

**Appendix G.2**  
**Study support email (from FNS RO to SA)**

Dear [SA CN Director]:

As you know, our regional office is working with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. **Thank you for your efforts to complete the first SMO data collection** this past spring.

The second SMO collection (SMO II) begins in October 2021 and includes all State agencies (SA) and a nationally representative sample of school food authorities (SFAs). SMO II is the first time that SFAs will be asked to complete a survey for SMO. The winter 2021/2022 SFA survey will gather information on program operations during school years (SY) 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 and the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on SFAs. At this time, we are also planning the third SMO data collection (SMO III), which begins in June 2022 and includes all SAs. The table below provides a breakdown of the expected data collection components, timeframes, and topics included in the SMO II and SMO III collections.

### SMO data collection activities and timeline

Collection	Timeframe	Data collection component	Topic(s)
SMO II	Fall 2021 (Oct-Dec)	SA web survey	SY 2020-2021 nationwide waivers
	Winter 2021/2022 (Jan-Feb)	SFA web survey	Meal operations and financial challenges in SYs 2020-2021 and 2021-2022
	Spring 2022 (March-May)	SA administrative data request	Disaggregated FY 2021 data (FNS-10, FNS-44, and FNS-418)
SMO III	Summer 2022 (June-Aug)	SA web survey	SY 2021-2022 nationwide waivers
	Spring 2023 (March-May)	SA administrative data request	Disaggregated FY 2022 data (FNS-10, FNS-44, and FNS-418)

**SMO II will gather all of the information needed to meet States' statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide Child Nutrition (CN) COVID-19 waivers that were authorized during school year (SY) 2020-2021.** As you know, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) requires any State agency that elects to use a nationwide CN 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. **The SMO Study is the required reporting tool for the CN COVID-19 nationwide waivers. State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide waivers.**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected school food authority operations and finances and to satisfy State agencies' congressionally mandated reporting requirements for the COVID-19 nationwide waivers pursuant to section 2202 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127). This is a mandatory collection for State agencies 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. 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, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-0607). Do not return the completed form to this address.

In response to State feedback that the first State agency survey was challenging to complete for some State agencies and also took more time than was estimated, **the SMO team streamlined the SMO II survey to reduce burden and increased the official burden estimate.**

**The SMO III data collection will meet States' reporting requirements for all of the SY 2021-2022 nationwide CN COVID-19 waivers.**

**Representatives from Mathematica will contact you in the coming weeks to provide more details.** For more information on the SMO study, including plans for of the SMO III data collection, 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: Brochure

SMO III

OMB Control Number: 0584-0607  
Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX

Dear [SA CN Director]:

As you know, our regional office is working with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. **Thank you for your efforts to complete the second SMO collection (SMO II).** The third SMO collection (SMO III) begins in June 2022 and includes all State agencies.

**SMO III will gather all of the information needed to meet States' statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide Child Nutrition (CN) COVID-19 waivers that were authorized for school year (SY) 2021-2022.** As you know, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) requires any State agency that elects to use a nationwide CN 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. **The SMO Study is the required reporting tool for the CN COVID-19 nationwide waivers. State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide waivers.** SMO III includes a survey of State agencies in summer 2022 and the collection of disaggregated administrative data reported on the FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 in spring 2023.

In response to State feedback that the first State agency survey was challenging to complete for some State agencies and also took more time than was estimated, **the SMO team streamlined the SMO III survey to reduce burden and increased the official burden estimate.**

**Representatives from Mathematica will contact you in the coming weeks to provide more details.**

For more information on the SMO 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: Brochure

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected school food authority operations and finances and to satisfy State agencies' congressionally mandated reporting requirements for the COVID-19 nationwide waivers pursuant to section 2202 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127). This is a mandatory collection for State agencies 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. 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, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-0607). Do not return the completed form to this address.