

COMPARABILITY OF SNMCS-II AND SNMCS-I

The School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study-II (SNMCS-II), described in the attached information collection request (ICR), is the second in a series of studies that will be implemented approximately every five years to collect information about the school meal programs. SNMCS-I collected data for school year (SY) 2014–2015 under OMB Control No. 0584-0596 (Discontinued 7/31/2017). SNMCS-II, which will collect data for SY 2019-2020, was designed to be consistent with SNMCS-I so that key findings can be compared over time.

The instruments included in the ICR for SNMCS-II are based on the instruments used in SNMCS-I. In some cases, minor modifications were made to ensure that the instruments address research questions that are of current interest to FNS while maintaining comparable levels of respondent burden. To facilitate review of the ICR, this memo summarizes differences between the SNMCS-I and SNMCS-II data collection instruments. Differences by instrument are summarized in Table 1.

Revisions to the instruments designed to collect information for the cost study were more extensive than revisions to other instruments. Many of these changes are based on pretesting the instruments with school food authority and school staff (described in Section B.4 in Supporting Statement B). Changes were designed to decrease respondent burden, increase ease of response, and only request information tied to SNMCS-II research questions. In some cases, instruments were combined or changed from hard copy to electronic forms. Consequently, names of some of the cost study instruments or modules were changed. Changes to the cost study instruments are described in a separate section at the end of Table 1, and names of the instruments and modules for this component of the study are presented in Table 2.

No substantive changes were made to the following instruments: the On-site Self-serve/Made-to-Order Bar Form (Appendix G7), Vending Machines and Other Sources of Foods and Beverages Checklists (Appendix H1), the dietary recall interview (AMPM; Appendix I5), the Point-of-Sale Form (Appendix I6), the Milk Form (Appendix I7), the Food Diary (Appendices I8 and I9), and the Reimbursable Meal Sale Data Request (Appendix J2). The instruments with no substantive changes are omitted from Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Differences between SNMCS-I and SNMCS-II Instruments

Instrument Name (Appendix)	Changes Made for SNMCS-II
School Food Authority (SFA) Planning Interview (Appendix C12)	<p>Added questions to determine whether Group 3 schools meet the eligibility criteria for plate waste observations (questions B17-B22).</p> <p>Added questions to identify the appropriate respondent and availability of data (questions C1-C6).</p> <p>Revised target week scheduling section to accommodate Groups 2, 3, and outlying areas (Section D).</p>
School Planning Interview (Appendix C18)	Content is similar to the Group 3 Foodservice Manager Pre-visit Questionnaire used in SNMCS-I, but now asked also of Group 2 school liaisons to assist in planning for on-site activities. The instrument name was changed to accommodate both Group 2 school liaisons and Group 3 school nutrition managers (SNMs) as respondents.
Fruit and Vegetable Questions & Meal Pattern Crediting Report (Appendix E3)	Added this new form to be completed by the menu planner for each school. In SNMCS-I, this information was collected from SNMs as part of the Menu Survey. However, some SNMs had difficulty providing the information. Menu planners make routine use of the required information when planning menus, so they are the preferred respondent.
Basic and Expanded Menu Survey (Appendices E1 and E2)	Added questions to the Menu Survey (completed by SNMs) to collect detailed information about how foods are served to students (<i>Menu Survey Enhancements Administered through the Electronic Menu Survey</i>). In addition, updated forms within the Electronic Menu Survey to simplify users' experience and improve quality of responses on the web.
SFA Director Survey (Appendix F1)	<p>Added or modified items to collect information about the Seamless Summer Program Option (question A3g), Provision 1 (questions A4 and B8), policies requiring school breakfast (questions C6-C8), direct certification for free or reduced-price meals (questions D1-D3), menu planning practices (questions B4, B5, F1, and F4-F7), policies to accommodate students with food allergies or disabilities (questions G5-G7), geographic preference in food purchasing (question H7), use of online tools to purchase food (question H14), pricing for competitive and a la carte foods (K1), procedures for dealing with unpaid meals (questions L1-L4), and characteristics of organizations operating meal programs other than school breakfast and lunch (questions M1-M5).</p> <p>Streamlined questions about wellness policy components and implementation (questions N4-N6).</p> <p>Dropped items related to the following topics, which were not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: number of charter schools; pricing changes for lunches and breakfasts; implementation of nutrition guidelines for competitive foods; school, staff, and community involvement in nutrition promotion practices; wellness policy components; terms of food service management company contracts; use of USDA Foods, SFA director qualifications; and SFA employee benefits.</p>
SNM Survey (Appendix F6)	<p>Added items to collect information about the role of school food service in afterschool and supper programs (questions 24, 25.1, and 25.2), the role of school food service in pricing competitive foods (question 5), Farm to School activities (question 27), the use of school garden produce in school meals (question 2.2), strategies to address plate waste (question 28), and the length of time students have to eat after they are seated (questions 16.1 and 19).</p> <p>Dropped items related to the following topics, which were not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: serving lines and stations; how students select components of reimbursable meals; challenges meeting nutrition standards; and SNM qualifications.</p>

Instrument Name (Appendix)	Changes Made for SNMCS-II
Principal Survey (Appendix F7)	Simplified questions related to physical education (questions 25-27). Dropped items related to the following topics, which were not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: Team Nutrition, the HealthierUS School Challenge, and detailed questions about local wellness coordinators and committees.
Cafeteria Observation Guide (Appendix H2)	Added items about students' ability to select all components of a reimbursable meal (questions B5-B5b and L3-L3b). Dropped items about availability of potable water.
Student Interview (Appendices I1 and I2)	Added items to assess food security from the perspective of middle/high school students (questions I2a and 41-58). Added request for parent email address to send the parent survey (question 65d). Dropped items related to the following topics, which were not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: opinions on food servers and cashiers; participation in physical education and sports; use of nutritional supplements; and cigarette smoking.
Parent Interview (Appendices I3 and I4)	Expanded item on household composition to collect more information about the ages of children in the household (questions 50-50b), consolidated questions about screen time (question 37), and modified questions to be appropriate for web or telephone administration. Dropped items related to the following topics, which were not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: opinions on the availability of school breakfast and lunch; frequency of student eating breakfast; use of nutritional supplements; and primary language spoken at home.
Plate Waste Observation Booklet (Appendix J1)	Dropped interviewer observation of student gender.
Cost Study Instruments	
State Agency Indirect Cost Survey (Appendix G1)	Dropped items related to the following topics, which were not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: the types of costs classified as indirect; types of programs and costs included in the direct cost base; and types of salaries (personnel) included in indirect cost rate calculations.
SFA Director Staff Salary and Time Allocation Grid (module in Appendix G3)	The format was altered to provide more flexibility in reporting time worked (Part 2, columns 4-5) and compensation received (Part 2, columns 7a-8b). Added percentage of salary/wage charged to central food service (Part 2, column 6) because the instructions were modified to include staff with any compensation from the SFA account, not just central food service staff. Replaced employment status (regular/other) with dollar amount of fringe benefits per position (Part 2, columns 8a-8b) based on pretest respondents' inability to provide fringe benefit rates across staff.
Preliminary SFA Indirect Cost Survey (module in Appendix G3)	Dropped items related to topics that are not included in research questions for SNMCS-II: types of costs classified as indirect; types of programs and costs included in the direct cost base; types of salaries (personnel) included in indirect cost rate calculations; State provision or approval of the indirect cost rate; "other" indirect cost rates (that is, neither restricted nor unrestricted indirect cost rates); and indirect cost allocation plans if indirect cost rates are available.
Preliminary Food Service Expense Statement (module in Appendix G3)	Added items to parse out the value of discounts or rebates for USDA Foods (questions E11-E12), and added an item to determine if costs associated with storage, transportation, or processing of USDA Foods are deducted from meal reimbursements (question E15). Dropped collection of unreported utilities and equipment costs because this is sufficiently covered in the Food Service Expense Statement Follow-up Module.

Instrument Name (Appendix)	Changes Made for SNMCS-II
Off-Budget Staff Salary and Time Allocation Grid (module in Appendix G3)	The format was altered to provide more flexibility in reporting time worked (columns 5-6) and compensation received (columns 7a-8b). Also replaced leave time per year with dollar amount of fringe benefits per position (columns 8a-8b).
School Nutrition Manager Cost Interview (Appendix G4)	<p>Added production kitchen screener so we do not collect staff time for those who only work on production of meals sent off-site (Part 1).</p> <p>Collapsed food production and serving into a single activity category by meal type. (See Appendix G9, Handout 2.)</p> <p>Changed format to allow for flexibility in reporting time worked (Part 3, columns 4-5) and compensation received (Part 3, columns 7a-8b).</p> <p>Replaced employment status (regular/other) with dollar amount of fringe benefits per position (Part 3, columns 8a-8b).</p>
Principal Cost Interview (Appendix G5)	<p>Changed format to allow for flexibility in reporting time worked (Part 3, column 3) and compensation received (Part 3, columns 5a-6b).</p> <p>Replaced leave time with dollar amount of fringe benefits per position (Part 3, columns 6a-6b).</p> <p>Dropped question on how many days or weeks school is in session because it is collected in the SFA Follow-Up Web Survey, and typical hours per day staff members work because that is collected in the staffing grid.</p>
Food Cost Worksheet (Appendix G6)	Largely unchanged with the exception of combining the following categories for ease of administration: (1) breads and tortillas, (2) State, SFA, or National processing agreement USDA Foods, and (3) entitlement and other DOD Fresh foods.
SFA Follow-Up Web Survey (Appendix G11)	<p>Added counts of meals claimed by school level (question Q2), counts of employee and adult meals served (questions 2a-2b), counts of Child and Adult Care Food Program snacks and suppers (questions 5a-5b), and paid lunch equity provision items (questions 9-11).</p> <p>Items on the value of purchased food inventory and USDA Foods were moved to the SFA Follow-Up Cost Interview.</p>
Food Service Expense Statement Follow-up (module in Appendix G13)	<p>Added items to parse out the value of discounts or rebates for USDA Foods (questions E11-E12) and an item to determine costs associated with storage, transportation, or processing of USDA Foods are deducted from meal reimbursements (question E16).</p> <p>Added utilities and equipment supplement, which rephrases questions from the Preliminary Food Service Expense Statement module to ask about the sampled kitchens for the prior school year, rather than any school (or average school by level) for an undefined period of time.</p> <p>Dropped fringe benefit rate chart because actual dollar amounts of fringe benefits by position are collected in the staffing grids (SFA Director Staff Salary and Time Allocation Grid, Off-Budget Staff Salary and Time Allocation Grid, School Nutrition Manager Cost Interview, and Principal Cost Interview).</p>
Food Service Revenue Statement (module in Appendix G13)	<p>Separated out Child and Adult Care Food Program and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program reimbursements from "Other USDA reimbursements" (questions C5-C7).</p> <p>Added questions for claimed meal counts and reimbursement rates for SFAs that could not report reimbursements by meal type (questions 1-6). Added items to collect the amount of money owed to SFA as a result of unpaid meals (questions 7-8).</p>
Food Service Indirect Cost Follow-up (module in Appendix G13)	Dropped reasons why indirect costs were not calculated because they are not associated with SNMCS-II research questions.

Table 2. Cost Study Instruments and Modules in SNMCS-II and -I

SNMCS-II Instrument	SNMCS-II Instrument Module	SNMCS-I Instrument
State Agency Indirect Cost Survey (Appendix G1)	n.a.	State Education Agency Finance Office Indirect Cost Survey
SFA On-Site Cost Interview (Appendix G3)	SFA Director Staff Salary and Time Allocation Grid	SFA Director Cost Interview Preparation Forms
	Preliminary SFA Indirect Cost Survey	SFA Director/LEA Business Manager SFA Indirect Cost Questionnaire – On-site
	Preliminary Food Service Expense Statement	SFA Director/LEA Business Manager Preliminary Foodservice Expense Statement
	Off-Budget Staff Salary and Time Allocation Grid	SFA Director/LEA Business Manager Off-budget District Staff Interview Guide
Food Cost Worksheet (Appendix G6)	n.a.	SFA Food Cost Worksheet and Instructions
School Nutrition Manager Cost Interview (Appendix G4)	n.a.	Foodservice Manager Cost Interview
Principal Cost Interview (Appendix G5)	n.a.	School Principal Cost Interview Guide
Onsite Self-Serve and Made-to-Order Bar Form (Appendix G7)	n.a.	Onsite Self-Serve and Made-to-Order Form
SFA Follow-Up Web Survey (Appendix G11)	n.a.	SFA Follow-up Cost Interview Preparation Form
SFA Follow-Up Cost Interview (Appendix G13)	Food Service Expense Statement Follow-up	SFA Director/LEA Business Manager Foodservice Expense Statement Follow-up
	Food Service Revenue Statement	SFA Director/LEA Business Manager Revenue Statement
	Food Service Indirect Cost Follow-up	SFA Director/LEA Business Manager SFA Indirect Cost Questionnaire – Follow-up

LEA = local educational agency; n.a. = not applicable; SFA = school food authority.