Dear <<SFA DIRECTOR/SFA DATA MANAGER>>:

Thank you for your participation in the fourth Access, Participation, Eligibility and Certification Study Series (APEC-IV).

The goal of the study is to provide FNS with reliable, national estimates of overpayments and underpayments in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) in school year (SY) 2023-2024. Under the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (PIIA) (P.L. 116-117), all Federal agencies that administer large programs are required to report estimates of erroneous payments to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). *Please note that this is a research study and not an audit of any kind.*

Part of Westat's data collection efforts include collecting meal participation adminsitative data from SFAs. Meal participation data includes the number of meals students received during the school year and any changes in their certification status or enrollment. We are requesting this data for your sampled schools for SY 2023-2024.

Your sampled schools are:

[SCHOOL 1 NAME], [SCHOOL 1 ADDRESS]
[SCHOOL 2 NAME], [SCHOOL 2 ADDRESS]
[SCHOOL 3 NAME], [SCHOOL 3 ADDRESS]

We ask that you electronically send the meal participation data through our secure web portal. Attached is a reference guide with instructions to submit this data request. **Please submit your data by [Insert Due Date].**

A member of the APEC IV research team will contact you within the next few days to follow up on the status of your submission, and answer any questions you may have regarding our request.

Please feel free to contact us at [INSERT NUMBER] or email us at [INSERT EMAIL] if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,
APEC IV Research Team

Attachment: Reference Guide for SFA Meal Participation Data Request

Authority: This information is being collected under the authority of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P. L. 111-296), Section 305.

Purpose: The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to assess improper payments made in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Routine Use: The records in this system may be disclosed to private firms that have contracted with FNS to collect, aggregate, analyze, or otherwise refine records for the purpose of research and reporting to Congress and appropriate oversight agencies, and/or departmental and FNS officials.

Disclosure: Disclosing the information is voluntary, and there are no consequences to you as an individual for not providing the information.

The System of Records Notice for this information collection is USDA/FNS-8, FNS Studies and Reports, which can be located at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1991-04-25/pdf/FR-1991-04-25.pdf (p. 19078).

Attachment: Reference Guide for SFA Meal Participation Data Request

<mark>NOTE: ONCE FINALIZED, THIS REFERENCE GUIDE WILL BE FORMATTED</mark>

WHAT WE ARE ASKING YOU TO DO

Please submit meal participation data for your sampled schools for **SY 2023-2024** electronically through Westat's secure web portal.

Your sampled schools are:

> [SCHOOL 1 NAME], [SCHOOL 1 ADDRESS]
> [SCHOOL 2 NAME], [SCHOOL 2 ADDRESS]
> [SCHOOL 3 NAME], [SCHOOL 3 ADDRESS]

Meal participation data includes:

1. The number of meals each student received during SY 2023-2024.
2. Any changes in student certification status or enrollment since the start of the SY 2023-2024.

REQUIRED DATA ELEMENTS

The required data elements for the file(s) are:

1. School name
2. School ID
3. Student last name, first name
4. Student ID
5. Meal certification status (free, reduced-price, or paid)
6. Meal certification status date (the most recent date of certification status or update)

ACCESSING THE WEB PORTAL

To access Westat's secure web portal, you will need the link and your personal identification number (PIN).

URL: [INSERT URL]
SFA PIN: <<PIN NUMBER>>

The link will take you to the landing page where you will be able to:

- ✓ Log in using your PIN
- ✓ Access the secure web portal and upload files
- ✓ Obtain the study's contact information

UPLOADING AND TRANSMITTING MEAL PARTICIPATION DATA

1. To securely upload your data file(s), click on "Upload".

2. Click on the "Browse…" button to navigate to the location of the data file on your computer, and click the "Open" button.

3. Click on "Submit File" to upload your data file.
   - The data file(s) must be in Excel or CSV format.
   - You can upload multiple files; however, only one file can be uploaded at a time.
   - A confirmation thank you message displays when your file is successfully uploaded.

4. You can confirm the upload of your file by clicking "Check Your Submission Status" located on the left side of the screen. This action opens the "Data File Status" screen for your SFA.

5. When you have completed uploading your data file(s), click on "Logout" located on the top right side of the page.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Please contact us at [INSERT NUMBER] or email us at [INSERT EMAIL] if you have any technical questions or issues using the web portal.