

# **Attachment V. System of Records Notices (SORNs): FNS- 8 USDA Studies and Reports**

OMB No. 0584-[NEW]

*Best Practices in Disaster Supplemental Nutrition  
Assistance Program (D-SNAP) Operations and  
Planning*

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# SORNS: FNS-8 USDA Studies and Reports

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*Privacy Act; System of Records*

*Agency: Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

*Action: Notice of new Privacy Act system of records.*

## Summary

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposes to create a new Privacy Act system of records, USDA/FNS-8, entitled "FNS Studies and Reports, USDA/FNS-8."

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) frequently conducts studies in which personal information on FNS program applicants, participants, eligibles, and beneficiaries is collected. The information is collected and maintained only as long as necessary to accomplish the objectives of the studies and reports. Contracts with private firms to complete such studies contain requirements that all personal information on individuals must be destroyed when the contract is completed. If FNS conducts studies internally, the personal data is destroyed when it is no longer needed, which is usually at the end of the study.

## Effective Date

This proposed notice will be effective, without further notice, June 24, 1991, unless modified by a subsequent notice to incorporate comments received from the public. Comments must be received by the contact person listed below on or before June 10, 1991, to be assured of consideration.

## Addresses

Comments should be addressed to: Christy Schmidt, Acting Director, Office of Analysis and Evaluation, room 208, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.  
Telephone: (703) 756-3017.

For further information contact: Joseph M. Scordato, FNS Privacy Act Officer room 308, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.  
Telephone: (703) 756-3234.

## Supplementary Information

The Office of Analysis and Evaluation (OAE) conducts research and evaluation projects and studies on the programs administered by FNS of the Department of Agriculture. These programs include the Food Stamp Program, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and others. OAE assists the FNS Administrator by providing valid, timely, and unbiased analysis and evaluation information to support Agency decisions regarding policy, legislative, budgetary, regulatory, and program management processes. The office: (1) Assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of FNS ongoing programs; (2) evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of demonstration and pilot programs; (3) provides leadership and technical assistance throughout FNS in the area of research and program evaluation; (4) develops analyses of completed evaluations to support the Administrator; (5) interprets research findings for use in the policy process; (6) prepares and develops program and

cross-program analyses, staff papers, and memoranda to support the Agency in development of policy initiatives; (7) conducts analyses of cost and impact of budgetary and legislative initiatives; (8) supports the Administrator in presentation of policy decisions and/or recommendations before Department level officials, and other Agencies including the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress; (9) conducts and manages program and demonstration research; and (10) reviews legislation, regulations, and reports and identifies and/or helps resolve issues to assure consistency with policy decisions.

To meet its mission of providing valid, timely and unbiased information to support Agency decisions, OAE conducts the research and demonstration activities mentioned earlier on the mandate of the Congress and Federal oversight agencies, and at the direction of the Administrator, FNS. From time to time, to meet these requirements, it is necessary to conduct studies which temporarily gather information on individual participants in the programs to measure impacts, efficiency, and effectiveness of the programs. Due to the time and expense involved, it is burdensome to prepare and publish a specific notice of the information gathered for each study. FNS therefore proposes that a generic system of records be established so that the Agency will have the authority to collect information on individuals for purposes of the study and destroy the identifiable items in the records when they are no longer needed. FNS assumes that the use of the data is temporary. In some cases where the need for data retention on identifiable items is more than two years, a separate notice will be published for that study notifying the public of the proposed exception. Identifiable items, for the purposes of this notice, are defined as items which contain names and other information which specify an individual.

## **USDA/FNS-8 System Name**

FNS Studies and Reports.

## **Security Classification**

None.

## **System Location**

Records of studies conducted internally will be located in the Office of Analysis and Evaluation, room 208, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. Records will be located with the contractor when studies are performed by contract.

## **Categories of Individuals Covered by the System**

The system consists of personal information from persons who are eligible for, have participated in, been recipients of, or participated in some capacity in the administration of FNS sponsored benefit programs.

## **Categories of Records in the System**

Individual records may contain information on program applicants, participants, eligibles, and beneficiaries of FNS-sponsored programs, and vital statistics such as birth and death records. This information may include but is not limited to their names, addresses, identifying numbers, and program-specific information such as programs sponsored by other agencies, location of birth, birthweight, health status, medical claims, diagnostic codes, and other pertinent information.

## Authority for Maintenance of the System

Federal statutes requiring studies of the food assistance programs: 7 U.S.C. 2011-27; 42 U.S.C. 1751-89; 7 U.S.C. 1431, 1431e, 612c, 612c note.

## Purpose

To study and determine the impact, efficiency, and/or effectiveness of FNS sponsored programs and for the purpose of reporting to the Congress, oversight agencies, and/or departmental and FNS officials.

## Routine Uses of Records Maintained in the System, Including Categories of Users and the Purposes of Such Uses

**USDA/FNS-8.** The records in this system may be disclosed to private firms that have contracted with FNS to collect, aggregate, analyze, or otherwise refine records for the purpose of research and reporting to Congress and appropriate oversight agencies, and/or departmental and FNS officials.

## Policies and Practices for Storing, Retrieving, Accessing, Retaining, and Disposing of Records in the System

### Storage

File folders, magnetic tapes, and computer disks.

### Retrievability

Information is retrieved by coded identification number once analysis files have been successfully constructed and edited. The coded number prevents association of data with individual identifiers except by authorized individuals. This is a security measure which allows linkage of individual identifying information with study data through computer media. Paper records containing identifying information and study data are not needed or retained once the information has been entered onto magnetic tapes and/or computer disks.

### Safeguards

1. **Authorized users.** When designing, developing and/or operating a system of records on individuals, contractors are required to comply with all provisions of the Privacy Act. Contractors are required to maintain and protect the personal data and cannot release or share the data without consulting with FNS. Access to records maintained within FNS is limited to those staff officials responsible for the subject system of records. Otherwise, access is limited to persons authorized and needing to use the records, including project directors, contract officers, programmers, analysts, statisticians, statistical clerks and key punch operators on the staffs of the contractors or in the FNS.
2. **Physical safeguards.** Hard copy records are stored in locked safes, locked files, and locked offices when not in use. Computer terminals used to process identifiable data are located in secured areas and are accessible only to authorized users. Should they be maintained, back-up records which are stored off-site shall be used and stored under the same secure conditions.

- 3. Procedural safeguards.** Names and other identifying characteristics from the interim records are not contained on the records encrypted for analysis. Encrypted data are indexed by code numbers. There will be no tables or files which link these code numbers with the original names or identifying attributes. Only those staff with a need to link identifiable information will be given the appropriate identifiers and access procedures. The FNS project officers and contract officers oversee compliance with these requirements. When appropriate, the FNS will review the site facilities to ensure that records have been maintained in accordance with the terms of this notice.

### ***Retention and Disposal***

Names and other identifying information are maintained in the file until conclusion of the file matching process. The portion of records which contain identifiable items will be maintained until they are no longer needed but not more than two years. The identifiable items portion of the records will then be destroyed. Aggregate data in analysis files may be kept in perpetuity according to the needs of the Department for longitudinal comparisons.

### ***System Manager and Address***

Director, Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture, room 208, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.  
Telephone: (703) 756-3017.

### ***Notification Procedure***

To determine if a record containing an identifiable item exists, write to the System Manager, giving your full name and address.

### ***Record Access Procedures***

An individual may obtain information about gaining access to a record containing an identifiable item in the system which pertains to him or her by submitting a written request to the System Manager. The envelope and the letter should be marked, "Privacy Act Request." An individual may be required to reference the record by furnishing name, address, Social Security Number, and/or other identifiers needed by FNS and administering agencies to discern the record.

### ***Contesting Record Categories***

Individuals desiring to contest or amend information maintained in the system should direct their request to the System Manager, the reasons for contesting it, and the proposed amendment to the information with supporting information to show how the record is inaccurate, incomplete, untimely, or irrelevant.

### ***Record Source Categories***

Information in this system will come from program application and participation records of applicants, eligibles, participants and beneficiaries of FNS programs, such as the Food Stamp Program, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and others.

Records are -created based on information gathered from individuals themselves and from State and local agencies which administer the programs.

***Systems Exempted from Certain Provisions Of The Act***

None.

Dated: April 19, 1991.

Edward Madigan,

*Secretary.*

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