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*Assessment of the Contributions of an
Interview to SNAP Eligibility and Benefit
Determinations:
Final Report*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation’s largest food assistance program, has undergone unprecedented growth—increasing from 17 million recipients in 2000 to nearly 47 million recipients in 2014 (United States Department of Agriculture 2015). However, during the same period, States were facing increasing fiscal and political pressures to reduce the program’s administrative costs while providing services to this growing number of clients. A national recession and State budget deficits along with hiring freezes forced many States to seek new approaches to maintain program access to their clients while using fewer resources. One approach many States have explored is modifying how staff interview or collect information from clients for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has implemented regulations that require State eligibility staff to interview households prior to initial certification for SNAP benefits and again as a part of the periodic recertification process. These regulations require that States conduct face-to-face interviews, unless the State determines that a telephone interview is acceptable due to a hardship on the client. However, over the last decade, most States applied for and received waivers that allow for telephone interviews in all cases, without the need to document a hardship. Currently, 47 States operate these waivers (USDA 2015). In addition, seven States currently operate waivers that eliminate recertification interviews for elderly and disabled individuals (USDA 2015). Other States have applied unsuccessfully for waivers to eliminate SNAP interviews for a broader range of individuals.¹

Although the interviews are often useful tools for State staff and clients, some States suggest the interviews can be inefficient, in light of new technology, and lead to additional client burden. State staff use eligibility interviews to confirm and complete the information on the application and recertification forms, collect documentation, inform clients of their rights and responsibilities, and provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions about their cases. However, some States suggest that all interviews—even those conducted by telephone—require substantial staff resources and increase States’ administrative burden for SNAP. (The interview can last 15 to 30 minutes, but the time needed to schedule interviews, reschedule missed appointments, and send reminders to clients increases the overall time and cost.) Given that new technologies and data exchanges make it possible for State staff to verify much of the information on an application without direct interaction with the client, the importance of the interview in determining an individual’s eligibility has diminished for some States in recent years. Interviews can be time-consuming for clients as well, and those who work standard business hours often find it challenging to complete the interview process.

¹ To date, FNS has not approved waivers to eliminate interviews for all clients, beyond those allowed for this study.

To assess whether States' requests to eliminate the eligibility interview would have adverse effects on client and worker outcomes, FNS awarded grants to two States—Oregon and Utah—to conduct demonstrations in which the eligibility interviews at certification and recertification were completely eliminated.² FNS commissioned Mathematica Policy Research to conduct a thorough analysis of the demonstrations and provide estimates of the contributions of eligibility interviews in determining SNAP eligibility and benefits.

Study objectives

The study examined how key outcomes, such as program access, payment accuracy, and administrative costs, vary with and without an interview at both certification and recertification. The study also assessed how eliminating the eligibility interview at application and recertification affects (1) the steps that eligibility workers must take to ensure the collection of accurate client information and (2) client and staff satisfaction. The study had eight research objectives (see Table ES.1). To meet the objectives of the study, Mathematica collected four types of data for analysis: site visit data, client data, administrative data, and office performance data. The final report presents the findings from the analyses of all collected data and addresses the study's objectives. Table ES.1 identifies the data sources and types of analysis used to respond to each study objective.

Table ES.1. Data sources and analysis method, by study objective

Research Objective	Data Source				Analysis Method
	Site visit data	Client data	Admin data	Office data	
Objective 1: Describe the no-interview demonstration in each State	x	x			Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 2: Describe any modernization activities in each State that complement the demonstration to make its application most effective ^a	x				Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 3: Describe the process for implementing the demonstration	x				Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 4: Describe the response of clients to the demonstration	x	x	x	x	Qualitative analysis using theme tables; survey data analysis
Objective 5: Describe the response of SNAP staff to the demonstration	x			x	Qualitative analysis using theme tables; time use and cost analysis
Objective 6: Describe the response of community based organizations and other stakeholders to the demonstration	x				Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 7: Document how program outcomes change after the demonstration is implemented	x	x	x	x	Impact analysis in Utah; difference-in-differences analysis in Oregon
Objective 8: Document the main takeaway points from the study to inform FNS for future studies	x	x	x	x	Summarizing the findings from all analyses

^a Modernization encompasses a broad range of activities that States can implement to improve client access, reduce costs, and improve staff efficiency—including, expanding the use of technology, making administrative structural changes, using community partnerships, and developing policy changes.

² FNS initially selected North Carolina to participate in the study; however, during the demonstration the State made several major changes to its eligibility system that compromised the ability of the State to provide data sufficient for the evaluation team to assess the effects of the demonstration. Therefore, after consulting with North Carolina, FNS decided to exclude the State from the study.

Demonstration background

In June 2011, FNS requested applications from States to implement a demonstration that would eliminate the eligibility interview at certification and recertification.³ FNS awarded grants to North Carolina, Oregon, and Utah in September 2011. Ultimately, North Carolina was excluded from the evaluation; no findings from that State are included in this report. Oregon and Utah used different models to assign up to 20 percent of clients to the demonstration:

- Oregon implemented the demonstration at five sites, waiving the certification and recertification interviews for all clients. For each of the demonstration sites, the State worked with the evaluation team to select a comparison site that best resembled the demonstration site in several areas, including caseload size, caseload characteristics, office process model, geography, and economic factors. All clients in the comparison sites were subject to the “business-as-usual” interview process model, which was the standard eligibility process model used by the State prior to the demonstration.
- Utah implemented the demonstration statewide, randomly assigning about 20 percent of SNAP applicants and participants to the demonstration group (no interview) and the other 80 percent to a comparison group (mandatory interview).

Oregon and Utah had approximately one year to plan and implement their demonstrations. The duration of the demonstrations in both States was 15 months—September 1, 2012, through November 30, 2013.⁴

Study data collection and analysis methodology

This evaluation was a comprehensive overview of the implementation, operations, and effects of the two demonstrations. To calculate program effects, the study used a comparison group design in Oregon—using a difference-in-differences approach to compare changes in demonstration counties to changes in similar comparison counties over time—and a randomized controlled trial design in Utah. The study also examined qualitative data to describe the demonstration approaches and to provide context for interpreting the calculated effects. Table ES.2 provides an overview of the types of qualitative and quantitative data collected, the approximate size of the samples, and the data collection time period.

It should be noted that findings from the Utah analysis have greater causal validity than findings from the Oregon analysis—that is, because of the design used in Utah, the study team is more confident that the differences in outcomes between individuals with and without an interview are due to the elimination of the interview requirement in that state. The random assignment process provides greater confidence that other factors do not explain those differences. A random assignment design was not employed in Oregon. Although steps were taken to control for factors other than the interview that could explain differences in outcomes for those with and without an interview in Oregon, it is still possible that the differences in

³ States had to agree, however, that an interview would be conducted if the client requested one.

⁴ Utah was granted an extension of the demonstration into 2014 because shutting down the demonstration would place an additional burden on the State at a time when it was implementing the Affordable Care Act. However, the evaluation includes data only through November 2013.

outcomes are explained by unobserved differences between the demonstration and comparison sites (such as differences in the local economies).

Table ES.2. Description of the data collected for the study

Data Source	Types of Data	Sample Size			Time Period for Data Collection
		Oregon	Utah	Total	
Site visit interviews	Interviews with State and local administrators, frontline staff, and community organizations that serve low-income families	78	51	129	September 2013–October 2013
Administrative data and client contact data	Monthly caseload files for all applicants and participants; indicators of demonstration status and contact with clients	930,719 (total cases)	328,118 (total cases)	1,258,837 (total cases)	September 2010–November 2013
Client surveys	Demonstration and comparison clients who applied for or recertified for SNAP in the previous two months	731	747	1,478	September 2013–December 2013
Interviews with applicants who received procedural denials ^a	Interviews (focus groups and telephone interviews) with demonstration and comparison clients who were denied SNAP for procedural reasons ^b	8	30	38	September 2013–March 2014
Staff time-use surveys	Five days of work activities tracked by eligibility staff in demonstration and comparison sites	22	21	43	August 2013–September 2013
QC-like reviews ^c	Sample of active demonstration cases	584	588	1,172	August 2012–November 2012 August 2013–November 2013

^a A procedural denial is due to a client not completing some part of the application process, such as not submitting verification documents or not completing the interview. This group is particularly important because the lack of an interview could affect the ability of these clients to understand what they needed to do to complete the application process. It could also affect staff ability to reach clients to clarify information, causing an increase in denials.

^b Due to low participation in the focus groups, we conducted additional telephone interviews with applicants who were procedurally denied. The focus group discussions and interviews were pooled for analysis.

^c QC-like reviews are reviews of a sample of SNAP demonstration cases to determine if staff made errors when determining eligibility or benefits. The QC-like reviews were conducted in a manner similar to the State quality control (QC) process, except that all reviews were conducted over the telephone instead of in person and only active cases were selected.

Oregon's demonstration implementation

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) participated in the demonstration to determine if eliminating an interview for certification and recertification would improve efficiency and help make caseloads manageable for staff. DHS selected 17 local offices in five counties as demonstration offices; 17 offices in six counties were selected as comparison offices. The demonstration counties, which accounted for about 19 percent of the State's caseload, varied by geography, economic conditions, and the office administrative process they used.

The counties selected for the comparison group continued to operate under standard procedures. In this business-as-usual model, clients complete a single application for SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), childcare, and, until the fall of 2014, Medicaid. They have several options for submitting applications, but most visit the office and submit a paper application in person. Oregon has set a goal of interviewing all clients on the

same day or next day of their office visit. Staff generally interview clients within 15 to 60 minutes of arrival, although wait times may be several hours, depending upon the time of day or month. Workers meet in person with each client who visits the office, and they generally spend 15 to 30 minutes interviewing that individual. During the interview, the eligibility worker reviews and confirms all of the information entered on the application and asks the client to clarify any discrepancies or gaps. The worker explains which verification documents are needed to process the case and how to submit them. The recertification process is largely the same as initial certification—the State mails an application to the client (the same application used for initial certification) and the client can mail in the completed application or take it to a local office. Clients are contacted by telephone for a recertification interview or they may visit the office for an in-person interview.

Key features of Oregon's demonstration

Geographic area served: Clackamas, Lane, Malheur, Multnomah, and Washington counties

Groups excluded: TANF applicants^a

Demonstration period: September 1, 2012, to November 30, 2013

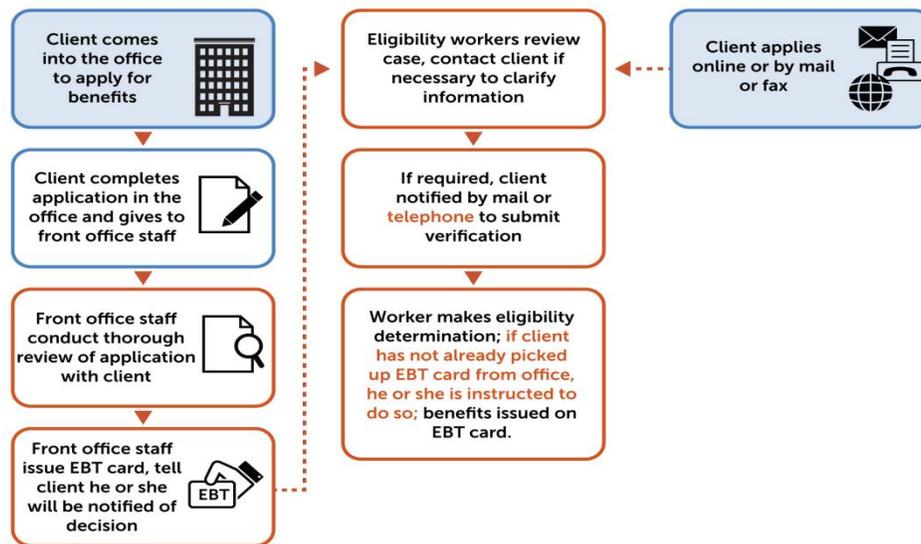
Percentage of SNAP caseload participating: 20.7 percent (approximately 107,800 participants each month)

Demonstration model: Selected demonstration sites in which all clients within that office's geographic service area were not required to interview for SNAP certification and recertification

^a In Multnomah County, recertification cases that included day care required an interview.

Although the interview was waived in the demonstration sites, the application and recertification processes were similar to those in the business-as-usual sites (Figure ES.1). The primary differences for the demonstration sites included the following:

- Front office staff were more involved in the application review process—for example, highlighting missing or questionable answers and asking clients to fill in required information before submitting their applications at the office.
- Without an interview, workers contacted clients directly via telephone or by mail to clarify information, as needed.
- Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards were issued when clients submitted their applications, instead of after eligibility was determined. Benefits were loaded onto the card if the client was determined to be eligible.

Figure ES.1. Application flow for clients in Oregon's demonstration model

Note: Boxes highlighted in orange denote differences in process from the business-as-usual model; highlighted text within a box denotes just a part of the process was changed.

Utah's demonstration implementation

The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) applied for the demonstration grant to improve efficiency across its assistance programs. Medicaid and TANF do not require interviews and, by waiving the SNAP interview, Utah standardized procedures for the three programs. DWS uses a centralized structure for administering SNAP statewide. This centralized structure enabled the State to randomly assign clients to either the demonstration or the business-as-usual group. The State assigned 20 percent of active cases statewide to the demonstration group at the start of the demonstration and about 20 percent of all households that applied statewide during the demonstration period.⁵

Key features of Utah's demonstration

Geographic area served: Statewide

Groups excluded: Native Americans and some refugees

Demonstration period: September 1, 2012, to November 30, 2013

Percentage of SNAP caseload participating: 19.1 percent (approximately 44,500 participants each month)

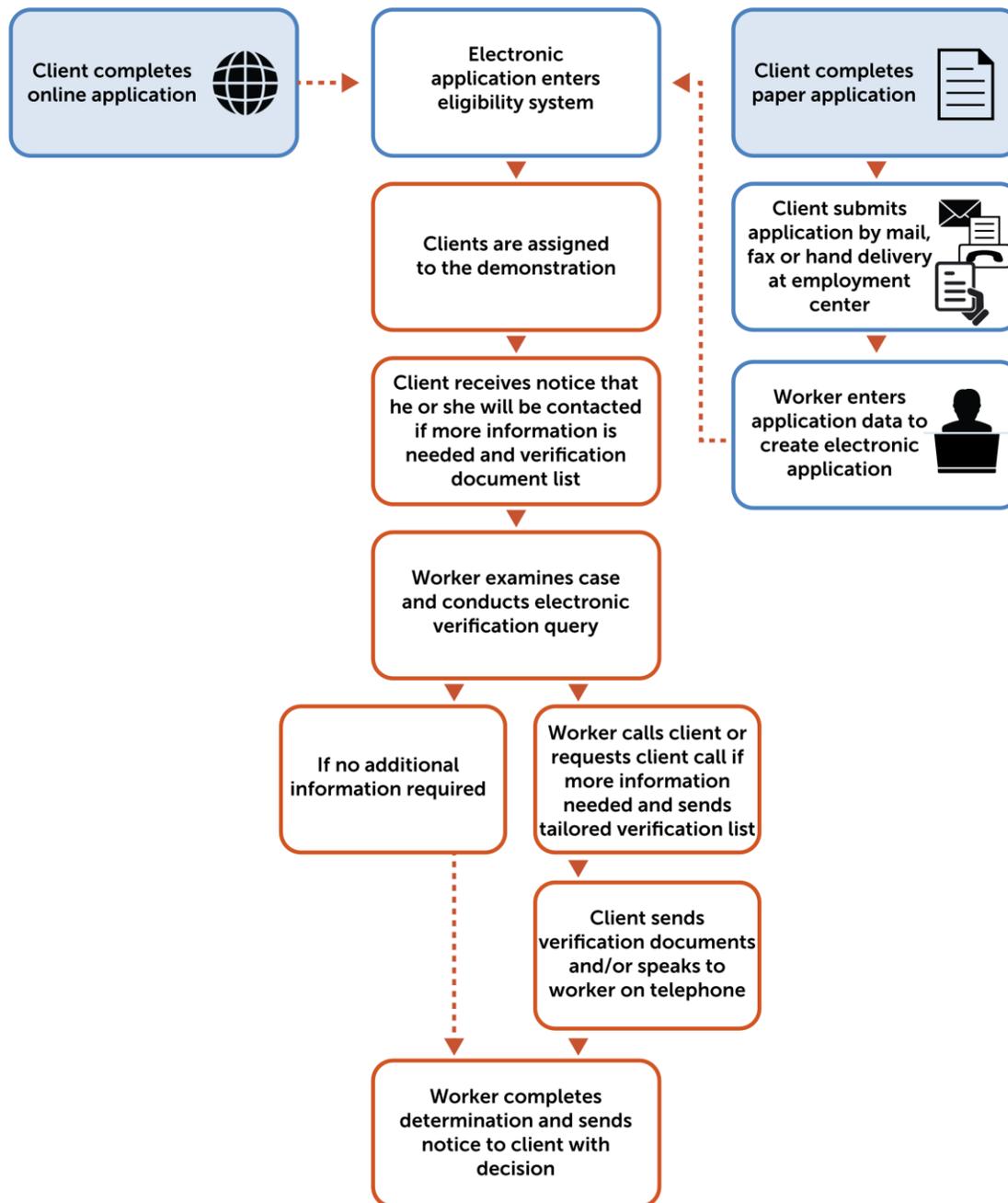
Demonstration model: Randomly selected demonstration cases that were processed with comparison cases by the same eligibility workers.

⁵ Native Americans and refugees in their first three years of receipt of benefits were exempt from the demonstration.

In the business-as-usual process, DWS relies heavily on online services that enable clients to complete applications and recertifications, manage their cases, and ask questions via online chat. Utah has moved away from face-to-face contact and local offices; most interactions with clients take place by phone or via the online interface. Clients use a single application to apply for SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and child care assistance, with more than 80 percent of them applying online (the rest submit paper applications). Once a client submits an application, he or she is instructed to contact the call center within seven days to conduct the eligibility interview.⁶ The call center serves the entire State and provides a single telephone number for clients to access all DWS services—for example, callers can participate in interviews, get answers to their questions, and report changes in their circumstances. During the interview, the eligibility worker conducts an information query with Utah’s electronic data verification system and reconciles the results with information on the application, asking the client to clarify any discrepancies or gaps. Before concluding the interview, the worker explains what verification documents are needed to process the case and how to submit them. Utah requires clients to recertify for SNAP every six months; however, interviews are required only once a year. The State either mails a prefilled paper application directly to clients or—for those who prefer electronic notification—emails instructions for completing the recertification online. Recertifications are processed in the same way as applications.

For the demonstration, clients applying for SNAP online were immediately assigned to either the demonstration or comparison groups at the point they submitted the application. Depending upon their assignment, clients received a notification that either directed them to contact the call center for an interview (comparison) or informed them that an interview was not required (demonstration) and that they would be contacted if additional information was needed. Clients who submitted paper applications learned of their assignment via a letter sent after staff entered the applications into the eligibility system. Workers in Utah processed both demonstration and comparison cases. Other than the interview requirement, the application and recertification process was virtually the same for the two groups (Figure ES.2). The primary differences were: (1) workers immediately processed demonstration applications without waiting for the client to call for an interview and (2) without an interview, workers contacted clients directly via the telephone or by mail to clarify information, as needed.

⁶ Utah is one of six States that has an “on-demand interview” waiver from FNS that allows the States to require clients to call for an interview during business hours (FNS 2012). These States no longer schedule interviews.

Figure ES.2. Application flow for clients in Utah's demonstration model

Note: Boxes highlighted in orange denote differences in process from the business-as-usual model.

Staff perceptions of the demonstration

When staffs in both States were asked about their perceptions of the demonstrations, most reported favorable experiences. Perceptions varied, however, by position and level. State-level staffs and local office supervisors were often the most positive about the demonstration, while local office staff (eligibility workers and front office staff) pointed out the more challenging aspects of eliminating the interview. Eligibility workers and supervisors generally reported that the demonstrations reduced the steps involved in the application process, decreasing the time needed for a determination. Most State staff also believed there was little adverse effect on their performance measures. According to staff perceptions, effective elements of the demonstrations included the following:

- Staff reported the demonstration provided flexibility to process cases more efficiently because they did not need to wait for the client interview or spend time talking with clients if the applications were already complete.
- Staff felt that eliminating the interview removed a barrier for clients trying to access SNAP.

Despite the generally positive response to the demonstrations, some workers found that the demonstrations posed challenges, including the following issues:

- Staff suggested it was difficult obtaining information to complete applications in the absence of interviews.
- Staff, particularly in Oregon, felt that eliminating interviews may shift work among staff members rather than reduce the burden overall.
- Staff thought that collecting information from complex cases (such as clients with income, clients who are self-employed, and clients who are students) was difficult and time-consuming without an interview.
- Staff and clients often found it difficult to understand when client contact was needed.
- Some staff disliked not interviewing clients, as it limited their ability to properly assess the accuracy of the case and to assess if clients needed additional services.

State staff and community organizers also were asked to describe client response to the demonstration. They said client response was mixed: the demonstration eased the process for some clients and created more challenges for others.

Effects of eliminating the interview

To understand the contribution of an interview, the study team examined the effects of eliminating the interview on client, worker, and office outcomes. Client outcomes included program access, application approval and denial rates, case closures, benefit levels, churning,⁷ and client experiences with the application process. Worker and office outcomes included staff contact with demonstration group clients, staff time, administrative costs, and case and payment

⁷ Churning occurs when a client leaves SNAP and returns to the program within three months.

error rates.⁸ The analysis of client outcomes relied heavily on the administrative data provided by States, client surveys, and interviews with clients and staff. For worker and office outcomes, the study team focused on the data staff reported about the time spent working on certain aspects of each case and, at demonstration sites, how often and for what purpose they contacted clients. The States also provided cost data and results of their quality reviews for analysis.⁹

Client outcomes

The primary purpose of the study was to determine if eliminating the SNAP interview would affect key client outcomes. The study team found that removing the eligibility interview did not have a large effect on these client outcomes overall. When statistically significant differences in outcomes between demonstration and comparison groups were found, they were generally small.

The analysis of the administrative data for the Utah demonstration frequently showed more significant effects on client outcomes than the Oregon demonstration. For example, the demonstration led to changes in the distribution of denial reasons and the rate of churning in Utah but not in Oregon. This could be related, in part, to the type of evaluation model implemented in each State. Because Utah clients were randomly assigned to demonstration and comparison groups, impact estimates isolate the effects of the demonstration. In contrast, in Oregon, differences between demonstration and comparison groups may be influenced by other factors outside the demonstration.

The demonstrations generally did not adversely affect overall application or recertification outcomes, but some subgroups saw larger effects. The following summarizes key study findings:

- The demonstration had no effect on **the number of applications or recertifications submitted** overall in Oregon, but households with earnings had slightly lower rates of applications and recertification submissions. (No data were available in Utah for this analysis.)
 - The demonstration significantly increased the percentage of **expedited applications** in Utah by 2.7 percentage points, likely due to Utah's practice of screening all demonstration applications for expedited service (rather than waiting for clients to call for an interview). There were no significant effects on expedited applications, in Oregon.
- The demonstrations in both States increased the time it took to process applications, reducing **application timeliness**. Secondary analysis for Oregon showed decreases in timeliness, but statistical testing could not be completed; analysis in Utah found the decreases were statistically significant (Table ES.3).

⁸ The case error rate is the number of errors found divided by the number of cases in the QC sample and the payment error rate is the total amount of benefits issued in error divided by the total amount of benefits issued to the sample households.

⁹ Data cover the pre-demonstration period (described as the *pre* period in the tables and figures, September 2010–August 2012) and the demonstration period (described as the *post* period in the tables and figures, September 2012–November 2013). The Utah impact analysis results use only the *post* period.

Table ES.3. Impact of demonstration on application timeliness in Utah

	Percentage of Applications Processed within Time Standards		
	Demonstration	Comparison	Impact
All applications	78.2	79.4	-1.2*
Standard applications	77.2	76.5	0.7*
Expedited applications	80.8	88.4	-7.0*

Source: Analysis of data from the Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

- The demonstrations did not affect application **approval rates** overall for both States, but recertification approvals decreased slightly in Oregon (Table ES.4). However, approval rates in both States did decrease significantly for some subgroups, particularly for households with children and earnings.

Table ES.4. Effects of eliminating the interview on application and recertification approval rates, overall and by subgroup

	Application Approval Rate		Recertification Approval Rate	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
All households	-1.4	-0.1	-1.2*	0.5
With children	-5.0*	-1.4*	-1.5*	0.9*
With elderly	-2.1	-2.7	-1.0	1.5
With disabled	-0.2	-0.6	-0.3	0.9
With earnings	-5.3*	-4.1*	-3.1*	0.9*
With other programs	-0.9	-1.0	-0.1	1.0*

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

- The demonstrations did not affect **denial or case closure rates** overall, but the distribution of denials and closures did change. In Utah, the demonstration increased denials based on income and decreased procedural denials (Table ES.5). Clients in Utah were also slightly more likely to have their cases closed for failing to submit their recertification applications. In Oregon, the demonstration reduced procedural case closures.

Table ES.5. Application denial and case closure reasons

Denial/Closure Reason	Application Denials		Case Closures	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Exceeds income limit	-1.3	2.3*	0.0	-0.0^
Procedural	0.5	-3.5*	-3.2*	-0.0^
Administrative or other	0.6	1.1*	-0.9	2.0*
Failed to submit recertification application	n.a.	n.a.	1.4	-1.6*

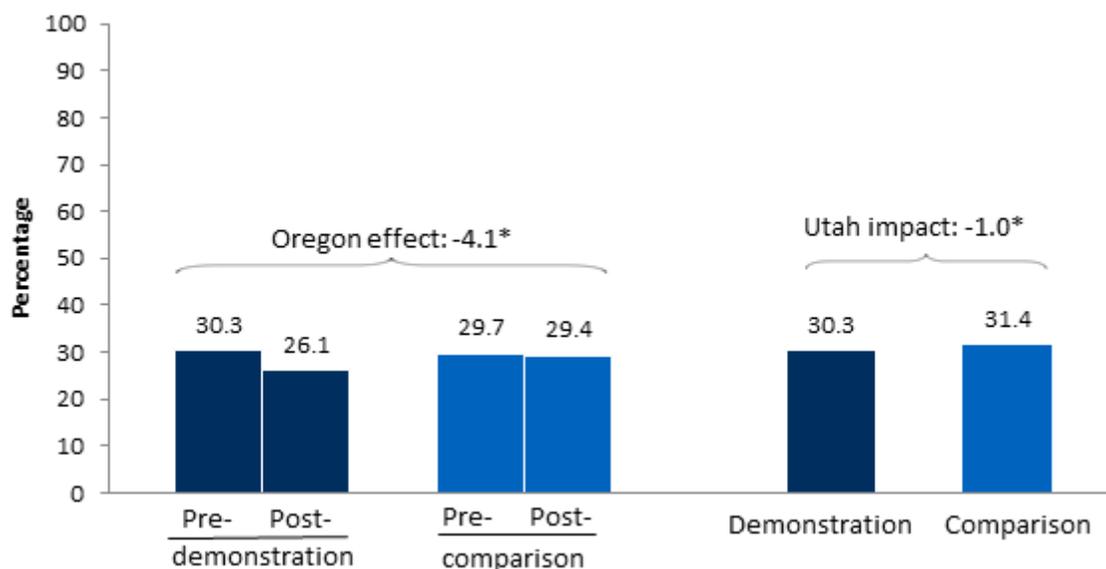
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable.

- The demonstration decreased the **rate of churning** in Utah by almost 3 percentage points; there was no effect in Oregon. This suggests that the recertification interview may present a barrier for some households in Utah.
- The demonstration applicants in both States had higher **average gross and earned income** amounts than applicants in the comparison groups. However, fewer applicants in the demonstrations actually reported earned income overall (Figure ES.3), suggesting that perhaps low-earning households may be less likely to report income under the demonstration.

Figure ES.3. Percentage of applicants reporting earnings

Source: Analysis of data from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

- The demonstrations had no effect on **benefit amounts paid** to households overall, either at application or recertification in either State.

Understanding the client's experience with the SNAP application process when there is no interview was a key part of the evaluation. The study team conducted two efforts to gather the perspectives of clients who received benefits and those who were denied for procedural reasons. Client perspectives were fairly consistent between demonstration and comparison groups. Client satisfaction was high among demonstration participants but was low among those denied benefits. Demonstration clients in both States who received benefits reported being very satisfied with the application process,¹⁰ indicating that eliminating the interview does not increase burden on participants. Among clients who were procedurally denied, satisfaction with the process was low in both the demonstration and comparison groups. But, more often, those denied in the demonstration group felt the application process was difficult and believed an interview would have helped them navigate the process.

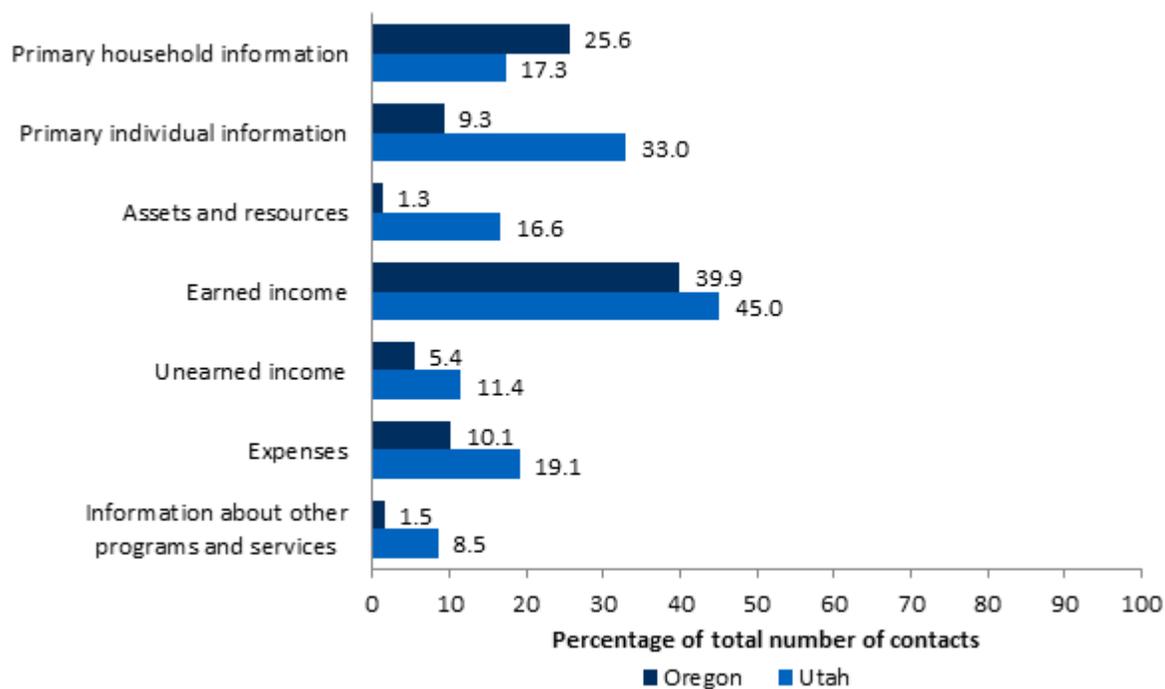
Worker outcomes

Worker and office outcomes are important measures for assessing staff performance and costs under the demonstration. The study team analyzed the outcomes of staff-reported contact with clients and the allocation of staff time spent on various activities. In addition, the study team analyzed (1) cost data to compare the cost to process applications between groups and (2) quality control (QC) data to determine case and payment error rates.

Client contact. States instructed their staffs to document when a demonstration client requested an interview and, among those not interviewed, when and for what purpose the staff contacted clients to collect additional information. Analysis of these data show that eligibility workers in Oregon reported interviewing a much higher proportion of demonstration clients than workers in Utah did and they also were more likely to contact demonstration clients. However, the study team learned during site visits that staffs in both States recorded these demonstration indicators inconsistently. Therefore, these results should be interpreted cautiously. Although the level of contact may be underestimated in both States, the distribution of reported reasons for client contact is likely reliable (if not representative of all contact) for cases that were documented by eligibility workers. These data suggest that in both States the most common reason eligibility workers contacted demonstration clients was to discuss clients' earned income (Figure ES.4). This is consistent with interview responses in which eligibility workers reported that households with earnings were the most complex cases and they often needed to talk with demonstration clients about information on the application.

¹⁰ This was not statistically significant by State but when client responses were pooled together overall the demonstration clients were significantly more satisfied with the application process.

Figure ES.4. Reasons for staff contacting demonstration households to complete their application or recertification, as a percentage of all contacts



Source: Analysis of data from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Worker time and cost. Demonstration and comparison eligibility workers self-reported the time they spent on various SNAP activities over the course of a five-day work week.¹¹ The study team analyzed these data to determine if there were overall differences in the time spent to process demonstration cases versus comparison cases, as well as differences in the time spent on specific certification or recertification tasks. States also provided salary and benefit data, by staff, to determine the cost of these differences in processing time.¹²

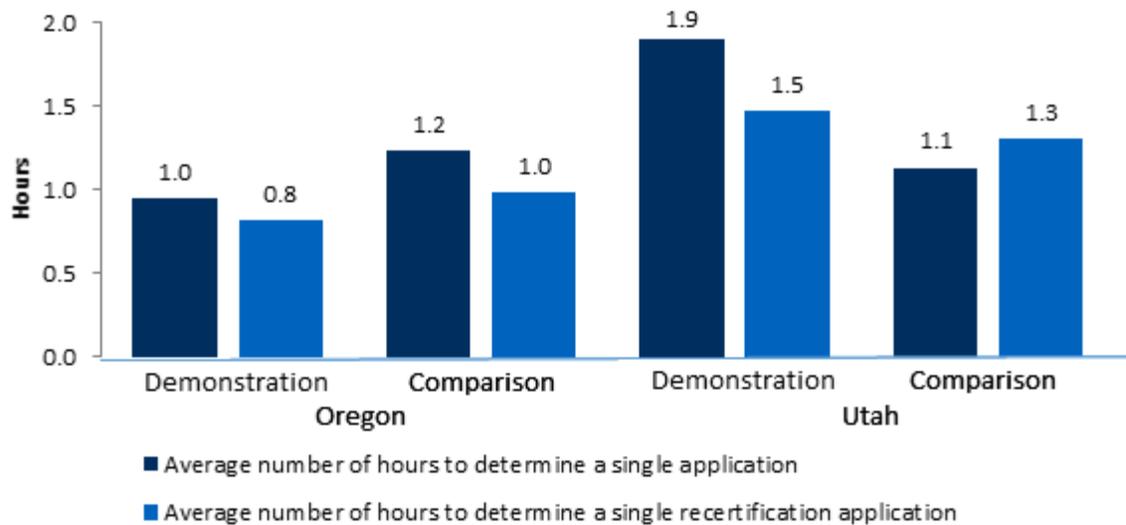
The study team found that time and cost savings in the demonstration were not apparent. Assessments of staff time and costs showed that eliminating the interview did not produce major savings or efficiencies. Although some staff might have saved time, the work could have simply shifted to other workers in the office. In Oregon, the staff time to complete applications in demonstration offices was slightly lower than in comparison offices, but these results did not include the time front office staff spent directing clients and helping review and complete applications. Eligibility and front office staff agreed that work from eligibility staff was shifted to

¹¹ Workers in Utah processed both demonstration and comparison cases, so each worker documented separately the time he or she spent on each type of case. In Oregon, the demonstration and comparison was conducted by office, so workers processed only demonstration or only comparison cases.

¹² The number of workers included for this analysis was small (22 workers in Oregon and 21 in Utah) compared to the total number of workers in each State, and respondents were not selected as representative samples of the overall eligibility staff. The results, therefore, may not be representative of the time and cost of the demonstration overall.

front office staff in the Oregon demonstration sites; however, these efforts are not represented in this analysis because front office staff were not surveyed. In Utah, an analysis of the time a given worker spent processing demonstration cases versus comparison cases each day found that it took nearly twice as long to process demonstration applications. That increase was driven by the additional time required to verify client information (Figure ES.5). However, differences in staff time and costs for demonstration cases may in part reflect the temporary nature and partial scope of the demonstration; if this was implemented as a statewide policy, the time and costs associated with the demonstration may decrease as States implement policies more efficiently and provide additional supports to staff.

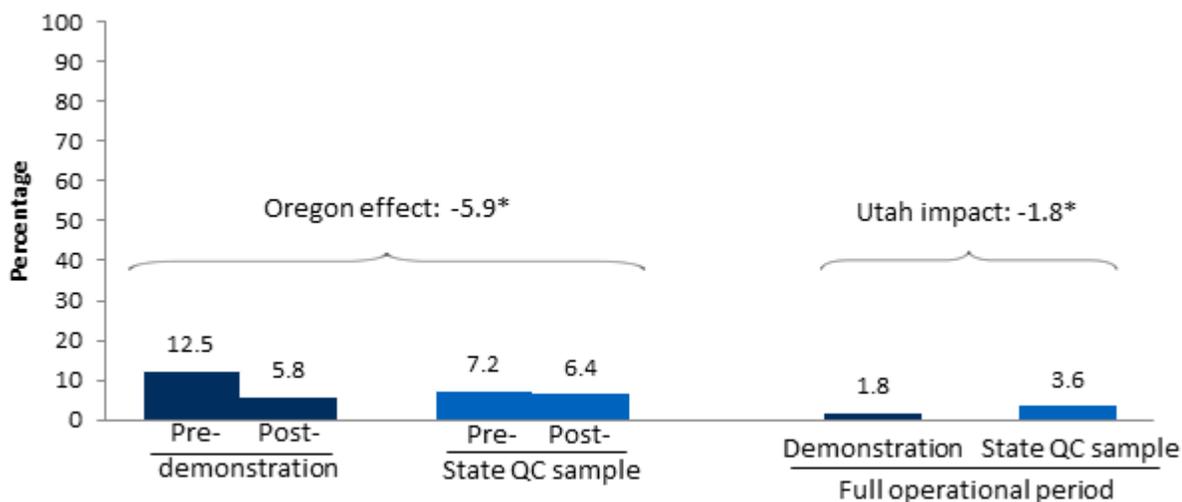
Figure ES.5. Average number of hours to determine eligibility for a single application



Source: Analysis of data collected by Mathematica from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Error rates. Oregon and Utah provided QC-like reviews of demonstration cases they conducted for the study team’s analysis of how eliminating the interview affected the accuracy of the benefit calculation. The study team calculated both the case error rate (the number of errors found divided by the number of sample cases) and the payment error rate (total amount of benefits issued in error divided by the total amount of benefits issued) for each State. The study team compared these errors to those in the official State QC files and found that the demonstration did not appear to negatively affect error rates and may, in fact, increase accuracy in both States. The case and payment error rates for the demonstration groups were lower than the State QC error rate in both States. These results were significant in both States for the case error rate (Figure ES.6) and significant in Utah for the payment error rate.¹³

¹³ Note that the method for collecting the demonstration quality reviews and the timing of the data collection relative to the standard State QC reviews may bias the demonstration error rate results.

Figure ES.6. Case error rate for QC-like reviews and State QC error rates

Source: QC-like reviews collected from Oregon and Utah. State QC error rates from the 2012 and 2013 FNS quality control data.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Conclusions and considerations

The primary goal FNS established for this study was to determine how eliminating the SNAP interview at certification and recertification affected such program outcomes as access, accuracy, costs, and client satisfaction. Even though Oregon and Utah used different evaluation designs, the study team found similar patterns in the outcomes. In general, eliminating the interview had few significant effects on client outcomes for the overall populations, but some subgroups experienced larger effects. The effects on worker and program outcomes were mixed—for example, demonstration cases often took longer to process but they also had lower error rates.

Each State relied on different process models for conducting SNAP intake and eligibility determination¹⁴ and each State served different populations.¹⁵ However, several common themes emerged across the two States that can provide informative lessons for assessing the usefulness of waiving the SNAP interview:

- **Complete applications and data quality become much more important if no interview is conducted.** Staffs in both States said that reaching clients in the demonstration was often difficult, and obtaining a simple clarification on an otherwise complete application was sometimes time-consuming. In fact, staff in Utah spent four times longer, on average, collecting and processing verifications for their demonstration cases than they did for their

¹⁴ The two States represent the spectrum of modernization: Oregon is less modernized than many States and Utah is one of the most modernized States.

¹⁵ Comparison of the caseload characteristics of the two States show that Oregon had smaller household sizes on average, much higher percentages of household heads who were male and non-hispanic whites, and much lower percentages of households with children than Utah.

comparison cases. In addition, demonstration offices in Oregon found they needed to change the intake process to require front office staff to review all applications for completeness prior to accepting the application. Without this step, eligibility staff found most applications could not be processed without some form of client contact.

- **Eliminating interviews requires few policy and system changes, but training is key for consistent messaging and results.** In eliminating the interview, neither Oregon nor Utah required major changes to policy, process, or technology. The different levels of modernization or types of process models did not appear to affect the transition to the new policy either. However, both States experienced difficulty with clearly and consistently messaging the demonstration to staff. Although most staff ultimately conducted the process correctly, some staff in both States never properly documented client contacts. Some staff also continued to contact clients for more extensive interview-like conversations, even though this was unnecessary.
- **States need flexibility to tailor interview requirements to worker and client needs.** Staffs in both States said that completely eliminating the interview in all cases might not be the best approach for workers or clients. State staff felt they should have flexibility to determine who and when to interview. Most staff agreed that households known to the system, such as those recertifying, might not need to complete interviews because basic information about them has already been recorded and the recertification process is a relatively easy update. Conversely, some staff suggested that all new applicants not previously in the SNAP system should be interviewed because collecting accurate information from clients unknown to the State often took more time than for other applicants. In addition, staff pointed out that more complex cases—such as those involving households with earnings, self-employed individuals, students, or homeless individuals—could benefit from an interview because workers could more quickly obtain clarification on application questions and discuss the special types of verification these clients might have to provide.

Overall, the study suggests that the contribution of eligibility interviews on SNAP eligibility and benefit determination is mixed. Interviews may improve application timeliness and increase the likelihood that applicants will report earnings. However, the interview does not necessarily improve approval or denial rates or accuracy of benefit payments. In fact, eliminating the interview may reduce error rates and decrease program churning. In considering the expansion of this policy, FNS will need to identify which combinations of factors are most salient for their decision-making. If interviews were eliminated, States would require a level of flexibility to determine the interview policy most appropriate for their staffs and clientele.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's largest food assistance program, has undergone unprecedented growth--surging from 17 million in 2000 to nearly 47 million in 2014 (USDA 2014). However during the same period, States were facing increasing fiscal and political pressures to reduce the program's administrative costs while providing services to this growing number of clients. A national recession and State budget deficits along with hiring freezes forced many States to seek new approaches to maintain program access to their clients using fewer resources. One approach many States have explored is to modify how staff interview or collect information from clients for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility.

Most States currently have waivers to replace required, in-person SNAP eligibility interviews with telephone interviews, and a few others waive the recertification interview entirely for certain types of clients. Now the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is testing additional modification to the interview process. FNS awarded grants to two States—Oregon and Utah—to conduct demonstrations in which the eligibility interviews at certification and recertification were completely eliminated.¹⁶ FNS commissioned Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate these demonstrations and to assess the contributions of the eligibility interview in determining SNAP benefits.

In this report, we provide the findings from these demonstrations and detail the effects of the demonstration on various outcomes. The report also includes State staff and client perspectives on and experiences with eliminating the SNAP interview. Chapter I focuses on the policy context, objectives, and methodology of the study, and provides background about the demonstrations. Chapter II provides a profile of each State, including the local context in which the demonstration was implemented and how it was implemented. This chapter also describes staff perceptions of the demonstration. Chapter III describes the effects of eliminating the interview on client outcomes—including participation and denial rates, benefit levels, and client experiences—and worker outcomes—including level of contact with clients, staff time spent to process cases and the associated costs, and payment error rates. In the final chapter, we present important themes and lessons learned from the demonstrations that could guide FNS as it considers the effectiveness of the policy governing interviews.

A. Policy context

FNS has implemented regulations that require State eligibility staff to interview households prior to initial certification for SNAP benefits and again as a part of the periodic recertification process (generally every 6 to 24 months after initial certification, depending on the household type). The interviews help State staff confirm and complete the information on the application and recertification forms, collect documentation, inform clients of their rights and responsibilities, and provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions about their case. States

¹⁶FNS initially selected North Carolina to participate in the study; however, during the demonstration, the State made several major changes to its eligibility system that compromised the ability of the State to provide data sufficient for the evaluation team to assess the effects of the demonstration. Therefore, after consulting with North Carolina, FNS decided to exclude the State from the study.

are required to conduct face-to-face interviews, unless the State determines that visiting the office poses a hardship to the client, in which case they can conduct a telephone interview. However, over the last decade, most States applied for and received waivers that allow for telephone interviews in all cases, without the need to document a hardship. By 2015, 47 States had waivers of the face-to-face interview at certification, recertification, or both (FNS 2015).

Now that most States offer to interview clients by telephone, some are interested in eliminating eligibility interviews altogether, just as they do for many other assistance programs.¹⁷ Seven States currently operate waivers that eliminate recertification interviews for elderly and disabled individuals (USDA 2015); other States have unsuccessfully applied for waivers to eliminate SNAP interviews for a broader range of individuals.¹⁸ These States suggest that eliminating the interview could reduce costs and client burden. All interviews—even those conducted by telephone—require substantial staff resources and increase States' administrative burden for SNAP (the interview can last 15 to 30 minutes, but the time needed to schedule interviews, reschedule missed appointments, and send reminders to clients increases the overall time and costs). Interviews can be time-consuming for clients as well, and those who have transportation issues or who work during business hours often find it challenging to complete the interview process. In addition, given that new technologies and data exchanges make it possible to verify much of the information on a client's application, the importance of the interview in determining an individual's eligibility has diminished for some States in recent years. If States were to eliminate eligibility interviews, they could rely on current technology and data exchanges to verify client data. They would contact clients only for clarification or when an application is incomplete.

Nevertheless, the SNAP eligibility interview does serve several important purposes for staff and clients. These include:

- Increasing the likelihood that accurate information is collected and that discussions with clients about their situations will lead to approving more accurate benefits
- Informing clients of their rights and responsibilities as SNAP client
- Assessing the overall needs of those in the client's household and offering additional assistance through other programs or referrals
- Helping clients who are not familiar with the application process or who experience difficulty in navigating the SNAP system seek further assistance
- Providing information to other assistance programs that require no interview (such as Medicaid and TANF, which often rely on the information provided by the SNAP interview to clarify or provide additional information)

¹⁷ Interviews are not required for Medicaid eligibility and States have discretion to decide whether interviews are needed for TANF.

¹⁸ To date, FNS has not approved any waivers to eliminate interviews for all clients, beyond those allowed for this study.

Prior to this study, none had examined the contribution of the SNAP eligibility interview in serving these purposes, particularly in the context of technologies now being used in the application and eligibility determination processes.

B. Demonstration background

In June 2011, FNS requested applications from States to implement a demonstration that would eliminate the eligibility interview at certification and recertification.¹⁹ FNS awarded grants to North Carolina, Oregon, and Utah in September 2011 (ultimately, North Carolina was excluded from the evaluation and no findings from that State are included in this report). The States each received approximately \$170,000 to develop and administer the demonstration and to participate in the evaluation.

The two States used different models to assign clients to the demonstration. Oregon implemented the demonstration in five sites in which all applicants and participants would not be subject to an interview at certification or recertification. The State worked with the evaluation team to select for each of the demonstration sites a comparison site that best resembled the demonstration site in several areas, including caseload size, caseload characteristics, office process model, geography, and economic factors. All clients in the comparison sites were subject to the “business-as-usual” interview process. Table I.1 shows that in Oregon, three of the demonstration sites were counties and two were SNAP offices within a county.²⁰ Utah implemented the demonstration statewide, randomly assigning some SNAP applicants and participants to the demonstration group (no interview) and some to a comparison group (mandatory interview).

Table I.1. Oregon demonstration and comparison sites

	Demonstration site	Comparison site
1	One Clackamas County SNAP office	One different Clackamas County SNAP office
2	All Lane County SNAP offices	All Marion County SNAP offices
3	All Malheur County SNAP offices	All Umatilla County SNAP offices
4	Five Multnomah County SNAP offices	Five different Multnomah County SNAP offices
5	All Washington County SNAP offices	All Jackson County and Josephine County SNAP offices

¹⁹ States had to agree, however, that an interview would be conducted if the client requested one.

²⁰ Oregon could not identify reasonable comparison counties for Clackamas or Multnomah County so it selected offices within each county for the demonstration and the comparison groups. Consequently, for the study period, the State reversed its “no wrong door” policy, in which clients could go to any office they chose (regardless of where they lived) to obtain services. To prevent clients who heard about the demonstration from selecting a location they saw as most advantageous to them, clients could submit an application at an office that was not providing services to their home address, but the application was sent for processing to the office associated with the clients’ address.

FNS required that Oregon and Utah include in the demonstration group no more than 20 percent of their overall caseloads. At the start of the demonstration, Oregon selected demonstration sites that accounted for about 19 percent of the State's monthly caseload. At the beginning of the demonstration in Utah, the State assigned 20 percent of its current participants to the demonstration group and used an algorithm in its eligibility system to assign about 20 percent of all new applicants to the demonstration on an ongoing basis. Once Utah made an assignment to the demonstration group, that individual kept that assignment throughout the demonstration period, even if the case was closed and he or she re-applied. Individuals assigned to the comparison group were reassigned each time they re-applied.²¹

Oregon and Utah had approximately one year to plan and implement their demonstrations. The duration of the demonstrations in both States was 15 months--September 1, 2012 through November 30, 2013.²²

C. Study objectives

The study examined how key outcomes, such as program access, payment accuracy, and administrative costs, vary with and without an interview at both certification and recertification. The study also assessed how eliminating the eligibility interview at application and recertification affects (1) the steps that eligibility workers must take to ensure the collection of accurate client information and (2) client and staff satisfaction. The study had eight research objectives:

1. Describe the no-interview demonstration in each State
2. Describe any modernization activities in each State that complement the demonstration to make it more effective²³
3. Describe the process for implementing the demonstration
4. Describe clients' response to the demonstration
5. Describe the response of SNAP staff to the demonstration
6. Describe the response community-based organizations (CBOs) and other stakeholders had to the demonstration

²¹ Utah unintentionally implemented their random assignment algorithm to allow comparison cases to be randomly assigned each time the household submitted an application during the demonstration period (it did not retain the initial assignment); it had a one-in-five chance of being reassigned to the demonstration group at each application. (Households assigned to the demonstration group remained there and were not subject to additional rounds of random assignment.) This resulted in some households experiencing comparison-group procedures and then subsequently experiencing demonstration-group procedures during the demonstration period.

²² Utah was granted an extension of the demonstration into 2014, as shutting down the demonstration would place an additional burden on the State at a time when it was implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The evaluation includes data only through November 2013.

²³ Modernization encompasses a broad range of activities States can implement to improve client access, reduce costs, and improve staff efficiency. These include expanding the use of technology, making administrative structural changes, using community partnerships, and developing policy changes.

7. Analyze changes in key program outcomes after implementation of the demonstration
8. Identify considerations for future studies

To meet the objectives of the study, Mathematica collected four types of data for analysis:

1. **Site visit data**, including interviews with State and local SNAP staff, interviews with representatives of CBOs, and observations of local office operations
2. **Client data**, including surveys of SNAP participants in the demonstration and comparison groups, and discussions with individuals in the demonstration and comparison groups who were denied SNAP benefits because of procedural reasons (through focus groups and interviews)
3. **Administrative data**, including SNAP case records from State eligibility and benefit determination systems
4. **Office performance data**, including survey of staff time, cost data, and “quality control (QC)-like reviews” of demonstration households²⁴

This report presents the findings from the analyses of all collected data and addresses the study’s objectives. In Table I.2, we identify the data sources and types of analysis used to respond to each study objective.

Table I.2. Data source and analysis method, by study objective

Research Objective	Data Source				Analysis Method
	Site visit data	Client data	Admin data	Office data	
Objective 1: Describe the no-interview demonstration in each State	x	x			Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 2: Describe any modernization activities in each State that complement the demonstration to make its application most effective	x				Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 3: Describe the process for implementing the demonstration	x				Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 4: Describe the response of clients to the demonstration	x	x	x	x	Qualitative analysis using theme tables; survey data analysis
Objective 5: Describe the response of SNAP staff to the demonstration	x			x	Qualitative analysis using theme tables; time use and cost analysis
Objective 6: Describe the response of CBOs and other stakeholders to the demonstration	x				Qualitative analysis using theme tables
Objective 7: Document how program outcomes change after the demonstration is implemented	x	x	x	x	Impact analysis in Utah; difference-in-differences analysis in Oregon
Objective 8: Document the main take-away points from the study to inform FNS for future studies	x	x	x	x	Summarizing the findings from all analyses

²⁴ QC-like reviews are similar to the QC reviews States conduct annually for FNS.

D. Study data collection and analysis methodology

This evaluation is a comprehensive overview of the implementation, operations, and effects of the two demonstrations. To calculate program effects, the study used a comparison group design in Oregon—using a difference-in-differences approach to compare changes in demonstration counties to changes in similar comparison counties over time—and a randomized controlled trial design in Utah. We also examined qualitative data to describe the demonstration approaches and to provide context for interpreting the effects we calculated.

We can be more certain—because of the design used in Utah—of the validity of the findings in that State than of the findings in Oregon. Randomly assigning cases to the demonstration and comparison groups in Utah allows us to know with certainty that any differences in outcomes observed between these two groups were due to the demonstration. The findings from the Utah analysis can, therefore, be used to make causal statements about the effect of the demonstration. In contrast, because Oregon did not randomly assign cases to the demonstration and comparison groups, it is unclear whether differences in outcomes observed between the two groups were due to the demonstration. Any differences that we observe may have been due to the demonstration or to other factors that differed for demonstration and comparison sites (such as differences in the local economy). Although we make adjustments for other factors, it is not possible to account for or measure all external factors that could influence the demonstration results.

In this section, we briefly describe the data we collected, the data sources, and the analytic approaches taken to respond to the study objectives. Appendix A includes additional detail on the data collection and analysis, and any data limitations. Table I.3 provides an overview of the types of qualitative and quantitative data we collected, the approximate size of the sample, and the data collection time period.

Table I.3. Description of the data collected for the study

Data Source	Types of Data	Sample Size			Time Period for Data Collection
		Oregon	Utah	Total	
Site Visit interviews	Interviews with State and local administrators, frontline staff, and community organizations that serve low-income families	78	51	129	September–October 2013
Administrative data and client contact data	Monthly caseload files for all applicant and participants, and indicators of demonstration status and contact with clients	930,719 (total cases)	328,118 (total cases)	1,258,837 (total cases)	September 2010–November 2013
Client surveys	Demonstration and comparison clients who applied for or recertified for SNAP in the last two months	731	747	1,478	September–December 2013
Procedurally denied client interviews	Interviews (focus groups and telephone interviews) with demonstration and comparison clients who were denied SNAP for procedural reasons ^a	8	30	38	September–March 2014
Staff time-use surveys	Five days of work activities tracked by eligibility staff in demonstration and comparison sites	22	21	43	August–September 2013

Data Source	Types of Data	Sample Size			Time Period for Data Collection
		Oregon	Utah	Total	
QC-like reviews	Sample of active demonstration cases	584	588	1,172	August 2012–November 2012 August 2013–November 2013

^aDue to low participation in the focus groups, we conducted additional telephone interviews with applicants who were procedurally denied. The focus group discussions and interviews were pooled for analysis.

1. Interview data

A key source of qualitative data for the study came from in-person, semi-structured interviews with various respondents in Oregon and Utah. The site visits included observations of local office procedures, interviews with State and local SNAP staff, and interviews with representatives of community advocacy organizations. We visited 14 locations in Oregon, including demonstration and comparison offices. We visited 9 locations in Utah, which varied in size, area of the State, and participant demographics.²⁵ The visits took place between September and October 2013. At the State agency offices, we interviewed agency leaders responsible for managing the demonstration and staff overseeing demonstration-related activities in SNAP operations, policy, information technology, and staff training divisions. In local offices and eligibility processing centers, we interviewed office managers, team supervisors, eligibility workers, employment counselors, and customer service representatives. To organize and analyze the data we collected from 129 people across the two sites, we created theme tables and developed profiles for each site (Yin 1994).

2. Administrative data

We collected from SNAP agencies in each State monthly caseload files on all SNAP applicants and participants, as well as demonstration-specific indicators of participation and client contact.

a. Monthly caseload data

The caseload data we collected spanned September 2011 through November 2013, covering the 24 months before the start of the demonstration in September 2012, and the full 15-month demonstration period. Administrative data included an indicator of whether the household was in the demonstration or comparison group, demographic variables, application and case characteristics, and case-processing actions.

²⁵ See Appendix A for more information on selection of sites for site visits.

To estimate the effect of the demonstration on SNAP application and participant outcomes, we conducted a double-difference analysis for Oregon and calculated the differences between demonstration and comparison group outcomes for Utah. In Oregon, to determine the demonstration's effect on client outcomes, we compared changes in outcomes in the five demonstration sites with changes in outcomes in the comparison sites (that resembled the demonstration sites in caseload size and characteristics). The validity of the findings relies on the assumption that the outcomes in the demonstration and comparison sites would evolve similarly in the absence of the demonstration. To determine the demonstration's impact on client outcomes in Utah, we subtracted the average outcome value for the comparison group from the average outcome value for the demonstration group. Because Utah randomly assigned clients to the demonstration and comparison groups, any differences between the two groups can be attributed to the demonstration rather than to other factors. We conducted statistical tests to determine which outcomes differed significantly between the two groups.²⁶

After estimating the demonstration effects in both States, we calculated regression-adjusted impacts to control for pre-demonstration differences between the demonstration and comparison groups. Because cases in Oregon were not randomly assigned, and caseloads in no two offices or counties are identical, we cannot be certain that different outcomes between the two groups were due to the demonstration. Therefore, we controlled for other observable site characteristics that may be correlated with changes in the outcomes. Specifically, we regressed the percentage change in each outcome on an indicator for whether the site was a demonstration site and several site-level socioeconomic characteristics, which were selected to capture site-specific factors that may influence the outcomes of interest (see Appendix A for the full list). Although Utah did use random assignment, there were some minor differences between the baseline characteristics of demonstration and comparison cases. We controlled for these differences by regressing each outcome on an indicator for whether the case was in the demonstration or comparison group and several socioeconomic baseline characteristics (see Appendix A for the full list).

For both Oregon and Utah, a single household (known as a case) could appear more than once in our analysis. For example, for the outcome of total number of applications processed, we counted all the applications that were processed during the demonstration period (for Utah) and during the pre- and post-implementation periods (for Oregon). If a particular case submitted multiple applications, all of those applications were included in the analysis, which resulted in the case appearing more than once in the analysis.²⁷ In the Utah regressions, we accounted for this "clustering" of observations within cases when calculating the statistical significance of our findings. It was not necessary to make an adjustment for clustering in the Oregon regressions because they were conducted at the site level rather than the case level.

²⁶ In Oregon, because individual cases were not randomly assigned to the demonstration and comparison groups, and because the analysis included the entire population of the two groups (as opposed to a sample), it was not necessary to conduct statistical tests for whether changes in outcomes differed between the two groups. Any observed difference is a true difference.

²⁷ Among households who submitted at least one application during the study period, households in Oregon submitted an average of 1.4 applications each. Households in Utah submitted an average of 1.8 applications each.

We encountered several important limitations with the caseload data that should be considered when interpreting findings. The following is a list of the limitations; Appendix A provides a detailed description of each:

- In Oregon,
 - Data included only the last status (open, pending, denied, or closed) of each household during the month.
 - Data did not include the date the eligibility determination decision was made on an application.
 - Some clients switched between demonstration and comparison offices during the demonstration period.
- In Utah,
 - Some households applying for benefits were not assigned to the demonstration or comparison group due to the method they used to submit their applications.²⁸
 - Some households in the comparison group were subject to multiple rounds of random assignment.

b. Client contact indicators

Although eligibility interviews were not required for demonstration clients, contact between clients and SNAP staff was expected, and States were asked to track the frequency of and reasons for contact. SNAP agencies in both States provided the number of demonstration clients who received eligibility interviews (at the clients' request) and, among clients who did not receive interviews, the number with staff-initiated contacts and the reasons for the contacts. We tabulated the data to determine how frequently staff contacted demonstration clients and for what reasons. We analyzed the results to identify patterns within and across the two States.

²⁸ Utah conducted an automated random assignment process using its client interface system. Under standard procedures, all paper and online applications pass through this system and would, therefore, be randomly assigned. In rare instances, applications might be completed over the phone or via other procedures that bypass the client interface. During the demonstration, these applications were not randomly assigned to either group. They were excluded from the evaluation.

3. Client perspectives

We assessed client experiences with and opinions of the SNAP application process as part of the evaluation through a client survey and interviews. The client survey was targeted to recent applicants or recertifications in both the demonstration and comparison group. Clients were asked about their application experiences and their perceptions of the ease of application. We also conducted interviews with applicants who were denied SNAP benefits due to procedural reasons in both the demonstration and comparison groups.²⁹ This group is particularly important, as the lack of an interview could directly affect the clients' ability to understand what they needed to do to complete the application process. In addition, the demonstration could affect workers' ability to reach clients to clarify information, causing an increase in procedural denials. The interviews with procedurally denied applicants focused on the process for completing the application and why clients were not able to complete it.

a. Client survey data

To evaluate the demonstration's effect on client experiences, we conducted a brief telephone survey with clients in the demonstration and comparison groups in both States. The survey collected client responses on their experiences applying for SNAP and, if applicable, completing the eligibility interview. Clients reported their experiences in asking for and receiving assistance, difficulty in completing the certification process, their level of understanding of SNAP procedures, whether they were informed about other sources of assistance, and their overall satisfaction with SNAP. We identified survey respondents by drawing random samples of clients from the SNAP administrative data from both States. We restricted our samples to clients who had certified or recertified for SNAP during the previous two months, drawing 3,600 of these clients (1,800 demonstration and comparison clients in each State). We conducted the survey between September 2013 and December 2013. Of the 3,600 clients, 1,478 clients completed a telephone interview, for an overall response rate of 41 percent.³⁰ To make the client satisfaction results representative of the combined study sample across the two States, we applied weights to adjust for sampling and nonresponse. We then conducted statistical tests to determine if satisfaction outcomes differed between demonstration and comparison clients.

The primary limitation of the survey data was our inability to locate many of the SNAP clients in the sample and ultimately obtaining a low response rate. To encourage clients to respond, we sent small pre-paid cash incentives as well as gift cards for survey completion. We sent additional reminders and conducted extensive efforts to identify additional phone numbers associated with sampled clients when the response rate remained low. We ultimately extended the survey period to three months rather than the planned two months.

²⁹ A procedural denial is due to a client not completing some part of the application process, like not submitting verification documents or not completing the interview.

³⁰ See Appendix A for more information on the survey response rate.

b. Discussions with clients denied for procedural reasons

We conducted a combination of focus groups and telephone interviews with applicants who were procedurally denied for benefits to better understand how their experiences in the demonstration may have differed from SNAP participants. During the site visits to each State in September and October 2013, we conducted eight focus groups with individuals who applied for benefits during the demonstration period but who were procedurally denied. We used administrative data from both States to identify the sample and recruited both demonstration and comparison clients for focus groups (two of each type in each State). We also targeted two of the focus groups in Utah to Spanish speakers (one demonstration and one comparison group).³¹ Participation in the focus groups was low (only 18 individuals participated across all eight focus groups), so we supplemented the focus groups with telephone interviews. We conducted 20 calls with demonstration and comparison denials in Utah.³² We analyzed the data collected from the interviews by creating tables of responses from calls and reviewing focus group transcripts. We pooled the data across States and highlighted differences and consistencies in the opinions of the demonstration and comparison groups.

4. Data related to staff time and cost

To assess whether application processing required more or less time under the demonstrations, we asked that eligibility workers track their time over the course of a work week. In both States, staff completed worksheets to track time spent on discrete SNAP-related activities throughout the day (an example of the worksheet is included in Appendix A). Each State selected workers to participate in the study examining time used to complete tasks. In Oregon, 22 eligibility workers (11 in four demonstration offices and 11 in four comparison offices) tracked their activities over a week in August 2013. In Utah, 21 eligibility workers that processed both demonstration and comparison cases from offices across the State provided data for a week in September 2013.³³ To analyze data, we averaged the time spent and number of cases in different activities across workers.

To determine if the demonstration affected costs, we compared the average cost to complete a single application in the demonstration and comparison groups. To estimate this cost, we used the time-use data described above in conjunction with cost information gathered from both States. We collected data on average labor rates of eligibility workers and number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff and average cost per FTE (including salary, benefits, and cost allocation) to determine and compare the costs associated with time spent on demonstration and comparison eligibility determination.

³¹ There were not enough procedural denials of Spanish-speaking individuals in Oregon during the time of our site visit for us to conduct a focus group.

³² Oregon did not provide the data needed to conduct additional calls in their State in time for the interview period.

³³ A few additional staff did submit survey of their time, but either the staff were not part of the demonstration or did not complete the surveys properly and had to be excluded.

5. QC-like reviews

To analyze the demonstration's potential effects on error rates, States provided reviews of demonstration cases, and we calculated case and payment error rates.³⁴ We asked States to collect data using their standard State QC sampling procedures used to determine the official State error rates each year. The QC-like reviews were conducted in a manner similar to the QC process, except that all reviews were conducted over the telephone instead of in person and only active cases were selected.³⁵ We requested that States sample a minimum of 225 active demonstration cases in each round of reviews, and we used the State QC error rates as a comparison for analysis.³⁶ The error analysis was similar to that used in QC reviews FNS uses to calculate the official State error rates. The case error rate is the number of errors found divided by the number of sample cases. The payment error rate is the total amount of benefits issued in error divided by the total amount of benefits issued.³⁷

³⁴ The case error rate is the number of errors found divided by the number of cases in the QC sample and the payment error rate is the total amount of benefits issued in error divided by the total amount of benefits issued to the sample households.

³⁵ We did not collect data on or calculate negative error rates (that is the rate at which households were incorrectly denied benefits).

³⁶ Although both States sample and review about 1,000 cases each year for FNS as part of the State QC process, those samples would not suffice for demonstration analysis; the number of demonstration cases included in the State sample would not be large enough to determine effects.

³⁷ The payment errors include all benefits issued to households determined to be ineligible and errors of more than \$50 for eligible households that were issued too much or too little in benefits.

II. DEMONSTRATION IMPLEMENTATION

In this chapter, we describe each State’s demonstration and the staff perceptions of it. The profiles include a description of the State and local context in which the demonstration was implemented (including the SNAP administrative structure, the “business-as-usual” model for applying for and receiving SNAP benefits in the State, and modernization efforts in place), the structure of the demonstration, and the implementation process. Section A details Oregon’s demonstration, Section B describes Utah’s demonstration, and Section C provides a summary of staff perceptions of the best aspects and outcomes of eliminating the interview and what proved most challenging.

A. Oregon

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) administers SNAP at the State level and grants localities flexibility in implementing policies and determining procedures. DHS applied for the demonstration in an effort to help local offices save time. DHS invited offices to volunteer to participate. Of those who volunteered, DHS selected 17 offices in five counties as demonstration sites. The counties, which accounted for about 19 percent of the State’s caseload, varied by geography, economic conditions, and the process models they used.

Key features of Oregon’s demonstration

Geographic area served: Clackamas, Lane, Malheur, Multnomah, and Washington counties

Groups excluded: TANF applicants^a

Demonstration period: September 1, 2012, to November 30, 2013

Percentage of SNAP caseload participating: 20.7 percent (approximately 107,800 participants each month)

Demonstration model: Selected demonstration sites in which all clients within that office’s geographic service area were not required to interview for SNAP certification and recertification

^a In Multnomah County, recertification cases that included day care were processed in the comparison site and required an interview.

1. State and local context

DHS administers several assistance programs in Oregon, including SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid. The State permits local offices to experiment with various process models, under the assumption that what works for a large urban area such as Portland might not effectively serve smaller rural areas of eastern Oregon. Oregon is predominantly rural, with pockets of urban areas, but SNAP participation is relatively high across the State. The State actively promotes access to assistance programs through outreach efforts and cooperation with a wide network of nonprofit organizations and advocates. SNAP participation in Oregon is one the highest in the country; over 95 percent of individuals eligible for SNAP receive it (Cunnyngham 2014). During the last several years, the State has begun implementing new strategies to respond to large and increasing caseloads and the need to process cases more efficiently.

a. SNAP administrative structure

DHS administers SNAP and other programs through 16 administrative districts. Within each district, the State operates three main types of local offices: (1) self-sufficiency program (SSP) offices, (2) aging and persons with disabilities (APD) offices, and (3) processing centers. SSP and APD offices are open to the public and conduct eligibility and recertification interviews in person or by telephone. Clients visit SSP offices to apply for SNAP, TANF, medical assistance, or day care.³⁸ Seniors or persons with disabilities may visit APD offices for specialized attention. Processing centers are not open to the public. They function primarily to process recertifications via telephone interviews.

The State makes SNAP policy decisions according to federal guidelines, but local offices implement the policies. Districts and local offices are permitted to provide input on policy matters but State approval is required for any policy changes. Districts have some flexibility in determining SNAP procedures for local offices. For example, offices in Multnomah County chose to move from a caseworker model—in which each worker is responsible for his or her own cases—to a pooled model—in which many workers process aspects of a single case and no one is solely responsible for a given case. Most other offices in Oregon continue to use the caseworker model.

b. Modernization efforts in place in the State

Before the demonstration, Oregon implemented several initiatives—administrative and technological—to streamline processes and increase the options for applying for assistance programs. During the demonstration, the State did not change any SNAP policies or implement new waivers. The administrative and technological initiatives that were in place during the demonstration are described below.

Ongoing paperwork model. Oregon introduced its Ongoing Paperwork Initiative to improve the efficiency of case processing. The initiative was rolled out office by office from January 2012 through January 2013.³⁹ The Ongoing Paperwork Initiative restructured the office work flow, requiring eligibility workers to rotate responsibilities and positions each day. The office restructuring also emphasized serving clients the same day or the day after their office visit. Front office staff schedule client appointments for workers through a scheduling board (either electronic or physical) that specifies time slots for each worker. Workers at the top of the board conduct in-person interviews; workers in the middle of the board help with intakes, if needed, and catch up on lower-priority paperwork. One worker is typically designated to conduct telephone interviews for all online, faxed, or mailed applications. The worker at the bottom of the board is the “worker of the day”—the individual who processes the highest-priority work (cases about to be closed if not processed within the week).

³⁸ During the demonstration, SNAP eligibility workers also processed medical applications, but in the last month of the demonstration, medical assistance application, processing, and tracking were separated from other DHS programs.

³⁹ Some comparison and demonstration offices implemented the initiative concurrently with the demonstration. The concurrent implementation sometimes caused staff confusion about how to implement the two efforts, making it difficult for some staff to disentangle the demonstration from the initiative when assessing the demonstration.

Electronic records. Oregon offered scanners to local offices to reduce paper and improve ease of access. Starting in early 2012, local offices could receive scanners but were not required to do so. The offices that chose to receive scanners could design how to incorporate them into their processes. Scanners could be used for converting paper files to electronic files or for attaching documentation to electronic case files.

Online application. In 2009, Oregon introduced its online application in the Portland metropolitan area and, in 2011, it made the process available statewide so clients could submit applications through the State's DHS website. The State system filtered submitted applications to the appropriate offices, and staff in those offices called clients for an unscheduled interview. Statewide, only about 20 percent of applications are submitted online, predominantly from the Portland metropolitan area. The remaining 80 percent are submitted in person at offices or by mail or fax.

c. Business-as-usual model

In the standard process model (called business-as-usual), clients have several options for submitting applications, but most visit the office and submit a paper application in person. Oregon has set a goal of interviewing all clients on the same day or next day of their office visit. With the move to the Ongoing Paperwork Initiative and the restructuring of the office work flow, staff generally interview clients within 15 to 60 minutes of arrival, although wait times may be several hours, depending on the time of day or time of the month. If the client must leave before being interviewed, he or she is scheduled for an appointment for a later time (for either a telephone or in-person interview).

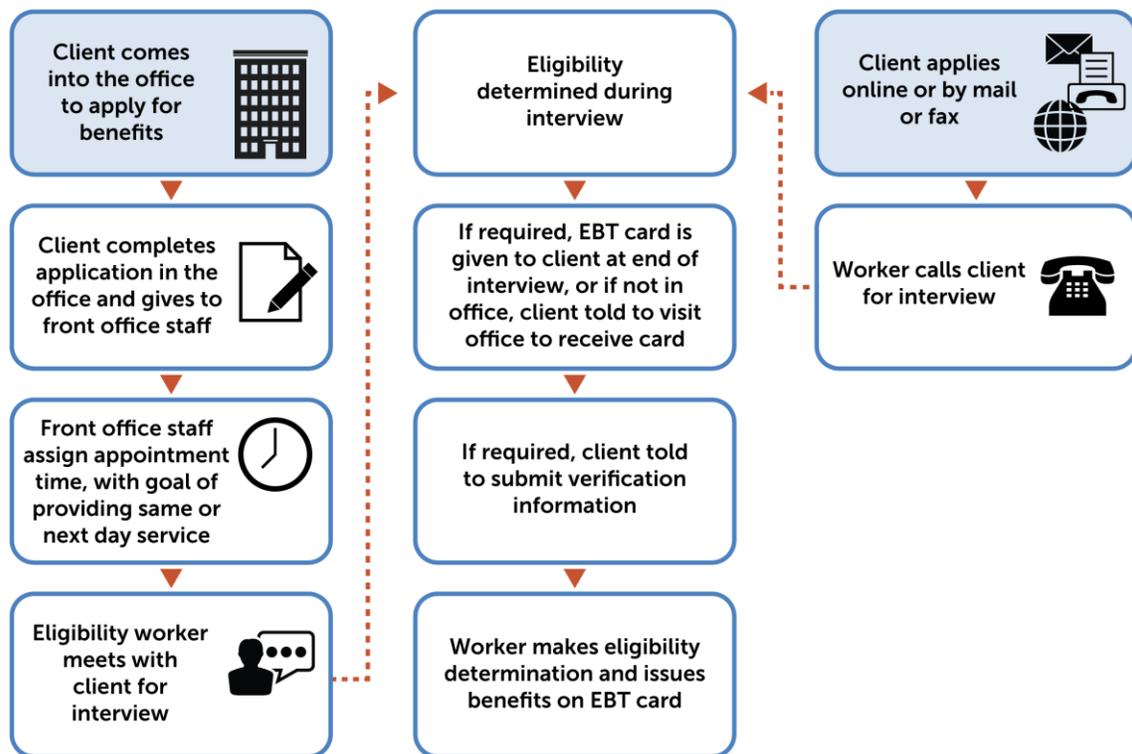
Application process. Oregon uses a single application for SNAP, TANF, child care, and—until recently—medical assistance. Front office staff review the application with the client, checking that he or she has answered key questions and has signed it. Staff then ask the client to wait, and assign him or her to the next available time slot for an eligibility worker to conduct an interview. Most clients rely on paper applications filled out at local DHS offices (Figure II.1).

Workers meet in person with each client who visits the office, and they generally spend 15 to 30 minutes interviewing that individual. When clients apply online or by fax or mail, a designated eligibility worker calls to conduct an eligibility interview by telephone. During the interview, the eligibility worker reviews and confirms all of the information entered on the application and asks the client to clarify any discrepancies or gaps. The worker also discusses the client's rights and responsibilities and asks if he or she needs other services, such as Medicaid or information on a food bank while awaiting assistance. Before ending the interview, the worker explains which verification documents are needed to process the case and how to submit them. The client receives the same information through a notice in the mail. When a client completes the application process in person, office staff distribute an EBT card when the interview is completed. Clients who do not complete the application process in person (but participate in a telephone interview) generally must visit a local office to receive EBT cards; however, a few offices have started mailing EBT cards to those applicants.

Verifying information. Oregon has eliminated many of the verification documents required for SNAP applications. The State accepts client statements or verbal confirmation in place of

several types of verification. Each client must submit, at a minimum, verification of head-of-household identity, verification of income, proof of alien status for noncitizens, and proof of federal financial aid and work study for students. The State permits workers to accept client statements without other verification for many sources of income (such as income from a relative) or verbal verification of income from employer via telephone. If the worker cannot or does not contact the client's employer, clients must submit pay stubs for earned income. Clients may mail, fax, or hand deliver required verification documents.

Figure II.1. Flow for clients in Oregon's business-as-usual model



Processing cases. After the interview is completed and all verification documents are submitted, workers determine eligibility and issue benefits on EBT cards. If the worker has an application complete enough to make a determination at the time of the interview, the decision is shared with the client. If the worker cannot make the eligibility determination upon completing the interview—usually because the client did not provide all of the verifications or information needed—the worker sends the client a letter and, in some offices, also attempts to call to notify the client of the decision.

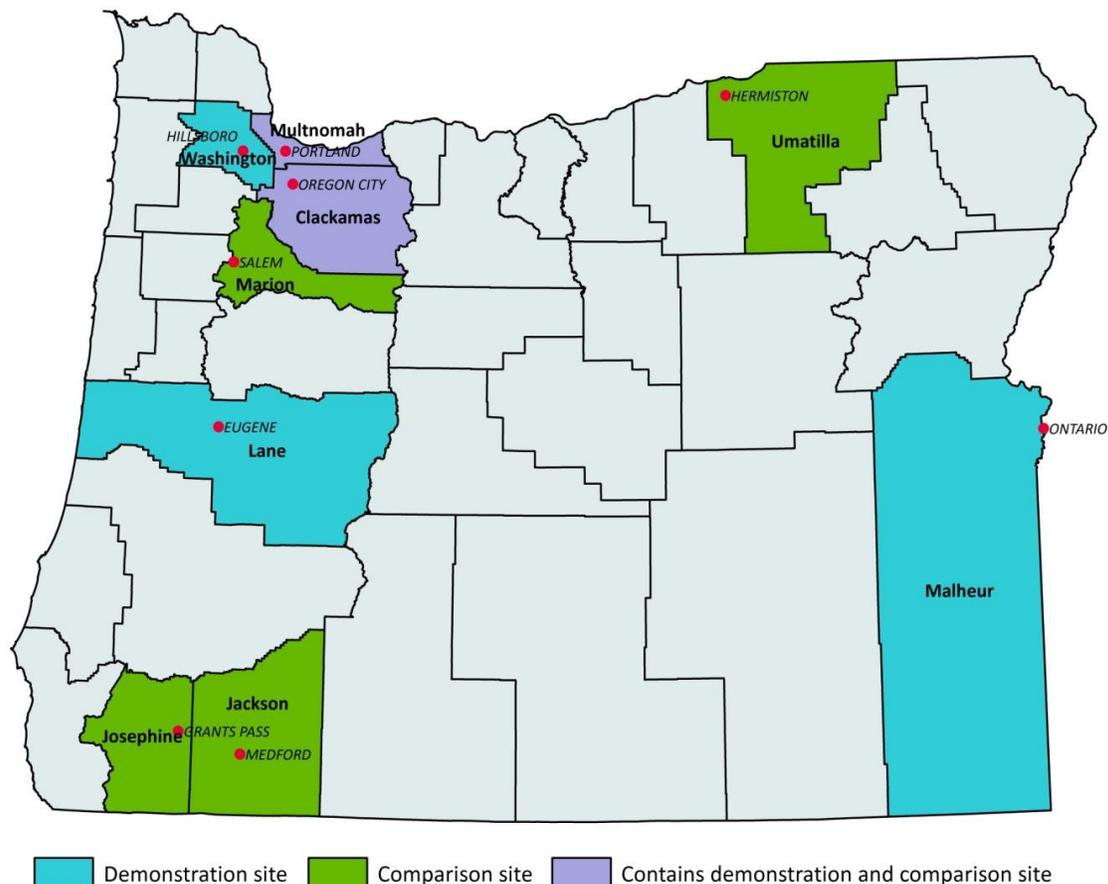
Recertification process. The recertification process is largely the same as initial certification. The State mails an application to the client (the same application used for initial certification). The client can mail in the completed application or take it to a local office. Mailed applications are distributed to the appropriate local office for processing, after which clients are

contacted by telephone for an eligibility interview. If a client delivers the application to the office, the process is the same as for initial certification.

2. Demonstration

Oregon decided to participate in the demonstration to determine if eliminating an interview for certification and recertification would improve efficiency and help manage staff workloads. Oregon designated 17 local offices in five counties as demonstration offices (Figure II.2); 17 offices in six counties were selected as comparison offices.

Figure II.2. Map of Oregon's demonstration and comparison sites



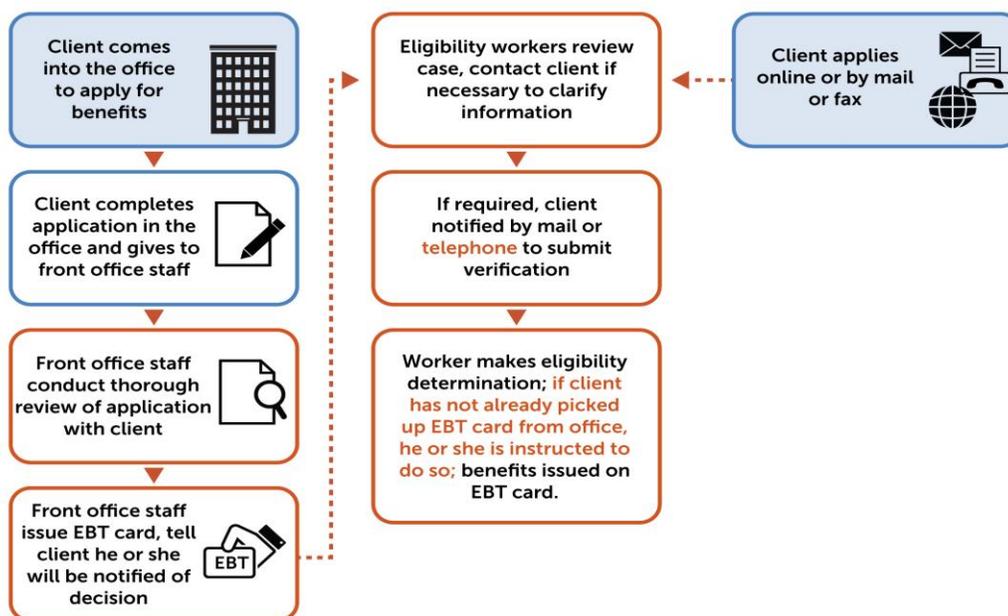
Note: The largest city in each county is shown for reference. For the counties we visited, we also visited offices in each of those major cities.

a. Demonstration structure

The application and recertification processes were largely the same—with only a few differences—in demonstration and business-as-usual sites; for instance, there was no change to the verification requirements and procedures or the determination process once the application was complete. The following highlights the differences between the two for certification and recertification (Figure II.3):

- **Upfront process involved more review.** Front office staff completed a more thorough review of applications during the demonstration than was initially required in the business-as-usual model. Staff were asked to check for completeness and accuracy and, when necessary, ask clients about missing information or if answers that appear to be illogical are correct, such as no reported income but reported expenses. Front office staff highlighted missing or questionable answers and asked clients to fill in the required information. Once applications were completed, staff informed clients that the office was participating in a demonstration that waived the interview and told them they would receive the decision via a telephone call and/or letter.
- **Workers contacted clients to clarify information.** When information was missing from applications or information had to be clarified, eligibility workers contacted clients by telephone. Workers were instructed to contact clients only if the missing information was needed to determine SNAP eligibility; moreover, workers were to ask questions related only to the missing information. They were not to conduct an interview or confirm information that was on the application and not in question.
- **EBT cards issued upfront.** To ensure that all clients would have access to EBT cards if they were determined eligible, front office staff issued EBT cards when clients submitted an application. Clients who applied online, by mail, or by fax generally received a letter instructing them to visit the office to obtain an EBT card. Some offices mailed the cards to clients, but that practice was not widespread. Benefits were loaded to the card if the client was determined to be eligible.

Figure II.3. Flow for clients in Oregon’s demonstration model



Note: Boxes highlighted in orange denote differences in process from the business-as-usual model; highlighted text within a box denotes just a part of the process was changed.

b. Implementing the demonstration

State staff developed the policies and guidelines for the demonstration; district and office managers developed the procedures used to implement the demonstration. State and local managers trained staff, and State staff provided oversight and guidance to local office staff. State, district, and office managers participated in monthly calls to plan the demonstration. At first, the calls included all demonstration and comparison offices; later, calls included only demonstration staff. Later in the planning process, the State met with specific districts to address individual demonstration-related issues or concerns. All the districts developed demonstration process plans that they submitted to the State for approval.

As part of the procedures for implementing the demonstration, the State decided to reverse its “no wrong door” policy, which permitted clients to visit any office (regardless of where they lived) to obtain services. To prevent clients who were aware of the demonstration from selecting a location they viewed as most advantageous to them, local offices developed procedures for reviewing client ZIP codes and sending clients who visited an office that did not serve their area to the appropriate office. It was the districts’ responsibility to develop procedure, coordinate with other offices, and train staff on this policy.

In August 2012, DHS staff conducted two-hour training sessions at all demonstration offices. The sessions focused on the new demonstration policies, when to contact clients, and how to track data. The training emphasized that the absence of an interview did not equate to no staff contact; workers were encouraged to contact clients if they needed specific information. However, staff were reminded that they were not to conduct a full interview unless requested by the client.⁴⁰ Follow-up training occurred during team meetings at local offices; some of it was delivered by State staff. Comparison office staff did not receive training on the demonstration. In fact, many comparison office staff were unaware of the demonstration until after it began.

At the request of FNS and the evaluator, Oregon did not notify clients about or widely advertise the demonstration,⁴¹ but it did design posters for the lobbies of demonstration offices. The posters noted that the office was participating in a demonstration and that eligibility interviews were not required. The State also revised client notices to include information about the demonstration.

B. Utah

The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) administers SNAP through a virtual call center that serves the entire State. A single telephone number connects clients to all DWS services: callers can participate in an interview, get answers to their questions, and report changes by calling this number. The State also relies heavily on online services that enable clients to complete applications and recertifications, manage their cases, and ask questions via

⁴⁰ Local office managers had discretion to train staff on how the demonstration affected both the work flow in the office and specific regional decisions about treatment of demonstration cases.

⁴¹ Because some of the demonstration and comparison sites were in the same city or county, outreach efforts could have influenced applicants to select one office over another, thus affecting the evaluation results.

online chat. Utah has moved away from face-to-face contact and local offices; most interactions with clients take place by phone or via the online interface.

Key features of Utah's demonstration

Geographic area served: Statewide

Groups excluded: Native Americans and some refugees

Demonstration period: September 1, 2012, to November 30, 2013

Percentage of SNAP caseload participating: 19.1 percent (approximately 44,500 participants each month)

Demonstration model: Randomly selected demonstration cases that were processed with comparison cases by the same eligibility workers

Utah's centralized structure allowed the State to assign clients randomly to the demonstration. At the outset of the demonstration, the State assigned to the demonstration group 20 percent of active cases statewide and about 20 percent of all households that applied during the demonstration period.⁴²

1. State and local context

DWS administers SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, child care assistance, and unemployment insurance. In 2009, the State centralized most of its eligibility staff statewide into four call centers. The centralized structure ensures little variation across the State in how SNAP cases are processed. The SNAP participation rate in Utah is on par with the national average, with about 79 percent of eligible individuals participating (Cunnyngham 2014). The State maintains informal links with community organizations but has not enlisted the organizations in a significant effort to provide application assistance or intake services.

a. SNAP administrative structure

DWS has two primary functions: it provides employment services and it administers assistance programs. The department is divided into two divisions, reflecting its dual mission. The Workforce Development Division provides employment counseling, enrolls workers in training programs, and provides job search assistance. The Eligibility Services Division administers the assistance programs, processing applications, conducting eligibility interviews, making final eligibility determinations, and answering clients' questions about their applications or case status.

b. Modernization efforts in place in the State

Utah's centralized administrative structure relies on technology and automation. In this section, we summarize the administrative and technological components in place during the demonstration period as well as one concurrent policy change.

⁴² Native Americans and refugees in their first three years of receipt of benefits were exempt from the demonstration.

Call center. Utah conducts almost all of its SNAP eligibility interviews through the statewide virtual call center. The State received in 2007 waivers from FNS to conduct telephone interviews instead of face-to-face interviews at certification and recertification, and in 2008 to eliminate scheduled interviews (clients call for interviews at their convenience). Workers in the call centers are organized into teams of 14 to 17 workers. Teams are organized by type of case (for example, SNAP and Medicaid cases, child care assistance cases, or Spanish-speaker cases). Workers are responsible for their own caseloads, but any member of a team works on cases as needed. Client calls are routed to the team that handles a given client's case, and work is completed by the next available team member. Most workers do their work at one of the four call centers, though some staff work in employment centers or telecommute from home. Workers complete all aspects of eligibility determination for their cases and are responsible for their timeliness and accuracy, even though other staff may contribute to the case. Workers split their time between answering calls and completing work on their own caseloads. In the rare cases, when a client requests an in-person interview, an eligibility worker or supervisor meets the client at a local employment center to conduct the interview.

Electronic records. Electronic case records, accessible to staff anywhere in the State since 2001, make it unnecessary for eligibility workers to be located near the clients they serve. The State's Imaging Operations Unit scans documents clients submit by mail and attaches them to the electronic records.⁴³

Rules-based eligibility system. In 2010, Utah implemented a rules-based eligibility system that eligibility workers use to process cases. In rules-based eligibility systems, workers enter case evidence, such as income and deductions, and the computer system automatically determines the client's eligibility and benefit level.⁴⁴ Utah's system has a web interface and embedded tools that manage work flow so workers can identify which cases are ready to be processed.

Electronic verification system. Created in 2004, an electronic verification system links workers to 21 Federal and State databases. The system reduces the number of verification documents clients must submit, shortens eligibility interviews, and improves the accuracy and reliability of case evidence.

Online client interface. Utah's online client interface contains the online application and allows clients to create user accounts. As of 2008, clients can log in and check their case or application status, chat with eligibility workers if they have questions, check which verification documents have been received, read notices, and monitor the benefit level on their EBT cards.

c. Business-as-usual model

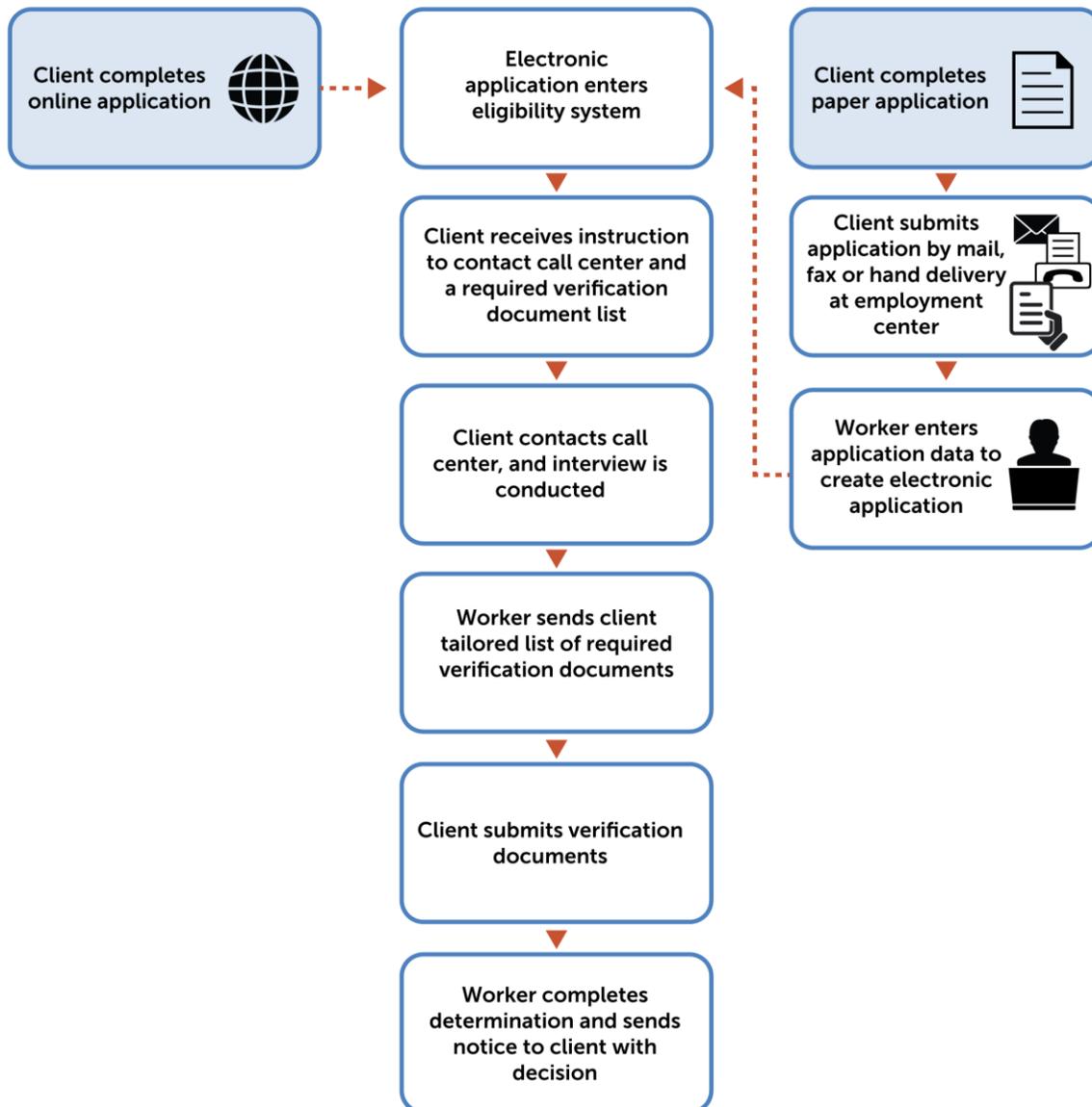
Under Utah's business-as-usual model, clients complete three steps to apply for SNAP benefits: they submit an application, participate in an eligibility interview, and submit

⁴³ Some employment centers also operate scanners to create images of client documents.

⁴⁴ Though the system automatically determines eligibility and benefits, eligibility workers are responsible for the accuracy of the results. If they believe the system's determination is inaccurate, they check the completeness and accuracy of the case evidence they entered. If it appears that the evidence was entered correctly but the determination was incorrect, they can seek assistance from the system's information technology support team.

verification documents. Eligibility workers then process cases and inform clients of their eligibility. Figure II.4 shows the standard process of applying for SNAP benefits in Utah.

Figure II.4. Flow for clients in Utah’s business-as-usual model



Application process. The first step clients take to access benefits is the submission of an application. Clients use a single application to apply for all assistance programs administered by DWS. They can apply online or with a paper application; more than 80 percent of clients apply online. Clients who apply online can use any computer with an Internet connection—including computers in the employment centers—and can receive help from eligibility workers through the embedded chat function. Clients who apply on paper can obtain applications from employment centers or through some community organizations. Clients submit paper applications through the mail, by fax, or in person at employment centers. Clients who apply via an employment center—

whether online or with a paper application—can receive assistance from employment center staff. However, employment center workers are not specialists in SNAP or other assistance programs and provide only basic information about assistance programs. They refer clients to the call center for specific questions about the status of a particular case.

The second step in the application process is an eligibility interview. Once a client submits an application, he or she is instructed to contact the call center within 7 days to conduct the eligibility interview.⁴⁵ A client who submits the application online receives instructions in the confirmation screen immediately upon submissions as well as in a notice sent by mail. Clients who submit paper applications receive only the paper notice. Almost all interviews take place through the virtual call center. The instructions to call within 7 days enable the State to complete applications on time for clients eligible for expedited SNAP benefits. Clients receive a reminder notification if they do not call within that time frame. Those who do not call within 30 days receive an auto-denial notice.

During the interview, the eligibility worker conducts an information query with Utah's electronic data verification system and reconciles the results with information on the application, asking the client to clarify any discrepancies or gaps. If the client is new to SNAP, the worker explains program procedures, including how to use EBT cards. The worker might also inform the client about such resources as food banks or the State's community services hotline (2-1-1). Before concluding the interview, the worker explains what verification documents are needed to process the case and how to submit them. The client receives the same information through a notice in the mail.

Verifying information. The final step in the application process is for clients to submit any verification documents they did not provide with the application. They can submit those documents online, by fax, mail, email, or in person at employment centers. Clients can use the online interface to track their application status, confirm receipt of verification documents, and learn their application decision and benefit level.

Processing cases. After a client submits the required materials and completes the interview, the worker prompts the eligibility system to make the determination. The system sends the client the decision in a notification through the mail (or via email, if the client prefers).

Recertification process. Utah requires clients to recertify for SNAP every six months. The State either mails a pre-populated paper application directly to clients or—for those who prefer electronic notification—emails instructions for completing the recertification online. Eligibility interviews are required only once a year, so clients interview every other recertification. For recertifications that require interviews, the process is identical to that for initial certification. If no interview is required, clients submit the application and verification documents as requested and are contacted only if staff need to clarify information.

⁴⁵ Utah is one of the six States that received from FNS an “on-demand interview” waiver, which allows States to require the client to call in for an interview during business hours (FNS 2012). These States no longer schedule interviews.

Policy change in work program requirements. Shortly after the demonstration began, Utah re-instated work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD). As of October 2012, Utah requires individuals between ages 18 and 49 with no disabilities and no dependents to work at least 20 hours per week or participate in a State-approved employment and training program. Individuals who do not meet the work requirements are limited to 3 months of SNAP benefits in any 36-month period. Clients received notifications if they were required to participate. Workers discuss the requirements during the eligibility interview.

2. Demonstration

Utah applied for the demonstration grant to improve efficiency across its assistance programs. Medicaid and TANF do not require interviews and, by waiving the SNAP interview, Utah standardized procedures for the three programs. This streamlined workers' tasks and reduced the application steps for clients.

a. Demonstration structure

The demonstration in Utah waived the certification and recertification eligibility interview for approximately 20 percent of the State's caseload. Workers processed demonstration and comparison cases. Other than the interview requirement, the application and certification process was virtually the same for the two groups.

Clients applying for SNAP online were immediately assigned to either the demonstration or comparison groups. Depending on their assignment, clients received notification that directed them to contact the call center for an interview (comparison) or informed them that an interview was not required (demonstration), and that they would be contacted if additional information was needed. Clients who submitted paper applications learned of their assignment via a letter sent after staff entered the applications into the eligibility system.

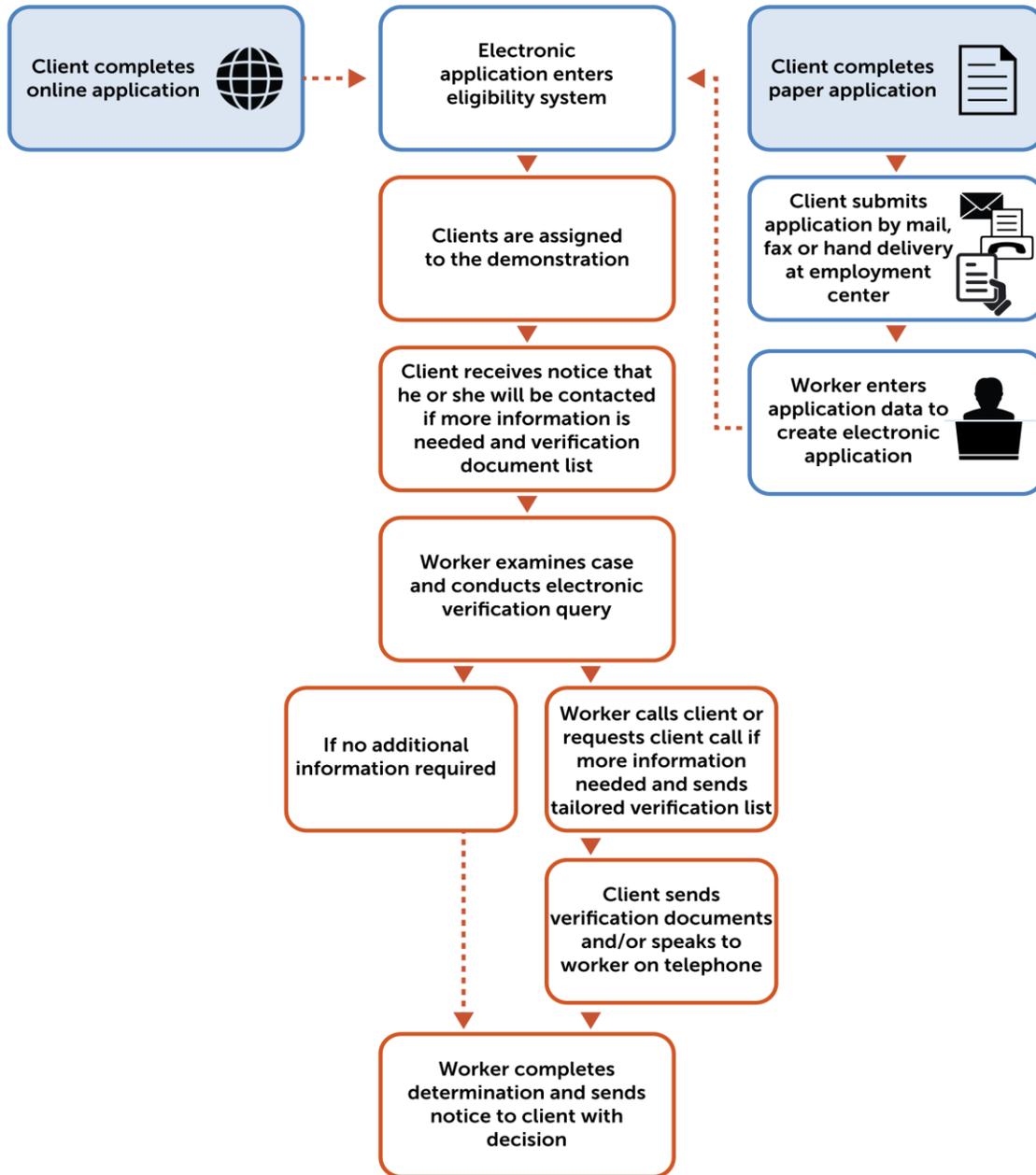
The application processes generally were the same for clients in the demonstration and business-as-usual models, with the following differences (Figure II.5):

- **Workers immediately processed applications.** Under business-as-usual procedures, workers typically waited until clients called for an interview before processing their cases. Under demonstration procedures, because no interview was required, workers had to review and begin processing the cases immediately after submission rather than waiting for clients to initiate the process. Workers reviewed their cases frequently to ensure they processed expedited demonstration cases (households with extremely low income or a low level of resources that must be processed more quickly because of the immediate need for assistance) within the required seven days.
- **Workers initiated contact to clarify information.** If workers needed to discuss aspects of a case with a client, they attempted to reach him or her by telephone or sent a notification advising the individual to contact the call center. Conversations with demonstration clients were not to include full interviews unless the client requested one.

b. Implementing the demonstration

Utah initiated the demonstration statewide in September 2012, randomly assigning to the demonstration group 20 percent of its existing clients and about 20 percent of all new applicants during the demonstration period. In this section, we summarize the main aspects of the demonstration’s implementation.

Figure II.5. Flow for clients in Utah’s demonstration model



Note: Boxes highlighted in orange denote differences in process from the business-as-usual model.

Changes to information technology (IT) systems. Changes to the electronic eligibility system were required to randomly assign clients and to track demonstration outcomes. IT staff reprogrammed the system so that it would assign approximately 20 percent of new applications to the demonstration. The algorithm gave each case an equal chance of being selected at the time an application was registered as an electronic record.⁴⁶ Programmers added a data element to store the demonstration decision.

Staff training. In August 2012, State staff trained each eligibility team on identifying demonstration cases, initiating contact with demonstration cases, discussing the demonstration with clients, and recording data for the demonstration. Trainers instructed workers to contact clients if they required additional information to complete the eligibility determination but not to conduct full interviews unless a client requested one.

Employment center staff did not participate in formal training sessions, so the information employment center staff received on the demonstration varied. All staff received monthly memoranda on updated policies and procedures, which included information on the demonstration. Some also received training on the demonstration from supervisors or managers, during which they learned that they would have to determine whether a client was a demonstration participant before instructing him or her to contact the call center for an interview. However, most staff we interviewed reported that they received no information about the demonstration. Several staff members said they learned about it from working with clients.

C. Staff perceptions of the demonstration

When staff in both States were asked about their perceptions of the demonstration, most reported favorable experiences. Perceptions varied, however, by position and level. Although many indicated that the demonstration reduced the time they spent on most cases, others suggested that work might simply be shifting to other staff, and that incomplete applications were difficult to complete. State staff and community organizers also were asked to describe client response to the demonstration. They said client response was mixed: the demonstration eased the process for some clients and created more challenges for others.

1. Effective elements

The majority of staff from State agencies and community organizations commented favorably on the demonstration. They reported that it reduced the steps involved in the application process, decreasing the time needed by staff for the determination process. Most State staff also believed there was little adverse effect on their performance measures. Staff noted that for some clients, waiving the interview also seemed to reduce barriers to accessing SNAP benefits.

The demonstration reportedly increased staff efficiency for processing cases. For staff, the primary benefit of eliminating the interview was a reported reduction in the time required to determine benefits. In Oregon, some workers found they spent less time collecting unnecessary

⁴⁶ The probability of selection for each case was 0.1907, slightly less than 0.2, to ensure that the random variation did not result in more than 20 percent of total cases in the demonstration.

information from clients during interviews and were able to hone in on the important pieces of information to determine eligibility. Workers said that before the demonstration, a large number of missed appointments kept them from working on other cases and created additional work, as schedulers had to reschedule appointments and send letters to clients. The demonstration eliminated the inefficiencies associated with this.

In Utah, not having to wait for a client to call for the interview reportedly eliminated a time-consuming step. When complete applications were submitted, workers were able to obtain all information necessary to make a determination from the application, the verification documents, and the electronic verification system. In these cases, they processed cases quickly and moved on to other work. In addition, workers reported that the demonstration reduced the time they spent on the telephone, freeing time to process cases. Workers described two ways the demonstration impacted telephone time: (1) it reduced the number of incoming calls because demonstration clients were directed not to call for an interview, and (2) it reduced the length of calls for most demonstration clients who needed to simply clarify specific issues rather than complete a full interview.

Not having an interview removed a barrier for clients trying to access SNAP. Staff and community advocates in both States agreed that, for some clients, waiving the interview increased program access. Staff in Utah suggested that some clients do not understand that they must call for an interview because they do not read or understand their notices. In these instances, their case is closed for failure to complete the recertification steps. Among clients who understand the need to call for an interview, many complained about the length of the hold time and the length of the interview. In Oregon, staff noted that clients who were employed or single parents without child care had difficulty waiting in the office for the interview. For them, eliminating the interview made the application process easier.

Community organizations also suggested that eliminating the interview reduced the number of barriers that clients face when completing the application process—on the telephone or in person. For example, in Oregon, community organizations noticed that demonstration offices had fewer clients in the lobbies, and those who were there found it was quicker to get answers to questions than in some of the business-as-usual model offices.

2. Challenging elements

Despite the generally positive response to the demonstration, some workers found that the demonstration posed challenges. Some reported the demonstration shifted work around the office but did not reduce it, and that collecting information for more complicated cases was difficult without the interview. In addition, some felt that clients experienced a decrease in satisfaction due to less staff interaction, and some clients with special requirements might not have been assessed accurately without the interview.

Workers face difficulty in completing incomplete applications in the absence of an interview. Even though both States encourage clients to complete the application fully, clients have the right, by law, to submit incomplete applications.⁴⁷ Workers traditionally fill in any missing information during the interview. However, under the demonstration, staff quickly realized that the less complete the application, the more difficult it was to fill in the gaps and process the case. Staff believed that a greater percentage of the caseload could not be processed than in the past due to the need for clarification or verification of documents. Most offices in Oregon changed their policies early in the process, requesting that front office staff review applications to reduce the level of missing or incomplete information. In Utah, staff said that when contact was necessary, it was often difficult to reach clients. As a result, incomplete applications took longer to process and sometimes caused timeliness issues, particularly for expedited cases.

In addition, staff in Utah suggested that not having a SNAP interview made it more difficult to process cases for other assistance programs. Although interviews are not required for other programs (such as Medicaid and TANF), information collected during SNAP eligibility interviews frequently informed or expedited certification for other programs. Some workers reported that without the interview, delays in obtaining information for SNAP caused delays in processing cases for other programs.

Eliminating interviews may shift work between staff instead of reducing burden for all. Especially in Oregon, which relies on local offices to accept applications, staff at all levels noticed that they were shifting work around the office but not necessarily saving overall staff time. Because clients no longer spoke with an eligibility worker in the demonstration sites, front office staff received more questions from clients and were responsible for reviewing applications for missing, incomplete, or inaccurate information. Even though many eligibility workers in the demonstration felt that eliminating the interview saved them time, front office staff unanimously agreed that they faced more work than before and had to assume expanded responsibilities.

Utah, on the other hand, relied heavily on a guided online application that encouraged clients to complete each question; as a result, it found the transition easier. Generally, its applications were more complete: gaps existed only in the paper applications (about 20 percent of the total). However, a staff member at an employment center (where clients visit for assistance or to use computers and telephones to apply for SNAP) suggested that, if the demonstration were introduced statewide, offices could come under additional pressure to work with clients who no longer have consistent contact with eligibility workers and need additional help.

Collecting information from complex cases was difficult and time-consuming for most staff. Although both States substantially reduced the amount of verification documentation collected directly from clients for eligibility determination, both still require some clients to produce verification based on their circumstances. Staff noted that self-employed individuals and students most often needed to provide additional verification, and the documentation could vary with the person. They found that a conversation with a client during a visit to the office to apply for benefits (or during a client-initiated call) often yielded the correct information in little time,

⁴⁷ Only the client's name, address, and signature are required to submit a SNAP application.

and the case was resolved shortly thereafter. However, staff suggested that, without the interview, it was difficult to complete the cases for the self-employed or students, and that often resulted in case closures for incomplete information. In addition, staff noted that if any documentation was needed from homeless clients, it was difficult to locate them after they submitted an application. Although staff noted that the average homeless client might, in fact, benefit from eliminating the extra barrier associated with an interview, homeless clients who have especially complex circumstances might require additional upfront contact.

Staff and clients often found it difficult to understand when client contact was needed in the demonstration. Staff in both States had concerns early on about whether they could contact clients at all for the demonstration and what constituted an interview. Some staff thought, incorrectly, that no interview meant no contact. Some staff also were unsure about how and when they could contact clients; some workers never called and simply mailed information requests to clients, others always attempted to call. Both States conducted retraining relating to these issues, although confusion persisted for some staff throughout the demonstration.

In Utah, many clients did not understand the demonstration process and reportedly contacted the call center even if an interview was not required. Many long-term clients called for an interview simply because they were accustomed to doing so and did not closely review the new notifications. In other cases, demonstration clients received inconsistent or inaccurate information from employment center staff. Some employment center staff indicated that they had not heard of the demonstration and continued to tell all clients to contact the call center for an interview. When clients called, some staff reported that they realized the clients were demonstration cases and told them they did not need an interview, but other staff completed an interview, stating that the client's call seemed to them a request for an interview.

Some staff disliked not interviewing clients. Although few staff reported difficulty with the logistical shift in work flow, several staff indicated they found it difficult to trust the information on the application in the absence of an interview. They pointed out that, during an interview, a client often provided additional information that he or she did not include on the application or that contradicted what was stated in the application. An interview also could uncover that the family had additional needs not reported on the application. Some eligibility workers also were concerned about errors if they did not have the opportunity to question the clients about information on the application. A few staff in both States also felt that eliminating the interview changed their role from social worker to case processor, which is not necessarily how they envisioned their job or what best serves clients in need of more services.

Staff perceived a decrease in satisfaction among some clients. Some workers remarked that the demonstration eliminated the customer service aspects of a visit to a local SNAP office. Before the demonstration, the interview gave workers the opportunity to give clients information about other programs and services. The demonstration reduced interaction between clients and eligibility staff and reportedly decreased the opportunity to share useful information. In Oregon, some staff also noted an increase in the number of "escalated" calls (those passed to supervisors) and angry clients walking into the office claiming that they were not receiving the information typically conveyed during an interview.

Some clients needed additional one-on-one contact to complete their cases. Staff noted that some groups would benefit from an interview, including clients who may be eligible for SNAP employment and training (E&T) programs and some elderly or minority groups (the subgroup mentioned most frequently was Hispanic clients). Both Oregon and Utah recently expanded or reinforced their SNAP E&T programs. Because information disclosed during an interview can often establish whether a client is exempt from the SNAP E&T requirements, staff estimated that many clients determined exempt through the interview would not have been deemed exempt if they had no interview. Several staff in Oregon suggested that they noticed an increase in the number of case closures for failure to comply with E&T requirements that were later reversed when clients called or visited the office to ask why the case was closed.⁴⁸ During these conversations, staff realized the clients were exempt and reopened the cases without a SNAP E&T requirement. In addition, staff suggested that some elderly or Hispanic clients preferred to visit the office for an interview because they needed more guidance or they experienced greater assurance through the contact with staff.

⁴⁸ We were not able to test this hypothesis due to limitations in tracking this subgroup in the administrative data.

III. EFFECTS OF ELIMINATING THE INTERVIEW

In this chapter, we present the effects of eliminating the interview on client, worker, and office outcomes. Client outcomes included program access, application approval and denial rates, case closures, benefit levels, churning, and client experiences. Worker and office outcomes included staff contact with demonstration group clients, staff time, administrative costs, and error rates. The analysis of client outcomes relies heavily on the administrative data provided by States,⁴⁹ client surveys we conducted, and interviews with clients and staff. For worker and office outcomes, we focused on the data staff reported about the time spent working on certain aspects of each case and, at demonstration sites, how often and for what purpose they contacted clients. The States also provided cost data and results of their QC-like reviews for our analysis. Sample sizes for all these data are shown in Table III.1.

Table III.1. Sample sizes by data source

	Oregon				Utah		
	Pre-implementation		Post-implementation		Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	
	Demonstration	Comparison	Demonstration	Comparison		Demonstration	Comparison
Active case observations ^a	1,655,770	2,209,065	970,454	1,345,413	2,466,275	254,623	998,968
Households with:							
Children	400,498	528,796	212,989	293,857	1,317,156	137,034	541,533
Elderly	207,158	256,709	141,267	185,883	231,186	29,026	111,989
Disabled	319,382	398,160	200,941	271,763	590,563	74,532	289,128
Earned income	551,940	700,883	302,652	418,725	854,462	91,337	365,049
Other assistance programs	393,317	485,704	250,775	331,969	1,651,297	183,960	718,092
Applications	99,050	123,706	58,269	69,127	294,542	27,904	107,366
Households with:							
Children	18,117	22,848	10,472	13,149	147,605	13,844	54,106
Elderly	5,254	6,580	3,121	3,983	12,982	893	3,341
Disabled	5,271	7,317	3,036	4,507	28,870	3,199	12,500
Earned income	30,031	36,791	15,195	20,329	85,541	8,454	33,761
Other assistance programs	6,912	9,028	3,880	5,268	110,108	10,395	40,876

⁴⁹ These data cover the pre-demonstration period (described as the *pre* period in the tables and figures, September 2010–August 2012) and the demonstration period (described as the *post* period in the tables and figures, September 2012–November 2013). The Utah impact analysis results use only the *post* period.

Table III.1 (continued)

	Oregon				Utah		
	Pre-implementation		Post-implementation		Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	
	Demonstration	Comparison	Demonstration	Comparison		Demonstration	Comparison
Recertification applications	115,129	154,175	72,015	98,817	390,814	39,298	153,489
Households with:							
Children	29,360	38,916	16,535	22,043	226,168	23,037	91,123
Elderly	16,083	19,649	11,540	14,945	23,265	3,010	11,461
Disabled	25,858	31,989	16,606	22,396	72,442	9,024	35,269
Earned income	40,505	51,914	23,856	32,911	131,003	12,950	51,043
Other assistance programs	31,558	38,651	20,658	27,277	241,973	26,143	102,619
Application denials	20,206	19,422	15,033	12,858	129,211	11,981	46,132
Households with:							
Children	18,820	20,535	16,315	13,825	68,130	6,311	23,982
Elderly	15,353	17,071	11,013	10,300	6,441	389	1,382
Disabled	9,311	10,762	6,410	6,913	10,966	1,160	4,468
Earned income	16,244	16,824	15,441	12,097	22,828	2,487	8,486
Other assistance programs	8,915	9,031	5,769	5,530	35,064	3,318	12,651
Case closures	74,812	92,394	48,008	59,732	160,518	19,992	78,652
Households with:							
Children	15,971	19,227	8,820	10,819	80,188	9,226	37,554
Elderly	4,209	5,036	3,086	3,886	6,764	871	3,462
Disabled	5,746	7,140	3,780	5,063	20,170	2,988	12,099
Earned income	28,911	34,043	17,636	21,640	60,261	7,010	29,232
Other assistance programs	7,101	8,565	4,765	6,146	74,307	9,119	37,008
Client surveys	n.a.	n.a.	329	346	n.a.	402	401
Procedurally denied client interviews	n.a.	n.a.	8	n.a.	n.a.	30	n.a.
Staff time-use surveys	n.a.	n.a.	11	11	n.a.	21 ^b	21 ^b
QC-like reviews	n.a.	n.a.	584	n.a.	n.a.	588	n.a.

^a Active case observations consist of one observation per month each SNAP case was active during the analysis period. For example, two cases each active for 6 months would provide 12 observations between them.

^b A total of 21 workers in Utah participated in the time-use surveys. Because they processed both demonstration and comparison applications, they appear in both columns.

A. Client characteristics

We compared the demonstration and comparison group characteristics within States to demonstrate how similar the two groups were and to identify any major differences between the two groups that could affect the findings. We looked at two points in time: at the start of the demonstration and over the course of the demonstration. Generally, the demonstration and comparison groups had similar characteristics.

1. Early demonstration period

Table III.2 shows that the demographic characteristics of the households during the early demonstration period were similar between the demonstration and comparison groups in both States. For Oregon, we compared the demographic characteristics of the demonstration and comparison groups during the pre-implementation period to determine if the sites selected for each group contained similar types of households before the demonstration started. In Utah, we compared the characteristics of the two groups at the time of random assignment to determine if the random assignment worked as expected. In fact, it did; the characteristics of the demonstration and comparison groups in Utah at assignment were virtually identical and no differences were significant. In Oregon, there were significant differences between the demonstration and comparison characteristics, but most were very small.

Table III.2 Average characteristics of demonstration and comparison groups in pre-implementation period (for Oregon) or at random assignment (for Utah)

Characteristic	Oregon		Utah	
	Demonstration site	Comparison site	Demonstration group	Comparison group
Size of Household (Individuals)	1.6	1.6*	2.5	2.5
Household Head Was Male (Percent)	51.0	51.4*	34.4	34.4
Race and Ethnicity of Household Head (Percent)				
Non-Hispanic, white	71.1	75.3*	51.7	51.7
Non-Hispanic, black	5.8	3.7*	1.8	1.9
Non-Hispanic, other	11.8	11.0*	33.4	33.5
Hispanic	11.3	10.1*	13.1	12.9
Age of Household Head (Percent)				
18–24	18.9	20.5*	20.4	20.3
25–49	56.0	53.4*	61.6	61.3
50–59	14.7	15.8*	10.6	11.0
60 or older	10.2	9.9*	7.1	7.1
Household Had Elderly (Percent)	10.6	10.4	7.7	7.6
Household Had Children (Percent)	22.4	22.0*	49.6	49.8
Household Had Disabled Individuals (Percent)	14.9	14.9	19.6	19.8

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data and Utah DWS data.

Note: All Oregon characteristics are from pre-implementation households in their last active month of receipt prior to the start of the demonstration. All Utah characteristics are at the time of random assignment (when clients were assigned to demonstration and comparison groups).

* Differs significantly from the demonstration site at the .05 level after controlling for other factors.

2. Demonstration period

Comparing the demographic characteristics of the SNAP households included in this study's analytical sample during the post-implementation period shows that the demonstration and comparison groups were similar within States but often different across them (Table III.3). In Oregon, the demonstration sites had a slightly smaller percentage of non-Hispanic whites and household heads age 18-24 years than the comparison sites, although the difference was not statistically significant. The two groups in Utah were even more similar, as is expected with random assignment; the demonstration had a slightly larger percentage of Hispanics and households with elderly or disabled members, and a slightly smaller percentage of households with children, but, again, the differences were not statistically significant.

Table III.3 Average participation, benefits, and characteristics of SNAP participants in post-implementation period, by State and demonstration status

Outcome	Oregon		Utah	
	Demonstration site	Comparison site	Demonstration group	Comparison group
Monthly Number of SNAP Participants (Individuals)	107,753	152,349	44,489	175,583
Monthly Number of SNAP Participants (Households)	69,318	96,101	16,975	66,599
SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	205	208	294	296
Size of Participant Household (Individuals)	1.6	1.6	2.6	2.6
Household Head Was Male (Percent)	49.6	49.7	29.4	29.2
Race and Ethnicity of Household Head (Percent)				
Non-Hispanic, white	69.1	74.9	57.2	57.4
Non-Hispanic, black	6.2	3.6	1.9	2.0
Non-Hispanic, other	12.0	10.8	25.4	25.6
Hispanic	12.8	10.7	15.5	15.1
Age of Household Head (Percent)				
18–24	14.7	16.5	12.9	12.9
25–49	53.2	51.3	62.6	62.5
50–59	17.8	18.6	13.6	13.9
60 or older	14.2	13.3	10.9	10.7
Participant Household Had Elderly (Percent)	14.6	13.8	11.4	11.2
Participant Household Had Children (Percent)	21.9	21.8	53.8	54.2
Participant Household Had Disabled Individuals (Percent)	20.7	20.2	29.3	28.9

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data and Utah DWS data.

Notes: All outcomes are post-implementation and were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred. Certain households in Utah were dropped from the evaluation to maintain random assignment integrity. See Appendix A for details.

Differences between the demonstration and comparison groups were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Comparing the results between States, we find there were more than twice as many individuals in Oregon’s demonstration sample than in Utah’s, due to the overall size of each State’s caseload; both States included about 20 percent of their statewide caseload in the demonstration. Household sizes in Oregon were smaller than those in Utah, and they were more likely to be headed by a male. Racial and ethnic distributions of household heads were similar across the two States; the household head was most often white. Age distributions of household heads were also similar, although households in Utah were much more likely to contain children than those in Oregon. Households in Utah received higher benefits, on average; this was likely due in part to larger household sizes in that State.

Because the Oregon demonstration was implemented at the site level, we compared the county-level demographic indicators of the demonstration sites to comparison sites to identify any significant difference that could affect the analysis (and we controlled for these county-level characteristics in the regression analysis). For each demonstration or comparison branch office, we selected the American Community Survey (ACS) county that had the largest number of cases processed by that office. The characteristics of the two groups generally were similar; however, comparison sites were located in counties with slightly higher average poverty and unemployment rates (Table III.4). (Because Utah implemented the demonstration statewide, these calculations were not done, as demonstration and comparison economic conditions did not vary between the two groups.)

Table III.4 Average county-level characteristics during post-implementation period in Oregon, by demonstration and comparison status

County characteristic	Demonstration sites	Comparison sites
Total population estimate	503,011	354,622
Poverty rate	17.1	21.2*
Percent unemployed	10.3	11.5*
Percent black	15.2	16.8
Percent Hispanic	14.6	13.2
Percent elderly	2.6	2.0
Percentage of individuals with a high school education or greater	89.2	87.9

Source: ACS, 2008–2012 five-year estimates.

* Differs significantly from the demonstration site at the .05 level after controlling for other factors.

B. Client outcomes

The primary purpose of the study was to determine if eliminating the SNAP interview would affect various client outcomes, including program access, application approval and denial rates, benefit levels, case closures, churning, and client satisfaction. We found that removing the eligibility interview did not have a large effect on these client outcomes overall. There were a few statistically significant differences in outcomes between demonstration and comparison clients, but they were generally small.

The Utah demonstration showed larger and more significant effects than the Oregon demonstration, but this could be related, in part, to the evaluation model implemented in each State. Because Utah clients were randomly assigned to demonstration and comparison groups, any differences between the two groups can be attributed to the demonstration. In contrast, because Oregon cases were not randomly assigned, differences between the two groups may have been due to the demonstration or to other factors. This section describes the significant client outcome for both Oregon and Utah. For detailed results of all outcomes, see Appendix C.

1. Program access

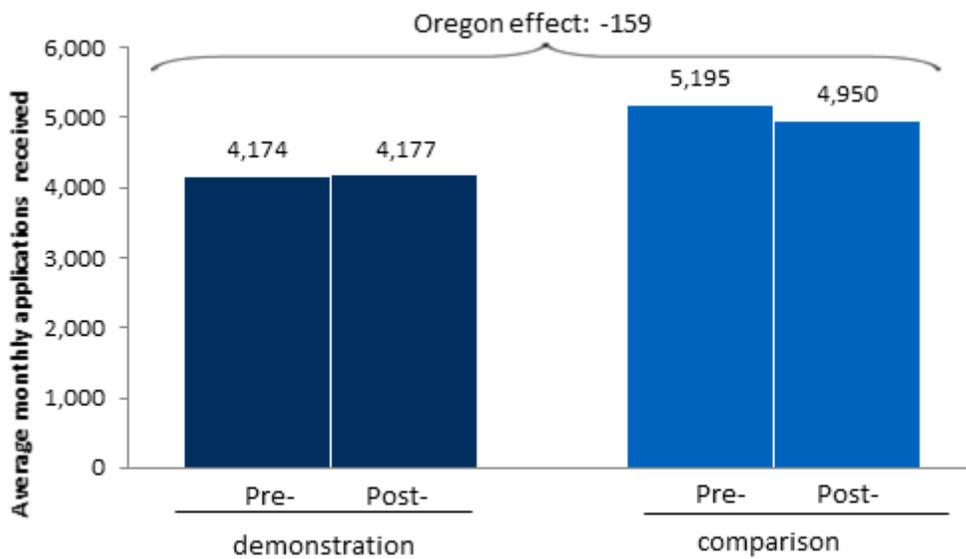
Eliminating the interview may affect program access in different ways. If the interview is viewed by clients as a burden, eliminating it may increase access and more clients may apply. Alternatively, if clients view the interview as a helpful tool in navigating the process, participation may decrease when the interview is eliminated. If the number of applications grows or the applications become more difficult to process in the demonstration, we also would expect to see changes in the rates of timeliness, approvals, and denials, which could further affect access to the program.

a. Application and recertification submission rates

Our analysis of the number of applications and recertifications submitted focuses on Oregon. Because demonstration status was assigned at the county level in Oregon, we can identify the demonstration and comparison sites to compare the number of applications and recertifications in the pre- and post-periods across the two groups. In Utah, because assignment occurred statewide at the individual level, we cannot identify demonstration and comparison groups in the pre-implementation period for comparing the number of applications and recertifications by group. However, we are able to analyze the percent of expedited applications for both States.

In Oregon, waiving the interview requirement did not affect access to SNAP for the overall caseload (measured by the total number of applications or recertifications submitted), but it did affect one subgroup—households that reported earned income (III.5). There were no significant differences in the change in the number of applications or recertifications clients submitted in Oregon between the demonstration and comparison sites (Figures III.1 and III.2). However, we did find that among both applicant and recertification households with earnings, clients in the demonstration sites were less likely to submit applications or recertification forms than those in the comparison sites: the numbers submitting applications and recertifications decreased in both groups but the demonstration sites saw a larger decrease (Table III.5). It is not clear how the demonstration would have caused a difference for this specific group. This result might have been due to other changes in economic conditions between demonstration and comparison sites. There was no change in overall participation patterns in Oregon for households with earnings.

Figure III.1. Average monthly applications received in Oregon

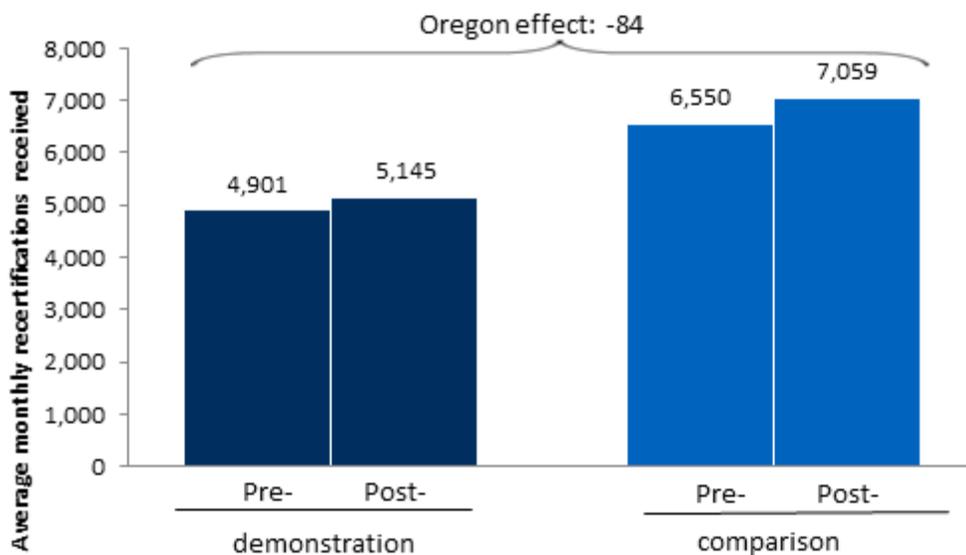


Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS.

Note: The Oregon effect is from a regression that controlled for other factors, so it might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

There were no statistically significant effects/impacts of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

Figure III.2. Average monthly recertifications received in Oregon



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS.

Note: The Oregon effect is from a regression that controlled for other factors, so it might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

There were no statistically significant effects/impacts of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

Table III.5. Effects of interview elimination on the number of new applications and recertification applications received in Oregon, by subgroup

Households with	New applications	Recertifications
Children	-35	-14
Elderly	0 [^]	-1
Disabled	-12	-15
Earned income	-266*	-203*
Other assistance programs	-6	2

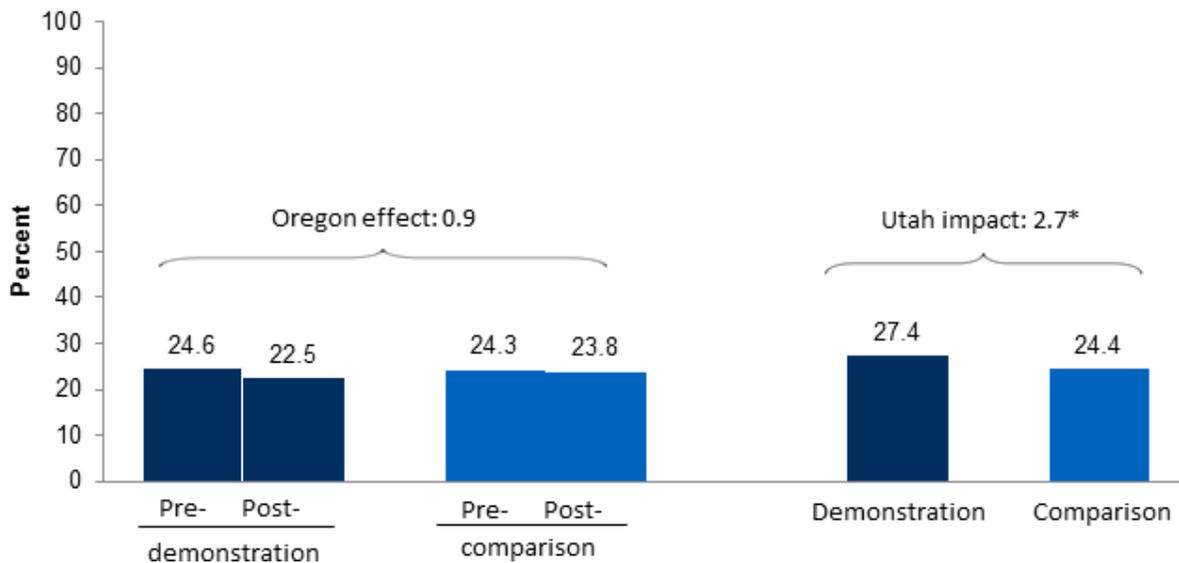
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Expedited application. In Utah, applications from demonstration clients were more likely to qualify for expedited service; however, Oregon did not have similar findings. In Utah, demonstration cases were 2.7 percentage points more likely to be expedited than comparison cases (Figure III.3). In Oregon, demonstration cases were 0.9 percentage points more likely to be expedited than comparison cases, but this result was not statistically significant. It is possible the difference between States is due to specific procedures eligibility staff in Utah use to process expedited applications. For the comparison group, eligibility staff review and process the application once the client calls, but the demonstration applications were reviewed shortly after submission; those in the demonstration might be evaluated and deemed expedited more quickly and often than those in the comparison, where clients might not call within seven days.

Figure III.3. Percentage of applications that were expedited



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

b. Timeliness

A key program measure for States is timeliness—the rate at which workers complete determination for applications and recertification within a set time period.⁵⁰ Waiving the interview requirement could conceivably increase or decrease application timeliness. Foregoing the interview could improve processing time if the eligibility worker has all the necessary information but is waiting for the client to complete the interview. On the other hand, waiving the interview could delay case processing if the eligibility worker needs to speak to the client to clarify application information.

We found that in both States the time to process new SNAP applications in the demonstration group increased, decreasing overall timeliness. Oregon did not provide case-level data on timeliness, but did provide aggregated yearly timeliness reports from its quality control unit. Each year, a small sample of cases from the demonstration and comparison offices was reviewed for timeliness. The reports showed the number of cases reviewed (140, 142, and 141 cases across both the demonstration and comparison sites in 2011, 2012, and 2013), and the number that were deemed timely. The demonstration sites experienced a larger decrease in the yearly percentage of cases that were processed within time standards than the comparison sites, resulting in an effect of -2 percentage points in 2012 and -7 percentage points in 2013.⁵¹

Timeliness also decreased in Utah; about 1 percent fewer applications were processed within time standards in the demonstration. Although processing time improved slightly for non-expedited applications (the percent of non-expedited applications that were processed within time standards increased by 0.7 percentage points), expedited applications from demonstration clients were much less likely to be processed within the required seven days than those from comparison clients (a decrease of 7 percentage points [Table III.6]).⁵² This led to an overall decrease in timeliness, which also was true for all subgroups examined. The difference between demonstration and comparison clients for all subgroups except households with elderly members was greater than the difference in the full sample (Figure III.4). The decrease in timeliness for expedited applications may have been due to the demonstration's higher proportion of applications that were expedited (described above). Overall, the demonstration had a mixed effect on expedited clients in Utah. More clients received expedited service, but, without an interview, staff had more trouble completing the applications in seven days.

⁵⁰ In Oregon and Utah, standard cases are considered timely if they are processed within 30 days. Expedited cases are considered timely if they are processed within 7 days.

⁵¹ This effect was calculated from the raw numbers of cases that were processed within time standards; we were not able to run regressions to test for statistical significance after controlling for other factors because timeliness data were not available for all offices in the State. Therefore, these results are not presented graphically.

⁵² We calculated timeliness in Utah by subtracting the effective date of benefits from the application date saved on the administrative case file. This might not be comparable to the method States use to calculate official timeliness statistics reported to FNS.

Table III.6. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of applications processed within time standards in Utah

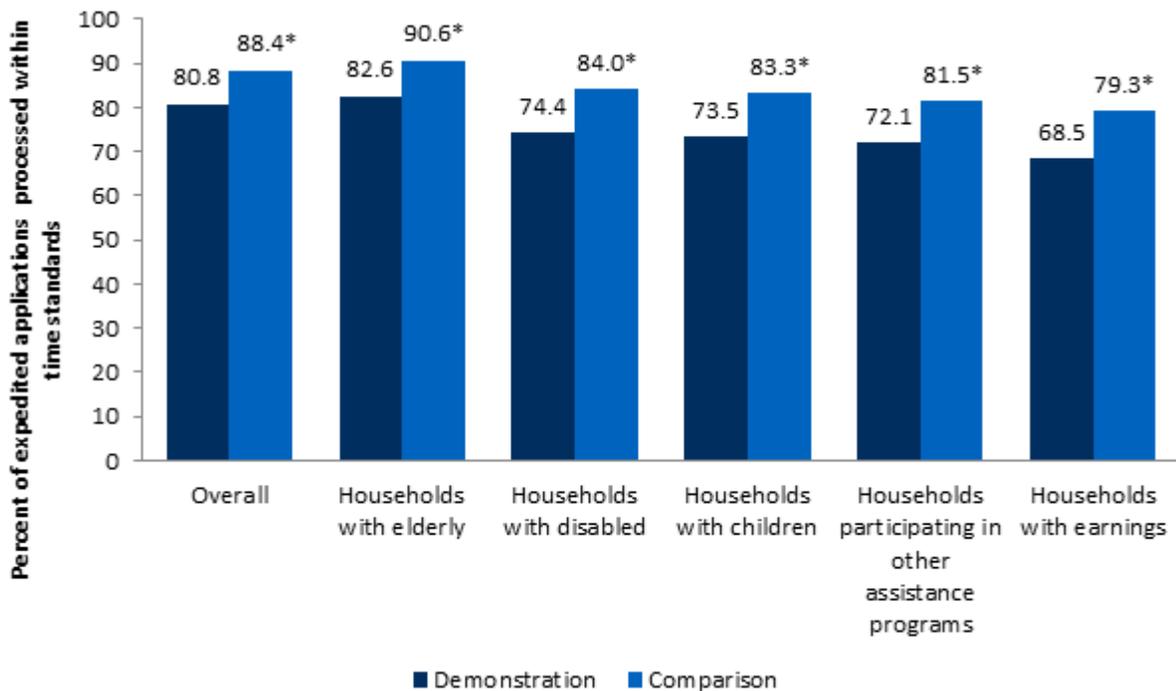
Percentage of	Demonstration	Comparison	Impact
Total applications processed within time standards	78.2	79.4	-1.2*
Non-expedited applications processed within 30 days	77.2	76.5	0.7*
Expedited applications processed within 7 days	80.8	88.4	-7.0*

Source: Analysis of data from the Utah DWS.

Note: The impacts are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Figure III.4. Percentage of expedited applications in Utah processed within time standards, overall and by subgroup



Source: Analysis of data from the Utah DWS.

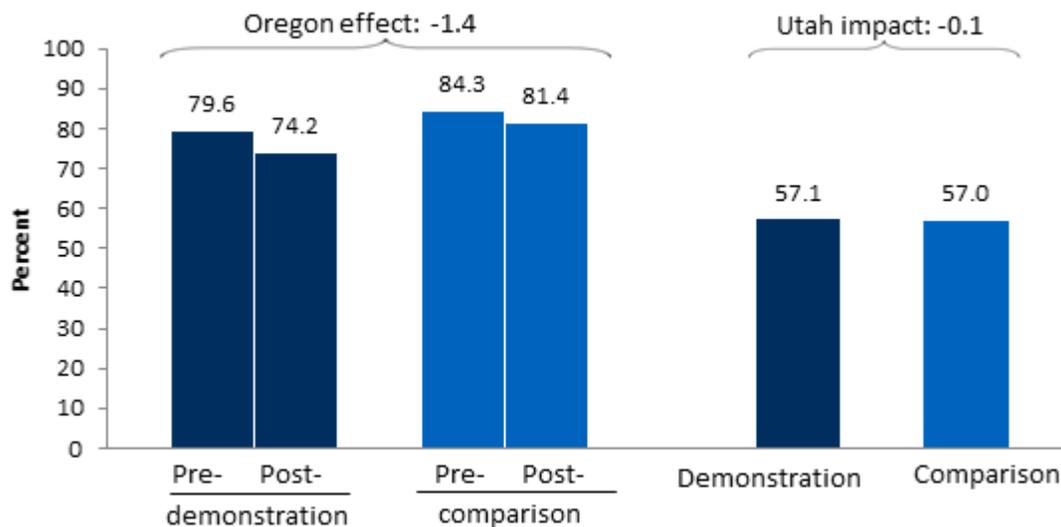
* Differs significantly from the demonstration group at the .05 level after controlling for other factors.

c. Approvals, denials, and case closures

Beyond the total number of applications and recertifications submitted, an important aspect of program access is the approval and denial rates of new applications, the approval rates for recertification applications, and case closure rates. We examine these outcomes in this section, including the reasons for denials and case closures.

Approvals. The demonstration did not affect the overall application approval rate, but the rates were lower for some subgroups. In both States, there were no statistically significant differences in approval rates between demonstration and comparison applications among the overall caseloads (Figure III.5).⁵³ However, for households with children, the demonstration group had a lower approval rate than the comparison group in both States (the Oregon effect was -5 and the Utah impact was -1.4 [Figure III.6]). The demonstration group also had a lower approval rate than the comparison group among households with earnings (the Oregon effect was -5.3 and the Utah impact was -4.1 [Figure III.7]). The decreases in approval rates for households with children and households with earnings might be due to the fact that such cases are more complex to process (for example, because households with earnings are required to submit more verification documents than other applicants). During site visits in both States, staff reported that interviews are more important for complex cases, including those with earnings and who are self-employed. Decreases in approval rates for these cases support that perspective.

Figure III.5. Application approval rates



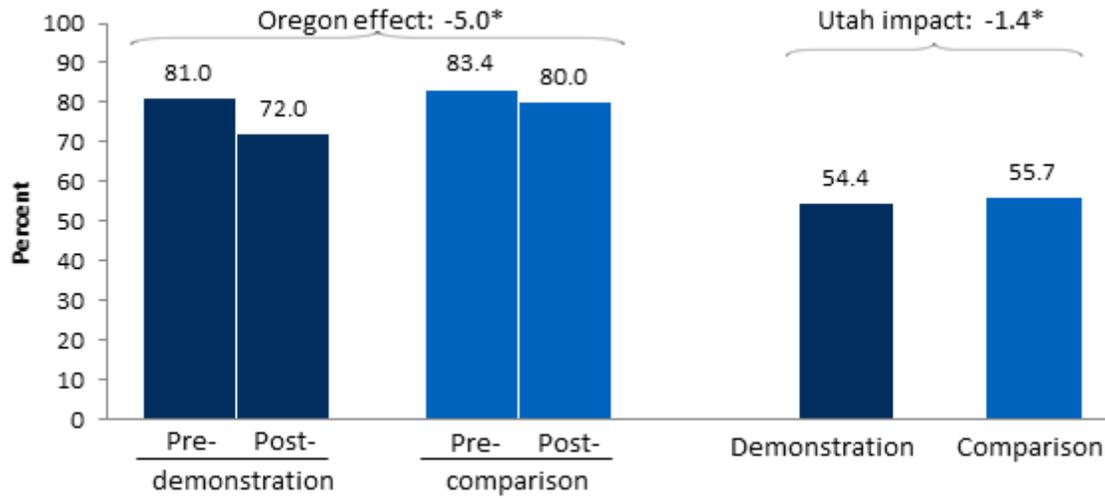
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

There were no statistically significant effects/impacts of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

⁵³ In a sensitivity analysis conducted with a subset of the full sample in Utah, we found that applications from demonstration cases were 2.3 percentage points more likely to be approved. See Appendix A for a description of the sensitivity analyses we conducted.

Figure III.6. Percentage of applications approved among households with children

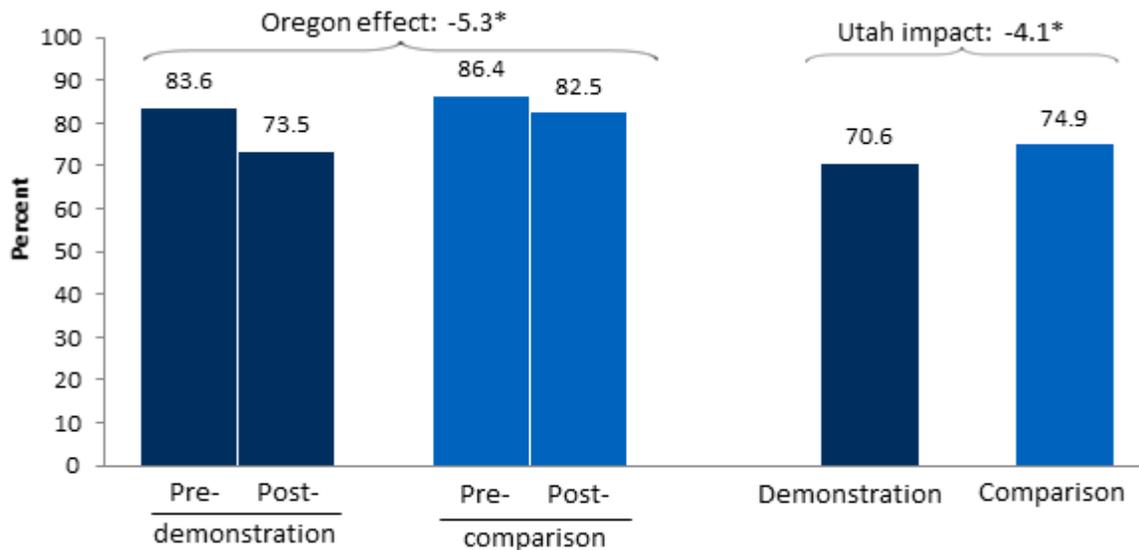


Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Figure III.7. Percentage of applications approved among households reporting earned income



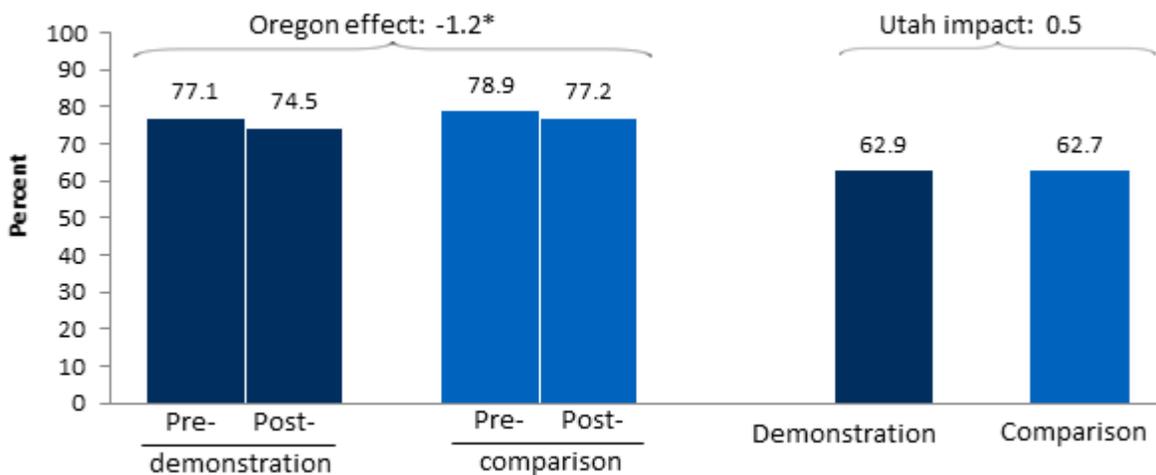
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and control/comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

The demonstration’s effect on recertification approval rates differed across the two States (Figure III.8). In Oregon, recertification applications from demonstration clients were less likely than those from comparison clients to be approved—by 1.2 percentage points. Among households with earnings, the difference was 3.1 percentage points (Table III.7). In Utah, there was no significant difference in approval rates for recertification applications (Figure III.8). There were differences among some subgroups in Utah: demonstration households with children, earnings, or other assistance programs were slightly more likely to be approved at recertification than comparison cases (Table III.7). This suggests that in Utah the recertification interview might be a barrier to some households, while some households in Oregon may benefit from an interview. Considering the recertification process in Oregon is the same as the initial application process—in which clients complete the same form as at application—it is not surprising the approval rates are similar for applications and recertifications.

Figure III.8. Recertification approval rates



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they may not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Table III.7. Effects of eliminating the interview on recertification approval rates, by subgroup

Households with	Oregon	Utah
Children	-1.5	0.9*
Elderly	-1.0	1.5
Disabled	-0.3	0.9
Earned income	-3.1*	0.9*
Other assistance programs	-0.1	1.0*

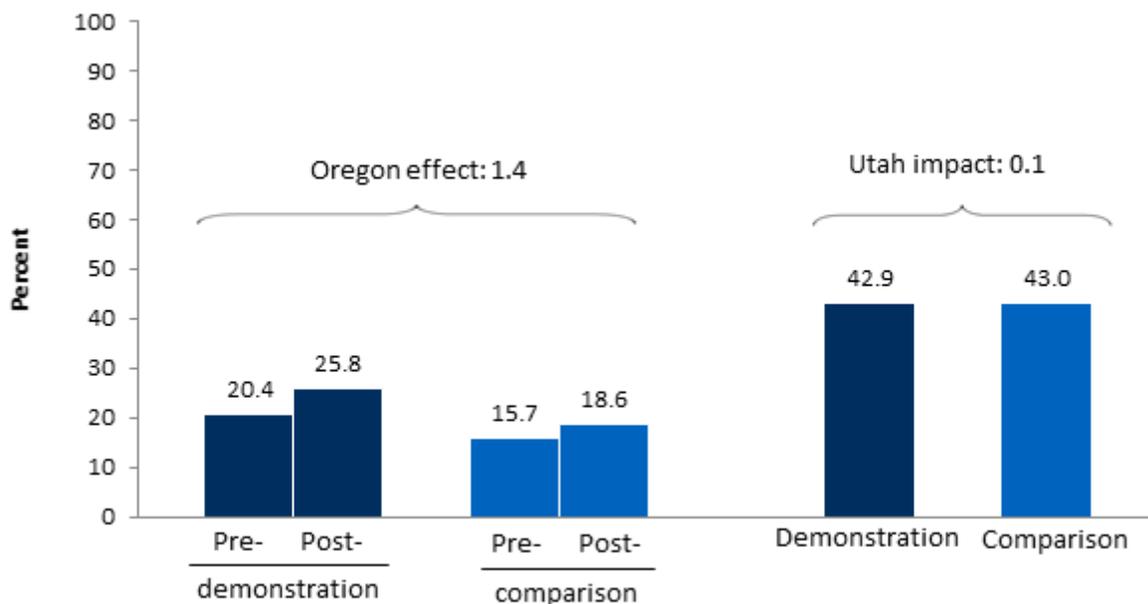
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Denials. The demonstration had no effect on the overall denial rate for new applications in either State. The adjusted effects for Oregon and Utah were 1.4 and 0.1 percent but neither was statistically significant (Figure III.9). However, in both States, the demonstration did increase the percentage of applications denied among subgroups. The denial rate increased for households with children by 4.3 percentage points in Oregon and 1.4 in Utah, and for households with earnings by 5.3 percentage points in Oregon and 4.1 in Utah (Table III.8).

Although the denial rate did not change for the overall population, the distribution of denial reasons did shift under the demonstration. In Utah, the demonstration decreased procedural denials for households overall (by 3.5 percentage points [Figure III.10]). The demonstration had no effect on the rate of procedural denials overall in Oregon; however, the percentage of procedural denials among households with children increased during the demonstration (Table III.9). In contrast, the percentage of procedural denials among households with elderly decreased significantly during the demonstration in both States. In Utah, the decreases for households with elderly members and households with disabled members were larger than for the full sample (impacts were -6.1 and -5.1 percentage points, respectively [Table III.9]). These findings suggest that the interview might present a greater barrier to completing the application for households with elderly or disabled members but that some—such as households with children—may benefit from assistance with application procedures staff provide during interviews or they have more complex circumstances and need additional guidance.

Figure III.9. Application denial rates



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

There were no statistically significant effects/impacts of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

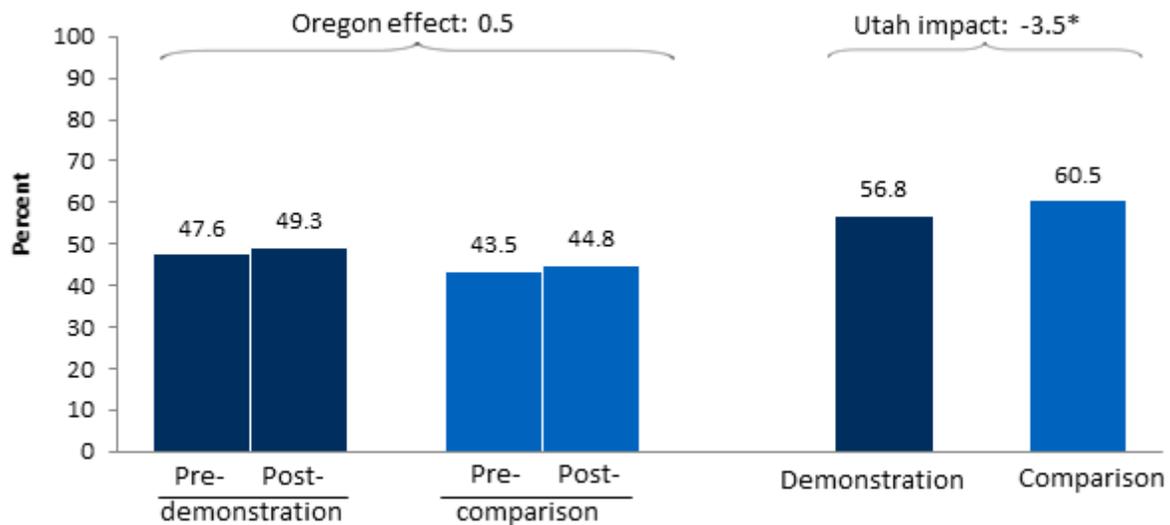
Table III.8. Effects of eliminating the interview on application denial rates, by subgroup

Households with	Oregon	Utah
Children	4.3*	1.4*
Elderly	1.4	2.7
Disabled	0.3	0.6
Earned income	5.3*	4.1*
Other assistance programs	0.6	1.0

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Figure III.10. Percentage of denied applications that were procedurally denied



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Table III.9. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of denied applications that were procedurally denied, by subgroup

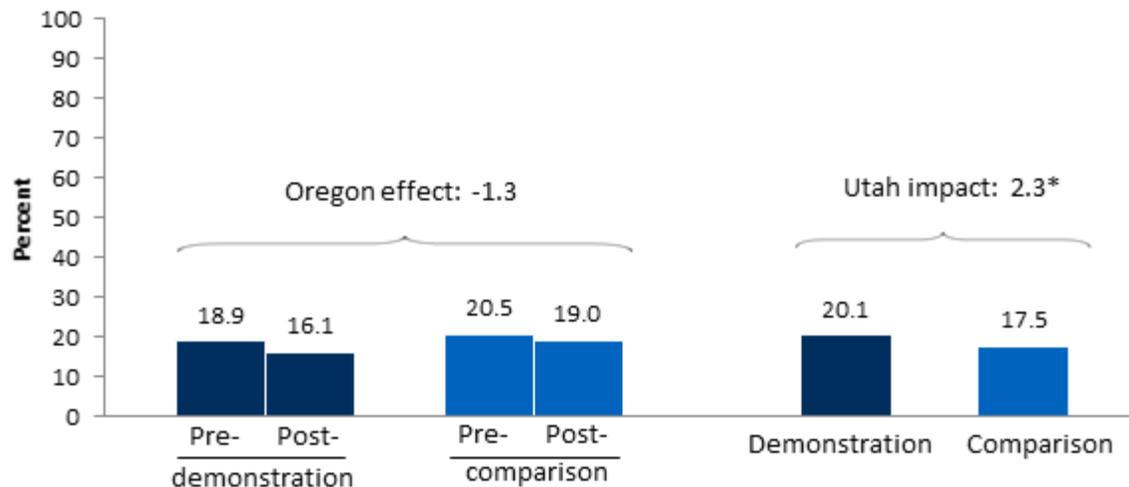
Households with	Oregon	Utah
Children	6.4*	-2.2*
Elderly	-16.4*	-6.1*
Disabled	4.9	-5.1*
Earned income	0.4	-0.5
Other assistance programs	5.6	-3.0*

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

By contrast, the demonstration increased the rate of application denials for exceeding the income limit in Utah, but not in Oregon (the effect was -1.3 percentage points in Oregon, but not statistically significant, and the impact was 2.3 percentage points in Utah [Figure III.11]). As with procedural denials, differences were greatest for households with elderly and disabled members (Table III.10).

Figure III.11. Percentage of denied applications that were denied based on income



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Table III.10. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of denied applications that were denied based on income, by subgroup

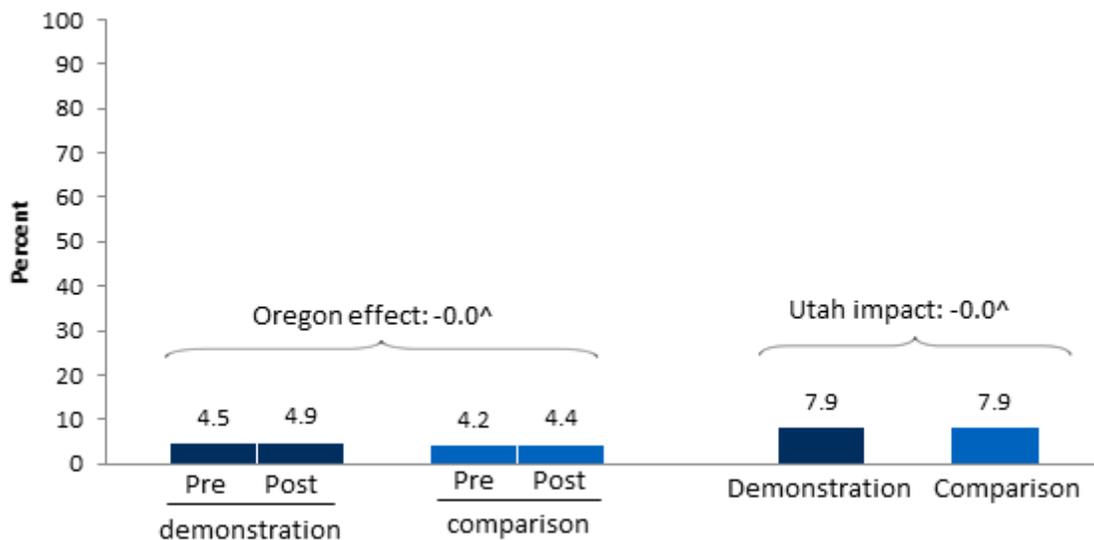
Households with	Oregon	Utah
Children	-2.7	2.2*
Elderly	0.4	7.5*
Disabled	0.9	4.3*
Earned income	-1.3	0.8
Other assistance programs	0.9	3.1*

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Case closures. The demonstration did not affect the overall case closure rate (for not completing recertification or losing eligibility at recertification) in either State (Figure III.12); although in Utah, it reduced the rates for most subgroups (Table III.11). Thus, the recertification interview might present a barrier to continued benefits to some clients in these subgroups.

Figure III.12. Percentage of cases closed



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

There were no statistically significant effects/impacts of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table III.11. Effects of eliminating the interview on case closure rates, by subgroup

Households with	Oregon	Utah
Children	0.1	-0.2*
Elderly	-0.0^	-0.1
Disabled	0.1	-0.2
Earned income	0.1	-0.3*
Other assistance programs	-0.0^	-0.2*

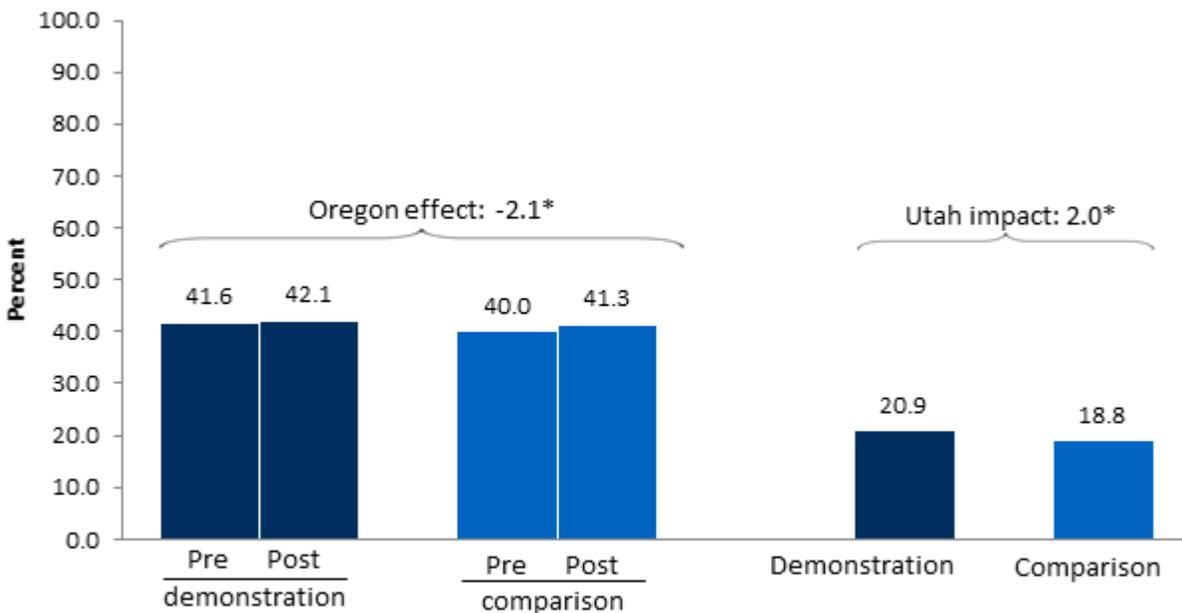
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

The demonstration altered the distribution of closure reasons in different ways across the two States. In Oregon, demonstration cases were 3.2 percentage points less likely to be closed for procedural reasons (Figure III.13). This difference was greater for households with children and households with earnings (Table III.12). By contrast, in Utah, demonstration cases were more likely than comparison cases to be closed procedurally, an impact of 2.0 percentage points (Figure III.13).

Figure III.13. Procedural closures as a percentage of cases closed



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Table III.12. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of cases closed that were procedurally closed, by subgroup

Households with	Oregon	Utah
Children	-3.3*	1.0*
Elderly	-2.4	1.2
Disabled	-1.2	0.8
Earned income	-2.5*	0.1
Other assistance programs	-0.6	0.5

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

At the same time, demonstration cases in Utah were less likely to be closed for failing to submit their recertification applications (an impact of -1.6 percentage points), but not in Oregon. The difference in Utah was greatest for households with elderly members (an impact of -4.6 percentage points [Table III.13]).

The effect the demonstration has on closures is mixed. Although closures overall are not affected, some subgroups were and the reasons for closures, such as denial for procedural reasons, did change under the demonstration. Results suggest that, for some clients, the interview may present a barrier to completing recertification and removing it will make it more likely they will keep benefits at recertification. On the other hand, for some clients, the recertification interview can be useful for reminding clients what steps they must take to complete recertification and to submit their information.

Table III.13. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of cases closed for failing to submit their recertification application, overall and by subgroup

	Oregon	Utah
Overall	0.9	-1.6*
Households with:		
Children	2.1	-1.0
Elderly	-1.4	-4.6*
Disabled	-4.3*	-1.9
Earned income	0.2	0.5
Other assistance programs	-2.0	-1.1

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

d. Churning

Churning occurs when a client leaves SNAP and returns to the program within three months. This results in inconsistent benefit receipt, which could cause hardship for clients. Churning also causes clients to submit additional SNAP applications—as opposed to recertification forms—

which take longer for clients to complete and for staff to process. Churning can be caused by fluctuations in client eligibility for SNAP or by clients failing to complete the recertification process.

Waiving the eligibility interview could conceivably increase or decrease churning. New SNAP clients who do not receive an eligibility interview might not understand they must take action to recertify. SNAP clients receive instructions in the mail, but some might benefit from having that explained during the interview. Similarly, clients might benefit from receiving instructions during recertification interviews. On the other hand, the recertification interview represents a step clients must take in order to be recertified.⁵⁴ Therefore, it could present a barrier to recertification and lead to churning.

There was no difference in churning rates between demonstration and comparison clients in Oregon, but demonstration clients in Utah were less likely to churn. Among clients coming onto SNAP in Utah, the percentage who had participated within the previous three months decreased by 2.9 percentage points (Table III.14). This difference existed for all subgroups examined except households with elderly members, for whom there was no statistically significant difference in churning rates (Table III.14). This suggests that the eligibility interview in Utah presented a barrier to recertification for some clients.

Table III.14. Effects of eliminating the interview on churning rates, overall and by subgroup

	Oregon	Utah
Overall	0.6	-2.9*
Households with:		
Children	1.2	-2.9*
Elderly	-0.7	-1.7
Disabled	-2.3	-2.5*
Earned income	1.7	-2.2*
Other assistance programs	-1.8	-2.5*

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Note: Churning is defined as coming back on the program within three months of leaving.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

e. Other program participation

One advantage of the SNAP eligibility interview is that it provides an opportunity for staff to inform clients about other programs for which they may be eligible. In both States, SNAP eligibility workers determine eligibility for other State programs and generally assess the client's need for multiple assistance programs at the time of the interview. Therefore, under the demonstration, clients might be less likely to apply for these programs if they do not participate in an interview. We compared participation in Medicaid, TANF, and SSI among demonstration

⁵⁴ In Utah, recertification are conducted every six months, but interviews are required every other recertification period.

and comparison household to determine if there were differences in access to other assistance programs. (We were not able to analyze TANF or Medicaid access in Oregon because TANF clients did not participate in the demonstration and the SNAP agency no longer administers or has access to Medicaid data.)

We found that the demonstration generally had no or small effects on access to other programs in both States. In Utah, there were no differences in the rate at which demonstration and comparison group clients applying for SNAP received TANF, but demonstration applicants were somewhat less likely to participate in Medicaid—an impact of -0.7 percentage points (Table III.15). The difference was greater among households with children (-1.8 percentage points). There were no statistically significant differences in reported SSI receipt in Oregon, but demonstration cases in Utah were slightly more likely than comparison cases to report receiving income from SSI, an impact of 0.6 percentage points (Table III.16). The difference was greater for households with disabled individuals, children, or reporting earned income (Table III.16). Overall, the results suggest the demonstration might have made clients slightly less likely to apply for some other assistance programs, which could be due to not being offered or assessed for the programs during an interview.

Table III.15. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of new applicants and recertification applicants reporting Medicaid participation in Utah, overall and by subgroup

	New Applicants	Recertifications
Overall	-0.7*	-0.0
Households with:		
Children	-1.8*	-0.1
Elderly	-0.5	0.4
Disabled	1.2	0.7
Earned income	-0.7	0.1
Other assistance programs	-0.8*	-0.2

Source: Analysis of data from the Utah DWS.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Differences in Medicaid and TANF participation and SSI receipt among Utah applicants did not carry over to recertification. In Utah, there were no significant differences in the extent of Medicaid participation (Table III.15). There was no significant difference in SSI receipt between the demonstration and comparison groups in either State, but households with elderly clients did report slightly higher SSI receipt in the Oregon demonstration (Table III.16). Although not having an interview could reduce the take-up of other programs, the differences were small and did not affect TANF participation. Because clients recertifying for assistance are generally already familiar with the system and may be more apt to see information about other programs through their participation in SNAP (during office visits or online), it is not surprising the results for recertification were not significant.

Table III.16. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of new applicants and clients recertifying reporting SSI receipt, overall and by subgroup

	New Applicants		Recertifications	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Overall	0.4	0.6*	-0.3	0.3
Households with:				
Children	-0.6	0.7*	-0.4	0.3
Elderly	0.3	0.1	1.0*	-0.2
Disabled	0.0^	2.5*	0.4	0.5
Earned income	0.4	0.7*	0.2	0.3
Other assistance programs	0.0	1.4*	0.0	0.2

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

2. Client-reported information, deductions, and SNAP benefit levels

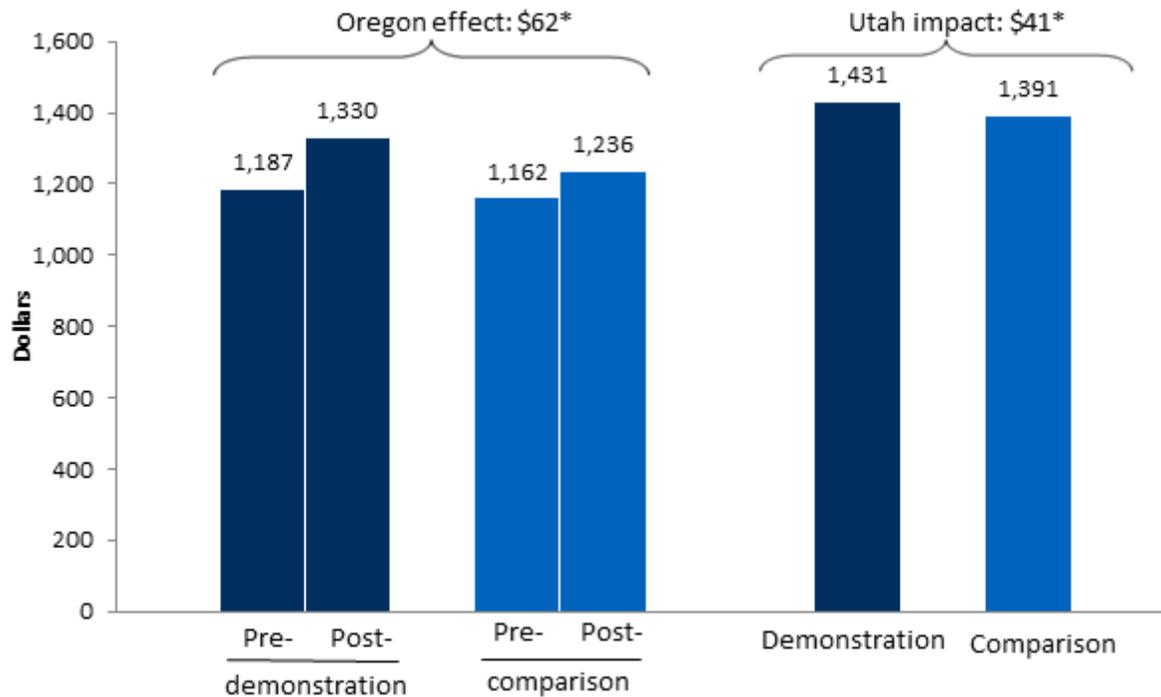
This section focuses on the extent to which client-reported information and benefit levels changed under the demonstration. Information provided by applicants—including income, earnings, and medical and shelter deductions—is used by eligibility workers to determine benefit levels. If the eligibility interview helps workers gather accurate information from clients, removing it may cause average benefit levels to change. We examined income, earnings, and deductions for all applicants, and examined benefit levels for approved applicants.

a. Income and earnings

One potential concern about waiving the eligibility interview is that clients might be less likely to report all sources of income if they never discuss their financial situation with an eligibility worker.

Among applicants reporting gross income, demonstration cases reported higher average gross income than comparison cases in both States. In Oregon, the effect was \$62, after controlling for other factors. The impact was smaller in Utah: \$41, after controlling for other factors (Figure III.14).

Figure III.14. Average reported gross income among applicants reporting gross income



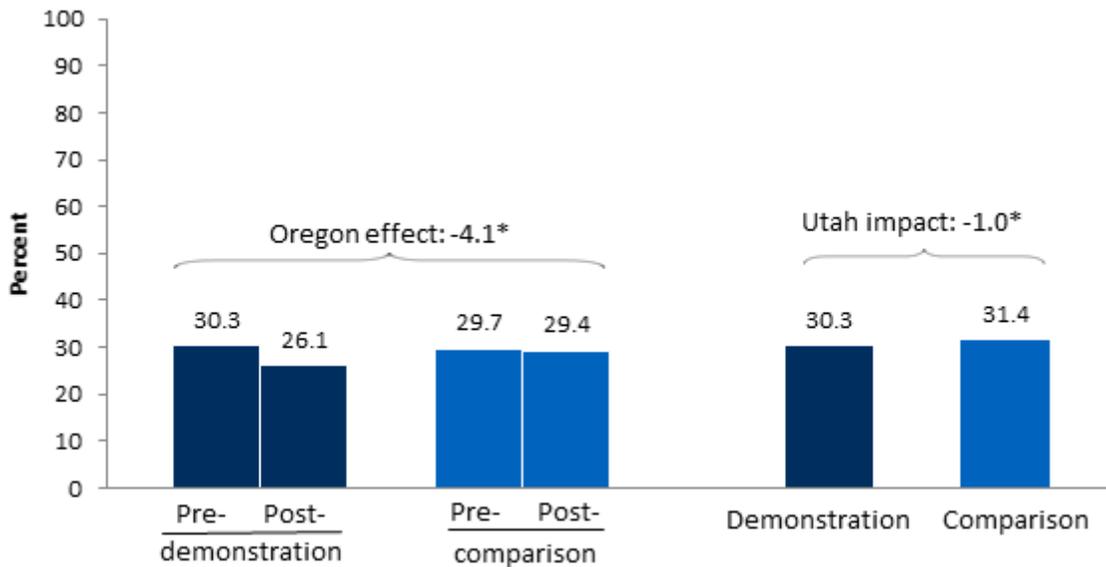
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Demonstration cases in both States were slightly less likely to report earnings. In Oregon, the proportion of applicants reporting earned income was 4.1 percentage points lower for demonstration cases, and in Utah, the proportion was 1.0 percentage point lower for demonstration cases (Figure III.15). This suggests that some clients with earnings might be less likely to report them in the absence of an interview. Especially in Utah—where clients were randomly assigned at the household level—we would expect demonstration and comparison clients to be equally likely to have earned income. The difference could be due to clients’ propensity to report earnings. Eligibility workers in Utah can search for wage statements using online databases and will reconcile any differences with client-reported earnings before processing the application. However, the type of earnings most likely to escape eligibility worker notice—which could cause the difference in these results—is pay from informal work.

Figure III.15. Percentage of applicants reporting earnings



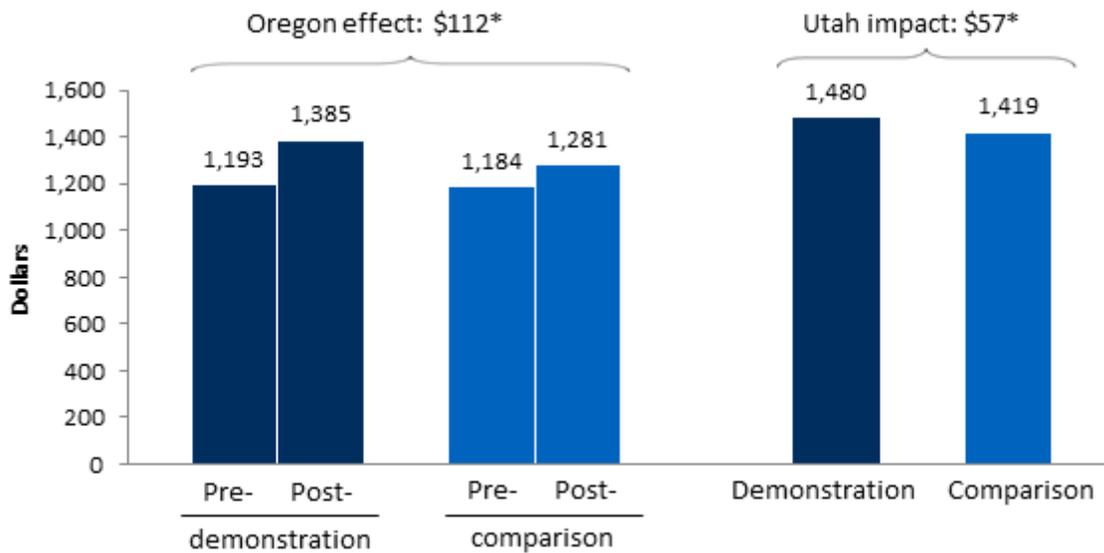
Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Among households reporting earnings, the average earnings reported were higher for demonstration than comparison cases in both States, after controlling for other factors. In Oregon, among households reporting earnings, the average earnings reported increased by \$112 (Figure III.16). In Utah, average earnings reported by households with earnings increased by \$57. Higher average earnings among clients reporting earnings suggests that it is clients with *lower* average earnings who are less likely to report earnings in the absence of an interview. This results in fewer clients reporting earnings but higher average earnings among those who do.

Figure III.16. Average reported earnings among applicants reporting earnings



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Note: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Patterns of reported income and earnings at recertification varied between States. In Oregon, the patterns were similar to those at application; clients in the demonstration were less likely to report earnings and average reported values for earnings and gross income were higher. By contrast, in Utah, clients in the demonstration were slightly more likely to report gross income (Table III.17). There were no significant differences in the percentage of clients in Utah reporting earnings or the average amount of earnings reported (Table III.18). One reason why patterns in reported income and earnings in Utah changed between application and recertification might be because demonstration households were more likely to be denied for exceeding the income limit at application. These households would not be in the sample applying for recertification.

Table III.17. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of clients reporting gross income, and average gross income reported at recertification, overall and by subgroup

	Percentage Reporting Gross Income		Average Gross Income Reported (\$)	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Overall	-2.4*	0.6*	31*	-12
Households with:				
Children	-1.3*	0.8*	19	-16
Elderly	-0.1	1.0	4	15
Disabled	0.0^	1.1	-7	-1
Earned income	0.0	0.0^	85*	-16
Other assistance	0.0^	0.7*	-4	-12

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table III.18. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of clients reporting earnings, and average earnings reported at recertification, overall and by subgroup

	Percentage Reporting Earnings		Average Earnings Reported (\$)	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Overall	-2.1*	0.0^	70*	-16
Households with:				
Children	-1.2	0.4	24*	-18
Elderly	-0.4	0.6	-52	24
Disabled	-0.4	-0.1	14	-41
Earned income	0.0	0.0^	70*	-16
Other assistance programs	0.0^	0.2	-33	-18

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

b. Medical and shelter deductions

When applying for SNAP, clients report medical and shelter costs, some of which can be deducted from gross income when calculating net income for determining SNAP eligibility and benefit levels. Clients report these costs on the application form but they can be clarified during the eligibility interview. Staff who conduct the interview discuss reported costs with the client

and might determine that costs should have been higher or lower than initially reported. Staff might also prompt clients to report eligible costs if they did not do so.

The results indicated no statistically significant differences in claimed medical deductions in either State for households overall (Table III.19). In Utah, among households with disabled members, those in the demonstration were slightly more likely to claim medical deductions than comparison households (by 1.5 percentage points [Table III.19]). At recertification, there were no significant differences in either State in the percentage of clients claiming medical deductions, although in Oregon, among households with disabled members, clients in the demonstration were less likely to claim them (Table III.19). In Utah, among households with elderly members, the average size of the deduction was \$18 smaller (Table III.20).

Table III.19. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of new applicants and clients recertifying claiming medical deductions, overall and by subgroup

	New Applicants		Recertifications	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Overall	0.1	0.2	-0.4	0.0 [^]
Households with:				
Children	-0.5	0.1	0.0 [^]	-0.1
Elderly	-0.4	1.4	-0.8	0.6
Disabled	-1.8	1.5*	-1.3*	0.1
Earned income	-0.3	0.2	-0.2	0.0 [^]
Other assistance	-2.0	0.2	-0.9	0.0 [^]

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table III.20. Effects of eliminating the interview on the average medical deduction claimed by new applicants and clients recertifying in Utah, overall and by subgroup

	New Applicants (\$)	Recertifications (\$)
Overall	-173	-9
Households with:		
Children	-14	-11
Elderly	-5	-18*
Disabled	-257	-7
Earned income	-23	-23
Other assistance	-193	-9

Source: Analysis of data from the Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Differences in claimed shelter deductions differed across the two States, but were relatively small. In Oregon, demonstration applicants were 2.7 percentage points less likely than in the comparison group to claim shelter deductions, after controlling for other factors (Table III.21). In Utah, demonstration applicants were slightly more likely to claim shelter deductions than comparison applicants—by 1.5 percentage points (Table III.21). These patterns continued at recertification. In Oregon, demonstration households were 1.7 percentage points less likely than the comparison group to claim shelter deductions (Table III.21). In Utah, demonstration clients were slightly more likely to do so—by 1.6 percentage points (Table III.21). The difference between the two States might be partly due to differences in application completeness. Applicants in Utah were much more likely to apply online than applicants in Oregon. Utah’s online application is designed to steer clients through each section systematically in order to maximize application completeness. If Utah captures more complete information on its application, workers could more easily calculate the deductions without an interview or client follow-up.

Table III.21. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of new applicants and clients recertifying claiming shelter deductions, overall and by subgroup

	New Applicants		Recertifications	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Overall	-2.7*	1.5*	-1.7*	1.6*
Households with:				
Children	0.0^	0.1	-1.9*	1.0*
Elderly	-3.2	-1.0	-0.7	2.2
Disabled	-3.7*	1.4	-0.9	1.4*
Earned income	1.2	-1.9*	2.2*	0.6
Other assistance	-2.8*	-0.1	-0.7	0.9*

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

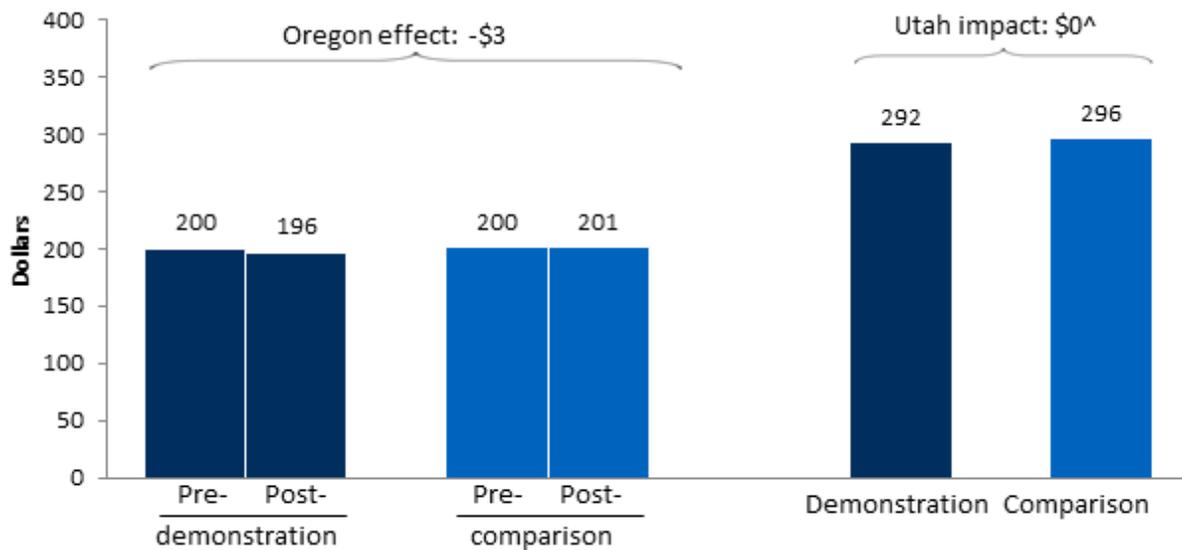
* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

c. Benefit levels

The demonstration did not lead to differences in average benefit levels for new SNAP cases in either State, despite small differences in reported income, deductions, and other sources of assistance (Figure III.17). There were small differences in Oregon in the proportion of cases approved for the maximum and minimum benefit among client subgroups, however. Among households with earned income, demonstration cases were 4.9 percentage points less likely to be approved for the maximum benefit, after controlling for other factors (Table III.22). Among households with disabled individuals, demonstration cases were 2.5 percentage points less likely to be approved for the minimum benefit, after controlling for other factors.

Figure III.17. Average SNAP benefits approved at application



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and the Utah DWS.

Notes: The Oregon effect and Utah impact are from a regression that controlled for other factors, so they might not equal the difference between the demonstration and comparison numbers shown.

There were no statistically significant effects/impacts of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table III.22. Effects of eliminating the interview on the percentage of new applicants approved for the maximum and minimum benefit amount, overall and by subgroup

	Percentage Approved for Maximum Benefit Amount		Percentage Approved for Minimum Benefit Amount	
	Oregon	Utah	Oregon	Utah
Overall	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Households with:				
Children	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.1
Elderly	-1.8	2.4	-2.2	0.4
Disabled	1.4	-1.9	-2.5*	0.6
Earned income	-4.9*	-0.1	1.3	0.4
Other assistance	-0.4	0.2	-1.5	0.1

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

At recertification, there was no statistically significant difference in average benefit levels for overall demonstration and comparison clients in either State (Table III.23). In Oregon, among households with earnings, clients in the demonstration group received \$5 more in benefits at recertification. Overall, the results provide no indication that eliminating the interview would result in substantial changes in benefit levels at application or recertification.

Table III.23. Effects of eliminating the interview on the average benefit amount at recertification, overall and by subgroup

	Oregon (\$)	Utah (\$)
Overall	2	2
Households with:		
Children	3	4
Elderly	-3	-3
Disabled	-2	-1
Earned income	5*	4
Other assistance programs	-2	3

Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

3. Client experience

Understanding the client's experience with the SNAP application process when there is no interview is a key part of the evaluation. We conducted two efforts to gather the perspectives of clients who received benefits and those who were denied. We conducted a client survey with the demonstration and comparison group participants who applied or recertified for SNAP benefits in the previous three months. Clients were asked about their application experiences and their perceptions of the ease of application. We also conducted client interviews with individuals in the demonstration and comparison groups who were denied SNAP benefits for procedural reasons. These interviews focused on the process for completing the application as well as the reasons why clients were unable to complete it. Client satisfaction with the demonstration was high for clients who received benefits, while clients denied benefits suggested an interview would have benefited them. This suggests that perhaps a determinant of client satisfaction is whether they are approved for benefits rather than the presence or absence of an interview.

a. Client survey

We asked SNAP clients in Oregon and Utah about their most recent SNAP application process to understand how the experiences and satisfaction level of those who did not receive an interview compared to those who did. Table III.24 shows the demographic characteristics of the demonstration and comparison respondents by State. The characteristics of the respondents are similar across groups and generally between States; most demonstration and comparison respondents were female, between 25 and 49 years of age, and white. The respondents in Utah were more often female and Hispanic, and younger than those in Oregon. None of the differences between the demonstration and comparison groups was statistically significant.

Our SNAP client survey revealed few differences in SNAP application and recertification experiences between demonstration and comparison clients. Most clients in both groups reported that they were satisfied with the process. Satisfaction with the application process was very high among the demonstration and comparison groups in Oregon (93.6 percent versus 93.9 percent); demonstration clients in Utah were more likely to report satisfaction with the process than comparison clients (89.7 percent compared to 85.6 percent, Figure III.18). The difference in satisfaction was not statistically significant in either State.

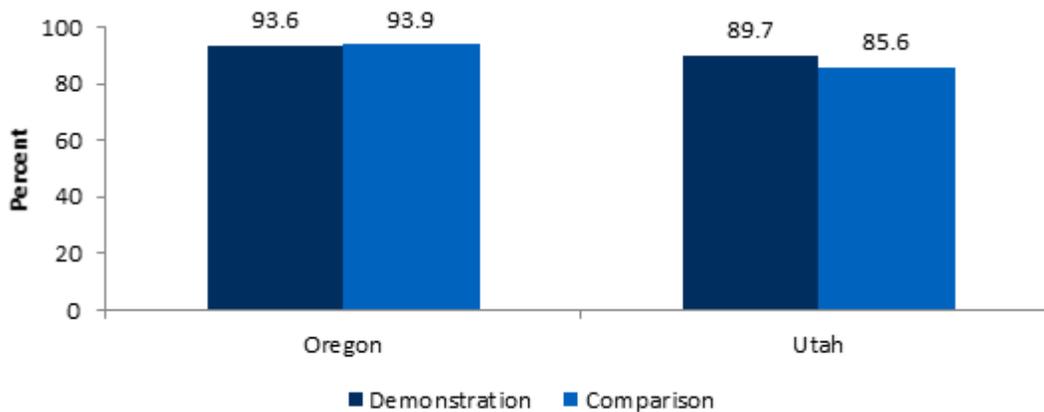
Table III.24. Percent of survey respondents by State and demographic characteristic

Demographic characteristic	Oregon		Utah	
	Demonstration	Comparison	Demonstration	Comparison
Female	54.6	61.4	73.1	74.2
Age				
18 to 24	12.5	8.9	13.0	10.9
25 to 49	49.3	53.0	65.6	62.6
50 to 59	20.2	19.9	11.5	16.5
60 or older	18.0	18.3	9.9	10.0
Race/ethnicity				
White	74.0	77.5	59.4	54.1
Hispanic	7.7	9.2	13.4	16.2
Black	5.6	3.7	3.0	2.0
Other	12.6	9.6	2.8	5.9
Non-Hispanic, no race selected	0.0	0.0	21.4	21.8

Source: Survey of SNAP clients in Oregon and Utah.

Note: Differences between the demonstration and comparison groups were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Figure III.18. Overall satisfaction with SNAP application process

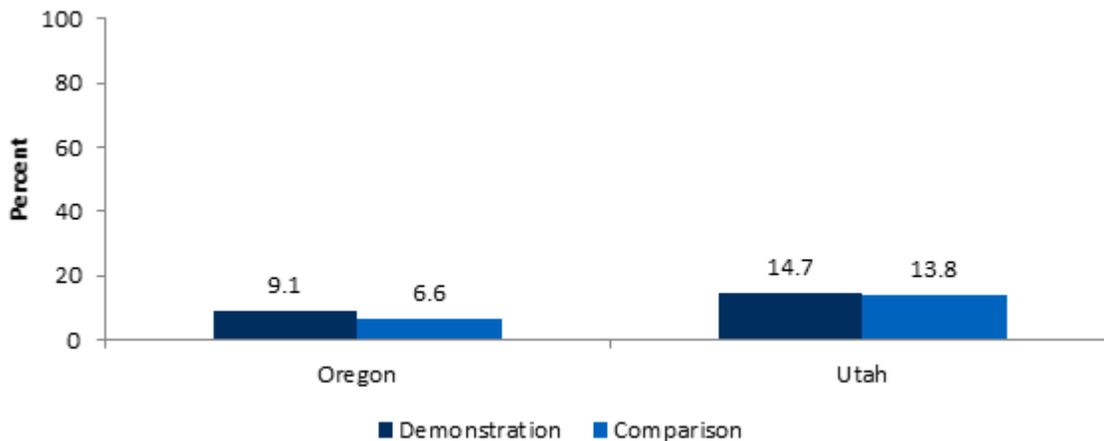


Source: Survey of SNAP recipients in Oregon and Utah.

Note: Differences between the demonstration and comparison groups were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Demonstration clients in both States were slightly more likely than comparison clients to report difficulty providing the information necessary to complete the application, although the differences were not statistically significant (Figure III.19). The substantive difference between demonstration and comparison clients was larger in Oregon than in Utah. However, clients in Utah overall were more likely to report difficulty than those in Oregon. One concern about eliminating the eligibility interview has been that it might leave clients confused about SNAP certification procedures; if this was the case, the effect appeared to be small, given the lack of statistical significance.

Figure III.19. Clients reporting difficulty providing information for SNAP application



Source: Survey of SNAP participants in Oregon and Utah.

Note: Differences between the demonstration and comparison groups were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Clients in the demonstration and comparison groups requested help to complete their SNAP applications at similar rates (Table III.25). Clients in both States were more likely to seek assistance from sources other than SNAP staff. The difference was larger in Utah than for Oregon. Most clients reported the help they received made the application process easier. In Oregon, demonstration clients were less likely than comparison clients to report that the assistance received was helpful (94.5 percent compared to 96.5 percent); in Utah the reverse was true (95.9 percent compared to 89.3 percent). None of these differences were statistically significant.

There were no significant differences in the proportion of clients feeling that staff were available to assist them, their understanding of how to use their benefits, or their understanding of how to recertify (Table III.25).

One potential benefit of SNAP eligibility interviews is that they provide an opportunity for staff to inform clients of other sources of assistance—such as TANF, medical assistance, child care assistance, and other community resources. The absence of the interview did not appear to prevent demonstration clients from receiving this type of information. In Oregon, demonstration and comparison clients were equally likely to report receiving information about other programs; in Utah, demonstration clients were slightly more likely than comparison clients to do so, although the difference was not statistically significant (Table III.25). Note that clients also might receive information about other programs from staff at local offices or by visiting the State SNAP agencies' websites.

Table III.25. Percent of clients reporting outcome, by demonstration status and State

Outcome	Oregon		Utah	
	Demonstration group	Comparison group	Demonstration group	Comparison group
Satisfied Overall with Application Process	93.6	93.9	89.7	85.6
Difficulty Providing Information for Application	9.1	6.6	14.7	13.8
Sought Assistance Completing Application	16.5	15.1	18.5	19.4
From SNAP office staff	7.2	8.3	5.5	6.9
From outside sources	9.4	7.5	13.5	12.5
Assistance Made the Process Easier	94.5	96.5	95.9	89.3
Felt Staff Were Available To Help If Needed	91.8	94.5	90.7	88.8
Understand How To Use Benefit	95.4	97.6	93.8	95.6
Understand How To Renew Benefit	91.6	95.0	92.8	90.6
Received Information About Other Assistance Programs During SNAP Application Process	39.8	40.3	46.8	41.5

Source: Survey of SNAP participants in Oregon and Utah.

Note: Differences between the demonstration and comparison groups were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

b. Procedurally denied client interviews⁵⁵

We conducted interviews (a combination of focus groups and one-on-one discussions) with applicants who were denied benefits for procedural reasons in Oregon and Utah to better understand how the absence of an interview might have affected the application process. The client outcomes discussed previously showed that, although the rate of procedural denials for demonstration applicants decreased in Utah (there was a slight insignificant increase in Oregon), the rate of procedural denials increased for certain subgroups. The experiences and opinions shared during those interviews may provide insight into these results.

⁵⁵ These were interviews with a small number of clients, so no statistical testing was performed on these data; the finding provide context for other findings but should not be considered representative or able to be generalized.

We interviewed 38 clients who were fairly evenly split between the demonstration and comparison groups (53 percent and 47 percent, respectively).⁵⁶ There were slightly more women than men in the sample; the majority were white and between 18 and 34 years of age (Table III.26). We targeted Spanish speakers for interviews, and they represented about 20 percent of the interviewees.

Table III.26. Characteristics of interviewed clients who were procedurally denied for SNAP

Percentage who were:	Demonstration			Comparison		
	Oregon	Utah	Total	Oregon	Utah	Total
Interviewed	25.0	75.0	100.0	16.7	83.3	100.0
Gender						
Male	10.0	20.0	30.0	11.1	50.0	61.1
Female	15.0	55.0	70.0	5.6	33.3	38.9
Age						
18–34	25.0	40.0	65.0	11.1	50.0	61.1
35–59	0.0	35.0	35.0	5.6	27.8	33.3
60+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6
Race						
White	25.0	60.0	85.0	16.7	50.0	66.7
Hispanic	0.0	15.0	15.0	0.0	27.8	27.8
Asian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6

Source: Analysis of data collected by Mathematica during interviews with procedurally denied clients in Oregon and Utah.

A high proportion of those denied benefits were not happy with the overall application process. Across both States, those clients denied benefits in both the demonstration and comparison groups complained about the long applications and level of detail required. Some respondents in both States said the application should be streamlined to ask only questions required for determining a SNAP benefit and not to require information for other people living in the household (if they are not helping with the applicant’s expenses). Some respondents in Oregon also suggested that if contact with eligibility staff is limited, the State should provide “example” applications for different types of clients that annotate why information was completed in a certain way. This could help guide clients as they complete applications, making it more likely they would properly address each question.

Overall, most respondents in both States suggested that completing the application and submitting it were the easiest part of the process, but providing verification was extremely difficult. Respondents who understood why they were denied benefits said it was most often due to not submitting verification materials (in both the demonstration and comparison groups). Many said that understanding what was needed and collecting all of the documents was hard. They felt that they had little control over whether an employer would submit the needed forms or

⁵⁶ Almost 80 percent of the interviews were conducted with clients in Utah, as described in the methodology section (Appendix A).

if the employer would do it in a timely manner. Some respondents also said obtaining verification of termination from a former employer can be challenging: some did not end on good terms or the business no longer existed. One client in Utah also pointed out that getting employment documentation for informal jobs was nearly impossible. In addition, most respondents agreed that although each State provides a general list of verification materials needed, there are often other specific materials that are not clearly specified, particularly for students (in Oregon) and self-employed clients (in both States). Without conversations with the eligibility workers, most respondents said they would not have understood what was needed. Clients in the demonstration group more often cited confusion over what the worker really needed when documents were missing. They also said they had a harder time reaching eligibility staff and getting a clear answer to their questions about what was needed to complete the application; demonstration clients in Utah, in particular, cited difficulty reaching workers due to long wait times on the telephone and being frequently disconnected without reaching a worker.

Although many respondents reported a high level of confusion about the application process, those in the demonstration group seemed more frustrated with the lack of contact about next steps and timing. Several indicated that the first contact they had was a letter saying they were denied, and most of them indicated they thought they had provided what was needed. Utah respondents were more likely to say they had this experience. The comparison group respondents often seemed better able to identify exactly why they were denied (generally they could not provide a specific piece of information and had several conversations with workers about it).

Although a few people suggested that not having an interview would be preferable, most respondents in both groups indicated that an interview was valuable to the process. Almost all of the respondents who suggested the interview be eliminated were in Utah, and they mainly cited long wait times for interviews or poor customer service. However, the majority of respondents felt that, without an interview, understanding the process and what information was needed (application and verification materials) would be more difficult, and they were concerned about not having opportunities to ask questions or fully explain personal situations that may not be captured on the application form. Most of the demonstration group respondents did not have an interview and suggested an interview would have helped them; those in the comparison group often felt the interviews could be improved with more knowledgeable staff or having a single eligibility worker for their case.

C. Worker and office outcomes

Worker and office outcomes are important measures for assessing staff performance and costs of the demonstration. In this section, we discuss the outcomes of staff-reported client contact and allocation of time on various activities, as well as a comparison of the cost to process applications between groups and error rates.

1. Client contact in demonstration⁵⁷

States instructed their staff to document when a demonstration client requested an interview and, among those not interviewed, when and for what purpose the staff contacted clients to

⁵⁷ These indicators were captured only for demonstration clients, so no statistical testing was performed on these data.

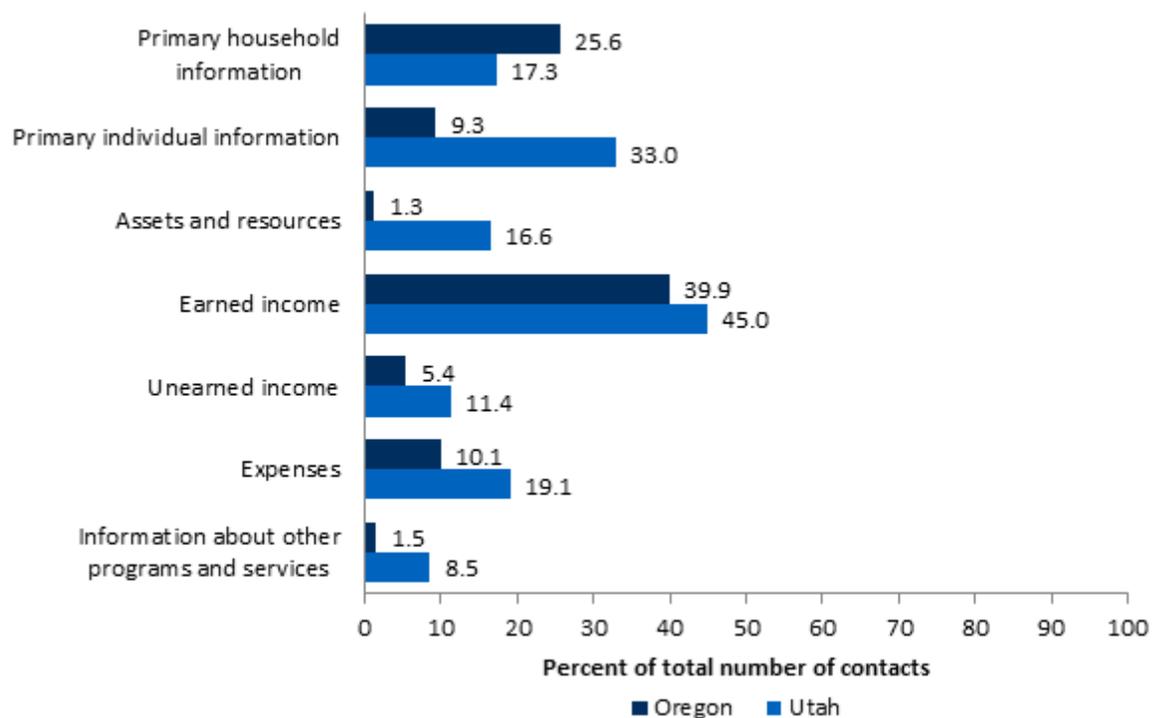
collect additional information for processing applications or recertifications. Analysis of these data show that eligibility workers in Oregon reported interviewing a higher proportion of demonstration clients (25 percent) than workers in Utah did (4 percent) and also were more likely to contact demonstration clients (21 percent in Oregon and 9 percent in Utah were contacted by eligibility workers for questions). However, we learned during site visits that staff in both States recorded these demonstration indicators inconsistently. Specifically, staff in Utah may have underreported interviews with demonstration clients. Therefore, these results should be interpreted cautiously.

Although the level of contact may be underestimated in both States, the distribution of reported reasons for client contact is likely reliable for cases that were documented by eligibility workers. These data suggest that in both States the most common reason eligibility workers contacted demonstration clients was to discuss clients' earned income (among demonstration clients contacted by eligibility workers, 40 percent in Oregon and 45 percent in Utah were contacted regarding earned income [Figure III.20]). This is consistent with interview responses, in which eligibility workers reported that households with earnings were the most complex cases and they often needed to talk with demonstration clients about information on the application.

State staff also often contacted clients to discuss primary information at either the household or individual level. In Oregon, about 26 percent of the client contacts were related to clarifying information about the overall household, such as confirming household contact information and which individuals in the residence should be included in the application (Figure III.20).⁵⁸ In Utah, 33 percent of client contacts were to seek information about individual household members, such as demographic information, Social Security numbers, or marital or citizen status (Figure III.20). Workers in Utah also frequently contacted clients to discuss expenses, such as housing costs, utilities, child care, or health insurance.

⁵⁸ Typically, all residents at an address are included in the application—and their financial resources must be counted in the eligibility determination. However, if some residents purchase and prepare food separately from the rest of the household, they can be excluded from the application.

Figure III.20. Reasons for staff contacting demonstration households to complete their application or recertification, as a percent of all contacts



Source: Analysis of data from the Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Note: Clients could be contacted for multiple reasons. Therefore the reasons included in the figure will not add to 100 percent.

2. Staff time and administrative costs⁵⁹

Demonstration and comparison eligibility workers self-reported the time they spent on various SNAP activities over the course of a five-day work week.⁶⁰ We analyzed these data to determine if there were overall differences in time spent to process demonstration cases versus comparison cases, as well as difference in time spent on specific certification or recertification tasks. States also provided salary and benefit data by staff to determine the cost differential of these differences in processing time. The number of workers included for this analysis are very small (22 workers in Oregon and 21 in Utah) compared to the total number of worked in each State, and these respondents were not selected to be representative samples of the overall eligibility staff. The results, therefore, may not be representative of the time and cost of the demonstration.

⁵⁹ No statistical testing was performed on these data.

⁶⁰ Workers in Utah processed both demonstration and comparison cases, so each worker documented separately the time he or she spent on each type of case. In Oregon, the demonstration and comparison was conducted by office, so workers processed only demonstration or comparison cases.

The experience level of a staff person can affect the time necessary to complete one's work, but it is worth noting that the average number of years the sample staff worked with the SNAP agency was consistent across groups. On average, staff worked for SNAP for about 8 years, and had spent about 6 to 7 years in the current position (Table III.27). In Oregon demonstration offices, workers' time in the current position ranged from less than 6 months to 20 years, with an average of about 7 years. Oregon comparison office workers had a lower average of 5.7 years in the current position, and a smaller range: 2 to 14 years. In Utah, the average time in the current position was 7.4 years, ranging from just under 2 years to more than 18 years.

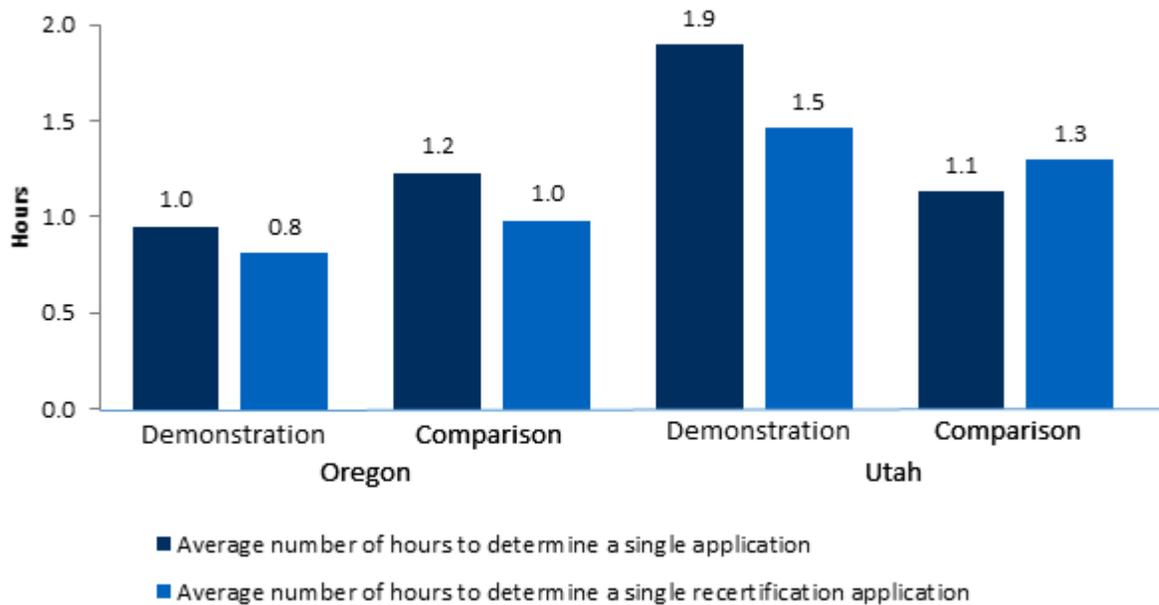
Table III.27. Average worker characteristics for sample documenting time use

	Oregon		
	Demonstration (11 workers)	Comparison (11 workers)	Utah (21 workers)
Years at current position	6.9	5.7	7.4
Years at local office	6.1	6.4	6.3
Years at SNAP agency	7.7	8.6	7.6

Source: Analysis of data from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

In Oregon, demonstration applications took less time to process (and were less costly) than comparison applications, while the opposite was true in Utah. In Oregon, the overall time to process a new application in the demonstration offices was slightly less than in the comparison offices (1 hour versus 1.2 hours), and demonstration recertifications took slightly less time than comparison recertifications (0.8 versus 1 hour; Figure III.21). Accordingly, demonstration office workers made eligibility determinations for more cases per day, on average, than comparison office workers (4.7 versus 2.2 for new applications and 6.3 versus 3.4 for recertifications [Appendix D, Table D1.1]). In contrast, new applications from demonstration cases in Utah took almost double the amount of time of new applications from comparison cases (1.9 versus 1.1 hours), and demonstration recertifications took slightly longer than comparison recertifications (1.5 versus 1.3 hours). In addition, Utah case workers made eligibility determinations for fewer demonstration cases per day, on average, than comparison cases (1.7 versus 3.6 for new applications; 1.5 versus 2.6 for recertifications [Appendix D, Table D1.1]).

Figure III.21. Average number of hours to process a single application



Source: Analysis of data collected from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Translating the time to complete applications into costs, results in small cost savings in the Oregon demonstration compared to substantial increases in cost in the Utah demonstration. In Oregon, the average cost to process a new demonstration application was about \$9 less than a comparison application (\$33 versus \$42) and \$6 less for a recertification (\$28 versus \$34) (Table III.28). It should be noted that front office staff in Oregon were not included in the survey of time use, but we learned during our interviews with staff that many felt work that had been traditionally done by eligibility workers was shifted to front office staff in the demonstration sites. Therefore, some or most of the time and cost savings noted in Oregon may be overestimated. In Utah, the average cost to process a new demonstration application was about \$36 more than a comparison application (\$73 versus \$37) and almost \$10 more for a recertification (\$52 versus \$42) (Table III.28). The cost differential in Utah is primarily due the substantial increase in time to verify each demonstration application.

Table III.28. Average cost (in dollars) to process an application, by demonstration status

	Oregon			Utah		
	Demonstration	Comparison	Difference	Demonstration	Comparison	Difference
New application	33.38	42.46	-9.08	73.05	37.34	35.71
Recertification application	28.29	34.08	-5.79	51.84	42.19	9.65

Source: Analysis of data collected from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

Note: We estimated costs using the average salary and fringe benefits of eligibility workers and average time spent processing a single new application and a single recertification.

An analysis of the time spent on specific certification and recertification activities shows that demonstration workers did save time on certain aspects of the process though other aspects took much more time than for comparison cases. Table III.29 shows that in Oregon, the time savings of not conducting an interview were offset by an increase in time spent determining new applications and processing forms for recertifications. In Utah, time spent on most certification and recertification activities were fairly comparable between the demonstration and comparison cases, but intake on new applications and sending recertification materials took relatively longer in the demonstration (8 minutes longer for intake; 22 minutes longer for sending recertification). However, the most notable difference in time was completing applicant verifications: workers spent almost an hour longer (57 minutes), on average, verifying new demonstration applications than new comparison applications. Some staff in Utah indicated they did not trust information produced by the electronic verification system and expressed concern that without an interview, the application was incorrect or incomplete. They often spent additional time looking into these cases, which explains some of the additional time to verify demonstration cases.

Workers in both States expressed mixed opinions about whether the demonstration created cost efficiencies. In Oregon, workers reported that straightforward demonstration cases required less time than comparison cases. However, more complex demonstration cases, such as self-employed clients or clients with multiple income sources, reportedly required more time than comparison cases because there was no interview at which to gather information. Some staff in Utah believed that the demonstration saved time and reduced costs; others said demonstration cases required more time, especially for verification, so any efficiency gained from removing the interview was lost on other activities.

Table III.29. Average number of minutes spent on application activities

	Oregon			Utah		
	Demonstration	Comparison	Difference	Demonstration	Comparison	Difference
<i>For Applications with the Following Activities, Average Number of Minutes Spent on Each:</i>						
Intake	13	15	-2	27	19	8
Eligibility interview ^a	n.a.	22	-22	n.a.	19	-19
Verification	19	23	-4	74	17	57
Determination	25	14	11	13	13	0
Total Time	57	74	-17	114	68	46
<i>For Recertification Applications with the Following Activities, Average Number of Minutes Spent on Each:</i>						
Sending forms/ scheduling interview	19	7	12	45	23	22
Eligibility interview ^a	n.a.	18	-18	n.a.	7	-7
Verification	15	23	-8	30	32	-2
Redetermination	15	11	4	13	16	-3
Total Time	49	59	-10	88	78	10

Source: Analysis of data collected from Oregon DHS and Utah DWS.

^a Eligibility interviews were not usually conducted for demonstration clients, although they were available upon request. Interviews likely took the same amount of time for demonstration and comparison clients.

3. Error rates

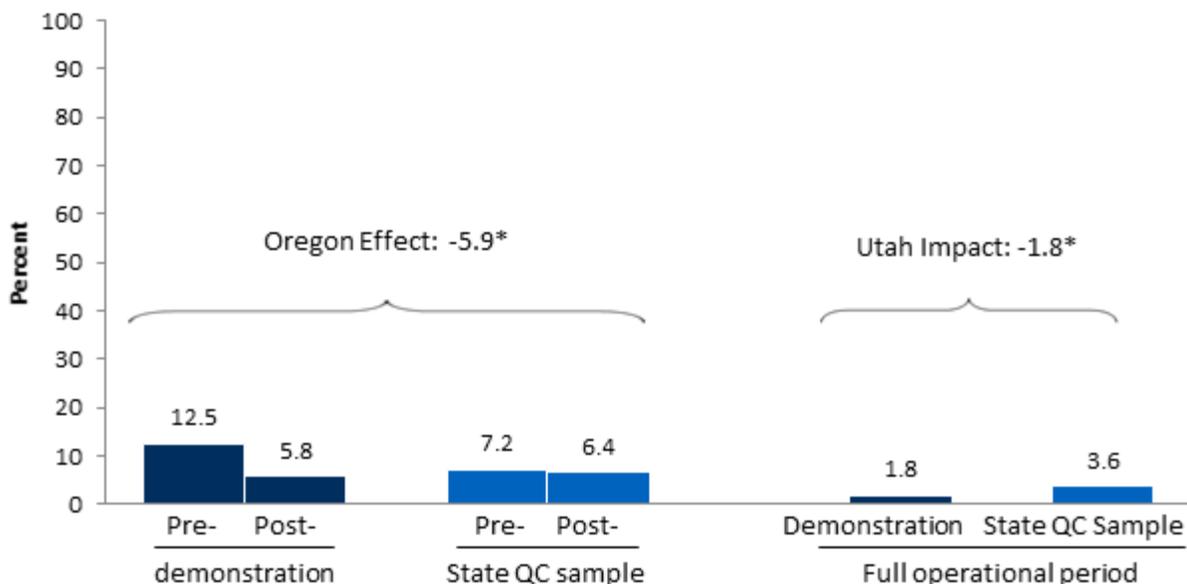
Analysis of the demonstration QC-like reviews provided by Oregon and Utah to determine whether eliminating an interview decreased the accuracy of the benefit calculation shows that the

demonstration did not appear to negatively affect error rates and may, in fact, increase accuracy. We calculated both case error rate (the number of errors found divided by the number of sample cases) and the payment error rate (total amount of benefits issued in error divided by the total amount of benefits issued) for each State. We compared these errors to those in the official State QC files and found that demonstration case and payment error rates were lower than the State QC error rate in both States. These results were significant in both States for the case error rate and in Utah for the payment error rate.

In Oregon, the case error rate in the demonstration was 5.9 percentage points lower than the State QC rate over the demonstration period. The error rate dropped between the pre-implementation and post-implementation periods for both the demonstration and State QC samples, but the drop in the demonstration was larger (12.5 percent in the pre-implementation period and 5.8 percent in the post-implementation period compared to 7.2 percent and 6.4 in the State QC sample during the same periods). The difference-in-differences estimate shows this was a statistically significant drop in case error rates for the demonstration (Figure III.22).

In Utah, the case error rates also decreased for the demonstration, and the decreases were significantly lower than the State QC rates. In Utah, we compared the demonstration error rates to the State QC sample at two points in time after the demonstration began—early implementation period and full operational period—to determine if the error rate changed over the course of the demonstration. We found that the case error rate during both periods was significantly lower than the State QC sample during the same periods (2 percent compared to 4.7 percent in 2012; 1.8 percent and 3.6 percent in 2013), suggesting that the demonstration cases were less likely to contain errors than other SNAP cases in the State (Figure III.122).

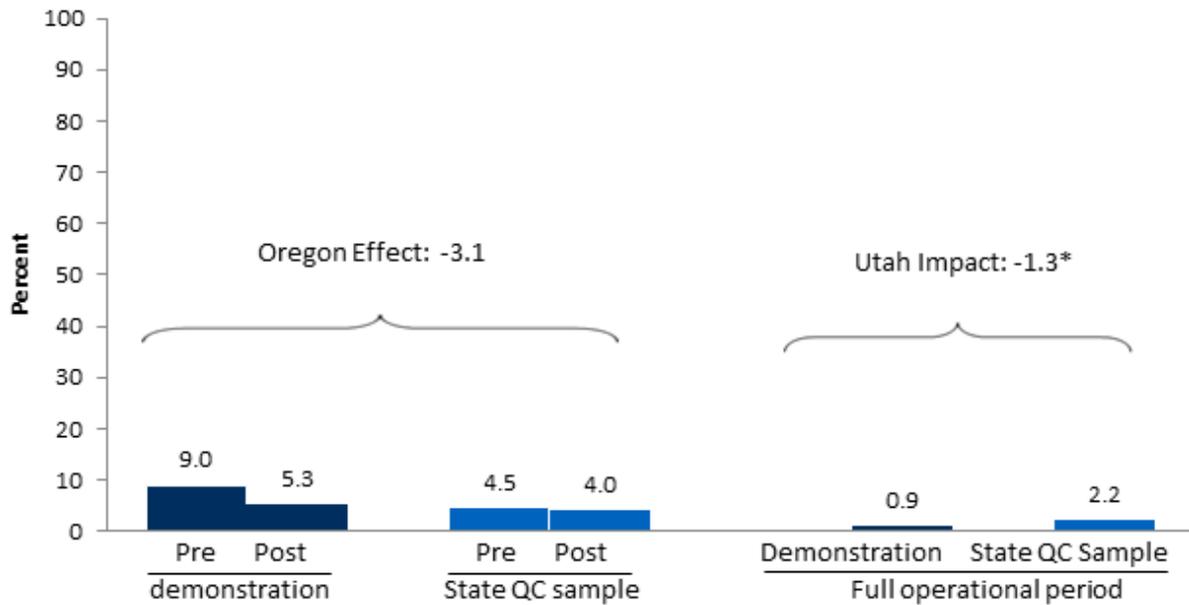
Figure III.22. Case error rate for QC-like reviews and State QC error rates



Source: QC-like reviews collected from Oregon and Utah. State QC error rates from the 2012 and 2013 FNS Quality Control Data.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

Figure III.23. Payment error rate for QC-like reviews and State QC error rates



Source: QC-like reviews collected from Oregon and Utah. State QC error rates from the 2012 and 2013 FNS Quality Control Data.

* The effect/impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level, after controlling for other factors.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The primary goal FNS established for this study was to determine how eliminating the SNAP interview at certification and recertification affected such program outcomes as access, accuracy, costs, and client satisfaction. Even though Oregon and Utah used different evaluation designs, we found similar patterns in the results. In general, eliminating the interview had few significant effects on client outcomes for the overall populations, but some subgroups experienced larger effects. The effects on worker and program outcomes were mixed; demonstration cases often look longer to process but had lower error rates. The following themes emerged from our analysis:

- **The demonstration generally did not adversely affect overall client outcomes.** Waiving the eligibility interview generally did not have significant negative effects on program access, application or recertification approval rates, denial rates, benefit levels, or churning for the overall demonstration population in either State. While denial rates overall did not change in the demonstrations, the reasons for denial in Utah shifted, with the demonstration cases having lower rates of denials for procedural reasons and higher rates of denials for being over income limits. Also, demonstration applicants in both States were slightly less likely than comparison applicants to report earned income. At the same time, demonstration applicants had higher average gross and earned income amounts than applicants in the comparison group did, suggesting that perhaps low-earning households may be less likely to report income under the demonstration.
- **The demonstration adversely affected client outcomes for some subgroups.** Although few effects were significant for the overall population, effects often were significant for some subgroups, particularly households with children and those that reported earnings. In both States, fewer applications were approved for households with children and for those reporting earnings, and more of these households were denied benefits. In Utah, both groups also were less likely to be approved at recertification (only households with earnings were approved at lower rates in Oregon). In addition, findings from Utah suggest that eliminating the interview decreased churning for both groups.
- **Satisfaction was high among demonstration participants but was much lower among those denied benefits.** Client perspectives were fairly consistent between demonstration and comparison groups. Demonstration clients in both States who received benefits reported being very satisfied with the application process,⁶¹ indicating that not having the interview likely does not increase burden on participants. Among clients who were procedurally denied, satisfaction with the process was low in both the demonstration and comparison groups, but demonstration clients more often felt the application process was difficult and believed an interview would have helped them navigate the process.
- **Time and cost savings in the demonstration were not apparent.** Assessments of staff time and costs show that eliminating the interview did not produce major savings or efficiencies. Although some staff might have saved time, the work could have simply shifted

⁶¹ This was not statistically significant by State but when client responses were pooled together overall the demonstration clients were significantly more satisfied with the application process.

to other workers in the office. In Oregon, the staff time to complete applications in demonstration offices was slightly lower than in comparison offices, but these results did not include the time front office staff spent directing clients and helping review and complete applications, which was not measured. Staff unanimously suggested work from eligibility staff was shifted to front office staff in the Oregon demonstration sites, which is not captured here. In Utah, an analysis of the time a given worker spent processing his or her demonstration cases versus his or her comparison cases each day found that it took him or her nearly twice as long to process demonstration applications. That increase was driven by the additional time required to verify client information. However, differences in staff time and costs for demonstration cases may in part reflect the temporary nature and partial scope of the demonstration; if this was implemented as a statewide policy, the time and costs associated with the demonstration may decrease as States implement policies more efficiently and provide additional supports to staff.

Although each State approached the demonstration differently and relied on different processes for conducting SNAP intake and eligibility determination,⁶² several common themes emerged. These can provide informative lessons for assessing the usefulness of waiving the SNAP interview. The themes include:

- **Complete applications and data quality become much more important if no interview is conducted.** Staff in both States said reaching clients in the demonstration was often difficult, and obtaining a simple clarification on an otherwise complete application was sometimes time-consuming. In fact, staff in Utah spent four times longer, on average, collecting and processing verifications for their demonstration cases than they did for their comparison cases. In addition, demonstration offices in Oregon found they needed to change the intake process to require front office staff to review all applications for completeness prior to accepting the application. Without this step, eligibility staff found most applications could not be processed without some form of client contact.
- **Eliminating interviews requires few policy and system changes, but training is key for consistent messaging and results.** In eliminating the interview, neither Oregon nor Utah required major changes to policy, process, or technology. Both States made only minor policy and system changes in most offices. The two States also had different levels of modernization and types of process models, neither of which appeared to affect the transition to the new policy. However, both States experienced difficulty with clearly and consistently messaging the demonstration to staff. Although most staff ultimately conducted the process correctly, some staff in both States never properly documented client contacts. Some also continued to contact clients for more extensive interview-like conversations than were needed.
- **States need flexibility to tailor interview requirements to worker and client needs.** Staff in both States said that completely eliminating the interview in all cases might not be the best approach for workers or clients. State staff felt they should have flexibility to determine who and when to interview. Most staff agreed that households known to the system, such as

⁶² The two States represent the spectrum of modernization: Oregon is less modernized than many States and Utah is one of the most modernized States.

those recertifying, may not need to complete interviews, as basic information about them is already in the State system and the process is a relatively easy update that usually requires little client clarification. However, staff felt that the interview can be a useful tool for completing the applications of clients who are not already in the State system or who have more complex circumstances. Some staff suggested that all new applicants should be interviewed. Staff reported that collecting accurate information from clients unknown to the State often took more time than for other applicants, and some staff expressed concerns about accuracy. In addition, staff pointed out that more complex cases, such as households with earnings, self-employed individuals, students, or homeless individuals, could benefit from an interview, as workers could quickly obtain clarification on application questions and discuss the special types of verification these clients might have to provide.

Overall, the study suggests that the contribution of eligibility interviews on SNAP eligibility and benefit determination is mixed. Interviews may improve application timeliness and increase the likelihood that applicants will report earnings. However, the interview does not necessarily improve approval or denial rates or accuracy of benefit payments. In fact, eliminating the interview may reduce error rates and decrease program churning. In considering the expansion of this policy, FNS will need to identify which combinations of factors are most salient for their decision making. If interviews were eliminated, States would require a level of flexibility to determine the interview policy most appropriate for their staffs and clientele.

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APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

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APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

This appendix contains additional information about data collection and analysis methodology for this study. It also provides details on the data and analysis limitations encountered.

A. Interviews

We conducted the Oregon visit over a period of seven days and the Utah visit over five days. On the first day of the visits to each State, we interviewed all the State staff involved in the demonstration and then used the remaining time on site to conduct interviews with local office staff and representatives of CBOs. On average, we met with three to five eligibility staff in each location and one or two front office staff, as applicable. With each respondent, we discussed the planning, implementation, and operation of the demonstrations, including changes required to implement the demonstration, challenges with operating the demonstration, staff response to the demonstration, and perceived effects on SNAP clients.

The SNAP offices selected for site visits (Table A.1) varied by urban and rural status, office process types (described below), and caseload sizes. In Oregon, we selected one or more offices in each of the five demonstration areas and in four of the comparison areas.⁶³ We also included a mix of offices that either flourished or struggled with the demonstration, according to information provided by Oregon State staff. We visited offices in each county that served the majority of the population. Offices included processing centers (where staff process cases but the center is not open to the public) and local offices (where staff process cases and the office is open to the public). We also visited two CBOs that work with low-income populations to learn how the community and clients responded to the elimination of the interview.

Because Utah has moved away from a traditional office model, visits to local offices (known as employment centers) were less important than visits to eligibility centers (similar to processing/call centers that are closed to the public), which is where most eligibility staff work.⁶⁴ We visited three of the four eligibility centers located in the State and 3 of 32 employment centers. At employment centers, our discussions focused on the upfront process for clients who visit for application assistance. We also discussed the system for processing paper applications dropped off by clients. We selected the employment center that serves the largest population in an urban area, an employment center located in a rural area, and the employment center serving the most diverse population (the State's highest proportion of African Americans and Hispanics). The three employment centers serve a mix of clients who might respond differently to the demonstration.

⁶³ We did not visit the Jackson/Josephine County comparison site, as it was too distant for the time available.

⁶⁴ Employment centers are predominately involved in employment-related activities that fall under the purview of other programs, but clients may visit the centers and apply for SNAP or use the telephone to call for an interview. Staff in these centers are typically employment counselors and cannot answer SNAP eligibility questions or process cases.

Table A.1. Organizations and locations visited

Organization	Location
Oregon (September 2013)	
DHS State office	Salem
North Salem DHS (Comparison site)	Salem
West Eugene DHS (Demonstration site)	Eugene
Ontario DHS (Demonstration site)	Ontario
Hermiston DHS (Comparison site)	Hermiston
Hillsboro DHS (Demonstration site)	Hillsboro
North Clackamas DHS (Comparison site)	Clackamas
Oregon City DHS (Demonstration site)	Oregon City
Alberta DHS (Demonstration site)	Portland
East Portland DHS (Comparison site)	Portland
North processing center (Demonstration site)	Portland
Metro processing center (Comparison site)	Portland
Oregon 2-1-1 (CBO)	Portland
Partners for Hunger-Free Oregon (CBO)	Portland
Utah (October 2013)	
DWS State office	Salt Lake City
Salt Lake eligibility center	Salt Lake City
Metro employment center	Salt Lake City
Provo eligibility center	Provo
Heber City employment center	Heber City
Ogden eligibility center	Ogden
Ogden employment center	Ogden
Utahns Against Hunger (CBO)	Salt Lake City
Community Action Program (CBO)	Salt Lake City

To organize and analyze the data we collected from more than 129 people across the two sites, we created theme tables and developed profiles for each site (Yin 1994). We collapsed the various staff responses around key themes into tables (by site). Using these tables and a high-level topical outline, we developed detailed site profiles for Oregon and Utah, which were the basis for this study's interim report.⁶⁵ This technique allowed us to construct a narrative of the demonstration implementation and summarize stakeholder views of the demonstration while accounting for diverse responses.

⁶⁵ Rowe, Gretchen, Elizabeth Brown, Andrew Gothro. "Assessment of the Contribution of an Interview to SNAP Eligibility and Benefit Determinations: Interim Report. See Appendix E.

Although we interviewed a large number of staff representing various levels for this study, the data are limited by the fact that these interviews were with only a small portion of the total number staff involved in the demonstration. The demonstration covered far more locations than we could visit. Even though we visited a mix of offices, they were only a subset of the offices participating in the demonstration or serving as comparison sites—and the offices and their comparisons may not be representative of all offices in the State. Although we asked to speak with a variety of staff, we did not select the people to interview and, therefore, they are likely not a representative sample of all staff across offices. Finally, although the opinions of staff at various levels tended to be somewhat diverse, it is possible that some staff have extreme views of the demonstration, and we did not have the opportunity to interview them. We relied on State and local office staff to provide names of workers to be interviewed. We stressed the importance of speaking with staff representing different points of view but recognize that some supervisors may have provided names only of staff members with moderate views.

B. Administrative data and regression-adjusted effects

We collected administrative data from September 2010 through November 2013, covering 24 months prior to the demonstration initiation in September 2012 and the full 15-month demonstration period. The data included the following household-level characteristics:

- Case ID number
- County name
- Name or ID number of the office servicing the case
- ZIP code
- Number of members in the SNAP household
- Date application was received
- Application status (pending, approved, denied, and so on)
- Application status date or eligibility determination date (the date that eligibility was determined or the date the application status became effective)*
- Reason for denial
- Language used to fill out the application (English, Spanish, and so on)
- Whether the case received expedited service at last opening
- Date case was opened
- Date case was last recertified
- Length of current certification period
- Benefit amount for most recent payment period
- Household's total gross income for the month
- Household's total gross earned income for the month
- Household's total income from Social Security and SSI for the month
- Household's shelter deduction

- Household's medical deduction*
- Indicator of current TANF receipt
- Indicator of current Medicaid participation*

It also included the following individual-level characteristics:

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Disability status
- Citizenship and country of citizenship
- Relationship of this person to the applicant/grantee

* The data element was not available in Oregon

After completing the standard analysis of the demonstration effects on outcomes (described in section I.D), we calculated regression-adjusted effects of the demonstration in both States to control for pre-demonstration differences between the demonstration and comparison groups. The methodology for each State is presented below.

1. Oregon

The Oregon regression analysis controlled for observable site characteristics that might have been correlated with changes in the outcomes. Specifically, we regressed the percentage change in each outcome on an indicator for whether the site was a demonstration site and on the following site characteristics (which were selected to capture site-specific factors that could influence the outcomes of interest):

- Average month-to-month percentage change in the number of SNAP participants during the pre-demonstration period
- Average month-to-month percentage change in the outcome during the pre-demonstration period
- County population
- Percentage of county population over 60 years old
- Percentage black, non-Hispanic in county
- Percentage Hispanic in county
- Percentage of county population with a high school degree or higher
- Percentage of county population in poverty in the past 12 months
- Percentage of county population receiving SNAP benefits
- Percentage of county civilian labor force population unemployed

The first two characteristics were calculated from the administrative data. The other characteristics came from the 2007–2011 ACS five-year estimates. For each demonstration or

comparison branch office, we selected the ACS county that had the largest number of cases processed by that office.

Formally, the regression model is:

$$(1) \quad q_i = \left(\frac{y_{post}^i - y_{pre}^i}{y_{pre}^i} \right) = \alpha + \beta d_i + \varphi S_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where q_i is the percentage change in the outcome of interest (such as number of applications processed) in site i between the pre- and post-demonstration periods; y_{pre}^i is the outcome for site i in the pre-demonstration period; y_{post}^i is the outcome for site i in the post-demonstration period; α , β , and φ are parameters to be estimated; d_i is an indicator that equals one for all demonstration sites and 0 for all other sites in the state for which ACS data were available; S_i is an array of the site characteristics listed above; and ε_i is an error term. The coefficient β represents the degree to which the percentage change in the outcome is different for demonstration sites, after controlling for other factors: the regression-adjusted effect of the demonstration.

2. Utah

The Utah regression analysis controlled for differences in baseline characteristics of demonstration and comparison cases. We regressed each outcome on an indicator for whether the case was in the demonstration or comparison group and the following baseline characteristics:

- Gender of the household head
- Age of the household head
- Race of the household head
- Ethnicity of the household head
- Citizenship status of the household head
- Household size
- An indicator for whether the household had children
- An indicator for whether the household had elderly members
- An indicator for whether the household had disabled members
- An indicator for whether the language used to fill out the application was English

Formally, the regression model is:

$$(2) \quad y_i = \alpha + \beta d_i + \varphi S_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where y_i is the outcome of interest (such as an indicator for whether the application was expedited) for case i during the post-demonstration period; α , β , and φ are parameters to be estimated; d_i is an indicator that equals one for all demonstration cases and 0 for all comparison cases; S_i is an array of the case characteristics listed above; and ε_i is an error term. The coefficient β represents the degree to which the outcome was different for demonstration cases, after controlling for other factors: the regression-adjusted effect of the demonstration.

We encountered several important limitations with the administrative data that should be considered when interpreting findings:

- In Oregon:
 - **Data included only the last status (open, pending, denied, or closed) of each household during the month.** Thus, if a household had more than one status during the month, we would have a record of only the last. For example, if a case submitted an application that was pending for several days and then denied, the data included only the denied status. For recertifications, if an open case submitted a recertification and was approved within the same month, the data did not include the recertification status; the case simply appears to be open for that month. Therefore, to measure the number of recertification applications, we considered a recertification application to have occurred if the previous certification period had passed.
 - **Data did not include the date the eligibility determination decision was made on an application.** The data included the date a household filed an application but not the date a decision was made. We, therefore, were unable to determine the number of days it took to process an application (for both regular and expedited applications), and could not calculate timeliness based on the administrative data.
 - **Some clients switched between demonstration and comparison offices during the demonstration period.** Although Oregon officially suspended its no wrong door policy during the demonstration period, we observed that some clients switched between demonstration and comparison offices during the demonstration period without a change of address. The analysis presented in this report excludes these cases. However, we did conduct two sensitivity analyses to determine if this approach was accurate: (1) an intent-to-treat analysis that includes these cases and maintains the demonstration status for each case observed at the end of the pre-demonstration period, and (2) an analysis that includes these cases and permits each case to switch groups each time they apply (for example, if a comparison case submitted an application through a demonstration office, we kept them in the comparison group for the months before that application and moved them into the demonstration group for subsequent months). Our results were unchanged across the three analyses.

- In Utah:
 - **Some households applying for benefits were not assigned to the demonstration or comparison group due to the method they used to submit their applications.**⁶⁶ Although these households experienced business-as-usual procedures, including them in the comparison group would bias the results because they had no chance of being assigned to the demonstration group. We excluded these applications (about 16 percent of all applications submitted during the demonstration period) from the analysis. Removing them does not bias the results but makes them somewhat less representative of Utah’s overall SNAP population; the excluded applications were more likely to be from larger households or households with: elderly or disabled members, a Hispanic household head, an older household head (age 50 or older), or a non-U.S. citizen household head.
 - **Some households in the comparison group were subject to multiple rounds of random assignment.** Because Utah unintentionally did not retain the initial assignment for comparison cases, each time a household in the comparison group submitted an application during the demonstration period, it had a one-in-five chance of being reassigned to the demonstration group. (Households assigned to the demonstration group remained there and were not subject to additional rounds of random assignment.) This resulted in some households experiencing comparison-group procedures and then subsequently experiencing demonstration-group procedures during the demonstration period. Allowing these households to switch analysis groups would undermine the random assignment and bias the results. So we performed an intent-to-treat analysis, requiring all households in the analysis sample to retain the treatment status to which they were initially assigned. This means some households analyzed as comparison group observations actually experienced demonstration-group procedures at some point during the study. The impact estimates calculated using this technique likely represent a lower bound of the true impact of eliminating the eligibility interview: if there had been no crossover from the comparison to demonstration group, we would expect larger differences between the outcomes of demonstration and comparison groups. To test the stability of our intent-to-treat results, we performed two sensitivity analyses: (1) for cases that switched groups, we excluded their data after the point that they switched, and (2) we analyzed a subset of cases that were randomized at the time of application (as opposed to being randomized as existing participants), and restricted the analysis to each case’s first application period—before any of them had an opportunity to switch groups. Our results were largely unchanged across the three analyses, suggesting this data limitation did not bias our overall results.

Client contact indicators

We asked States to train their staff to track client contact so we could measure the extent and type of contact that occurred in the absence of mandatory eligibility interviews. SNAP agencies

⁶⁶ Utah conducted an automated random assignment process using its client interface system. Under standard procedures, all paper and online applications pass through this system and would be randomly assigned. In rare instances, applications may be completed over the phone or via other procedures that bypass the client interface. During the demonstration, these applications were not randomly assigned to either group, so they were excluded from the evaluation.

in both States provided the number of demonstration clients who received eligibility interviews and, among clients not receiving interviews, the number with staff-initiated contact and the reasons for contact. Utah embedded the data collection in its eligibility system—staff could record the data as they processed the case. In Oregon, all data were recorded outside the eligibility system: procedures varied across sites, but most commonly Oregon staff used Excel spreadsheets to track demonstration indicators.

Our ability to accurately assess the level and type of contact between workers and demonstration clients was limited by incomplete and inconsistent data collection. Neither State was able to provide all the variables we requested: we did not receive the number of demonstration clients who requested a follow-up call from SNAP staff, or information about potential procedural denials. We learned during site-visit interviews that some workers did not ever record the data or stopped doing so during the demonstration. In addition, many workers in Utah did not record client-initiated interviews they conducted with demonstration clients. The resulting data likely understate the proportion of demonstration participants who received interviews or staff contact. However, among cases where staff contact was recorded, patterns of the reasons for such contact likely are reliable. Our analysis focuses on these findings.

C. Client perspectives

1. Client Survey

Client survey responses provided data necessary for us to analyze client’s experiences with the demonstration. Due to difficulties surveying this population, the response rate was below our target at 41 percent (Table A.2). The low response rate was directly related to the large number of missing, bad, or incorrect telephone numbers. Almost half of the sample was sent to the locating service to find contact information. We were able ultimately to contact only 57.4 percent of the initial sample drawn (51.2 percent in Oregon and 63.6 percent in Utah [not shown]). Once respondents were located, however, a high percentage—93.5 percent—of those eligible to participate in telephone interviews completed them. The rates between demonstration and comparison groups were relatively even.

Table A.2. Client survey response rates

Survey statistic	Demonstration	Comparison	Total
Initial sample size	1,800	1,800	3,600
Contact rate (percent)	56.7	58.1	57.4
Eligibility determination rate (percent) ^a	78.2	77.5	77.8
Eligibility rate (percent) ^b	98.4	98.2	98.3
Completion rate (percent)	93.1	93.8	93.5
Number of interviews completed	731	747	1,478

Source: Survey response statistics.

^aThe eligibility determination rate is the percent of clients for whom we were able to determine whether or not they were eligible for the survey.

^bThe eligibility rate is the percent of clients who were eligible for the survey out of those whose eligibility was determined.

2. Discussions with clients denied for procedural reasons

We targeted 65 to 80 participants for the eight focus groups (four in each State—two with demonstration participants and two with comparison participants); however, due to difficulty locating and recruiting clients, as well as a very high rate of no-shows, only 18 individuals participated.⁶⁷ Because the participation rate was low for the focus groups, we conducted supplemental calls to procedurally denied individuals, asking the same questions as those from the focus group. We conducted an additional 20 interviews with Utah clients who were procedurally denied. (We did not conduct supplemental interviews with individuals procedurally denied in Oregon, as the state did not provide contact information for these individuals.)

These focus groups and interviews provide context to other data collected in studies. Although some of the responses provide useful insights and buttress other findings, the sample was not selected to be representative of all procedural denials. As a result, these responses cannot be relied on for a consensus of how the demonstration may affect the application process for denied clients. Moreover, clients often have difficulty isolating how a nuanced policy affects their overall application experience. More often than not, the responses of the demonstration and comparison groups were similar and focused on the application process broadly or on a very specific aspect of the process that was not related to the demonstration itself.

D. Data about time use

For the surveys of time use, we gave workers instructions and examples of how to use the worksheets to track activities throughout the day (Figure A.1 provides an example worksheet sent to staff in Oregon for the first day of data collection). We asked them to tell us how many applications and recertifications they processed each day and to round to the nearest 10 minutes the time they spent on the following categories and subcategories in a given day:

- Certification
 - Intake
 - Eligibility interview
 - Verification
 - Determination
- Recertification
 - Sending forms
 - Eligibility interview
 - Verification
 - Re-determination
- Ongoing case management

⁶⁷ This may not be surprising, as individuals who were procedural denials failed to complete their application process. Therefore, they could be less willing to participate, in a SNAP-related focus group, and they might be less likely than other individuals to follow through on commitments to participate.

Figure A.1 Example data collection worksheets for time use study, Oregon day 1

Basic Work Day Questions – Day 1 Monday

1. When did your work day start today?	1. _____ AM/PM
2. When did your work day end today?	2. _____ AM/PM
3. How many hours of your day did you spend working on SNAP cases or SNAP related activities? <i>Please round to the nearest 10 minute increment.</i>	3. _____ Hours _____ Minutes
4a. As you performed your SNAP-related activities today, did you <i>specialize</i> on one or a sub-set of activities (certification, recertification, ongoing case management) during the day?	4a. _____ Yes _____ No
4b. If yes, please briefly describe your job roles and responsibilities.	4b. [Editable text field here.]
5a. Did you spend any part of your day working on non-SNAP related activities? For example, you may spend time processing TANF-only cases, where there is no SNAP component. Or you may work on an assignment that is wholly unrelated to SNAP.	5a. _____ Yes _____ No
5b. If you answered yes to 5a, how many hours of your day today did you spend working on non-SNAP related activities? <i>Please round to the nearest 10 minute increment.</i>	5b. _____ Hours _____ Minutes
5c. If you answered yes to 5a, please briefly describe the other work you performed during the day. If applicable, name the other programs you worked on that did not have a SNAP component (for example, TANF, Medicaid, Cash Assistance, etc.).	5c. [Editable text field here.]

SNAP Time Use Activity Log – Day 1 Monday

Activity	Number of Cases (for each activity)	Time Working on Cases	
		Hours	Minutes <i>(Round to the nearest 10 minute interval)</i>
Certification			
Application assistance	[]	[]	[]
Application intake	[]	[]	[]
Eligibility interview scheduling	[]	[]	[]
Eligibility interview	[]	[]	[]
Verification (@ certification)			
Send verification requests to applicants or contact them to confirm information	[]	[]	[]
Collect and document verification materials	[]	[]	[]
Use verification systems to collect documentation	[]	[]	[]
Eligibility Determination	[]	[]	[]
Recertification			
Monitor recertification and send forms	[]	[]	[]
Recertification form assistance	[]	[]	[]
Review recertification materials	[]	[]	[]
Recertification interview scheduling	[]	[]	[]
Recertification interview	[]	[]	[]
Verification (@ recertification)			
Send verification requests to clients or contact them to confirm information	[]	[]	[]
Collect and document verification materials	[]	[]	[]
Use verification systems to collect documentation	[]	[]	[]
Eligibility Redetermination	[]	[]	[]
Ongoing Case Management Activities			
Answer client questions	[]	[]	[]
Process reported changes	[]	[]	[]
Other Activities			
[Enter Other #1]	[]	[]	[]
[Enter Other #2]	[]	[]	[]
[Enter Other #3]	[]	[]	[]

To analyze the data, we averaged the time spent and number of cases in different activities across workers. Workers did not spend time in all activities each day. Therefore, for each worker, we totaled the time spent in each activity and divided it by the number of days the individual worked on that activity, for a daily average time per worker. We followed the same process for determining the average number of cases per worker for each activity, totaling the number of cases and dividing by the number of days. We then calculated average time and cases separately for the demonstration and comparison groups by summing daily averages across all workers and dividing by the number of workers.

After reviewing the data and discussing the data with staff during our site visits, a few issues emerged. First, although we provided examples of how to measure time spent in different activities, the data relied on interpretations of categories by each worker. Thus, categories may include time spent on different activities, depending on how each worker defined them. In addition, many workers were confused about how to isolate time spent in discrete activities, given that they multi-tasked throughout the day. Second, the data (and associated cost estimates described below) are based on eligibility workers' time, and do not include time spent by other workers such as clerks, front office staff, or employment specialists. These staff may also spend considerable time with clients, answering questions and reviewing applications. Thus, the results underestimate the total time for and cost of processing a SNAP application in both the demonstration and comparison sites. Moreover, we cannot assume the amount and distribution of time across these staff is similar across for both groups (particularly in Oregon).

E. QC-like reviews

We asked the States to collect data using forms similar to the FNS-380, which are used to collect data for QC reviews that FNS uses to determine the official State error rates each year. For each case reviewed, States provided us with data from these forms.

In Oregon, we asked the State to conduct the QC-like reviews prior to the start of the demonstration (June through August 2012) and at the end of the demonstration period (August through November 2013), which enabled us to calculate the difference in error rates prior to the start of the demonstration and after the demonstration was implemented. Because all QC-like reviews were conducted with demonstration cases, we were able to compare the difference in the error rates in the demonstration to the difference in the State QC error rate between fiscal year (FY) 2012 and FY 2013 and test for significance.

In Utah, because the demonstration was randomly assigned statewide, we did not conduct a difference-in-differences analysis. Instead, we requested that the State conduct QC-like reviews at two periods in time after the start of the demonstration. The first period was from September to November 2012; the second was from August to November 2013. As with Oregon, Utah's State QC file was used to form the comparison group. However, the Utah QC-like reviews had identifiers that allowed us to match them with the data collected for the official State QC data.⁶⁸ Therefore, we included any demonstration cases that appeared in the QC file to the QC-like

⁶⁸ Because the Oregon data in the State QC file did not include case identifiers that matched the Oregon administrative data we could not exclude any potential demonstration cases from the State QC file prior to comparison.

reviews to increase our sample size. The remaining cases in the State QC file became the comparison for the demonstration cases. We calculated the error rates for the demonstration and comparison samples in each time period. We tested whether the demonstration errors were significantly different from the comparison rates and identified whether the case and payment error rates varied from the beginning of the demonstration period to the end.

There are potentially three issues related to the analysis of the error rate that could limit the results. First, State QC reviews are conducted in person primarily, whereas the QC-like reviews for this study were all conducted by telephone. Inasmuch as more accurate information is collected in person during QC reviews and more errors are identified, the QC-like reviews may underestimate the error rates for the demonstration. Second, because we could not identify and remove demonstration cases in the State QC sample for Oregon, the State QC file may contain some demonstration cases during FY 2013, which would bias the difference-in-differences results. Finally, for both States, the QC-like reviews were conducted over a two to three month period, using a one month sample, whereas the State QC reviews were conducted over the course of a year with multiple monthly samples. If there were specific events that increased errors in months other than the one selected for the QC-like reviews, the errors in this sample could be understated.

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APPENDIX B
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

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APPENDIX B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

Appendix B includes tables describing the full range of characteristics of the study population. Tables include the difference in characteristics of the average household in the pre- and post-implementation periods, and for Oregon, the characteristics of the demonstration and comparison sites during these periods.

Table B.1. Average household characteristics of SNAP participants in Oregon in the pre-implementation period and by demonstration and comparison status

Characteristic	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Household Head Was Male	49.3	49.6	0.2	49.9	49.7	-0.2	0.4	0.5*
Age of Household Head								
18–24	15.9	14.7	-1.2	17.6	16.5	-1.0	-0.2	-0.5
25–49	55.4	53.2	-2.2	53.3	51.3	-2.0	-0.2	0.2
50–59	16.4	17.8	1.4	17.7	18.6	0.9	0.5	0.5*
60 or older	12.2	14.2	2.0	11.2	13.3	2.2	-0.1	-0.2
Race and Ethnicity of Household Head								
Non-Hispanic, white	70.5	69.1	-1.5	75.4	74.9	-0.5	-0.9	-0.7*
Non-Hispanic, black	6.0	6.2	0.2	3.6	3.6	0.0 [^]	0.2	0.3
Non-Hispanic, other	11.0	12.0	1.0	10.3	10.8	0.5	0.5	0.5*
Hispanic	12.5	12.8	0.3	10.7	10.7	0.1	0.2	0.3
Application submitted in English	89.9	90.1	0.2	91.1	91.2	0.1	0.1	-0.0 [^]
Size of Participant Household	1.6	1.6	-0.0 [^]	1.6	1.6	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Participant Household Had Elderly	12.5	14.6	2.0	11.6	13.8	2.2	-0.1	-0.2
Participant Household Had Children	24.2	21.9	-2.2	23.9	21.8	-2.1	-0.1	0.1
Participant Household Had Disabled Individuals	19.3	20.7	1.4	18.0	20.2	2.2	-0.8	0.0 [^]
Participant Reported Gross Income	67.8	64.9	-2.9	65.4	64.3	-1.1	-1.7	-1.9*
Reported Gross Income of Participant Household	1,020	1,057	37	1,038	1,061	23	13	21*
Participant Reported Earned Income	33.3	31.2	-2.1	31.7	31.1	-0.6	-1.5	-1.8*
Reported Earned Income of Participant Household	1,054	1,120	66	1,095	1,135	40	26	50*
Participant Reported Income from Other Assistance Programs	23.7	25.8	2.1	22.0	24.7	2.7	-0.6	0.1
Participant Claimed Medical Deductions	8.7	9.1	0.4	7.8	8.0	0.3	0.1	-0.1

B.4

Table B.1 (continued)

Characteristic	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Participant Claimed Shelter Deductions	71.7	69.9	-1.7	69.1	69.3	0.2	-2.0	-2.0*
Shelter Deduction Claimed by Participant	408	420	12	399	410	10	2	-0 [^]

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in percentage point changes).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

Table B.2. Average household characteristics of SNAP participants in Utah in the pre-implementation period and by demonstration and comparison status

Characteristic	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Household Head Was Male	31.4	29.4	29.2	0.2	0.1
Age of Household Head					
18–24	15.1	12.9	12.9	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
25–49	63.5	62.6	62.5	0.1 [*]	0.3
50–59	12.3	13.6	13.9	-0.3 [*]	-0.4
60 or older	8.9	10.9	10.7	0.2 [*]	0.2
Race and Ethnicity of Household Head					
Non-Hispanic, white	59.8	57.2	57.4	-0.1 [*]	0.1
Non-Hispanic, black	2.1	1.9	2.0	-0.1 [*]	-0.1
Non-Hispanic, other	21.9	25.4	25.6	-0.2 [*]	-0.1
Hispanic	16.1	15.5	15.1	0.4 [*]	0.2
Household Head Was a U.S. Citizen	91.7	92.4	92.8	-0.4 [*]	-0.1
Language Used to Fill Out the Application	92.7	93.5	93.8	-0.3 [*]	0.1
Size of Participant Household	2.6	2.6	2.6	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Participant Household Had Elderly	9.4	11.4	11.2	0.2 [*]	0.1
Participant Household Had Children	53.4	53.8	54.2	-0.4 [*]	0.1
Participant Household Had Disabled Individuals	23.9	29.3	28.9	0.3 [*]	0.3
Participant Reported Gross Income	70.2	73.8	74.0	-0.2	-0.2
Reported Gross Income of Participant Household	719	781	789	-8 [*]	-5
Participant Reported Earned Income	34.6	35.9	36.5	-0.7 [*]	-0.4
Reported Earned Income of Participant Household	1,167	1,226	1,238	-12 [*]	-7
Participant Reported Income from Other Assistance Programs	67.0	72.2	71.9	0.4 [*]	0.3
Participant Claimed Medical Deductions	1.8	2.6	2.6	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]

Table B.2 (continued)

Characteristic	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Medical Deduction Claimed by Participant	94	93	96	-3*	-4
Participant Claimed Shelter Deductions	62.4	66.5	66.3	0.3*	0.3
Shelter Deduction Claimed by Participant	324	330	331	-1*	-1

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in percentage point changes).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

Table B.3. Average site-level characteristics during pre- and post-implementation periods in Oregon, by demonstration and comparison site

	Pre-Implementation		Post-Implementation	
	Demonstration site	Comparison site	Demonstration site	Comparison site
Total population estimate	495,882	350,022	503,011	354,622
Poverty rate	14.4	16.0	17.1	21.2*
Percent unemployed	9.5	10.7*	10.3	11.5*
Percent black	2.5	2.0	15.2	16.8
Percent Hispanic	14.4	12.9	14.6	13.2
Percent elderly	16.6	20.7*	2.6	2.0
Percentage of individuals with a high school education or greater	88.9	87.4	89.2	87.9

Source: ACS.

* Differs significantly from the demonstration site at the .05 level.

APPENDIX C
CLIENT OUTCOMES

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APPENDIX C. CLIENT OUTCOMES

Appendix C includes tables describing the findings for all client outcomes, including insignificant findings. Section C1 shows the results for the overall population and section C2 provides these outcomes by subgroup for both States. For each outcome in these sections, there is a table for Oregon and Utah, as the method of analysis varied by State. Section C3 describes the results of the client survey for both States.

Table C1.1. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP participation and benefit outcomes in Oregon

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Monthly number of SNAP participants (individuals)	110,307	107,753	-2,554	149,898	152,349	2,450	-5,004	-3,665
Monthly number of SNAP participants (households)	68,990	69,318	328	92,044	96,101	4,057	-3,729	-2,825
Average SNAP benefit (dollars)	210	205	-4	213	208	-5	1	1
Percentage of households receiving maximum SNAP benefit	48.1	49.2	1.1	48.9	49.7	0.8	0.3	0.2
Percentage of households receiving minimum SNAP benefit	5.5	6.3	0.8	5.4	6.2	0.8	-0.0 [^]	-0.1

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

* There were no statistically significant effects of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.2. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP participation and benefit outcomes in Utah

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Monthly number of SNAP participants (individuals)	270,349	44,489	175,580	n.a.	n.a.
Monthly number of SNAP participants (households)	102,761	16,975	66,598	n.a.	n.a.
Average SNAP benefit (dollars)	297	294	296	-2*	0^
Percentage of households receiving maximum SNAP benefit	32.1	29.6	29.6	-0.0^	0.0^
Percentage of households receiving minimum SNAP benefit	3.2	3.5	3.2	0.3*	0.3*

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.3. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP application outcomes in Oregon

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Monthly Number of Applications Received ^c	4,174	4,177	3	5,195	4,950	-245	248	-159
Total Number of Applications Processed	99,050	58,269	-40,781	123,706	69,127	-54,579	13,798	-2,189
Percentage of Expedited Applications	24.6	22.5	-2.1	24.3	23.8	-0.6	-1.5	0.9
Percentage of Applications Approved (Regular and Expedited)	79.6	74.2	-5.4	84.3	81.4	-2.9	-2.5	-1.4
Among Applications Approved:								
Average SNAP benefit (dollars)	200	196	-4	200	201	1	-5	-3
Percentage of applications approved for maximum SNAP benefit	61.4	63.0	1.6	62.3	63.1	0.8	0.8	0.1
Percentage of applications approved for minimum SNAP benefit	5.8	7.3	1.5	5.7	6.3	0.6	0.9	0.2
Average Size of Applicant Household (Individuals)	1.4	1.4	-0.0 [^]	1.4	1.5	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Percentage of Applicants with Elderly in the Household	5.3	5.4	0.1	5.3	5.8	0.4	-0.4	0.1
Percentage of Applicants with Children in the Household	18.3	18.0	-0.3	18.5	19.0	0.6	-0.9	-0.3
Percentage of Applicants with Disabled Individuals in the Household	5.3	5.2	-0.1	5.9	6.5	0.6	-0.7	0.1
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Gross Income	48.1	41.3	-6.8	48.4	45.9	-2.5	-4.3	-2.3 [*]
Average reported gross income of applicant households reporting gross income (dollars)	1,187	1,330	144	1,162	1,236	74	69	62 [*]

C.6

Table C1.3 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Earned Income	30.3	26.1	-4.2	29.7	29.4	-0.3	-3.9	-4.1*
Average reported earned income of applicant households reporting earned income (dollars)	1,193	1,385	193	1,184	1,281	97	96	112*
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	7.0	6.7	-0.3	7.3	7.6	0.3	-0.6	0.4
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions ^d	2.8	2.3	-0.4	2.7	2.6	-0.1	-0.3	0.1
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	55.2	53.4	-1.9	54.8	54.3	-0.5	-1.3	-2.7*
Average shelter deduction claimed by applicant (dollars)	396	412	16	387	395	8	7	0 [^]

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

^c Although we know from the site visits that about 20 percent of the applications in Oregon are submitted online, the Oregon DHS was not able to provide data on the application method for individual applications. Because of that, we were not able to analyze results separately by method of application (online versus paper).

^d The Oregon DHS was not able to provide data on the amount of medical deductions claimed.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.4. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP application outcomes in Utah

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Monthly Number of Applications Received ^a	11,936	1,924	7,394	n.a.	n.a.
Total number of Applications Processed	294,542	27,904	107,366	n.a.	n.a.
Percentage of Expedited Applications	26.0	27.4	24.4	3.0*	2.7*
Percentage of Applications Approved (Regular and Expedited)	56.1	57.1	57.0	0.0 [^]	-0.1
Among Applications Approved:					
Average SNAP benefit (dollars)	295	292	296	-4*	0 [^]
Percentage of applications approved for maximum SNAP benefit	50.2	49.4	48.2	1.2*	0.2
Percentage of applications approved for minimum SNAP benefit	2.1	2.0	1.9	0.2	0.2
Percentage of Total Applications Processed Within Time Standards	71.5	78.2	79.4	-1.2*	-1.2*
Percentage of Regular Applications Processed Within 30 Days	65.3	77.2	76.5	0.8*	0.7*
Percentage of Expedited Applications Processed Within 7 Days	89.1	80.8	88.4	-7.6*	-7.0*
Average Size of Applicant Household (Individuals)	2.5	2.4	2.4	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Percentage of Applicants with Elderly in the Household	4.4	3.2	3.1	0.1	0.1
Percentage of Applicants with Children in the Household	50.1	49.6	50.4	-0.8*	-0.0 [^]
Percentage of Applicants with Disabled Individuals in the Household	9.8	11.5	11.6	-0.2	-0.2
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Gross Income	42.4	42.6	43.2	-0.6	-0.4
Average reported gross income of applicant households reporting gross income (dollars)	1,349	1,431	1,391	40*	41*
Percentage of applicants reporting earned income	29.0	30.3	31.4	-1.1*	-1.0*
Average reported earned income of applicant households reporting earned income (dollars)	1,387	1,480	1,419	62*	57*
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Participation in or Income from Other Assistance Programs	37.4	37.3	38.1	-0.8*	-0.4
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Medicaid Participation	34.0	33.7	34.9	-1.2*	-0.7*

Table C1.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Income from TANF	1.5	1.2	1.3	-0.1*	-0.1
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	7.7	7.9	7.3	0.6*	0.6*
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions	1.0	1.4	1.2	0.2*	0.2
Average medical deduction claimed by applicant (dollars)	150	125	282	-158	-173
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	37.3	42.0	40.5	1.4*	1.5*
Average shelter deduction claimed by applicant (dollars)	343	346	345	2	3

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a Although we know from the site visits that about 90 percent of the applications in Utah are submitted online, the Utah DWS was not able to provide data on the application method for individual applications. Because of that, we were unable to analyze results separately by method of application (online versus paper).

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.5. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on SNAP application denials in Oregon

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Applications Denied	20.4	25.8	5.4	15.7	18.6	2.9	2.5	1.4
Among Applications Denied, Percentage of Applications by Denial Reason:								
Ineligible noncitizen	1.3	1.1	-0.2	1.7	1.3	-0.4	0.1	n.a.
Exceeds income limit	18.9	16.1	-2.8	20.5	19.0	-1.4	-1.4	-1.3
Exceeds asset limit	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.1	n.a.
Employment & training (E&T) work requirements not met	0.6	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Procedural denial	47.6	49.3	1.7	43.5	44.8	1.4	0.4	0.5
Administrative or other reason	31.5	32.7	1.2	33.7	34.0	0.3	0.9	0.6

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred. The denial reasons "Ineligible noncitizen," "Exceeds asset limit," and "E&T work requirements not met" were combined with the "Administrative or other reason" category for the regression analyses, because they had small sample sizes.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

* There were no statistically significant effects of the demonstration on the outcomes at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.6. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on SNAP application denials in Utah

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applications Denied	43.9	42.9	43.0	-0.0 [^]	0.1
Among Applications Denied, Percentage of Applications by Denial Reason:					
Ineligible noncitizen	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Exceeds income limit	19.8	20.1	17.5	2.6 [*]	2.3 [*]
Exceeds asset limit	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.1 [*]	0.1
Failed able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) time limit	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.1 [*]	n.a.
E&T work requirements not met	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Procedural denial	54.5	56.8	60.5	-3.7 [*]	-3.5 [*]
Administrative or other reason	24.4	21.4	20.5	0.9 [*]	1.1 [*]

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred. The denial reasons "Ineligible noncitizen," "Failed ABAWD time limit," and "E&T work requirements not met" were combined with the "Administrative or Other Reason" category for regression analyses, because they had small sample sizes.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.7. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP recertification outcomes in Oregon

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Monthly Number of Applications Received	4,901	5,145	244	6,550	7,059	509	-265	-84
Total Number of Recertification Applications Processed	115,129	72,015	-43,114	154,175	98,817	-55,358	12,244	-1,666
Percentage of Expedited Applications	4.3	3.2	-1.1	4.7	4.7	0.0 [^]	-1.2	-1.3*
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved (Regular and Expedited)	77.1	74.5	-2.6	78.9	77.2	-1.7	-0.9	-1.2*
Among Recertification Applications Approved:								
Average SNAP benefit (dollars)	206	199	-6	210	201	-9	3	2
Percentage of recertification applications approved for maximum SNAP benefit	35.0	35.7	0.7	35.4	34.5	-0.9	1.6	1.2
Percentage of recertification applications approved for minimum SNAP benefit	5.3	6.3	0.9	5.4	6.3	0.9	0.1	0.2
Average Size of Recertification Applicant Household (Individuals)	1.6	1.6	-0.1	1.7	1.6	-0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Percentage of Recertification Applicants with Elderly in the Household	14.0	16.0	2.1	12.7	15.1	2.4	-0.3	-0.4
Percentage of Recertification Applicants with Children in the Household	25.5	23.0	-2.5	25.2	22.3	-2.9	0.4	0.5
Percentage of Recertification Applicants with Disabled Individuals in the Household	22.5	23.1	0.6	20.7	22.7	1.9	-1.3	-0.1
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Gross Income	72.4	68.9	-3.4	69.7	68.5	-1.2	-2.2	-2.4

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Table C1.7 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Average reported gross income of recertification applicant households reporting gross income (dollars)	1,044	1,088	45	1,064	1,087	24	21	31*
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Earned Income	35.2	33.1	-2.1	33.7	33.3	-0.4	-1.7	-2.1*
Average reported earned income of recertification applicant households reporting earned income (dollars)	1,088	1,170	82	1,134	1,170	36	46	70*
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	27.4	28.7	1.3	25.1	27.6	2.5	-1.3	-0.3
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions ^c	10.0	9.9	-0.0 [^]	8.5	8.8	0.2	-0.3	-0.4
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	72.0	71.2	-0.8	69.3	70.0	0.6	-1.4	-1.7*
Average shelter deduction claimed by recertification applicant (dollars)	396	412	15	387	401	14	2	1

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

^c The Oregon DHS was not able to provide data on the amount of medical deductions claimed.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.8. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP recertification outcomes in Utah

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Total Number of Recertification Applications Processed	390,814	39,298	153,489	n.a.	n.a.
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved (Regular and Expedited)	61.4	62.9	62.7	0.2	0.5
Among Recertification Applications Approved:					
Average SNAP benefit (dollars)	316	317	318	-1	2
Percentage of recertification applications approved for maximum SNAP benefit	25.0	23.4	23.4	0.0^	0.2
Percentage of recertification applications approved for minimum SNAP benefit	2.1	2.4	2.3	0.2	0.1
Average Size of Recertification Applicant Household (Individuals)	2.8	2.8	2.8	-0.0*^	0.0^
Percentage of Recertification Applicants with Elderly in the Household	6.0	7.7	7.5	0.2	0.1
Percentage of Recertification Applicants with Children in the Household	57.9	58.6	59.4	-0.7*	0.0^
Percentage of Recertification Applicants with Disabled Individuals in the Household	18.5	23.0	23.0	-0.0^	0.1
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Gross Income	57.0	57.5	57.3	0.2	0.6*
Average reported gross income of recertification applicant households reporting gross income (dollars)	1,249	1,225	1,247	-21*	-12
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Earned Income	33.5	33.0	33.3	-0.3	0.0^
Average reported earned income of recertification applicant households reporting earned income (dollars)	1,388	1,382	1,406	-25*	-16
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Participation in or Income from Other Assistance Programs	61.9	66.5	66.9	-0.3	0.1
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Medicaid Participation	60.2	64.5	65.0	-0.5	-0.0^
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Income from TANF	3.7	2.9	2.9	0.0^	0.0^

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Table C1.8 (continued)

Outcome	Pre- implemen- tation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	12.0	14.6	14.3	0.3	0.3
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions	1.1	1.6	1.5	0.0^	0.0^
Average medical deduction claimed by recertification applicant (dollars)	100	95	102	-8	-9
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	46.5	49.9	48.5	1.4*	1.6*
Average shelter deduction claimed by recertification applicant (dollars)	321	328	327	1	2

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.9. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on case closures and churning rates in Oregon

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Cases Closed	4.5	4.9	0.4	4.2	4.4	0.3	0.2	0.0 [^]
Among Cases Closed, Percentage of Cases by Closure Reason:								
Ineligible noncitizen	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Exceeds income limit	6.0	4.6	-1.4	6.0	4.8	-1.2	-0.3	-0.1
Exceeds asset limit	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
E&T work requirements not met	0.4	0.2	-0.1	0.6	0.3	-0.4	0.2	n.a.
Procedural closure	41.6	42.1	0.5	40.0	41.3	1.3	-0.8	-2.1 [*]
Recertification application not submitted	32.6	33.7	1.2	32.8	33.3	0.4	0.7	0.9
Administrative or other reason	19.5	19.3	-0.1	20.4	20.2	-0.2	0.1	-1.1
Percentage of Households Churning onto the Program ^c	13.7	14.1	0.5	15.2	16.5	1.3	-0.8	0.6

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred. The closure reasons "Ineligible noncitizen," "Exceeds asset limit," and "E&T work requirements not met" were combined with the "Administrative or other reason" category for the regression analyses, because they had small sample sizes.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

^c Churning is defined as coming back on the program within 3 months of leaving.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C1.10. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on case closures and churning rates in Utah

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Cases Closed	6.5	7.9	7.9	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Among Cases Closed, Percentage of Cases by Closure Reason:					
Ineligible noncitizen	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0* [^]	n.a.
Exceeds income limit	18.9	14.8	15.2	-0.4*	-0.0 [^]
Exceeds asset limit	0.5	0.5	0.5	-0.1*	-0.0 [^]
Failed ABAWD time limit	0.0	12.5	12.6	-0.1*	n.a.
E&T work requirements not met	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.1*	n.a.
Procedural closure	18.3	20.9	18.8	2.1*	2.0*
Recertification application not submitted	48.6	40.6	42.7	-2.1*	-1.6*
Administrative or other reason	13.1	10.0	9.6	0.5*	-0.2
Percentage of Households Churning onto the Program ^a	21.1	28.5	31.5	-3.0*	-2.9*

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred. The closure reasons "Ineligible noncitizen," "Failed ABAWD time limit," and "E&T work requirements not met" were combined with the "Administrative or Other Reason" category for regression analyses, because they had small sample sizes.

^a Churning is defined as coming back on the program within 3 months of leaving.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Less than |0.005| but different than zero.

Table C2.1. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP participation and benefit outcomes in Oregon, by subgroup

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Monthly Number of SNAP Participants (Individuals)	110,307	107,753	-2,554	149,898	152,349	2,450	-5,004	-3,665
Households with:								
Children	53,423	49,116	-4,307	73,168	70,371	-2,798	-1,510	-2,585
Elderly	10,862	12,477	1,615	13,631	16,539	2,908	-1,293	-580*
Disabled	18,365	19,362	997	23,862	26,874	3,011	-2,015	-566
Earned income	49,783	47,097	-2,686	67,117	67,948	831	-3,517	-4,956*
Other assistance programs	19,858	21,407	1,549	25,211	28,845	3,634	-2,085	-434
Monthly Number of SNAP Participants (Households)	68,990	69,318	328	92,044	96,101	4,057	-3,729	-2,825
Households with:								
Children	16,687	15,214	-1,474	22,033	20,990	-1,043	-431	-690
Elderly	8,632	10,091	1,459	10,696	13,277	2,581	-1,122	-429
Disabled	13,308	14,353	1,045	16,590	19,412	2,822	-1,776	-344
Earned income	22,998	21,618	-1,380	29,203	29,09	705	-2,085	-3,017*
Other assistance programs	16,388	17,913	1,524	20,238	23,712	3,474	-1,950	-341
Average SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	210	205	-4	213	208	-5	1	1
Households with:								
Children	354	357	3	363	365	2	1	1
Elderly	143	139	-4	137	135	-3	-1	-1
Disabled	164	158	-6	167	160	-7	1	-1
Earned income	237	234	-3	247	242	-5	1	1
Other assistance programs	139	134	-5	138	133	-4	-0 [^]	-0 [^]

Table C2.1 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Households Receiving Maximum SNAP Benefit	48.1	49.2	1.1	48.9	49.7	0.8	0.3	0.2
Households with:								
Children	28.9	29.3	0.4	27.1	27.5	0.4	0.0 [^]	0.2
Elderly	23.3	23.5	0.1	21.4	23.1	1.7	-1.5	-1.1*
Disabled	19.6	18.8	-0.8	18.8	18.6	-0.2	-0.5	-0.7
Earned income	31.1	29.0	-2.1	28.9	29.0	0.0 [^]	-2.1	-2.6*
Other assistance programs	17.7	17.0	-0.7	16.3	16.4	0.1	-0.8	-0.5
Percentage of Households Receiving Minimum SNAP Benefit	5.5	6.3	0.8	5.4	6.2	0.8	-0.0 [^]	-0.1
Households with:								
Children	1.6	1.4	-0.1	1.4	1.4	-0.0 [^]	-0.1	-0.1
Elderly	14.6	15.9	1.3	16.8	18.3	1.5	-0.2	-0.0 [^]
Disabled	8.4	9.5	1.1	8.6	9.6	1.1	0.1	-0.3
Earned income	5.2	6.7	1.5	5.1	6.2	1.1	0.4	0.6*
Other assistance programs	13.0	14.3	1.4	14.0	15.4	1.5	-0.1	-0.3

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C2.2. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP participation and benefit outcomes in Utah, by subgroup

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Monthly Number of SNAP Participants (Individuals)	270,349	44,489	175,580	n.a.	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	216,590	35,755	141,617	n.a.	n.a.
Elderly	13,015	2,547	9,795	n.a.	n.a.
Disabled	45,965	8,836	34,682	n.a.	n.a.
Earned income	134,394	22,941	91,531	n.a.	n.a.
Other assistance programs	210,290	36,242	142,270	n.a.	n.a.
Monthly Number of SNAP Participants (Households)	102,761	16,975	66,598	n.a.	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	54,882	9,136	36,102	n.a.	n.a.
Elderly	9,633	1,935	7,466	n.a.	n.a.
Disabled	24,607	4,969	19,275	n.a.	n.a.
Earned income	35,603	6,089	24,337	n.a.	n.a.
Other assistance programs	68,804	12,264	47,873	n.a.	n.a.
Average SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	297	294	296	-2*	0^
Households with:					
Children	426	427	428	-1	1
Elderly	121	116	117	-1	-2
Disabled	189	179	184	-5*	-3*
Earned income	354	360	358	2*	3
Other assistance programs	329	319	321	-2*	1

Table C2.2 (continued)

Outcome	Pre- implemen- tation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Households Receiving Maximum SNAP Benefit	32.1	29.6	29.6	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Households with:					
Children	21.8	23.1	22.8	0.3*	0.4
Elderly	12.7	12.4	12.4	0.1	0.1
Disabled	16.4	16.9	17.3	-0.4*	-0.4
Earned income	10.2	11.4	11.1	0.2*	0.4
Other assistance programs	19.3	19.3	19.1	0.2*	0.3
Percentage of Households Receiving Minimum SNAP Benefit	3.2	3.5	3.2	0.3*	0.3*
Households with:					
Children	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1*	0.1*
Elderly	12.8	13.1	11.8	1.3*	1.3
Disabled	7.6	7.5	6.9	0.6*	0.5
Earned income	1.9	1.9	1.8	0.1*	0.1
Other assistance programs	4.0	4.3	3.9	0.4*	0.3

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable

Table C2.3. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP application outcomes in Oregon, by subgroup

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression -adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Monthly Number of Applications Received ^c	4,174	4,177	3	5,195	4,950	-245	248	-159
Households with:								
Children	763	751	-12	963	942	-21	10	-35
Elderly	221	223	2	277	285	8	-6	0 [^]
Disabled	221	217	-4	307	322	15	-19	-12
Earned income	1,262	1,087	-174	1,542	1,454	-89	-86	-266*
Other assistance programs	290	277	-13	379	376	-2	-11	-6
Total Number of Applications Processed	99,050	58,269	-40,781	123,706	69,127	-54,579	13,798	-2,189
Households with:								
Children	18,117	10,472	-7,645	22,848	13,149	-9,699	2,054	-665
Elderly	5,254	3,121	-2,133	6,580	3,983	-2,597	464	32
Disabled	5,271	3,036	-2,235	7,317	4,507	-2,810	575	-197
Earned income	30,031	15,195	-14,836	36,791	20,329	-16,462	1,626	-3,807*
Other assistance programs	6,912	3,880	-3,032	9,028	5,268	-3,760	728	-7
Percentage of Expedited Applications	24.6	22.5	-2.1	24.3	23.8	-0.6	-1.5	0.9
Households with:								
Children	9.7	7.7	-2.0	9.8	9.5	-0.3	-1.7	-0.7
Elderly	8.7	7.6	-1.2	9.2	9.3	0.0 [^]	-1.2	-1.8
Disabled	4.2	3.8	-0.5	4.7	4.9	0.2	-0.7	-1.0
Earned income	11.9	7.6	-4.3	10.1	9.2	-0.9	-3.4	-3.9*
Other assistance programs	3.7	3.1	-0.6	3.4	4.2	0.8	-1.4	-1.9*

Table C2.3 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression -adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Applications Approved (Regular and Expedited)	79.6	74.2	-5.4	84.3	81.4	-2.9	-2.5	-1.4
Households with:								
Children	81.0	72.0	-9.0	83.4	80.0	-3.5	-5.6	-5.0*
Elderly	84.5	81.1	-3.4	86.2	85.1	-1.2	-2.2	-2.1
Disabled	90.6	89.0	-1.6	91.3	90.0	-1.2	-0.3	-0.2
Earned income	83.6	73.5	-10.1	86.4	82.5	-3.9	-6.2	-5.3*
Other assistance programs	91.0	90.1	-0.9	92.7	92.0	-0.7	-0.2	-0.9
Among Applications Approved:								
Average SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	200	196	-4	200	201	1	-5	-3
Households with:								
Children	321	323	2	318	326	8	-6	-2
Elderly	146	142	-4	144	144	-0 [^]	-4	2
Disabled	154	145	-9	156	151	-5	-4	-0 [^]
Earned income	197	187	-9	198	194	-4	-5	-5
Other assistance programs	124	118	-6	125	123	-2	-4	1
Percentage of Applications Approved for Maximum SNAP Benefit	61.4	63.0	1.6	62.3	63.1	0.8	0.8	0.1
Households with:								
Children	32.6	34.7	2.1	33.2	35.2	2.1	0.0 [^]	0.5
Elderly	32.7	33.5	0.8	32.5	32.9	0.5	0.3	-1.8
Disabled	19.7	20.6	0.9	20.5	19.7	-0.9	1.8	1.4
Earned income	33.6	28.7	-4.9	33.4	31.8	-1.6	-3.3	-4.9*
Other assistance programs	17.0	16.8	-0.2	16.5	16.9	0.3	-0.5	-0.4

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Table C2.3 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Applications Approved for Minimum SNAP Benefit	5.8	7.3	1.5	5.7	6.3	0.6	0.9	0.2
Households with:								
Children	2.5	2.7	0.2	2.5	2.2	-0.3	0.4	0.6
Elderly	20.8	22.7	1.9	21.3	21.9	0.7	1.2	-2.2
Disabled	15.3	16.0	0.7	13.7	15.9	2.1	-1.4	-2.5*
Earned income	7.0	11.0	4.0	7.1	9.4	2.3	1.7	1.3*
Other assistance programs	21.4	23.1	1.7	20.8	22.0	1.2	0.6	-1.5
Average Size of Applicant Household (Individuals)	1.4	1.4	-0.0 [^]	1.4	1.5	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Households with:								
Children	3.1	3.1	-0.0 [^]	3.1	3.1	0.1	-0.1	-0.1*
Elderly	1.4	1.4	-0.0 [^]	1.4	1.4	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Disabled	1.5	1.5	-0.0 [^]	1.6	1.6	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Earned income	1.9	1.9	0.0 [^]	1.9	1.9	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.1 [^]
Other assistance programs	1.3	1.3	-0.0 [^]	1.3	1.3	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Gross Income	48.1	41.3	-6.8	48.4	45.9	-2.5	-4.3	-2.3*
Households with:								
Children	75.7	67.5	-8.1	76.1	71.5	-4.6	-3.5	-3.0*
Elderly	76.9	71.2	-5.7	76.3	74.7	-1.6	-4.2	-0.2
Disabled	97.8	96.3	-1.5	96.5	95.4	-1.1	-0.4	-0.5
Earned income	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other assistance programs	100.0	99.9	-0.0 [^]	100.0	100.0	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]

Table C2.3 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Average Reported Gross Income of Applicant Households Reporting Gross Income (Dollars)	1,187	1,330	144	1,162	1,236	74	69	62*
Households with:								
Children	1,797	1,937	140	1,802	1,876	74	66	61*
Elderly	1,224	1,298	73	1,199	1,232	34	40	10
Disabled	1,121	1,163	43	1,117	1,150	33	10	-31
Earned income	1,305	1,504	199	1,301	1,389	87	112	144*
Other assistance programs	1,085	1,128	43	1,061	1,092	31	12	-11
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Earned Income	30.3	26.1	-4.2	29.7	29.4	-0.3	-3.9	-4.1*
Households with:								
Children	55.0	49.0	-6.0	55.3	52.7	-2.6	-3.4	-3.6*
Elderly	14.7	12.9	-1.7	14.8	14.9	0.1	-1.9	-2.1*
Disabled	13.8	12.8	-1.0	12.8	12.4	-0.4	-0.6	-1.5
Earned income	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other assistance programs	8.4	8.9	0.6	7.7	7.6	-0.1	0.7	-1.4*
Average Reported Earned Income of Applicant Households Reporting earned Income (Dollars)	1,193	1,385	193	1,184	1,281	97	96	112*
Households with:								
Children	1,792	1,989	197	1,796	1,915	119	78	106*
Elderly	1,163	1,324	160	1,118	1,194	76	84	102
Disabled	1,105	1,327	221	1,236	1,283	46	175	-33
Earned income	1,193	1,385	193	1,184	1,281	97	96	112*
Other assistance programs	769	957	188	852	930	77	111	14

Table C2.3 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	7.0	6.7	-0.3	7.3	7.6	0.3	-0.6	0.4
Households with:								
Children	3.0	2.7	-0.3	3.6	3.5	-0.1	-0.3	-0.6
Elderly	57.5	54.7	-2.9	54.7	55.1	0.4	-3.3	0.3
Disabled	85.1	83.6	-1.5	82.3	81.1	-1.2	-0.3	0.0 [^]
Earned income	1.9	2.3	0.4	1.9	2.0	0.1	0.3	0.4
Other assistance programs	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions ^d	2.8	2.3	-0.4	2.7	2.6	-0.1	-0.3	0.1
Households with:								
Children	1.2	1.0	-0.2	1.3	1.5	0.1	-0.4	-0.5
Elderly	29.7	26.3	-3.4	28.3	26.0	-2.3	-1.1	-0.4
Disabled	25.9	21.7	-4.2	23.2	22.3	-1.0	-3.2	-1.8
Earned income	1.1	0.9	-0.3	1.1	1.2	0.1	-0.3	-0.3
Other assistance programs	35.0	31.3	-3.7	32.2	29.6	-2.7	-1.0	-2.0
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	55.2	53.4	-1.9	54.8	54.3	-0.5	-1.3	-2.7 [*]
Households with:								
Children	73.0	69.6	-3.4	71.6	69.1	-2.6	-0.9	0.0 [^]
Elderly	71.0	66.5	-4.4	70.7	70.9	0.2	-4.6	-3.2
Disabled	80.2	78.2	-2.0	78.9	80.1	1.2	-3.2	-3.7 [*]
Earned income	78.9	77.1	-1.8	78.5	77.2	-1.3	-0.6	1.2
Other assistance programs	81.1	80.1	-1.0	80.8	82.3	1.5	-2.5	-2.8 [*]

Table C2.3 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Average Shelter Deduction Claimed by Applicant (Dollars)	396	412	16	387	395	8	7	0 [^]
Households with:								
Children	387	405	18	381	390	10	8	0 [^]
Elderly	532	532	-1	497	503	6	-7	-4
Disabled	428	447	19	426	444	18	1	-8
Earned income	377	381	4	369	371	2	2	-0 [^]
Other assistance programs	415	421	7	400	419	19	-13	-3

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

^c Although we know from the site visits that about 20 percent of the applications in Oregon are submitted online, the Oregon DHS was not able to provide data on the application method for individual applications. Because of that, we were unable to analyze results separately by method of application (online versus paper).

^d The Oregon DHS was not able to provide data on the amount of medical deductions claimed.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C2.4. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP application outcomes in Utah, by subgroup

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Monthly Number of Applications Received ^a					
Households with:	11,936	1,924	7,394	n.a.	n.a.
Children	5,948	957	3,731	n.a.	n.a.
Elderly	528	61	229	n.a.	n.a.
Disabled	1,175	220	858	n.a.	n.a.
Earned income	3,474	564	2,251	n.a.	n.a.
Other assistance programs	4,469	693	2,725	n.a.	n.a.
Total Number of Applications Processed					
Households with:	294,542	27,904	107,366	n.a.	n.a.
Children	147,605	13,844	54,106	n.a.	n.a.
Elderly	12,982	893	3,341	n.a.	n.a.
Disabled	28,870	3,199	12,500	n.a.	n.a.
Earned income	85,541	8,454	33,761	n.a.	n.a.
Other assistance programs	110,108	10,395	40,876	n.a.	n.a.
Percentage of Expedited Applications					
Households with:	26.0	27.4	24.4	3.0*	2.7*
Children	16.9	17.0	15.9	1.1*	1.0*
Elderly	11.9	13.5	13.3	0.2	0.3
Disabled	16.6	19.7	19.0	0.7	0.6
Earned income	14.4	12.3	13.1	-0.8*	-0.8
Other assistance programs	19.3	18.8	17.4	1.4*	1.3*

Table C2.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applications Approved (Regular and Expedited)	56.1	57.1	57.0	0.0 [^]	-0.1
Households with:					
Children	53.8	54.4	55.7	-1.3*	-1.4*
Elderly	50.4	56.4	58.6	-2.2	-2.7
Disabled	62.0	63.7	64.3	-0.5	-0.6
Earned income	73.3	70.6	74.9	-4.3*	-4.1*
Other assistance programs	68.2	68.1	69.1	-1.0	-1.0*
Among Applications Approved:					
Average SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	295	292	296	-4*	0 [^]
Households with:					
Children	415	415	414	1	2
Elderly	160	148	160	-12	-6
Disabled	213	213	222	-9*	-5
Earned income	332	333	331	2	0 [^]
Other assistance programs	355	357	362	-5	0 [^]
Percentage of Applications Approved for Maximum SNAP Benefit	50.2	49.4	48.2	1.2*	0.2
Households with:					
Children	27.5	28.5	28.2	0.3	0.2
Elderly	28.0	28.2	26.2	2.0	2.4
Disabled	28.0	31.3	32.7	-1.3	-1.9
Earned income	23.4	23.1	23.5	-0.5	-0.1
Other assistance programs	27.5	28.0	27.5	0.5	0.2

Table C2.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applications Approved for Minimum SNAP Benefit	2.1	2.0	1.9	0.2	0.2
Households with:					
Children	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1
Elderly	12.5	11.9	11.1	0.8	0.4
Disabled	7.9	6.8	6.3	0.6	0.6
Earned income	1.5	2.0	1.6	0.4	0.4*
Other assistance programs	2.8	2.6	2.4	0.2	0.1
Percentage of Total Applications Processed Within Time Standards	71.5	78.2	79.4	-1.2*	-1.2*
Households with:					
Children	69.2	76.9	78.6	-1.6*	-1.7*
Elderly	77.7	84.0	85.3	-1.3	-1.5
Disabled	78.4	82.0	82.6	-0.7	-0.7
Earned income	84.6	85.7	87.9	-2.2*	-2.1*
Other assistance programs	78.0	81.0	83.5	-2.5*	-2.4*
Percentage of Regular Applications Processed Within 30 Days	65.3	77.2	76.5	0.8*	0.7*
Households with:					
Children	66.8	77.6	77.7	-0.0^	-0.1
Elderly	76.8	84.2	84.5	-0.3	-0.5
Disabled	76.5	83.9	82.3	1.5	1.5
Earned income	85.8	88.2	89.2	-1.0*	-1.1*
Other assistance programs	77.5	83.1	84.0	-0.8	-0.8
Percentage of Expedited Applications Processed Within 7 Days	89.1	80.8	88.4	-7.6*	-7.0*
Households with:					
Children	81.2	73.5	83.3	-9.8*	-8.9*
Elderly	84.0	82.6	90.6	-7.9*	-6.5*
Disabled	87.7	74.4	84.0	-9.6*	-8.5*
Earned income	77.9	68.5	79.3	-10.8*	-9.8*
Other assistance programs	79.8	72.1	81.5	-9.4*	-8.9*

Table C2.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Average Size of Applicant Household (Individuals)	2.5	2.4	2.4	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Households with:					
Children	3.8	3.7	3.7	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Elderly	1.7	1.6	1.7	-0.1 [*]	-0.0 [^]
Disabled	2.2	2.2	2.2	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Earned income	3.3	3.3	3.2	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Other assistance programs	3.2	3.2	3.2	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Gross Income	42.4	42.6	43.2	-0.6	-0.4
Households with:					
Children	54.2	56.6	56.8	-0.2	-0.3
Elderly	59.3	64.3	62.1	2.1	1.9
Disabled	62.9	60.3	58.0	2.3 [*]	2.6 [*]
Earned income	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0 [^]
Other assistance programs	65.4	67.8	67.2	0.5	0.6
Average Reported Gross Income of Applicant Households Reporting Gross Income (Dollars)	1,349	1,431	1,391	40 [*]	41 [*]
Households with:					
Children	1,607	1,700	1,662	39 [*]	35 [*]
Elderly	1,187	1,169	1,157	13	41
Disabled	1,248	1,277	1,282	-6	11
Earned income	1,553	1,652	1,586	66 [*]	61 [*]
Other assistance programs	1,354	1,454	1,444	10	12
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Earned Income	29.0	30.3	31.4	-1.1 [*]	-1.0 [*]
Households with:					
Children	41.6	44.4	45.1	-0.7	-0.9
Elderly	11.9	14.3	15.0	-0.6	0.1
Disabled	18.3	19.3	20.0	-0.8	-0.8
Earned income	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0 [^]
Other assistance programs	41.2	45.1	45.8	-0.7	-0.3

Table C2.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Average Reported Earned Income of Applicant Households Reporting Earned Income (Dollars)	1,387	1,480	1,419	62*	57*
Households with:					
Children	1,603	1,705	1,651	55*	52*
Elderly	1,127	1,046	1,016	30	20
Disabled	1,265	1,255	1,235	20	31
Earned income	1,387	1,480	1,419	62*	57*
Other assistance programs	1,403	1,494	1,485	10	11
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Participation in or Income from Other Assistance Programs	37.4	37.3	38.1	-0.8*	-0.4
Households with:					
Children	55.8	57.5	59.0	-1.5*	-1.5*
Elderly	69.0	70.1	69.5	0.6	0.7
Disabled	75.3	67.6	65.8	1.8*	2.0*
Earned income	53.0	55.5	55.4	0.0^	-0.2
Other assistance programs	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0^
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Medicaid Participation	34.0	33.7	34.9	-1.2*	-0.7*
Households with:					
Children	53.3	54.9	56.7	-1.8*	-1.8*
Elderly	38.5	37.0	37.9	-0.9	-0.5
Disabled	62.6	55.1	53.9	1.3	1.2
Earned income	51.5	53.5	54.0	-0.5	-0.7
Other assistance programs	91.0	90.6	91.7	-1.2*	-0.8*

Table C2.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Income from TANF	1.5	1.2	1.3	-0.1*	-0.1
Households with:					
Children	2.9	2.3	2.6	-0.3*	-0.3
Elderly	1.4	0.7	1.3	-0.6	-0.0^
Disabled	1.7	1.6	1.6	-0.0^	-0.0^
Earned income	1.1	1.0	1.2	-0.2	-0.2
Other assistance programs	4.1	3.2	3.5	-0.3	-0.2
Percentage of Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	7.7	7.9	7.3	0.6*	0.6*
Households with:					
Children	5.4	6.2	5.6	0.6*	0.7*
Elderly	59.6	61.6	61.0	0.6	0.1
Disabled	43.9	39.9	37.8	2.1*	2.5*
Earned income	3.8	4.8	4.2	0.7*	0.7*
Other assistance programs	20.7	21.1	19.2	1.9*	1.4*
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions	1.0	1.4	1.2	0.2*	0.2
Households with:					
Children	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.0^	0.1
Elderly	11.3	18.5	16.9	1.6	1.4
Disabled	6.7	8.7	7.3	1.4*	1.5*
Earned income	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.2	0.2
Other assistance programs	2.6	3.3	2.9	0.4	0.2
Average Medical Deduction Claimed by Applicant (Dollars)	150	125	282	-158	-173
Households with:					
Children	118	107	112	-5	-14
Elderly	177	124	126	-1	-5
Disabled	160	120	351	-231	-257
Earned income	348	104	112	-8	-23
Other assistance programs	150	120	294	-173	-193

Table C2.4 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	37.3	42.0	40.5	1.4*	1.5*
Households with:					
Children	43.1	48.0	47.7	0.3	0.1
Elderly	40.3	50.3	51.0	-0.7	-1.0
Disabled	43.9	48.3	47.0	1.3	1.4
Earned income	65.5	69.0	70.8	-1.9*	-1.9*
Other assistance programs	50.9	55.3	55.5	-0.1	-0.1
Average Shelter Deduction Claimed by Applicant (Dollars)	343	346	345	2	3
Households with:					
Children	351	354	351	2	2
Elderly	415	423	410	14	15
Disabled	350	340	345	-6	-2
Earned income	332	335	337	-2	-2
Other assistance programs	345	343	343	1	1

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a Although we know from the site visits that more than 80 percent of the applications in Utah are submitted online, the Utah DWS was not able to provide data on the application method for individual applications. As a result, we were unable to analyze results separately by method of application (online versus paper).

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable

Table C2.5. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on SNAP application denials in Oregon, by subgroup

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Applications Denied	20.4	25.8	5.4	15.7	18.6	2.9	2.5	1.4
Households with:								
Children	19.0	28.0	9.0	16.6	20.0	3.5	5.6	4.3*
Elderly	15.5	18.9	3.4	13.8	14.9	1.2	2.2	1.4
Disabled	9.4	11.0	1.6	8.7	10.0	1.2	0.3	0.3
Earned income	16.4	26.5	10.1	13.6	17.5	3.9	6.2	5.3*
Other assistance programs	9.0	9.9	0.9	7.3	8.0	0.7	0.2	0.6
Among Applications Denied, Percentage of Applications by Denial Reason:								
Ineligible noncitizen	1.3	1.1	-0.2	1.7	1.3	-0.4	0.1	n.a.
Households with:								
Children	0.7	0.7	-0.0 [^]	0.7	0.6	-0.1	0.1	n.a.
Elderly	3.0	3.2	0.3	5.0	3.4	-1.6	1.9	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	-0.2	0.2	n.a.
Earned income	0.2	0.2	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.3	0.2	-0.1	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	-0.2	0.2	n.a.
Exceeds Income Limit	18.9	16.1	-2.8	20.5	19.0	-1.4	-1.4	-1.3
Households with:								
Children	36.1	26.4	-9.8	38.3	33.3	-5.0	-4.8	-2.7
Elderly	31.9	27.2	-4.7	31.2	26.9	-4.3	-0.5	0.4
Disabled	31.9	30.0	-1.8	31.1	28.4	-2.6	0.8	0.9
Earned income	46.4	39.6	-6.8	48.7	46.1	-2.6	-4.2	-1.3
Other assistance programs	30.5	33.6	3.1	29.4	31.8	2.4	0.7	0.9

Table C2.5 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Exceeds Asset Limit Households with:	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.1	n.a.
Children	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.1	n.a.
Elderly	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	-0.3	0.5	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.2	-0.6	0.9	n.a.
Earned income	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.0	-0.6	1.0	n.a.
E&T Work Requirements Not Met Households with:	0.6	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.8	0.2	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Children	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0 [^]	-0.1.	n.a.
Elderly	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Earned income	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.2	-0.1	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Procedural Denial Households with:	47.6	49.3	1.7	43.5	44.8	1.4	0.4	0.5
Children	37.7	46.2	8.4	32.3	32.9	0.6	7.8	6.4*
Elderly	31.8	37.7	5.9	30.4	40.2	9.8	-3.9	-16.4*
Disabled	18.8	29.1	10.4	22.8	25.6	2.7	7.6	4.9
Earned income	27.1	30.1	3.0	23.4	26.3	2.9	0.1	0.4
Other assistance programs	14.7	19.5	4.8	20.5	19.0	-1.5	6.3	5.6

Table C2.5 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Administrative or Other Reason Households with:	31.5	32.7	1.2	33.7	34.0	0.3	0.9	0.6
Children	25.3	26.7	1.4	28.6	33.1	4.5	-3.2	-2.8
Elderly	33.3	31.4	-1.8	33.0	29.4	-3.6	1.8	13.5*
Disabled	49.4	40.5	-8.9	45.2	45.8	0.6	-9.5	3.5
Earned income	26.0	29.6	3.6	27.4	26.7	-0.7	4.3	0.4
Other assistance programs	54.6	46.4	-8.3	49.4	49.3	-0.1	-8.1	-1.1

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable

Table C2.6. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on SNAP application denials in Utah, by subgroup

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Applications Denied	43.9	42.9	43.0	-0.0 [^]	0.1
Households with:					
Children	46.2	45.6	44.3	1.3 [*]	1.4 [*]
Elderly	49.6	43.6	41.4	2.2	2.7
Disabled	38.0	36.3	35.7	0.5	0.6
Earned income	26.7	29.4	25.1	4.3 [*]	4.1 [*]
Other assistance programs	31.8	31.9	30.9	1.0	1.0 [*]
Among Applications Denied, Percentage of Applications by Denial Reason:					
Ineligible Noncitizen	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0 ^{*^}	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 ^{*^}	n.a.
Elderly	1.7	1.3	1.4	-0.2	n.a.
Disabled	0.1	0.0	0.1	-0.1 [*]	n.a.
Earned income	0.0 [^]	0.2	0.0 [^]	0.1	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.1	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 ^{*^}	n.a.
Exceeds Income Limit	19.8	20.1	17.5	2.6 [*]	2.3 [*]
Households with:					
Children	24.5	26.1	23.5	2.6 [*]	2.2 [*]
Elderly	32.9	35.7	28.4	7.3	7.5 [*]
Disabled	31.7	29.1	24.9	4.1 [*]	4.3 [*]
Earned income	87.8	81.4	80.6	0.8	0.8
Other assistance programs	34.8	35.9	32.5	3.4 [*]	3.1 [*]

Table C2.6 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Exceeds Asset Limit					
Households with:	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.1*	0.1
Children	1.5	1.7	1.4	0.3*	0.2
Elderly	1.6	1.3	1.7	-0.4	-0.5
Disabled	0.8	0.9	1.0	-0.2*	-0.1
Earned income	3.2	3.1	3.1	0.0^	0.1
Other assistance programs	2.4	2.5	2.3	0.2*	0.2
Failed ABAWD Time Limit					
Households with:	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.1*	n.a.
Children	0.0	0.0	0.0^	-0.0^	n.a.
Elderly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.2*	n.a.
Earned income	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0	0.1	0.0^	0.0^	n.a.
E&T Work Requirements Not Met					
Households with:	0.0^	0.1	0.0^	0.0^	n.a.
Children	0.0^	0.0	0.0	0.0*	n.a.
Elderly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Disabled	0.0^	0.0	0.0	0.0*	n.a.
Earned income	0.0^	0.1	0.1	0.0^	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0^	0.0^	0.0	0.0^	n.a.
Procedural Denial					
Households with:	54.5	56.8	60.5	-3.7*	-3.5*
Children	51.4	53.2	55.7	-2.5*	-2.2*
Elderly	36.7	38.3	44.6	-6.3	-6.1*
Disabled	43.3	50.1	55.1	-5.0*	-5.1*
Earned income	6.2	11.6	12.0	-0.4	-0.5
Other assistance programs	37.1	40.7	43.8	-3.1*	-3.0*

Table C2.6 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Administrative or Other Reason Households with:	24.4	21.4	20.5	0.9*	1.1*
Children	22.6	19.0	19.4	-0.4*	-0.3
Elderly	27.1	23.4	23.9	-0.5	-0.9
Disabled	23.9	19.3	18.5	0.8*	0.9
Earned income	2.8	3.6	4.2	-0.6	-0.5
Other assistance programs	25.5	20.7	21.3	-0.6*	-0.3

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable

Table C2.7. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP recertification outcomes in Oregon, by subgroup

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Monthly Number of Applications Received ^c	4,901	5,145	244	6,550	7,059	509	-265	-84
Households with:								
Children	1,248	1,181	-66	1,649	1,575	-74	8	-14
Elderly	680	824	144	832	1,068	235	-91	-1
Disabled	1,092	1,186	94	1,352	1,600	248	-153	-15
Earned income	1,728	1,704	-23	2,205	2,351	146	-169	-203*
Other assistance programs	1,333	1,476	143	1,634	1,948	314	-171	2
Total Number of Recertification Applications Processed	115,129	72,015	-43,114	154,175	98,817	-55,358	12,244	-1,666
Households with:								
Children	29,360	16,535	-12,825	38,916	22,043	-16,873	4,048	-163
Elderly	16,083	11,540	-4,543	19,649	14,945	-4,704	161	176
Disabled	25,858	16,606	-9,252	31,989	22,396	-9,593	341	-33
Earned income	40,505	23,856	-16,649	51,914	32,911	-19,003	2,354	-2,892*
Other assistance programs	31,558	20,658	-10,900	38,651	27,277	-11,374	474	194
Percentage of Expedited Applications	4.3	3.2	-1.1	4.7	4.7	0.0 [^]	-1.2	-1.3*
Households with:								
Children	1.2	1.2	-0.0 [^]	1.2	1.4	0.3	-0.3	-0.1
Elderly	0.5	0.5	0.0 [^]	0.5	0.5	0.1	-0.0 [^]	-0.1
Disabled	0.5	0.4	-0.0 [^]	0.5	0.5	-0.1	0.0 [^]	-0.1
Earned income	2.4	0.9	-1.5	2.2	1.8	-0.4	-1.1	-1.6*
Other assistance programs	0.4	0.4	0.0 [^]	0.4	0.3	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]

Table C2.7 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved	77.1	74.5	-2.6	78.9	77.2	-1.7	-0.9	-1.2*
Households with:								
Children	80.5	78.7	-1.8	82.4	82.3	-0.0 [^]	-1.7	-1.5*
Elderly	88.2	85.8	-2.4	88.9	87.3	-1.7	-0.7	-1.0
Disabled	90.5	89.0	-1.5	90.8	89.2	-1.6	0.0 [^]	-0.3
Earned income	75.0	71.0	-4.1	76.9	75.6	-1.4	-2.7	-3.1*
Other assistance programs	89.9	88.1	-1.7	90.5	88.8	-1.6	-0.1	-0.1
Among Recertification Applications Approved:								
Average SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	206	199	-6	210	201	-9	3	2
Households with:								
Children	350	350	-0 [^]	363	357	-6	6	3
Elderly	137	132	-5	130	127	-3	-2	-3
Disabled	157	151	-6	160	152	-7	1	-2
Earned income	248	245	-3	260	249	-11	8	5*
Other assistance programs	135	129	-6	133	128	-5	-1	-2
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved for Maximum SNAP Benefit	35.0	35.7	0.7	35.4	34.5	-0.9	1.6	1.2
Households with:								
Children	24.3	23.7	-0.6	22.0	21.5	-0.5	-0.1	1.0*
Elderly	18.9	19.0	0.1	16.5	18.3	1.8	-1.7	-1.1
Disabled	16.1	15.4	-0.7	14.7	14.3	-0.3	-0.3	-1.1
Earned income	27.0	24.3	-2.7	24.4	23.9	-0.5	-2.2	-2.3*
Other assistance programs	14.6	14.0	-0.6	12.8	12.8	0.0 [^]	-0.6	-0.9

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Table C2.7 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved for Minimum SNAP Benefit	5.3	6.3	0.9	5.4	6.3	0.9	0.1	0.2
Households with:								
Children	1.1	1.3	0.2	1.0	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Elderly	13.7	15.8	2.1	16.9	18.5	1.6	0.5	1.6*
Disabled	7.6	8.9	1.3	7.9	8.8	0.9	0.4	0.2
Earned income	3.9	5.3	1.3	4.0	4.8	0.8	0.5	0.7*
Other assistance programs	12.0	13.7	1.7	13.3	14.8	1.5	0.2	0.3
Average Size of Recertification Applicant Household (Individuals)	1.6	1.6	-0.1	1.7	1.6	-0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Households with:								
Children	3.2	3.3	0.0 [^]	3.4	3.4	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Elderly	1.3	1.2	-0.0 [^]	1.3	1.2	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Disabled	1.4	1.4	-0.0 [^]	1.4	1.4	-0.1	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Earned income	2.2	2.2	-0.0 [^]	2.4	2.3	-0.1	0.1	0.1* [^]
Other assistance programs	1.2	1.2	-0.0 [^]	1.2	1.2	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Gross Income	72.4	68.9	-3.4	69.7	68.5	-1.2	-2.2	-2.4
Households with:								
Children	90.7	89.4	-1.3	90.5	90.2	-0.3	-0.9	-1.3*
Elderly	95.1	94.0	-1.1	94.3	93.4	-0.9	-0.2	-0.1
Disabled	99.5	99.5	-0.0 [^]	99.4	99.4	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Earned income	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other assistance programs	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0* [^]

Table C2.7 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Average Reported Gross Income of Recertification Applicant Households Reporting Gross Income (Dollars)	1,044	1,088	45	1,064	1,087	24	21	31*
Households with:								
Children	1,498	1,558	60	1,538	1,604	66	-6	19
Elderly	981	1,016	35	998	1,020	22	13	4
Disabled	932	962	30	948	970	22	8	-7
Earned income	1,216	1,289	73	1,263	1,287	24	49	85*
Other assistance programs	931	962	31	942	967	25	7	-4
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Earned Income	35.2	33.1	-2.1	33.7	33.3	-0.4	-1.7	-2.1*
Households with:								
Children	68.2	69.4	1.2	67.2	69.5	2.3	-1.1	-1.2
Elderly	9.7	9.3	-0.4	10.4	10.7	0.2	-0.6	-0.4
Disabled	9.7	9.3	-0.4	9.3	9.0	-0.4	-0.1	-0.4
Earned income	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other assistance programs	6.5	6.3	-0.2	5.8	5.6	-0.2	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Average Reported Earned Income of Recertification Applicant Households Reporting Earned Income (Dollars)	1,088	1,170	82	1,134	1,170	36	46	70*
Households with:								
Children	1,479	1,568	89	1,538	1,623	85	3	24*
Elderly	782	833	51	777	801	24	26	-52
Disabled	808	880	72	890	904	14	58	14
Earned income	1,088	1,170	82	1,134	1,170	36	46	70*
Other assistance programs	506	540	34	575	593	19	15	-33

Table C2.7 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	27.4	28.7	1.3	25.1	27.6	2.5	-1.3	-0.3
Households with:								
Children	5.4	5.4	-0.1	6.4	6.5	0.1	-0.2	-0.4
Elderly	84.9	84.7	-0.2	81.2	80.4	-0.8	0.6	1.0*
Disabled	92.2	92.4	0.3	90.4	91.7	1.2	-0.9	0.4
Earned income	5.0	5.4	0.4	4.4	4.7	0.3	0.1	0.2
Other assistance programs	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions ^c	10.0	9.9	-0.0 [^]	8.5	8.8	0.2	-0.3	-0.4
Households with:								
Children	2.2	2.2	-0.0 [^]	2.3	2.2	-0.1	0.1	0.0 [^]
Elderly	38.3	36.2	-2.1	37.5	34.1	-3.4	1.3	-0.8
Disabled	25.8	24.5	-1.4	22.7	21.8	-0.9	-0.5	-1.3*
Earned income	2.2	2.2	0.0 [^]	2.0	1.9	-0.1	0.1	-0.2
Other assistance programs	34.6	33.2	-1.4	32.1	30.1	-1.9	0.5	-0.9
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	72.0	71.2	-0.8	69.3	70.0	0.6	-1.4	-1.7*
Households with:								
Children	85.9	84.5	-1.4	85.0	84.8	-0.1	-1.3	-1.9*
Elderly	89.5	88.7	-0.9	88.5	88.2	-0.3	-0.6	-0.7
Disabled	92.8	92.9	0.1	92.5	93.3	0.8	-0.7	-0.9
Earned income	83.6	86.0	2.5	83.7	84.5	0.8	1.7	2.2*
Other assistance programs	93.1	93.3	0.2	92.6	93.4	0.7	-0.6	-0.7

Table C2.7 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Average Shelter Deduction Claimed by Recertification Applicant (Dollars)	396	412	15	387	401	14	2	1
Households with:								
Children	386	396	11	377	385	8	3	6*
Elderly	423	437	14	393	411	18	-4	-8
Disabled	412	429	17	404	424	20	-3	-5
Earned income	381	394	13	374	383	9	4	5*
Other assistance programs	406	421	15	389	409	20	-5	-8*

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

^c The Oregon DHS was not able to provide data on the amount of medical deductions claimed.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C2.8. Estimated impact of eliminating the interview on SNAP recertification outcomes in Utah, by subgroup

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Total Number of Recertification Applications Processed	390,814	39,298	153,489	n.a.	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	226,168	23,037	91,123	n.a.	n.a.
Elderly	23,265	3,010	11,461	n.a.	n.a.
Disabled	72,442	9,024	35,269	n.a.	n.a.
Earned income	131,003	12,950	51,043	n.a.	n.a.
Other assistance programs	241,973	26,143	102,619	n.a.	n.a.
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved	61.4	62.9	62.7	0.2	0.5
Households with:					
Children	66.7	68.2	67.3	0.9*	0.9*
Elderly	75.1	79.1	77.8	1.3	1.5
Disabled	75.3	76.0	75.2	0.8	0.9
Earned income	72.4	79.6	78.8	0.9*	0.9*
Other assistance programs	71.9	73.3	72.3	1.0*	1.0*
Among Recertification Applications Approved:					
Average SNAP Benefit (Dollars)	316	317	318	-1	2
Households with:					
Children	415	419	419	0^	4
Elderly	134	128	129	-1	-3
Disabled	218	205	209	-5	-1
Earned income	355	363	362	1	4
Other assistance programs	350	344	344	0^	3

Table C2.8 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved for Maximum SNAP Benefit	25.0	23.4	23.4	0.0 [^]	0.2
Households with:					
Children	17.5	17.9	17.6	0.3	0.4
Elderly	11.9	12.3	12.3	-0.1	0.0 [^]
Disabled	16.1	15.9	15.9	-0.1	-0.0 [^]
Earned income	7.8	8.9	8.8	0.2	0.2
Other assistance programs	16.8	16.3	16.0	0.3	0.5
Percentage of Recertification Applications Approved for Minimum SNAP Benefit	2.1	2.4	2.3	0.2	0.1
Households with:					
Children	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Elderly	10.6	10.8	10.3	0.5	0.4
Disabled	5.5	5.5	5.1	0.4	0.3
Earned income	1.4	1.5	1.5	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Other assistance programs	2.5	2.8	2.7	0.2	0.1
Average Size of Recertification Applicant Household (Individuals)	2.8	2.8	2.8	-0.0 ^{*^}	-0.0 [^]
Households with:					
Children	3.9	3.9	3.9	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Elderly	1.5	1.5	1.4	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]
Disabled	2.2	2.0	2.1	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Earned income	3.8	3.8	3.8	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Other assistance programs	3.4	3.3	3.3	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]

Table C2.8 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Gross Income	57.0	57.5	57.3	0.2	0.6*
Households with:					
Children	68.9	67.2	66.4	0.8*	0.8*
Elderly	78.8	78.1	77.2	1.0	1.0
Disabled	75.2	72.9	71.9	1.0	1.1
Earned income	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0^
Other assistance programs	72.1	70.8	70.0	0.8*	0.7*
Average Reported Gross Income of Recertification Applicant Households Reporting Gross Income (Dollars)	1,249	1,225	1,247	-21*	-12
Households with:					
Children	1,416	1,406	1,435	-29*	-16
Elderly	939	934	912	21	15
Disabled	1,038	1,009	1,022	-13	-1
Earned income	1,573	1,554	1,581	-27*	-16
Other assistance programs	1,238	1,226	1,245	-19*	-12
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Earned Income	33.5	33.0	33.3	-0.3	0.0^
Households with:					
Children	47.7	47.0	46.8	0.2	0.4
Elderly	10.2	9.7	9.1	0.6	0.6
Disabled	16.3	14.9	15.2	-0.3	-0.1
Earned income	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0^
Other assistance programs	39.5	37.9	38.0	-0.0^	0.2

Table C2.8 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Average Reported Earned Income of Recertification Applicant Households Reporting Earned Income (Dollars)	1,388	1,382	1,406	-25*	-16
Households with:					
Children	1,506	1,504	1,533	-29*	-18
Elderly	949	859	870	-11	24
Disabled	1,046	941	993	-52*	-41
Earned income	1,388	1,382	1,406	-25*	-16
Other assistance programs	1,409	1,404	1,430	-27*	-18
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Participation in or Income from Other Assistance Programs	61.9	66.5	66.9	-0.3	0.1
Households with:					
Children	83.2	85.7	85.6	0.1	-0.0^
Elderly	85.7	86.0	86.1	-0.1	0.0^
Disabled	85.9	84.4	83.3	1.1*	1.1*
Earned income	73.0	76.6	76.4	0.2	0.1
Other assistance programs	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Medicaid Participation	60.2	64.5	65.0	-0.5	-0.0^
Households with:					
Children	82.3	84.9	84.8	0.0^	-0.1
Elderly	73.1	73.4	73.5	-0.1	0.4
Disabled	82.2	80.3	79.7	0.6	0.7
Earned income	72.2	75.8	75.6	0.2	0.1
Other assistance programs	97.2	96.9	97.2	-0.3*	-0.2

Table C2.8 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Income from TANF	3.7	2.9	2.9	0.0^	0.0^
Households with:					
Children	6.2	4.9	4.8	0.1	0.0^
Elderly	2.0	1.8	1.9	-0.0^	-0.2
Disabled	5.3	4.4	4.3	0.1	-0.0^
Earned income	2.2	1.5	1.8	-0.3*	-0.3
Other assistance programs	5.9	4.4	4.3	0.1	0.0^
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Reporting Income from SSI	12.0	14.6	14.3	0.3	0.3
Households with:					
Children	6.7	7.8	7.5	0.4	0.3
Elderly	65.8	66.4	66.7	-0.3	-0.2
Disabled	43.5	43.7	43.1	0.7	0.5
Earned income	4.9	5.7	5.4	0.3	0.3
Other assistance programs	19.4	22.0	21.4	0.6*	0.2
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Medical Deductions	1.1	1.6	1.5	0.0^	0.0^
Households with:					
Children	0.5	0.7	0.7	-0.1	-0.1
Elderly	7.8	9.6	8.8	0.8	0.6
Disabled	4.2	4.9	4.9	0.0^	0.1
Earned income	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.0^	0.0^
Other assistance programs	1.7	2.3	2.2	0.1	0.0^

Table C2.8 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Average Medical Deduction Claimed by Recertification Applicant (Dollars)	100	95	102	-8	-9
Households with:					
Children	95	94	104	-9	-11
Elderly	107	95	108	-12	-18*
Disabled	100	94	101	-7	-7
Earned income	111	81	103	-22*	-23
Other assistance programs	99	94	102	-8	-9
Percentage of Recertification Applicants Claiming Shelter Deductions	46.5	49.9	48.5	1.4*	1.6*
Households with:					
Children	53.7	55.1	54.1	1.1*	1.0*
Elderly	58.1	60.9	58.7	2.3*	2.2
Disabled	56.5	58.3	56.8	1.4*	1.4*
Earned income	65.6	72.2	71.3	0.9*	0.6
Other assistance programs	55.8	57.3	56.4	1.0*	0.9*
Average Shelter Deduction Claimed by Recertification Applicant (Dollars)	321	328	327	1	2
Households with:					
Children	333	339	339	0^	1
Elderly	307	324	309	15*	12
Disabled	312	314	316	-2	-0^
Earned income	324	335	331	4*	3
Other assistance programs	320	325	325	0^	0^

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable

Table C2.9. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on case closures and churning rates in Oregon, by subgroup

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Percentage of Cases Closed								
Households with:	4.5	4.9	0.4	4.2	4.4	0.3	0.2	0.0 [^]
Children	4.0	4.1	0.2	3.6	3.7	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.1
Elderly	2.0	2.2	0.2	2.0	2.1	0.2	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Disabled	1.8	1.9	0.1	1.8	1.9	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.1
Earned income	5.2	5.8	0.6	4.9	5.2	0.3	0.3	0.1
Other assistance programs	1.8	1.9	0.1	1.8	1.9	0.1	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Among Cases Closed, Percentage of Cases by Closure Reason:								
Ineligible noncitizen	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Households with:								
Children	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Elderly	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.1	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 [^]	0.0	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Earned income	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Exceeds Income Limit								
Households with:	6.0	4.6	-1.4	6.0	4.8	-1.2	-0.3	-0.1
Children	10.7	8.7	-2.0	11.6	10.6	-1.0	-0.9	-1.0
Elderly	8.2	6.6	-1.5	10.1	7.4	-2.7	1.2	0.6
Disabled	6.2	5.5	-0.7	7.1	5.1	-2.0	1.3	0.9
Earned income	11.2	9.3	-1.9	11.7	10.0	*1.7	-0.2	0.3
Other assistance programs	5.7	5.0	-0.7	6.4	4.8	-1.6	0.9	0.5

Table C2.9 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Exceeds Asset Limit	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Households with:								
Children	0.0 [^]	0.0	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Elderly	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0	0.1	0.1	-0.1	n.a.
Disabled	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Earned income	0.0 [^]	0.0	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.1	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	n.a.
E&T Work Requirements Not Met	0.4	0.2	-0.1	0.6	0.3	-0.4	0.2	n.a.
Households with:								
Children	0.0 [^]	0.0	-0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Elderly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Earned income	0.1	0.1	-0.0 [^]	0.2	0.1	-0.1	0.1	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Procedural Closure	41.6	42.1	0.5	40.0	41.3	1.3	-0.8	-2.1*
Households with:								
Children	40.6	40.7	.1	38.9	42.6	3.7	-3.6	-3.3*
Elderly	15.6	14.4	-1.2	15.6	15.6	-0.0 [^]	-1.2	-2.4
Disabled	14.3	12.6	-1.7	15.6	14.1	-1.5	-0.2	-1.2
Earned income	45.1	44.7	-0.3	44.2	46.6	2.4	-2.7	-2.5*
Other assistance programs	10.6	10.1	-0.5	12.2	10.5	-1.7	1.1	-0.6
Recertification application not submitted	32.6	33.7	1.2	32.8	32.8	0.4	0.7	0.9
Households with:								
Children	32.9	34.2	1.3	32.5	31.0	-1.5	2.8	2.1
Elderly	43.7	49.0	5.3	42.5	45.3	2.8	2.5	-1.4
Disabled	42.5	46.3	4.3	40.9	45.4	4.6	-0.3	-4.3*
Earned income	31.0	32.8	1.8	31.4	31.3	-0.1	1.9	0.2
Other assistance programs	44.6	49.2	4.6	42.9	47.2	4.2	0.3	-2.0

Table C2.9 (continued)

Outcome	Demonstration Site			Comparison Site			Unadjusted difference (A) – (B) ^b	Regression-adjusted difference
	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (A) ^a	Pre-implementation	Post-implementation	Change (B) ^a		
Administrative or Other Reason	19.5	19.3	-0.1	20.4	20.2	-0.2	0.1	-1.1
Households with:								
Children	15.8	16.4	0.6	16.9	15.8	-1.1	1.7	2.1*
Elderly	32.4	30.0	-2.4	31.7	31.5	-0.2	-2.2	3.0
Disabled	37.4	35.4	-2.0	36.4	35.3	-1.1	-0.9	3.7
Earned income	12.6	13.1	0.5	12.5	12.0	-0.4	0.9	1.9
Other assistance programs	39.1	35.6	-3.4	38.5	37.5	-1.0	-2.4	1.8
Percentage of Households Churning onto the Program ^c	13.7	14.1	0.5	15.2	16.5	1.3	-0.8	0.6
Households with:								
Children	13.4	13.6	0.2	14.7	14.9	0.2	0.0 [^]	1.2
Elderly	8.7	10.3	1.6	9.2	12.0	2.7	-1.2	-0.7
Disabled	16.3	16.2	-0.1	17.8	20.4	2.6	-2.7	-2.3
Earned income	15.9	17.1	1.1	17.2	18.4	1.2	-0.0 [^]	1.7
Other assistance programs	13.5	14.1	0.6	14.8	17.8	3.0	-2.4	-1.8

Source: Analysis of Oregon DHS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a For outcomes measured as levels, change reflects the percentage change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage change). For outcomes measured as rates, change reflects the percentage point change (and the difference is computed as the difference in the percentage point change).

^b Unadjusted differences are based on a census of the population (as opposed to a sample), so any observed effect is a true difference.

^c Churning is defined as coming back on the program within 3 months of leaving.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

[^] Rounds to—but different from—zero.

Table C2.10. Estimated effect of eliminating the interview on case closures and churning rates in Utah, by subgroup

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Cases Closed	6.5	7.9	7.9	-0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]
Households with:					
Children	6.1	6.7	6.9	-0.2 [*]	-0.2 [*]
Elderly	2.9	3.0	3.1	-0.1	-0.1
Disabled	3.4	4.0	4.2	-0.2 [*]	-0.2
Earned income	7.1	7.7	8.0	-0.3 [*]	-0.3 [*]
Other assistance programs	4.5	5.0	5.2	-0.2 [*]	-0.2 [*]
Among Cases Closed, Percentage of Cases by Closure Reason:					
Ineligible noncitizen	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 ^{*^}	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Elderly	0.0 [^]	0.0	0.1	-0.1 [*]	n.a.
Disabled	0.0 [^]	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Earned income	0.0 [^]	0.0	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0 [^]	0.0	0.0 [^]	-0.0 [^]	n.a.
Exceeds Income Limit	18.9	14.8	15.2	-0.4 [*]	-0.0 [^]
Households with:					
Children	25.6	22.3	22.2	0.1	0.1
Elderly	22.8	18.7	15.5	3.2 [*]	2.7 [*]
Disabled	22.0	15.9	15.8	0.2	0.4
Earned income	28.4	24.9	24.9	-0.1	-0.1
Other assistance programs	25.0	20.7	20.6	0.1	0.1

Table C2.10 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Exceeds Asset Limit	0.5	0.5	0.5	-0.1*	-0.0^
Households with:					
Children	0.7	0.6	0.6	-0.1	n.a.
Elderly	0.9	1.0	1.2	-0.1*	-0.1
Disabled	1.0	1.3	1.5	-0.2	-0.2
Earned income	0.7	0.5	0.6	-0.1	-0.2
Other assistance programs	0.9	0.9	0.9	-0.0^	-0.1
Failed ABAWD Time Limit	0.0	12.5	12.6	-0.1*	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	0.0	0.0^	0.0^	-0.0^	n.a.
Elderly	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1*	n.a.
Disabled	0.0	6.1	6.4	-0.3	n.a.
Earned income	0.0	2.9	3.0	-0.1	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0	0.6	0.5	0.2	n.a.
E&T Work Requirements Not Met	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.1*	n.a.
Households with:					
Children	0.0^	0.0^	0.0^	-0.0^	n.a.
Elderly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	n.a.
Disabled	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0^	n.a.
Earned income	0.2	0.0^	0.0^	0.0^	n.a.
Other assistance programs	0.0^	0.0^	0.0^	-0.0^	n.a.

Table C2.10 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Procedural Closure	18.3	20.9	18.8	2.1*	2.0*
Households with:					
Children	16.3	19.7	18.6	1.0	1.0*
Elderly	8.3	9.0	7.7	1.3*	1.2
Disabled	10.6	12.3	11.5	0.8	0.8
Earned income	15.4	17.1	17.1	-0.0^	0.1
Other assistance programs	12.5	14.8	14.3	0.5	0.5
Recertification application not submitted	48.6	40.6	42.7	-2.1*	-1.6*
Households with:					
Children	46.1	49.2	50.2	-1.0	-1.0
Elderly	43.1	48.8	54.0	-5.2*	-4.6*
Disabled	44.6	46.4	48.3	-1.9	-1.9
Earned income	47.4	48.9	48.5	0.4	0.5
Other assistance programs	45.7	50.6	51.7	-1.1	-1.1
Administrative or Other Reason	13.1	10.0	9.6	0.5*	-0.2
Households with:					
Children	11.2	8.3	8.3	0.0^	-0.1
Elderly	24.9	22.4	21.7	0.7*	0.7
Disabled	21.7	17.7	16.3	1.4	0.9
Earned income	8.0	5.8	5.9	-0.1	-0.2
Other assistance programs	15.8	12.4	11.9	0.5	0.6

Table C2.10 (continued)

Outcome	Pre-implementation	Demonstration group (A)	Comparison group (B)	Difference (impact) (A) – (B)	Adjusted impact
Percentage of Households Churning onto the Program ^a	21.1	28.5	31.5	-3.0*	-2.9*
Households with:					
Children	24.5	31.7	34.6	-2.9*	-2.9*
Elderly	13.3	24.4	26.5	-2.1	-1.7
Disabled	25.0	37.0	39.4	-2.5*	-2.5*
Earned income	23.5	29.9	32.0	-2.1*	-2.2*
Other assistance programs	24.7	33.7	36.3	-2.6*	-2.5*

Source: Analysis of Utah DWS data.

Note: The pre-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 24 months before the demonstration began. The post-implementation outcomes were averaged across the 15 months during which the demonstration occurred.

^a Churning is defined as coming back on the program within 3 months of leaving.

* The impact of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

^ Rounds to—but different from—zero.

n.a. = not applicable

Table C3.1. Percent of clients reporting outcome by demonstration status and State

Outcome	Oregon			Utah		
	Demonstration group	Comparison group	Difference	Demonstration group	Comparison group	Difference
Difficulty providing information for application	9.1	6.6	2.5	14.7	13.8	1.0
Difficulty locating documents	4.6	3.5	1.1	7.2	7.7	-0.4
Deadline too short	0.5	0.0	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.1
Instructions were confusing	0.9	0.7	0.3	2.3	2.0	0.3
Didn't understand process	1.1	1.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0
Other difficulty	3.2	1.9	1.3	4.2	4.1	0.1
Sought assistance completing application	16.5	15.1	1.4	18.5	19.4	-0.9
From SNAP office staff	7.2	8.3	-1.1	5.5	6.9	-1.4
From outside sources	9.4	7.5	1.9	13.5	12.5	1.0
Assistance made the process easier	94.5	96.5	-2.0	95.9	89.3	6.7
Felt staff were available to help if needed	91.8	94.5	-2.7	90.7	88.8	1.9
Understand how to use benefit	95.4	97.6	-2.2	93.8	95.6	-1.9
Understand how to renew benefit	91.6	95.0	-3.4	92.8	90.6	2.1
Satisfied overall with application process	93.6	93.9	-0.3	89.7	85.6	4.1
Satisfied with information received about SNAP	95.4	94.3	1.1	92.6	93.5	-0.9
Received information about other assistance programs during SNAP application process	39.8	40.3	-0.5	46.8	41.5	5.2
TANF	22.5	18.4	4.1	20.1	16.0	4.1
Medical benefits	26.6	28.7	-2.1	42.6	36.5	6.1
Child care assistance	17.1	13.9	3.3	20.1	15.4	4.7
WIC or other food assistance	15.8	14.6	1.1	14.0	15.6	-1.6
Other community programs	9.6	7.2	2.4	6.5	8.8	-2.3

Source: Survey of SNAP participants in Oregon and Utah.

Note: Differences between the demonstration and comparison groups were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

APPENDIX D
WORKER OUTCOMES

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APPENDIX D. WORKER OUTCOMES

Appendix D includes complete results for the worker outcomes. The tables include results of staff's self-reported time spent on various SNAP-related activities over a work week in both States. This section also includes the QC-like review sample sizes and error rate calculations for Oregon and Utah.

Table D1.1. Results from the survey of staff time spent on SNAP activities over a 5 day period

	Oregon			Utah		
	Demonstration	Comparison	Difference	Demonstration	Comparison	Difference
Daily Averages						
Average number of hours at work per day	8.69	8.47	0.22	8.92	8.92	0.00
Average number of hours worked on SNAP per day	6.30	4.05	2.25	5.12	5.12	0.00
Percentage of Day Working on SNAP Spent on:						
Certification						
Intake	9.31%	7.43%	1.88%	11.21%	12.90%	-1.68%
Eligibility interview ^a	n.a.	11.27%	-11.27%	n.a.	12.47%	-12.47%
Verification	13.81%	11.63%	2.18%	30.89%	11.31%	19.58%
Determination	18.18%	7.10%	11.08%	5.63%	8.89%	-3.25%
Recertification						
Sending forms/assisting with forms/scheduling interview	18.14%	5.21%	12.93%	16.58%	10.81%	5.77%
Eligibility interview ^a	n.a.	14.48%	-14.48%	n.a.	3.39%	-3.39%
Verification	14.34%	18.53%	-4.18%	11.01%	15.08%	-4.07%
Re-determination	14.61%	8.66%	5.95%	4.74%	7.58%	-2.85%
Ongoing Case Management	11.61%	15.68%	-4.06%	9.42%	17.58%	-8.16%
Average Number of Eligibility Determinations per Day	4.66	2.15	2.51	1.71	3.63	-1.92
Average Number of Recertification Determinations Processed per Day	6.27	3.36	2.91	1.50	2.60	-1.10
Average Time per Application/Recertification:						
Average number of minutes to process a new application	57	74	-17	114	68	46
For a new application, average number of minutes spent on:						
Intake	13	15	-2	27	19	8
Eligibility interview ^a	n.a.	22	-22	n.a.	19	-19
Verification	19	23	-4	74	17	57
Determination	25	14	11	13	13	0
Average number of minutes to process a recertification application	49	59	-10	88	78	10
For a recertification application, average number of minutes spent:						
Sending forms/assisting with forms/scheduling interview	19	7	12	45	23	22
Eligibility interview ^a	n.a.	18	-18	n.a.	7	-7
Verification	15	23	-8	30	32	-2
Re-determination	15	11	4	13	16	-3

Source: Self-reported time spent on activities by eligibility staff in Oregon and Utah.

^a Eligibility interviews were not usually conducted for demonstration clients, although they were available upon request. Interviews likely took the same amount of time for demonstration and comparison clients.

Table D2.1. SNAP case and payment error rates for the Oregon demonstration

Error	Pre-Demonstration			Post-Demonstration		
	Sample size	Number of errors	Error rate	Sample size	Number of errors	Error rate
Case error	272	34	12.5	312	18	5.8
Payment error	272	34	9.0	310	18	5.3

Source: QC-like reviews collected from Oregon.

Table D2.2. SNAP case and payment error rate analysis for the Oregon demonstration

Error	Demonstration			State QC (Comparison)			
	Pre-demonstration error rate (%)	Post-demonstration error rate (%)	Difference (percentage points)	2012 error rate (%)	2013 error rate (%)	Difference (percentage points)	Difference-in-differences
Case error	12.5	5.8	-6.7	7.2	6.4	-0.9	-5.9*
Payment error	9.0	5.3	-3.7	4.5	4.0	-0.5	-3.1

Source: QC-like reviews collected from Oregon.

* The effect of the demonstration is statistically significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

Table D2.3. SNAP case and payment error rates for the Utah demonstration

Error	Early Implementation Period				Full Operational Period			
	QC-like review sample size	Additional State QC demonstration case sample size	Number of errors	Error rate	QC-like review sample size	Additional State QC demonstration case sample size	Number of errors	Error rate
Case error	300	0	6	2.0	288	110	7	1.8
Payment error	300	0	6	0.6	284	110	7	0.9

Source: Demonstration error rates from the official QC reviews and the demonstration QC-like reviews collected from Utah. State QC error rates from the 2012 and 2013 FNS Quality Control Data.

Table D2.4. SNAP case and payment error rate analysis for the Utah demonstration

Error	Early Implementation Period			Full Implementation Period		
	Demonstration error rate (%)	State QC 2012 (comparison) error rate (%)	95 percent confidence interval (percentage points)	Demonstration error rate (%)	State QC 2013 (comparison) error rate (%)	95 percent confidence interval (percentage points)
Case error	2.0	4.7	±1.6	1.8	3.6	±1.3
Payment error	0.6	2.4	±0.6	0.9	2.2	±0.8

Source: Demonstration error rates from the official QC reviews and the demonstration QC-like reviews collected from Utah. State QC error rates from the 2012 and 2013 FNS Quality Control Data.

APPENDIX E
INTERIM REPORT

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**Assessment of the Contributions
of an Interview to SNAP Eligibility
and Benefit Determinations**

Final Interim Report

May 23, 2014

Gretchen Rowe
Andrew Gothro
Elizabeth Brown



MATHEMATICA
Policy Research

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MATHEMATICA
Policy Research

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I. INTRODUCTION

Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has grown dramatically over the last 10 years, with an increase of over 42 percent in just the last 5 years. With over 47 million people receiving benefits nationally in fiscal year (FY) 2013 (USDA 2014), the program is a major source of support for many low-income families across the country. At the same time, however, States are under fiscal and political pressure to reduce the program's administrative costs, often by reducing staffing levels. With rising workloads and fewer staff members to respond to the growing demand for program benefits, States have sought new approaches for reducing administrative burden while maintaining program access. One such approach modifies how State staff interview clients for purposes of determining SNAP eligibility.

Although most States currently have waivers to replace required, in-person SNAP eligibility interviews with telephone interviews, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is further testing modification to the interview by awarding grants to two States—Oregon and Utah—to conduct demonstrations that eliminate the eligibility interviews at certification and recertification. FNS has commissioned Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate these demonstrations and to assess the contributions of the eligibility interview in determining SNAP benefits.

In this report, we describe each State's demonstration and discuss the cross-site themes identified during site visits conducted with State and local staff in Oregon and Utah. The remainder of Chapter I focuses on the policy context, objectives, and methodology for the study and provides background on the demonstrations. In Chapters II and III, we profile each State, discussing the State and local context in which the demonstration was implemented (including the SNAP administrative structure, the "business-as-usual" model for applying for and receiving SNAP benefits in the State, and modernization efforts in place), the structure of the demonstration, the planning and implementation process, and challenges associated with eliminating the interview. The profiles also describe State factors that may affect implementation or outcomes of the demonstration and staff perceptions of what worked best about eliminating the interview and what proved most challenging. In the final chapter, we present important themes and lessons learned across sites that could guide FNS as it considers the effectiveness of the policy governing interviews and how the policy could be improved.

A. Policy Context

FNS requires States to interview SNAP clients at eligibility determination and at recertification (generally every 12 to 24 months after initial certification, depending on household type). The interviews help State staff confirm and complete the information on the application and recertification forms, collect documentation, and inform clients of their rights and responsibilities; in addition, the interviews provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions about their case. Every State has the option to allow workers to exercise their discretion in determining if a telephone call can take the place of an in-person interview when an office visit would pose a hardship for the client. In addition, States may request waivers from FNS to replace the in-person interview with a telephone interview for all clients. Almost every State has an interview waiver, but those without such a waiver often make liberal use of the hardship option.

With most States offering to interview clients over the telephone, some are now interested in completely eliminating eligibility interviews. Four States currently operate waivers that eliminate recertification interviews for elderly and disabled individuals (USDA 2012), and other States have applied for waivers to eliminate SNAP interviews more broadly.⁶⁹ The desire to save costs and reduce client burden motivates such proposals. Interviews—even telephone interviews—require substantial staff resources and increase States’ administrative burden for SNAP (the interview may last about 15 to 30 minutes, but the time needed to schedule interviews, reschedule missed appointments, and send reminders to clients increases the overall burden time). Interviews are time-consuming for clients as well, and those who have few transportation options or who work during business hours often find it challenging to complete the interview process. In addition, given that new technologies and data exchanges make it possible to verify much of the information on a client’s application, the importance of the interview in determining a client’s eligibility has diminished for some States in recent years. If States eliminated eligibility interviews, they could rely on current technology and data exchanges to verify client data and contact clients only for clarification or when an application is incomplete.

Nevertheless, the SNAP eligibility interview serves several important purposes for staff and clients. First, its design increases the likelihood that accurate information is collected from the client and that the appropriate benefits are provided to eligible individuals. Second, it is designed to inform clients of their rights and responsibilities as SNAP clients. Third, the eligibility interview may be used to assess the overall needs of those in the client’s household and offer additional assistance through other programs or referrals. Fourth, for clients who are not familiar with the application process or experience difficulty in navigating the SNAP system, the eligibility interview provides an opportunity to seek further assistance. Finally, the SNAP interview may benefit other assistance programs that no longer require an interview (such as Medicaid and TANF); workers responsible for determining eligibility for several programs generally rely on the information provided by the SNAP interview to clarify or provide the information required across a wide range of programs. To date, no study has examined the contribution of the eligibility interview in serving these purposes, particularly given the technologies now used in the application and eligibility determination processes.

B. Demonstration Background

FNS released a competitive request for applications (RFA) in June 2011 to select three States to implement a demonstration that eliminated the eligibility interview at certification and recertification.⁷⁰ FNS awarded grants to North Carolina, Oregon, and Utah in September 2011 (ultimately, North Carolina was excluded from the evaluation and is not included in the report).⁷¹ The States received approximately \$170,000 to develop and administer the demonstration and to participate in the evaluation.

⁶⁹ To date, FNS has not approved any waivers to eliminate interviews beyond those included in the present study.

⁷⁰ States had to agree, however, that interviews would be conducted if the client requested one.

⁷¹ FNS initially selected North Carolina to participate in the study; however, during the demonstration, the State made several major systems changes that likely affected the demonstration outcomes and made it impossible for the State to provide the data needed for the study. Therefore, FNS (in conjunction with North Carolina) decided to exclude North Carolina from the study.

Each State used a different model to assign clients to the demonstration. Utah implemented the demonstration statewide, randomly assigning some SNAP applicants and recipients to the demonstration group (no interview) and some to a comparison group (mandatory interview). Oregon implemented the program in five sites within the State (all applicants and recipients in the sites would not be subject to an interview at certification or recertification) and selected a comparison site for each of the five sites that best resembled the demonstration site along several dimensions, including caseload size, caseload characteristics, office process model, geography, and economic factors (all clients in these sites would be subject to the “business-as-usual” interview process) (Table I.1). In Oregon, three of the demonstration sites encompassed counties, and two were SNAP offices within a county.⁷² With guidance from Mathematica, Utah and Oregon staff determined where and how they would implement the demonstration.

Table I.1. Oregon Demonstration and Comparison Sites

	Demonstration Site	Comparison Site
1	One Clackamas County SNAP Office	One Different Clackamas County SNAP Office
2	All Lane County SNAP Offices	All Marion County SNAP Offices
3	All Malheur County SNAP Offices	All Umatilla County SNAP Offices
4	Five Multnomah County SNAP Offices	Five Different Multnomah County SNAP Offices
5	All Washington County SNAP Offices	All Jackson and Josephine County SNAP Offices

FNS required Oregon and Utah to include no more than 20 percent of their overall caseloads in the demonstration group. At the start of the demonstration, clients in Oregon’s demonstration sites accounted for about 19 percent of the State’s monthly caseload. At the start of the demonstration in Utah, the State assigned 20 percent of its recipients to the demonstration group and 20 percent of all new applicants to the demonstration on an ongoing basis. Once Utah made an assignment, clients kept their assignment throughout the demonstration period, even if their case was closed and they reapplied. The demonstration designation followed the household head; therefore, if a child moved from a demonstration household to a comparison household, the household’s assignment did not change.

Oregon and Utah had approximately one year to plan and implement their demonstrations. The demonstrations in both States began on September 1, 2012, and ran for 15 months through November 30, 2013.⁷³

⁷² Oregon could not identify reasonable comparison counties for Clackamas or Multnomah County; therefore, it selected offices within each county for the demonstration and for the comparison groups. Consequently, for the study period, the State reversed its “no wrong door” policy, in which clients could go to any office they chose (regardless of where they lived) and obtain services. To prevent clients who heard about the demonstration from selecting a location they saw as most advantageous to them, clients could submit an application at an office not providing services to their home address, but, for purposes of processing, the application was transferred to the office associated with the clients’ address.

⁷³ Utah requested an extension of the demonstration into 2014, as shutting down the demonstration would place an additional burden on the State at the same time it was implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA); however, the study includes data only through November 2013.

C. Study Objectives

FNS contracted with Mathematica to assess how the eligibility interview contributes to the determination of SNAP benefits. The study is examining how key outcomes such as program access, payment accuracy, and administrative costs vary with and without an interview at both certification and recertification. The study also is examining how eliminating the eligibility interview at application and recertification affects (1) the steps that eligibility workers must take to ensure the collection of accurate client information and (2) client and staff satisfaction. The study has eight research objectives:

Describe the no-interview demonstration in each State

1. Describe any modernization activities in each State that complement the demonstration to make it more effective
2. Describe the process for implementing the demonstration
3. Describe clients' response to the demonstration
4. Describe the response of SNAP staff to the demonstration
5. Describe the response of community-based organizations (CBO) and other stakeholders to the demonstration
6. Analyze changes in key program outcomes after implementation of the demonstration
7. Identify considerations for future studies

To meet the objectives, Mathematica is collecting four types of data for analysis:

1. **Site visit data**, including interviews with State and local SNAP staff, interviews with representatives of CBOs, and observations of local office operations
2. **Client data**, including quality control (QC)-like reviews of demonstration households,⁷⁴ surveys of SNAP recipients in the demonstration and comparison groups, and discussions with individuals in the demonstration and comparison groups denied SNAP benefits because of procedural reasons
3. **Administrative data**, including SNAP case records from State eligibility and benefit determination systems
4. **Performance data**, including local office performance data, time-use interviews with staff, and administrative cost data

In the final study report, we will present the results of the analyses of all collected data and address all the above research objectives. The present report focuses solely on the data collected from the site visits and addresses five of the eight research objectives.

⁷⁴ QC-like reviews are similar to the QC reviews States conduct annually for FNS. Each State selects a sample of its total caseload and interviews a member of the household to determine if accurate information was collected from the client and to verify that both the eligibility determination and benefit amount were correct. FNS then uses the data to determine the State's error rate. For the present study, States conducted similar interviews—by telephone only—with a subset of clients in the demonstration.

D. Data Collection Methodology

A key source of data for the study came from site visits to Oregon and Utah. The visits included observations of local office procedures, interviews with State and local SNAP staff, and interviews with representatives of CBOs. We conducted the Oregon visit over seven days and the Utah visit over five days. During the first day of the visits to both States, we interviewed all the State staff involved in the planning, implementation, and operation of the demonstration and then used the remaining time on site to conduct interviews with local office staff and representatives of CBOs. With far more local offices and local staff involved in the demonstration than we were able to accommodate during the visits (17 offices comprised the demonstration group in Oregon, and 36 call centers and employment centers comprised the demonstration group in Utah), we selected a subset of offices and staff to visit. In each location, we met with SNAP office directors/supervisors, front office staff, and eligibility staff.

1. Site Selection

The SNAP offices selected for visits represented a mix of locales that varied by urban and rural status, office process model types, and caseload sizes (Table I.2). In Oregon, we selected at least one office in each of the five demonstration areas and in four of the comparison areas.⁷⁵ We identified a mix of offices that either flourished or struggled with the demonstration, according to information provided by Oregon State staff. We visited offices that were generally located in the area of the county serving the majority of the population. Offices included both processing centers (staff process cases, but the center is not open to the public) and local offices (staff process cases, and the office is open to the public), where applicable. In Oregon, no CBOs were directly involved in planning or implementing the demonstration. However, given that Oregon's strong advocacy community frequently communicates with the State about SNAP, we visited two of the CBOs most involved with the SNAP population to learn how the community and clients responded to the elimination of the interview.

As Utah has moved away from a traditional office model, visits to offices (known as employment centers) were less important than visits to eligibility centers (similar to processing/call centers that are closed to the public), which is where most staff work. We visited three of the four eligibility centers located throughout the State and visited 3 of 32 employment centers. Given that eligibility staff generally do not work in employment centers, our discussions with employment center staff focused on the upfront process for any clients who may have visited the employment centers for application assistance.⁷⁶ We also discussed the system for processing paper applications dropped off by clients. We selected the employment center serving the largest population (urban), an employment center located in a rural area, and the employment center serving the most diverse population (the State's highest proportion of African Americans and Hispanics). These three employment centers represented a mix of clients who may respond differently to the demonstration.

⁷⁵ We did not visit the Jackson/Josephine County comparison site, as the site was too distant for the available time.

⁷⁶ Employment centers are predominately involved in employment-related activities that fall under the purview of other programs, but clients may visit the centers and apply for SNAP online or use the telephone to call for an interview. Staff in the centers are typically employment counselors and cannot answer SNAP eligibility questions or process cases.

Table I.2. Organizations and Locations Visited

Organization	Location
Oregon (September 2013)	
Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS)	Salem
North Salem DHS	Salem
West Eugene DHS	Eugene
Ontario DHS	Ontario
Hermiston DHS	Hermiston
Hillsboro DHS	Hillsboro
North Clackamas DHS	Clackamas
Oregon City DHS	Oregon City
Alberta DHS	Portland
East Portland DHS	Portland
North Processing Center	Portland
Metro Processing Center	Portland
Oregon 2-1-1	Portland
Partners for Hunger-Free Oregon	Portland
Utah (October 2013)	
Utahns Against Hunger	Salt Lake City
Community Action Program	Salt Lake City
Department of Workforce Services (DWS) State Office	Salt Lake City
Salt Lake Eligibility Center	Salt Lake City
Metro Employment Center	Salt Lake City
Provo Eligibility Center	Provo
Heber City Employment Center	Heber City
Ogden Eligibility Center	Ogden
Ogden Employment Center	Ogden

2. Data Collection Limitations

We designed the site visits to collect comprehensive information from Oregon and Utah in order to provide a detailed picture of the two States’ experiences with the demonstration and to identify lessons learned. In assessing the collected data, we have identified a few limitations with our data collection process that may prevent a broad interpretation of the study’s results.

First, as discussed, the demonstration covered far more locations than we could visit. Even though we attempted to visit a mix of offices, we visited only a small number of the total offices participating in the demonstration or serving as comparison sites—and the offices and their comparisons may not be representative of the full complement of offices. Similarly, our discussions focused on staff at all levels; however, we interviewed only a small subset of staff. On average, we met with three to five eligibility staff in each location and one to two front office staff, as applicable. With sometimes hundreds of staff in a single office, we were unable to interview a representative number of staff. Finally, although the opinions of staff at various levels tended to be somewhat diverse, it is possible that we did not have an opportunity to

interview staff with extreme views of the demonstration. We relied on State and local office staff to provide names of workers to be interviewed. We stressed the importance of speaking with staff representing different points of view but recognize that some supervisors may have provided the names of only those staff members with moderate views.

II. OREGON PROFILE

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) administers SNAP at the state level and grants localities flexibility in implementing policies and determining procedures. DHS applied for the demonstration in an effort to help local offices save time and allowed offices to volunteer to participate. Many offices across the State volunteered, but, ultimately, DHS selected 17 offices in five counties as demonstration sites. The counties, which account for about 19 percent of the State's caseload, represent a cross-section of the State's population, geography, economic conditions, and type of office process models. In Figure II.1, we provide information on key features of Oregon's demonstration. In this chapter, we present information on how Oregon administers SNAP; the differences between processes in business-as-usual and demonstration offices; implementation of the demonstration; and perceptions of the demonstration.

Figure II.1. Key Features of Oregon's Demonstration Model

Geographic Area Served by Demonstration: Clackamas, Lane, Malheur, Multnomah, and Washington counties

Groups Excluded from Demonstration: TANF applicants^a

Demonstration Period: September 1, 2012, to November 30, 2013

Percentage of SNAP Caseload in Demonstration: 19 percent (approximately 154,802 participants statewide)

Demonstration Model: Selected demonstration sites in which all clients within that office's geographic service area were not required to interview for SNAP certification and recertification

^aIn Multnomah County, recertification cases that included day care were processed in the comparison site and required an interview.

A. State and Local Context

DHS administers several assistance programs in Oregon, including SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid. Despite the State's overall administration of the programs, DHS provides local areas with flexibility in implementing State-determined policies and procedures. To ensure a high level of service, the State permits local areas to experiment with various process models, recognizing that what works for a large urban area such as Portland may not effectively serve smaller rural areas of eastern Oregon. Therefore, some variation exists in how cases are processed across the state and within the demonstration sites.

Oregon is predominantly rural, with pockets of urban areas, but SNAP participation is relatively high across the State. The State actively promotes access to assistance programs through outreach efforts and cooperation with a wide network of nonprofit organizations and advocates who assist individuals in applying for assistance programs. Over the last several years, the State has begun implementing strategies that respond to increasing caseloads (growth of 82 percent in the last five years) and the need to process cases more efficiently. Recently, the State introduced a new statewide process model that rotates worker responsibilities daily and sets priorities for processing types of work.

1. SNAP Administrative Structure

To administer SNAP, DHS divided the State into 16 geographic districts. A district manager oversees the 2 to 12 local offices located within his or her region. The State operates 3 main types of local offices: (1) self-sufficiency program (SSP) offices, (2) aging and persons with

disabilities (APD) offices, and (3) processing centers. SSP and APD offices are open to the public and conduct eligibility and recertification interviews in-person or by telephone. Clients visit SSP offices to apply for SNAP, TANF, medical assistance, or day care. Seniors or persons with disabilities may visit APD offices for specialized attention to meet their needs. Processing centers are closed to the public and primarily process recertifications via telephone interviews only. (A few processing centers are located in the State’s urban areas for the express purpose of managing large caseloads.) One or all 3 types of offices/centers may be co-located in one building, but the district determines office locations.

The State makes SNAP policy decisions per federal guidelines, but local offices implement the policies. Although permitted to provide input on policy matters, districts and local offices require State approval for any policy changes. Districts have some flexibility in determining SNAP procedures for local offices. For example, offices in Multnomah County chose to move from a caseworker model—with each worker responsible for his or her own cases—to a pooled model, in which many workers process aspects of a single case and no one worker is responsible for a given case. Most other offices in Oregon continue to use the caseworker model.

DHS and the local office managers contribute to staffing decisions in local offices. The State determines staffing levels (based on legislative decisions about overall agency staffing levels and hiring freezes), with local offices requesting additional staff if their caseloads warrant. Local office managers assign responsibilities and manage work flow among the front office staff and eligibility workers.

2. Modernization Efforts in Place in the State

Before the demonstration, Oregon implemented several initiatives—both administrative and technological—to streamline processes and increase the options for applying for assistance programs (described below). During the demonstration, the State did not change any SNAP policies or implement new waivers.

Ongoing paperwork model. Designed to improve case processing efficiency, Oregon implemented the Ongoing Paperwork Initiative. The State introduced the initiative on an office-by-office basis from January 2012 through January 2013.⁷⁷ The Ongoing Paperwork Initiative restructured the office work flow, requiring eligibility workers to rotate responsibilities and positions on a daily basis. The office restructuring also focuses on serving clients the same day or next day after their office visit. Front office staff schedule client appointments for workers through a scheduling board (either electronic or physical) that specifies time slots for each worker. Workers on the top of the board conduct in-person interviews while workers in the middle of the board help with intakes if needed and catch up on lower-priority paperwork. One worker is typically designated to conduct telephone interviews for all online, faxed, or mailed applications. The worker on the bottom of the board is the “worker of the day” who processes the highest-priority work (cases with a service interruption or cases about to be closed).

The schedule of intake interviews is based on the type and number of programs for which a client is applying. The schedule allots eligibility workers 30 minutes for an applicant with no

⁷⁷ Some comparison and demonstration offices implemented the initiative concurrently with the demonstration. The concurrent implementation sometimes caused confusion among staff about how to implement the two efforts, making it difficult for some staff to disentangle the demonstration from the initiative when assessing the demonstration.

income who is applying for a single program (SNAP, Medicaid, or child care), 45 minutes for an applicant with income who is applying for a single program, 60 minutes for an applicant applying for two programs, 75 minutes for an applicant applying for three programs (SNAP, Medicaid, and child care), or 90 minutes for any application that includes a TANF appointment.

Electronic records. To reduce paper and improve ease of access, Oregon offered scanners to local offices. The State viewed the scanners as a means for local offices to become paperless and thus reduce the large volume of paper files that were accessible only in-person. Starting in early 2012, local offices could opt to receive scanners but were not mandated to do so. The local offices that chose to receive scanners could design how to incorporate the devices into their processes. Some offices went completely paperless and scanned all paper files, including incoming and old documents. Other offices decided to scan only incoming files, with the exclusion of TANF cases.

Online application. In 2009, Oregon introduced its online application in the Portland metropolitan area and, in 2011, introduced it statewide. Clients may submit their applications through the State's DHS website. The State system filtered submitted applications to the appropriate offices, and staff in those offices called clients for an interview. Statewide, only about 20 percent of applications are submitted online (a larger share in the Portland metropolitan area), with the remaining 80 percent submitted by mail, fax, or in-person at local offices. Although no statewide efforts broadly promoted the online application, some individual offices introduced initiatives to increase the number of online applications and publicized the initiatives by displaying posters and making flyers available throughout the office.

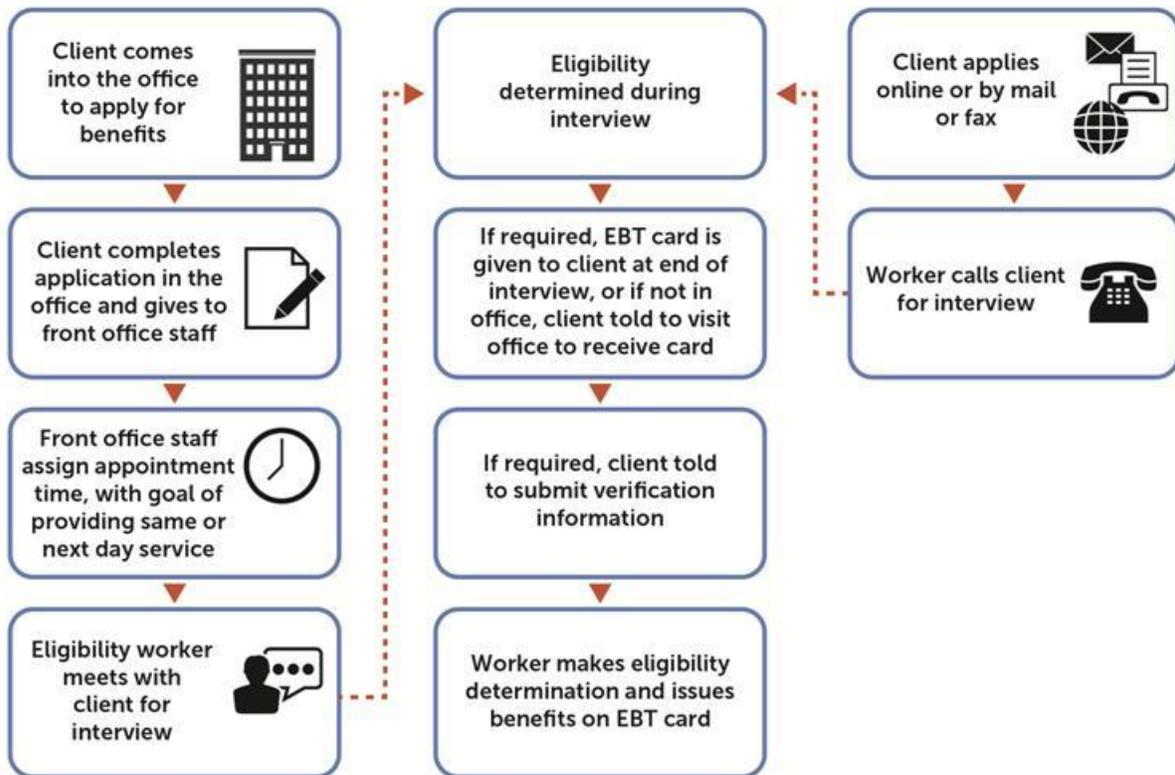
3. Business-as-Usual Model

Clients have options for submitting applications, but most visit the office and complete a paper application. Oregon has set forth a goal of serving all clients on the same day or next day of their office visit. With the move to the Ongoing Paperwork Initiative and the restructuring of the office work flow, staff generally see clients within 15 to 60 minutes of arrival, although wait times may be several hours depending on the time of day or time of the month. If the client must leave, he or she is scheduled for an appointment for a later time (for either a telephone or in-person interview). The following details the standard application and case management process.

Submitting application forms. Clients may submit applications online or on paper by mail, fax, or drop-off. Despite the online option, few local offices have computers for clients' use, and the State has not widely promoted online applications.⁷⁸ Most clients rely on paper applications filled out at local DHS offices (Figure II.2). When clients enter the office, they typically take a number and wait to be seen. Once their number is called, clients meet with front office staff, describe the reason for their visit to the office, and receive an application, if applying for benefits. Oregon uses a single application for SNAP, TANF, child care, and medical assistance.

⁷⁸ DHS plans to introduce a new online application and will advertise and encourage local areas to promote the application to clients.

Figure II.2. Flow for Clients in Oregon's Business-as-Usual Model



Reviewing application information. Front office staff review the application with the client, checking that the client has answered most of the questions and has signed the application. Staff then schedule a time slot for the client with the next available eligibility worker.

Interviewing clients for eligibility. Workers meet in-person with clients who visit the office and, depending on the worker, generally spend about 15 to 30 minutes interviewing the client. The worker uses the remaining time allocated to him or her to process the case. When clients apply online or by fax or mail, a designated eligibility worker calls the applicant to conduct a telephone eligibility interview. If the worker is unable to reach the client after two attempts, the worker sends a notice of a telephone appointment time.

Issuing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. For clients who complete the application process in-person, front office staff distribute EBT cards upon completion of the interview. Clients who do not complete the application process in-person (and instead participate in a telephone interview) generally must visit a local office to receive their EBT card; however, a few offices have started mailing EBT cards to those applicants.

Verifying application information. Oregon requires relatively few verification documents for SNAP applications. The application includes an attachment that notifies clients to submit verification of head-of-household identity, verification of income, proof of federal financial aid and work study for students, and proof of alien status for noncitizens. The State permits workers to accept client statements without other verification for many sources of income (such as

income from a relative) or verbal verification of income from employers via telephone. If the worker cannot or does not contact the client's employer, clients must submit pay stubs for earned income. Workers may verify identity by reviewing Oregon Department of Motor Vehicle screens or looking up Social Security numbers in a Social Security Administration database. Some workers, however, reportedly still ask clients to provide photo ID, Social Security cards, or birth certificates, although State policy does not require these forms of identification. Many clients bring verification documents with them to the office for their interviews. If verification documents are required and not submitted during the appointment, workers notify clients verbally and often by a letter that they take with them. Clients may mail, fax, or hand deliver the required documents.

Notifying clients of application decision. After completion of the interview and the submission of all verification documents, workers determine eligibility and issue benefits on EBT cards. If the worker does not make the eligibility determination upon completion of the interview, clients receive a letter notifying them of the decision. Workers in some offices also attempt to call clients to notify them of the decision and send a letter.

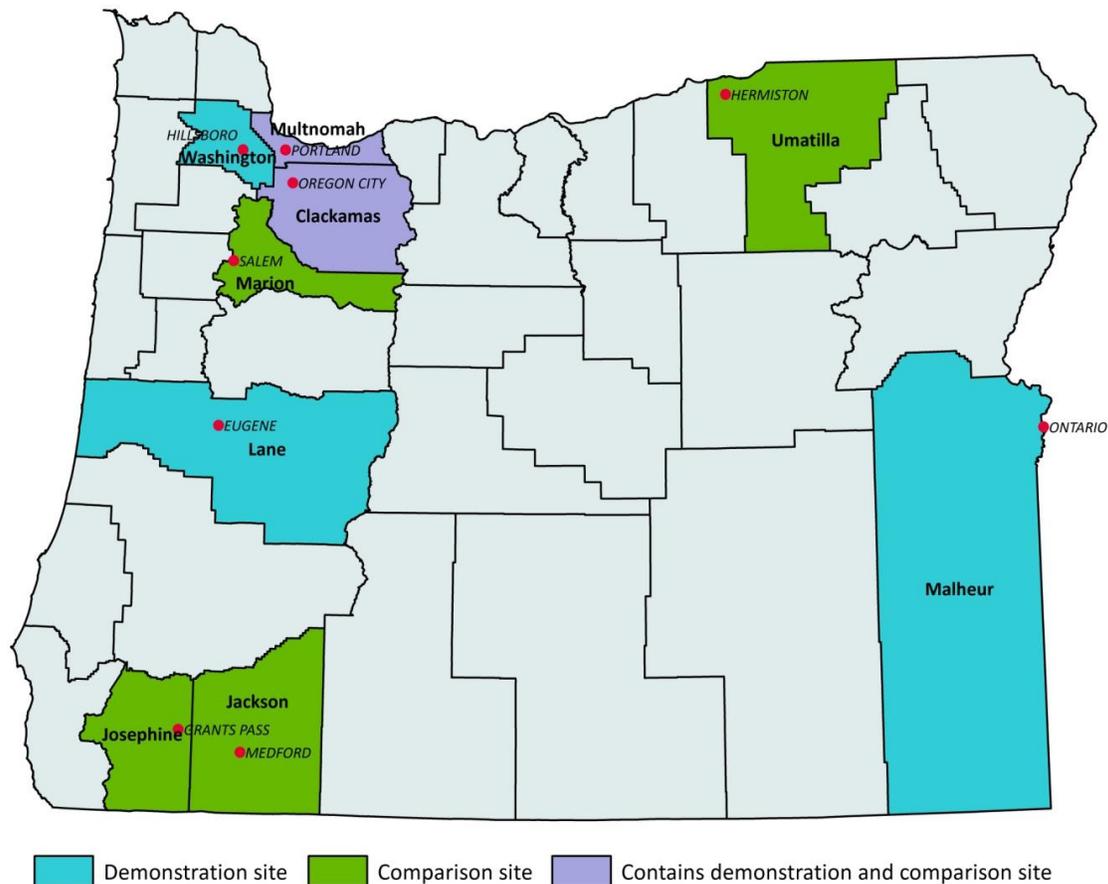
Managing cases. In most offices, eligibility workers manage their own caseloads, but, under the Ongoing Paperwork Initiative (discussed above), other workers may process aspects of the case when the case is not completed during the interview and at recertification. In most offices, workers are assigned to the case if they conduct the initial eligibility interview and generally process change requests for their own cases.

Recertification process. The recertification process is largely the same as for initial certification. The State mails clients an application (the same application used for initial certification). Clients may then either mail the application to an address provided by the State or bring it to a local office. Mailed applications are distributed to the appropriate local office for processing, after which clients are contacted by telephone for an eligibility interview. If clients bring the application to the office, the process is the same as for initial certification.

B. Demonstration Structure

Oregon decided to participate in the demonstration to determine if eliminating an interview for certification and recertification would improve efficiency and help manage staff workloads. In addition, DHS management encouraged the department to apply for any grant that was available and might benefit staff and clients. Oregon designated 17 local offices in five counties as demonstration offices (Figure II.3), with 17 offices in six counties as comparison offices. The following describes the typical experience of clients moving through the application and recertification process at a local demonstration office. Some variation exists between districts and among offices in those districts.

Figure II.3. Map of Oregon's Demonstration and Comparison Sites



Note: The largest city in each county is noted for reference. For the counties we visited, we also visited offices in each of those major cities.

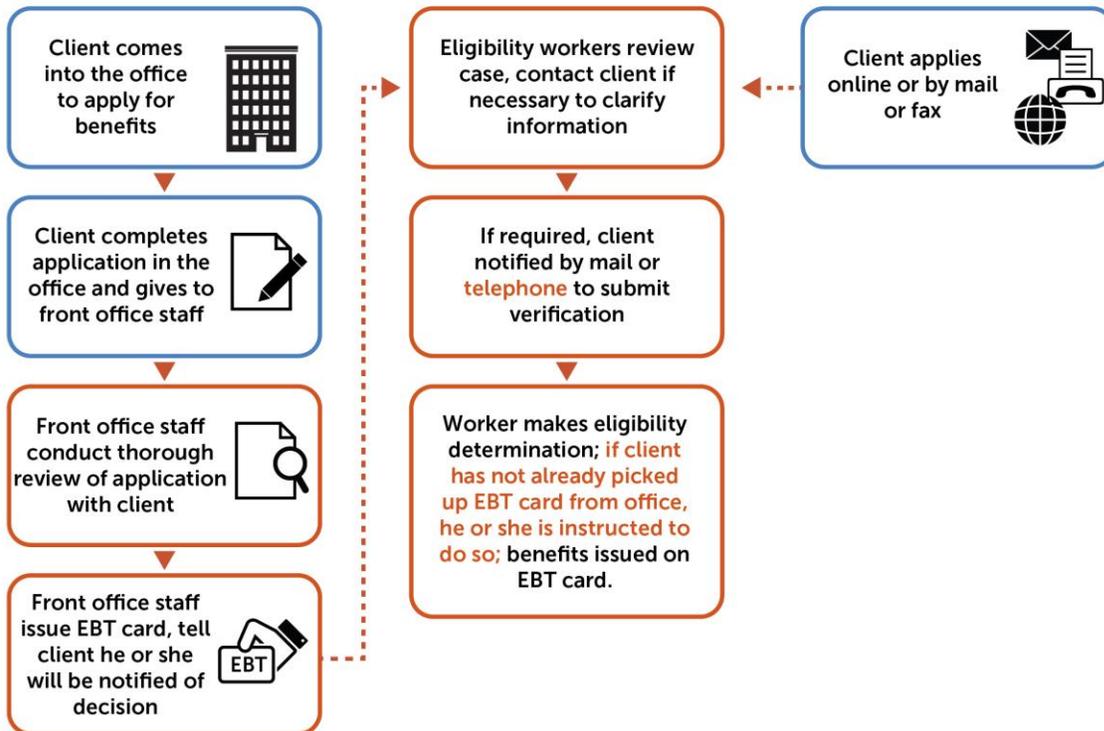
1. Application and Recertification Processes

Despite a few differences, the application and recertification processes generally were the same in demonstration sites as in business-as-usual sites. The following highlights the differences between the demonstration and the business-as-usual model for certification and recertification (Figure II.4):

- Upfront process included more review.** Initially, as in the business-as-usual model, front office staff completed a quick review of applications to check for signatures. After eligibility workers complained that applications were incomplete and thus prevented them from making determinations, managers revisited and strengthened the procedures for front office staff participating in the demonstration. Front office staff began completing a thorough review of applications to check for completeness and accuracy and, if necessary, questioned clients about missing information or illogical answers, such as no reported income but reported expenses. Front office staff highlighted missing or questionable answers and asked clients to fill in the required information. Upon the completion of applications, staff informed clients that the office was participating in a demonstration that waived the eligibility interview and told clients that they would receive a telephone call and/or letter in the mail with the decision.

- Workers contacted clients to clarify information.** When, in the absence of an interview, applications were missing information or workers needed to clarify information, workers contacted clients by telephone. Workers were instructed to contact clients only if the missing information was needed to determine SNAP eligibility; moreover, workers were to ask questions related only to the missing information. They were not to conduct an interview or confirm information that was on the application and not in question. Workers generally tried to call clients twice throughout the day. If they did not reach clients, they sent a letter requesting the additional information. Eligibility workers often found it difficult to reach clients to clarify information and generally had to pend (hold the case until more information was provided) the case until clients provided the needed information.
- EBT cards issued upfront.** To ensure that all clients would have access to EBT cards, demonstration offices revised their EBT procedures. In most demonstration offices, on the assumption that the case was complete and the client was eligible for benefits, front office staff issued EBT cards when clients submitted an application. If clients applied online or by mail or fax, they generally received a letter instructing them to visit the office to receive an EBT card. Some offices began mailing the cards to clients, but such practice was not the norm.

Figure II.4. Flow for Clients in Oregon’s Demonstration Model



Note: Text highlighted in orange denotes differences from the business-as-usual model.

2. Implementing the Demonstration

State staff developed the policies and guidelines for the demonstration while district and office managers developed the procedures used to implement the demonstration. State and local managers trained staff, and State staff provided oversight and guidance to local office staff as needed. The sections below discuss key aspects of the implementation process.

Planning the demonstration. State, district, and office managers participated in monthly calls to plan the demonstration. Initially, the calls included all the demonstration and comparison offices. During the calls, participants discussed how to issue EBT cards without requiring an interview, how to document the demonstration cases in the State systems, and how and when to train staff. To prevent clients who heard about the demonstration from selecting a location they viewed as most advantageous to them, the State decided to reverse its “no wrong door” policy, which permitted clients to visit any office (regardless of where they lived) and obtain services. Local offices developed procedures for reviewing client ZIP codes and sending clients to the appropriate office if they visited an office that did not serve their area. Later in the planning process, the State met with specific districts to address individual demonstration-related issues or concerns. All the districts developed demonstration process plans that they submitted to the State for approval.

Informing clients about the demonstration. Oregon did not notify clients about or widely advertise the demonstration, but it did design posters for display in the lobby of all demonstration offices. The posters stated that the office was participating in a demonstration and that eligibility interviews were not required. The State also revised client notices to include demonstration information.

Staff training. In August 2012, DHS staff conducted two-hour training sessions at all demonstration offices. Using PowerPoint slides, DHS staff delivered training on policy changes and data collection procedures. The training sessions focused on the new demonstration policies, when to contact clients, and how to track data. The training emphasized that the absence of an interview did not equate to no staff contact and encouraged workers to contact clients if they needed specific information. However, staff were reminded that they were not to conduct a full interview unless requested by the client. The formal State training sessions did not address local office or regional procedures for conducting the demonstration, which were determined by individual districts and offices; it was at the local office managers’ discretion to train staff on how the demonstration affected both the work flow in the office and specific regional decisions about treatment of demonstration cases.

Follow-up training occurred during local office team meetings and, as needed, was delivered by State staff. The training sessions focused primarily on appropriate staff contact and when to pend cases. DHS staff provided some offices with a detailed list of the missing information that would require a worker to pend a case. Staff clarified that eligibility workers should contact clients only if the missing information was critical to determining eligibility and that they should ignore missing questions that did not affect eligibility. Local offices typically held daily team meetings to discuss policy and procedural changes. During the meetings, managers and supervisors reviewed the demonstration’s local procedures. In addition, some local offices discussed a more comprehensive screening process with front office staff.

Comparison office staff did not receive training on the demonstration. In fact, many comparison office staff were unaware of the demonstration until after it began. Comparison staff

reported, however, that training would have been useful as they had to modify some of their procedures. In particular, front office staff had to monitor clients' addresses and send applications to the appropriate office when the State reversed its "no wrong door" policy statewide for the demonstration.

Local demonstration office staff voiced mixed opinions on the training's sufficiency. Most eligibility workers reported that the training provided sufficient information on the demonstration policy; however, some staff did not recall the training or viewed it as more of a short information session instead of formal training. Staff asked questions and provided feedback on policies and procedures, but some staff noted that they did not know what to expect at the time of the training and therefore probably did not ask enough questions. The front office staff reported that the training was generally insufficient for what they viewed as increased responsibilities associated with the demonstration.

C. Perceptions of the Demonstration

After their initial apprehension, most staff reported favorable experiences with the demonstration. The client response, however, was reportedly mixed, with the demonstration easing the process for some clients and creating more challenges for others. Community organizations generally supported improved efficiency that would ease the burden in applying for SNAP.

1. Effective Elements

The majority of staff and community organizations commented favorably on the demonstration. Staff observed decreased traffic in office lobbies. Many workers noted an improvement in processing efficiency and a decrease in time spent waiting for clients who did not appear for their appointments. Clients reportedly appreciated that they did not have to wait for an interview. The following provides more detail on the positive aspects of the demonstration:

- **Decreased lobby traffic.** Managers and eligibility workers observed a decrease in office traffic. Representatives of community organizations noted that demonstration offices had fewer clients in the lobbies and that it was easier to get answers to questions than in some of the business-as-usual model offices. These organizations also noted that clients were less likely to leave without being seen where offices were less crowded.
- **Increased processing efficiency.** Some workers found that they spent less time collecting unnecessary information from clients during interviews and were able to hone in on the important pieces of information to determine eligibility. These workers noted that they were able to process cases more efficiently, accelerating case completion without sacrificing accuracy. Community organizations said that they supported the change. They perceived more efficiency in the application process when clients did not have to visit the office, allowing workers to process cases more quickly.
- **Decreased in distractions from missed appointments.** Workers suggested that, before the demonstration, a high number of missed appointments prevented them from working on other cases and caused additional work as schedulers had to

reschedule appointments and send letters to clients. The demonstration eliminated the inefficiencies associated with missed appointments.

- **Reported increase in client satisfaction from shorter wait times.** Clients reportedly appreciated the time savings made possible by the demonstration. Rather than requiring clients to wait for an appointment, workers in demonstration offices told clients that they would be notified of a decision. Workers noted that the time savings was particularly useful for employed clients or single parents without child care. In addition, community organizations suggested that eliminating the interview reduced the number of drop-off points that clients face when completing the application process.

2. Challenging Elements

Despite the generally positive response to the demonstration, some workers found that the demonstration posed challenges for their work and their clients. Front office staff reported that a shift in work took place without proper training or a reduction in other responsibilities. Some workers were uncertain when and what was appropriate contact with clients, possibly increasing the number of pending cases. In addition, some clients might have reportedly benefited from interviews and the opportunity for workers to explain program requirements and identify potential barriers. The following describes the demonstration-related challenges:

- **Increased workload for front office staff.** Front office staff reported that the demonstration caused a shift in work, along with the added burden of collecting accurate information. The demonstration required front office staff to review applications, ensuring that questions were answered correctly, completely, and logically (for example, questioning why clients reported more rent than income). Front office staff expressed frustration at not receiving proper training and taking on responsibilities outside the purview of their job descriptions.
- **Confusion around when to contact clients.** Managers and eligibility workers reported that they initially misunderstood that no interview equated to no contact. Eligibility workers were confused about how and when to contact clients for points of clarification. The State conducted follow-up training to clear up the confusion, and team meetings reiterated that workers could call demonstration clients to ask clarifying questions. Most workers understood the policy after training, but some workers still did not contact clients and simply pended cases. Staff generally held the perception that the number of pending cases increased in most demonstration sites because workers would not or could not contact clients.
- **Complicated cases reportedly in need of more information.** Certain populations proved challenging in making accurate eligibility determinations without interviews. Eligibility workers reported that students, self-employed clients, seniors, and clients with English as a second language were difficult to process without information gathered in interviews. Student applications often did not provide the level of detail needed to satisfy the SNAP student requirements. The income information on many applications was insufficient to answer all the eligibility requirements for self-employed clients. Seniors and clients with English as a second language typically needed more assistance in filling out the applications and understanding the types of required verification documents.

- **Reported decrease in client satisfaction as a consequence of reduced staff support.** Some workers remarked that the demonstration eliminated the customer service aspects of a visit to a DHS office. Before the demonstration, the interview provided workers with the opportunity to give clients information about other programs and services. The demonstration reduced the interaction between clients and eligibility staff and reportedly decreased the opportunity to share useful information. Some staff noted an increase in the number of escalated calls and angry clients walking into the office and claiming that they were not receiving the information typically conveyed during an interview.
- **Increase in case closure for program noncompliance.** Offices observed an increase in the number of clients with case closures for failure to comply with SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) work program requirements. Eligibility workers attributed the increase to the failure to identify barriers during the interview and to referring clients inaccurately to the work program. They also noted an increase in the number of clients who were exempt after their first work program appointment because of a barrier. Workers suggested that, if they had interviewed these clients, they would have been able to identify the barrier and to exempt them.

III. UTAH PROFILE

The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) administers the SNAP program by using a “virtual call center” that serves the entire State. Staff are located throughout the State but are connected by a single call center number that clients use for interviews and questions and to report changes. The State also relies heavily on online services that allow clients to complete applications and recertifications, manage their cases, and ask questions via instant messaging. Utah has moved away from face-to-face contact in a local office setting, with most client interaction taking place over the telephone or via the online interface.

Given that Utah’s SNAP program is centrally administered statewide, the State elected to assign clients randomly to the demonstration. At the outset of the demonstration, the State randomly assigned 20 percent of current recipients to the demonstration for their upcoming recertification and about 20 percent of all new applicants to the demonstration on an ongoing basis.⁷⁹ Once a case was selected for participation or nonparticipation, it retained that status through the end of the demonstration. Most eligibility workers were responsible for both demonstration and comparison cases. Likewise, staff in all employment centers (local offices) potentially interacted with clients in both the demonstration and comparison groups and represented the public face of DWS. In Figure III.1, we present key features of the demonstration model adopted by Utah. In this chapter, we describe the SNAP administration model in place before the demonstration, how the demonstration and comparison group policies differed, Utah’s experience in planning and implementing the demonstration, and staff and stakeholder perceptions of the demonstration.

Figure III.1. Key Features of Utah’s Demonstration Model

Geographic Area Served by Demonstration: Statewide
Groups Excluded from Demonstration: Native Americans and some refugees
Demonstration Period: September 1, 2012, to November 30, 2013
Percentage of SNAP Caseload in Demonstration: 20 percent (approximately 55,378 participants)
Demonstration Model: Randomly selected demonstration cases that were processed with comparison cases by the same eligibility worker

A. State and Local Context

In Utah, DWS administers a range of assistance programs, including SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and child care. The State develops policies and procedures and oversees their implementation at the local level. The State has centralized most of its eligibility staff into four call centers that manage the statewide caseload, ensuring little variation in how SNAP cases are processed across the State. The level of uniformity provided by DWS’s administrative structure offers an opportunity to examine policy and procedure changes in a statewide context.

Although Utah’s population is largely concentrated in Salt Lake City and the surrounding urban areas, clients throughout the State access the same virtual call center. SNAP participation in Utah is on par with the national average, at around 75 percent (Cunningham 2012). The State

⁷⁹ Refugees in their first three years of receipt of benefits and Native Americans were exempt from the demonstration.

maintains informal links with community organizations but has not enlisted the organizations in a significant effort to provide application assistance or intake services.

1. SNAP Administrative Structure

DWS has two primary functions: it provides employment services, including job training and placement services, and it administers assistance programs, including SNAP, TANF, medical assistance, child care assistance, and unemployment insurance. The department is divided into two divisions, reflecting its dual mission. The Workforce Development Division provides employment services and connects workers to jobs in Utah by providing employment counseling, enrolling workers in training programs, providing job search assistance, and helping job seekers in their job search. The Eligibility Services Division administers the assistance programs. Its eligibility workers process applications, conduct eligibility interviews, make final eligibility determinations, and answer clients' questions about their applications or case status.

2. Modernization Efforts in Place in the State

Utah's centralized administrative structure relies heavily on technology and automation. The centralization effort extended over many years and involved a series of modernization efforts. In this section, we summarize the administrative and technological efforts in place during the demonstration period as well as one concurrent policy change.

Call center. Utah conducts almost all of its SNAP eligibility interviews through the statewide virtual call center. In 2007 and 2008, respectively, the State received waivers from FNS to conduct telephone interviews instead of face-to-face interviews at certification and recertification and to eliminate scheduled interviews (clients could call for an interview at their convenience). Eligibility workers work in the virtual call center and are organized into teams of approximately 14 to 17 workers. Teams are grouped, usually by case type, under managers. For example, one manager may oversee teams handling SNAP and Medicaid clients; another may oversee teams handling child care assistance cases. Workers are responsible for their own caseloads, but any member of a team works on cases as needed. Client calls are routed to the team that handles a given client's case, with work completed by the next available team member. Most workers are located in one of the four call centers, though some staff work in employment centers or telecommute from home.

Eligibility workers' caseloads are not assigned geographically but rather by the number and type of program(s) in which a client participates. The electronic eligibility system assigns each case to a worker once the case enters the system. However, cases are generally reassigned to the worker conducting the interview. Workers split their time between answering calls and working their personal caseloads. Schedules vary, but workers may, for instance, spend the first three hours of each work day answering telephone calls and the last five hours processing cases. Workers are responsible for the timeliness and accuracy of their cases. They complete all aspects of the eligibility determination process for their cases, based on information they or others on their team collect from the client.

In September 2013, the State adjusted how calls were routed through the statewide virtual call center. Previously, each eligibility team managed its own call queue, with the team supervisor taking responsibility for call wait times. However, in response to inconsistent client wait times among teams, the State began sharing calls across four to eight teams. Calls go to the first available worker on those teams. During the demonstration, the State piloted an alternative approach to handling calls. Under that approach, a few teams in the State began routing

incoming calls to the worker assigned to the case in question. If the assigned worker was unavailable, a small subset of workers on the assigned worker's team (about four other workers) handled the call. The alternative approach made it much more likely that clients would speak to the worker handling their case or to someone familiar with it. The State hoped to learn whether the system affected call wait times and case accuracy.

Clients may but rarely do request an in-person eligibility interview with a worker. In the unusual case of an interview, an eligibility worker or supervisor meets the client at a local employment center and conducts the interview. (Eligibility workers stationed at employment centers do not work with clients who visit the centers; they work as if they are physically located at a call center and follow all call center procedures. Eligibility staff generally work at the employment centers because the call centers are not located near their place of residence.)

Electronic records. Eligibility workers rely on several key pieces of technology to operate effectively in a call center environment. The most important component is statewide electronic case records, which are accessible to staff anywhere in the State. Electronic records, implemented in 2001, make it unnecessary for eligibility workers to be colocated with the clients they serve. The State's Imaging Operations Unit scans the documents submitted by clients by mail and attaches them to the electronic records.⁸⁰

Rules-based eligibility system. Implemented in 2010, another important technological tool is the rules-based eligibility system used by eligibility workers to process cases. The system has a web interface and automatically determines eligibility and benefit levels once the worker enters the required case evidence.⁸¹ Workers prioritize their tasks by using embedded work-flow management tools that help them identify which cases are ready to be processed.

Electronic verification system. Created in 2004, an electronic verification system links workers to 21 federal and State databases. The system reduces the number of verification documents clients must submit, thereby shortening eligibility interviews and improving the accuracy and reliability of case evidence.

Online client interface. In addition to the technology used by workers, the State offers a technological interface for clients. The online client interface contains the online application and allows clients to create user accounts. As of 2008, clients may log in and check their case or application status, chat with eligibility workers if they have questions, check to see what verification documents have been received, view notices, and check the benefit level on their EBT card.

Policy change in work program requirements. Shortly after the outset of the demonstration, Utah reinstated work requirements for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD). As of October 2012, Utah requires individuals between age 18 and 49 with no disabilities and no dependents to work at least 20 hours per week and/or participate in a State-

⁸⁰ Some employment centers also operate scanners to image client documents.

⁸¹ Though the system automatically determines eligibility and benefits, eligibility workers are responsible for the accuracy of the results. If they believe that the system's determination is inaccurate, they may check the completeness and accuracy of the case evidence they entered. If it appears that the evidence was entered correctly but that the determination was incorrect, they may seek assistance from the system's information technology support team.

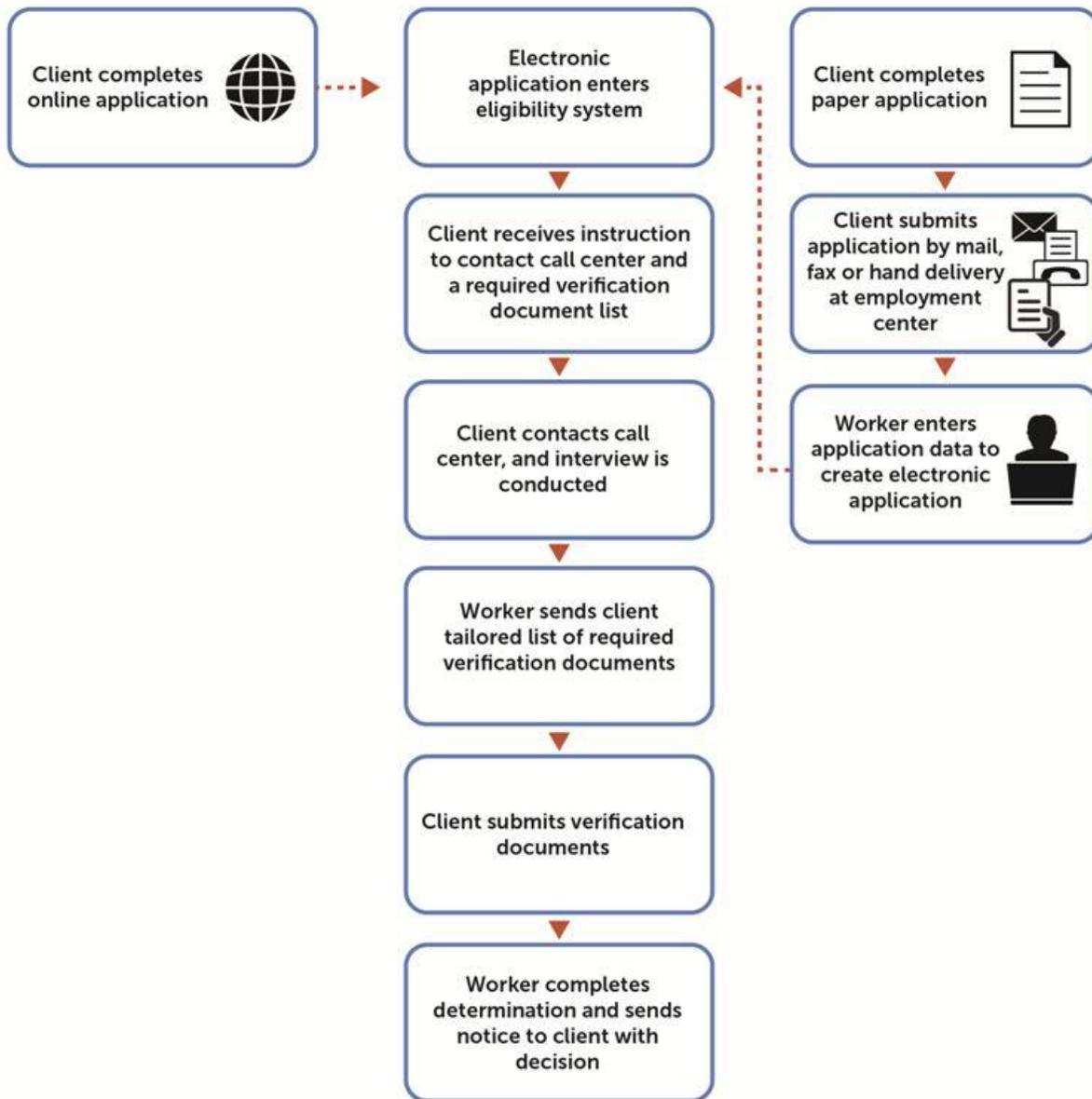
approved employment and training program. Individuals who do not meet the work requirements may receive only 3 months of SNAP benefits in a 36-month period.

Utah sent notifications to ABAWD clients to explain the new requirements. Eligibility workers also discussed the requirements with clients during eligibility interviews (those who had participated in an interview). Some eligibility supervisors expressed concern that demonstration clients often did not read or understand the notifications about the policy change and would have benefitted from an explanation. Employment center staff likewise reported that many clients learned of the policy change only when their cases were closed, and they visited the employment center in search of an explanation.

3. Business-as-Usual Model

Under Utah's business-as-usual model, clients complete three steps to apply for SNAP benefits: they fill out and submit an application, they participate in an eligibility interview, and they submit verification documents. Eligibility workers then process cases and inform clients of their eligibility. In this section, we describe the application process as well as the case processing procedures the State uses to make eligibility determinations. In Figure III.2, we illustrate the standard process of applying for SNAP benefits in Utah.

Figure III.2. Flow for Clients in Utah’s Business-as-Usual Model



a. SNAP Application Process

Clients must complete and submit applications, participate in an interview, and provide verification materials before their SNAP eligibility is determined. The following describes the three-step application process clients complete in Utah.

Submitting application forms. The first step clients take in accessing benefits is the submission of an application. Clients use a single application to apply for all assistance programs administered by DWS. They may apply for the programs by using the online application or a paper application; over 80 percent of clients apply online. Clients applying online may use any computer with an Internet connection, including computers in the employment centers. The

online application uses a dynamic structure that tailors the questions to a client's circumstances. It prompts clients to complete each section before moving to the next screen, though clients may submit incomplete applications if they do not know the answers to all questions. Clients using the online application may receive assistance from eligibility workers through the application's embedded chat function. Clients applying on paper may obtain applications from employment centers or through some community organizations. Clients submit paper applications through the mail, by fax, or in-person at employment centers. Clients applying via an employment center—whether applying online or with a paper application—may receive assistance from employment center staff. However, employment center workers are not specialists in SNAP or other assistance programs and provide only basic information about the programs. Employment center workers refer clients to the call center for detailed questions about the status of a particular case.

The State creates electronic files based on all submitted applications and paperwork. Online applications automatically become electronic files; eligibility workers may access them immediately. Staff at the Imaging Operations Unit data-enter paper applications into the eligibility system. Paper applications submitted by fax may be entered into the system within a few hours. Applications submitted through other methods likely take several days for entry into the system.

Interviewing clients for eligibility. The second step in the application process is an eligibility interview. Once an application is in the eligibility system as an electronic file, the system sends the client a notification with program information and instructions for completing the application process, including completing the interview.⁸² The notification instructs applicants to contact the call center within seven days to conduct the eligibility interview.⁸³ Clients submitting the application online receive the instructions in the confirmation screen immediately upon submitting the application as well as in a notice sent by mail. Clients submitting paper applications receive a letter in the mail. SNAP is the only State assistance program that requires an eligibility interview. Almost all interviews take place over the telephone through the statewide virtual call center. Clients call when they are ready to conduct the interview; they do not have to schedule a time. The instructions to call within seven days allow the State to complete applications on time for clients eligible for expedited SNAP benefits. Clients receive a reminder notification if they do not call within that time. If they do not call within 30 days, they receive an auto-denial notice.

During the interview, the eligibility worker conducts an information query by using Utah's electronic data verification system and reconciles the results with information on the application, asking the client to clarify any discrepancies or gaps. If the client is new to SNAP, the worker explains program procedures, including how to use EBT cards. The worker may also inform the client about other resources such as food banks or the State's community services hotline (2-1-1). Before concluding the interview, the worker explains what verification documents are needed to process the case and how to submit them. The client receives the same information through a notice in the mail.

⁸² New clients also receive an EBT card. If an applicant is determined to be eligible, DWS activates the card and loads benefits on it. If an applicant is ineligible, DWS does not activate the card.

⁸³ Utah is one of the six States that received an "on-demand interview" waiver from FNS, which allows States to require the client to call in for an interview during business hours (FNS 2012). These States no longer schedule interviews.

Verifying application information. The final step in the application process is for clients to submit any verification documents they did not provide with the application. They may submit the documents online or by fax, mail, email, or in-person at employment centers. Staff in the State's Imaging Operations Unit scan verification documents and attach them to the electronic case record. As noted, clients may create accounts on the online client interface to track their application status, confirm the receipt of verification documents, and learn their eventual application decision and benefit level.

b. Case Processing Procedures

After a client submits the required materials and completes the interview, eligibility workers process the case. The following describes the procedures workers use to process new applications and case recertifications:

Notifying clients of application decision. When all the evidence is assembled, the worker prompts the eligibility system to make the determination. The system sends the client the decision in a notification through the mail (or via email, if the client prefers).

Managing cases. Eligibility workers do not begin processing SNAP cases until the client calls for the interview. When the client calls, the eligibility worker who answers the call conducts the interview and usually takes the case from the worker initially assigned to it. If clients contact the call center before the application enters the eligibility system, workers may complete the interview and append the information to the application once it appears in the system.

Recertification process. Utah requires clients to recertify for SNAP every six months. The State either mails a prepopulated application directly to clients or emails (to those preferring electronic notification) instructions for logging into the online interface and completing the recertification. As with certification, clients may recertify with a paper application or online. Eligibility interviews are required only once per year such that clients interview every other recertification. For recertifications requiring interviews, the process is identical to that for certification. If no interview is required, clients submit the application and verification documents as requested and are contacted only if staff need to clarify information.

B. Demonstration Structure

Utah applied for the demonstration grant in order to improve efficiency across its assistance programs. Medicaid and TANF do not require interviews, and, by waiving the SNAP interview, Utah standardized procedures for the three programs, thereby streamlining workers' eligibility-related tasks and reducing the number of steps for clients applying for benefits. The demonstration in Utah waived the certification and recertification eligibility interview for 20 percent of the State's caseload. As the demonstration was statewide, workers processed both demonstration and comparison cases throughout the demonstration period. However, the overall application and certification process beyond the elimination of the interview was virtually the same for the two groups.

Clients applying for SNAP online learned immediately if they were in the demonstration as an algorithm in the system assigned clients to the demonstration or to the comparison. Depending on their assignment, clients received notification that either directed them to contact the call center for an interview (comparison) or informed them that an interview was not required

(demonstration) and that they would be contacted if additional information was needed. Clients submitting paper applications learned of their assignment via a letter after staff entered the applications into the eligibility system.

1. Application and Recertification Processes

The application processes generally were the same for clients randomly assigned to the demonstration or clients served under the business-as-usual model, although we observed a few differences. The following describes those differences for certification and recertification (Figure III.3):

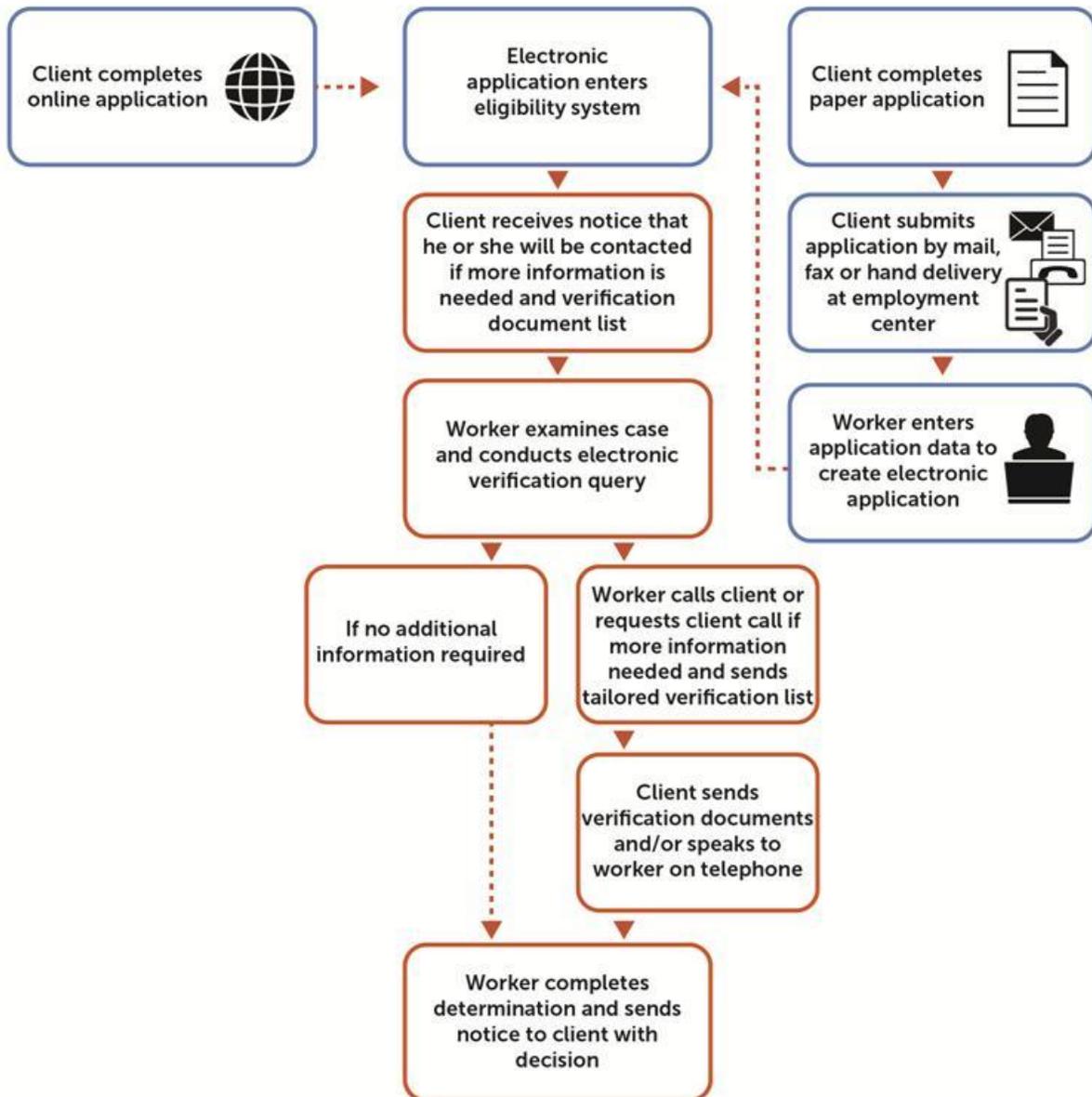
- **Clients were informed of demonstration status.** Clients applying online learned immediately of their interview status; however, clients applying on paper had to wait until the application was entered into the system before learning of their interview status. If clients hand delivered a paper application to the employment center, staff generally told them that they should wait to receive a letter in the mail to inform them of the next steps in the process.
- **Workers immediately processed applications.** Given that clients were not calling for an interview, which typically initiated work on a case, workers had to self-initiate the demonstration cases. Workers reviewed their assigned cases each day and selected the demonstration cases that were ready for processing. Workers needed to ensure that they reviewed their cases frequently in order that demonstration cases eligible for expedited benefits were processed within the required seven days.
- **Workers initiated contact to clarify information.** If workers needed to discuss aspects of a case with a client, they either attempted to reach the client by telephone or sent a notification requiring the client to contact the call center. Conversations with demonstration clients were not to include full interviews unless the client requested one.

2. Implementing the Demonstration

Utah initiated the demonstration statewide in September 2012. At the same time, the State randomly assigned 20 percent of current clients to the demonstration for recertification and randomly assigned about 20 percent of clients to the demonstration group as they submitted initial applications during the demonstration period. Utah revised its client notifications and application instructions to include information about the demonstration; however, the State did not publicize the demonstration through letters or outreach materials. The State did notify community advocacy organizations about the demonstration during a regular meeting before implementation. In this section, we summarize the main aspects of the demonstration's implementation.

Changes to information technology systems. Changes to the electronic eligibility system were needed for the random assignment of clients and to track demonstration outcomes. Information technology (IT) staff reprogrammed the system so that it would select up to 20 percent of new applications and recertifications for the demonstration. The algorithm gave each case an equal chance of being selected at the time an application was registered as an electronic record.⁸⁴ Programmers added a data element to store the demonstration decision.

Figure III.3. Flow for Clients in Utah’s Demonstration Model



Note: Text highlighted in orange denotes differences from the business-as-usual model.

⁸⁴ The probability of selection for each case was 0.1907, slightly less than 0.2 to ensure that the random variation did not result in more than 20 percent of total cases in the demonstration.

For purposes of the demonstration, Utah also made changes to the eligibility worker interface and the online client portal. IT staff reprogrammed the system to distinguish between demonstration cases and comparison cases, thus permitting eligibility workers to identify demonstration cases. For the demonstration cases, IT staff had to reprogram the system not to require an interview so that the system would allow benefit determination. In the online client portal, for clients checking their status, IT staff added an option to indicate that an interview was not needed and to direct clients to await contact. The State also made changes to its notifications and to language on the paper application to mirror changes to the online client portal.

Staff training. In August 2012, State staff trained each eligibility team in the new procedures. The training was organized around a PowerPoint presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session, that covered procedures such as identifying demonstration cases, how and when to initiate contact with demonstration cases, how to discuss the demonstration with clients, and how to record data for the demonstration. The training included screenshots of the electronic eligibility system that depicted how demonstration cases were distinguished from comparison cases. It also identified the electronic eligibility system's new fields and explained the fields to be used by staff to enter data for the demonstration. The training instructed workers to contact clients if they needed additional information to complete the eligibility determination but directed the workers not to conduct full interviews when seeking such information.

The demonstration procedures for expedited cases initially caused confusion among many eligibility workers. As noted, expedited SNAP benefits must be issued within seven days of a client's submission of an application. For comparison cases involving expedited SNAP benefits, clients were instructed to call for an interview within seven days so that benefits could be issued on time. For demonstration cases, workers could not expect to receive a call and were required to screen all cases quickly to identify possible expedited cases. The process generated questions from staff, prompting the State trainers to conduct a follow-up training session to clarify the procedures for expedited cases.

Most eligibility workers reported that the training sufficiently explained the demonstration procedures. Experience with the new procedures helped workers understand how to apply the instructions presented in the training sessions. The State reported that the training might have been improved if it had included examples of particularly complex cases.

Employment center staff did not participate in any formal training sessions similar to those provided to eligibility workers, so the degree to which employment center staff received information on the demonstration varied. All staff statewide (including employment center staff) received monthly memoranda on updated policies and procedures, which included information on the demonstration, and State staff discussed the changes with employment center managers. Some managers discussed the new policy with their workers. Some employment center staff also reported that they received a brief training on the demonstration from their supervisor or manager. These training sessions explained that some clients would not be required to participate in an interview and that staff would need to determine whether clients were demonstration participants before instructing them to contact the call center. However, most interviewed staff reported that they received no training or information about the demonstration. Several staff members said that they learned about the demonstration from clients while others said that they noticed the "pilot case" flag in the electronic eligibility system but did not know what it meant.

As noted, the State informed community advocacy groups of the demonstration before implementation. In short conversations with State staff, advocates provided informal input into how clients might view elimination of the interview. In general, advocates believed that many clients would appreciate not having to call for an interview but that some might miss the personal interaction. Advocates were not involved in the formal training on the demonstration.

C. Perceptions of the Demonstration

Staff perceptions of the demonstration were largely positive but varied by position and level. The State and eligibility division managers almost unanimously pointed to the strong advantages associated with streamlining the application process. Eligibility supervisors and workers voiced mixed opinions, though most viewed the demonstration favorably. The most commonly reported benefit of waived interviews was the reduction in the time needed to process cases.

Employment center staff were less enthusiastic about the demonstration. They did not derive direct benefits from the interview waiver because they do not conduct interviews. Some observed trade-offs for clients—in particular, the potential loss of information regarding program policies and community resources—while others thought that reducing the required application steps would help clients overall.

1. Effective Elements

Staff reported several positive aspects of the demonstration. Reducing the steps involved in the application process and aligning SNAP application procedures with those of other assistance programs reduced the time needed by staff for the determination process—with no apparently adverse effects on performance measures. For some clients, waiving the interview appeared to reduce barriers to accessing SNAP benefits.

- **Increased processing efficiency.** For staff, the primary benefit of eliminating the interview was a reduction in the time needed for determining benefits. Not having to wait for a client to call for the interview reportedly eliminated a time-consuming step. When workers were able to obtain all the information needed to make a determination from the application, the verification documents, and the electronic verification system, they processed cases quickly and moved to other work.
- **Removed barrier to access SNAP.** Both staff and community advocates agreed that, for some clients, waiving the interview removed a barrier to program access. For example, some clients do not understand that they need to call for an interview because they do not read or understand their notices. In these instances, their case is closed for failure to complete the application steps. Among clients who understand the need to call for an interview, many complained about the length of the hold time and the length of the interview. Some clients simply had difficulty making time for the interview or did not have enough minutes or battery life on their cell phones to wait on hold. For these clients, eliminating the interview made the application process easier. Community advocates reported that some elderly clients or clients with disabilities experienced difficulty in navigating the interactive telephone system and reaching an eligibility worker. Another advocate reported that many Hispanic clients were anxious about calling for an interview.
- **Reduced telephone time.** Many eligibility workers reported that the demonstration reduced the time they spent on the telephone, freeing up time for processing cases.

Workers commonly described incoming telephone calls as the least favorite aspect of their job and appreciated a reduction in telephone time. Workers described two ways that the demonstration reduced telephone time: (1) it reduced the number of incoming calls because demonstration clients were directed not to call for an interview, and (2) it reduced the length of calls from some demonstration clients who needed to clarify specific issues rather than complete a full interview. Workers who reported decreased telephone time under the demonstration expressed the hope that the demonstration would be expanded to cover the entire caseload.

2. Challenging Elements

Some staff expressed concern that eliminating the eligibility interview led to inaccurate determinations. Others observed that they were more likely to pend (put a hold on) demonstration cases when they encountered difficulties in reaching clients. In addition, employment center staff, who interacted with clients needing assistance with the application process, thought that some clients would receive less effective customer service if they did not call for an interview.

- **Confused clients contacted call center.** For some clients, the demonstration's messaging was not clear. Some demonstration clients often contacted the call center even if an interview was not required. Many long-term clients called for an interview simply because they were accustomed to doing so and did not closely review the new notifications. In other cases, demonstration clients received inconsistent or inaccurate information from employment center staff. Some employment center staff indicated that they had not heard of the demonstration and continued to tell all clients to contact the call center for an interview. Others suggested that clients submitting paper applications should contact the call center immediately after completing an application to determine whether an interview was required. (The advice given to clients completing paper applications was not helpful because paper applicants were not assigned to the demonstration until they were entered into the system.)
- **Experienced difficulty in reaching clients.** Staff suggested that it was often difficult to contact clients when they initiated the calls. As a result, incomplete applications took longer to process than in the business-as-usual model and sometimes caused timeliness issues, particularly for expedited cases. In addition, staff worried that the demonstration did not properly serve the needs of homeless clients. They argued that it was preferable for homeless clients to place the call when they have time and access to a telephone.
- **Complicated cases might need interviews.** Self-employed clients, clients with significant earnings and deductions, clients applying for several programs, and clients with complicated household composition may have benefited from an interview. Even though a full eligibility interview was not always warranted, workers reported that complicated cases often would have benefitted from a discussion with the client about some aspect of the case and an assessment of the details of the case. In addition, employment center staff reported that the interview allayed some clients' anxiety, particularly among the elderly, providing them with accurate case status information in a timely manner.
- **Limited information about other resources.** Some employment center staff expressed concern that demonstration clients were less likely to receive information

about the services available from other community resources. They also noted that clients may be less likely to understand the newly reinstated SNAP work requirements for ABAWDs. One employment center staff member pointed out that reduced contact between eligibility staff and clients could mean that employment center staff would receive eligibility questions that they were not trained to answer.

- **Lacked trust in application information.** Some workers strongly preferred to speak with clients before making a determination. In their experience, interviews often uncovered additional information that clients did not include in their applications. Some eligibility staff did not trust the information produced by the electronic verification system and preferred to verify it with clients when possible. Some workers said that, owing to anxiety about incorrectly determining eligibility or benefits, they scrutinized demonstration applications more closely than other applications, probably more so when clients were applying for several programs.
- **Delayed certification for other programs.** Though other assistance programs in Utah do not require eligibility interviews, the programs take into consideration similar information about applicants, such as income and household composition. Information collected during SNAP eligibility interviews frequently informed or expedited certification for other programs. Some workers reported that without the interview, delays in obtaining information for SNAP caused delays in processing cases for other programs.

IV. COMMON THEMES AND LESSONS

Although each State approached the demonstration differently and relied on different processes for conducting SNAP intake and eligibility determination, several common themes emerged across sites. These themes can provide informative lessons for assessing the usefulness of the no-interview policy and, if the policy were implemented more widely, may help other States avoid potential pitfalls. In this chapter, we summarize these themes and lessons by drawing on interviews with selected State and local staff. The findings are based on the opinions of the interviewees and may not represent the views of all staff across the two States.

Eliminating interviews requires few policy and system changes. In eliminating the interview, neither Oregon nor Utah required much in the way of major changes to policy, process, or technology. Both States made only minor policy and system changes, although the process changes in individual offices varied. Oregon experienced greater variation, with some demonstration offices using the same process as the business-as-usual offices (retaining interview time slots and working one case at a time) and others eliminating the interview time slots and permitting staff to work at their own pace on a set of cases each day. Regardless of the level of change, staff generally did not experience difficulty in adapting to the new procedures. The work was fairly similar to the pre-demonstration work, except that staff did not talk with clients during specific times.

Although a statewide shift to a no-interview policy may require more systematic changes than in the case of the demonstrations, neither State suggested that the overall changes would be extensive. The two States also represent different levels of modernization and types of process models, neither of which appeared to affect the transition to the new policy.

Some staff struggled with not interviewing clients. Although few staff reported difficulty with the logistical shift in work flow, several staff suggested that they experienced difficulty in trusting the information on the application in the absence of an interview. They pointed out that, during an interview, a client often provided additional information that he or she did not include on the application or that contradicted what he or she wrote on the application. An interview also may disclose that the family has additional needs not reported on the application. Some eligibility workers also were concerned about receiving errors, if they did not question the clients about the information on the application. Other staff felt that eliminating the interview changed their role from social worker to case processor, which is not necessarily how they envisioned their job. Some staff enjoyed interacting with clients and assessing broader issues and the need for additional resources.

Maintaining initial eligibility interviews may benefit certain groups. Staff in both States suggested that universal elimination of the interview may not best serve workers or clients. They generally supported the waiver of recertification interviews for all households because basic client information is already in the State system; further, recertification is a relatively easy update that often does not require client clarification. However, staff in both States did not reach consensus on eliminating the interview at application for all clients. A few staff in Oregon, including some at the State level, suggested that perhaps all new applicants (those not currently in the State system) should be interviewed and then waived at recertification. Collecting accurate information from clients unknown to the State often took more time than for other applicants, and some staff expressed concern that such information may be less accurate. More specifically,

staff suggested that the following subsets of applicants may need more upfront contact to complete the application:

- **Applicants needing to submit verification.** Although both States substantially reduced the amount of verification documentation collected directly from clients for eligibility determination, the two States still require some clients to produce verification based on their circumstances. Staff noted that self-employed individuals and students most often needed to provide additional verification and that the documentation could vary with the person. They found that a conversation with a client during a visit to the office to apply for benefits (or during a client-initiated call) often yielded the correct information in little time, with the case resolved shortly thereafter. However, staff suggested that, without the interview, it was difficult to complete the self-employed and student cases, which often resulted in case closures for incomplete information. In addition, staff suggested that, if any documentation was needed from homeless clients, it was difficult to locate the clients after they submitted an application. The average homeless client may in fact benefit from eliminating the extra barrier associated with an interview, but homeless clients with particularly complex cases may require the additional upfront contact.
- **Applicants needing additional assessment or guidance.** Staff noted that some groups would benefit from the one-on-one contact of an interview, including clients who may be eligible for SNAP E&T programs (and some elderly or minority groups (the subgroup mentioned most frequently was Hispanic clients). Both Oregon and Utah recently expanded or reinforced their SNAP E&T programs, and staff reported that clients determined eligible for SNAP E&T on paper often would not have been determined eligible if they were assessed through a conversation or interview, as the additional information often disclosed during a conversation could indicate the need for an exemption. Staff pointed to an increase in the number of case closures for failure to comply with E&T requirements that were later reversed when clients called or visited the office to ask why their case was closed. During these conversations, staff realized the clients were exempt and reopened the cases without a SNAP E&T requirement. In addition, staff suggested that some elderly or Hispanic clients preferred to visit the office for an interview either because they needed more guidance or experienced greater assurance through the contact with staff.

Staff in both States suggested that FNS should provide the States with the flexibility to decide whether to interview clients and which clients to interview, as populations may differ across and within States.

Workers face difficulty in completing incomplete applications in the absence of an interview. Even though both States encourage clients to complete the application fully, clients have the right, by law, to submit incomplete applications.⁸⁵ Workers traditionally fill in any missing information during the interview. However, under the demonstration, staff quickly realized that the less complete the application, the more difficult it was to fill in the gaps and process the case. Staff sensed that a greater caseload was pending and waiting for information than before the demonstration. Most offices in Oregon changed their policies early in the process to enlist the front office staff in reviewing applications in order to reduce the level of pending applications.

⁸⁵ Only the client's name, address, and signature are required before submitting a SNAP application.

Although workers may have had less work associated with incomplete applications in the short run—they pended the case and waited for a client response—applicants who did not respond to information requests received a case closure and likely applied again and/or contacted staff about their case, thereby adding to the number of applications and increasing the overall workload for staff.

Eliminating interviews may shift work between staff instead of reducing burden for all. Particularly in Oregon, which relies on local offices to accept applications, staff at all levels noticed that they were shifting work around the office but not necessarily saving overall staff time. Because clients no longer spoke with an eligibility worker in the demonstration sites, front office staff received more questions from clients and were responsible for reviewing applications for missing, incomplete, or inaccurate information. Even though many eligibility workers in the demonstration felt that elimination of the interview saved time, front office staff universally agreed that they faced more work than before and had to assume expanded responsibilities.

Utah, on the other hand, relied heavily on a guided online application that encouraged clients to complete each question; as a result, it found the transition easier. Generally, its applications were more complete, with gaps only in the paper applications (about 20 percent of the total). However, one staff member at an employment center (where clients visit for assistance or to use computers and telephones to apply for SNAP) suggested that, if the demonstration were introduced statewide, offices could come under additional pressure to work with clients who no longer have contact with eligibility workers and need additional help.

The study is collecting additional administrative and performance data to assess the extent to which the various perceptions of State staff accurately represent the demonstration outcomes. We will present the findings in a final report that assesses all outcomes in light of the implementation process and challenges discussed in this report.

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