

# **Appendix E. State SNAP Director Interview Protocol**

OMB No. 0584-0659

*Modernizing Channels of Communication  
With SNAP Participants*

February 12, 2021

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## Modernizing Channels of Communication With SNAP Participants: State SNAP Director Interview Protocol

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**PURPOSE:** *This protocol will be used to assess the experiences the State SNAP director has had while implementing MCS and to understand the challenges and barriers to implementation. This will be a 60-minute interview.*

As you know from our previous correspondence with you, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service is conducting a research study to better understand States' use of mobile communication. During today's discussion, we would like to update what we know about your State's mobile communication strategies—or MCS—and learn more about your experiences, best practices, and lessons learned. 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.

We are talking with many people in States around the country, so I would like to audiorecord this call 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.

The first step is to review the consent form together. [READ CONSENT FORM].

Do you agree to be interviewed? Can I record our discussion? [RECORD RESPONSE]

Just to confirm, now that we are recording- do you agree to be interviewed?

### A. Recap Background on State's MCS Implementation

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1. Please start by telling me about your responsibilities related to mobile communication as State SNAP director.

**Probe:** How long have you been in this role?

We have done some initial research to get a preliminary understanding of your State's MCS. The information we have reviewed so far has been collected from publicly available reports such as the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants (OMB Number 0584-0512, Expiration Date 07/31/2022), your State's public-facing website, and information we have learned from State representatives involved in the design and implementation of your State's MCS [IF APPLICABLE: as well as the SNAP Process and Improvement Grant information]. Over the course of the study, we plan to conduct two interviews with you and other key staff involved in the MCS implementation. [REFERENCE STATE-SPECIFIC SUMMARY OF MCS PROGRAM AND SERVICES]

2. Does this sound accurate?

## B. History and MCS Implementation Rollout

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1. Tell me about the history of the MCS in your State.
  - a. What was the goal or motivation for launching the MCS?  
**Probe:** Decreasing cost, increasing access, reducing wait times, going paperless, responding to a funding opportunity?
  - b. Who led the initiative? Was there a champion?
2. What were the primary funding sources?
3. Please describe how much funding was used for each component of MCS development and implementation.  
**Probe:** How much was devoted to staffing, software development, technology, contractors, other?
4. Do any aspects of the strategy interact with other State assistance programs?  
[IF APPLICABLE] What was the process of integrating your initiative with other programs in your State?
  - a. [IF APPLICABLE] What was the process of integrating your initiative from your program with the State's eligibility system?
  - b. [IF APPLICABLE] What sort of initial coordination or ongoing communication occurs across agencies to ensure these multiprogram functions work properly?
5. Did you encounter any data security or privacy issues when developing or implementing these tools?
  - a. [IF APPLICABLE] How do you obtain consent to participate in these communication mechanisms from clients in the State?
6. Tell me about the uptake of these MCS tools among SNAP participants.  
**Probe:** Have they been popular? Has this varied over time?
  - a. What types of advertising, marketing, or incentives have you used to promote these tools?  
**Probe:** What has worked best to get the word out?

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 0584-0659. 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 (0584-0659). Do not return the completed form to this address.*

## C. Functional Components of MCS

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I want to learn a bit more about the specific MCS functions that are available in your State.

1. How has your State's MCS 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?

2. What additional functionality would you like to add to the State's MCS ? Why?

3. **[IF APPLICABLE]** Are there plans to add some or all of the above mentioned functionality to your State's MCS? If not, why or why not?

**Probe:** What barriers or challenges prevent you from implementing desired MCS functions?

4. Which partners did you work with to develop, test, or implement your MCS?

**Probe:** What were their roles? How did you identify the partners to work with?

5. What has worked well in these partnerships? What has not worked so well?

**Probe:** Would you do anything to improve these partnerships?

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

## D. Effect of MCS Implementation on State Operations

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1. How, if at all, has implementing these strategies influenced the way your State conducts business?

**Probe:** Has implementing the strategies influenced staffing, workflow, and/or workload? Has the implementation influenced case management? Which areas were most affected?

**Probe [IF APPLICABLE]:** If your State has any view-only functions in place, what value do those have to your State?

2. How have these MCS influenced participants' experience with SNAP?

**Probe:** Are there specific aspects of being able to manage their cases that would have positive impacts on clients? Are there potentially negative impacts?

## E. Evaluation and Monitoring (if applicable)

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[SUMMARIZE EVALUATION RESULTS/ DATA FROM INTRODUCTORY CALL, IF APPLICABLE]

1. What actions have resulted from these takeaways?
2. What has been your progress toward meeting your original program goals?

## F. Lessons Learned and Best Practices

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1. [SHARE SCREEN AND SHOW STATE-SPECIFIC JOURNEY MAP] Thinking about all the MCS functions available in your State, what were some of the best practices and biggest successes during the implementation?
2. What were some of the challenges?
  - a. What strategies worked best to address these challenges?
3. Have there been any unintended consequences of implementing these communication strategies in your State?
4. 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 that has not yet implemented an MCS need to plan and implement an approach like this? What do you wish you had known before starting this initiative?
5. How could FNS help support successful MCS development and implementation in other States?