

APPENDIX C-8 STATE CHILD NUTRITION DIRECTOR GUIDE



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EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL MEAL DATA COLLECTION PROCESS STATE CHILD NUTRITION 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. With me today is [NOTE TAKER'S NAME] who will be taking notes.

Consent Form

PURPOSE: The federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is interested in understanding and improving the processes used to collect and report program data. FNS hired Westat to conduct a study 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 the process and increase accuracy.

HOW YOU WERE SELECTED: We are conducting four state-based case studies that include qualitative interviews with 4 State Child Nutrition and SNAP 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. Westat worked with FNS to select states based on factors such as state size, FNS region, use and type of management information system (MIS) and direct certification system processes.

INFORMATION TO BE COLLECTED: As a State Child Nutrition Director, we will ask about your experience with the FNS 10, FNS 742 and FNS-384. We will also ask about your experience collaborating with other departments or agencies as well as any suggestions you may have on how to improve all forms and the corresponding submission process.

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 30 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.

RISKS AND PRIVACY: There is little risk to being part of this study. We use all data we collect only for the purposes we describe. 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. Participating in the survey may not help you individually, but it may help us better understand how to improve the completion of FNS-10, FNS-742 and FNS-834.

STUDY COSTS AND COMPENSATION: There is no cost to you to join this study. The interview takes about 30 minutes

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your participation is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not have any impact on your position or child nutrition programs. You can take a break, skip questions or stop participating at any time.

[NOTE TAKER'S NAME] is here with me to take notes, but know that the information you share in this discussion will be kept private.

QUESTIONS: 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 Evaluation of School Meal Data Collection, 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 30 minutes. Is that still okay?

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.

Do you have any questions? [ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS]

If you agree to participate in this interview, please read the following statement and sign your name below.

I have read the above information about this project and my rights as a participant. I consent to participate in this research and to have this discussion audio-taped.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

If you do not agree to be audio recorded, please cross out "and to have this discussion audio-taped" in the sentence above.

May I turn on the audio recorder now?

Thanks for taking the time to complete the pre-site visit interview over the phone with someone from our team. The information you provided on how your agency is structured and organized was very helpful.

As mentioned, we are going to be focusing on processes related to the FNS-10, FNS-742 and FNS-834 forms during our conversation. The purpose of this interview is to gain a high-level understanding of the data collection and reporting process. We understand that as the director, you may not have detailed information for all questions.

INTERVIEWER: SHOW A HARD COPY OF EACH FORM. DURING INTERVIEW DETERMINE TERMINOLOGY STATE AGENCY USES TO REFER TO THE THREE FNS FORMS, SFAs, STATE SYSTEMS, ETC., AND MODIFY QUESTION WORDING AS NEEDED.

Communication

When we last spoke you identified staff involved in submitting the school meal data. I want to ask now about the FNS Regional Office's involvement.

1. How does the Regional Office typically communicate with your program? (monthly calls, onsite visits, ad hoc meetings, TA)

Probes:

- a. How often?
 - b. Who do they interact with most frequently?
2. Does the Regional Office provide any technical assistance or other guidance regarding processing schools meals data (claims data, verification)?

Overview of Processes

3. When we spoke during the pre-visit interview, we briefly discussed the FNS-10 form that collects school meal claims information. Are there any challenges your staff face in collecting or submitting the data for this form? Describe.
 - a. Is there anything else that you think we should know about this form or school meal claims data?
4. How about for the FNS-742, which collects verification information for each SFA. Are there any challenges with collecting verification information for each SFA? Describe.
 - a. Is there anything else that you think we should know about this form or about verification data?

5. For the FNS-834, which is used by FNS to calculate your State's direct certification rate, your agency provides Data Element #3, which is the number of SNAP children in special provision schools operating in a non-base year. Are there any challenges with this form?
 - a. Is there anything else we should know about direct certification with SNAP?
 - b. The SNAP State agency provides Data Element #2, the number of school-aged children in SNAP households in July, August and September. Do you have any thoughts or concerns about how they arrive at their number?

Suggestions

6. If you could, what changes would you make to the FNS-10 to improve the form or submission process?
7. What about the FNS-742?
8. What about the FNS-834?
9. Is there anything you think the State could improve on with regard to collecting school meal data?

Wrap Up

10. Reflecting on everything we have discussed today and in our phone call earlier, what do you think your State does really well with regard to processing school meal program data?

If needed: meal claims data, verification data, direct certification

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