

APPENDIX B

STATE CN AGENCY DIRECTOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

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## STATE CN AGENCY DIRECTOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

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**Interviewer instructions:** State-level interviews are planned for Hawaii and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Complete the SFA-level interview before the State-level interview. Ask the State CN agency director only the questions that the SFA director and district business manager were unable to answer. Refer to the table at the end of the SFA director/district business manager interview guide to identify which sections were not covered by the SFA-level interview. In addition, tailor questions based on information provided from other sources, including prior interviews and your review of any documents received from any respondent. For example, if a respondent shared financial statements before this interview, do not request the records again and instead adjust the probes about the contents and completeness of the records.

### A. Introduction

The purpose of this interview is to determine what kinds of information are available in the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction about the costs of reimbursable meals for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Reimbursement rates for school meals sold in the contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia are assessed periodically using a rigorous cost study methodology applied to a sample of public SFAs and schools. That cost study methodology has never been applied in outlying areas such as [Hawaii/the U.S. Virgin Islands]. We are trying to find out if the methodology can be used to determine the cost of producing reimbursable lunches and breakfasts in your [State/Territory]. This study is important because an accurate assessment of meal costs in [Hawaii/the U.S. Virgin Islands] could be used to adjust per-meal reimbursement rates in your [State/Territory]. The study is not an audit.

Today I'm going to ask you about some of the records the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction keep(s). We have already spoken to the SFA director(s) and district business manager(s) in [SFA(s)] and will only ask you questions that they could not answer.] We will not identify you or share any information you provide outside of the study team, which includes FNS reviewers. We will store any records you share with us in password-protected, secure folders or in locked filing cabinets, and we will destroy these records after the project ends. Your participation is mandatory under Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

In case I miss anything in my notes, may I have your permission to record our call? We will not share the recordings outside of our study team. [IF YES, START RECORDING.]

Do you have any other questions for me before we begin?

### B. Natural disaster recovery (U.S. Virgin Islands only)

I understand schools and school meal operations were significantly impacted by the hurricanes last fall. I'd like to ask about how the school meal programs are currently operating, and how

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they may be operating in the 2019-2020 school year, which is when the cost study may be conducted.

1. Can you please describe how the school lunch and breakfast programs are currently operating?
  - a. [ASK IF ANY DOCUMENTS WERE APPLICABLE BUT UNAVAILABLE DURING THE RECRUITING CALL] If we are to do a cost study in the future, it will be necessary to work with food service and financial records from the SFA and district. You previously said you were unable to share [revenue and expenditure statements, daily production records, documentation for indirect cost rate(s) or cost allocation plan(s), cycle menus, food service management company contract, union contract, food purchase records, standardized recipes, food service personnel records, non-reimbursable food sales records]. Which of these records, if any, were previously available but were destroyed by the hurricanes? Do you anticipate such records will be available for the 2019-2020 school year? Why or why not?
2. At this time, do you anticipate that by the 2019-2020 school year the school lunch and breakfast programs will be operating under the NSLP and SBP menu planning and meal pattern requirements? Why or why not?
3. Do you anticipate that schools will be operating in a “steady state” by the 2019-2020 school year? For example, do you think school closures and other disruptions that might affect food purchases, meal production, staffing, or student participation will be resolved by then? If not, what changes to operations do you anticipate will persist?

#### C. Organizational structure

[ASK Q4 THROUGH Q6 IN HAWAII. ASK Q7 IN USVI.]

4. I understand from the Western Regional Office that the SFA under your jurisdiction is divided into eight regions, and each region has a regional supervisor. What roles do the regions play in school meal program operations, such as food service staff supervision, menu planning, nutrition education and promotion, procurement, or administrative activities?
  - b. In what percentage of the SFA’s schools does the principal have control over the school food service budget and staff? Does the principal only do hiring and payroll for food service staff, or does she or he also have a role in food purchases? Which of these costs are part of the SFA expense statement, which we may discuss later, and which are not?
5. Are regional- or local-level food service staff paid from the SFA’s food service account or from another source?
6. What roles do the regions have in the financial aspects of the SFA’s food service operations?
  - a. Do the regions have their own budgets? How are Federal reimbursements and other revenue sources allocated to the regions?
  - b. Are food service costs at the school level rolled up to the region level, and then are regional costs rolled up to the SFA level?
  - c. Do the regions maintain any documentation about food service operations that is not available to SFA central staff? If so, what documentation?

7. I understand from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office that your State agency receives Federal reimbursements for school meals and disburses the funds to the SFAs. Could you please describe the roles of your agency and the SFAs in the financial aspects of the food service operations?
- Do the SFAs develop their own budgets? How often does your agency disburse Federal reimbursements and other sources of revenue to the SFAs?
  - From what account or accounts are food service employees paid?
  - Does your agency maintain any documentation about food service operations that is not available from the SFAs? If so, what documentation?

**D. Off-budget services and resources**

The following questions are about any services or other resources that the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction uses, but are not charged to the food service account and do not appear on the SFA financial statement.

8. Does the school district(s) perform any activities or functions on behalf of the SFA(s)? For example, some school districts handle their SFA's payroll or IT, do some or all of their SFA's purchasing, do some or all of the maintenance and repair of their SFA's equipment or vehicles, or provide their SFA with warehouse space or warehouse labor. [IF NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
- What activities or functions does the school district(s) perform for the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction?
  - Thinking about only district staff and not school staff, does the school district(s) pay the salary or benefits of any personnel who work on food service activities? For example, in some SFAs the SFA director is a school district employee, not a food service employee, or the school district's business manager also serves as the SFA's business manager.
9. Now please consider school staff in [SELECTED SCHOOLS]. Do any of the staff working in those schools who are not part of the food service department do any work in support of the food service program in the school? Food service activities can include [HAWAII: distributing or processing applications for free or reduced-price meals;] cleaning food service areas and other custodial services; supervising students during meals; ordering, storing, and transporting food; or other food service administrative activities.
- If yes: Are any wages or benefits of school food service staff in [SELECTED SCHOOLS] paid out of the school district account rather than the food service account?

IF Q8B AND Q9 AND Q9A = NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.

10. IF Q8B OR Q9 OR Q9A = YES: For every person who works on food service activities but is paid by the school district, will you be able to provide the following information?
- Job title/description
  - Salary on any basis, for example, annual, monthly, twice per month, biweekly, weekly, or hourly
  - Total paid hours per week
  - Total paid weeks per year

- Total hours of paid leave per year, such as sick leave, vacation, or holiday time
  - Amount of time spent on food service activities
  - Hours that they work on the NSLP and SBP versus hours that they work on CACFP meals, snacks, or at-risk suppers, or NSLP afterschool snacks, if applicable
- a. If no: What is the name, job title, and contact information of the person who would be able to provide this information if we requested it in a future cost study?
  - b. Can you send examples of the records that show [district/school] personnel information including job title, salary, hours worked, amount of leave time, and amount of time spent on food service activities? Please redact any names, Social Security Numbers, or other personally identifiable information from these records.

11. Does the school district(s) under your jurisdiction pay for any SFA operating costs such as utilities, supplies, rent, or contracted services?

- a. If yes: What SFA operating costs does the school district(s) pay for?

#### E. Indirect costs

Next I'll ask some questions about how the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction handles its indirect costs.

12. Which of the following does the school district(s) have for indirect costs for the 2017-2018 school year—a restricted indirect cost rate, an unrestricted indirect cost rate, or an indirect cost allocation plan? [IF NONE, GO TO NEXT SECTION.]

- a. Can you provide documentation that identifies the cost categories and support functions included in the district's indirect cost rate(s) or cost allocation plan(s), such as documentation submitted to the State Department of Education for approval?

If needed: *Cost categories* that may be treated as indirect costs can include the following: salaries and wages; employee benefits and payroll taxes; workers' compensation; supplies and expendable equipment; equipment rental; gas, oil, or electricity; water or sewer; telephone or internet service; insurance such as liability, vehicle, or other insurance; or other purchased services. *Support functions* that may be treated as indirect costs can include: accounting, budget finance, and payroll; data processing operations and programming; administration of personnel, benefits, and human resources; purchasing and contracting; general administration and policy, such as the superintendent's office; school board; custodial and janitorial services; building operations and maintenance; equipment and vehicle operations and maintenance; refuse disposal, pest control, or other sanitation; security; storage and transportation of goods; providing and maintaining uniforms; or medical or health services or supplies.

#### F. Financial statements

Next I'd like to ask about the financial statements for the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction.

13. When does the SFA or LEA fiscal year end?

- b. How long after the close of the fiscal year do you have an unaudited financial statement that lists expenditures and revenues by line item?

- c. How long after the unaudited financial statement is completed is an audited statement available?
  - d. What is the most recent fiscal year for which the audited and unaudited financial statements are available for the SFA(s)?
  - e. Can you please send us the audited and unaudited financial statements for that fiscal year?
14. Over the last several years, have there been any meaningful differences between the audited and unaudited financial statements that would result in a different interpretation of the data?
- a. If yes: Can you please describe these differences? If necessary, please describe them year by year.
15. If we are to use the cost study methodology in outlying areas, we need to understand what each line item on the SFA's expenditure and revenue statements includes. I reviewed the statements you shared with us and I'd like to review some of the details with you. [Interviewer: Tailor the probes based on reviewing the statements. Example probes are below.]
- Which line item in the expense statement includes SFA staff salaries?
  - Can revenues be separated for NSLP and SBP? For reimbursable and, if applicable, non-reimbursable meals?
  - Which line item(s) in the revenue statement includes student payments, State or local payments, and Federal reimbursements for NSLP, SBP and, if applicable, other Child Nutrition Programs?
16. Do you expect any changes to the format or available information in the SFA's revenue and expense statement over the next few years? If so, what kinds of changes do you expect? In what time frame?

#### G. Meal production and planning

I'm next going to turn to some questions about how the meals served in the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction are produced and planned.

17. Do any schools in the SFA(s) provide meals, snacks, or at-risk suppers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, or CACFP? Do any provide afterschool snacks through the NSLP? Did the SFA(s) operate any Summer Food Service Program sites in summer 2017?
18. Does the SFA(s) contract with a food service management company? [IF NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
- a. What services does the FSMC provide?
    - i. Is the FSMC involved in menu preparation? Food purchasing or procuring USDA Foods? Accounting and record-keeping?
    - ii. Does the FSMC deliver prepared, pre-plated meals, or prepared foods to be assembled on site, or does the FSMC prepare meals at the schools or in central kitchens?
  - b. Are school food service workers employees of the SFA(s) or of the FSMC?
  - c. What types of payments are included in the contract?

- d. Is it possible to obtain a copy of the most recent contract?
19. Are food service employees unionized? [IF NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
- a. Does the contract require unionized employees be paid for a fixed number of days per year regardless of whether school is in session?
  - b. Is it possible to obtain a copy of the most recent contract?
20. Does the SFA(s) have any central kitchens? These are kitchens that prepare meals to distribute to schools and do not serve any of the meals on site where the kitchen is located. [IF NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
- a. How many central kitchens does the SFA(s) have?
  - b. How many schools does [the/each] central kitchen serve?
21. Does the SFA(s) have any production kitchens? These are kitchens that prepare meals served on site but also distribute meals to other schools. They are also known as base kitchens. [IF NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
- a. How many production kitchens does the SFA(s) have?
  - b. How many receiving schools does [the/each] production kitchen serve?
22. Are all reimbursable lunch and breakfast menus planned at the SFA level?
- a. If yes: Are different menus planned for elementary, middle, and high schools? How much do the types of foods planned for reimbursable meals vary for the different school types?
  - b. If no: Do all schools—or only some schools—plan their own menus? [IF NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
    - i. If only some schools plan their own menus: Why are some menus planned at the school level, for example, due to remote location?
    - ii. Do schools plan the entire menus for reimbursable meals, or does the SFA do most of the planning while giving schools flexibility to offer certain types of foods within a category, such as fruits and vegetables?
23. Does the SFA use cycle menus? [IF NO, GO TO NEXT SECTION.]
- a. What is the cycle frequency?
  - b. Can we please get a copy of the menus?

#### H. Reimbursable lunches and breakfasts

I would now like to ask you for some additional details about the information that is available about reimbursable meals, and whether you will be able to report this information to us in the cost study. The following questions are about the availability of detailed information on foods prepared and served in reimbursable breakfasts and lunches over the course of a week.

24. HAWAII: How many public schools are in the SFA, and how many of those schools are implementing the Community Eligibility Provision, or CEP?
25. IF CEP SCHOOLS ARE PRESENT OR USVI: What are the claiming percentages the SFAs use to claim Federal reimbursements for school meals [in CEP schools]?



26. How do schools communicate to the SFA(s) the number of [free, reduced-price, and full-price/school] meals that are served each day?
27. Do schools in the SFA(s) keep production records that document the foods that are prepared for and served in reimbursable meals each day, for example, the name of food, serving size, number of portions prepared and served, and so on?
- If no: Do you have any other records, for example, from a point-of-sale, or POS, system or menu planning software, that include this information?
    - If yes: Do all schools in the SFA(s) use the same POS system or menu planning software that includes this information, or is there variability? Can you send an example of the records that document the foods that are prepared for and served in reimbursable meals each day, say, for a week? [If there is variability across schools, ask for a few examples.]
  - If yes: Do all schools in the SFA(s) use a standard template for production records, or do the production records vary in terms of the information that is documented? Can you send an example of *completed* daily production records for a typical school week for [SELECTED SCHOOLS]?
28. We are interested in whether schools will be able to report detailed information on each food item that is offered to students as part of reimbursable meals. Do the records include the following?
- Name and portion size for each food item
  - Number of portions: Prepared, served in reimbursable meals, sold a la carte/to adults, left over, and wasted (if not documented this way, can these be estimated?)
  - Identification of USDA Foods
  - Identification of foods prepared from a recipe
29. Do any schools prepare any foods from scratch, for example, spaghetti and meatballs, or by combining two or more ingredients, for example, a turkey and cheese sandwich?
- If no: Just to confirm, are all the foods offered in reimbursable meals commercially prepared? [IF Q29 = NO, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.]
  - If yes: Do schools use standardized recipes for all foods prepared from scratch? A “recipe” could be for foods prepared from scratch or foods that combine two or more ingredients. A recipe includes the name of each ingredient used, the amount included in the recipe, and the number of portions the recipe produces.
    - If yes: Can you please send us copies of three standardized recipes?
    - If no: Will schools be able to provide a recipe that documents the name of each ingredient used, the amount included in the recipe, and the number of portions the recipe produces?
30. Do any schools offer self-serve or made-to-order food bars, such as sandwich or deli bars, salad bars, or condiment bars?
- If yes: Will schools be able to provide a list of all items offered on the food bars?

31. Do you expect any changes to production records that schools currently use over the next few years, in terms of the kinds of information that is documented? If so, what kinds of changes do you expect? In what time frame?

I. Food price records

The next questions are about the sources of the foods the SFA(s) under your jurisdiction acquires for use during the school year.

32. Which entities order foods from vendors for schools to use—the SFA(s), the school district(s), or individual schools? The orders can include both fresh items and commercially prepared items.

- a. If the school district(s) or schools order from vendors: Is the SFA(s) responsible for paying for all food orders or only the food orders placed by the SFA(s)?
- b. If the SFA(s) is responsible for any payments: For each vendor, do you have records of the item, the unit size, the price per unit, and the quantity of each food item purchased for the past three months? For example, the records would show the quantity purchased and the unit price, such as 20 cases of peaches with six #10 cans per case at \$18.50 per case. These records might be invoices, delivery slips, or monthly statements.
  - i. If yes: Can you please send us a sample of some pages from these records that shows the information available for each purchase? Please share examples from each vendor the SFA(s) uses. You do not need to share examples for the entire past three months.
  - ii. If yes: How often does the SFA(s) receive invoices from each vendor? [If needed: Can any vendors provide a monthly summary statement?]
  - iii. If no: If we created a list of all the food items used in up to three schools in the SFA in a school week, would you be able to provide the unit size and the price paid for each item on this list?
- c. If the district(s) or schools are responsible for any payments: For each vendor, [does the school district/do school nutrition managers] have records of the item, the unit size, the price per unit, and the quantity of each food item purchased for the past three months? For example, the records would show the quantity purchased and the unit price, such as 20 cases of peaches with 6 #10 cans per case at \$18.50 per case. These records might be invoices, delivery slips, or monthly statements.
  - i. If yes: Can you please send us a sample of some pages from these records that shows the information available for each purchase? Please share examples from multiple vendors, if applicable. You do not need to share examples for the entire prior three months.
  - ii. If yes: How often [does the school district/do school nutrition managers] receive invoices from each vendor? [If needed: Can any vendors provide a monthly statement?]
  - iii. If no: If we created a list of all the food items used in up to three schools in a school week, would you be able to provide the unit size and the price paid for each item on this list?

33. Do you have a list or other records of the USDA Foods (that is, donated commodities) acquired, the unit size, the quantity, and the USDA-assigned values of each commodity acquired for the past three months for the SFA(s)? For example, the records would show the quantity acquired and the unit price, such as 20 cases of peaches with 6 #10 cans per case at \$18.50 per case.
- a. If yes: Does the SFA(s) acquire any processed food items that contain USDA Foods?
    - i. If yes: Do you have records that show which USDA Foods are used in processed items for the SFA(s)? For example, if the item is a processed pizza, the records would show whether the pizza contains USDA flour or cheese or both.
  - b. If yes: Can you please send us a sample of some pages from these records that show the information available for each USDA Food [including processed items]? Please share examples from multiple vendors, if applicable. You do not need to share examples for the entire prior three months.
  - c. If no: If we created a list of all the USDA Food items used in up to three schools in a school week, would you be able to provide the unit size and USDA-assigned value for each item on this list?
34. Does the SFA(s) purchase fruits and vegetables through the U.S. Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, also called DoD Fresh?
- a. If yes: Do you have records of the item, the unit size, the price per unit, and the quantity of the fruits and vegetables purchased through DoD Fresh for the past month? For example, the records might show the purchase of five 100-count cases of apples for \$35.00 per case.
  - b. If yes: Can you please send us a sample of some pages from these records that show the information available for each purchase? You do not need to share a sample for the entire prior month.
  - c. If no: If we created a list of all the DoD Fresh items used in up to three schools in a school week, would you be able to provide the unit size and price paid for each item on this list?

#### J. Non-reimbursable foods

Now I am going to ask about the availability of detailed information on foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals in a week—we refer to these foods as *non-reimbursable foods*. These could be adult meals, foods that are sold a la carte in a cafeteria serving line, in vending machines located in the cafeteria or elsewhere in the school building, or at a school store, food cart, or snack bar.

35. Do the food service departments in any schools in the SFA(s) sell any non-reimbursable foods or beverages? We are only interested in non-reimbursable items that are sold by the food service department, not by other entities.
- a. If no: I just want to confirm that the school food service departments generate no revenue from the sale of foods outside of reimbursable meals. Is that correct?
  - b. If yes: Do you have any reports, for example, from a POS system, that document the type and number of these foods that were sold each day? Can you send an example of a report that shows this, or any available information, such as a weekly report on the sale of non-reimbursable foods and beverages?

36. If schools' food service departments do not sell any non-reimbursable foods: Do you anticipate that school food service departments will start selling foods or beverages outside of reimbursable meals over the next few years? [GO TO NEXT SECTION.]
37. Can schools provide information on the total dollar value of daily non-reimbursable foods sales? If schools cannot provide daily sales information for non-reimbursable foods, can they provide weekly sales information?
- a. If no: Can schools provide daily *total* sales?
38. For non-reimbursable food items that are either pre-packaged or made from recipes, can schools in the SFA(s) provide the following information?
- Food name
  - Portion size
  - For pre-packaged items, the manufacturer or brand name and product code
  - For pre-packaged items, the manufacturer or brand name and product code or a description of the item, such as its type, for example, whole wheat bread or banana-nut muffin; form, such as fresh or frozen fruit; flavor, such as chocolate milk; and fat content, for example, reduced-fat chips
  - Number of portions sold on site, sent off site to be sold at other schools, left over for later use, and wasted
39. Do you expect any changes in the next few years to the non-reimbursable foods records that schools currently use, in terms of the kinds of information that is documented? If so, what kinds of changes do you expect? In what time frame?

#### K. SFA central staff and school-based staff

The following questions are about SFA central staff and school-based staff.

40. Do you have a master list of all staff who work full- or part-time on central SFA activities and are paid from the food service account?
- a. What about full- or part-time staff who work on school food service activities in [SELECTED SCHOOLS] and are paid from the food service account?
  - b. IF Q40 OR Q40A = YES: For every person on [that list/those lists], will you be able to provide the following information?
    - Job title/description
    - Salary on any basis, for example, annual, monthly, twice per month, biweekly, weekly, or hourly
    - Whether or not the person receives fringe benefits
    - Hours per week that they work for the [SFA/school]
    - Weeks per year that they work for the [SFA/school]
    - Total hours of paid leave per year, such as sick leave, vacation, or holiday time
    - Amount of time spent on food service activities such as administration, nutrition education and promotion, or meal production

- If applicable: Hours that they work on the NSLP and SBP versus hours that they work on CACFP meals, snacks, or at-risk suppers, or NSLP afterschool snacks
  - i. If no: What is the name, job title, and contact information of the person who would be able to provide this information if we requested it in a future cost study?
  - ii. Can you send *examples* of the records that show [SFA/school] personnel information including job title, salary, receipt of fringe benefits, hours worked, and amount of leave time? Please redact any names, Social Security Numbers, or other personally identifiable information from these records.

41. What is the SFA's or school district's fringe benefit rate? A fringe benefit rate is the total amount the SFA spends for fringe benefits divided by total annual salaries paid to staff receiving fringe benefits.

L. Closing

42. If the respondent will submit records: I have in my notes that you will share [LIST RECORDS] with me. What is the most convenient way for you to share the records? Would you prefer to post the documents to a secure website, email them to me, fax them to me, or ship them postage-paid via FedEx?

Great. You can post/send the documents by [PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS]. Please send by [DATE].

Those are all the questions I had for you today. Thank you for your time.