

**Summer Food Service
Program (SFSP)
Participant Characteristics Study
Information for Sponsors**



OMB Control No.:0584-0595

Expiration Date: 8/31/2016

United States Department of Agriculture

Who is conducting the study?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has contracted with Optimal Solutions Group, LLC to conduct the study.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is sponsored by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. The purpose of this study is to examine factors that affect the participation of both sponsors and children in Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP) across the United States. Participation in the SFSP has fluctuated over the course of the program's history. Examining factors that affect participation across states is vital to improving policies that influence the effectiveness of the program. This study will help the USDA better serve our nation's youth by providing for those in need of supplemental nutrition during the summer. This is the first study of its kind in over a decade and your participation is critical to its success.

Which objectives will the study meet?

- Describe how the SFSP operates at the state, sponsor and site levels.
- Describe the characteristics of SFSP participants.
- Examine the differences in participation in the SFSP and factors that affect participation by sponsors and children.
- Examine changes in the SFSP since the 2003 study.

Which results will the study provide?

The study will provide insight into how the SFSP operates at the state, sponsor, and site levels and will identify barriers to and factors that support participation by children and sponsors.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will receive a detailed report tabulating and analyzing the data collected.

What is your role in the study?

- June 2015: You will be invited to participate in an informational webinar on the SFSP participants characteristics study.
- June and August 2015: Optimal will contact you to send a recruitment email/letter to sites that you sponsor. Please send the email/letter as soon as possible and within a week of receiving the request.
- Mid Summer 2015: Optimal will ask that you complete a sponsor survey as soon as possible and within three weeks of receiving it. The survey should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

What information will be collected?

This study will collect information from a variety of sources, including a survey of all state agencies that administer their states' Summer Food Service Program and surveys from a selection of program sponsors and sites. Surveys will cover topics such as administrative, monitoring, and application procedures, as well as program participation, promotion and publicity activities. We will also conduct interviews with parents/caregivers of both SFSP participants and eligible non-participants to find out about their experiences with SFSP. We are particularly interested in any barriers people experience that might affect their ability to take advantage of SFSP offerings.

Why is your participation in this study important?

Your participation ensures the accurate description of SFSP participant characteristics.

The perspective you provide will help the U.S. Department of Agriculture to better understand the impact of policy changes on participation in the SFSP. In turn, this will allow states, sponsors, and sites to better serve children in need of supplemental nutrition during the summer.

Research Approval and Privacy Assurances

No individual state, sponsor, site or participant will be identified in the findings. Results will be presented at aggregate levels in all reports.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved this study for all data-collection activities under OMB # 0584-0595.

The study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board.



OPTIMAL SOLUTIONS GROUP LLC

Any Questions? Please contact us at:
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