

Assess the Barriers That Constrain the Adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Allotments

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Project Overview

The purpose of this study is to identify the individual, household, and environmental barriers that limit SNAP participants' access to a healthy diet throughout the month and to examine how these barriers vary by household demographics, economic characteristics, and geography.

This study is the result of recommendations made by an expert committee convened by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to examine the feasibility of objectively defining the adequacy of SNAP allotments. The committee recommended that FNS assess the factors that can constrain the purchasing power of SNAP allotments including 1) time to purchase and prepare foods, 2) geographic price variations, 3) access to retailers, and 4) food purchasing and preparation skills. This study implements those IOM recommendations.

The study has 2 components:

1. Develop and conduct a nationally representative survey of SNAP participants to determine the barriers that prevent them from having access to a healthy diet throughout the month. The survey will include questions about cooking skills, shopping patterns, nutritional literacy, financial literacy, time available for preparing food, and other constraints.
2. Conduct in-depth interviews with at least 120 SNAP participants to explore more thoroughly the barriers that are cited most frequently in the survey. The interviews also will assess coping strategies used by SNAP households to overcome the barriers.



As a subcontractor to Westat on this study, Insight will:

- Assist in the development of the in-depth interview protocols.
- Conduct 6 site visits of 5 days each to hold in-depth interviews with SNAP participants to examine barriers that limit their access to a healthy diet and strategies that they use to cope.
- Code and analyze the qualitative data collected in site visits.
- Describe qualitative findings and methods for inclusion within the final report and briefing.

Core Activities

Site Visits; Data Collection; Qualitative Research; Policy Analysis and Assessment; Report Development and Presentation

Products

The final report will be submitted in April 2017.