SERVICE INSIGHTS INITIATIVE
Network Data Glossary

Last Updated 12/20/17

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Overview

Having consistent data will become more important for telling our story, as our network increasingly turns towards addressing the root causes of hunger while mobilizing resources today to understand how we are meeting the immediate needs of communities and defending the government safety net. **One goal of the Service Insights Initiative is to facilitate consistency in messaging and data driven insights across agencies, food banks, and states through the development and implementation of a Network Data Glossary.**

This glossary includes a list of primary, core data elements and their associated answer options that are foundational for any service insights program to produce data driven insights, including unduplicated data. These data elements and answer options have been selected as a result of conversations with dozens of network members, including the pilots and early adopters, as well as benchmarking against institutions such as the U.S. Census Bureau. It is important to note that these data elements are intended for use during the intake process at agencies, not necessarily for survey research purposes. Consequently, the questions are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather, are meant to balance collecting critical information about the people we serve with facilitating an efficient intake process. The information in this document can also be used to identify ways in which answer options can be further customized so that they meet local requirements and are appropriate given the local environmental context and cultural norms.

As more network members implement service insights programs, and as our learnings as a network evolve over time, the data glossary will be updated. For example, when the U.S. Census releases final recommendations for asking about race and ethnicity in the 2020 Census, we may decide as a network that our data elements need to match those of the Census given that many funders will be asking us for information in a similar manner. This could involve making small adjustments to the glossary.

Finally, as Feeding America develops a long-term strategy for the Service Insights Initiative, additional data elements that extend beyond basic demographics (e.g., income, employment, etc.) will be added. These items may be incorporated based on (a) agreement across the network to focus on elements that support greater shared knowledge on key issues, and (b) unique member needs, including to support broader operations or specific program offerings outside of feeding programs, and (c) alignment with the Feeding America strategic plan, including shared goals and outcome measurements.

Creating a core set of indicators that are used consistently across the Feeding America network creates strength in our shared data and the insights that emerge. Members that are interested in or are currently implementing a service insights program should carefully consider the data elements that are configured into their chosen software system. *For additional guidance on facilitating this process, please carefully review the **Plan**, **Select**, and **Design Phases** of the Service Insights Network Framework.*

Core Data Elements

Table 1 (on the next page) includes the list of primary, core data elements and their associated answer options that are critical for any service insights program and for producing unduplicated data. These core data elements include the following:

- First and last name
- Date of birth
- Gender identity
- Race or ethnicity
- Zip code
- Household member count
- Household members' names
- Household members' date of birth
- Household members' race or ethnicity

Feeding America highly recommends that any member implementing a service insights program is, at a minimum, collecting the core data elements using the recommended answer options provided. This will help facilitate consistency in messaging and shared data-driven insights across your partner agencies, peer member food banks, and states. **Member food banks and agencies may choose to collect additional, supplementary data elements beyond this core list.**

Table 1: Service Insights Network Data Glossary, List of Core Data Elements

Field Name	Recommended Question Phrasing	Description / Definition	Frequency to Update	Recommended Answer Options	Comments, Recommendations, or Rationale
Name	**What is your first and last name?**	First, middle (optional) and last names (each entered into a distinct field) of the primary person receiving services (i.e., the respondent).	To be asked at each visit	**First, middle, and last names each entered into a distinct field**	If required for federal program reporting in the relevant state, the name should match government issued identification card presented at time of service. If respondents do not wish to disclose their name, ask if they would be willing to provide their first and last initials instead. If they do not want to provide their initials, the software system should have an "Anonymous" option that can be selected. Do not include titles, prefixes, or suffixes in this field (e.g., Mr., Mrs.).
Date of Birth	**What is your date of birth?**	Birthday of the respondent.	To be asked at the initial visit and, if necessary, confirmed at subsequent visits	**MM/DD/YYYY**	A unique DOB should be obtained for each respondent. This information can be validated against the ID provided (where applicable). This information can be used for de-duplication purposes, especially when different people receiving assistance have similar names. If the respondent does not know their DOB or does not want to provide it, ask if they can estimate or would be willing to provide their birth year. Estimated DOBs should be entered as 01/01/YYYY.
Gender Identity	**How do you describe your gender identity?**	Gender as self-reported / identified of the respondent.	To be asked at the initial visit	▪ **Female** ▪ **Male** ▪ **Transgender** ▪ **Do not identify as female, male, or transgender** *Source: Williams Institute, Center for American Progress, and the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving SOGI (Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity) Measurement*	Agency intake workers should be trained to ask this question for each respondent, instead of guessing on behalf of the individual. Capturing this data may help the food bank and its partner agencies apply for funding or specific programs.

Field Name	Recommended Question Phrasing	Description / Definition	Frequency to Update	Recommended Answer Options	Comments, Recommendations, or Rationale
Race or Ethnicity	**What is your race or ethnicity? Select all that apply. Note, you may report more than one group.**	The respondent's self-reported cultural or national background.	To be asked at the initial visit	▪ **White** ▪ **Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish** ▪ **Black or African American** ▪ **Asian** ▪ **American Indian or Alaska Native** ▪ **Middle Eastern or North African** ▪ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** ▪ **Some other race or ethnicity** ▪ **Prefer not to answer** *Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015 National Content Test: Race and Ethnicity Analysis Report). Anticipated categories to be included in the 2020 Decennial Census.*	If appropriate, members can change the order of the answer options listed to more closely match the prevalence of races and ethnicities in their service area. The current list is mirrored after the U.S. Census recommendations (i.e., in order of population size from largest to smallest). Capturing this data may help the food bank and its partner agencies better understand the cultural backgrounds of the people they serve, and use this information to apply for funding or specific programs.
Zip Code	**What is the zip code where you are currently living?**	Zip code of the household.	To be asked at the initial visit and, if necessary, confirmed at subsequent visits	**5-digit field formatted as a zip code** **xxxxx**	Capturing the zip code of the household can aid the agency or food bank in connecting them with additional resources or programs available in their community. It can also be useful for analyzing not only where food is being distributed, but where households who are accessing charitable food assistance live.

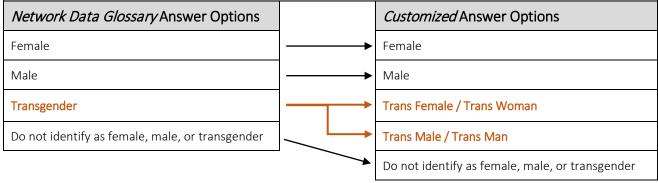| Field Name	Recommended Question Phrasing	Description / Definition	Frequency to Update	Recommended Answer Options	Comments, Recommendations, or Rationale
Member Count	**How many people, including yourself, are currently living in your household and sharing expenses?**	Total number of household members living together and sharing expenses. This does not include individuals living together in group homes or shelters. *Source: HIA and U.S. Census Bureau.*	To be asked at the initial visit and then confirmed and/or updated at subsequent visits	**Numerical values, 1-20**	Capturing this information will help quantify the number of people reached with the food provided, may inform the amount of food needed for the household, and, if collected with income data, may inform eligibility for programs. Ensure that this number includes the respondent, so household size should never equal zero.
Member Names	**What are the names of all household members who are currently living in your household?**	First and last names of all household members (each entered into a distinct field)	To be asked at the initial visit and then confirmed and/or updated at subsequent visits	**First, middle, and last names each entered into a distinct field**	The number of member household names entered into the system should match the total number of household members previously provided. If respondents do not wish to disclose full names, ask if they would instead be willing to provide the first and last initials of household members. If they do not want to provide their initials, the software system may have an "Anonymous" option that can be selected. Contact the technology vendor about making this option available. Capturing this information will help ensure de-duplication in the event that another household member comes to a partner agency.

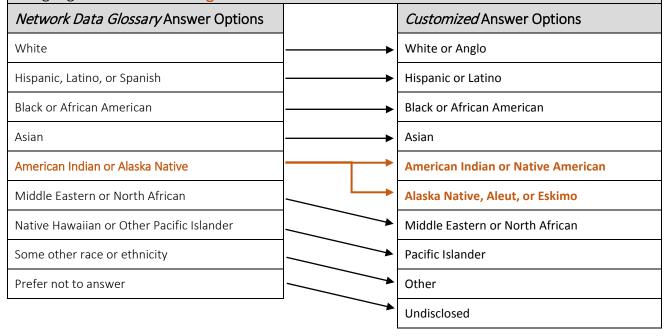| Field Name	Recommended Question Phrasing	Description / Definition	Frequency to Update	Recommended Answer Options	Comments, Recommendations, or Rationale
Member Date of Birth	**What are the birthdates of all household members who are currently living in your household?**	Birthdays of all household members.	To be asked at the initial visit and then confirmed and/or updated at subsequent visits	**MM/DD/YYYY** **Do not know**	When possible, and when the respondent consents, a unique DOB should be associated with each household member. In cases where the respondent does not know the DOB of a household member, ask if they can estimate their birth year. Estimated DOBs should be entered as 01/01/YYYY. If they cannot estimate a birth year, there should be also an option for "Don't Know", or a prompt to ask the respondent at the next visit. This information can be used for de-duplication purposes, especially in instances where multiple household members may be picking up food from an agency(s).
Member Race or Ethnicity	**What is the race or ethnicity of all household members who are currently living in your household? Select all that apply. Note, you may report more than one group.**	The cultural or national background of all household members, as reported by the respondent.	To be asked at the initial visit and then confirmed and/or updated at subsequent visits	▪ **White** ▪ **Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish** ▪ **Black or African American** ▪ **Asian** ▪ **American Indian or Alaska Native** ▪ **Middle Eastern or North African** ▪ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** ▪ **Some other race or ethnicity** ▪ **Prefer not to answer** *Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015 National Content Test: Race and Ethnicity Analysis Report).*	If appropriate, members can change the order of the answer options listed to more closely match the prevalence of races and ethnicities in their service area. The current list is mirrored after the U.S. Census recommendations (i.e., in order of population size from largest to smallest). Capturing this data may help the food bank and its partner agencies better understand the cultural backgrounds of the people they serve, and use this information to apply for funding or specific programs.

Customizing Core Data Elements

The examples below illustrate ways in which answer options for the core data elements can be further customized so that they meet local requirements and are appropriate given the local environmental context and cultural norms, yet can align to common, comparable values shared by other members.
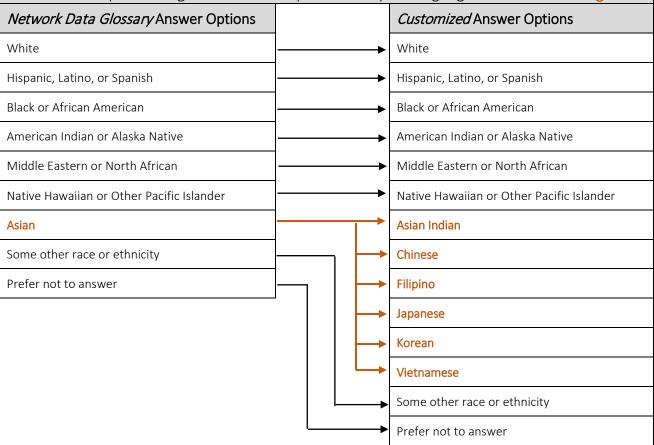
Example A: The example below includes additional answer options for the <u>gender identity</u> core data element. As illustrated in Table 1, the data glossary indicates "transgender" as an answer choice; however, if needed, food banks and partner agencies can obtain a more granular level of detail by replacing "transgender" (in the left-hand column) with two different answer choices: "trans female/trans woman" *and* "trans male/trans man" (see the right-hand column). This example is highlighted below in orange.

Network Data Glossary Answer Options		*Customized* Answer Options
Female	→	Female
Male	→	Male
Transgender	→	Trans Female / Trans Woman
Do not identify as female, male, or transgender	→	Trans Male / Trans Man
		Do not identify as female, male, or transgender

Example B: The example below includes additional answer options for the <u>race or ethnicity</u> core data element. As illustrated in Table 1, the data glossary indicates "American Indian or Alaska Native" as an answer choice; however, if needed, food banks and partner agencies can obtain a more granular level of detail by replacing "American Indian or Alaska Native" (in the left-hand column) with two different answer choices: "American Indian or Native American" *and* "Alaska Native, Aleut, or Eskimo" (see the right-hand column). This example is highlighted below in orange.

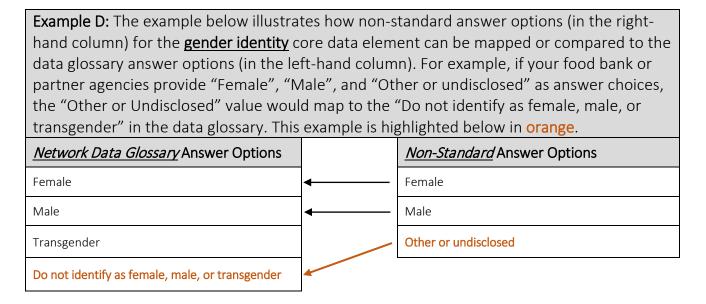| *Network Data Glossary* Answer Options		*Customized* Answer Options
White	→	White or Anglo
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	→	Hispanic or Latino
Black or African American	→	Black or African American
Asian	→	Asian
American Indian or Alaska Native	→	American Indian or Native American
Middle Eastern or North African	→	Alaska Native, Aleut, or Eskimo
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	→	Middle Eastern or North African
Some other race or ethnicity	→	Pacific Islander
Prefer not to answer	→	Other
		Undisclosed

Example C: The example below includes additional answer options for the <u>race or ethnicity</u> core data element. As illustrated in Table 1, the glossary indicates "Asian" as an answer choice; however, if needed, food banks and agencies can obtain a more granular level of detail by replacing "Asian" (in the left-hand column) with additional categories, including some of the following: "Asian Indian", "Chinese", "Filipino", "Japanese", "Korean", and "Vietnamese" (see the right-hand column). This example is highlighted below in orange.

Network Data Glossary Answer Options		*Customized* Answer Options
White	→	White
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	→	Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
Black or African American	→	Black or African American
American Indian or Alaska Native	→	American Indian or Alaska Native
Middle Eastern or North African	→	Middle Eastern or North African
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	→	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Asian	→	Asian Indian
Some other race or ethnicity		Chinese
Prefer not to answer		Filipino
		Japanese
		Korean
		Vietnamese
		Some other race or ethnicity
		Prefer not to answer

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Mapping to Core Data Elements

If your food bank or partner agencies are currently collecting the core data elements, but are using different answer options (i.e., non-standard answer options), the examples below can be used to map, align or compare those non-standard answer options to the answer options illustrated in the data glossary.

Example D: The example below illustrates how non-standard answer options (in the right-hand column) for the **gender identity** core data element can be mapped or compared to the data glossary answer options (in the left-hand column). For example, if your food bank or partner agencies provide "Female", "Male", and "Other or undisclosed" as answer choices, the "Other or Undisclosed" value would map to the "Do not identify as female, male, or transgender" in the data glossary. This example is highlighted below in orange.

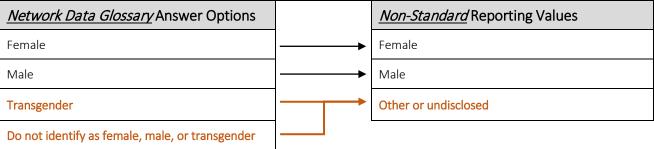| *Network Data Glossary* Answer Options		*Non-Standard* Answer Options
Female	←	Female
Male	←	Male
Transgender		Other or undisclosed
Do not identify as female, male, or transgender		

Note: There are some constraints to using the non-standard answer options listed above in Example D. Specifically, the number of "Transgender" responses (in the left-hand column) will not be fully represented or accurate, if aligned to or combined with data from an organization or partner agency that is using the non-standard answer options (in the right-hand column). This is because transgender individuals may respond as "Other or undisclosed" (in the right-hand column) and are then mapped to the option of "Do not identify as female, male, or transgender" (in the left-hand column). A similar constraint applies to the **race or ethnicity** option, if the "Middle Eastern or North African" category is not included (see the right-hand column in Example F below). However, given the constraints of mapping less granular options to the glossary, this is the current recommendation.
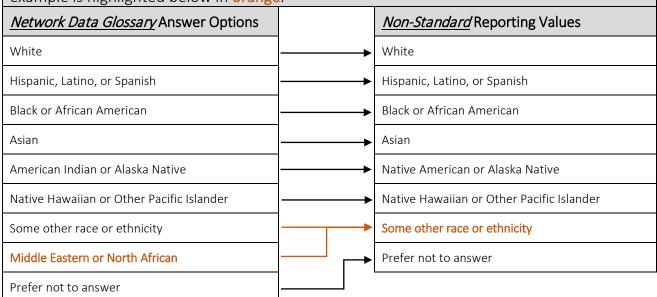
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Reporting Tips

In some cases, the food banks or partner agencies may need to report on demographics about the people we serve to donors or other organizations who ask for this data in a format that differs from the answer options provided in the Network Data Glossary. Below are examples for how the answer options in the data glossary can be mapped to a different set of reporting values. *Additional guidance on reporting data will be provided in the **Operate Phase** of the Service Insights Network Framework.*

Example E: The example below illustrates how the **gender identity** answer options provided in the data glossary can be mapped to a different set of reporting values with fewer answer options. For example, if donors or external partners are requesting information on the number of respondents reporting "Female", "Male", and "Other or undisclosed" (see the right-hand column), the "Transgender" and "Do not identify as female, male, or transgender" options provided in the data glossary (see the left-hand column) would map to the "Other or undisclosed" values (in the right-hand column). This example is highlighted below in orange.

Network Data Glossary Answer Options	*Non-Standard* Reporting Values
Female	Female
Male	Male
Transgender	Other or undisclosed
Do not identify as female, male, or transgender	

Example F: The example below illustrates how the **race or ethnicity** answer options provided in the data glossary can be mapped to a different set of reporting values with fewer answer options. Specifically, if donors or external partners are requesting information on race or ethnicity, but do not request or provide a way in which to report "Middle Eastern or North African", this category can instead be reported as "Some other race or ethnicity". This example is highlighted below in orange.

Network Data Glossary Answer Options	*Non-Standard* Reporting Values
White	White
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
Black or African American	Black or African American
Asian	Asian
American Indian or Alaska Native	Native American or Alaska Native
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Some other race or ethnicity	Some other race or ethnicity
Middle Eastern or North African	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	

Example G: Since respondents can select more than one race or ethnicity using the data glossary answer options, *percentages may sum to over 100%.* If not careful in reporting, a person who responds as more than one race or ethnicity could be counted twice. However, if it is necessary to **sum to 100%** of respondents for reporting purposes, it is possible to do so by reporting details on single race or ethnicity responses and a sum of all respondents selecting multiple races or ethnicities. For example, in the illustration below, if Respondent A provides a single response of "Black or African American", they would be reported in the right-hand column under the Single Race or Ethnicity category as "Black or African American". If Respondent B reports "White" *and* "Middle Eastern or North African", they would only be reported in the Multiple Races or Ethnicities category (see bottom of right-hand column). This ensures that the respondent and their race or ethnicity are not double counted. Any respondent that selects more than one race or ethnicity should be reported in the Multiple Races or Ethnicities category. This guidance follows reporting conventions used by both the *Hunger in America 2014* study, as well as the U.S. Census Bureau. This example is highlighted below in orange (for Respondent A) and blue (for Respondent B).

All Races or Ethnicities
White
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
Black or African American
Asian
American Indian or Alaska Native
Middle Eastern or North African
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Some other race or ethnicity
Prefer not to answer

Single Race or Ethnicity	94%
White	50%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	11%
Black or African American	27%
Asian	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%
Some other race or ethnicity	2%
Multiple Races or Ethnicities	5%
Prefer not to answer	1%
Total	100%

Respondent A

Respondent B

Additional Considerations

Obtaining Consent

Prior to collecting any personal information, agency intake workers should always ask for individuals' consent to collect and electronically store personal information. Once consent has been obtained, whether verbal, written, or electronically, it should be noted within the record. Depending on the software solution, this can occur by attaching an electronic signature or by using a checkbox. In either case, your vendor will need to configure this into the system. Some vendors may already have something configured into the software system; however, if that is not the case, members should request that a consent item be included in the system. *Additional guidance on the consent process can be found in the* **Participant Privacy Agreement***, to be released with* **Design Phase** *of the Network Framework.*

Collecting Data at Subsequent Visits

During a household's first visit, or the initial intake within the software system, individuals will likely be asked to provide a significant amount of personal information and data. However, to create a more efficient process for the long-term, it may <u>not</u> be necessary to again ask the full set of questions at each subsequent visit. Instead, train agency intake workers to ask individuals if anything has changed since their last visit and, if so, update that information accordingly.

> **For example, at subsequent visits, agency intake workers should ask each household the following question:** "*Has anything about you or your household changed since your last visit (for example, the number of people in your household or your address)?*" If anything has changed, that information can be updated accordingly.

While this is a critical question, and a proven best practice, it may or may not be appropriate to configure this question into the software system. If it is not programmed into the software system, then it will be critically important to train intake workers to ask this question at each subsequent visit. Listed in Table 1, the column titled "Frequency to Update" contains suggestions for which data elements this would apply. *Additional guidance on training agency intake workers will be provided in the* **Train & Onboard Phase** *of the Network Framework.*

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