

Attachment D: SFA Interview Protocol

**Evaluation of 2019-2022 Summer EBT Project
Interview with School Food Authorities**

[Note to site visitors:] Unless otherwise noted, all questions will be asked of a single respondent only.

INTRODUCTION

My name is [X], from Abt Associates.

As you may know, Abt is working to evaluate the Summer EBT Projects for the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA. This project provides nutrition assistance during the summer months to families with children who are eligible for free and reduced price meals during the school year.

My colleagues and I are contacting each of this year's grantees and collecting information from a wide range of stakeholders involved in the project's service area, including a number of School Food Authorities (SFAs) to learn more about the project as a whole.

I want to start by thanking you for taking time to speak with us today. Your perspective and insights on these issues are very helpful. Our reports to FNS will describe the range of responses expressed by interview respondents and may list the SFAs who contributed information, but we will not quote you or anyone by name or title. I expect our conversation will take approximately 60 minutes.

Do you agree to participate in the interview as described? Please respond with "yes" or "no."

YES Great, thank you

NO Do you have questions about the evaluation or the interview that I can answer?

Permission to Record: In order to ensure that we fully and accurately capture the points raised during today's discussion, we would like to digitally record this conversation. Please note that the interviews will remain private. There is a small risk of loss of privacy, but the research team has taken many steps to reduce this risk. Your identity and any information attributable to you will not be released to anyone outside of the research team except as otherwise required by law. The recording will NOT be shared with FNS, or anyone outside the research team, unless you give us permission to do so. We will only use the recording to ensure accuracy of the transcription. Any identifying information, such as your name or anyone else's name that may be mentioned, will be omitted from the final transcript. No names will appear in the final report given to FNS. The recording of your interview will be deleted at the end of the study, after all data have been analyzed.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is conducting this study to obtain information about the experiences of the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Project by grantees, retailers, school districts and participants. Participation in this study is voluntary and the information collected will be used to understand how Summer EBT projects are implemented in varying settings. This study does not collect personally identifiable information. Information collected in this study will be kept private to the full extent permitted by law. 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 provide this information collection is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review 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: USDA/Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314 ATTN: PRA (0584-0524).

Do we have your permission to continue this interview?

YES Thank you.

NO Okay. That is not a problem at all.

Do we have your permission to record this interview?

YES Thank you. Do you have any questions before we begin?

NO Okay. That is not a problem at all. We would like to ask for your patience, as we will need to take a little more time to note your responses by hand to ensure we accurately capture your insights.

First, do you have any questions for me about Summer EBT in general or what we will be discussing today?

A. BACKGROUND ON RESPONDENT AND SFA

I'd like to start with just a couple questions about your background and role in the project.

A.1 What is your title and role in the SFA?

A.2 What are your responsibilities specifically related to the Summer EBT project?

A.3 How many of your schools participate in Summer EBT?

A.4 How many of these school(s) participate in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND SUCCESSES

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about different aspects of your experience with implementation of the Summer EBT project.

Communities and Populations Served

These next questions ask about the communities and populations you serve via Summer EBT.

B.1 Why and how do you think your local area (i.e., the area in which your SFA operates) was chosen for involvement in the Summer EBT project?

B.2 What is the perception of Summer EBT among participating families? To what extent is it viewed as a critical source of nutrition assistance? Is it perceived as linked to participation in school meal programs (as opposed to being an additional SNAP/WIC benefit)?

Overall Role and Responsibilities

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about the role of your SFA in Summer EBT.

B.3 Please describe for me the roles your SFA plays as a partner in implementing the Summer EBT project.

Probe for:

- a) *Identifying eligible children and households*
- b) *Data management*
- c) *Conducting recruitment and consent*
- d) *Training or supporting retailers*
- e) *Providing customer service to participating households*
- f) *Other*

B.4 Right now, Summer EBT is a project that is designed to try out options for feeding children in the summer. If Summer EBT was made permanent, what improvements in Summer EBT would make it easier for SFAs/schools to be part of Summer EBT?

B.5 If Summer EBT was made permanent, how would this change the school/SFA strategy for feeding students in the summer?

Challenges and Successes during Implementation

The next few questions ask about challenges and successes when implementing Summer EBT.

B.6 What challenges did you face when executing your role in the Summer EBT project?

Probe for:

- a) *Challenges with the resources required to fulfill role*
- b) *Challenges working with/contacting families*
- c) *Challenges with school or SFA leadership – administrative rules, administrative support*
- d) *Challenges related to data management*
- e) *Challenges communicating with the grantee/agency*
- f) **[For Cherokee Nation only.]** *Challenges specifically related to implementing a new project*

B.7 What might have been done differently to prevent these challenges?

Probe for:

- a) *Additional support from grantee/agency*
- b) *Changes in processes and infrastructure*
- c) *Staffing changes*
- d) *More funding*

e) *Other*

- B.8 What would you say are successes implementing the Summer EBT project in your school's/SFA's community? And what factors contributed to them?
- B.9 What additional resources would you require if Summer EBT became permanent? Which resources would you require less of if the project became permanent and you set up a consistent Summer EBT process?
- B.10 What new challenges would you anticipate arising if Summer EBT was a permanent program?

Issues in Identifying Eligible Children

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about issues or challenges when identifying children for Summer EBT.

- B.11 Please describe in detail your process for identifying eligible children for Summer EBT.
- B.12 What kinds of problems or challenges, if any, have you experienced with identifying eligible children for Summer EBT? ***[If the SFA participates in CEP, ask]*** Is the process different as a result of CEP?
- Probe for:*
- a) *Determining eligibility*
 - b) *Inaccuracies in eligible and participating household lists*
 - c) *Grouping children into households*
 - d) *Knowing how many children are in the household*
 - e) *Knowing which adult has custody during the summer*
 - f) *Knowing how to contact the household*
 - g) *Other*
- B.13 What would you say are the main factors that lead to challenges when identifying eligible children?
- Probe for:*
- a) *Inaccuracies in eligible and participating household lists*
 - b) *Grouping children into households*
 - c) *Identifying the correct adult in the household responsible for Summer EBT*
 - d) *Grantee/Agency not understanding SFA procedures or terminology*
 - e) *Other*

- B.14 What processes, if any, have you put into place to prevent and address these issues?
- B.15 Describe any time you were contacted by [insert grantee or agency name] to look into cases where benefits may have been issued to ineligible households or where benefits were not issued to households that were eligible? *Probe for details on process and the outcome*

Challenging-to-Serve Populations

Now we'd like to ask a few questions about populations that may be challenging to serve under Summer EBT.

- B.16 Which populations do you consider challenging to identify or recruit for Summer EBT?
Probe for:
- a) *Rural families*
 - b) *Families difficult to contact*
 - c) *Families that change households in the summer, including foster or migrant children*
 - d) *Children who attend Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools*

B.17 Why do you find it challenging to serve these populations?

B.18 How do you think Summer EBT could better serve these populations?

Impacts on Other Nutrition Assistance Programs

The next few questions ask about other summer nutrition assistance programs.

- B.19 What other types of nutrition assistance programs for children are accessible in your Summer EBT service area during the summer?
Probe for:
- a) *Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)*
 - b) *Summer meals in schools or NSLP for summer school*
 - c) *Seamless Summer Options (SSO) for schools*
 - d) *Summer nutrition programs at camps or foodbanks*
 - e) *Other*

B.20 How many schools in your SFA participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), SSO and/or NSLP for summer school?

B.21 How did Summer EBT affect how other nutrition assistance programs (such as SFSP or summer meals in schools) operate in your community during the summer months? Does it affect one part of the service area more than another? Why?

- Probe for:*
- a) *Effects on participation*

b) Other impacts

B.22 How could Summer EBT be targeted to reduce overlap (redundancy) with other options for summer nutrition assistance?

B. 23 If Summer EBT were made a permanent program, from your perspective, what do you think needs to be considered, from the SFA point of view?

CLOSING

Is there anything you think is important for FNS to know about the [State/Tribal Nation]'s [Summer EBT NAME] that we did not ask about?

Is there anything else you want to tell us about feeding children in the summer in your community?

Thank you for your time and helpful feedback. The information you have shared will be valuable to our team as we look across localities for themes and ideas that we can share with FNS.

Are there any questions you have for me before we finish?

END OF INTERVIEW