

## **Appendix G.4**

### **Brochure**



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



**SMO**

School Meals Operations Study

OMB Clearance Number: 0584-0607

Expiration date: xx/xx/20xx



## About the Study

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Child Nutrition (CN) Programs help ensure that children have access to safe, nutritious foods year-round. FNS requires information on how CN Programs are operating to inform policy decisions and manage these Programs effectively.

FNS contracted with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study series. The first collection for this important study occurred in spring 2021, followed by the second and third collections (SMO II and SMO III). The fourth collection of the SMO Study (SMO IV) will begin in fall 2023 and will address research questions related to school participation, student participation, meal counting, financial management, and program integrity. Like the prior data collections which covered use of nationwide waivers, SMO IV will also gather all of the information needed to meet States' statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide Child Nutrition (CN) COVID-19 Waiver to Allow Fiscal Action Flexibility for Meal Pattern Violations Related to COVID-19 Supply Chain Disruptions Impacting School Meals in School Year 2022-23. The SMO Study is the required reporting tool for the CN COVID-19 nationwide waivers.

## Participating in the Study

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) requires any State Agency (SA) that elects to use a CN nationwide waiver to submit a report not later than 1 year after electing to use the waiver that summarizes the use of such waiver. The 68 SAs that administer the Federal CN Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are required to participate in this collection. SMO IV also includes a nationally representative sample of SFAs. Cooperation by States and districts is required under Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

SMO IV data collection will begin in fall 2023. To the extent possible, data collection activities have been designed to reduce participant burden.

### The **State Agency Director** will be asked to complete:

**A web survey.** The fall 2023 SA Director survey will gather information on CN program operations in SY 2022-2023 and the use of the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver. This survey will be completed only by directors overseeing NSLP, SBP, or SSO.

**Administrative data requests.** The study team will request disaggregated FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 administrative data in spring 2024 for Fiscal Year 2023 to collect information on school and site participation, as well as children's program participation.

### The **SFA Director** will be asked to complete:

**A web survey.** The fall 2023 SFA survey will gather information on program operations and financial conditions during SY 2022-2023. This is the only collection from SFAs.

To minimize the time needed to complete each survey, the surveys focus only on questions that cannot be answered using the administrative data.



## Protecting Privacy

We will group responses with those of other study participants so the data will not identify individual SFAs or schools. Some of the information gathered may be presented by State. Each respondent's personally identifiable information will be kept private to the full extent allowed by law. No individual student data are being collected.

## Disseminating the Findings

FNS will consider the most effective ways to disseminate the study's findings to a broad audience and expects to release findings in 2025.

## About the SMO Research Team

Mathematica is among the nation's leading research companies. The team has over 50 years of experience in conducting research for government agencies and studying Child Nutrition Programs.

## For More Information

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The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to understand how State agencies and school food authorities (SFAs) operated CN Programs in SY 2022-2023 and to satisfy the 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 (0.05 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, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-0607). Do not return the completed form to this address.