

Attachment E.4 State Recruitment Call Script

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in better identifying and understanding how States define and measure customer service for SNAP applicants and participants. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to better understand current efforts to strengthen customer service practices in SNAP. 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 0.5 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.

[To be used after the initial email to a State is sent and a mutually agreed upon call time is selected. Note that this call is intended to review the study, answer questions, and confirm the State's participation. Additional calls will be arranged to schedule and plan for the site visit.]

Introduction

Thank you so much for speaking with me today. My name is [NAME] and I am from a company called Social Policy Research Associates, which is an evaluation, research, and technical assistance firm based in Oakland, California. As you saw in the email, we were hired by the Food and Nutrition Service at the US Department of Agriculture to conduct a study on how States are currently thinking about and implementing customer service strategies for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. We selected [State] as one of the nine States we hope to include in the study because of the promising SNAP customer service approach you are taking. [Can customize with example of their customer service approach if appropriate/known.]

Today I would like to offer you background information on the study, answer any questions you may have, and then hear your thoughts on participating. Is this still a good time? It should not take longer than 30 minutes or so.

[If yes] Thank you. Can I confirm your job title and have you briefly describe your responsibilities at [State agency]?

[If no] That's fine. Can we figure out a time that works better for you?

Study Background

The goal of this research is to better identify and understand customer service lessons learned and best practices. Currently, there is little research on this topic, yet providing high quality customer service is an important factor in the success of SNAP. We want to learn what States are doing to implement, measure, and monitor customer service standards and plan to include up to nine promising States in our research. Overall, the study's main goals are to describe:

- How each study State defines and measures good and/or bad customer service for SNAP applicants and participants, particularly in ways that go beyond the minimum requirements set by FNS
- How the State SNAP agency in each study State implements and refines its customer service approach
- Promising practices in improving customer service from other government programs and private industry and their applicability to SNAP

We will be gathering and analyzing data collected on site visits in up to nine selected study States to document the design, implementation, measurement and operation of SNAP customer service strategies, which is our main focus today and how we hope to engage [State].

[State's] participation would primarily involve a two-day site visit. During this visit, we plan to interview administrators and staff from the State SNAP agency and one county/local area to document the design and implementation of your customer service approach. Specifically, we would be conducting a series of 60-minute interviews on topics including customer service policies, training, technology, and partnerships. In addition, the study team would also observe a local office or call center and conduct deskside observations with three to four eligibility workers. SNAP applicants and participants would not be expected to participate in the research. To gain more of the customer perspective on customer service, we would also conduct one 60-minute interview with a local advocate, ombudsperson, or outreach partner that helps connect individuals to SNAP.

We will work collaboratively with you and your colleagues to schedule the visit, identify interview respondents, and determine which SNAP offices in the State to visit. We know you are extremely busy so will do everything we can to be sensitive to constraints in staff schedules and minimize any disruption to normal business. The site visit will occur in the next three months.

In addition to the site visit, study participation would also involve providing us with any documents [State] has related to customer service, such as policy memos, training materials, or customer service reports. However, we will not be collecting any administrative data or any documents connected to individual SNAP participants.

Ultimately, the study team will produce a final report for FNS that will compile findings from across our data collection (including the site visits). In addition to short case studies of each of the States, the report will also include a summary of State practices derived from a cross-site analysis of the data collected that will include lessons learned and promising practices, remaining knowledge gaps, and recommendations for future efforts to strengthen customer service practices in SNAP. The goal is to develop a document that will guide FNS and States in developing, implementing, and measuring customer service approaches going forward. We will ask each participating State to review the case study we write as part of our final report, as well as any other specific mentions of the State, to ensure accuracy before it is made public.

Questions from State

Next, I'd like to give you a chance to ask any questions you may have about the study or [State's] participation.

Do you have any concerns or questions at this time?

[Study team member to address/respond to thoughts or concerns by referring to FAQ document. If study team member is unable to answer any of the questions, let the State contact know you will follow up with the study director and get back to them as soon as possible]

State Participation and Next Steps

Now that we've talked through your questions, what are your thoughts about participating? [Tell State contact they are welcome to discuss whether they'd like to participate with other staff if necessary.]

[If State contact expresses concerns]:

- Probe as needed to determine why they do not want to participate
- Ask if there is something that can be done to solve the problem.
- If no solution is reached, thank them for their time and end the call.

[If State agrees to participate]:

- Thank them for their participation
- Tell them we will follow up soon with an email confirming their participation and to schedule a site visit planning call.

[After the call, fill out the tracker to indicate the status of the recruitment effort. If the State wants more time to consider participation, note this in the tracker and follow up with them via email after several days. If the State agreed to participate, send them an email confirming participation (template provided).]