



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Rosemarie Downer, USDA/FNS

**FROM:** Carolyn O'Brien, Principal Investigator

**DATE:** April 15, 2008

**RE:** Request for Modifications to the Supporting Statement for Request for Clearance for *Food Stamp Certification: Food Stamp Modernization Efforts*

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Based on the meeting with members of the OMB review team held on April 8, 2008, we are requesting that the following modifications be made to the Supporting Statement for Request for Clearance submitted on December 12, 2007.

- *Insert on p. 1, after fifth paragraph.* This study does not provide an impact assessment using an experimental design with random assignment to alternative program conditions by which observed changes in FSP performance can be attributed specifically to any state's modernization initiatives. No reliable comparison groups are available to distinguish the influence of modernization activities from other potential factors. In addition, the study was not designed to provide a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the benefits of the implemented activities outweigh the costs. This study will provide a comprehensive, consistent inventory of food stamp modernization activities and the patterns and choices made by states and local agencies. While it cannot measure impact, it will examine general relationships and FNS performance indicators over time.
- *Delete on p.3., fourth paragraph, the following two sentences:*  
*Based on previous experience, the reduction in burden on respondents outweighs the possible mode bias. However, we will treat survey mode as paradata and check for any indication of bias.*
- *Insert on p. 7, after the last sentence in section A .10.* Approval of this study by the Urban Institute's Institutional Review Board (IRB) is pending. When this approval is granted, OMB will be notified.
- *Delete last sentence in third full paragraph, p.13 (sentence beginning, "The public use data files..."). Insert the following sentences.* A public use data file of state survey responses identified by region and state will be provided. A county public use data file will be provided for all counties surveyed but will neither name the counties nor link counties to states. Similarly, a partner organization public use data file will be provided for partner organizations surveyed but will not name the partner organizations or their counties, nor link the counties to states. *See additions to survey documents below.*

- *Insert on p. 14, before the first full paragraph.* The State Survey is a census of all State FSP Directors. Purposive samples will be selected for the survey of local agencies, the survey of partner organizations, and the case study sites. The aim of the sampling strategies for each, described in section B.1 of the Supporting Statement, is to capture the diversity of modernization activities and implementation circumstances across the country and is not intended to be representative of the population of local agencies and partners. No statistical inferences will be drawn from the responses to the local agency survey, the partner survey, or the case studies.

# Enhancing Food Stamp Certification: Food Stamp Modernization Efforts

## State Food Stamp Agency Survey

Revised 4/15/08

**Name of person completing this form:**

**Title:**

**Agency:**

**State:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail:**

**Fax:**

**Best days and times to reach you, in case of questions:**

This survey is being conducted as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) study of the range of efforts states are undertaking to enhance food stamp certification and to modernize the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely. We appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedules to complete this survey.

FNS broadly defines "food stamp modernization" to encompass changes in four areas: 1) policy; 2) administrative functions; 3) application of technology; and 4) partnering arrangements with businesses and nonprofit organizations. State modernization efforts vary widely; examples include consolidation of local offices, acceptance of electronic and faxed applications, increased outreach activities, implementation of call centers, use of biometric identification, and implementation of Supplemental Security Income/Food Stamp Program Combined Application Programs (CAPs).

This survey contains the following sections: (A) Organizational Information; (B) State Context; (C) Organizational and Operational Changes; (D) Electronic Applications; (E) Technological Innovations; (F) Call Centers; (G) Outreach; (H) Supplemental Security Income/Food Stamp Program Combined Application Programs (CAPs); (I) Fingerprint Imaging and Other Biometric Identification; (J) Outcome Measures; and (K) Concluding Remarks. The web-based survey will automatically guide you through the appropriate sections based on your responses.

We are only interested in modernization efforts planned or implemented after January 1, 2000. Please feel free to discuss the contents of this survey with any staff or agencies who may have experience with your state's modernization activities.

Survey results will be provided to FNS and made available in a public use data file. States will be identified in the data but respondents' names will not be included. If you have any questions about the contents or purpose of this survey please contact:

Carolyn O'Brien at (202) 261-5624 or [Cobrien@ui.urban.org](mailto:Cobrien@ui.urban.org) or

Robin Koralek at (202) 261-5736 or [Rkoralek@ui.urban.org](mailto:Rkoralek@ui.urban.org)

Thank you very much for taking the time to provide this feedback!

***Please return by June 15, 2008.***

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX and expires on XX/XX/XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 2.5 hours, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, ORNA, Alexandria, VA 22302.

# Enhancing Food Stamp Certification: Food Stamp Modernization Efforts

## Local Food Stamp Agency Survey

Revised 4/15/08

**Name of person completing this form:**

**Title:**

**Agency:**

**County/State:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail:**

**Fax:**

**Best days and times to reach you, in case of questions:**

This survey is being conducted as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) study of the range of efforts states are undertaking to enhance food stamp certification and to modernize the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely. We appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedules to complete this survey.

FNS broadly defines "food stamp modernization" to encompass changes in four areas: 1) policy; 2) administrative functions; 3) application of technology; and 4) partnering arrangements with businesses and nonprofit organizations. State modernization efforts vary widely; examples include consolidation of local offices, acceptance of electronic and faxed applications, increased outreach activities, implementation of call centers, use of biometric identification, and implementation of Supplemental Security Income/Food Stamp Program Combined Application Programs (CAPs). A separate survey is being sent to state Food Stamp Program Directors. For local agencies, we are particularly interested in learning how any of these efforts have affected local agency workers and customers.

This survey contains the following sections: (A) Organizational Information; (B) Local Context; (C) Organizational and Operational Changes; (D) Electronic Applications; (E) Technological Innovations; (F) Call Centers; (G) Outreach; (H) Supplemental Security Income/Food Stamp Program Combined Application Programs (CAPs); (I) Fingerprint Imaging and Other Biometric Identification; (J) Outcome Measures; and (K) Concluding Remarks. The web-based survey will automatically guide you through the appropriate sections based on your responses.

We are only interested in modernization efforts planned or implemented after January 1, 2000. Please feel free to discuss the contents of this survey with any staff or agencies who may have experience with your state's modernization activities.

Aggregate survey results will be provided to FNS and included in a public use data file. Counties will not be identified by state, county name, or respondent name. If you have any questions about the contents or purpose of this survey please contact:

Carolyn O'Brien at (202) 261-5624 or [Cobrien@ui.urban.org](mailto:Cobrien@ui.urban.org) or

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# Enhancing Food Stamp Certification: Food Stamp Modernization Efforts

## Partner Organization Survey

Revised 4/15/08

**Name of person completing this form:**

**Title:**

**State:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail:**

**Fax:**

**Best days and times to reach you, in case of questions:**

This survey is being conducted as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) study of the range of efforts states are undertaking to enhance food stamp certification and to modernize the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely. We appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedules to complete this survey.

FNS broadly defines "food stamp modernization" to encompass changes in four areas: 1) policy; 2) administrative functions; 3) application of technology; and 4) partnering arrangements with businesses and nonprofit organizations. State modernization efforts vary widely; examples include consolidation of local offices, acceptance of electronic and faxed applications, increased outreach activities, implementation of call centers, use of biometric identification, and implementation of Supplemental Security Income/Food Stamp Program Combined Application Programs (CAPs).

This survey contains the following sections: (A) Organizational Information; (B) State or Local Context; (C) Relationship with State or Local Food Stamp Agency; (D) Food Stamp Program Certification and Recertification Processes; (E) Customer Access; (F) Electronic Applications; (G) Technological Innovations; (H) Call Centers; (I) Outreach; (J) Fingerprint Imaging and Other Biometric Identification; (K) Outcome Measures; and (L) Concluding Remarks. The web-based survey will automatically guide you through the appropriate sections based on your responses.

We are only interested modernization efforts planned or implemented after January 1, 2000. Please feel free to discuss the contents of this survey with any staff or agencies who may have experience with your modernization activities in your local service area.

Aggregate survey results will be provided to FNS and included in a public use data file. Partner organizations will not be identified by state, county name, partner organization name, or respondent name.

If you have any questions about the contents or purpose of this survey please contact:

Carolyn O'Brien at (202) 261-5624 or Cobrien@ui.urban.org or

Robin Koralek at (202) 261-5736 or Rkoralek@ui.urban.org

Thank you very much for taking the time to provide this feedback

**Please return by June 15, 2008.**

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