

Appendix A5. Letters of Support

Subject: Please Support USDA's School Food Purchase Study IV

Dear Directors:

The SNA leadership has reviewed a description of USDA's School Food Purchase Study IV (SFPS-IV) and hereby registers its support for the collection of this information. We strongly encourage you to participate in the study.

SFPS-IV will collect three months of food purchase data (one quarter) from approximately 600 school food authorities (SFAs) during School Year 2021-2022. This data will be supplemented with data on USDA Foods from State Distributing Agencies. The aggregated results will provide national estimates of food acquisitions by schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The study will also highlight the changes in food purchases and purchasing practices since the last study more than a decade ago. Collectively, findings will provide program operators and policymakers with an updated picture of food purchasing and purchasing practices in the context of the significant recent changes in the school nutrition environment.

Our members work hard in the face of many challenges to ensure that our students are served the best meals possible. SNA believes that that the data from this study will be of significant practical use to those working in school nutrition. We expect the results of this study to contribute to improved understanding of the costs associated with improving the nutritional content of school meals and to help document the progress school nutrition directors have made in purchasing and serving nutritious foods. We also believe it will be a valuable source of information on procurement practices that districts and those that serve them can use to further improve efficiencies.

USDA assures us that they have taken steps to minimize the reporting burden placed on districts participating in the study.

Sincerely,

SNA President

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is conducting this study to obtain updated national estimates of food acquisitions and a description and analysis of food purchase practices of school districts participating in the Federally supported school meal programs. The estimates will provide information on the type, volume and source of foods acquired, the relative importance of USDA Foods, and changes in food composition and cost over time. Participation in this study by individuals is voluntary and the information collected will be used to understand school meal program trends and practices associated with food buying efficiency. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0471. The time required to provide this information collection is estimated to average 1 minute per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314 ATTN: PRA (0584-0471).

OMB Control No: 0584-0471

Expiration Date: XX/XX/20XX

Subject: Please Support USDA's School Food Purchase Study IV

Dear Directors:

On behalf of the ACDA Board, I am writing to encourage you to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's School Food Purchase Study IV.

SFPS-IV will collect information on purchasing practices and three months of food purchase data (one quarter) from approximately 600 school food authorities (SFAs) and associated State Distributing Agencies during School Year 2021-2022. The aggregated results will provide national estimates of food acquisitions (USDA Foods and commercially purchased products) by schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The study will also highlight the changes in food purchases and purchasing practices since the last study more than a decade ago.

Collectively, findings will provide USDA, program operators and other stakeholders with an updated picture of food purchasing and purchasing practices in the context of the significant recent changes in the school nutrition environment. Study results may also be useful in helping USDA determine the types and forms of products that will be offered as USDA Foods in the future.

We appreciate the effort and time it takes to participate in studies, in addition to your usual responsibilities. USDA assures us that they have taken steps to minimize the burden placed on districts and SDAs in SFPS-IV. In preparing to launch the study, the study team gathered input from a number of districts and State agencies to fine-tune study instruments and other materials. In addition, there are significant study resources and individual technical assistance available to support study participants and facilitate data collection.

We strongly encourage your participation in this important USDA study.

Sincerely,

ACDA President/Board