

**Appendix G.3**  
**State Agency Advance email**

FROM: [STUDY EMAIL]

TO: [SA CN DIRECTOR EMAIL]

EMAIL SUBJECT: USDA/FNS School Meals Operations (SMO) Study IV Survey

Dear [SA CN DIRECTOR]:

Mathematica is conducting the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study under contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Thank you for your efforts to complete the first three years of SMO data collection. The fourth SMO data collection (SMO IV) is expected to begin this month and includes all State agencies (SAs) and a nationally representative sample of school food authorities (SFAs). **This email requests:**

- 1) **your full participation in state-level data collection activities**, including completion of a 30-minute web survey this fall and the collection of disaggregated administrative data reported on the FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 in the spring (March 2024), and
- 2) **your assistance notifying selected SFAs in your State about this important study.**

#### **State-Level Data Collection Activities**

SMO IV will collect information on CN Program operations in SY 2022-2023 and gather all 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. **State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for these nationwide waivers.** The 68 SAs that administer the Federal CN Programs in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are required to participate in this collection.

***Following OMB approval, Mathematica will email you an invitation to complete the 30-minute SMO IV web survey.***

#### **Request for Assistance Notifying Selected SFAs**

In fall 2023, the 30-minute SFA survey will gather information on program operations during SY 2022-2023. We will contact you in the coming weeks with the names of SFAs in your State that are included in the SMO IV national sample. At that time, we would appreciate it if you could contact these SFA directors to describe the study, inform them of their selection into the study, and encourage their participation.

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.

To reduce burden on SFAs, the SFA sample is limited to the smallest possible number of SFAs needed to support the research, and the study will rely on administrative data whenever possible to avoid redundant information requests.

Thank you for your assistance with this important study. **Your participation, and the participation of selected SFAs, is vital to understanding CN program operations during SY 2022-2023** and to informing policies intended to ensure these programs contribute to a healthy future for all children—a goal we all share.

For more information on SMO, please see the attached brochure. If you have questions about the study, please contact Mathematica at 1-833-440-9475 or [SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com).

Sincerely,  
Veronica Severn  
Survey Director  
Mathematica

Attachment: Brochure