

**Appendix G.11**  
**SFA Advance letter**

SMO II

OMB Control Number: 0584-0607  
Expiration Date: XX/XX/20XX

FROM: [STUDY EMAIL]

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](mailto:SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com).

Sincerely,

Rachel Frisk  
Project Director

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected School Food Authority (SFA) 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 SFAs. 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.

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 (SFA) 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 SFAs. 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.