

Appendix J: Mentor Consent Form for Study of E-STAR

Key Information

This document is a consent form for participation in a study of a training and mentoring program for school nutrition professionals called E-STAR. The purpose of this study is to conduct research on how E-STAR is implemented and whether and how it helps school nutrition professionals improve school meal quality. Over a two-year period, mentors who participate in the study will be asked to complete two interviews, and may also be asked to participate in a focus group, with compensation provided for these activities. There are minimal risks associated with study participation. Participating in the study is voluntary but will provide valuable information that may inform future efforts to improve E-STAR and other school nutrition initiatives.

Overview

Established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the Team Nutrition program supports nutrition education, training for school food service professionals, and school and community efforts to encourage physical activity and healthy eating.

In 2019, the USDA awarded the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) a Team Nutrition Enhanced Strategies, Training, Action Plans, and Resources (E-STAR) Training Grant. E-STAR Training Grants are awarded to State Child Nutrition agencies to provide training to School Nutrition Managers over a two-year period. The E-STAR training includes workshops, online courses, interactive webinars, and mentoring sessions.

The Michigan Department of Education, its evaluator Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI), and Abt Associates (Abt), a policy research firm working with FNS, are conducting a research study to learn more about the experiences of school nutrition professionals in Michigan's E-STAR program, and invite you to participate in this research study.

What is the purpose of this study?

The study aims to examine the implementation of the E-STAR program. It will also look at meal quality in participating schools and the experiences of school food service professionals in Michigan, and how those things may or may not change over time.

What does the study involve?

The study will incorporate information collected as part of your participation in E-STAR, such as attendance and participation in the program. Over the two-year study period, you will also be asked to participate in two interviews, and you may also be asked to participate in one focus group.

Interviews

Abt will conduct two phone interviews. The interviews will take place

- Near the end of the first year of E-STAR implementation, targeted for spring 2022; and
- Near the end of the second year of E-STAR implementation, targeted for spring 2023.

The interviews will focus on your E-STAR mentoring experience, your mentoring approach, and any successes you may have had or and challenges you may have encountered during the E-STAR program.

With your permission, the interviews will be audiorecorded and transcribed. The audiorecordings and transcripts, like the other data collected, will be stored securely.

Focus Group

You may be asked to participate in one small (less than 8 mentors) focus group, which will occur at the end of the summer or fall 2021 E-STAR workshop.

The focus group will discuss your plans and goals for future mentoring sessions. The focus group will not be recorded.

Why should I participate in the study?

You will not receive any direct benefit from your study participation. However, by participating in the study and sharing your perspective, you will provide valuable information that can inform future decisions related to E-STAR and other efforts to improve school nutrition.

How long will study activities take?

Each interview is expected to take about 45 minutes to complete. The focus group is expected to take 30 minutes.

We realize that completing study activities takes time away from your daily schedules and appreciate your participation.

For **each** interview you complete, you will receive a \$20 electronic gift card, for a total of \$40 across the two interviews.

In addition, you will receive a \$20 electronic gift card for participating in the focus group.

What are the risks associated with being part of the study?

There is a small risk of loss of confidentiality. However, the study team has taken many steps to reduce this risk. Your identity as a participant in this study will not be disclosed beyond the research team, and your specific interview or focus group responses will not be linked to you in any report or presentation of this research outside of the study team. All data collected will be used for research purposes only, and are intended to evaluate the E-STAR program, not you specifically.

Will information collected about me be kept private?

All data will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. For efficiency and to limit the burden on study participants, MDE/MPHI and Abt will share data with each other and, to a limited extent, with the E-STAR curriculum developer, the Institute of Child Nutrition. Data collected will be incorporated into study reports by MDE and Abt for FNS. In these reports, all data will be reported in a combined form so information cannot be tied to individual responses. Neither your name nor any identifying information will be used in the presentation of this research to others, and your answers will never be linked to *you*. Your data, with names removed, may also be provided to FNS for future research without further consent. Any documents that include your name will be kept in a locked storage area. Any computer files with your name will be locked and protected. Any researchers using information to study the program must follow all data security rules.

Do I have to participate?

Both interviews and the focus group are completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating in the study. Participating in the study is separate from serving as an E-STAR mentor. That is, you can still serve as an E-STAR mentor even if you do not participate in the study.

If you chose to participate in the study, you may skip interview or focus group questions you would prefer not to answer. You can withdraw from the study at any time, and you can still serve as an E-STAR mentor even if you withdraw from the study. If you withdraw from the study, information already collected will be included in analyses, but no additional data about you will be used in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions or would like more information about the study?

For more information about E-STAR, you can contact the Michigan Department of Education at [EMAIL address] or call toll-free [PHONE NUMBER]. For more information about the study, you can contact Abt Associates at [EMAIL address] or call toll-free [PHONE NUMBER]. For more information about your rights as research participants, you can contact the Abt Institutional Review Board at [EMAIL address] or call toll-free [PHONE NUMBER].

Do you agree to participate in this research study as described? Please respond with “yes” or “no.”

- YES
- NO

If YES, please check the box below to consent to having any interviews in which you participate audiorecorded and transcribed.

- I consent to having my interviews audiorecorded and transcribed.

Electronic Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in understanding the E-STAR training program as implemented. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to inform future iterations of E-STAR. This collection does not request any personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. 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 0584-0524. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 5 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: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22306 ATTN: PRA (0584-0524). Do not return the completed form to this address.