

Feasibility of Improved Estimates of Trafficking

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

Project Overview

Insight conducted a study for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to determine the feasibility of using a national probability sample of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)-authorized retailers to calculate trafficking estimates and produce retailer trafficking estimates by store type. The trafficking of program benefits has been a longstanding concern for SNAP. Trafficking, the exchange of SNAP benefits for cash rather than for food, is not only illegal, but also diverts resources from achieving the goal of the program, which is to impact the nutritional status of needy individuals.



This project included 5 main components:

1. Develop a detailed understanding of project needs and requirements.
2. Conduct a thorough document review.
3. Interview external experts.
4. Develop a sampling plan.
5. Develop a data collection approach and optional approaches and develop costing estimates for each of these approaches.

These analyses culminated in the development of a final report that described the identified resources, presented the results of our analysis, and summarized recommendations based on our research.

The Insight team prepared a final report that described the results of the feasibility assessment; this included the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative in relation to the goal of determining the feasibility of using a national random sample to produce the SNAP trafficking estimates. The report also evaluated all approaches using criteria established at the outset of the project. Additionally, the report identified study limitations and next steps that may need to be resolved. Finally, the report addressed requirements for developing an annual estimation process for SNAP trafficking using a nationally representative sample.



Core Activities

Literature Reviews and Environmental Scans; Semi-Structured Interviews; Qualitative Research; Secondary Data Analysis; Sampling; Administrative Cost Analysis; Report Development and Presentation

Products

The final report is entitled “Feasibility of Improved Estimates of Trafficking” and was submitted to FNS in August 2014.