



# | Interview Guides

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [X] and I'm part of a research project focused on understanding food service in prisons and jails. We are particularly interested in learning how facilities with privatized models, like those that contract with Aramark, function in comparison to self-operated models and how they affect people during and after incarceration, people who work in these facilities, or are otherwise involved.

| **\*\*Review Informed Consent that was included in the pre-survey, confirm email address to send a copy of the consent\*\***

As a reminder, this interview is confidential but will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Please let me know if you would prefer not to answer a question or would like to end the interview. I will now begin the audio-recording for the interview. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

## ► **INDIVIDUALS FORMERLY INCARCERATED IN A FACILITY MANAGED BY ARAMARK**

First, I'd like to ask you some background questions to understand your personal experience of incarceration. This will help me better understand the relationship between the prison or jail food service system and any impact it may have had in your life.

- 1 Thank you for providing examples of the meals you were served at the facility. How would you describe the taste of your meals?
- 2 How would you characterize the variety of different types of foods in your meals?
- 3 Were there any occasions where the foods that were offered to you during meals were unsafe to eat? For example, foods that had any physical contaminants, foods that appeared rotten or expired.

[If YES, then follow-up] How frequently did this occur?

- 4 How would you describe the environment and conditions of meal service in terms of safety and sanitation?
- 5 In your opinion, did the food service workers appear to follow standard food service practices for ensuring food safety? For example, washing their hands frequently, changing gloves to prevent cross-contamination, wearing hair nets and with hair pulled back, and maintaining clean work surfaces in the kitchen or food service areas.
- 6 **REFER TO PRE-SURVEY RESPONSE:** Do you have any dietary preferences or restrictions that may be related to food allergies, cultural preferences, or medical conditions? (review response from survey questions)

**Can you say more about that?**

- 7 [If YES, then follow-up] Was the facility able to accommodate your dietary needs?

[If needs were not met, follow-up] How often were you served meals that did not meet your needs for [X restriction/preference]?

[If No, then move to next question]

8 Can you tell me about your ability to meet your nutritional needs while you were incarcerated? For example, on a day-to-day basis, were you able to eat a variety of foods to support your nutritional needs?

9 Did you ever feel hungry between meals because you were not provided enough food or due to the timing of the meals?

[If YES, then follow-up] About how often did this occur?

10 Can you tell me about ways you supplemented the meals provided by the facility? For example, did you buy more foods from commissary or buy food from others?

11 [if applicable] Did you notice any changes in food when Aramark began or ended its contract? (Probes: Changes in food quality, staff, meal types, portion sizes)

12 Did you ever provide feedback, make a formal complaint, or file a grievance about the food service operation and quality of food provided?

**Now I'd like to talk about your health before, during, and after the time that you were incarcerated. REFER TO PRE-SURVEY RESPONSE:**

13 Can you tell me a little about your health before you were incarcerated? How would you describe your overall health before you were incarcerated?

[If prompts are needed] For example, did you have any health conditions that affected your daily life or ability to work, take care of household tasks, or engage in physical activity?

[If participant mentions a specific condition, repeat back and follow-up to clarify whether the condition was well-managed or negatively impacted their daily life]

14 How would you describe your overall health during the time that you were incarcerated?

15 **REFER TO PRE-SURVEY RESPONSE:** Were you diagnosed with any medical conditions during the time that you were incarcerated?

[If YES, then follow-up] Did a physician or other healthcare provider discuss the impact of diet or foods [on your health/the diagnosis]?

16 Do you believe that the foods and meals offered while you were incarcerated affected your health afterwards?

[If YES, then follow-up] Can you tell me more about the lasting or longer-term effects that you noticed?

17 [if applicable] Did you notice a change in your personal health after Aramark began its contract at this facility? Including, but not limited to, fluctuation in weight or high blood pressure?

Finally, let's discuss suggestions you have to improve the food service at the Aramark facility.

- 18 What suggestions do you have for improving the food service at that facility?
- 19 Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience with the Aramark facility?
- 20 Do you have any questions for us?

### ► CURRENT OR FORMER CARCERAL FOOD SERVICE AND NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

- 1 Tell me about your role and the types of facilities you've worked in (e.g., prisons, schools, corporate). How long did you work there?
- 2 What roles have you held during your employment, and how long were you in each role?
- 3 Which facility did/do you work in? Please include the city/state.
- 4 Who provided the food service during your time at the facility?
- 5 Was there ever a change in food service provider during your employment?
- 6 What kind of training did you receive for your role? (Probes: Food safety, corrections-specific training, management, federal or state regulation compliance)
- 7 Were there any gaps in training that you received or other areas where it would have been helpful to receive more training or support?
- 8 What was your experience working in carceral food service settings? (Probes: How did it compare to other types of facilities?)
- 9 Can you describe how menus are determined and planned? (Probe: Do incarcerated people have any input on the menus?)
- 10 Can you describe how menus for special diets were handled?
- 11 What are your protocols for storing, producing, and distributing food?
- 12 Did you have any concerns about food safety at your facility? If so, what were those concerns?
- 13 Did you have any concerns about pest control at your facility? If so, what were those concerns?
- 14 Can you describe the condition of the equipment used in food service at your facility? In general, would you say that it was adequate or inadequate? (Probes: old equipment, broken equipment, etc.)
- 15 How does Aramark aim to meet the needs of incarcerated individuals? (Probes: nutrition, meal planning, job training for incarcerated workers, food quality, allergens, religious diets)

- 16 What recommendations do you have for improving Aramark's food service in correctional facilities?
- 17 Did you attempt to make any improvements during your employment? If so, please explain any successes and/or challenges you experienced in making these improvements.

► **JOURNALISTS, ADVOCATES, OR RESEARCHERS WITH EXPERTISE ON ARAMARK OR FOOD SYSTEM REFORM**

- 1 First, we will start with a few questions about your connection to the carceral food system. Tell me about your current work and how you became interested in carceral food systems.
  - a Probe: What is your current occupation?
  - b Probe: Do you have a loved one who has been incarcerated?
- 2 Now let's discuss your familiarity with carceral food service. What states or facilities are you familiar with?
  - a Probe: Over what period of time?
- 3 Who provides or provided the food service at those facilities?
- 4 Probe: Have you observed any changes in food service providers? For example, a switch from self-operated/in house to Trinity.
- 5 What, in your view, defines a successful food service program in prisons and jails?
  - a Probe: Examples of strong programs?
  - b Probe: Examples of transitions?
- 6 How would you describe the nutritional quality of foods served and labor conditions within the prison/jail food systems you are familiar with?
- 7 How would you describe the overall quality of food and performance of the food service provider (e.g. Aramark, self-operated)?
  - a Probes: Food safety, palatability and taste, labor, and management
- 8 Did you observe any positive or negative changes that resulted from privatization of food service in a specific state or facility?
- 9 From your perspective, what are the potential benefits of privatized food service?
  - a Probe: How does that compare to self-operated food service? What are the benefits? (probes: incarcerated people, employees, institutional administrators/finances, vendors)

- 10** From your perspective, what are the potential risks of privatized food service?
  - a** Probe: How does that compare to self-operated food service? What are the risks?
  - b** Further probes: incarcerated people, employees, institutional administrators/finances, vendors)
- 11** Are you aware of any institutional, local, or state policies, that have helped correctional systems transition to self-operated food service?
- 12** If “yes”—What helped facilitate the transition?
  - a** Probes: Change in policy? Budget? Staff champion? Lawsuit? Bad press?
- 13** What challenges do those systems face in making that transition? What successes have you seen?
- 14** What strategies do you recommend for getting the best out of a private vendor?
- 15** What are the major barriers preventing facilities from transitioning to self-operated food service?
- 16** What information or resources would best support facilities exploring a shift away from privatized food service?