

C9. FSMC RECRUITMENT CALL SCRIPT  
(GROUPS 2, 3, & FULL OUTLYING AREAS)

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## FSMC RECRUITMENT CALL SCRIPT

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The following talking points are to be used during discussions with FSMCs.

### Introduction

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling on behalf of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to follow up on a letter sent to [FSMC contact] regarding a study on school nutrition and meal cost. Could I speak to her/him?

I am following up on a letter sent to you on [DATE] regarding the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study-II (SNMCS-II). The letter advised you that a member of the study team would be following up with your office to provide more information and to coordinate your company's cooperation and agreement that sampled SFAs whose food service operations your company manages can participate in the study. Do you recall this letter?

#### IF YES, RECALLS LETTER:

- Identify whether you are speaking to the right person who can make a decision;
- If you are not talking with the right person clarify who we should be speaking to;
- Identify other executives who have to be on board;
- Confirm if we need to contact them individually.

#### IF NO, DOES NOT RECALL LETTER:

- Offer to email letter;
- Identify whether you are speaking to the right person;
- Identify if anyone else should receive the letter.

### The Study

FNS has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, and its research partners Insight Policy Research, Decision Information Resources, and Agralytica to conduct the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study-II (SNMCS-II) for school year 2019–2020, including a sub-study called the Outlying Areas Cost Study. [SFA(s) NAME] was/were selected as part FNS's study sample, and although we would typically reach out directly to SFAs, in cases where there is a Food Service Management Company involved, such as [FSMC Company Name], we have found it to be helpful to reach out to the management company directly as well. Today we would like to explain the study and what we will be asking of SFAs. Once you have had an opportunity to ask questions we will ask that you endorse this study by reaching out to participating SFAs

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encouraging their participation. That usually makes the process of getting each SFA on board easier for all involved and helps make the study run smoothly.

**Why is it important for your FSMC to endorse the study and assist with SFA participation?**

The food service operations of over 20% of the country's school districts are managed by FSMCs. The participation of the sampled school districts administered by your company, as well as other FSMCs, is critical to gaining a representative picture of school meals nutrition and cost.

**What are the study objectives?**

[IF GROUP 2, 3] The study has many key objectives. These include:

- Describing SFA and school environments, food service operations, and school/student participation;
- Determining the food and nutrient content of school meals and snacks and examining compliance with updated meal standards;
- Determining the cost to produce school meals, including indirect and local administrative costs;
- Describing and assessing student characteristics, participation, satisfaction, and dietary intake; as well as
- Describing and assessing plate waste;
- Assessing the effects of the updated nutrition standards by examining how characteristics and outcomes have changed since implementation;
- Comparing SNMCS-II results with similar previous studies (SNMCS, SNDA, and SLBC); and
- Examining interrelationships among nutrition quality, cost, and student participation.

[IF OA] The Outlying Areas Cost Study will determine the cost of producing reimbursable meals for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, including indirect and local administrative costs. It will also examine the ratios of revenues to costs. Reimbursement rates for school meals sold in the contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia are assessed periodically using a rigorous cost study methodology applied to a sample of public SFAs and schools. That cost study methodology has never been applied in outlying areas such as [Alaska/Guam/Hawaii/Puerto Rico/the U.S. Virgin Islands].

**More specifically, what type of information will be collected?**

[IF GROUP 2] Mathematica is selecting a nationally representative sample of about 500 school districts nationwide and 3 to 4 schools per district. Data collection activities will be limited to only those necessary for success of the study. The SFAs that you oversee will be asked to participate in our study activities that focus on student nutrition, student meal program participation, and the school environment. These SFAs will *not* be asked to participate in the extensive cost and revenue portions of the study. During school year 2019–2020, these SFAs and schools will be asked to:

- **Complete a Menu Survey.** This web-based survey will collect detailed information on the foods offered and served in each sampled school during a target week, as well as a la carte foods offered on a single day. The Menu Survey includes a questionnaire about foodservice operations that the school nutrition manager completes. The burden for the basic menu survey is 8 hours, with the incentive of up to a \$100 gift card (prepay incentive of \$75, and an additional \$25 when the survey is complete). Burden includes required training time.
- **SFA Director and Principal Surveys.** SFA directors and principals will be asked to respond to questions in web-based surveys needed to characterize district policies and the school environment. The SFA Director survey will take approximately 50 minutes to complete; the principal survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- **Student and Parent Interviews.** Professional data collectors will interview a small sample of students and their parents to obtain information on student characteristics, dietary intake, and consumption of and satisfaction with school meals. Students' height and weight will be measured as part of the interview. Data collection activities will differ for elementary school students and those in middle and high schools and have been designed to be age appropriate. The interview will take about 60 minutes for each sampled student and parent. Elementary students will be provided with a \$5 gift card to thank them for their participation; middle/high school students with a \$15 gift card (\$20 if interviewed on a Saturday); elementary student parents will receive a \$25 gift card as a token of our appreciation; middle/high school parents a \$15 gift card. Kindergarten and prekindergarten students will not be included in the study.
- **Passive/Active Consent.** This study is approved to use the passive consent process, whereby consent forms are sent home to student and parent participants and they sign and return the forms only if they wish to OPT OUT of the study. If they do not return a signed form, we assume they give their consent to participate.
- **Observations of Cafeteria and Other Sources of Foods and Beverages.** Data collectors will observe one lunch and one breakfast period (if the school participates in the School Breakfast Program) in each sampled school to document characteristics of foodservice operations. They will also observe other sources of foods and beverages such as vending machines and school stores.

[IF GROUP 3] Mathematica is selecting a nationally representative sample of about 500 school districts nationwide and 3 to 4 schools per district. Data collection activities will be limited to only those necessary for success of the study. The SFAs that you oversee will be asked to participate in the study activities related to the cost and revenue portions of the study. These SFAs will not be asked to participate the student-level data collection effort. During school year 2019–2020, these SFA and schools will be asked to:

- **Complete a Menu Survey.** This survey will collect detailed information on the foods offered and served in reimbursable lunches, breakfasts, and afterschool snacks (if offered) during a target week.
- **SFA Director, School Nutrition Manager and Principal Surveys.** SFA directors, school nutrition managers and principals will be asked to respond to questions needed to characterize district policies, the school environment, and foodservice operations.

- **SFA Director, School Nutrition Manager and Principal Cost Interviews.** SFA directors, school nutrition managers and principals will be interviewed to gather information about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs.
- **Cafeteria Observations.** Data collectors will observe one lunch and one breakfast period (if the school participates in the School Breakfast Program) in selected schools to document characteristics of foodservice operations.
- **Plate Waste Observations.** At a subset of schools, data collectors will estimate the proportion of foods wasted by students in order to assess the nutrient and food group composition of foods wasted, and to assess the relationship between plate waste and characteristics of students, school food environments, and school foodservice operations.

[If OA] Mathematica is selecting a sample of SFAs and schools needed to produce cost estimates for [Alaska/Guam/Hawaii/Puerto Rico/the U.S. Virgin Islands]. Data collection activities will be limited to only those necessary for success of the study. The SFAs that you oversee will be asked to participate in the study activities related to the cost and revenue portions of the study. During school year 2019–2020, these SFA and schools will be asked to:

- **Complete a Menu Survey.** This survey will collect detailed information on the foods offered and served in reimbursable lunches and breakfasts during one school week.
- **SFA Director, School Nutrition Manager and Principal Cost Interviews.** SFA directors, school nutrition managers and principals will be interviewed to gather information about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs.

### **Protecting Privacy**

All information gathered for this study is for research purposes only and will be kept private to the fullest extent allowed by law. (GROUPS 2, 3: Responses will be grouped with those of other study participants, and no individual schools, districts, or students will be identified in reports. We will inform parents of the study and our privacy practices.) (OA: We will group responses with those of other study participants. Study reports will not identify individual schools or respondents.) We are not conducting audits or monitoring visits. Participation in the study will not affect Federal meal reimbursements or school meal program benefits to students participating in the school meal programs.

### **What is required to obtain the FSMC endorsement and their agreement to assist the sampled SFAs in participating in this study?**

Discuss specific next steps and check the following:

- Do we need to provide any further information?
- What are the steps in obtaining FSMC endorsement?
- How long do you anticipate it taking to get this endorsement?
- What can we do to facilitate the process?
- Identify the main point of contact within the FSMC.

### **Communication with SFAs managed by the FSMC**

Arrange to send the list of SFAs managed by this FSMC (provided by the States'/Territories' CN offices) to FSMC main contact for review and confirmation that the FSMC serves these SFAs (it is possible some changes have occurred that have not been captured by the States at the time they verified the sampled SFAs).

Explain that it is possible to uncover some additional FSMC-managed SFAs during the recruitment process.

Discuss how districts will be informed that the FSMC has endorsed the study and that they will work with the sampled school districts to participate in the study.

- FSMC will formally inform each SFA that they are encouraged to participate (preferable);
- Study team will inform SFAs and provide a letter of confirmation or contact;
- Discuss whether FSMC would require review of some of the data provided by their SFAs/schools (e.g., food purchase costs) prior to releasing them.

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