

**B.4 SUGGESTED TEXT FOR RECRUITING CALL (TO SFA DIRECTOR)**

Hello, is Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ available? (Occasionally they put you through, but most likely you should be prepared to answer a couple questions)

If asked why you're calling or who you are:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling to follow up on a letter sent to Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ about a new study of the school lunch and breakfast program that your district has been selected to participate in. Could I speak to Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ about the study?

**If the secretary doesn't know about the letter and doesn't want to talk to you or pass you through until she sees the letter:**

What's your fax number? I'll send it in a few minutes and call again this afternoon. And your name again? Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ for your help.

**If asked for more details:**

The study is being conducted for the USDA and will focus on SY 2012-2013. It will provide information about students' participation in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and on the certification process. The study will help Congress and the USDA improve the school lunch and breakfast programs and ensure that intended recipients have access to them. We would like to discuss the study with the SFA Director and ask him/her about characteristics of schools in his/her SFA and participation in options like Provision 2, Provision 3, and the Community Eligibility Option.

**If told the SFA Director is unavailable:**

Is there someone else I can speak to about the study? Is there an assistant SFA director I can speak with? Would it be appropriate for me to call the superintendent's office?

**If the secretary says you should speak to the SFA Director:**

Could I schedule a time to call Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_? (If not:) Please ask Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ to call me at \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you so much for your help.

**If the secretary says you should speak to someone else:**

Thank you for your help. Please let Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ know I called and inform [him][her] I'll call \_\_\_\_\_ to talk about the study.



## **SUGGESTED TEXT - SPEAKING TO SFA DIRECTOR (OR SUPERINTENDENT)**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm working on a study of the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs for the USDA. Your district and the following schools [SCHOOL NAMES] have been selected to participate in the study. The study will provide important information needed for the USDA to improve the school breakfast and lunch programs, and ensure that intended recipients of these programs have access to them.

*If they ask how we selected their district:*

All school districts in the nation had a chance of participating. 176 districts were selected across the nation, each representing hundreds of districts like them in the country.

### **Why you should participate:**

- This study is authorized under the 2002 Improper Payments Information Act, which requires all Federal agencies that administer large programs to identify and reduce erroneous payments and report their findings to the Office of Management and Budget. Participation of selected districts and schools is required under Section 305 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- You are "the voice" of many districts like yours - you represent hundreds of districts like yours across the country.
- This is an important study for FNS and the USDA, and your experiences and opinions about the lunch and breakfast programs are extremely valuable to the study.
- The study will help FNS ensure that benefits are provided to those students that need them most.
- This study will help Congress make informed decisions when they make changes to the school breakfast and lunch programs.
- The study will not affect meal reimbursements received by participating districts and schools nor school meal program benefits received by students or households. It is not an audit or monitoring visit.

### **Study Endorsements**

- USDA FNSRO (regional office) director/liason: NAME
- State Child Nutrition Agency director: NAME
- School Nutrition Association

**The study will have minimal requests of your district and participating schools.**

- The study does not include any classroom visits, it does not include any teacher interviews or student interviews, and it does not impact your curriculum.
- It is a one year study that will occur during the 2012-2013 school year.
- Sometime between February and April 2013, we'll ask each SFA food service director to complete a survey.
- Except for P2/3 schools in a non-base year, we will visit the district and participating schools once or twice in a target week at some point during the school year. Depending on the when these visits are scheduled, we may have to schedule one other short visit earlier in the school year to get the study started.
- During the visits, we'll need access to school breakfast and lunch records that you already have readily available. For example, we'll need access to lists of meal program applicants and directly certified students.
- During the first visit, we'll use the lists of applicants and directly certified students to the school meal programs to select a sample for the study. We'll need contact information for the sampled students so that we can ask parents to complete a survey for the study.
- We will need access to sampled students' applications and direct certification documentation so we can abstract some information from the forms. Our visitors have been specially trained to abstract the data themselves, so your school and district staff does not have to take the time to do so. We would prefer photocopying this information to avoid errors in transcription.
- If schools in your SFA are participating in the Community Eligibility Option, we will also request lists of all enrolled students, but we will not be contacting those students' households to complete a survey. We will sample students from three groups: directly certified, certified by application, and "paid" students, and we will compare sampled students with lists of students participating in SNAP, TANF, and other programs to see if they should have been counted as directly certified (really identified students in CEO eligibility determinations)
- We will need access to records of meal counts and claims to the SFA for sampled schools and SFA's claims to the state child nutrition agency for a target week and month.

**If they ask what we're interviewing parents about:**

The interview will ask parents or guardians about their participation in the programs, and about household size and income and participation in programs such as SNAP or TANF. [***If asked why we're asking about income:*** The information on income sources and amounts will help document how accurately households' report income on their application or how accurately school districts determine eligibility for meal benefits.]

**Privacy:**

All information gathered from school districts, schools, and households is for research purposes only and is kept private. No individual districts, schools, or students will ever be identified. We will inform parents of the study and our privacy procedures.

**If they ask for our authority to access the records:**

As part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, SFAs are required by law and program regulations to make all records available for review by FNS and its agents. As an agent of FNS conducting the study, we have access to the information being requested. However, please feel free to refer to your own program regulations and FNS to confirm this.

## **Study Approval:**

We want to make sure we get the appropriate approvals for your district to participate in the study because the study will ask for lists of students and contact information to mail letters to households. Therefore, we sent a letter to the superintendent informing [him][her] about the study. Is the superintendent the appropriate person to contact?

### **If superintendent not the right person to talk to about approval:**

Who should I speak to about obtaining approval?

### **If they know about the approval process:**

What are the steps in the process? How long do you anticipate it taking to get approval? Can we do anything to facilitate the process?

***If approval is needed, help if you can. Alternatively, call them back to follow up on their approval process in a week or other agreed upon timeframe.***

## **Detailed Information to Collect in Initial Call:**

### **Determining Whether Food Service Management Company/Multiple Departments Involved in Certification and Meal Counting and Claiming Activities**

Are all aspects of the certification and meal counting and claiming process under your purview, or are some of these functions spread across other administrative bodies (meaning spread across different organizations, it's okay if it's spread across staff in the same organization)? For example, we will encounter food management companies as the SFA contact, that will be responsible for the food aspect including the meal counts and claims, but not the applications, certification, or verification—that might be done by someone in administration.

If spread across multiple organizations: Who is responsible for applications, certification, or verification? Who is responsible for meal counts and claims?

### **Verifying Sampled Schools—Whether Sampled Schools Still Operating and Any New Schools**

Are any of the sampled schools no longer operating? If so, then we'll need to substitute for it with its replacement (alternate). SFAs should know this, because they need to serve lunches and breakfasts at these locations.

Has your district added any new schools since Fall 2010 or are any new schools planned to open by the beginning of the SY 2012-2013? For each

newly added school, what is the name, grades served, enrollment (estimate is fine), # F/RP students (if possible, or have them estimate), and is the school electing Provision 2/3 (and if so, whether in base or non-base year) or the Community Eligibility Option? This information needs to get to John Hall, so he can determine whether the original selections remain the same for the district, or one or more new schools replace the main selections. Tell district that the sampled schools are probably the selections, but one school could change.

**IF DISTRICT IS IN THE NON-CEO SAMPLE, ASK:**

According to my records, none of the schools in your district participate in the Community Eligibility Option (CEO). Is that correct? IF YES (NO SCHOOLS ARE CEO), NO MORE INFORMATION IS NEEDED, SKIP TO “NEXT STEPS”

IF NO (SOME OR ALL SCHOOLS ARE CEO), ASK: Do all schools in your district participate in CEO, or just some of them?

IF ALL PARTICIPATE IN CEO ASK: Did they all elect CEO as individual schools, groups of individual schools, or did the entire district elect CEO district-wide? SKIP TO SCRIPT A, NEED TO RESAMPLE

IF ONLY SOME PARTICIPATE IN CEO ASK: How many schools in your district participate in CEO? (ESTIMATE IS FINE). Did they elect CEO together as one group, as separate groups, or as separate, individual schools? SKIP TO SCRIPT A, NEED TO RESAMPLE

**SCRIPT A: NEED TO RESAMPLE**

Thank you for that information. I’m going to have to check back with the study director and sampling statistician. We may need to resample schools from your district based on the information you provided. **GO TO NEXT STEPS**

**IF DISTRICT IS IN THE CEO SAMPLE, ASK:**

According to my records, some schools in your district participate in the Community Eligibility Option. Do all of the schools in your district participate in CEO?

**IF YES, GO TO NEXT STEPS.**

**IF NO, ONLY SOME PARTICIPATE, GO TO SCRIPT B.**

**IF NONE OF DISTRICT’S SCHOOLS ARE CEO, SAY:**

Thank you for that information. I’m going to have to check back with the study director and sampling statistician to determine which schools three schools will be selected to participate in the study. We may need to resample schools from your district based on the information you provided.

**GO TO NEXT STEPS**

**SCRIPT B: For each of our sampled schools,**

I need to find out whether they participate in CEO, and if so, whether they participate in CEO in a group with other schools or as an individual school.



## **Next Steps:**

I'll contact Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ about obtaining approval for [district name] to participate in the study. Would it be best to include you in that phone call?

## **If the SFA Director wants to be included in a conference call:**

What day and times are good for you? I'll call the district office to set up the call with [superintendent name][administrator name] during one of the times you've mentioned. I'll call or email you with confirmation of the time and date. Would you prefer I notify you of the conference call date by email or phone?

*Once you've gotten the blessing of the SFA director and the approval of the district administration, make sure a point of contact is designated for future interactions about the study. At that point, send the point of contact the MOU.*

## **After the district agrees to the study and is working on the MOU:**

I appreciate all of your help with study. As the date of our first visit to the district approaches a member of the data collection team will contact you to coordinate logistics.

Important information to track about the SFA and sampled school include:

- general procedures
- location of lists and applications
- logistics of meal services
- counting and claiming procedures

## **If they are hesitant about the study...**

Participation in the study will not affect meal reimbursements to participating districts and schools nor will it affect the meal program benefits received by participating students and households. We are not conducting audits or monitoring visits in the study. The goal of the study is to ensure that all eligible students who need the benefits of this program are able and do receive benefits.

Finally, the USDA must conduct this study in order to meet its reporting requirements to the Office of Management and Budget. Districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program receive federal reimbursement for meals provided to school children, and regularly make program records available for review by the USDA and FNS. Doing so ensures that USDA can fulfill its reporting

obligations to the Office of Management and Budget, and FNS would appreciate your cooperation.

## Helpful Hints:

- This information may take several contacts to convey - don't bury them with details until you need to.
- Emphasize the fact you are working on a study for USDA and FNS.
- Stress the low-burden nature of this study, the fact you are not asking for anything new, and that you're only asking for information they have readily available.
- Characterize the study as low intensity, collecting data from households not students, and the SFA/school data collection is similar to the Coordinated Review process.
- Once you get the SFA director's buy-in, call the superintendent and tell the secretary quickly that you just spoke with [NAME OF SFA DIRECTOR], and [he][she] referred you to the superintendent's office.
- Secretaries can be gatekeepers, be nice to them!
- Make sure you get the secretary's name before you get off the phone with them. If you are stuck in a rut leaving messages, it's very helpful to address the secretary personally in subsequent calls.
- If you can't get through to the person you're calling, ask the secretary who you can talk to.
- Try to avoid getting stuck with the "they'll call you back" response. It's better to talk to someone, if you can.
- If you can't get through, call every other day until you are able to speak with someone.

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