

Appendix D2
Process mapping protocol

Evaluation of Child Support Cooperation Requirements in SNAP

PROCESS MAPPING PROTOCOL

Introduction

My name is _____ and I'm a researcher at a company called Mathematica/MEF Associates. Under Legal Authority Public Law, 115-334, we are conducting a congressionally mandated study of child support cooperation requirements for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This study examines the implementation experience of States that currently or formerly require(d) cooperation with child support as a condition of SNAP eligibility], and the feasibility of implementing child support cooperation requirements among States considering adopting this option. My colleagues and I are currently visiting State and local SNAP offices and child support offices here and in 11 other States to collect information about child support cooperation requirements from a wide range of stakeholders.

We are interested in understanding the processes and procedures for [considering] implementing cooperation requirements and [the motivation for considering adopting cooperation requirements]. We also want to explore what types of policies and practices make cooperation requirements easier or more challenging to implement. This research will help the government better understand the effect of child support cooperation requirements on individuals and families.

I want to start by thanking you for taking time to speak with us today. Your perspective and experience implementing child support requirements will be very helpful to the study. I want to let you know that your participation in this process mapping exercise is voluntary, and your responses will be kept private, except as required by law. There are no known risks to your participation. We will not share the information you provide with anyone outside the study team. You may refuse to answer any question, and you may stop the discussion at any time. There will no penalties if you refuse to participate in part or at all.

We will take notes over the course of this discussion and would like to audio record the conversation so we can remember the information we collect. We will use this information in our report to FNS to help us describe different State's experiences with cooperation requirements. The report might list the names of States that contributed information, but we will not quote you or anyone by name or title. However, because of the relatively small number of SNAP and child support offices participating in the study, there is a possibility a response could be attributed correctly to you.

I expect our discussion will take between 90 minutes and two hours. First, do you have any questions for me about the project in general or what we will be discussing today?

And finally, do I have your permission to record our discussion? [Confirm permission to record from each person before recording starts.]

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-xxxx. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 2 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 to 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.

(MODERATOR: This process mapping exercise is designed to elicit general answers and an overall picture of the process. At the outset of the meeting, present a visual, high-level flow chart of the process used to implement the cooperation requirement based on review of policy documents and descriptive information provided by state-level respondents. Then break down the discussion into each step in the cooperation requirement process: identification, notification, establishing cooperation, good cause exemptions, and sanctioning for noncooperation.)

A. Respondent background

1. What is your official job title or position?
2. How long have you held this position?
3. What are your primary responsibilities?

B. Identification process

First, I'd like to start with the SNAP application process and identifying applicants needing to cooperate with child support. Let's focus first on custodial parents who are applying for SNAP, do not participate in any other assistance programs with the child support cooperation requirement, and do not already have an open child support case.

1. [FOR SNAP STAFF RESPONDENTS] Can you provide an overview of the SNAP application process starting when a person seeks assistance? In particular:
 - a. Can you describe how you identify that the applicant is subject to the child support cooperation requirement?
 - b. At what point(s) in the application process is the cooperation requirement addressed?

C. Notification process

Next, I'd like to move on to talk about the notification process.

1. Can you describe the general process for [notifying the child support agency/being notified by the SNAP agency] that a SNAP participant is subject to the cooperation requirement?
2. How is this information relayed by the SNAP agency and receipt acknowledged by the child support agency?
3. Which parts of the notification process work well and which parts present challenges (for staff and/or participants)? What factors account for this?

D. Establishing cooperation process

Now, can you walk me through process of what a participant subject to a cooperation requirement is required to do to meet it? Please break the process down depending on whether they need (a) paternity for their child to be established, (b) a support order established, (c) a support order enforced?

1. What happens after child support agency receives this initial notification from the SNAP agency participant?

2. What is the process for communicating a participant's cooperation status back to SNAP?
3. Which parts of cooperation establishment process work well and which parts present challenges for (a) staff and (b) participants? What factors account for this?

E. Noncooperation and sanction process

Next, let's talk about the processes that take place for communicating noncooperation and imposing consequences for noncooperation.

1. Can you describe what the participant is told about the consequences for noncooperation and what they have to do to avoid being sanctioned or to get a sanction lifted?
2. Can you describe the general process for imposing sanctions for noncooperation with child support? Is this a standard practice?
3. Can you describe how and when child support/SNAP communicate about the status of a case that is not cooperating?
4. How much and at what points do you have discretion in the sanction process?
5. Which parts of the noncooperation determination and sanction process work well and which parts present challenges for (a) staff and (b) participants)? What factors account for this?

F. Good cause exemption process

How and where does the good cause exemption come into the picture?

1. What is the process for establishing good cause?
2. When are participants told about good cause? What proof is needed?
3. How much and at what points in the process do you have some discretion (for example, in informing participants about good cause, assessing whether they have sufficient reason to pursue a good cause claim, or determining whether to approve or deny good cause)?
4. Which parts of the good cause work well and which parts present challenges for (a) staff and (b) participants? What factors account for this?

[Moderator: Cycle through the previous questions, as relevant, to understand differences in the process depending on participant/case characteristics] Now that I have a good understanding of the basic process, can you describe how and where the process differs if the participant subject to the cooperation requirement: (a) already has an open child support case, (b) receives assistance from TANF and [IF APPLICABLE] receives Medicaid or subsidized child care (but not TANF), (c) [IF APPLICABLE] is a noncustodial parent, or (d) is a relative/non-relative caretaker.]

G. Conclusion

1. [FOR STATES THAT CURRENTLY OR USED TO HAVE A COOPERATION REQUIREMENT] Based on your experience with implementing cooperation requirements in the SNAP program, do you have any advice or lessons learned for states that are considering implementing this requirement in SNAP?

2. [FOR STATES THAT ARE CONSIDERING COOPERATION REQUIREMENTS] What types of information about child support cooperation requirements would you find useful if [STATE] continues to consider implementing this requirement?
3. What do you think [are/would be] the most important benefits of having a child support cooperation requirement in SNAP? What do you think are the most significant drawbacks?
4. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your thoughts and experiences with cooperation requirement for SNAP participants before we finish?

Thank you for your time. Here is my contact information should you have any additional questions or concerns about the study.

[INTERVIEWER: PROVIDE RESPONDENT WRITTEN COPY OF YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION, INCLUDING NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION, PHONE, EMAIL ADDRESS]

Privacy Act Statement

Authority: This information is being collected under the authority of Section 9 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 2018). Disclosure of the information is voluntary.

Purpose: The information is being collected to evaluate Child Support Cooperation Requirements in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Routine Use: The information may be shared with SNAP contract researchers and USDA SNAP research and administrative staff.

Disclosure: Disclosure of the information is voluntary. If all or any part of the information is not provided, interviews may not be admissible in data sets.

The Systems of Records Notices relevant to this collection are FNS-8 FNS Studies and Reports located at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1991-04-25/pdf/FR-1991-04-25.pdf> and FNS-10 Persons Doing Business with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) located at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2000/03/31/00-8005/privacy-act-proposed-new-system-of-records>.