

Appendix G.8
Telephone reminder script

Reminder Call Script

Hello, I am calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service regarding the School Meals Operations Study, or SMO. May I please speak with [STATE CN DIRECTOR/SFA DIRECTOR]?

IF CN DIRECTOR/SFA DIRECTOR IS NOT AVAILABLE:

Is there a better time to call to reach [STATE CN DIRECTOR/SFA DIRECTOR]?

[LOG DATE/TIME FOR CALL BACK]

IF NO ANSWER AND VOICEMAIL BOX NAME MATCHES CONTACT NAME, LEAVE VOICEMAIL:

Hello, this message is for [DIRECTOR NAME]. My name is [INTERVIEWER NAME]. I am calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service regarding the School Meals Operations Study, or SMO.

[IF SA: Thank you for participating in the first three years of SMO data collection. The fourth SMO data collection, SMO IV, includes a 30-minutes survey of State Child Nutrition Directors to collect information on CN Program operations in School Year 2022-2023 and how the School Year 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver was used. State agencies are required to participate, and full participation in the SMO Study will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for the waiver.]

[IF SFA: The SMO Study includes a 30-minutes survey of School Food Authority Directors that focuses on Child Nutrition Program operations. You have been selected to participate as part of a nationally representative sample, which means that your response will speak for many SFAs and is necessary to ensure the views of SFAs like yours are included. Participation in this important study is required for all selected SFAs.]

You should have received an email with a link to this survey on [DATE OR TIME FRAME]. The survey ends soon, so please log on today to provide your responses.]

If you have any questions or need help accessing the survey, please call our toll-free line at 1-833-440-9475 or email us at SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com. We greatly appreciate your participation.

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 4.8 minutes (0.08 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

IF DIRECTOR IS AVAILABLE:

Hi, my name is [INTERVIEWER NAME]. I'm calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service regarding the School Meals Operations Study, or SMO.

[IF SA: The SMO Study includes a 30-minutes survey of State Child Nutrition Directors to collect information on CN Program operations in School Year 2022-2023 and how the School Year 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver was used. State agencies are required to participate, and full participation in the SMO Study will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for these waivers.]

[IF SFA: The SMO Study includes a 30-minutes survey of School Food Authority Directors that focuses on Child Nutrition Program operations. You have been selected to participate as part of a nationally representative sample, which means that your response will speak for many SFAs and is necessary to ensure the views of SFAs like yours are included. Participation in this important study is required for all selected SFAs.]

I'm calling to see if you have any questions about accessing or completing the survey. [ANSWER QUESTIONS].

You should have received an email with a link to this survey on [DATE OR TIME FRAME].

The survey closes soon, so please log on to complete your survey as soon as possible.

IF DIRECTOR DOES NOT RECALL EMAIL:

I can share some information regarding the study.

[IF SA: We appreciate your efforts to complete the first three years of SMO data collection, which began in spring of 2021. This fall, during the fourth SMO data collection, SMO IV, the survey gathers information on CN Program operations in School Year 2022-2023 and information needed to meet States' statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide Child Nutrition 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. Federal law requires that States report on the waivers, and the SMO Study is the required reporting tool for the CN COVID-19 nationwide waivers. State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for the waivers. Having updated information about Child Nutrition Program operations will help the Food and Nutrition Service effectively oversee these programs and will inform policy decisions as well as future training and technical assistance efforts]

[IF SFA: The SFA survey gathers information on program operations during School Year 2022-2023. Having updated information about school-based Child Nutrition Programs will help the Food and Nutrition Service effectively oversee these programs and will inform policy decisions as well as future training and technical assistance efforts.]

Your participation is vital to understanding Child Nutrition program operations and to ensuring these programs contribute to a healthy future for all children—a goal we all share.

I would be happy to email you another link to the web survey. First, let me confirm your email address: [FILL EMAIL ADDRESS].

IF HESITANT OR SKEPTICAL:

The information you provide is critical to informing current and future policy decisions as well as training and technical assistance efforts.

[IF SA: Under the terms of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) and Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, State Agencies 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.

As you know, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) requires any State Agency that elects to use a CN nationwide waiver to submit a report, no later than 1 year after electing to use the waiver that, at a minimum, summarizes its use and describes how it resulted in improved services to Program participants. The SMO Study is the required reporting tool for the School Year 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver authorized under the FFCRA. The Food and Nutrition Service is sponsoring this study to capture the congressionally mandated data from States on this waives, and to learn how programs like the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Seamless Summer Option are operating. State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide waiver.

We recognize the administrative effort it takes to participate in research studies, and that earlier State agency surveys were challenging to complete for some State agencies and took more time than was estimated. The SMO team took steps to streamline the SMO IV State agency survey to reduce burden to the extent possible and survey is estimated to take about 30 minutes to complete. The study will also rely on administrative data whenever possible to avoid redundant information requests.]

[IF SFA: You have been selected to participate as part of a nationally representative sample, which means that your response will speak for many SFAs and is necessary to ensure that the voices of SFAs similar to yours are heard.

We recognize the administrative effort associated with participating in research studies, and the School Meal Operations Study has been designed to reduce participant burden to the extent possible. For example, the survey focuses only on questions that cannot be answered using the administrative data you have already reported, as your State agency will be providing those data to the study team in order to avoid redundant information requests.

Under Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, sampled SFAs and the 68 State agencies 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.]

AGREES TO PARTICIPATE:

Great, thank you very much. We appreciate your time and effort.

Please feel free to call our toll-free helpline with any additional questions or to get help with the survey, 1-833-440-9475, or to email us at SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com.

SPEAKING WITH A SECRETARY:

Hi, my name is [INTERVIEWER NAME]. I'm calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service regarding the School Meals Operations Study, or SMO. We recently sent [DIRECTOR NAME] an email with a link to this survey. I'm calling to remind [DIRECTOR NAME] to complete the 30-minute survey online and to see if they had any questions about accessing or completing the survey.

[IF SA: The SMO Study is the required reporting tool for the School Year 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver, and State agencies' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for waivers used during School Year 2022-2023.]

[IF SFA: Participation in this important study is required for all selected SFAs.]

Can you pass that message along, or can you set an appointment for me to speak with [DIRECTOR NAME]?

Frequently Asked Questions

Survey URL: [WEBSITE]

What is the purpose of the study?

[IF SA: This important study will provide general descriptive data on the characteristics of school-based Child Nutrition programs, identify program trends, and inform potential topics for training and technical assistance. Having updated information about school-based Child Nutrition Program operations will help the Food and Nutrition Service manage these programs effectively and inform current and future policy and budget decisions. Further, the School Meal Operations Study aims to gather information that will help States, school food authorities, and schools better serve children.

The School Meals Operations Study (SMO) is also the required reporting tool for the School Year 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver, and the study will gather all of the information needed to meet States' statutory reporting requirements for this nationwide Child Nutrition COVID-19 waiver. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) (PL 116-127) requires any State Agency that elects to use a Child Nutrition nationwide waiver to submit a report, no later than 1 year after electing to use the waiver that, at a minimum, summarizes its use and describes how it resulted in improved services to Program participants. States' full participation in SMO will satisfy their statutory reporting requirements for this waiver.]

[IF SFA: This important study will gather information on program operations during School Year 2022-2023. Study data will inform potential topics for training and technical assistance, as well as upcoming policy decisions. Having updated information about the operation of school-based Child Nutrition Programs will help the Food and Nutrition Service manage these programs effectively and help States, school food authorities, and schools better serve children.]

Will States need to submit additional information to the Food and Nutrition Service on the COVID-19 Child Nutrition waivers?

FNS intends for the fourth SMO data collection to collect all of the information needed to meet States' statutory reporting requirements for the nationwide COVID-19 Child Nutrition waiver that was used during School Year 2022-2023. Completion of the survey and administrative data request will satisfy States' reporting requirements for the nationwide COVID-19 Child Nutrition waiver authorized under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

When is the State CN Director/SFA Director survey due?

The survey closes in [DATE], so we need your completed survey as soon as possible.

Can I have a hard copy of the State CN Director/SFA Director survey?

Yes, but web responses promote higher data quality and make it easier for you to identify and complete only the questions that apply to you, so we encourage you to take it through our secure online platform.

I am not [NAME]. You have the wrong person.

COLLECT THEIR NAME, TITLE AND DISTRICT AFFILIATIONS, MARK THE CASE FOR REVIEW.