



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

Introduction to the SNAP Model Notice Toolkit

What is the Model Notice Toolkit?

The Model Notice Toolkit is a set of tools designed to help State agencies improve the notices they send to clients about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP notices are the primary way State agencies communicate with SNAP applicants and current participants. In many cases, these notices include time-sensitive information and instructions about what the household needs to do to receive (or continue to receive) benefits.

Developing effective SNAP notices can be a challenge. It can be difficult to clearly convey SNAP decisions to clients, the reasoning behind them, and required actions, especially when the household's situation is complex. Notices must also meet Federal and State policies, and State automated systems may impose constraints on the tone, content, and appearance of client notices.

The toolkit is designed to help State agencies evaluate their SNAP notices and make targeted improvements that fit the needs of their clients, work within system constraints, and comply with Federal policy. The toolkit includes model notices with examples of plain language and formatting that State agencies can adapt to fit their needs. The toolkit also provides customizable tools to help promote continuous improvement practices.

What makes a good notice?

A good notice complies with SNAP policy and can be read easily, understood quickly, and used to take appropriate action.

What is included in the Model Notice Toolkit?

In the toolkit your State agency will find tools to help evaluate and improve the policy compliance, readability, and effectiveness of SNAP notices. These tools focus on 11 types of SNAP notices: *Interview Scheduling Notice*, *Notice of Missed Interview*, *Notice of Eligibility*, *Notice of Denial*, *Notice of Expiration*, *Notice of Required Verification*, *Notice of Requested Verification*, *Notice of General Work Requirements*, *Notice of Expedited Approval With Postponed Verification*, *Notice of Adverse Action for an Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents Approaching Their Third Countable Month*, and *Notice of Adverse Action for Termination*. However, many of the tools will also be helpful in making changes to other types of notices. The toolkit has four components:

1. **Notice Review Tools.** These are checklists for evaluating SNAP notices. They include Federal requirements; comprehension, readability, usability, and presentation principles; and electronic notice (e-notice) considerations.

2. **Model Notices.** These sample notices illustrate policy compliance and communication best practices.
3. **Annotated Model Notices.** These are versions of the model notices with comments to highlight, at a glance, how the sample notice meets SNAP policy requirements and considerations for State customization. (To view PDFs, download free Adobe reader here: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
4. **Project Support Materials.** These include a Notice Improvement Team Charter Template, a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Form, a Communication Plan Worksheet, recommendations for collecting client feedback, comprehension and usability indicators, and a list of performance measures for notices.

The toolkit is organized by notice type, with a Notice Review Tool, Model Notice(s), and Annotated Notice(s) for each of the five types of notices. Project support materials are included separately.

How do you use the Model Notice Toolkit?

State agencies can use these resources to focus on a single notice or a set of notices through five steps:

1. **Form a team.** Use the Team Charter to create a notice improvement team and develop a “problem and aim” statement. Consider building on the knowledge of other notice improvement efforts by consulting with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and other State agencies.
2. **Assess your notices.** Review notices using the Notice Review Tools. Consider the notice performance indicators, feedback from stakeholders, and results from FNS reviews to identify opportunities for improvement.
3. **Revise your notices.** Refer to the Model Notices and Annotated Model Notices for examples of plain language and formatting best practices and how they can be adapted. Review Federal policy options, waivers, and guidance and State-specific requirements to ensure compliance with civil rights disclosures, limited-English-proficiency accessibility, and other considerations.
4. **Gather stakeholder input.** Apply the PDSA Cycle Report to test proposed notice changes with stakeholders, including clients.
5. **Communicate changes.** Use the Communication Plan Worksheet to ensure systematic planning and effective communication with relevant State agency staff, including caseworkers, automated system contractors, and other key stakeholders.

FNS Regional Office staff are available to help State agencies successfully engage these tools as part of their notice improvement efforts.

Where can you get more help?

More information on SNAP policy and notices is available on FNS’s website, including the [SNAP Policy webpage](#) and the [Guide to Improving Notices of Adverse Action](#). State agencies should contact their Regional Office representatives with questions about Federal policy for help improving their notices and for assistance using the Model Notice Toolkit.