Cooking Matters

Administering Surveys – ADULTS & TEENS

# Overview of the Participant Survey

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

The Participant Survey serves as a tool for:

* Tracking changes in participant knowledge, attitudes, skills, confidence, and behavior as a result of the Cooking Matters course
* Soliciting feedback regarding the overall quality of the participant experience
* Capturing quotes from participants about how the course has affected them
* Gathering participants’ background and demographic information
* Recording class attendance

When Share Our Strength receives completed participant surveys, they are sent to a data entry company for processing. Your compliance with survey administration protocol will ensure that data is processed efficiently and that your program’s outcomes and impact are analyzed and reported accurately.

Please use this guide when administering participant surveys in Cooking Matters Adult and Teen courses. We recommend reading through the guide once before the course starts and bringing it with you to the first and last classes to use as a checklist. If you have any questions, contact the Cooking Matters National Database Manager.

Thanks for all you do with Cooking Matters and for your commitment to ensuring meaningful outcomes for the families we serve.

# Before First and Last Class: Prepare to Bring Correct Materials

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

* **Correct number and type of surveys and enrollment forms**
* Bring enough surveys and enrollment forms for the number of participants you expect to attend, plus a few extras. \*NOTE\* Cooking Matters for Teens courses do not use enrollment forms since we do not collect contact information for youth, so you only need to bring surveys for Cooking Matters for Teens courses.
* Check that surveys and enrollment forms match the curriculum you are using (e.g. if you are using the Cooking Matters EXTRA for Parents of Preschoolers participant and instructor manuals, make sure you are using Cooking Matters for Teens surveys and enrollment forms).
* If you run out of surveys or enrollment forms: You may print your own from PDFs posted on the Resource Center. Be sure to print surveys and enrollment forms single-sided, on plain white paper, using a printer with plenty of ink. Never make photocopies of existing hard copies.
* **Pens with blue or black ink**
* Do not use pencils or markers: Scanning software can only read blue or black pen.
* Surveys not completed in blue or black pen will be returned to you and will need to be hand-transferred to blank surveys using pen.

# First Class: Complete Enrollment Forms

* Every Cooking Matters course participant should complete the enrollment form 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.
* **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.

# First Class: Complete Participant Demographics

The first page of all participant surveys collects demographic information from participants.

* **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, you should 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 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**
* 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 Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity 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 Hispanic/Latino ethnicity 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. 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 house 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 younger than 18 living in household: This question refers to all children living in the same house 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).

**After participants complete the demographics page:**

* **Review completed demographics pages**
* As participants return their completed demographics pages, check them over for any obvious errors, such as such as checking more than on box for questions that do not indicate “check 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.

# Last Class: Complete Participant Surveys

On the last day of the course, participants complete the participant survey questions. 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.
* Do not refer to the survey as a test. There are no right or wrong answers.
* **Encourage everyone to say something in the open-ended questions at the end of the survey.**
* **Emphasize confidentiality**
* Repeat points in Step 3 and also emphasize that participants should not talk among themselves while they are completing the survey. Talking can be distracting to some participants and reduces confidentiality of survey responses.
* **Explain the set-up of the survey questions**
* Explain that they are to respond to each question twice, once in the “Before Class” column, and once in the “Now” column to indicate what they did before taking this course and what they do now. Questions that are not marked in both the “Before Class” and “Now” columns will not be counted.
* Assure participants that there are no wrong answers. Sometimes the answers may be the same in both columns and sometimes they will be different.
* Walk participants through a sample question. Either have an example on a flipchart or have all participants look at Question 1. Read the question and the answers aloud.
* A sample visual aid can be found on the Resource Center: https://cookingmatters.centraldesktop.com/cmresourcecenter/file/3072979/
* Allow participants to complete question 1 individually and ask if anyone has questions.

**While participants complete the survey:**

* **Complete the survey as a group, if needed**
* If you believe at least half the class is of low literacy, you should 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.
* If you decide to complete the survey as a class, be sure to read slowly and pausing between each question and response
* If less than half of the class has trouble reading: Pair volunteers 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.
* **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 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.
* **Make sure participants mark boxes correctly**
* Boxes can be marked with a check mark or with an “X.”
* Marks outside the boxes that touch other boxes are read as two answers by the scanner.
* There should be one mark in the before column and one mark in the after column for every question.
* Make sure only one box is checked in each column for these questions and that participants provide both “Before Class” and “Now” responses.

**After participants complete the survey:**

* **Ensure that all questions have been completed – have course members help with this.**