

**Appendix C1. Study Notification Email from FNS to Regional Offices**

Dear Regional Child Nutrition Directors,

We are writing to inform you about an upcoming Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) study, the Evaluation of the Independent Review Process (“IRA Study”), and request your support. A similar letter will be sent shortly to all State Child Nutrition Directors.

The *IRA Study* will provide FNS with information about the effectiveness of the independent review of applications (IRA) requirement for school meal programs, also called the second review of applications. The study will examine how State agencies and local education agencies (LEAs) conduct the IRA and report results to FNS, and assess whether IRA is effective in identifying and reducing administrative error in the certification of household applications. FNS has contracted with Westat to conduct the study.

There are three phases of the study: 1) an online survey of all State Child Nutrition Directors; 2) telephone interviews with 30 LEAs that have conducted IRA; and 3) the collection and review of a sample of household applications from 20 of the 30 LEAs interviewed.

State agencies will receive the online survey upon approval from the Office of Management and Budget, which we expect to receive by [date]. State agencies will have approximately two months to complete the survey. Data collection from selected LEAs is expected to begin in Spring 2019. We will notify your office and the State agencies of the LEAs selected to participate in the study before we contact LEAs.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact the Project Lead, Jinee Burdg, at [jinee.Burdg@fns.usda.gov](mailto:jinee.Burdg@fns.usda.gov).

Thank you,

[SIGNATURE]

[SIGNATURE]

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