APPENDIX B.4 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

SNAP State Agency Web Survey Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q	**Why is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) conducting the study?**
A	This study is being conducted to examine how States are currently protecting the PII submitted in SNAP applications or maintained in SNAP case files.
	SNAP participants and applicants are required to provide PII to their State agency (SA) so that SAs can determine (or redetermine) eligibility and benefits. SAs are required by federal law to protect participant/applicant information. SAs vary in caseload, benefit management systems, information technology (IT), and staffing. Your SA may have found cost-effective and innovative methods to safely secure participant/applicant PII methods that can be shared with other SAs. This is an opportunity for your SA to voice your concerns, challenges, and successes in protecting PII.
	Please know that this study is not an audit. In this study, we are asking you to be partners in improving data security for SNAP.
Q	**How is this study being conducted?**
A	The study is divided into two parts: a web survey of all 53 SNAP SAs and follow-up semi-structured interviews with 5 SNAP SAs. This study plans to address the following topics:
	(1) Describe legislation, regulations, and policies that address how participants' PII must be safeguarded (2) Describe methods that can be used to safeguard PII (3) Describe how States currently safeguard participant PII (4) Examine the consistency of safeguarding practices across States (5) Provide recommendations to States to improve safeguarding of PII
Q	**How will USDA use the information gathered from the survey?**
A	USDA FNS will use the data collected to provide ideas to SAs on ways they can improve how they safeguard SNAP PII. In addition, this study will provide insight into the various challenges SAs face in their efforts to maintain security of PII. With increased understanding of these challenges, future policies and regulations can improve support to SAs in maintaining adequate protection.
Q	**Why did you select our SA for the survey?**
A	This phase of the study is a web survey of all 53 SNAP SAs. The second phase of the study is a semi-structured interview with five SNAP SAs deemed as State leaders. Based on your SA's answers from the web survey and interviews with data security and State systems industry experts, five SAs will be asked to participate in an estimated hour-long interview regarding their challenges and successes in safeguarding participant PII.
Q	**Are we required to participate?**
A	Your SA's cooperation is encouraged, so that FNS can obtain a broad perspective on how PII security is handled nationwide. Participation by all SAs is critical to a truly national survey. It is also your opportunity to help achieve the highest possible level of security for SNAP participants.
Q	**Who should fill out the survey?**
A	The survey should be filled out by the State SNAP Director, staff members such as a data/program analyst, and senior State IT staff (such as the Chief Information Security Officer) who know about • SA systems; • security plan information, personnel policies, and procedures; • security policies and procedures; • maintenance, storage, sharing, and transfer of PII; and • challenges and best practices.

	If you have more questions about which staff member should complete the survey, please call us at **1-877-230-3035** (toll-free) between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday ET, or email us at SNAPPIII@2mresearch.com.
Q	**How much time should I time allocate to the survey?**
A	In total, the survey is estimated to take about 90 minutes to complete. However, because of the differing content and knowledge associated, the survey is estimated to take about 30 minutes each for you (or a designee), a data/program analyst, and a senior State information security staff member.
Q	**How does USDA FNS protect the privacy of the information provided?**
A	Your answers to the survey will only be used for research purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose.
Q	**What if we do not have time or staff to complete the survey?**
A	We understand that your time is valuable. The study has been carefully designed and pretested to collect the required information with minimum burden to the SAs.
Q	**Who should I contact if I have questions about the study or survey?**
A	If you have questions or concerns about this survey or would like to complete the survey over the phone, please contact the study team by email SNAPPII@2mresearch.com or at **1-877-230-3035** (toll-free) from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, ET. If you call us outside of these hours, please leave a message, and we will return your call the following business day.
Q	**What is the contact information for the USDA FNS Study Liaison?**
A	FNS Project Officer: Andrew Burns Phone: 703-305-1091 Email Address: Andrew.burns@usda.gov