

Appendix G.2
Study support email from FNS Regional Offices to State agencies

Dear [SA CN Director]:

As you know, our regional office is working with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. Thank you for your efforts to complete the first three years of SMO data collection.

The fourth SMO collection (SMO IV) is expected to begin in October 2023 and includes all State agencies (SA) and a nationally representative sample of school food authorities (SFAs). The table below describes the expected data collection components, timeframes, and topics included in the collections.

SMO data collection activities and timeline

| Timeframe (expected start) | Data collection component | Topic(s) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Fall 2023 (October) | SA web survey | CN Program operations in SY 2022-2023 and use of the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action Waiver |
| | SFA web survey | SFA Program operations in SY 2022-2023 |
| Spring 2024 (March) | SA administrative data request | Disaggregated FY 2023 data (FNS-10, FNS-44, and FNS-418) |

SMO IV will 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 2022-2023. State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for this nationwide waiver.

Representatives from Mathematica will contact you in the coming days to provide more details. For more information on the SMO study, including plans for the SMO IV data collection, please see the attached brochure. Data collection will begin following OMB approval.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in this very important study.

Sincerely,

[FNS Regional Office Liaison]

Attachments: Brochure

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to understand how State agencies and school food authorities 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.