

Appendix B1
Invitation Letter to SFA Directors

APPENDIX B.1. INVITATION LETTER TO SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE DIRECTORS

XX/XX/2011

SUBJECT: Participation in the Special Nutrition Program Operations Study (SNPOS), 2011

TO: School Food Authority (SFA) Directors

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is requesting your participation in the Special Nutrition Program Operations Study (SNPOS). The information for this study is being collected by Westat, a research firm in Rockville, Maryland for FNS, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The SNPOS is being conducted to understand and address the current policy issues related to Special Nutrition Program (SNP) operations.

The goal of this study is to improve the implementation of the Child Nutrition Program by examining:

- Data on the Child Nutrition (CN) program characteristics to help FNS respond to questions about the SNPs in schools;
- Data related to program administration for designing and revising program regulations, managing resources, and reporting requirements; and
- Data related to program operations to help FNS develop and provide training and technical assistance for SFAs and State Agencies responsible for administering the CN program.

The topics included on the survey include school and student participation rates, school food service characteristics, meal prices, revenues, expenditures, alternative meals/recouping credits, meal counting and claiming, procurement issues, involvement in other programs, food safety program, and communication issues.

The survey is designed to be completed in about 1 hour and 45 minutes by the SFA Director. While you may complete the survey and mail it to Westat, you also have the option of completing an online version of the survey available through the Internet. The online version of the survey is available at **www.XXX.org**. Your username and password appear on the enclosed Web Survey Information Sheet. If you complete the paper version of the questionnaire, please return it to Westat in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Please complete the survey only once, using either the paper or the online version.**

We ask that the survey be completed **within 3 weeks** and that you keep a copy of the completed survey for your files. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the Westat survey helpline at 1-888-202-1565 (toll-free) or by email: SNPOS@westat.com. You may also call John Endahl, the FNS Project Officer, at 703-305-2127.

Thank you for your assistance.

Signature (FNS PD)

Enclosed: SNPOS Survey and Frequently Asked Questions

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.75 hours per respondent, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302. Attn: Mr. John Endahl.

Special Nutrition Program Operations Study (SNPOS)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Why is FNS conducting the survey?

A This survey is being conducted to provide nationally representative information about Child Nutrition programs and programs available in public school districts. The goal of the SNPOS is to understand the policy and operational issues surrounding the Child Nutrition Programs. Specifically, survey topics include the preparation of program budget, development and implementation of program policy and regulations, and identification of areas for provision of technical assistance and training.

Q Who is invited to participate in SNPOS?

A This is a survey of 56 State Child Nutrition Program Directors and 1765 School Food Authority Directors.

Q Why is participation by your School Food Authority (SFA) important?

A Your SFA's participation, while voluntary, is important because it is vital to the development of national estimates. We need your input because your SFA is one of a small sample of SFAs selected for the study. Your cooperation is critical to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely.

Q How long is the data collection period?

A Because of the time sensitive nature of data that are being collected, we expect to receive all completed surveys within 6 weeks of initial mailing.

Q Can I complete the survey on-line?

A Yes, you can visit XXX.gov website to access the survey. Use your Study ID to access and complete your survey. While you can complete your survey over multiple sittings, the survey can be completed in about 1 hour and 45 minutes and we urge you to complete it in one sitting or to take fewer breaks and save your responses if you have to stop along the way.

Q How does FNS protect the confidentiality of the information that you provide?

A Your answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose unless otherwise compelled by law. The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the survey (OMB No. xxxx-xxxx).

Q Who should I contact if I have questions about the study or the survey?

A If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the Westat survey helpline at 1-888-202-1565 (toll-free) or by email: SNPOS@westat.com. You may also call John Endahl, the FNS Project Officer, at 703-305-2127.