

## **Memorandum of Understanding Between Abt Associates and the [Name of LEA]**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between Abt Associates (Abt) and the [Name of LEA] concerning their participation in the USDA's Community Eligibility (CE) Option Evaluation. This MOU describes the terms and conditions associated with the participation of the [Name of LEA] in the study. Each party is signing this agreement in good faith and with the expectation that each party will fulfill its obligations as described in the MOU.

### **BACKGROUND**

The CE Option was made available through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This evaluation was mandated by Congress with the objectives of:

- Examining the characteristics of eligible schools that participate in the CE Option and those that choose not to participate
- Examining the incentives and barriers to participation and implementation of the CE Option
- Estimating CE Option impacts on Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools and children, including impacts on program administration, nutritional quality and foodservice costs and revenues.

To accomplish this, Abt selected a sample of up to 1400 LEAs across 7 States that have been selected to participate in the CE Option during school year 2012-13. Within these States, Abt scientifically selected LEAs and schools that are participating in the CE Option and similar LEAs and schools that are not participating in the Option. Abt will collect data from these samples of LEAs and schools to examine the implementation and impact of the CE Option.

### **Evaluation Activities:**

- The LEA Foodservice Director will complete a 30-minute implementation Web survey focusing on experiences and opinions of the CE Option.
- The LEA Foodservice Director will complete a web-based survey on Participation, Enrollment, Attendance and Revenue (PEAR). This survey will collect data from four school years, SY 2009/10 through SY 2012/13. We may be able to discuss options for completing part of the survey with the help of existing State databases. Other options for providing the data include completing a paper version of the survey.
- An on-site data interview with the LEA Foodservice Director and appropriate school-level staff about administrative costs and facilitating a Certification Record Abstraction for 114 to 150 certification records per LEA, spread over up to 3 sampled schools.

### **[IF SELECTED FOR MENU SURVEY:**

- Cafeteria managers at the schools selected for the evaluation will be asked to participate in a menu survey of NSLP and SBP meals offered in their schools for a 5-day pre-specified "target week". Other data collected in the schools will include an observation of meals taken by students and cashier transactions, as well as a review of meal counting and claiming procedures at the school and the LEA.]

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 number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ABT, LEA, AND SCHOOL(S)**

Major responsibilities and expectations for both Abt and LEAs are listed in this section.

### **Abt will:**

***Select a sample of LEAs and Schools to participate in the CE Option Evaluation***

***Collect Data from the sampled LEA and schools, as follows:***

- *LEA Foodservice Director Web Surveys:* Abt will send Foodservice Directors at selected LEAs a recruitment email that contains a link to two web surveys for them to complete. Abt will provide assistance to web survey respondents via telephone and email, as needed.
- *Administrative Cost Interviews and Questionnaire:* Prior to an on-site visit to the school and LEA, Abt will conduct a pre-visit telephone interview with the LEA Foodservice Director and provide him or her with a self-administered questionnaire. During the on-site data collection, Abt will interview the LEA Foodservice Director, and depending on pre-visit information may interview the Cafeteria Manager, other school foodservice personnel, and school administrative staff. Abt will also direct school staff in obtaining student Household Applications, Direct Certification lists, and other associated records. Abt will abstract information from the records. Student ID numbers will be used only to identify records selected for review and will be destroyed once the data collection and processing is complete. No other personal identifying information will be recorded.

[IF SELECTED FOR MENU SURVEY:

- *Menu Survey:* Abt will work with the school to determine the 5-day target week for the menu survey. Abt will make two visits to the school for Menu Survey activities. Prior to the visits, Abt will conduct a pre-visit telephone interview with the Cafeteria Manager. The first visit to the school will take place prior to the target week, during which Abt will train the Cafeteria Manager in-person on how to document the school foods offered. Abt will make the second visit to the school and LEA on one day of the target week for additional data collection, as described in “Evaluation Activities”.]

### ***Obtain necessary approval and permission***

Abt will be responsible for conducting research in accord with school and LEA protocols and will fulfill the requirements of relevant LEA review boards as necessary. Abt will follow established LEA and school procedures for gaining admission to school premises (such as background checks for data collectors).

### ***Ensure confidentiality***

Information provided in this survey will be kept private, to the extent provided by law. No data will be attributed to specific survey respondents in reports or data provided to USDA. This includes data collected by Abt and any administrative data provided to Abt by participating LEAs and schools. All members of the Abt Study Team will be asked to sign data privacy agreements. De-identified data from this study will be provided to the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S Department of Agriculture, and aggregate measures of subgroups of LEAs may be included in the study’s reports.

**Participating LEAs and schools agree to:**

***Participate in data collection***

The [Name of LEA] hereby agrees to participate in the evaluation. In addition, [Name of schools] have also been selected to participate. The [Name of LEA] will ensure access to these schools. The [Name of LEA] will participate in the following study activities:

- *LEA Foodservice Director Web Surveys:* The LEA Foodservice Director will complete two web surveys. The respondent will have the option to complete it by paper and pencil, if desired.
- *Administrative Cost Interviews and Questionnaire:* The LEA Foodservice Director will complete a self-administered questionnaire and return the completed Section I and II to Abt, as well as participate in a pre-visit telephone interview prior to the on-site visit. During the on-site data collection, the LEA Foodservice Director will participate in an in-person interview. Depending on pre-visit information, the Cafeteria Manager, other school foodservice personnel, and school administrative staff will participate in an in-person interview as well. The school staff will provide Abt with the requested student Household Applications, Direct Certification lists, and other associated records.

**[IF SELECTED FOR MENU SURVEY:]**

- *Menu Survey:* The foodservice department will work with Abt to determine the 5-day target week for the Menu Survey. The Cafeteria Manager will attend an in-person training session at the school conducted by Abt on how to document the school foods offered during the target week. The Cafeteria Manger will participate in a telephone interview prior to the target week. During the target week the Cafeteria Manager will record the school breakfast and lunch foods and recipes offered and daily meal counts. The LEA and school foodservice departments will facilitate a one-day on-site visit at the school and LEA by Abt, and provide meal counting and claiming information as requested.]

**CHANGES TO THE AGREEMENT:**

We anticipate that over the course of the study, some modifications or additions may need to be made to this agreement. It is understood that the terms may be adjusted with written amendments as agreed upon by both parties.

**SIGNATURES**

The following people have read this Memorandum of Understanding and acknowledge the terms and conditions regarding participation in the Community Eligibility Option Evaluation: the [Name of LEA], and the individual schools listed above.

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LEA Official

Date

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Authorized Abt Associates Official

Date