

APPENDIX E.1

STUDY SUPPORT EMAIL FROM FNS REGIONAL OFFICE TO STATE AGENCIES

Dear [SA CN Director]:

Our regional office is working with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study for school year (SY) 2020–2021.

For SY 2020-2021, the data collection is designed to gather information on statutory reporting requirements for the COVID-19 Child Nutrition (CN) waivers that were initially authorized in spring 2020. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) requires any State Agency (SA) that elects to use a CN nationwide waiver to submit a report, no later than 1 year after electing to use the waiver that, at a minimum, summarizes its use and describes how it resulted in improved services to Program participants. **Full participation in the SMO will satisfy these reporting requirements.**

The study includes all CN SAs that administer the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Seamless Summer Option, Summer Food Service Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program. **Your participation is vital to understanding the use of the COVID-19 CN waivers and to informing policies for CN programs intended to ensure the meals contribute to a healthy future for all children—a goal we all share.**

This important study will capture congressionally mandated data from SAs on the COVID-19 CN waivers, provide general descriptive data on the characteristics of CN programs, identify program trends, and inform potential topics for training and technical assistance. Having updated information about CN program operations will help the Food and Nutrition Service effectively oversee these programs and inform current and future policy and budget decisions. Further, SMO aims to gather information that will help States, SFAs, CN program sponsors, and schools better serve children. To that end, we will summarize key study findings in a manner that stakeholder audiences can readily understand.

Representatives from Mathematica will contact you in the coming weeks to provide more details about the study. As part of the study, you will be asked to respond to an administrative data request and complete a web survey. For more information on this study, please see the attached brochure.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in this very important study.

Sincerely,

[FNS Regional Office Liaison]

Attachments: Study Brochure

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information in order to satisfy the congressionally mandated reporting requirements from State agencies on 21 COVID-19 nationwide waivers pursuant to section 2202 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127). This is a mandatory collection and FNS will use the information to assess how the waivers improved services to children and to inform FNS's planning, policy, and guidance related to state and local meal service operations during future emergency situations and unanticipated school closures. Because the personally identifiable information (PII) requested under this collection will not be used to retrieve survey records or data, requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974 do not apply. Responses will be kept private to the extent provided by law and FNS regulations. 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 0584-0607. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 minutes (.0501 hours) per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing 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, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314. ATTN: PRA (0584-0607). Do not return the completed form to this address.