

C7. GROUP 3—SFA DIRECTOR PRE-VISIT ADVANCE LETTER

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<DATE>

<SFA Director Prefix> <SFA Director_FN> <SFA Director_LN>
<SFA Director_Title>
<MSTREE06>
<MCITY06>, <MSTATE06> <MZIP06>

Dear <SFA Director Prefix> <SFA Director_LN>:

Again, thank you for your participation in the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study (SNMCS). As we discussed during the **SFA Director Planning Interview**, data collectors will be visiting the selected schools in your SFA on the following schedule:

Target Week	Week of [DATES]
School Name	On-Site Visit Date
<School1Name>	[DATE]
<School2Name>	[DATE]
<School3Name>	[DATE]
<School4Name>	[DATE]

At this time, we would like to request your assistance with the following three aspects of data collection:

- 1) Set aside time to meet in person to complete the **SFA Director Cost Interview**. This interview will address the full cost of food service in your SFA, including indirect and administrative costs. *[IF A BUSINESS MANAGER WAS IDENTIFIED IN THE RECRUITMENT CALL, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING]* This interview will need to include your Business Manager, *NAME*.
- 2) Complete the **SFA Director Survey**. You will receive a link to this survey after completing the cost interview. This survey will include questions needed to characterize district policies, the school environment, and food service operations.
- 3) Support selected schools in the following data collection activities during the target week:

Menu Survey and School Nutrition Manager Survey. Food service managers will be asked to complete a web-based survey during the target week. The Menu Survey collects detailed information on the foods offered and served in reimbursable lunches, breakfasts, and afterschool snacks (if offered). Included with the Menu Survey will also be a separate, brief questionnaire that asks about food service operations in each school.



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Online training tools will be available within the Menu Survey to instruct respondents on how to complete it correctly. A project staff member will also be available throughout the target week to answer questions and offer assistance. It is critical that the menu survey be completed as fully and accurately as possible during the agreed-upon target week.

We will provide a \$50 check for food service managers who complete the Menu Survey and the School Nutrition Manager Survey, in recognition of their conscientious efforts and important contributions.

Competitive Foods Checklists. A staff member appointed by you will be asked to complete a simple set of forms detailing the availability to students of vending machine items and other sources of food such as school stores.

School Nutrition Manager and Principal Cost Interviews. We will conduct interviews with food service managers and principals to learn about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs. We will speak to food service managers in person during the target week, and will be conducting interviews with principals by phone.

SFA Director and Principal Surveys. The final components of the study are two web-based surveys to be completed by you and the school principal. The surveys will contain questions needed to characterize district policies and the school environment and food service operations. We will notify you and the school principals by e-mail when these surveys are available for completion.

Cafeteria Observations. Data collectors will observe one lunch and one breakfast period (if the school participates in the School Breakfast Program) in each sampled school to document characteristics of food service operations.

Plate Waste Observations. Data collectors will estimate the proportion of foods wasted by students in order to assess the nutrient and food group composition of foods wasted, and to assess the relationship between plate waste and characteristics of students, school food environments, and school food service operations.

Participation in the study by selected states, districts, and schools is required under Section 305 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). Thank you for your participation in the SNMCS and for your assistance with notifying food service managers and principals. This important study of the school meals programs could not be completed without your support. We are looking forward to learning all that we can from you and your staff.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our project team at 855-###-####, or e-mail SNMCS@abtassoc.com.

Sincerely,

Maria Boyle
Project Director (Abt Associates)
Abt Associates

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