

Appendix C2: Study Notification Email from FNS to State Child Nutrition Directors

Dear State Child Nutrition Director,

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 to request your participation and support.

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.

The study has three phases: 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 November 2018. State agencies will have approximately two months to complete the survey. Data collection from selected LEAs is expected to begin in Spring 2019. Westat will notify State agencies of the LEAs selected to participate in the study before they contact LEAs.

[add for States that spoke previously with FNS about the IRA process] We would like to thank your [agency/office/department] for speaking with us in 2017 and sharing [STATE’S] experience with the IRA process. While we learned a great deal from our conversation, and from representatives of the other States we spoke with, we would appreciate it if you would complete the survey.

For next steps, the Westat study team will contact you when we receive OMB approval to request your completion of the online survey. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the IRA Study, please contact the Westat Study Team at: [study email] or [study phone number].

Thank you for your support of this important FNS study.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

[SIGNATURE]

OMB Approval No. 0584-

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Ed Harper
Director, Office of Program Integrity
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

[Name and affiliation for OPS contact]

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