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## Guidelines for Qualitative Evaluation and Template Moderator Guides for Interviews and Focus Groups

- Do you want to know more about the experiences of your participants, firms, or stakeholders?
- Are you interested in receiving in-depth feedback about your project?
- Have you ever wondered how a participant, firm, or other stakeholder thinks about and engages with your project?
- Would qualitative data potentially add valuable information to a case study about your project?
- Do you want to gain more information and details “behind the numbers” to better understand your survey findings?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you might consider conducting qualitative key informant interviews and/or focus groups to add greater depth and detail to your project evaluation. Incorporating qualitative interviews and/or focus groups into your project evaluation provides opportunities to gather detailed feedback about your project from the perspective of individuals who are directly involved.

### Purpose

This document provides an overview of qualitative research and example moderator guides designed for grantees who want to incorporate key informant interviews and/or focus groups into their project evaluation. If any grantee would like individual assistance tailoring moderator question guides to their specific needs, please contact qualitative methods specialist, Dr. Sarah Stotz, at [ssotz@centerfornutrition.org](mailto:ssotz@centerfornutrition.org).

### General tips

At the start of any focus group or interview, the moderator (e.g., person asking the questions) should be sure to:

- Thank the participant(s) for their time.
- Remind the participant(s) how long the interview or focus group will last.

- Tell the participant(s) that their answers will remain confidential and anonymous.
  - **Note for focus groups:** Since there are multiple people in the room, you cannot promise confidentiality or anonymity in a focus group. However, you can ask everyone to kindly keep what they discuss during the focus group within the confines of the focus group.
- Remind participants they do not have to answer any specific question(s) that they do not wish to answer, and they can withdraw from the focus group or interview at any time.
- Briefly summarize the purpose of the interview or focus group
  - **For example:** The purpose of this focus group is to better understand how customers experience the [**NAME OF NI OR PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FIRM**] so that we can improve, strengthen, and expand the program.
- Choose your strategy for documenting the interview or focus group, either via detailed notes or recording.
- Ask the participant(s) if it is okay for the interview or focus group to be recorded.
- Have a notetaker for focus groups. This person is not to contribute to the conversation, rather, their role is simply to take notes. If there is a notetaker, explain this person's role to participants.
- Recommend NOT to have a notetaker if this is a one-on-one interview. It's better not to 'outnumber' the interviewee.
- Remind the participant(s) what, if any, stipend they will receive for completing the interview/focus group (e.g., a 60-minute interview participant is provided with a \$50.00 gift card stipend for their time). Also explain how the participant(s) will receive the stipend.
- Ask the participant(s) if they have any questions before you begin the interview or focus group.
- If the data from the interview or focus group will be published anywhere, obtain approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and have participants sign a consent form. For more information about IRB, click [here](#).

## Tips for asking interview questions

- Do not start a question with the word "why." Instead try "tell me about" or "walk me through," as these solicit responses that are generally not defensive in nature. Asking "why" can solicit a defensive response that also tends to lack detail.
- Do not ask too many close-ended questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no." These types of questions create little opportunity for the interview to be descriptive and lack the opportunity to include a person's perceptions and experiences. For example, instead of "*Were there challenges to registering for*

*the Nutrition Incentive program at Anywhere USA Farmers Market?” which can be answered with a “yes” or a “no,” ask it in an open-ended format, such as, “Tell me what it was like registering for Nutrition Incentive program at Anywhere USA Farmers Market.”*

- Do not ask leading questions. Let the interviewee answer freely without being led by the question. For example, instead of *“What health benefits did you notice after participating in the Produce Prescription Program at Anywhere Clinic USA?”* ask, *“Tell me about your health and wellbeing related to participating in the Produce Prescription Program at Anywhere Clinic USA.”* The first question is leading because it assumes that there were health benefits. The second question allows the interviewee to answer without being “pushed” toward a certain answer.
- If an interview question can be answered with one or two words, consider moving these questions to a survey that is distributed before or after the interview as this can save time during the interview. For example, a question such as *“How many months have you been using the Produce Prescription Program at Anywhere Clinic USA?”* could easily be offered in a short survey with multiple choice answers before an interview or focus group. Results from these short surveys can help describe and frame the interviews in reporting as well as help guide probing questions to gain more insight on answers provided in a survey.
- Learn to embrace silence. If you ask a question, give the participant(s) time to think and let the room be silent. If you fill the silence with your own thoughts, additional questions, or follow up questions you will unintentionally lead the interviewees’ answers.

### **What to do with the information from an interview or focus group**

- Immediately after the interview or focus group, write a short reflection on the experience.
  - Reflect on questions such as: Was the participant nervous? Did participants seem interested, bored, or excited? Did you feel nervous? Did any participant seem to lead the group in a positive or negative way? Where was the interview or focus group? Was the room comfortable? Was there anything going on in the world the day of the interview (e.g., major news event)?
  - These notes will help contextualize the interview or focus group when you analyze the data.
- The audio file or transcribed document from an interview or focus group is the qualitative data.

- Transcribe audio recorded data. Professional companies like [Rev](#) provide transcription services or you can transcribe yourself with a program like [Inqscribe](#).
- If you do not have time or resources to transcribe verbatim, listen to the audio at least twice and take notes about themes that appear across the interviews or focus groups.
- Focus group or interview data analysis can be completed using many types of software.
  - Using a qualitative data analysis program, like Atlas.ti, NVivo, or MAXQDA, among others, will offer the most support. Many of these programs have free trial licenses and video tutorials available online.
  - Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word (or any word processing program) are also powerful tools to conduct analysis.
- Before you begin analyzing the transcriptions, it is important to “de-identify” the transcription. This usually includes a simple “Find and Replace” search using Microsoft Word and removing participant names. Names can be replaced with [NAME] or [INTERVIEWEE]. If there is more than one interviewee, such as in the case of focus groups, it is often helpful to have different identifiers for each interviewee, for example [NAME\_1] and [NAME\_2]. This may be helpful because sometimes in focus groups, the same person tends to speak more than anyone else, and it is important to know if different people were saying the same thing, or if the same person was speaking for most of the interview.
- Focus group or interview analysis typically includes attaching codes to excerpts of the transcription. Codes are labels that you apply to short pieces of transcribed text or notes to represent different themes and relationships between focus groups or interviews that are occurring.
  - For example, an interviewer asks 30 participants about the quality of fruits and vegetables available at a local farmer’s market. Some of the participants note that fruits are readily available in the summer, but not the rest of the year. Some of the other participants note that vegetables are readily available in the late summer and fall, but not the rest of the year. You may decide to develop a code named “seasonality” and label all instances that participants discuss seasons as “seasonality.”
- There are two primary ways to develop codes.
  - The first type includes codes that you develop ahead of time, usually based on the moderator guide. For example, if you are interviewing farmers to learn about how Nutrition Incentive (NI) programs impact their sales and production demand, and if you have some ideas ahead of time

- of what they might say in the interview, you can develop codes accordingly. This could include “improved sales” or “new customers.”
  - The second type includes codes that you develop while you are reading the transcriptions and that arise *from* the interview itself. These are usually more unique, nuanced, and likely more interesting findings as they often go beyond what you “expected” to hear in the interviews.
  - In most cases, it’s important to do both types of coding
- If you use Microsoft Word, use the track changes “comment” feature to attach codes to the data. Here is an example of what a coded transcript might look like:

The screenshot displays a transcript with the following segments and associated codes:

- 00:01:30 Sarah:** Thank you so much for being here. Now that we’ve talked about the logistics of this interview – I’ve started the recorder. Thank you for allowing me to record this interview. So let’s start with this: please tell me about food and nutrition for your patients at [Name of Clinic].  
Code: Stotz, Sarah, Fruit and vegetable access issues
- 00:02:00 Interviewee:** From what I’ve seen, it’s hard to access, fresh fruits and vegetables. Sometimes transportation plays a big role in the access. I’ve seen that when we were talking at the clinic. There’s a lot of processed foods in their diets. There’s a lot of agriculture, but it goes out of the community. That’s from what I’ve heard as well.  
Codes: Stotz, Sarah, Transportation issues; Stotz, Sarah, Processed food consumption; Stotz, Sarah, Agriculture commodity
- 00:02:30 Sarah:** Sure.
- 00:02:30 Interviewee:** Do you want me to elaborate?
- 00:02:30 Sarah:** Yes, please do. When you say there’s a lot of agriculture but it goes out of the community, what does that mean?
- 00:03:00 Interviewee:** From driving down the highway, it looks like there’s mostly cotton that’s being grown. There’s wheat, but it’s harder to find people growing things like pecans, peaches and blueberries. I know that we’re a really big producer of it that doesn’t get a lot of attention, but I don’t know if that’s necessarily south Georgia – so everyone thinks we grow peaches, blueberries and pecans – and we do, but that’s not the majority. And that which is grown, is usually shipped away. And of course, ya can’t eat wheat – so that gets shipped away too. I don’t even think those farmers get to decide what they grow, I’ve heard that before. There are a lot of sod farms it looks like, or grass farms. Those big irrigating rolling machines that are in the fields. It looks like there’s a lot of grass farms. That makes a lot of sense because we have a lot of animals to feed and a lot of it’s grown in south Georgia from what I think from my own experience in farming.  
Codes: Stotz, Sarah, Agriculture commodity; Stotz, Sarah, Local crops for human consumption rare; Stotz, Sarah, Local crops leaving community; Stotz, Sarah, Agriculture commodity; Stotz, Sarah, Farmers lack autonomy; Stotz, Sarah, Agriculture for animal feed
- 00:03:30 Sarah:** That’s interesting. I never heard of a sod farm.
- Interviewee:** It’s actually big money. If you’re going in between Madison and Monroe, there’s a little town called Bostwick. It’s home of the sod farms mixed with a little 1900’s architecture and a small quiet town. It’s really big sod farm. They grow it, they harvest it, and roll it up, and then sell it. It’s actually really big money.  
Codes: Stotz, Sarah, Agriculture for animal feed; Stotz, Sarah, Finance Farmers

Figure 1: Example of a coded transcript as a snippet from a Microsoft Word document

- In this example, you can see how different segments of the interview have codes attached to them.
- It is best to code a transcript completely; this is called the first round of coding. Next, create a second document called a “codebook” to name and define codes. In this stage, you may realize that two codes mean the same thing, in which case, you can merge them into one code. The codebook should include all codes

and their definition. Once this codebook is complete, you should go back through all transcripts a second time (second round of coding) to update codes according to the new codebook.

- There is no “right number” of codes to have for any given focus group or interview project, and the first round of coding (before codebook and merging) is can be as many as 200 codes. After the second round of coding, where the codebook is developed and redundant codes are merged, this often decreases the number of codes dramatically.
- The next step is to organize the codes into categories. This means grouping codes together, but not merging as you did in the last step. For example, in the above excerpt, a category may be “Challenges to Accessing Fruits/Vegetables” and one of the codes that make up that category may be “transportation challenge.”
- Once the categories are developed, this is when overarching themes usually emerge from the analysis. Typically, there are at least two but usually no more than five themes. For the above example, two of the overarching themes were: Systematic Barriers to Affordable, Local Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (e.g., commodities, agricultural policy and practices) and Patient-Level Barriers to Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (e.g., preference for easy, quick, processed foods). Please note what is shown in the example is a very small excerpt of one interview, which was part of 30 interviews and 10 focus groups in a much larger study.
- The most important part of interview or focus group analysis is to remember it takes time, and it is important to reflect and pause in between listening to an audio file or reading a transcription. Trying to quickly review and summarize the data will usually miss important topics.
- Code with others on your team and compare your codes. When you disagree about a code, come to a resolution (or reach consensus) so that it is commonly labeled. Working with another person will help to increase your understanding of the qualitative data.
- Writing up results
  - Qualitative results are often called “findings.” There are many different ways to represent these findings including a [case study](#), infographic, testimonial quotes, published paper (note: IRB approval is required before qualitative data is collected for papers published in peer review journals), or as anecdotal quotes that can be used in social media, newsletters, or communications with key stakeholders.

- If you would like assistance with focus group or interview data collection or analysis, please contact qualitative methods specialist, Dr. Sarah Stotz at [sstotz@centerfornutrition.org](mailto:ssotz@centerfornutrition.org).
- On the pages that follow you will find template moderator guides. You are welcome to use any questions that will help answer your own research questions. You may also choose to adapt any questions (e.g., readability, specificity, cultural appropriateness) for your qualitative GusNIP evaluation needs.

## Brick and Mortar Management Staff

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with **managers/owners and administrators** of brick and mortar firms (e.g., grocery stores and corner stores) that administer an NI or PPR program.*

1. Please tell me about you and your role at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What are your responsibilities at **NAME OF STORE**?
2. Please tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How do you advertise **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - ii. Tell me about the customers of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iii. Tell me about eligible foods for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iv. Tell me what your sales figures look like for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
3. If a new store wanted to get involved with a Nutrition Incentive or Produce Prescription Program, what advice would you give them?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What lessons have you learned during your involvement with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - ii. Tell me about resources you needed to start **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iii. Tell me about groups of people are involved in facilitating **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - iv. What sorts of challenges can be expected when starting a new **NI or PPR PROGRAM** at a new store/location?
4. Tell me about the most challenging parts of having **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How did you train your staff about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - ii. Tell me about any challenges you may have encountered in stocking foods eligible for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - iii. Tell me about any difficulties with point of service sales that **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** may have encountered at **NAME OF STORE**?
5. Tell me about any benefits you see from having **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.



- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** and sales at **NAME OF STORE?**
    - ii. Tell me about customer satisfaction at **NAME OF STORE** and **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM.**
6. Sometimes it is challenging to get the word out to people about new programs such as **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**. Can you tell me about any marketing approaches for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about your marketing strategy for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
    - ii. What types and locations of signage have you used to advertise **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
    - iii. Please tell me more about what marketing worked well and what didn't work well.
7. If you hired a new point of sale staff member, such as a cashier, please walk me through how they would learn about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE.**
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** and new employee training program at **NAME OF STORE?**
8. What recommendations for improvements do you have for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What types of training(s) might help to improve **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
    - ii. What possible steps would you consider to boost sales associated with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
    - iii. How might you better advertise or market **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE?**
    - iv. What could be the impact of having more in-stock foods eligible for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** in **NAME OF STORE?**
9. If there is something we didn't cover today, please tell me about anything else related to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** that you would like to share?

## Brick and Mortar Point of Sale (POS) Employees

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with **cashiers** employed by a brick and mortar firm (e.g., grocery store or corner store) that administers an NI or PPR program.*

1. Please tell me about you and your role at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about your responsibilities at **NAME OF STORE**?
2. Please tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - ii. How do you market **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iii. Tell me about the customers of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iv. Tell me about eligible foods for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - v. Tell me about your sales figures for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
3. Tell me about the most challenging parts of having **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about any challenges stocking foods eligible for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - ii. Help me understand if **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** causes any difficulties with point of service sales at **NAME OF STORE**?
4. Tell me about any benefits you see from having **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** and sales at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - ii. Tell me about customer satisfaction at **NAME OF STORE** and **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
5. Sometimes it is challenging to get the word out to people about new programs such as **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**. Can you tell me about marketing **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How does **NAME OF STORE** advertise or market **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - ii. How do customers know about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
6. What recommendations for improvements do you have for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:

- i. What would help make **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** easier for at the point of sale at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - ii. How could you boost sales associated with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - iii. How could you get more customers to know about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - iv. How do you think available stock for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** could be improved at **NAME OF STORE**?
7. If there is something we didn't cover today, please tell me about anything else related to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** that you would like to share.

## Brick and Mortar Customers

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with **customers** that participate in an NI or PPR program administered at a brick and mortar firm (e.g., grocery store or corner store).*

1. Tell me about the grocery stores in your neighborhood/community.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What is it like to grocery shop in your neighborhood/community?
    - ii. What do you like and dislike about the grocery stores in your neighborhood/community?
    - iii. Walk me through how you choose what grocery store to shop at.
    - iv. Tell me about selection of fruit and vegetables at the grocery stores in your neighborhood/community.
    - v. Tell me about prices at grocery stores in your neighborhood/community.
2. Tell me about how you decide where to do your grocery shopping.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Walk me through how you choose what grocery store to shop at.
    - ii. Tell me about how you get to the grocery stores in your neighborhood/community.
    - iii. How does the variety or selection of foods affect where you get your groceries?
    - iv. Tell me about how prices affect where you get your groceries.
3. Walk me through what it's like to use **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How do you know what foods are available at **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - ii. How did you learn about which specific foods were or were not available at **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - iii. If someone was to use **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** for the first time, what advice would you give this person?
    - iv. Tell me about loyalty cards, tokens, or other items needed to participate in **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
    - v. What do you think are the benefits of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?

- vi. What do you think are the challenges of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
  - vii. How do you sign up for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
4. Sometimes it is challenging to get the word out to people about new programs such as **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**. Can you tell me about how you first heard about and started using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How did you learn about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - ii. How does **NAME OF STORE** spread the word to other customers about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iii. Tell me about when you first signed up for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
5. If the people who run **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** wanted suggestions to improve the program, what sorts of things would you let them know?
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What would you do to make it easier for people to purchase more fruit and vegetables using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
6. Please tell me about anything that has changed in eating patterns at your household since you've started using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**.
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about your purchasing of fruits and vegetables before you started **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** versus now.
    - ii. Tell me about the quality of fruits and vegetables before you started **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** versus now.
    - iii. Tell me about the health of you and your family since you started **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
      - 1. Please share about any specific health issues, such as diabetes, that have been impacted since you started **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - iv. Tell me about your food budget before you started using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** versus now.

7. If you were to explain **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** to a friend, what would you say?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How do you qualify for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - ii. How do you sign up for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE**?
    - iii. What benefits does **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** offer you and your family?
    - iv. What makes **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** challenging?
8. If there is something we didn't cover today, please tell me about anything else related to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF STORE** that you would like to share.

## Farm Direct Management, Market Operators Support Staff, Volunteers Point of Sale Employees

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with market operators or people working at individual farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, or other farm direct firms that administers an NI or PPR program.*

1. Please tell me about you and your role at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
  - a. Possible follow up questions:
    - i. What are your responsibilities at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
2. Please tell me about NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How do you advertise or market at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
    - ii. Tell me about the customers at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
    - iii. Tell me about eligible fruit and vegetables at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
    - iv. Tell me about what your sales of fruits and vegetables look like for at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
3. If a new TYPE OF FARM DIRECT SITE wanted to get involved with a NI or PPR program, what advice would you give them?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What lessons have you learned during your involvement with Nutrition Incentive program?
    - ii. Tell me about resources you needed to start with NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM.
    - iii. Tell me about who is involved in facilitating NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME FARM DIRECT SITE?
    - iv. What challenges can be expected when starting a new NI or PPR PROGRAM at a TYPE OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
4. Tell me about the most challenging parts of having NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How did you train your staff about NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
    - ii. Tell me about any challenges stocking foods eligible for NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
    - iii. Tell me about any difficulties with point of sale that NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM causes at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?

5. It seems like SNAP benefits are distributed and redeemed differently at various farm direct sites. Please share with me how this process works at **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - a. Possible follow up questions.
    - i. Some **TYPE OF FARM DIRECT SITE** use scrips, tokens, or a discount model. Can you tell me about the process for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
    - ii. If you could start over, what model for distributing and redeeming SNAP benefits would you use at your **TYPE OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - iii. What factors went into choosing the SNAP benefit distribution and redemption model that you use at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - iv. If there was a new **TYPE OF FARM DIRECT SITE** who wanted to get involved with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**, what advice would you give them for the best way to distribute and redeem SNAP benefits?
6. Tell me about any benefits you see from having **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** and sales at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - ii. Tell me about customer satisfaction at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE** and **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
    - iii. Tell me what you hear from farmers about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
7. Sometimes it is challenging to get the word out to people about new programs such as **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**. Can you tell me about marketing **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How do customers learn about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
    - ii. Tell me about your marketing strategy for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
    - iii. What types and locations of signage have you used to advertise or market **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.



- iv. What makes it challenging to get customers to know about (or use) **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
- 8. If a new volunteer/staff member was recruited, such as an information booth representative, market manager, or support staff, please walk me through how they would learn about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** and employee/volunteer training program at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
- 9. What recommendations for improvements do you have for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What types of training(s) might help to improve **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - ii. What steps would you take to boost sales associated with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - iii. How might you better advertise or market **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - iv. What would be the impact of having more seasonable foods eligible for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** in **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
- 10. If there is something we didn't cover today, please tell me about anything else related to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE** that you would like to share.

## Farmers, Growers, or Vendors

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with **farmers, growers, or vendors for a farm direct firm that administers an NI or PPR program.***

1. Please tell me about you and your role at **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION**.
  - a. Possible follow-up question:
    - i. Tell me about your responsibilities at **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION**.
2. Next, tell me about **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION**.
  - a. Possible follow-up question:
    - i. Tell me about what types of fruits and/or vegetables you grow.
    - ii. Tell me about where you usually sell your fruit and/or vegetables.
    - iii. Tell me about who is involved in growing and selling your fruit and/or vegetables.
3. Please tell me about **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION** and **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions
    - i. Tell me how you learned about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
    - ii. Tell me about your customers and **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
    - iii. How does **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** affect your sales?
    - iv. If something could be improved with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** to benefit your farm/growing operation, what would that look like?
    - v. What are the challenges you've encountered with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - vi. Tell me about where you sell your product for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
    - vii. How do you redeem tokens at the market for cash at **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
4. If a new **TYPE OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION** wanted to get involved with a nutrition incentive or produce prescription program, what advice would you give them?
  - a. Possible follow-up questions
    - i. What lessons have you learned during your involvement with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - ii. Tell me about resources you needed to start selling your fruits and/or vegetables for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?

- iii. Tell me about who is involved in running or managing **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** with your farm.
    - iv. What challenges can be expected when starting to work with a new **NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
- 5. Tell me about the most challenging parts of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** for your **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions
    - i. What is working with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** like for your staff?
    - ii. How do you go about redeeming nutrition incentive/SNAP EBT benefits from your sales for cash at the end of any given market day?
    - iii. What is it like selling your product with the **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
- 6. Tell me about any benefits you see from **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** for your **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions
    - i. Tell me about sales as they relate to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
    - ii. Tell me about customer satisfaction as it relates to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**.
- 7. What recommendations for improvements do you have for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** for your **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions
    - i. What would help make sales go more smoothly with **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - ii. How could more customers learn about/use **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iii. What would help make **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** better for your farm/growing operation?
    - iv. How could eligible products be changed to improve **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** for your farm/growing operation?
- 8. If there is something we didn't cover today, please tell me about anything else related to **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** and your **NAME OF FARM OR GROWING ORGANIZATION** that you would like to share.

## Farm Direct Customers

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with **customers** that participate in an NI or PPR program administered by a **farm direct firm** (e.g., farmers market, farm stand, or CSA).*

1. Tell me about the places you can get fresh fruits and vegetables in your community.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What is it like to grocery shop in your neighborhood/community?
    - ii. What kinds of places can you get fresh fruit and vegetables in your neighborhood/community?
    - iii. What do you like and dislike about the fresh fruit and vegetables available in your community?
2. Walk me through how you choose which fruits and vegetables to purchase at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - i. Tell me about selection of fruit and vegetables in your neighborhood/community at farmer's markets or farm stands.
  - ii. Tell me about prices of fruit and vegetables in your community.
  - iii. Tell me about places like farmers markets or farm stands in your community.
3. Tell me about how you decide where to get your fresh fruits and vegetables.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Walk me through how you choose where to get your fresh fruit and vegetables.
    - ii. How does availability affect where you shop for fruits and vegetables?
    - iii. How do prices affect your fruit and vegetable shopping choices.
    - iv. Tell me about local fruits and vegetables available in your neighborhood/community.
4. Walk me through what it's like to use **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How did you learn about which specific foods were or were not included in **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - ii. What it is like to checkout fruit and vegetables at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - iii. If someone was to use **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE** for the first time, what advice would you give this person?

- iv. Tell me about scrips, tokens, or other items needed to participate in **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
  - v. What do you think are the benefits of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
  - vi. What do you think are the challenges of **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
  - vii. How do you sign up for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
5. Sometimes it is challenging to get the word out to people about new programs such as **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**. Can you tell me about how you first heard about and started using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How did you learn about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - ii. How does **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE** seem to let other customers know about **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM**?
    - iii. Tell me about when you first signed up for **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
6. If the people who run the **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE** wanted suggestions to improve the program, what would you tell them?
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. What would you do to make it easier for people to purchase more fruit and vegetables using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
    - ii. What would you recommend about which foods are eligible foods in **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**?
7. Please tell me about anything that has changed in the food and nutrition habits at your household since you've started using **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE**.
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. Tell me about the fruit and vegetables you purchased before you started **NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM** at **NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE** versus now.

- ii. Tell me about the quality of fruit and vegetables at now vs. when the NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM started at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
  - iii. Tell me about the health of you and your family since you started NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
    - 1. Please share about any specific health issues, such as diabetes, that have been impacted since you started NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE.
  - iv. Tell me about your food budget before you started using NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE versus now.
8. If you had to explain NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE to a friend, what would you say?
- a. Possible follow-up questions:
    - i. How do you qualify for NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
    - ii. How do you sign up for NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE?
    - iii. What benefits does NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE offer you and your household?
    - iv. What makes NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE challenging?
    - v. What is NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE like for your family?
9. If there is something we didn't cover today, please tell me about anything else related to NAME OF NI or PPR PROGRAM at NAME OF FARM DIRECT SITE that you would like to share.

## Health Care Providers

*The following question guide is designed for interviews/focus groups with **health care providers** that participate in a PPR program.*

1. Tell me about your role within the GusNIP Produce Prescription Project (PPR) at (NAME OF SITE/ORGANIZATION)  
 (probes: director, prescriber, management, coordinator, full time, part time)

2. From your perspective as a health care provider, walk me through how your PPR program works.  
*(probes: recruitment, referral, retention, EHR, clinical visits/data collection, challenges, facilitators/strengths.)*
3. What resources or support would help improve your PPR?  
*(probes: funding, time, experts, data collection infrastructure, partnerships)*
4. If a new group or organization was interested in PPR, what advice would you give them?  
*(probes: best practices, what not to do, resources to request, collaborators)*
5. Tell me about challenges you've encountered with your PPR.  
*(probes: funding, engagement, recruitment, time, collaborators, resolved challenges)* **Note:** encourage discussion of challenges beyond COVID-19 related challenges
6. Please share any patient outcomes or experiences as related to your PPR.  
*(probes: improved clinical metrics, mental health, food security, program critiques from patients, program-specific requests from patients)*
7. Is there anything else related to your experience with this or other PPR that you think would be helpful for others working in this area or those just starting projects that you would like to share with me?

## Additional Resources for Qualitative Methods

Harris, J. E., Gleason, P. M., Sheean, P. M., Boushey, C., Beto, J. A., & Bruemmer, B. (2009). An introduction to qualitative research for food and nutrition professionals. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109(1), 80–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2008.10.018>  
Free online access to this article.

Swift, J. A., & Tischler, V. (2010). Qualitative research in nutrition and dietetics: Getting started. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, 23(6), 559–566. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-277X.2010.01116.x>  
Free online access to this article.

Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: Getting started. *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 67(6), 436–440. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v67i6.1406>  
Free online access to this article.

Achterberg, C. (1988). Qualitative methods in nutrition education evaluation research. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 20(5), 244–250. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-3182\(88\)80065-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-3182(88)80065-7)

Maxwell, J. A. (2004). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

If you would like assistance with focus group or interview data collection or analysis, please contact qualitative methods specialist, Dr. Sarah Stotz at [sstotz@centerfornutrition.org](mailto:ssotz@centerfornutrition.org).

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