

Modernizing Channels of Communication With SNAP Participants

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

Overview

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest program in the domestic nutrition assistance safety net; after unemployment insurance, it is the most responsive federal program providing additional assistance during economic downturns. The goal of this study is to better understand how participants use various communication channels, such as smartphones, social media, internet, and other communication technologies, that can enhance SNAP communication and education activities. This study highlights best practices and lessons learned from various mobile communications strategies (MCS) operating in state SNAP agencies. The results are designed to help FNS and states improve communication and program outcomes.

Specifically, Insight will address the following four research objectives:

- Provide a general overview of how mobile technologies are used by all states and program recipients for case management and notification.
- Conduct case studies of selected state projects that use mobile technology for case management and/or notification.
- Gather information on client satisfaction and perspectives on mobile communication strategies.
- Identify best practices and lessons learned.

The first objective will present the landscape of mobile technology use for SNAP across the nation and provide a basis for selecting the MCS



case study sites. The second and third objectives are descriptive and will provide FNS with an understanding of the state processes, challenges, and distinct features of mobile technologies, along with the clients' experiences with these technologies overall. The fourth objective will summarize the best practices and lessons learned for states that choose to implement these technologies moving forward. The study methods include a national scan of states' use of MCS and in-depth case studies in five states to collect comprehensive information on the varieties of different MCS in use. During the case studies, we will speak to state SNAP Directors, MCS administrators, software developers, and local office staff. We will also conduct focus groups with SNAP participants with experience using MCS to help assess the usability of MCS and evaluate customer satisfaction with the tools.

Products

National scan of states' use of mobile communication strategies; case study reports; focus group report; final report