

G. SNAP agency case study simulation guide

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SNAP Language Access Study

SITE VISIT SIMULATION GUIDE

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Introduction

My name is _____ and I work for Mathematica. Mathematica is the research and consulting firm that is conducting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Language Access Study on behalf of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This study examines how State and local SNAP offices serve SNAP applicants and participants with limited English proficiency (LEP). LEP individuals do not speak English as their primary language and may have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. I want to start by thanking you for taking time to speak with us today. Your perspective and insights will be very helpful to the study.

My colleagues and I are currently visiting State and local SNAP offices here and in three other States to collect information about serving LEP individuals from a variety of perspectives and experiences. For this simulation of LEP participants' experiences in SNAP, we are interested in understanding the processes and procedures LEP individuals would go through when applying for and participating in SNAP. We are also interested in how a LEP individual's experiences would differ if they used a language you commonly encounter in your office or an uncommon language.

Your responses to this study will be kept private, except as required by law. We will not share the information you provide with anyone outside the study team. You may refuse to answer any question, and you can stop the discussion at any time.

During the simulation, I will ask to see materials, observe processes, and speak with translators in [non-English language spoken by site visitor]. I will take notes over the course of the simulation and I may ask you for copies of documents and/or screenshots, as long as no personally identifiable information is visible. Personally identifiable information is information by which the identity of an individual can be determined by direct or indirect means. Examples of such information include the name or case number of a SNAP applicant or participant. We will use this information in our report to FNS to describe each State and local area's experience serving LEP individuals. The report will list the names of States that contributed information, but we will not quote you or anyone by name or title.

I expect this simulation to take no more than two hours. Before we get started, do you have any questions for me about the project in general or what we will be discussing today?

Do you consent to participate? (Y/N)

Public Burden Statement

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service to better understand the language landscapes in which Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) agencies operate and their associated limited English proficiency (LEP) policies and operations. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to improve access of SNAP to LEP individuals. 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-[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 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-xxxx). Do not return the completed form to this address.

A. Pre-application steps

1. First, please walk me through what happens when a LEP individual who uses [language used by site visitor] comes into your office. What would take place before they filled out a SNAP application?

Probes:

- Is there a screening tool that people can use to assess whether they would be eligible for SNAP before applying?
 - Do people receive referrals from other community organizations? How common is this for LEP individuals? How does the referral process typically work?
 - Are there any pre-application steps that ask about language assistance needs? How is it determined that someone needs language assistance?
 - How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?
 - What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would these pre-application steps differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- How would a LEP individual who used an uncommonly encountered language get any questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

B. Application

1. Please show me how a LEP individual would complete an application if they used [language used by site visitor].

Probes:

- Can LEP individuals apply in person? Online? By telephone? Show me how they would do so.
 - In what languages is a SNAP application available? *If application is not available in the language used by the site visitor:* Why is the application not available in [language]? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having an application available in their language?
 - How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?
 - What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would completing an application differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- Can people who use an uncommonly encountered language apply in person? Online? By telephone?

- How would a LEP individual who used an uncommonly encountered language get their questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

C. Application interview

1. How would someone using [language used by site visitor] complete the application interview?

Probes:

- Would the interview be completed in person? Over the phone?
 - Who would be involved in the interview (for example, a bilingual SNAP worker or an English-speaking SNAP worker and an interpreter from another organization)?
 - How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?
 - What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would completing the application interview differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- Could the interview be completed in person? Over the phone?
- Who would be involved in the interview (for example, a bilingual SNAP worker or an English-speaking SNAP worker and an interpreter from another organization)?
- What would you do if there was no qualified interpreter available to interpret in the LEP individual's language?
- How would someone using an uncommonly encountered language get any questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

D. Verification

1. How would a LEP individual who used [language used by site visitor] complete the process of verifying their household's income, identity, citizenship status, assets, expenses, and household size?

Probes:

- Please show me any forms the person would fill out. In what languages are the forms available? *If documents are not available in the language used by the site visitor:* Why are these documents not available in [language]? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?
- What documents must be provided as part of the verification process (for example, pay stubs or benefit statements from Social Security or Unemployment Insurance)?
- What types of assistance are available to help someone with LEP complete the verification process?
- How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?

- What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would completing the verification process differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- How would a LEP individual complete required verification forms if they were not available in their language? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?
- How would someone using an uncommonly encountered language get their questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

E. Benefit issuance

1. What needs to happen for someone approved for SNAP to use their benefits? How does this work for a LEP individual who uses [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- How do SNAP participants receive their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards?
 - Are printed materials that accompany the card provided in languages other than English? If so, in which languages are they available? *If documents are not available in the language used by the site visitor: Why are these documents not available in [language]? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?*
 - Once someone has been approved for SNAP, how long does it usually take for their card to arrive? Would this amount of time differ for a LEP individual, for example because printed materials that accompany the card are provided in another language?
 - How is the card activated?
 - Do SNAP participants need to call a telephone service line or create a PIN number? If so, is that service line available in other languages?
 - What other steps, if any, would a SNAP recipient need to take to be able to use their benefits, and how would a LEP individual complete the steps?
 - How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?
 - What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would accessing SNAP benefits differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- Would the amount of time it took to receive the card differ for someone who used an uncommonly encountered language, for example, because printed materials that accompany the card are provided in another language?
- Do SNAP participants need to call a telephone service line or create a PIN number? If so, is that service line available in uncommonly encountered languages?

- What other steps, if any, would a SNAP recipient need to take to be able to use their benefits, and how would someone using an uncommonly encountered language complete the steps?
- How would someone using an uncommonly encountered language get their questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

F. Reporting changes

1. Please describe the process someone who used [language used by site visitor] would follow to report changes in income, employment, household size, or other changes to their assets or expenses. The types of changes that must be reported differ depending on household characteristics. For the purposes of this simulation, let's assume the household is subject to simplified reporting. Under simplified reporting, the SNAP household must only report changes periodically or when income increases above a certain threshold.

Probes:

- Can changes be reported in person? Online? By telephone?
 - Please show me any documents that would be used in reporting changes. In what languages are these documents available? *If documents are not available in the language used by the site visitor:* Why are these documents not available in [language]? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?
 - How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?
 - What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would the process for reporting changes differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- Could changes be reported in person? Online? By telephone?
- How would a LEP individual report changes if required forms were not available in their language? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?
- How would someone using an uncommonly encountered language get their questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

G. Recertification

1. How would someone who used [language used by site visitor] complete the recertification process?

Probes:

- Would the recertification interview be completed in person? Over the phone?

- Who would be involved in the interview (for example, a bilingual SNAP worker or an English-speaking SNAP worker and an interpreter from another organization)?
 - Please show me the verification forms the individual would fill out. In what languages are the forms available? *If documents are not available in the language used by the site visitor:* Why are these documents not available in [language]? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?
 - What documents must be provided as part of the verification process for recertification (for example, pay stubs or benefit statements from Social Security or Unemployment Insurance)?
 - What types of assistance are available to help someone with LEP complete the verification process?
 - How would a LEP individual get their questions answered during this stage?
 - What challenges might a LEP individual experience at this stage?
2. If a LEP individual used a language uncommonly encountered in your office, how would the recertification process differ from what you described for someone who used [language used by site visitor]?

Probes:

- Could the recertification interview be completed in person? Over the phone?
- Who would be involved in the interview?
- What challenges could a LEP individual using an uncommonly encountered language experience during the recertification interview?
- How would a LEP individual complete required verification forms if they were not available in their language? What challenges might a LEP individual experience by not having these documents available in their language?
- What types of assistance would be available to help someone using an uncommonly encountered language complete the verification process?
- What would you do if there was no qualified interpreter available to interpret in the LEP individual's language?
- How would someone using an uncommonly encountered language get their questions answered during this stage?
- Are there any challenges someone using an uncommonly encountered language might experience at this stage?

H. Other language service activities

1. How do you document language services provided?
2. If a LEP individual has questions outside of any of the key steps we just discussed, how could they get their questions answered?
3. How would a LEP individual access additional services such as employment and training services or SNAP education?
4. What is the process for receiving a discrimination complaint from a LEP individual?

Probes:

- Do you provide them with a translated complaint form?
 - Do you receive the complaint orally using an interpreter?
5. After the discrimination complaint is received, how is it processed?
 6. Do you provide LEP individuals with a translated version of the appropriate USDA FNS nondiscrimination statement?

I. Additional challenges

1. Are there any other challenges LEP individuals encounter when applying for or participating in SNAP that we haven't discussed?
2. Are there any other challenges specific to LEP individuals who use languages uncommonly encountered in your office?
3. Are there any steps that could be taken to improve the application or participation process for LEP individuals?
4. Are there any additional resources that would help you serve LEP individuals?
5. Is there anything else you would like to show me or mention related to serving LEP individuals?