Appendix D: Request for Extant Data

This appendix presents information on the requests for extant data from the six study states. The appendix includes three parts: (1) the section of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with states that discusses the extant data request, (2) the e-mail sent to states providing additional details about the case records extracts data request, and (3) the list of requested data elements sent to states with the e-mail.

Excerpt from Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Task 3: Extant Data Collection

In addition to the primary data collected at the orientation meeting and during site visits, the study will rely on a range of extant data. The State will provide the following to the research team:

1. Monthly case record extracts. To examine the impact that each state's modernization changes may have on participation, FNS will require monthly case record extracts from each state for the period that begins July 2000 through June 2011. The study team will work closely with state data managers to articulate data requirements, and a senior Mathematica programmer will be assigned to work with the State data manager to identify and resolve any technical problems that arise. The State will be asked to provide relevant documentation for each file, including a data dictionary and details of the file structure and format. There is no specific format in which the data files are to be provided. The study team will accept a variety of formats and media for data delivery. Reviewing the data dictionary in advance will help researchers articulate data requirements clearly, as well as ensure a comprehensive understanding of the analysis variables. The data will be collected in

two batches: the first in December 2010 and the second in July 2011.

2. Application Statistics. FNS will collect statistics on the number of applications processed monthly from July 2000 through July 2011. These data will allow us to examine how the rate of applications changed after implementation of modernization initiatives, and whether those rates differ across geographic areas within the state or by subgroup. In addition, FNS will also require information on the type of applications and how the applications were processed.

3. Performance measures. The study will require state records on any performance-related measures that states track. In particular, FNS will need monthly reports on the timeliness of application approvals by local office, monthly reports on approval/denial rates by local office, and quarterly State Administrative Expense (SAE) reports submitted to FNS. Other statistics to be collected, where relevant and available, include data on call center usage, data on electronic application usage, and data on community partner usage. To reduce the overall burden on participating states, FNS will rely on data collected in FNS's Performance Standards and Reporting for SNAP Modernization Initiatives study, to the extent possible. Once the team has assessed what information is available through that study, the State will be asked to provide the remaining necessary data.

4. Other relevant materials. In addition, the States will be asked to provide FNS with copies of all relevant materials—such as policy manuals and program descriptions—about state modernization efforts. Other relevant materials may be identified through discussions with state staff. If the State conducts client satisfaction surveys, the survey results should be provided to the study team.

Mathematica will contact the State contact person to provide more detail about the specific data elements required, the timing of delivery, and handling of the data.

E-mail to State Contacts

[State Contact],

At the orientation meeting, we described the different types of data that we would be collecting for the In-Depth Case Studies of Advanced SNAP Modernization Initiatives project. One key type of data will be monthly SNAP case records extracts. The attached file includes a draft list of data elements that we will be requesting from each state in the study. These data are needed for all SNAP cases and applicants, and all individuals within each case, for every month from July 2000 through June 2011.

In addition to the regular monthly extracts, we will need additional case records extracts to identify and contact SNAP recipients to participate in focus groups. Shortly before each of the two site visits (which should occur in spring and summer 2011), we will request extracts containing contact information for cases within zip codes near the planned site visit locations who either (1) have received benefits for two or more years or (2) applied for benefits within the past three months.

Please let me know if you have any questions or foresee any challenges in extracting the data.

Thank you,

Draft List of Data Elements for
In-Depth Case Studies of Advanced SNAP Modernization Initiatives
Case Records Data Extracts

A. CASE/UNIT-LEVEL DATA:

1. Case/Unit ID[1]
2. County name
3. Name or ID number of the office servicing the case
4. Zip code
5. Number of members in the SNAP unit
6. Date application was received
7. Origin location of the application (such as the SNAP office, partner organization, from home, etc)
8. Method of application (such as walk-in, fax, mail, online, telephone, etc.)
9. Reason for the application (lost a job, etc)
10. Application status (pending, approved, denied, etc)
11. Application status date/eligibility determination date (the date that eligibility was determined, or the date the application status became effective)
12. Reason for denial
13. Whether anyone assisted the applicant, what their role was (for example, as a contact, authorized representative or payee, interpreter, or other role; whether they are related or unrelated to the applicant, etc), and an identifier if assistance was at a community agency
14. Whether an authorized representative submitted the application
15. Language used to fill out the application (English, Spanish, etc)
16. Whether the case received expedited service at last opening
17. Date case was opened
18. Date case was last recertified
19. Length of current certification period
20. Benefit amount for most recent payment period
21. Unit’s total gross income for the month
22. Unit’s total net income for the month
23. Unit’s total gross earned income for the month
24. Unit’s total income from Social Security and SSI for the month
25. Unit’s total assets
26. Unit’s shelter deduction
27. Unit’s medical deduction
28. Indicator of whether the case was opened under disaster food stamps or other emergency program

[1] The primary purpose of the case ID will be to link data from multiple files over time. It will also enable us to explore particular cases with you about which we have questions.

29. Indicator of current TANF receipt
30. Indicator of current receipt of Property Tax and Rent Rebate
31. Indicator of current receipt of Low-Income Subsidy
32. Indicator of current Medicaid participation
33. Indicator of current participation in State prescription benefits plan

B. INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL DATA (for each person within each case/unit):

1. Person ID and Case/Unit ID[2]
2. Date of birth
3. Gender
4. Race/ethnicity
5. Disability status
6. Citizenship and country of citizenship
7. Relationship of this person to the applicant/grantee

[2] The purpose of these IDs will be to link individuals to units.