

COOKING MATTERS FOR PARENTS and ADULTS
PARTICIPANT SURVEY GUIDE
A CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL ADMINISTRATION OF PAPERWORK

Overview of the Participant Survey

Share Our Strength uses a pen and paper survey to understand the experience of Cooking Matters participants and ensure that the program is achieving its desired results.

Overall, the participant survey serves as a tool for:

- Tracking changes in participant knowledge, attitudes, skills, confidence, and behaviors as a result of participating in a Cooking Matters course
- Soliciting feedback regarding the overall quality of the participant experience
- Capturing qualitative feedback (e.g., quotes) from participants about how the course has affected them
- Gathering participants' background and demographic information
- Recording class attendance

This guide serves as a checklist for administering *Cooking Matters for Parents*. Following this guide will ensure that the survey is the most effective measure of your program's outcomes and impact.

Many thanks for your commitment to ensuring meaningful outcomes for the families we serve!

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Survey Administration Checklist

1. Before the First and Last Class: Prepare to Bring the Appropriate Materials

Successful survey administration depends on the right tools! Please make sure you bring the following to class:

Correct number and type of surveys

- Make sure you have enough surveys for the number of participants you expect to attend, plus a few extras.
- You may print your own surveys if you do not have enough originals or if you begin using the revised survey before it is available from the print fulfillment company. To print your own surveys, please see the resource provided on Desire 2 Learn. Be sure to print **single-sided**, on **plain white paper** with no hole punches. **Never make photocopies** of existing hard copies.

Pens with blue or black ink

- **Do not use pencils or markers:** our survey software can only read blue or black pen.

2. First Class: Complete the Enrollment Form

Every Cooking Matters course participant should complete the enrollment form before or during the first class, when they sign a participant waiver. If a participant starts the course in week two or three, they should complete the enrollment form on the day they start.

Before participants complete the enrollment form:

Explain the purpose of the enrollment form

- To collect contact information for participants, primarily to contact them during the course. It may also be used to inform them of a reunion class or contact them about a long-term follow-up study.
- Participants also have the opportunity to sign up to receive our quarterly graduate e-newsletter when they fill out the enrollment form.

Emphasize confidentiality

- The enrollment form is separate from the survey to preserve participant confidentiality.

- We will never report a participant's survey responses with their name or other distinguishing characteristics; We only report data for participants as a group to understand what everyone gained from participating in the program.
- Names, addresses, and personal information are never shared with anyone else.

Describe how to record responses

- Ask participants to print written responses clearly.
- Boxes should be marked with an "X" or check.
- If participants accidentally put an "X" in the wrong box and want to change their answer, they should scratch out that response and place an "X" in the correct box. Make sure that the scratched out response is clearly distinguishable from the correct response. Do not use whiteout on the surveys.

Answer participant questions

- Encourage participants to list their complete contact information, but it is **not required** for participation in the course.
- If participants feel uncomfortable completing contact information, they can leave portions blank or decline to complete the enrollment form. The enrollment form is the **least** important part of the survey.

3. First Class: Complete the Participant Demographics

Explain the purpose of collecting participant demographics

- To gain a better understanding of the background of our participants.

If needed, complete the participant demographics together as a class

- Cooking Matters works with populations where low literacy is more prevalent. It may be necessary to administer the survey by reading each question aloud or to have a translator present.
- If you believe at least half the class is of low literacy, read the survey aloud.
- Reading through the questions and responses as a group also guides participants through the survey design and ensures they take their time and don't rush.
- Use these tips for reading the enrollment form aloud:

- Read each question slowly, exactly as it is written, and in the order in which it appears.
 - Read all of the options given in the question.
 - After each question is read, ask participants if they need to hear it again. If you have any doubt that the participants have heard the question, repeat all of it.
 - Pause between questions and give participants ample time to respond.
- **If less than half of the class has trouble reading:** Pair volunteers or site staff with those who need assistance so they can guide them through the survey individually.
 - **If it is a mixed language class:** Complete the survey as a group and ask the translator to read the foreign language translation **after each question is read in English.**

While participants complete the demographics page:

Remain alert and available to those with questions

- The course coordinator and volunteers should remain available throughout the time that participants are completing the survey.
- The entire course team should scan the room to look for participants who may have trouble reading the survey, may not fully understand the format, or may be stuck on a certain question or concept.

Answer participant questions

- Cooking Matters strives to make its surveys clear and easy to complete, but participants may still have questions.
- **Race and Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity:** These questions align with the categories required by federal grants, including the SNAP-Ed program, and make it easier to compare Cooking Matters data with other data sources. However, the separate race and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity questions may cause confusion:
 - All participants should **answer both the Race and “Are you Hispanic or Latino?”** questions.
 - **Participants who identify with a race not listed:** Should mark the “other” box and write their race in the blank space provided.
 - **Participants identifying with more than one race:** Should mark as many responses as they need.
 - **Hispanic and Latino Participants:** Even if they answered “yes” to the “Are you Hispanic or Latino?” question, they still need to answer the race question. This is an opportunity to be more specific about their background and to identify as a Latino of European, African, or Indian descent.
 - **Participants who do not want to answer these questions:** Re-emphasize that this information is not traceable and is used to assess how well Cooking Matters reaches various audiences. If participants still do

not feel comfortable, they can leave these questions blank. However, the coordinator should make a visual assessment and respond for the participant after the last class (see step 4). This ensures we can comply with federal reporting guidelines, including requirements for SNAP-Ed funding.

- **Number of people in household:** This question refers to the number of people living in the same home as the participant **counting him/herself**. If the host site is a shelter, home, or transitional center, please ask participants to enter only themselves and their dependents.
- **Children in household:** These questions refer to all children living in the same home as the participant, regardless of whether or not they are the participant's biological children (e.g. participants living with grandchildren or a partner's children should count these children in their response).

4. First Day: Participants complete the “Before Course” portion of the survey

Explain the survey's purpose and encourage participants to answer honestly

- The purpose of the survey is to understand what participants are doing or thinking before the course and whether they make any changes during the six weeks.
- Encourage respondents to be honest in their responses and to answer all questions. Remind them that their responses are confidential.
- **Assure participants that this survey is not a test.** There are no right or wrong answers.

Explain the set-up of the survey

- Tell participants that they will be completing pages 2-5, and should stop when they see the stop sign. Point out that the response options for each question are shown along the top of a grid, and that participants should mark the one box on each line that best represents their answer.
- Explain the 'Does Not Apply' option available in some questions. Participants should choose 'Does not Apply' instead of 'Never' only if they do not consume a particular food category or are not responsible for an activity being discussed.

Encourage participants to complete the survey silently and not share their answers with others

- Maintaining a quiet environment makes it easier for participants to concentrate, makes survey completion go more quickly, and helps ensure that all participants are comfortable answering questions honestly

If needed, complete the “Before Course” survey together as a class (Follow process outlined in Step 3)

Clarify problem questions, if needed

- **When you eat grain products, how often do you choose whole grain products?** Many participants might not be sure if a particular product is whole grain, particularly while completing the “Before Course” survey. Please feel free to provide clarification on this and other questions based on content included in *the Cooking Matters for Adults* curriculum.
- **How often do you plan meals ahead of time?** Planning meals ahead of time can include planning meals for an entire week, or planning the next evening’s meal the night before or in the morning.
- **How often do you make homemade meals “from scratch”?** Every ingredient does not need to be a whole ingredient or made from scratch for this question; for example, participants can count meals made with dried pasta or some pre-chopped vegetables, but most ingredients should be whole.

After participants complete the demographics page and “Before Course” survey:

Review completed surveys

- Check them over for any obvious errors, such as such as skipping questions, marking more than one box for questions that do not indicate “Mark all that apply,” or not marking boxes clearly.
- **Make sure the participant writes a first name or alias on the top right of the demographics page:** This will allow the coordinator to provide the correct survey back to each participant on the last day of class. It will also help the coordinator know which survey belongs to which participant when completing the For Staff Use Only section after the course is over. If the coordinator or participant has any concerns about confidentiality, participants can use an alias, code, or nickname, as long as the coordinator can identify which survey belongs to which participant.

If participants join after the first class:

All participants must complete an enrollment form, but it is up to the partner organization to determine whether participants joining the course after the first class need to complete a survey. If a participant joining after the first class completes a survey, be sure to provide a quiet place away from the action for the participant to complete the demographics page and “Before Class” survey. It is also recommended to have a volunteer available to answer questions the participant may have.

5. Throughout the Course: Track Attendance

Use the participant surveys to record attendance each week

- Use the “For Staff Use Only” section to mark the boxes that correspond to each session the participant attended. For example, if a participant attended weeks 1, 3, 4, and 5, complete the attendance as shown below.

Correct

Check box(es) for each session the participant attended: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Incorrect

Check box(es) for each session the participant attended: 1 2 3 4 5 6

- Note: Some course coordinators pass around an attendance sheet at the beginning of each class and then use this list to later complete the attendance section.

5. Last Class: Complete the “After Course” Survey

On the last day of the course, participants complete the remainder of the participant survey. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete, including explaining the survey’s purpose, reading questions aloud, answering participant questions, and completing open-ended questions. **Make sure you and your volunteer team account for survey administration when planning your last class.**

Before participants complete the survey:

Provide blue or black pens to all participants

Explain the survey’s purpose and encourage participants to answer honestly

- The purpose of the survey is to understand what participants learned in the course and what they liked and disliked so we can improve the program in the future.
- Encourage respondents to be honest in their responses and to answer all questions. Remind them that their responses are confidential.

- **Assure participants that this survey is not a test.** There are no right or wrong answers.
- Encourage everyone to write something in the open-ended questions at the end of the survey.

Describe how to record responses correctly (Repeat points in Step 2)

Explain the set-up of the survey questions (Repeat points in Step 4)

While participants complete the survey:

Complete the survey as a group, if needed (Follow process outlined in Step 3)

Clarify problem questions, if needed (Repeat points in Step 4)

Course team should remain alert and available to those with questions

- The entire course team should remain available throughout the time that participants are completing the survey, scanning and/or walking around the room to look for participants who may have trouble reading the survey, may not fully understand the format, or may be stuck on a certain question or concept.

After participants complete the survey:

Ensure the Race and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity questions are completed

6. Course Close-Out (For Course Coordinators only)

Make sure surveys are not missing pages

- Even if a participant did not mark any responses on a page, each survey must include all pages.

Complete the “For Staff Use Only Section”

- Make sure the attendance section is filled out for all participants. If you have been keeping separate attendance sheets, transfer the attendance information to each participant’s survey. **Mark the boxes that correspond to each session the participant attended** (participants will have more than one attendance box checked if they attended more than one class; see step 3 for an example). Do not “X” out boxes for classes participants did not attend; simply leave them blank.
- Indicate whether the participant has participation and media waivers on file. The participant waiver box should be checked for all participants; the media waiver is optional.
- **Complete the partner code, course code, and month course ended on each survey.** This will allow us to link the surveys to the appropriate partner organization and course.

Make copies of the surveys for your files (optional)

- We recommend you make and store copies of participant surveys for up to a year. This practice is helpful for record-keeping or in case the surveys get lost in the mail. However, be sure to send the **originals** to Share Our Strength.

Complete and attach a Participant Evaluation Packet Coversheet

- Download and print a copy from Desire 2 Learn Complete the form and attach to the packet of surveys using a paperclip or rubber band.

Mail ALL paperwork affiliated with your Cooking Matters course - including the Enrollment Form, the participant surveys, the Program Log, and the Participant Demographics to OSUE State Office.

- Participant surveys should be mailed **within one week of completing the course** to:

OSUE SNAP-Ed Cooking Matters Program
Attn: Jenna Haaser
315 Campbell Hall
1787 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

