



Third Access, Participation,  
Eligibility and Certification  
Study Series

## Third Access Participation Eligibility and Certification Study Series (APEC III)

### SFA PRE-VISIT INTERVIEW

**SUMMARY:**

The home office scheduler will use this guide to conduct a pre-visit interview by phone with SFA Directors (or their designee) to schedule the data collection visit, and obtain the details needed to prepare for the data collection site visit to the SFA.

The home office scheduler will record the information on hardcopy to later enter key information in the study management system (SMS), or he/she may enter the information directly into the SMS while on the call.

Text that should be read to the respondent is presented in mixed case text. All instructions or notes to the home office scheduler are in ALL CAPS. These are not read to the respondent, but are guidelines for the data collector.

Differential text choices are presented in parenthesis while information obtained from the SMS report are in [bolded/bracketed] text.

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 0584-0530. The time required for the SFA Director to provide this information collection is estimated to average 20 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.

## APPENDIX B5. SFA PRE-VISIT INTERVIEW

### SECTION A: INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT

Hello, my name is [FULL NAME] with Westat and I am calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's(USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Third Access Participation Eligibility and Certification Study Series (APEC III). Thank you again for your participation in APEC III. I am contacting you now to schedule your data collection visit, and prepare for your data collection visit. Our discussion may take about 20 minutes. Are you available to talk at this time?

DATA COLLECTOR: IF RESPONDENT IS THE SFA DIRECTOR/CONTACT SAYS YES—CONTINUE

DATA COLLECTOR: IF SFA DIRECTOR/CONTACT IS NOT ABLE TO TALK AT THIS TIME, ATTEMPT APPOINTMENT.

IF APPOINTMENT MADE—RECORD IN THE ELECTRONIC RECORD OF COMMUNICATION (EROC) AND POLITELY THANK SPONSOR OR CENTER CONTACT AND TERMINATE CALL

IF RESPONDENT WANTS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE STUDY—CONTINUE (ALSO REFER TO STUDY FAQs)

As part of data collection at your SFA the data collector will conduct the following:

- 1) [FOR NON CEP SCHOOLS ONLY]. Abstract information for the sampled list of households from the application for meal benefits.
- 2) Abstract data from meal claim records your SFA submitted to the State agency.
- 3) Abstract data from meal claim records submitted to the SFA by the schools.

IF THE SFA HAS NOT PROVIDED AN ELECTRONIC STUDENT FILE:

- 4) The data collector will obtain information about enrolled students at the sampled schools. This will include certification status, application status/information, and parent contact information. This information will be used to sample a subset of households for a household survey.
- 5) IF SFA HAS CEP SCHOOLS SAMPLED: For CEP schools, the data collector will obtain information and records about the ISP, identified and non-identified students, and source documentation to support the ISP.

As a reminder, the data collector will also conduct an in person survey with sampled households. The household survey portion of this study is using the public friendly name: The National School Meals Study (NSMS).

I will provide more details about the data collection visit, but first I would like to schedule a date for the data collector to conduct the visit.

[SCHEDULE AND CONFIRM THE DATA COLLECTION VISIT. RECORD THE INFORMATION IN THE SMS]

You will receive an email reminder two weeks prior to the data collection visit. This email will include the name and contact information of the data collector.

## **APPENDIX B5. SFA PRE-VISIT INTERVIEW**

DATA COLLECTOR: IN VERY FEW CASES, THE SFA REQUESTED THE LIST OF THE DATA COLLECTORS SOONER THAN 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO DATA COLLECTION. CHECK THE NOTES IN THE SMS.

Are there any special instructions or information about access to the building and parking that the data collector may need to know about prior to the site visit (e.g., general information, a parking garage, an escort needed in the building or some other security requirement, hours of operation, special directions, etc.)?

### **SECTION B: SFA CONTACT INFORMATION**

I have the following address and contact information for your SFA:

READ CONTACT INFORMATION FROM SMS

Is this information correct?

IF NEEDED, RECORD UPDATES.

Is there another person other than you (or a backup person) that should be our Site Visit Contact?

RECORD INFORMATION PROVIDED.

Do you have any questions about the study that I can answer for you?

USE STUDY FAQS OR OTHER DATA COLLECTION MATERIALS TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ANSWER THEM, LET THE CONTACT KNOW THAT YOU WILL LOOK INTO THE QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW UP WITH THEM.

### **SECTION C: APPLICATION DATA ABSTRACTION (FOR NON-CEP AND PROVISION 1, 2 & 3 SCHOOLS)**

When the data collector comes onsite, he/she will first need to pull an enrollment list that details the number of students in each sampled school along with their meal certification status (i.e. free, reduced-price, paid with application (denied), and paid with no application). The data collector will conduct our sampling for the Household Survey from these lists using a sampling program on our laptops. After the sample is selected, the data collector will need to pull the applications for meal benefits for the sampled students.

IF PROVISION SCHOOL: the data collector will be requesting the enrollment list from your base year. The applications we abstract will also be from the base year.

IF THE SFA HAS ALREADY PROVIDED AN ELECTRONIC STUDENT FILE:

Thank you for providing Westat with an electronic enrollment list ahead of our on-site visit. Sampling for the household survey has been conducted and our data collectors will provide you with a list of the sampled students. The data collector will need to see the applications for meal benefits for each of the sampled students. For directly certified students, the data collector may need to review direct certification list.

IF PROVISION SCHOOL: As a reminder, the applications we are requesting will be from your base year.

## **APPENDIX B5. SFA PRE-VISIT INTERVIEW**

DURING THE DISCUSSION WITH THE SFA DIRECTOR/CONTACT, BE SURE TO CAPTURE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- How are student income eligibility applications stored (hardcopy or electronic)?
  - If there is missing information on hardcopy files, are there notes recorded in another location?
- IF STUDENT APPLICATIONS ARE ELECTRONIC, will the data collector be able to print out and scan electronic information?
- IF STUDENT APPLICATIONS ARE HARDCOPY, where are they stored (school or SFA, or at both places)?
  - IF APPLICATIONS ARE STORED AT THE SAMPLED SCHOOLS, obtain the name and contact information of the person responsible for keeping them.
  - IF APPLICATIONS ARE STORED AT THE SFA, is there a primary contact (other than the SFA Director) that is responsible for keeping the income eligibility applications? If so, obtain their name and contact information.
- Is there any other information we need to know about the applications prior to the site visit?

RECORD ALL INFORMATION LEARNED WITHIN THE SMS.

IF APPLICATIONS ARE STORED SOMEWHERE OTHER THAN THE SFA OR SCHOOL: I will consult with the study team to discuss strategies on how to gather the application data. I will follow up with you on this. For now, let's continue.

### **SECTION E: SFA MEAL COUNT AND CLAIMING DATA**

During the site visit, we will also be asking for meal count and claiming information for a target month. The target month is the last calendar month in which meal count and claims were submitted by the school and SFA. This is usually 1-2 calendar months prior to the site visit.

DURING THE DISCUSSION WITH THE SFA DIRECTOR/CONTACT, BE SURE TO CAPTURE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Is there a different person at the SFA (other than the primary contact) who is responsible for claims reimbursement? If yes, obtain their name and contact information.
- Does the SFA follow the same procedures for all of the sampled schools, or do the procedures vary by schools (same or vary)? IF IT VARIES BY SCHOOL, OBTAIN AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE.
- Who submits meal reimbursement claims to the State CN agency (SFA, school or other)?
- Are claims submitted to the State reported separately for each school or consolidated?
- How often do the schools report claims data to the SFA (quarterly, monthly, or other) and in what format (electronic, hardcopy mail or other)?
- Is there any other information that we need to know about your meal counts and claiming process?

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RECORD ALL INFORMATION LEARNED WITHIN THE SMS.

### SECTION F: RECORDS

To reduce the burden on you and your staff, the data collector will securely scan applications and meal claiming records for data abstraction (instead of making photocopies). All data scanned will be maintained on a secure password protected laptop and database system.

PLEASE CHECK THE BOX IF SFA OBJECTS TO SCANNING OF ANY OR ALL INFORMATION FOR DATA COLLECTION.

Objects to Scanning

### SECTION G: ESCORTING DATA COLLECTORS

DATA COLLECTOR: SOME SFA'S WANT TO ESCORT THE DATA COLLECTOR TO THE SCHOOLS. OF THIS GROUP, SOME ASKED THAT THE DATA COLLECTOR MEET THE SFA STAFF MEMBER AT THE SFA FACILITY, OTHERS WILL MEET THE DATA COLLECTOR AT THE SCHOOL. CHECK THE NOTES IN THE SMS.

[IF APPLICABLE]: Who will be the person escorting the data collectors into the schools and how we can get in contact with that person when we are scheduling the visits to the schools?

### SECTION H: THANK YOU/CLOSE

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. As a reminder our visit to your school is scheduled for: **[INSERT DATES]**. You will receive a confirmation email two weeks prior to the visit. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the study directly at 855-820-6138 or [schoolmealstudy@westat.com](mailto:schoolmealstudy@westat.com). We look forward to working with you to complete the APEC III.