

Appendix F: School Nutrition Manager 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, study participants will be asked to complete surveys and interviews, 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 your school 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 your attendance and participation in the program. You will also be asked to participate in four surveys and two interviews over the two-year study period.

Surveys

The first two surveys will be conducted by MDE/MPHI. The surveys (web-based or paper) will take place

- Before the E-STAR workshop, targeted for late spring or early summer 2021; and
- Immediately after the E-STAR workshop, targeted for summer or fall 2021.

Interviews

In addition, 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 experience related to E-STAR specifically, and any successes or challenges you may encounter during the program. With your permission, the interviews will be audiorecorded and transcribed. The audiorecordings and transcripts, like the other data collected, will be stored securely.

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.

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.

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 survey or interview 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 may also be provided to FNS and/or be made publicly available at a later time for the purpose of future research, without further consent. However, any data provided to FNS will *not* contain your name. Any data provided to the public will *not* contain your name, any information that could be used to identify you specifically, or any information that would link you to your specific responses. In addition, data collected will be incorporated into study reports by MDE/MPHI 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*. 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?

All surveys and interviews are completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating in the study. Participation in the study is separate from your participation in E-STAR. That is, you can still participate in the E-STAR training program even if you do not participate in the study.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may skip survey or interview questions you would prefer not to answer. You can withdraw from the study at any time, and you can still participate in the E-STAR program 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.