



## Household Survey Recruitment Guide Virtual Survey

This call guide is to be used by APEC IV recruiters when recruiting households to participate in the household survey via Zoom or telephone call. This scripted guide includes the following:

1. Mentions the study sponsor, USDA FNS, and that we are interested in learning about the household’s experience with the school breakfast and lunch programs.
2. Mentions that the household was randomly chosen from a sample of households who participate in, or applied for, school meal benefits.
3. Discusses the incentives—receipt of a Visa gift card of up to \$60. The parent/guardian will receive a \$40 Visa gift card for completing the survey and an additional \$20 more on the gift card if they show documents to verify income.
4. Discusses the study’s voluntary nature and the protection of privacy to the fullest extent allowed by the law. The script mentions that there are no consequences as to whether or not the respondent participates, they are free to skip any questions, and we will keep their responses private.
5. Attempts to complete the interview immediately or schedule an appointment. If an appointment is scheduled, lets respondents know that we will send them a confirmation letter with the date and time of their appointment.
6. If the respondent requires a Spanish speaking recruiter (and the current recruiter is not bilingual), the case is coded in the management system as “Spanish required”. The case would then be assigned to a Spanish speaking recruiter/interviewer.

Make sure the survey is conducted or scheduled at a time that is convenient for the respondent. The data collector will send the appointment confirmation materials if appointments are scheduled.

This guide is organized as follows:

Section A: Call Guide -When No One Answers the Phone

Section B: Call Guide - When Someone Answers the Phone

Section C: Household Frequently Asked Questions

APPENDIX C23a. (RECRUITMENT 019) Household Survey Recruitment Guide - Virtual Survey

OMB Number: 0584-0530  
Expiration Date: 05/31/2025

## Section A: Call Guide - NO ONE ANSWERS THE PHONE

BOX 1: ANSWERING MACHINE/VOICE MAIL PICKUP (FIRST AND THIRD ATTEMPTS ONLY)

BOX 2: NO ONE ANSWERS THE PHONE/BUSY/ANSWERING MACHINE (SECOND, FOURTH AND OTHER ATTEMPTS)

### BOX 1 ANSWERING MACHINE/VOICE MAIL PICKUP (FIRST AND THIRD ATTEMPT ONLY)

Hello. This message is for <NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN>. My name is <YOUR NAME> and I am calling regarding the National School Meals Study. I am following up regarding a packet you should have received in the mail. At your convenience, I would like to speak with you about this important study.

I will try to call you at another time or you may call me at <YOUR PROJECT CELL PHONE NUMBER>. Again, my name is <YOUR NAME> and I look forward to speaking with you soon. Goodbye.

NOTE:

- ONLY LEAVE MESSAGE ON THE FIRST AND THIRD CALL ATTEMPT.
- RECORD EROC FOR CONTACT ATTEMPT.
- ANY OTHER NUMBERS TO CALL?

### BOX 2 NO ONE ANSWERS THE PHONE/BUSY/ANSWERING MACHINE (SECOND, FOURTH AND HIGHER ATTEMPT)

NOTE:

- RECORD EROC FOR CONTACT ATTEMPT.
- ANY OTHER NUMBERS TO CALL?

## Section B: Recruitment Call Guide- SOMEONE ANSWERS THE PHONE

**S1.** Hello, may I speak with <NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN>?

**BOX 3:** SPEAKING WITH NAMED PARENT OR GUARDIAN OR  
NAMED PARENT/GUARDIAN IS NOT AVAILABLE, BUT SPEAKING WITH OTHER  
PARENT/GUARDIAN

**BOX 4:** PARENT/GUARDIAN IS NOT AVAILABLE AND SPEAKING TO ANOTHER  
HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

**BOX 5:** PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE NO LONGER AT THE KNOWN TELEPHONE NUMBER

**BOX 6:** REMAIL OF ADVANCE LETTER NEEDED

### **BOX 3 SPEAKING WITH A PARENT OR GUARDIAN**

**S2.** My name is <YOUR NAME>. I am calling to follow up about the materials you were sent in the mail about the National School Meals Study.

Is this a good time to speak with you?

INTERVIEWER: IF NO, ASK FOR A BETTER DATE AND TIME TO CALL. RECORD AN EROC IN SMS].

We recently sent you an invitation letter and brochure about this study. Did you receive it?

YES..... (CONTINUE TO **S3**)

NO..... (CONTINUE TO **S3**)

REMAIL REQUESTED..... (GO TO **BOX 6**)

**S3.** For this research study, we'd like to ask if you would be willing to complete a survey about your experiences with the school lunch and breakfast programs. Your household was randomly selected for the study from a list of students enrolled at <NAME OF SCHOOL> and who received free or reduced price school meals in SY 2023-2024.

We can do the survey over the phone or using Zoom, a call over the internet, and I will ask

you the survey questions. The survey will take about 45 minutes of your time. I will ask you questions about your household, your experience with the school meal programs, the application process, and your household income.

For participating in the study, you can receive a Visa gift card of up to \$60, as a thank you for your time - \$40 for completing the survey and an extra \$20 for providing documents that verify your income.

Can you confirm that your child currently attends <SCHOOL NAME>?

YES, ATTENDS..... (CONTINUE TO S4)

NO, DOES NOT ATTEND..... (END CALL)

INTERVIEWER: IF CHILD NO LONGER ATTENDS <SCHOOL NAME>: At this time we are only able to include in the study households whose children attend <SCHOOL NAME>. Given that, we will remove your household from our contact list. Thank you for speaking with me today.

--IN THE SMS, DOCUMENT INELIGIBILITY--

Have you already submitted or do you plan to submit an application for your child to receive school meals at <SCHOOL NAME> in school year 2023-24?

YES..... (CONTINUE TO S4)

NO ..... (END CALL)

INTERVIEWER: IF WILL NOT SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR SY 2023-24: At this time we are only able to include in the study households that plan to submit applications for school meals in school year 2023-24. Given that, we will remove your household from our contact list. Thank you for speaking with me today.

--IN THE SMS, DOCUMENT INELIGIBILITY--

Do you have any questions for me about the study, or what we are asking you to do?

YES..... (ANSWER QUESTIONS/CONCERNS.  
CONTINUE TO S4)

NO..... (CONTINUE TO S4)

INTERVIEWER: IF CHILD NO LONGER ATTENDS <SCHOOL NAME>:

--IN THE SMS, DOCUMENT REFUSAL EROC AND ANSWER ENIRF QUESTIONS—

INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT DECLINES PARTICIPATION: You do not have to make a decision now. Review the materials we have sent and I will give you a call back to answer any questions and address any concerns. You may also visit our study website for additional information at < STUDY WEBSITE>. The school meal programs are important in our schools and having your participation in this study will assist us in enhancing and improving these programs.

I will call you again after you have had more time to think about participating. Thanks for your time today. Goodbye.

NOTE:

- REFER TO THE FAQs/BROCHURE/JOB AID TO ANSWER QUESTIONS/CONCERNS.
- AFTER RESPONDING TO INITIAL QUESTION, BE SURE TO ASK IF THERE ARE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

--IN THE SMS, DOCUMENT REFUSAL EROC AND ANSWER ENIRF QUESTIONS—

**S4.** Would you like to complete the survey now?

YES..... (CONTINUE TO **S4a**)

NO..... (CONTINUE TO **S5**)

**S4a.** That’s great. During the survey, I will ask about your income during <**APPLICATION MONTH, YEAR**>. You should have received an income worksheet in the materials we sent to you. It asks you to gather documents, such as paystubs and payment statements, that we will need for the survey and for you to receive the extra \$20 incentive.

Do you have the income worksheet available? I can wait while you find it or send you a copy by email if that’s easier for you.

REQUESTS EMAIL..... (CONTINUE TO **S4b**)

WAIT WHILE THEY FIND WORKSHEET.....(CONTINUE TO **S4c**)

**S4b.** The email will come from my email address, which is **<YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS>**. To be sure I have the correct contact information for you, please tell me the best email address to use to send you the worksheet (COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS; SEND EMAIL AND WAIT FOR THEM TO RECEIVE IT. CONTINUE TO S4c)

**S4c.** Please take a look at the worksheet. I can wait while you complete it and gather the necessary income documentation. [ONCE THEY ARE READY TO BEGIN]. OK, let's begin the survey. [TRANSITION TO HOUSEHOLD SURVEY]

**S5.** Would you like to schedule the survey for another time? What day and time would be convenient for you to meet for up to 45 minutes via Zoom?

**NOTE:**

- HAVE YOUR CALENDAR AVAILABLE TO CONFIRM YOUR AVAILABILITY

DID PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMIT TO A FIRM APPOINTMENT?

YES..... (CONTINUE TO **S5a**)

NO..... (GO TO **S11**)

**S5a.** RECORD APPOINTMENT DATE AND TIME IN EROC. (CONTINUE TO **S6**)

**S6:** Just to confirm with you, we will join Zoom on **<APPOINTMENT DATE AND TIME>** to complete the survey. You can use the Zoom call-in number if you prefer to complete the survey over the phone. Please remember to allow for enough time and make a note of this on your calendar. (CONTINUE **S7**)

**S7.** I will send an appointment confirmation email that includes the link to the Zoom call, and a worksheet with instructions to prepare before our call. The worksheet should take you about 25 minutes to complete. It asks you to gather documents, such as paystubs and payment statements, that we will need for the survey and for you to receive the extra \$20 incentive.

Then, during our call, I will ask about your income during **<APPLICATION MONTH, YEAR>**. For the income questions, I will ask if you are willing to turn on your video or transition to a video call, to show your documents to verify your income and receive the extra \$20. You will also have the option to submit this information via email or text if you choose.

The email will come from my email address, which is **<YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS>**. To be sure I have the correct contact information for you, please tell me the best email address to use to send you these materials (COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS).

Terrific, thank you. I will give you a call the day before our appointment to remind you of our zoom call. Do you have any questions? (GO TO **S9**)

**S8. IF THE RESPONDENT REQUESTS THAT YOU SEND THE APPOINTMENT CONFIRMATION PACKET VIA MAIL: CONFIRM OR OBTAIN MAILING ADDRESS.**

You should receive your appointment confirmation packet in a few days, which will include a worksheet to prepare before our zoom call. I will give you a call the day before our appointment to remind you of our zoom call. Do you have any questions? (CONTINUE TO **S9.**)

**NOTE:**

- REFER TO THE FAQs/BROCHURE/JOB AID TO ANSWER QUESTIONS/CONCERNS.
- AFTER RESPONDING TO INITIAL QUESTION, BE SURE TO ASK IF THERE ARE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

**S9.** Thank you for your time today. We greatly appreciate your help and support for this important study. If you have any questions before our scheduled appointment on **<APPOINTMENT DATE>**, please contact me at **<YOUR PROJECT CELL PHONE NUMBER>**. Again, my name is **<YOUR NAME>**. Thank you again. Goodbye.

**S10. IF UNWILLING TO COMMIT TO AN APPOINTMENT, ADDRESS ANY CONCERNS AND ESTABLISH THE FOLLOW UP CONTACT. RECORD CONTACT RESULT AS AN EROC.**



**BOX 4**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN IS NOT AVAILABLE  
AND SPEAKING TO ANOTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER**

When would be a good time to call back to reach <NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN>?

--MAKE AN EROC ENTRY TO RECORD CALLBACK DATE AND TIME--

Okay. My name is <YOUR NAME>. I am calling about a letter and brochure we sent recently about the National School Meal Study. I'll try calling again later or (he/she) can call me at <YOUR PROJECT CELL PHONE NUMBER>. Thank you for your help. Goodbye.

**BOX 5**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN IS NO LONGER AT THE KNOWN  
TELEPHONE NUMBER**

My name is <YOUR NAME> and I am calling on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service. We are trying to locate <NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN> to invite (him/her) to join an important research study. Can you tell me how to reach (him/her)?

**IF PERSON ON PHONE KNOWS HOW TO REACH PARENT/GUARDIAN**

--OBTAIN NEW CONTACT INFORMATION--

You can also ask <NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN> to call me at <YOUR PROJECT CELL PHONE NUMBER>. Thanks you for help. Goodbye.

--MAKE AN EROC ENTRY TO NOTE WRONG NUMBER AND RECORD ANY NEW PHONE NUMBER OBTAINED--

**IF PERSON ON PHONE DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO REACH PARENT/GUARDIAN**

Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

--MAKE AN EROC ENTRY TO NOTE WRONG NUMBER--

**BOX 6**

**REMAIL OF ADVANCE LETTER NEEDED**

**S12.** Okay, I can re-send the invitation letter and brochure to you. The address in our records is (READ ADDRESS IN SMS: STREET, CITY, STATE, & ZIP). Is this correct?

YES..... (CONTINUE TO **S13**)

NO..... Okay, what is your current mailing address? (UPDATE ADDRESS IN EROC. CONTINUE TO **S13**)

**S13.** I have confirmed your address and will send another packet to your home right away. In the meantime, I would like to give you more information about the study.

NO OBJECTION..... (GO TO **BOX 3, S3**)

OBJECTION.....(CONTINUE TO **S14**)

**S14.** IF RESPONDENT REQUESTS TIME TO REVIEW INTIVATION LETTER AND BROCHURE BEFORE MOVING FORWARD:

An invitation letter and brochure will be sent to you shortly. I will call you again in a few days, after you have received the study information. Again, my name is <YOUR NAME> and I look forward to speaking with you again. Goodbye.

--SET [HH RECRUITMENT LETTER] STATUS IN EROC SO THAT REMAIL CAN BE MADE. FOLLOW UP AFTER REMAIL IS SENT--

## Section C. Household Frequently Asked Questions

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) is sponsoring this study to learn about the students and their households who participate in the school meal programs. FNS wants to know more about who receives school meal benefits, whether benefits are reaching those who need them, and how the process works to transfer benefits from the government to schools and households.

### **MY CHILD DOES NOT EAT SCHOOL MEALS**

Even if your child doesn’t eat school breakfast or lunch every day, we would like information on why they do not participate. This will help us understand how the school breakfast and lunch programs are working in your school district.

### **HOW DID YOU GET MY NAME? WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?**

Your school is participating in this study, and your household was chosen randomly from a list of households whose student(s) received school meals in school year 2023-2024.

The survey is designed to represent all households who applied for school meal benefits in your school district. You were selected to represent many households similar to you. The information you provide will help provide an accurate picture of households’ experiences with the school meal program.

### **AM I REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE?**

No, participation in this research study is voluntary - it is your choice if you want to participate or not. If you participate, you can also skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, your opinions and experience matter and help to improve these programs. As a token of our appreciation, we will provide you with \$40 for completing the survey and an additional \$20 if you provide income documentation when the survey has been completed.

### **I DO NOT HAVE THE TIME FOR THE SURVEY**

I understand how valuable your time is. This survey will only take 30 - 45 minutes; we can work around your schedule and try to do the survey at a time that is convenient for you. The survey will be conducted via video internet (Zoom) call at no cost to you.

### **I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM**

That is a good reason to do the survey. Your comments will be especially important because the U.S. Department of Agriculture is interested in the different perspectives of people who use or have used the school meal program in the past.

### **IS THE SURVEY PRIVATE?**

We are very serious about protecting your privacy to the full extent required by the law. The study is reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board that is focused on protecting your rights and privacy as a study participant.

All survey interviewers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. This means they are prohibited from sharing or talking about your personal information to anyone other than authorized research staff.

Your answers will be combined with those of other participants nationwide. The study results and reports will be summarized in such a way that no individual family or child can ever be identified.

### **HOW LONG WILL THE SURVEY TAKE?**

The length of the survey is different for different people, but it usually takes 30 to 45 minutes, plus some time to prepare.

### **WHAT IS THE SURVEY ABOUT?**

The survey has questions about participation in the school breakfast and lunch programs, opinions about school meals, and information related to your application for school meal benefits including your household size and sources of income. Remember, all information is completely private. The information you provide will not affect the meal reimbursements your school receives or your child's eligibility to receive school meal benefits.

## **WHY ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT INCOME?**

Income information tells us a little about families who qualify for meal benefits. The information you provide will be kept private and will be used for research purposes only.

## **WHO WILL CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW?**

A survey interviewer who works for Westat will connect to the video internet (Zoom) call on the date and time you agreed to. The interviewer will have an identification badge available to show, to confirm that she or he works for Westat.

## **WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY PAYMENT?**

After you have completed the survey, you will receive your payment in the form of a Visa gift card.

## **WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?**

Please feel free to visit our study’s website at <URL>. Please note that the National School Meal Survey (NSMS) is part of the larger APEC IV study on the national school lunch and breakfast programs. Therefore, you may see both names – APEC and NSMS – on the website.

## **WHEN I VISIT THE STUDY WEBSITE, I SEE THE STUDY REFERRED TO AS THE “NSMS” AND AS “APEC.” WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?**

Both acronyms are used to refer to this research study. States and school districts know it as “APEC,” and households know it as the National School Meals Study (NSMS). They are two names for the same study.

## **HOW DO I CONTACT THE STUDY?**

Please call us at < STUDY TOLL FREE NUMBER> or email us at <STUDY EMAIL ADDRESS>.

## APPENDIX C23a. (RECRUITMENT 019) Household Survey Recruitment Guide - Virtual Survey

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Expiration Date: 05/31/2025

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 0.167 hours (10 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