

Appendix G.3
SA Advance emails

FROM: [STUDY EMAIL]

TO: [SA CN DIRECTOR EMAIL]

EMAIL SUBJECT: USDA/FNS School Meals Operations (SMO) Study, Required Reporting on COVID-19 Nationwide Waivers Used in SY 2020-2021

Dear [SA CN DIRECTOR]:

As you know, Mathematica is conducting the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study under contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Thank you for your efforts to complete the first SMO data collection this past spring. The second SMO data collection (SMO II) begins in October 2021 and includes all State agencies (SAs) and a nationally representative sample of school food authorities (SFAs). **This email requests:**

- 1) **your full participation in state-level data collection activities**, including completion of a web survey this fall and the collection of disaggregated administrative data reported on the FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 in the spring (March 2022), and
- 2) **your assistance notifying selected SFAs in your State about this important study.**

State-Level Data Collection Activities

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. **State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for these nationwide waivers.** The 67 SAs that administer the Federal CN Programs in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are required to participate in this collection.

Mathematica will email you an invitation to complete the SMO II web survey within the next few days.

Please know that we recognize the effort it takes to participate in research studies and that the first SMO survey was challenging to complete for some State agencies and took more time than estimated. In response to State feedback, the SMO team streamlined the SMO II survey to reduce burden and increased the official burden estimate to account for the additional time needed to gather the necessary information to respond to the survey questions. Despite the increase in the burden estimate, we expect the SMO II web survey to take less time to complete than the SMO survey you completed this past spring.

Request for Assistance Notifying Selected SFAs

SMO II is also the first time that SFAs will be asked to complete a survey for SMO. In winter 2021/2022, the SFA survey will gather information on program operations during SYs 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 and the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on SFAs.

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, 5th floor, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-0607). Do not return the completed form to this address

The names of SFAs in your State included in the SMO II national sample are available in an attachment to this email. **We would appreciate it if you could contact these SFA directors to describe the study, inform them of their selection into the study, and encourage their participation.** We have attached an email template that you can use to express your support for the study. Mathematica representatives will contact these SFA directors in the coming weeks to provide additional information about the study and their role in it.

To reduce burden on SFAs, the SFA sample is limited to the smallest possible number of SFAs needed to support the research and the study will rely on administrative data whenever possible to avoid redundant information requests.

Thank you for your assistance with this important study. **Your participation, and the participation of selected SFAs, is vital to understanding CN program operations during the COVID-19 pandemic** and to informing policies intended to ensure these programs contribute to a healthy future for all children—a goal we all share.

For more information on SMO, including plans for the third SMO data collection (SMO III), please see the attached brochure. If you have questions about the study, or would like a copy of your responses to the first SMO survey that you completed in the spring, please contact Mathematica at 1-833-440-9475 or SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com.

Sincerely,
Rachel Frisk
Project Director
Mathematica

Attachments: List of Selected SFAs, Study Support Email (from SA to SFA), Brochure

FROM: [STUDY EMAIL]

TO: [SA CN DIRECTOR EMAIL]

EMAIL SUBJECT: USDA/FNS School Meals Operations (SMO), Required Reporting on COVID-19 Nationwide Waivers Used in SY 2021-2022

Dear [SA CN DIRECTOR]:

As you know, Mathematica is conducting the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study under contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). **Thank you for your efforts to complete the second SMO data collection (SMO II).** The third SMO collection (SMO III) begins in June 2022 and includes a survey of all State agencies and the collection of disaggregated administrative data reported on the FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 in spring 2023.

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 used during school year (SY) 2021-2022. **State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for these nationwide waivers.** The 67 SAs that administer the Federal CN Programs in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are required to participate in this collection.

Mathematica will email you an invitation to complete the SMO III web survey within the next few days and will follow up with you in the spring to complete the administrative data collection.

Thank you for your assistance with this important study. For more information on SMO, please see the attached brochure. If you have questions about the study, please contact Mathematica at 1-833-440-9475 or SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com.

Sincerely,
Rachel Frisk
Project Director
Mathematica

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, 5th floor, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-0607). Do not return the completed form to this address.