

**Evaluation / Reporting**  
**Discussion Session Dialogue – 17 March 2004**  
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**Acceptable Protocols for Verifying that FSNE Participants are Food Stamp Recipients**

- Check sign-in sheets against food stamp roster; ask project to check whether they're on food stamps; some states are not allowed to ask directly – work through other agencies that sign declarations that >50% are food stamp recipients (pre-formed groups such as Head Start); some states can get verification from their state food stamp agency.
- Most people get verification of eligibility, but not actual participation.
- Use 185% of poverty in many cases.
- Are there programs without waivers? Information is second hand – someone knew of someone.
- Error rates are really down. Not much misrepresentation.
- One state asks FSNE participants if they receive food stamps and then verifies food stamp program participation through food stamp records; even that system may be an estimate at best because people go on and off food stamps easily.
- Question – what about requesting that state food stamp offices ask food stamp recipients if they are participating in FSNE?

**Human Subjects Review**

- When required? Any time you aggregate data you need to go through IRB
- Examples: One state sent people into food stamp offices to see if food stamp recipients had seen media promotions (pre and post); also knocked on doors in census tracts

**Evaluation**

- How many states have someone on staff to do? Do states have the expertise or are they trying to piece together? Situations vary among states - some have the expertise; others are struggling.
- Research, in and of itself, is not allowable, but evaluation research that documents program effectiveness is allowable. Need “tangibles,” such as program impacts, for research to be allowable as evaluation.

**Food Stamp Promotion**

- One state trains agencies how to get on websites – promotes food stamps through websites; another option – teach librarians; also consider promoting websites through major stores that serve food stamp recipients.
- State offices vary in what they want.

### **Attribution**

- Not just “did you hear this message” but “who is sponsoring it?”
- What about our partners and attributions for their contributions?
- Concerns about losing funding – we need to do a better job of educating our legislators; there is a difference between lobbying and education. In some cases legislators became involved this past year; concern was expressed that this could alienate state food stamp agencies.
- Some state food stamp contact people have been a “pass-through;” now they have to be more responsible for programs – yet, are not trained to understand these programs.
- Can we advocate for more resources in food stamp offices? In one state the food stamp office puts up 10% match; another was told this would be a conflict of interest, and so not allowed. States vary in their priorities, which affects their commitment and ability to provide close oversight and involvement.

### **National Guidance/Standards**

- Currently being formulated – need to allow time to get everyone’s input. Also make sure there are options to put in “N/A.”
- What are the benchmarks – see paper distributed at the beginning of the conference which has benchmarks based on the CNE Logic Model.
- One region developed a protocol for evaluation – “died a slow and painful death” when not supported by federal offices.
- We need a planning process to get input into indicators and still have them developed in a timely manner. States could help so it’s not just on Federal shoulders.

### **Supporting Research Concerns**

- Are recalls collected in groups valid?
- Studies in grocery stores need to be allowed to document food stamp participants’ food buying and choices.