

Attachment F. SNAP E&T Provider Interview Protocol

My name is *[name]*, and I'm a researcher at Westat. Westat is conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, or FNS. The study will examine the data FNS needs to measure equitable program access and outcomes in State agencies' administration of work requirements and Employment and Training, or E&T, for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

My colleagues and I are currently conducting interviews with SNAP State and local SNAP offices, E&T providers, and other interested parties here and in five other States. Through these interviews, we hope to collect information from a wide range of individuals involved in administering work requirements and SNAP E&T. I want to start by thanking you for taking time to speak with us today. Your perspective on and insights into these processes will be very helpful to the study.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and your responses will be kept private, except as otherwise 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 may stop the interview at any time. There will be no penalties if you choose not to participate in a part or the entirety of this interview.

We will take notes over the course of the interview and would like to audiorecord the conversation to help us remember the information we collect. We will summarize the information you share with us today and combine it with information gathered from other people we interview. Nothing you say will ever be linked to your name. Direct quotes included in our reports will be presented without the speaker's name to protect their identity.

I anticipate our conversation will take up to 1 hour. Do you have any questions for me about the project in general or what we will discuss today?

Do I have your permission to record the conversation? You may stop the recording at any time.

[Confirm permission before recording starts. Do not record without respondent permission.]

[Turn on recorder] For the purpose of the recording, are you willing to participate in this interview? And are you willing to have the interview audiorecorded?

A. Introduction

I'd like to learn more about your role and responsibilities at [SNAP E&T provider].

1. What is your current job title or position?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What are your primary responsibilities?

B. SNAP E&T Background

First, I'd like to learn more about how your organization became a SNAP E&T provider and the services it offers.

1. Can you please describe how your organization became a provider for the SNAP E&T program in [State]? [Probe: application process, outreach from State]
 - a. How long has your organization been a part of the SNAP E&T program?
 - b. Does your organization work with any other Federal or State programs? [Probe: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, General Assistance] If yes, please describe. What, if any, challenges result from working with multiple programs?
 - c. What are the challenges to being a SNAP E&T provider? [Probe: 50/50 funding, administrative requirements]
2. In what area or areas of the State do you provide SNAP E&T services?
3. Based on information from the SNAP [State] E&T Plan, [SNAP E&T provider] offers the following SNAP E&T components: [List]. Is this information correct? Is anything missing? [Interviewer note: If this information is not available in the State Plan, ask the provider which SNAP components it offers.]

Public Burden Statement

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in examining equity in SNAP work requirements and SNAP Employment and Training. This is a voluntary data collection, and FNS will use the information to understand what data are needed to assess equitable program access and outcomes in SNAP and SNAP Employment and Training. 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 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 Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-XXXX). Do not return the completed form to this address.

- a. How did your organization decide to offer these components to SNAP E&T participants?
- b. Do you feel the components offered are reflective of the needs of the clients you serve? Why or why not?
 - i. *[If no]* What other services would be beneficial? What are the constraints of providing these services within SNAP E&T?

C. Clients Served and Progression Through SNAP E&T

Let's discuss the SNAP E&T clients your organization serves and how they progress through SNAP E&T.

1. What proportion of your overall service population is SNAP E&T clients?
2. How would you describe your SNAP E&T population? *[Probe: gender, ethnic, and racial makeup; percentage with children or dependents; age]*
 - a. Are SNAP E&T clients different from other clients your organization serves? If yes, how? Are SNAP E&T clients co-enrolled in other services?
3. How do SNAP E&T clients learn about your organization and the services you provide?
 - a. Do you recruit SNAP E&T clients or conduct any outreach? If yes, can you please describe the outreach you conduct?
 - i. What types of SNAP E&T outreach materials does your organization use? How are they distributed?
 - ii. Has your organization solicited feedback regarding the materials from SNAP E&T participants? If yes, what feedback did they provide?
 - b. *[If reverse referral]* How does your organization verify a client's SNAP participation?
 - c. *[If regular referral]* Can you tell us more about how the State agency refers clients to your organization?
4. I'd like to learn more about how your clients progress through SNAP E&T. As we discuss the various points in the process, I'd like to get your perspectives on which points may have the potential to contribute to disparities in participant access and outcomes. *[Before the interview, add State-specific probes that may be most relevant for groups in the State, such as rural individuals, racial/ethnic groups, or individuals living on Indian Tribal organizations.]*
 - a. Once the client is referred to your organization, what comes next? *[Probe: assessment, orientation activities. Note: Also determine what comes next for clients who have been "reverse referred" to SNAP E&T]*
 - i. What may prevent some clients who have been referred to SNAP E&T from participating in your services? What additional supports, if any, would be necessary to promote their participation?
 - b. How do you assign a case manager to clients? *[Probe: randomly, based on needs assessment, whoever is available]*
 - i. How would you describe the client-case manager relationship? Is the case manager the same person who provides SNAP E&T services to the client?

- ii. How often does the client meet with the case manager? Are meetings conducted in person or virtually?
 - c. How are clients assigned to a SNAP E&T component or components?
 - i. To what extent are services tailored for individual clients?
 - ii. What challenges, if any, do you face in making sure clients are assigned to the appropriate component?
 - iii. Can clients start all activities immediately? What happens if there is a wait before the activity begins?
 - iv. Are SNAP E&T services provided in person? How do most clients get to the provider location?
 - v. When are activities offered? *[Probe: evening, weekend classes]*
 - d. How do you define successful SNAP E&T completion? Does this definition vary by a client's individual needs and barriers? If yes, how?
 - e. What may prevent a client from completing the program? What additional supports, if any, would be necessary to promote completion?
 - f. What other challenges do your clients face in SNAP E&T participation? What are the most common reasons for dropoff? How could these challenges be mitigated?
- 5. According to the SNAP E&T Plan in *[State]*, the following are allowable participant reimbursements: *[List]*. Does your organization offer any additional allowable participant reimbursements?
 - a. Are there any caps on the reimbursements? If yes, how are those implemented?
 - i. Do individual clients ever meet the cap? If yes, what happens then?
 - b. Are reimbursements disbursed in advance or after expenses occur? Why?
 - i. *[If after expenses occur]* What steps do SNAP E&T clients take to be reimbursed for those expenses?
 - c. What challenges does your organization face in providing support services? *[Probe: lack of available childcare/waitlists, limited transit infrastructure, reimbursement caps, administrative burden]*
 - i. What could be done to mitigate these challenges?
 - d. Are there any additional support services that you think would be valuable to clients? If yes, please describe. *[Probe: types of reimbursements, the amount of the reimbursement, services currently reimbursed and not reimbursed by SNAP E&T]*

D. Partner Organizations and Staffing

Next, let's talk about your organization's partners and current staffing.

- 1. Does your organization collaborate with other organizations and/or agencies to provide SNAP E&T? If yes, please describe. *[Probe: case management organization, refer clients based on needs assessment to partners]*

- a. If yes, how did these collaborations begin?
 - b. What works well with these collaborations? What are some challenges?
2. Does your organization have relationships with any local employers for job placements or training? If yes, can you please describe what these relationships look like?
 - a. How were these relationships developed?
 - b. What works well with these relationships? What are some challenges?
3. How does your organization help SNAP E&T clients find well-paid work? How do you work to minimize disparities in hiring practices and wages? [*Probe: alignment with State workforce development board priorities, pathways programs*]

E. Data Availability and Needs

I'd like to shift to discuss the SNAP E&T data your organization collects and reports.

1. Can you first tell me about your organization's capacity to analyze and use the data you collect?
2. We know that *[State]* collects the following data on SNAP E&T participants: *[List responses to survey questions F.49, F.60, and F.61]*. What, if any, additional data do you collect on your SNAP E&T clients? *[Probe: educational attainment, disability, language, component assignment]*
 - a. How do staff collect these data? Which staff collect these data? How often do staff collect or update these data?
 - b. Do the data collected vary between clients who do and do not participate in SNAP E&T?
 - c. What challenges do you face in how these data are collected or updated?
 - d. Do you share these data with the State agency?
 - i. If yes, do you use a State system or your own system? Do you need to complete any duplicate entries?
 - ii. If no, would a data-sharing agreement be possible?
 - e. What factors or considerations should the State agency and FNS keep in mind when using these data? *[Probe: data quality issues]*
3. What outcome data do you collect on your SNAP E&T clients? *[Probe: wages, length of time employed, whether the client found employment, name of the employer, position]*
 - a. How do staff collect these data? Which staff collect these data? How often do staff collect or update these data?
 - b. Are there challenges related to how these data are collected or updated? If yes, what are they? *[Probe for data validity and reliability]*
 - c. Do you share these data with the State agency? If not, would a data-sharing agreement be possible?
 - d. What factors or considerations should the State agency and FNS keep in mind when using these data? *[Probe: quality issues, clients not reporting outcomes]*
4. *[For providers in mandatory SNAP E&T States and/or providers that serve general and able-bodied adults without dependents]* What data do you collect to inform the State agency about client compliance with work requirements and/or mandatory SNAP E&T? How do staff collect these data? Which staff collect these data? How do you share these data with the State agency?
5. How, if at all, does your organization use the data we just discussed internally? What are your key performance measures?
 - a. Have these measures evolved? If yes, please describe.
 - b. To what degree does your organization use these data to measure and assess differences in participant access or disparities in outcomes? Please describe.

6. What data would you like to have access to that you do not? What would you be able to do with these data if you had them?
7. What, if any, additional data should the State agency or FNS collect to be better able to determine whether there are disparities in SNAP E&T access, participation rates, and outcomes?

F. SNAP E&T Access and Outcomes

Now, let's talk about where disparities could occur when administering SNAP E&T services and your ideas for how FNS could better ensure individuals have the same opportunities to access SNAP E&T and benefit from the program.

1. We already talked about some areas in the SNAP E&T screening and referral processes that may contribute to disparities. Are there any other administrative processes or procedures that could affect a client's ability to access SNAP E&T services? If so, please describe. *[Probe: any roadblocks in the process]*
 - a. Do these procedures generally affect anyone who is eligible for SNAP E&T or specific groups? *[If specific groups] Which groups and why?*
2. What factors may contribute to disparities in clients' outcomes? *[Probe: access to childcare, access to transportation, general readiness, activities that help clients meet their goals]*
 - a. Do these factors generally affect anyone who is eligible for SNAP E&T or specific groups? *[If specific groups] Which groups and why?*
3. What needs to be done to ensure all eligible individuals can participate in SNAP E&T? What data can be used to measure whether all eligible individuals can participate?
4. What needs to be done to ensure all participants who engage in SNAP E&T succeed? What data can be used to measure whether all participants can succeed?

G. Wrap-Up

Thank you for answering our questions. Before we wrap up ...

1. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
2. Is there anything we did not ask about that you think is important for us to know?

Those are all the questions I have. Thank you very much for speaking with us!