

APPENDIX B-12. STUDY FAQs

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School Meal Forms Study FAQs

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The School Meal Forms Study will provide detailed information on how schools, School Food Authorities (SFAs), and State agencies collect and report school meal program data via three FNS forms: the FNS-10 *Report of School Program Operations*, FNS-742 *School Food Authority Verification Collection Report*, and FNS-834 *State Agency (NSLP/SNAP) Direct Certification Rate Data Element Report*. The study will also identify potential sources of error on these forms, and provide recommendations for improving the data collection processes to increase the accuracy of program data.

2. Who is sponsoring this study?

This study is sponsored by the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS).

3. Who is conducting this study?

Westat, Inc. is conducting this study on behalf of USDA FNS. Westat is among the nation's leading research organizations, with over 50 years of experience conducting research for government agencies. Westat's work is behind many of the federal government statistics you hear in the news. For more information about Westat, go to www.westat.com.

4. Who will be participating in this study?

The School Meal Forms Study is being conducted in four States. In each State, the study will collect data from 10 SFAs and 3 schools per SFA. In total, the study will collect data from 40 SFAs and 120 schools. We will talk with State Directors of Child Nutrition and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) of each selected State, the Director of each selected SFA, and the School Food Manager of each selected school.

5. What is the role of study participants?

State-level. We will conduct a pre-site visit phone interview with the Child Nutrition Director for each selected State where we will ask about the State agency structure and data processes, including specifics about their management information systems, staff involved in reporting, and how they work with SFAs in the State. We will also request that the State send any relevant process documentation prior to the site visits, such as guidance developed to help staff complete any or all of the three FNS forms of interest. During site visits we will conduct in-person interviews with the State Director and key staff in Child Nutrition involved in reporting for the three forms, to gather detailed information on the State's data collection and reporting processes. We will also conduct an in-person interview with the State SNAP Director.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-NEW. The time required to provide this information collection is estimated to average 3 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the collection of information.

Schools. We will conduct one visit to each school where we will meet with the school food manager to explore the procedures and processes for collecting and reporting meal count data for the FNS-10. Data collection will NOT include any classroom visits, teacher interviews or student assessments/interviews and will NOT impact the school curriculum.

6. Why should I participate?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Be assured that there will be no penalties if you decide not to respond, either to the information collection as a whole or to any particular questions. Your input is valuable. Participating SFA and school staff are "the voice" of many districts and schools like yours across the country. Information from the study will help FNS improve required data collection and identify best practices to reduce the incidence of errors.

Keep in mind this is a research study; it is not an audit or monitoring visit. The study will not affect meal reimbursements received by participating SFAs and schools, nor school meal program benefits received by students or households. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 includes a provision that SFAs and schools cooperate with officials and contractors to conduct program, research and evaluation.

7. Will the information we provide be secure and private?

All information gathered from the States, SFAs, and schools is for research purposes only and is not shared with anyone outside the research team and is kept private, except as otherwise required by law. Additionally, no individual persons, SFAs, or schools will be identified in public documents or public use data files.

8. What if I have more questions? Who do I contact for more information?

For more information about the study contact the Project Director, Allison Roeser, at [insert study phone number] or via email at [insert study email address].