Ask if each type of staff was on site. The State may have a different term for this role, which should be noted. Some staff may have played more than one role. Include any notes to help clarify the role or function on site.




Staff role	Yes	No	Number	We called them...	Notes
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Troubleshooters (to identify issues, help answer questions, etc.)					Whom did they help and how? (Probe if these were State SNAP employees, State staff from other agencies, volunteers from CBOs, etc.)
Onsite reviewers					
Onsite data entry					
Onsite staff to answer phone calls					
Security					
Staff to manage lines, hand out applications, and triage					
Volunteers					What sorts of tasks did they handle?
<p>1. Were considerations given to provide for staff comfort and health during the disaster? Please describe.</p> <p>For example, private break rooms, separate bathroom facilities, temporary housing (for out-of-town staff), antibacterial lotion/wipes, onsite first aid, water, or meals?</p>					

4. Eligibility

Reminder to observer: Be sure to walk through and observe where and how each part of the process took place on site.

- 1.** Once on site, what did applicants do?
- 2.** How were applicants informed about eligibility requirements, completing the application, required verification, the duration of the process, etc.?

<p>3. Where did people line up to apply?</p> 	
<p>4. How was the flow of people managed? Were there lines, numbers, waiting areas, etc.?</p> 	
<p>5. Were writing surfaces available (tables, clipboards, etc.)?</p>	
<p>6. Were staff (or volunteers) on hand to serve any of the following functions?</p> <p>Please indicate all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Triage the line <input type="checkbox"/> Hand out applications <input type="checkbox"/> Answer questions <input type="checkbox"/> Identify language needs (e.g., translation, nonverbal) <input type="checkbox"/> Identify people with special needs (disabled, elderly, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Help complete an application if an applicant cannot read or write <input type="checkbox"/> Advise applicants of the process and estimated wait times 	
<p>4. Eligibility (continued)</p>	
<p>7. Where were these staff positioned?</p> <p><i>Reminder to observer: Consider these locations relative to individuals who may require assistance. Ask clarifying questions if necessary. (For example, did applicants have to wait until they got through the line and inside the building to get an application, or were staff handing out applications to people who were waiting in line? Did applicants wait until they were with an eligibility worker before anyone learned they couldn't speak English?)</i></p> 	
<p>8. How were applicants interviewed? When, where, and by whom were applicants interviewed?</p>	

<p>9. Where and how were interview areas set up?</p> <p><i>Note to observer: Note whether and how these areas were set up to protect applicants' privacy. Probe for additional information as needed.</i></p> 	
<p>10. Were applications screened for completion? When, where, and by whom?</p>	
<p>11. How were applications screened for having the required verifications? When, where, and by whom?</p>	
<p>12. How were applicants screened for ongoing or duplicate participation? When, where, and by whom?</p> <p><i>Reminder to observer: Volunteers cannot check for duplicate participation.</i></p>	
<p>13. Were applicants allowed to drop off applications? If so, how did that process work?</p>	

5. Issuance

1. How were cards issued? Who issued them and where?

2. Was there adequate inventory on hand to meet the needs of the D-SNAP? Did all of those cards work as they should (e.g., none were expired or damaged)?

3. Who had access to the cards?

4. Where were the cards kept? Can you show me?

5. Where were the cards kept overnight?



6. Were program materials available to inform people about the following topics? Please describe where and how these were provided.

Please indicate all that apply:

- How to use an EBT card
- Eligible SNAP purchase items
- How D-SNAP is different from regular SNAP
- Availability of regular SNAP after the disaster
- Fraud

7. Were materials available or provided to clients on other disaster assistance that may be available to them?

8. Were materials made available or provided to clients on the availability of WIC?

6. Wrap Up

1. Now that we have walked through the D-SNAP site, are there any additional challenges, best practices, or lessons learned that come to mind that we did not discuss earlier during the interview?

2. What was the hardest part of running this D-SNAP?

3. What surprised you the most?

4. What was the best thing you and your staff did to make it run smoothly?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study!

Additional Notes
