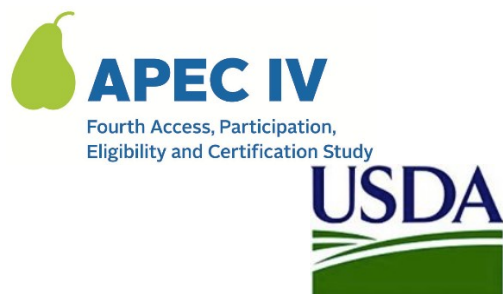


OMB Number: 0584-0530 Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX



Dear <SFA PRIMARY CONTACT NAME>:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the APEC IV study and for reviewing information about the schools in your SFA. Your participation in APEC will help us to confirm and improve the accuracy of meal tracking and reporting within the NSLP and SBP to ensure that meal payments make it to the right families.

There are no additional steps you need to take at this time. Data collection will occur in SY 2023-24, with preliminary activities beginning before the start of the school year. The table below provides a summary of the data collection activities that involve your SFA, participating schools and participating households. More details are provided in the attached FAQ document and on the study website: <URL>.

As a reminder, APEC IV is a research study, not an audit. All information will be kept private to the extent required by law and will not affect meal reimbursements or meal program benefits for any participating State agency, SFA, school, or household.

Data Collection Activities for SFAs		Timeline
1	Provide list of student households that applied for school meals in SY 2022-23	[Month, Year]
2	Provide list of student households that applied for school meals in SY 2023-24	[Month, Year]
3	Telephone call with the Westat study team to discuss data collection visit	[Month, Year]
4	Westat visits SFA to collect data from school meal applications and/or direct certification records for SY 2023-24	[Month, Year]*
5	Provide meal count and claims records covering [TIME PERIOD]XXX	[Month, Year]
6	Provide data on student eligibility in CEP schools, if applicable	[Month, Year]
7	Provide records of meal participation covering [TIME PERIOD]	[Month, Year]
8	Complete online SFA director survey	[Month, Year]
Data Collection Activities for Schools		Timeline
1	Telephone call with the Westat study team to discuss data collection visit	[Month, Year]

2	Westat visits the school to observe meals and collect meal count and claims records	[Month, Year]
Data Collection Activities for Households <i>Note: Only parents/guardians of randomly selected students that applied or were directly certified for meal benefits in SY 2023-24 will be asked to participate. APEC IV is called the "National School Meals Study" in communications with households.</i>		Timeline
1	Complete a telephone survey. A subsample will be asked to complete an in-person survey as well.	[Month, Year]

* The exact timing will be determined in collaboration with the SFA.

We will contact you prior to the start of each data collection activity to ensure that you are aware of the progress of the study and the individuals or entities that we will be contacting. We will typically notify you via email. As such, please let us know if someone else should be named as the point of contact for this study.

We appreciate your time and participation in APEC IV. We look forward to working with you when data collection begins. If you have any additional questions, please contact at < EMAIL ADDRESS> or < TOLL FREE NUMBER>. For more information on the study, you may also visit the study's website at <URL.>

Sincerely,
APEC IV Study Team

Attachment: 024. APEC IV FAQ (for States, SFAs, and Schools)

This information is being collected to provide the Food and Nutrition Service with key information on the annual error rates and improper payments for the school meal programs. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to examine school meal error rates and inform future APEC studies. This collection requests personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. 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 0584-0530. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.0501 hours (3 minutes) 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