

APPENDIX 03. STATE FOLLOW UP CONTACT GUIDE

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Expiration Date:
XX/XX/XXXX



Third Access, Participation,
Eligibility and Certification
Study Series

This call guide is to be used by the APEC III research team when following up with State Child Nutrition Directors/Primary Contact. All calls should be made within one week of mailing the State Notification Letters from the FNS Regional Office. This guide is organized as follows:

- Step 1: Introduction and purpose of the call
- Step 2: Confirm receipt of mailing for States who have not returned spreadsheets
- Step 3: Gain cooperation from State CN Director to encourage SFA participation
- Step 4: Gather information about SFAs that help facilitate their participation

Before placing a call, determine if the FNS Regional Liaison has returned a completed spreadsheet. You can find a list of all states that have returned a spreadsheet at:

[SFA Recruitment\SFA Contact Information\01 Overall Recruitment Status.xlsx](#)

If a spreadsheet has not been returned, call the State Child Nutrition Director found in the following directory:

[APECIII\Recruitment\Child Nutrition Directors\Cop of StateCNDirectors 2016.xlsx](#)

Follow the script based on whether or not the spreadsheet has been returned.

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 State Child Nutrition Director to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data

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Important Notes for Research Team (Caller):

1. The outcome/findings from every call must be documented in the Call Record Sheet.
2. Any text that should be read to the contact is presented in sentence case.
3. All instructions or notes to the caller are in ALL CAPS. These are not read to the contact.
4. Callers may use a hardcopy version of this guide to complete the interaction. However, the result of a call and updated contact information must be documented on the Call Record sheet immediately following the call.

Helpful Hints:

1. Contact the State Child Nutrition Primary Contact from the spreadsheet completed by the State CN Director. If no Primary Contact has been chosen, speak with the State CN Director.
2. Have handy a hard copy of the documents that FNS Liaisons sent to the CN Directors
3. This information may take several contacts to convey - don't overwhelm the respondent with details until you need to.
4. Emphasize the fact you are working on a study for the USDA and FNS.
5. Emphasize that this is not an audit.
6. 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.
7. If/when you sense hesitation or that they are overwhelmed/busy, offer options to reduce burden. For example, offer to take information over the phone or via email if that's easier than filling out a spreadsheet.
8. Characterize the study as low intensity, collecting data from households not students, and abstracting records from SFAs or schools.

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9. Secretaries/administrative assistants can be gatekeepers, be nice to them!
10. Focus on developing relationships.
11. Make sure you obtain and note the names of each person you talk to on the phone before you get off the phone with them. When you are having difficulty, it's very helpful to address him/her personally in subsequent calls.
12. Use Outlook to schedule appointments. This gets it on their calendar.
13. If you can't get through to the person you're calling, ask the secretary/ administrative assistant who you can talk to.
14. Try to avoid getting stuck with the "they'll call you back" response. It's better to talk to someone, if you can.
15. Use email as much as possible. It can be more effective than letters or phone calls.
16. Emails should be professional, but avoid strict or formal language that may put people off or seem too demanding.
17. If you can't get through, call every other day until you are able to speak with someone.

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE CALL

Hello, my name is <INSERT NAME> and I am calling from Westat regarding the APEC III Study for the USDA. Is <STATE CN DIRECTOR/PRIMARY CONTACT> available? (AS NEEDED:) Your office recently received notice of the study from your Regional Office. This call is to follow-up on that communication.

IF SPEAKING TO STATE CN DIRECTOR OR THE PRIMARY CONTACT, CONTINUE TO STEP 2.
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IF ANOTHER PERSON ANSWERS THE PHONE:

My name is < INSERT NAME > and I work for Westat, a research company based in Rockville, MD. I am calling on behalf of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service about the APEC III Study. Westat has a contract with Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to conduct this study. I would like to speak with

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< CONTACT NAME> about the (letter/email) recently sent by <NAME OF FNS REGIONAL LIAISON>, about this important study.

WHEN SPEAKING TO STATE CN DIRECTOR OR THE PRIMARY CONTACT, CONTINUE TO STEP 2.

IF PRIMARY CONTACT IS NOT AVAILABLE OR BUSY:

When would be a good time to call back to reach (you/< CONTACT NAME>)?

--RECORD CALLBACK DATE AND TIME ON THE CALL RECORD SHEET--

I have made a note to call back at that time. (Can you please let < CONTACT NAME> know that I called today?

In the meantime, if (you have/< CONTACT NAME> has) any questions, (he/she/you) can call me at 1-855-820-6138 or send an email to schoolmealstudy@westat.com. Again, my name is <INSERT NAME>. Thank you for your help today. Goodbye.

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ANSWERING MACHINE MESSAGE:

- ON FIRST ATTEMPT, LEAVE VOICE MAIL
- DO NOT LEAVE VOICE MAIL ON CALLS 2 THROUGH 4
- ON FIFTH ATTEMPT, LEAVE A SECOND VOICEMAIL MESSAGE

VOICE MAIL MESSAGE: My name is < INSERT NAME>. I work for Westat, a research company based in Rockville, MD. I am calling on behalf of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service about the APEC III Study. Your office recently received notice of the study from your regional office. This call is to follow-up on that communication.

I will call back and try to reach you later or, you can reach me by calling the toll-free number, 1-855-820-6138 and asking to speak to <INSERT NAME>. Again, my name is <INSERT NAME> and that toll-free number is: 1-855-820-6138. Thank you and goodbye.

STEP 2: CONFIRMING RECEIPT OF THE ELECTRONIC MAILING

ARE YOU SPEAKING WITH THE:
PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON..... (GO TO STEP 2A)
CHILD NUTRITION DIRECTOR..... ...(CONTINUE WITH STEP 2)

Recently your Regional Office sent you notification of the APEC III study and asked for your assistance with providing information for a point of contact in your office. We are also asking for your assistance in providing contact information for the sampled SFAs and encouraging cooperation among your State's sampled SFAs.

(IF NEEDED, ADD:) As a reminder, the purpose of the APEC III data collection is to enhance and validate models that FNS will use to produce estimates of certification errors and amounts of erroneous payments in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. APEC III is authorized under the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act (IPERIA) of 2012 to ensure the financial and programmatic integrity of programs such as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

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1. Do you recall receiving this information?

IF NEEDED, ADD: The materials request that you provide contact information for the SFAs sampled for the APEC III study. Do you recall receiving this request?

YES..... GO TO **STEP 2A**

NO..... GO TO 1A

1A. I will make a request that the materials are resent to you. (STOP CALL AND RECORD ON CALL RECORD SHEET THAT THEY DIDN'T RECEIVE THE EMAIL)

STEP 2A: ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

2. As the materials outline, APEC III data collectors will be conducting data collection in States, SFAs, schools, and households that participate in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

Do you have any questions about the study?

IF YES..... ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CONTINUE TO **STEP 3**

IF NO QUESTIONS..... GO TO **STEP 3.**

AS NEEDED, USE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION, THE FACT SHEET, AND YOUR FAMILIARITY OF THE STUDY TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

At the SFA/School/Household-level, data collection efforts will focus on school breakfast and lunch meal programs and will include the following:

1. Pre-visit interview with sampled SFAs and school personnel;
2. Review and abstraction of applications for meal benefits;
3. Observation of meal service at schools;
4. Brief interview with cafeteria managers to gather qualitative information about meal claiming procedures and process;
5. Review and abstraction of school and SFA meal counting and claiming records;
6. Household survey (in person) with a sample of parents/guardians of students that applied for meal benefits. [Note that the household survey component of APEC III is entitled National School Meals Study];

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7. An in-depth phone interview with a sub-set of parents/guardians that completed the Household survey to gather qualitative information about their application process and experience;
8. SFA Director survey (web-based) with questions regarding characteristics and processes; and
9. An in-depth phone interview with a sub-set of SFA Directors to gather qualitative information on the process for eligibility determination and potential sources of error.

STEP 3: GAIN COOPERATION FROM STATE CN DIRECTOR TO PROVIDE SFA CONTACT INFORMATION AND TO ENCOURAGE SFA PARTICIPATION

IF SFA CONTACT INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED, GO TO 4 (below).

IF SFA CONTACT INFORMATION HAS NOT BEEN PROVIDED, ASK 3:

3. The communication from the FNS Regional Office asked if you could provide the name of a member of your staff who could serve as point of contact for the study and the name and contact information for the SFAs sampled in your state. Have you had an opportunity to provide that information?

YES, INFORMATION SENT GO TO **4A.**

NO, NOT PROVIDED..... GO TO **3A.**

3A. It would be very helpful if you could provide this contact information. Will you be able to do this in the next week or so?

YES..... GO TO **4A.**

YES, BUT NOT SURE WHEN GO TO **3B.**

NO..... GO TO **3B.**

IF THERE IS HESITATION/TOO BUSY TO COMPLETE THE REQUEST, SET A DATE TO OBTAIN THAT INFORMATION OR ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN IT OVER THE PHONE RIGHT THEN. BE PREPARED WITH A LIST OF SFAs FOR THE STATE.

3B. When do you think you will be able to provide us this information? Alternatively, we can complete the name and contact information for the sampled SFAs right now over the phone.

RECORD DATE ON CALL RECORD SHEET.....GO TO **4A.**

OBTAIN INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE...GO TO **4A.**

4. (IF SFA CONTACT INFORMATION PROVIDED): We have received the spreadsheet with contact information you provided for each SFA. Thank you for providing this information. GO TO **4A.**

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CONTACT SFAs:

4A. (READ TO ALL): You were also asked to contact the SFAs and let them know they were selected to be sampled for the study. Have you had an opportunity to contact the SFAs sampled for APEC III using the template letter about their selection for the study?

YES..... GO TO **5**.

SOME, BUT NOT ALL
SAMPLED SFAs..... GO TO **5**.

NO, BUT HAS PLANS
TO DO SO..... GO TO **4B**.

NO, AND WILL NOT/DID NOT
MENTION PLANS..... GO TO **4B**.

--RECORD ANSWER/COMMENTS ON CALL RECORD SHEET

4B. It would be very helpful if you could contact each SFA to inform them that they were sampled to be included in APEC III. You received a template letter that may be used to draft your communication to sampled SFAs that explains the study. Will you be able to contact the SFAs in the next week? (AS NEEDED:) If you don't have a copy of this letter, I can email it to you. Would you like me to email you a copy of this letter?

YES..... GO TO **5**.

YES, BUT NOT SURE WHEN GO TO **5**.

NO..... GO TO **5**.

--RECORD ANSWER/COMMENTS ON CALL RECORD SHEET

CEP SOURCE DOCUMENTATION

5. I have a question about the source documentation used for meeting the requirements to elect CEP status. As you know, when an SFA elects CEP, the state reviews documentation to evaluate whether the requirements are met to elect CEP. While the SFA is supposed to maintain this source documentation, we are interested in finding out if the state of <<INSERT STATE>> also maintains the source documentation on every student used to calculate the ISP (Identified Student Percentage) at the time CEP was elected?

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(IF NEEDS CLARIFICATION): For example, if the ISP for a particular district or group of schools was last calculated in 2014 based on participation in SNAP, TANF, and other programs, does the state have the records or source documentation available for every student that was used for calculating that SFA's ISP?

(IF INDICATE THAT THE SFAs SHOULD KEEP THOSE RECORDS): While we understand that the SFA must maintain this documentation during the claiming period as well as for up to 3 years after the period, on rare occasions we may encounter an SFA that hasn't maintained this documentation and we are being proactive at this early stage to see if this information may be available at the state level.

(IF CONCERNED WE ARE EVALUATING THE STATE): We would only be reviewing this information to help generate a national estimate of the annual amount of erroneous payments. We are only asking to determine if there is a backup at the state level, in the rare instance that the SFA has not maintained their source documentation. We are not conducting a review or audit.

YES, STATE HAS DOCUMENTATION..... GO TO **5A**

NO..... GO TO **STEP 4**

NOT SURE..... GO TO **5B**.

5A. Can you describe what source documentation is available? (IF NEEDED:) Such as SNAP or TANF records.

How far back do you have this information?

PROBE FOR DETAILS AND ENTER COMMENTS ON THE CALL RECORD SHEET AND GO TO STEP 4

5B. Would you be able to look into whether the state maintains this source documentation and get back to me with what you find out?

YES, WILL LOOK INTO THIS..... GO TO **STEP 4**

NO/REFUSED..... GO TO **STEP 4**

STEP 4: GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT SFAS THAT MAY REQUIRE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6. Shortly we will contact the sampled SFAs to describe in greater detail their role in the APEC III Study. Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding how to proceed with the sampled SFAs in your state?

PROBE: Are there any SFAs on the sample list that may require special considerations?

- YES..... 1 GO TO **6A.**
- NO..... 2 GO TO **CLOSE**

6A. Please let me know what information you believe might be helpful for us to know when contacting the SFAs. WHEN FINISHED, GO TO CLOSE.

PROBE FOR DETAILS AND ENTER COMMENTS ON THE CALL RECORD SHEET

CLOSE: Thank you for your time today. If you have any questions about the APEC III Study at any time, you can call me at 1-855-820-6138 or send an email to schoolmealstudy@westat.com. Thank you again. Goodbye.

(AS NEEDED, IF STATE CN DIRECTOR OR STATE PRIMARY CONTACT HAS NOT REACHED OUT TO SFAS:) We truly appreciate any assistance you can offer to encourage cooperation among sampled SFAs. As a reminder, a template letter was provided to you to notify sampled SFAs of their role in the APEC III Study. Thank you!

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

SCENARIO B - SEND LETTER TO GATEKEEPER: IF ANOTHER PERSON OR SECRETARY DOES NOT KNOW ABOUT THE LETTER AND DOES NOT WANT TO TALK TO YOU OR PASS YOU THROUGH UNTIL THEY SEE THE LETTER, SAY

Can you please give me your email address? I'll send it to you shortly and call again. And your name again? Thank you for your help.

SCENARIO C - CONTACT UPDATES: IF CHANGES ARE NEEDED TO PRIMARY CONTACT'S NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL OR PHONE NUMBER

>IF THERE IS A BETTER
PRIMARY CONTACT..... SAY THE FOLLOWING:

What is the name of the best person to discuss this important study?
COLLECT FIRST AND LAST NAME.

What is the best phone number to reach (him/her)? Email address?

>IF PRIMARY CONTACT
NEEDS UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION..... SAY THE FOLLOWING:

Can you tell me how to best reach (him/her)?

--NOTE: ANY APPROPRIATE CHANGES IN PRIMARY CONTACT NAME,
WRONG NUMBER, AND BETTER PHONE NUMBER OR ADDRESS NEED TO
BEDOCUMENTED ON THE CALL RECORD SHEET

You can also ask < CONTACT NAME > to call the study's toll free number, 1-855-820-6138 or send an email to schoolmealstudy@westat.com providing (his/her) name and best contact information. Thank you for your time today. Goodbye.

NOTE: DO NOT LEAVE ADDITIONAL VOICE MAIL MESSAGES AFTER FIFTH CALL WITHOUT AN ANSWER. DISCUSS STRATEGIES FOR FOLLOW-UP WITH YOUR WESTAT SUPERVISOR.

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SCENARIO E - RESEND RECRUITMENT PACKET: IF INDIVIDUAL/PRIMARY CONTACT YOU SPEAK WITH STATES THAT THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE INFORMATION, SAY THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, I will be sure to re-send the materials to you. Let me confirm your email address. <READ EMAIL ADDRESS FROM CALL RECORD SHEET>.

Is this email address correct?

YES..... GO TO **[END CALL]**

NO..... GO TO **[UPDATE ADDRESS]**

[UPDATE EMAIL ADDRESS] Can you please give me the correct email address?

--UPDATE EMAIL ADDRESS ON THE CALL RECORD SHEET--

[END CALL] I will send that information to you shortly. I will call you back in a few days after you have had an opportunity to review the information. We can discuss your support for the APEC III Study at that time. Thank you. Goodbye.