**Appendix G.11   
SFA Advance letter**

FROM: [STUDY EMAIL]

SMO II

OMB Control Number: 0584-0607

Expiration Date: XX/XX/20XX

TO: [SFA DIRECTOR EMAIL]

EMAIL SUBJECT: USDA/FNS School Meals Operations Study: COVID-19 operations and impacts

Dear [SFA DIRECTOR]:

Your school food authority (SFA) has been selected to participate in the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. Mathematica is conducting this study under contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). This letter **requests your participation in a web survey in winter 2021-2022** and provides some general information about the study.

**This important study will gather information on Child Nutrition (CN) Program operations during school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, as well as the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on SFAs.** You have been selected to participate as part of a nationally representative sample, which means that your response will speak for many SFAs and is necessary to ensure the views of SFAs like yours are included. **This is the first time that FNS has collected information from a nationwide sample of SFAs since the start of the pandemic,** and FNS is hoping to learn from you about how the pandemic affected program operations and finances. Your response will inform policy decisions, as well as future training and technical assistance efforts. **Participation in this important study is required for all selected SFAs.**

Recognizing the effort associated with participating in research studies, SMO has been designed to reduce participant burden to the extent possible. For example, 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 from your State Agency whenever possible to avoid redundant information requests. The study team also obtained input from SFA directors on the survey questions to help ensure they are appropriately worded and possible to answer.

Your participation in the survey is key to the study’s success.Cooperation by States and districts is required under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) and Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, so we thank you in advance for your participation in this important study. **Mathematica will email you an invitation to complete the web survey within the next few days.**

For more information on this study, please see the enclosed brochure. If you have questions about the study, please call Mathematica at 1-833-440-9475 or email SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com.

Sincerely,

Rachel Frisk

Project Director

Mathematica

Attachments: Brochure