

## APPENDIX C-7. STATE CHILD NUTRITION GUIDE- PRE-VISIT



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### EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL MEAL DATA COLLECTION PROCESS STATE CHILD NUTRITION PRE-VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you again for taking the time to talk with me today. My name is [INTERVIEWER'S NAME] and I work for Westat, a private research company in Rockville, Maryland and we are contacting you on behalf of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). On the call with me is [NOTE TAKER'S NAME] who will be taking notes.

FNS is interested in understanding and improving the processes used to collect and report program data. The purpose of this study is to describe how schools, School Food Authorities (SFAs), and State agencies collect and report school meal program data via three forms:

- 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.

We will also identify where errors tend to occur during data collection and transmission. The final product will be a description of the data collection processes for these forms, and recommendations to improve processes and increase accuracy.

We are conducting four State-based case studies that include qualitative interviews with 4 State Child Nutrition agencies, 10 SFAs in each State, and 3 schools per SFA in order to describe the data collection processes and gather information to better understand areas for improvement. We will also be interviewing the State SNAP agency and key staff within the Child Nutrition agency. Your State is one of the four States selected for case study.

The purpose of today's discussion is to gather and confirm information about your State agency operations that will help make the on-site interviews as efficient and productive as possible.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not have any impact on your position or on the Child Nutrition programs. You can take a break, skip questions, or stop participating at any time.

[NOTE TAKER'S NAME] is on the call to take notes, but know that the information you share in this discussion will be kept private, except as otherwise required by law. Your name will not be linked to any of your responses. In our reports we may include quotes from our respondents, but these will be presented without the speaker's name and in such a way that you could not be identified.

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 for the State Child Nutrition Director to provide this information collection is estimated to average 45 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.

With your permission, I would like to record this discussion to help us fill any gaps in our written notes. The recordings, transcripts, and any notes we have will be stored on Westat's secure server and will be destroyed after the project is complete.

If you have questions about your rights and welfare as a research participant, please call the Westat Human Subjects Protections office at 1-888-920-7631. Please leave a message with your full name, the name of the research study that you are calling about, which is the School Meal Forms study, and a phone number beginning with the area code. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.

We have planned for this discussion to last 45 minutes. Is that still okay?

Do you have any questions? [ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS]

Do I have your consent to participate?

May I turn on the audio recorder now?

IF YES: [ONCE RECORDER IS ON, "Now that the recorder is on, do I still have your permission to audio record this interview?" MAKE SURE YOU GET AN AUDIBLE "Yes" FROM RESPONDENT.]

### **Warm Up**

1. To start, please tell me about your role at the agency and how long you have worked here.

### **Context**

2. Please explain the organizational structure of your agency and how the Child Nutrition program fits into that structure.
3. Tell me about how the Child Nutrition program staff in your office are organized.

#### **Probes:**

- a. How are work units organized? IF NEEDED: (how are they organized to perform various functions - monitoring, technical assistance, reporting)?
  - b. Are there other State agencies involved with the school meal programs in your State?
  - c. [If yes] In what capacity do you work with these other agencies?
  - d. How do the Child Nutrition program staff interact with the financial management staff?
4. Tell me about how your Child Nutrition program works with school food authorities to implement the school meals program.

[ASK FOR ANY DOCUMENTATION THEY CAN SHARE.]

#### **Probes:**

- a. How do you interact with districts? How often?
- b. Which staff in your program interact with school districts? Does this include directors? Managers? Other staff?

5. For the three forms in this study—the FNS-10, FNS-742 and FNS-834-- we'd like to understand the department and key people that work on each form. For the on-site visit, we would like to interview those key staff who work on each form.

**FNS-10**

a. Starting with the FNS-10, which is the form that collects meal claim information, which group is primarily responsible for completion of this form? [INTERVIEWER NOTE: ask probes to identify the key staff we would want to interview when on site]

b. Within that group, who are one or two key staff that work most closely with this form and best understand the process to collect, validate, and submit the meal claims data?

[INTERVIEWER: COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE KEY STAFF MENTIONED]

c. Which staff in the financial department or others outside of your program are involved with the form?

[INTERVIEWER: COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE KEY STAFF MENTIONED]

**FNS-742**

d. And for the FNS-742 form, which collects verification information for each SFA in the State, which group is primarily responsible for completing this form? [INTERVIEWER NOTE: ask probes to identify key staff we would want to interview when on site].

e. Within [insert group name] who are the one or two key staff that work most closely with this form and best understand the process to collect, validate, and submit the verification data?

[INTERVIEWER: COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE KEY STAFF MENTIONED]

**FNS-834**

f. And lastly, which group is responsible for completing the FNS-834 form? This is the form that collects the number of SNAP children in Special Provision Schools operating in a non-base year. The data is used to calculate the State's direct certification rate.

g. Within [insert group name] who are the one or two key staff that work most closely with this form?

[INTERVIEWER: COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE KEY STAFF MENTIONED]

IF NEEDED: by 'primarily responsible' we mean the group/staff that collects, validates and aggregates the data from the SFA and then puts the data into FPRS and submits to FNS.

6. Tell me about the Child Nutrition program's Management Information System (MIS), known as [enter name of State's MIS] for collecting and monitoring school meal data.

IF INTERVIEWER DOES NOT HAVE THE NAME OF THE MIS ASK: What is the name of your Child Nutrition program's Management Information System?

**Probes:**

- a. Is the school meal data stored in one system or multiple systems? IF NEEDED: By this we mean the meal claiming, certification, verification and direct certification data.
  - i. [If multiple systems] Are there any staff you have not already mentioned that we should interview to understand how these different systems work, related to the data on the three forms?

- 7. This has been very helpful. Now that you have a better understanding of the type of information we are gathering, is there any other context you'd like to share with us as we prepare for the on-site visit?

**Wrap Up**

- 8. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today. Do you have any final questions or thoughts?

We'll look forward to seeing you as well as [names of key staff] for our site visit. As a reminder, during our site visit we'll also be meeting with the SNAP State Director, 10 SFAs and 30 schools within your State. You'll receive follow up information via email from Westat.

[REMINDER: FNS may be able to provide info on the name of the person who submits FPRS data for each form, to facilitate this interview with the State director. Confirm the FPRS person with the Director. If it isn't known before the interview, inquire about the key staff for FPRS].