

An Assessment of the Roles and Effectiveness of Community-Based Organizations in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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

Project Overview

The goal of this study was to determine whether and how the use of community-based organizations (CBOs) to conduct Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applicant interviews affects program performance and outcomes. As part of broader efforts to better serve low- and no-income households applying for SNAP, FNS has worked with the States to modernize and streamline SNAP application processing and ultimately to provide more-efficient access to eligible services. Over the past few years, CBOs have become increasingly involved in assisting SNAP applicants with the application process in a number of States through a combination of policy simplifications and waivers to facilitate eligibility determination and manage case levels more efficiently.



For this study, Insight examined both relevant program outcomes and client outcomes for when CBOs conduct applicant interviews (versus when interviews are conducted by SNAP personnel). Insight also examined the variation among CBOs by factors such as who they serve, what services they offer, how they provide SNAP-related services, and the nature of their relationships with local SNAP agencies.



This study included 6 main objectives:

1. Describe the CBOs conducting SNAP interviews and the nature of their partnerships with State and local SNAP agencies.
2. Describe the response of State SNAP staff to the involvement of CBOs in conducting applicant interviews.
3. Describe the response of CBO interviewers to their involvement with SNAP.
4. Describe the response of SNAP applicants who are interviewed by CBO staff for SNAP benefits to the involvement of CBOs in SNAP.
5. Describe the services that the CBOs offer.
6. Document the impacts of CBOs conducting SNAP interviews on program outcomes.

Core Activities

Program Evaluation; Qualitative Research; Survey Design and Implementation; Site Visits; Survey Research; Data Collection; Data Analysis; Performance Measuring and Monitoring; Report Development and Presentation

Products

The final report is entitled “An Assessment of the Roles and Effectiveness of Community-Based Organizations in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (January 2015) and is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/assessment-roles-and-effectiveness-community-based-organizations-supplemental-nutrition-assistance>.