

**Appendix M.1**  
**SMO Option Period 3 Pre-test Memorandum**

**To:** Darcy Güngör, Susie Barr, and Conor McGovern

**From:** Kate Schroeder, Veena Prakriya, and Veronica Severn

**Date:** 3/30/23

**Subject:** School Meals Operations Study: Option Period 3 Pre-Test Findings

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## A. Introduction

This memorandum describes key findings from the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study Option Period 3 pre-test of the surveys for State Agency Child Nutrition (CN) directors and School Food Authority (SFA) directors, and the revisions we made to these instruments based on pre-test findings.

Mathematica conducted the pre-test in March 2023 with the State CN directors in Arizona, Maine, and Wisconsin, and six SFA directors in Arizona, California, Maine, and Wisconsin. We selected respondents based on their interest and availability to participate within the pre-test time frame. When choosing SFA directors, we selected respondents from SFAs that varied in size and urbanicity.

We emailed hard-copy versions of the surveys to confirmed respondents and instructed them to note any instructions or questions that were unclear or questions that were difficult to answer. We asked respondents to track how long it took them to complete the survey. The revised versions of the State Agency CN Director Survey and the SFA Director Survey used in the pre-test are available in Appendices M.2 and M.3, respectively. Note, we fielded two versions of the SFA Director Survey according to States' participation in universal free meals. Both versions are available in Appendix M.3. We conducted 30-minute debriefing interviews with each pre-test respondent to identify questions that were confusing or difficult to answer, and to gather their recommendations for changes. Appendices M.4 and M.5 list debriefing protocols for State CN directors and SFA directors, respectively. We provide the final versions of the State Agency CN Director Survey and the SFA Director Survey used in the pre-test in Appendices D.1 and F.1, respectively.

## B. State Agency CN Director Survey

### 1. Burden

We asked respondents to record how long it took them to complete each section of the Option Period 3 survey, including the time needed to gather relevant data or information. Respondents spent an average of 26 minutes completing the survey (Table 1). The respondent who took the longest did not perceive timing to be an issue and anticipated completing the survey in less time in the fall. All respondents reported that the Option Period 3 survey was much easier and shorter than the surveys from previous years. Based on respondents' feedback, we estimate this survey should take respondents about 30 minutes to complete.

**Table 1. State CN Director Survey pre-test completion times (in minutes)**

Respondent	Overall	Section A: SY 2022– 2023 Fiscal Action Waiver	Section B: State Provided Universal Free School Meals	Section C: USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	Section D: Subsidies	Section E: Procurement and Buy American	Section F: Wrap-Up
7	20	6	1	2	4	7	1
8	43	8	1	12	5	17	1
9	16	3	2	2	1	7	1
7	20	6	1	2	4	7	1

SY = school year.

## 2. Modifications to the State Agency CN Director Survey

All respondents reported that the Option Period 3 survey was generally easy to understand and clearly organized. They felt the survey structure made it easy to delegate sections or certain questions to appropriate staff members and noted that the relevant data from the 2022–2023 school year will be readily accessible when this survey is fielded in the fall. Overall, the respondents’ feedback yielded minimal changes to the survey.

Table 2 provides additional details about pre-test respondents’ feedback to the survey and the changes we made to address their comments. In response to their feedback, we revised certain questions to clarify wording and intent, and we added some additional response options. The final State Agency CN Director Survey is available in Appendix D.1.

**Table 2. State Agency CN Director Survey: Respondents’ feedback and subsequent changes**

Questions	Respondents’ feedback	Survey changes
C1, C2, C3	One respondent noted that they could not easily access information for these questions but said the preparation note in the introduction will be helpful when they complete the survey in the fall.	No change. The preparation note indicates respondents will need to gather this data for the survey. The questions also include a “Don’t know” response option for respondents who cannot access the data or do not know how to respond.
C4	Respondents reported they returned FFVP funds because some schools are unable to use all their awarded funds due to staffing, supply chain, and other challenges that prevent them from being able to fully participate in the program.	We added the response option “Schools did not utilize all of their awarded funds,” to a new question, C4, that addresses a new research question: “Why did States return FFVP funding to the USDA?”
D2, D4	One respondent reported that their State’s model of subsidizing universal free meals involves multiple components that made answering this question challenging.	No change. Respondents can select all subsidies that apply to their State and report any unique circumstances in the “Other, specify” text box.
E1	Two respondents were unsure how to respond to this question because their State’s policy is to implement the Federal policy.	We changed the response options to allow States with a Buy American policy to indicate “Yes, our State implements the Federal policy,” or “Yes, our State has a State-specific policy.”

E2, E3	One respondent suggested that Response Item 7 should be changed to “Encouragement for SFAs to order USDA foods in order to meet Buy American.”	No change. We do not recommend changing this response item as the question is about the components of the State’s Buy American policy.
E6	One respondent suggested including an option for exceptions when domestic foods are out of season.	No change. Seasonality can be captured in Items A and B: “The domestic food product is in inadequate supply,” and “The domestic food product is low quality.”
E9	Two respondents were unsure whether they should consider participation in LFS through Agricultural Marketing Service.	We added a clarification to the survey question, “If your State participated in the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS), please do not consider this in your response.”
E11	One respondent was unsure what constituted training, and whether delivering a training is different from providing guidance.	We changed the question to ask about “training or guidance.”

CN = Child Nutrition; FFVP = Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program; LFS = Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program; SFA = School Food Authority; USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture.

### C. SFA Director Survey

#### 1. Burden

Four of the six respondents completed the survey within the target burden estimate of 30 minutes; on average, it took respondents 27 minutes. Table 2 shows each respondent’s completion time. Pre-test respondents completed a hard-copy version of the survey. Several respondents said they expect to complete a web version of the survey in less time, because a web survey will use skip logic. We therefore do not recommend adjusting the estimated burden.

**Table 3. SFA Director Survey pre-test completion times (in minutes)**

Respondent	Overall	Section A: School Participation	Section B: State-Provided Universal Free Meals	Section C: Eligibility Determination and Verification	Section D: Meal Prices	Section E: Funding and Expenditures	Section F: Procurement and Buy American	Section G: Meal Preparation and Service
1	25	1	2	3	n/a	3	10	6
2	25	1	n/a	2	7	6	5	4
3	18	1	n/a	1	3	4	5	4
4	33	1	n/a	1	5	6	11	9
5	40	1	n/a	2	4	6	14	13
6	21	1	1	1	n/a	3	7	8

#### 2. Modifications to the SFA Director Survey

Overall, respondents reported that the Option Period 3 survey is straightforward and clearly written. Respondents provided feedback on the wording of some questions and offered suggestions for additional response options. In response to their feedback, we added an additional term to the glossary, revised certain questions to clarify wording and intent, and modified response options to specific questions.

Table 4 provides more information on pre-test respondents’ feedback on the survey and changes we made to address their comments. The final SFA Director Survey is located in Appendix F.1.

**Table 4. SFA Director Survey: Respondent feedback and subsequent changes**

Questions	Respondents’ feedback	Survey changes
Overall	One respondent said questions felt too brief, and they would have liked the opportunity to elaborate further in certain questions.	No change. Opportunities to provide more information are captured in the “Other, specify” response options for many questions. Adding additional short answer or write-in question formats could add to the burden and might shift the respondents’ focus away from the questions’ intention.
Survey navigation	One respondent commented it would be helpful if the electronic version of the survey had an option to save progress when partway through a section.	No change. Respondents will be able to save progress while taking the web version of the survey, as described in the instruction page.
Section B	One respondent suggested including a question about the impact of States’ models of financing universal free meals on participation, free lunch stigma, and meal service policies, such as Offer versus Serve.	No change. The State survey addresses subsidies and reimbursements to SFAs. The additional topics mentioned do not align with the research questions and adding a new question would modestly increase respondent burden.
D2, D3, D4, D5	Two respondents reported that meal prices in their SFA changed midyear, as their State allocated funding to provide reduced price meals at no cost. However, there was no response option to indicate this situation in the question.	We added the instruction, “If the price changed during the school year, please report the price charged for the majority of the school year.”
D6	One respondent selected “Increased lunch prices in all schools,” but reported that the price increase was not in response to the PLE provision. They were exempt from PLE, because their operating balance was positive.	We italicized “ <i>in response to the Paid Lunch Equity provision</i> ” in the question, to make it clearer to respondents that their responses should consider the PLE provision.
E1	One respondent reported that some SFA directors might not know the specifics of the Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022.	We added a definition of the Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022 to the Glossary page.
E4	One respondent suggested including a question asking why SFAs did not receive Equipment Assistance Grants.	No change. This comment is not aligned with the research questions.
E11	One respondent reported it was difficult to estimate how much unpaid meal debt was recovered, because only a small percentage of households pay their unpaid meal debts.	We added the preparation note to the survey introduction, “You will be asked to report the total amount of money owed to your SFA because of unpaid meal charges and the amount that has been recovered since the end of SY 2022–2023.” Respondents can also report that they do not know how much money was recovered.
E12	One respondent reported that unpaid meal balances in their SFA are primarily paid through financial aid from their district, charitable donations, and the Local Education Agency.	We added a question asking about the proportion of unpaid meal balances SFAs recovered from household payments, district funding, charitable donations, state funding, and other sources.
F4	One respondent suggested changing Item D to “Using domestic commodities or products increases administrative burden when they are not available or cost more.”	No change. We do not recommend changing Item D, because Items A and C capture supply and cost challenges. Adding language to this item will change the meaning of the item.

Questions	Respondents' feedback	Survey changes
F4a	One respondent commented that obtaining Buy American information from suppliers can be difficult and time consuming, and, although the suppliers are responsive, sometimes the information is not readily available.	We changed Item D to "Food suppliers are not responsive to requests or able to provide information about the percentage of U.S. content in end products," to better encompass SFA experiences.
F5	Respondents indicated it would be helpful to have a definition or example of a threshold in the question, because SFA Directors might interpret this term differently.	We modified the question to include "For example, an SFA may use a threshold of 5 percent, meaning an exception to the Buy American provision is warranted if the cost of a domestic commodity or product is at least 5 percent more than the cost of a non-domestic commodity or product."
F6	Two respondents reported their SFA is part of a buying group, so they are not always aware of whether their purchases include non-domestic commodities. Another respondent commented that "occasionally" should be a response option, as their SFA only occasionally procures food items under the exception to Buy American.	We added the instruction, "If your SFA procured any of these foods under an exception to the Buy American provision at any time in SY 2022–2023, please select "Yes." Respondents can select "Don't know" if they do not have this information.
F10	One respondent commented that SFAs can use multiple units to track exceptions to Buy American, and a "Select all" question format would make responding to the question easier and make responses more accurate.	We changed the response format of Question F10 to "Select all that apply," to allow respondents to select multiple units of measure.
F11	Some respondents reported difficulty reporting on the percentage of food procurements that were not domestic commodities or products.	We added a preparation note to the survey introduction, "You will be asked to report the percentage of food procurements that were not domestic commodities or products during SY 2022–2023." Respondents are encouraged to report their best estimate and have the option to select "Don't know."
G3	Four respondents reported additional trainings or resources for determining ingredient costs and developing standardized recipes would be helpful.	We added two new response options: (1) "Determining ingredient costs or price per serving for standardized recipes" and (2) "Incorporating scratch cooking."
G4	Respondents indicated online resources and materials are generally preferred; however, they prefer new materials and materials that will be distributed to schools as paper copies.	No change. We do not recommend changing this question as respondents did not report difficulty answering it.
G5	Two respondents indicated it would be helpful to encompass scratch and speed-scratch cooking in this question, as the schools in their SFA use both methods. Another respondent reported that schools in their SFA frequently use speed-scratch recipes, and they would have liked a way to indicate this in the survey.	We added use of speed-scratch cooking as a response option to Question G5 and created a new question, G6b, about how often SFAs use speed-scratch cooking.
G7	One respondent suggested splitting Item U into two response options because parents and students have different feelings about new recipes and menus.	We separated Item U into "Concern about students' acceptance of new recipes or menus" and "Concern about parents' acceptance of new recipes or menus."
G8, G9	One respondent reported the frequency of offering nonanimal-based proteins at breakfasts and lunches differs by school level.	We changed Questions G8 and G9 to ask respondents to report how often plant-based meals were offered at each school level.

PLE = Paid Lunch Equity; SFA = School Food Authority; SY = school year.

## **Appendix M.2**

### **SMO SA CN Director Survey – Revised**



OMB Clearance Number: 0584-0607  
Expiration Date: 12/31/2024

# **State Agency Child Nutrition Director Survey: School Year 2023–2024**

*REVISED*  
*March 3, 2023*

**Sponsored by:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service



## Introduction

Intro.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), has contracted with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. Having updated information about school-based Child Nutrition (CN) Programs will help FNS effectively administer these programs and inform policy and budget decisions.

This survey is collecting information on the following topics for School Year (SY) 2022-2023:

- A. COVID-19 CN waiver reporting requirements for the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver\*
- B. Universal free school meals
- C. Participation in CN Programs  
*Preparation note:* You will be asked to report the number of schools that applied to participate and participated in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program (FFVP). You will also be asked for the number of children served through this program.
- D. Subsidies
- E. Procurement and Buy American

\* This survey is collecting information on the statutory reporting requirements for the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver that FNS authorized for use due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and pursuant to the authority in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Federal statute requires each State agency that oversees CN Programs to report on use of the waiver by the State agency and local program operators.

**Because this is a mandatory information collection, your State Agency must answer all questions regarding the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver. Full participation in the SMO Study will satisfy your State agency's reporting requirements for the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver.**

Cooperation by States and districts is required under Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. At the same time, recognizing the administrative effort associated with participating in research studies, SMO has been designed to limit participant burden to the extent possible. **It should take about 30 minutes to complete the survey**

The information you provide about yourself and other individuals in your organization will be kept private to the full extent allowed by law. This means that your personal information will be kept private and not associated with any of your responses about your agencies' operations. The responses you provide about operations may be tabulated by State so that the public will be able to determine how your agency operates CN Programs.

We thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in this important study. If you have any questions about the study, please email [SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com) or call Mathematica toll-free at 833-440-9475.

## Glossary

**SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver:** This waiver allowed State agencies to *not* take fiscal action for missing meal components or production records and for repeat violations involving milk type and vegetable subgroups when there is a COVID-19-related supply chain disruption with respect to foods served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), or Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

**Local program operators:** SFAs, sponsors, or institutions that operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

**School food authority (SFA):** The governing body that has the legal authority to operate a lunch or breakfast program in one or more public or private schools.

**A. WAIVER TO ALLOW FISCAL ACTION FLEXIBILITY FOR MEAL PATTERN VIOLATIONS RELATED TO COVID-19 SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS IMPACTING SCHOOL MEALS IN SY 2022-2023**

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the survey here: \_\_\_\_\_**

This section focuses on the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action Waiver to allow flexibility for meal pattern violations involving missing meal components or production records and for repeat violations involving milk type and vegetable subgroups.

ALL ANSWER:

**COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #110: 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**

This section asks about use of the **SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action** waiver. This waiver allowed State agencies to *not* take fiscal action for missing meal components or production records and for repeat violations involving milk type and vegetable subgroups when there is a COVID-19-related supply chain disruption with respect to foods served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), or Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Please answer the following questions focusing on use of the waiver during SY 2022-2023.

**A1. Did your State agency use the SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action waiver for any of the following?**

*Select one per row*

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. The requirement to apply fiscal action for missing food components or missing production records	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. The requirement to apply fiscal action for repeated violations involving milk type and vegetable subgroups	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF FISCAL ACTION WAIVER USED FOR MISSING FOOD COMPONENTS OR MISSING PRODUCTION RECORDS (IF A1A =1)

**A2. For how many school food authorities (SFAs) did your State agency waive the requirement to apply fiscal action for missing food components or missing production records using the *SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action* waiver during SY 2022-2023?**

Please enter the number of SFAs. Then select an option to indicate whether this is the actual number or your best estimate. If you do not have enough information to provide a reasonably close estimate, please select "Don't know."

<input type="text"/>	NUMBER OF SFAS
(RANGE: 1-2000)	
<input type="radio"/> Actual number of SFAs.....	3
<input type="radio"/> Estimated number of SFAs.....	2
<input type="radio"/> Don't know- data not collected .....	d
NO RESPONSE .....	M

ANSWER IF FISCAL ACTION WAIVER USED FOR REPEATED VIOLATIONS INVOLVING MILK TYPE OR VEGETABLE SUBGROUP (IF A1B =1)

**A3. For how many SFAs did your State agency waive the requirement to apply fiscal action for repeated violations involving milk type and vegetable subgroups using the *SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action* waiver during SY 2022-2023?**

Please enter the number of SFAs. Then select an option to indicate whether this is the actual number or your best estimate. If you do not have enough information to provide a reasonably close estimate, please select "Don't know."

<input type="text"/>	NUMBER OF SFAS
(RANGE: 1-2000)	
<input type="radio"/> Actual number of SFAs.....	3
<input type="radio"/> Estimated number of SFAs.....	2
<input type="radio"/> Don't know- data not collected .....	d
NO RESPONSE .....	M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

**B. STATE-PROVIDED UNIVERSAL FREE MEALS**

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

The next questions ask about State-provided Universal Free Meals in SY 2022 – 2023.

ANSWER IF YOUR STATE IS CA, NV, MA, ME, VT

**B1. With the recent availability of universal free meals, what challenges, if any, has your State agency experienced with application collections now that school meals benefits are not tied to the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application?**

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- SFAs not collecting applications..... 1
- Families not completing applications..... 2
- Incomplete data in applications ..... 3
- SFAs unable to verify applications ..... 4
- No challenges ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- Other (*Specify*)..... 99
- NO RESPONSE..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.

**C. USDA FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM**

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

The next questions are about school participation in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in SY 2022-2023.

ALL ANSWER:

**C1. How many elementary schools participated in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in SY 2022-2023?**

If none, please enter 0.

NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
(RANGE 0-6000)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**C2. How many elementary schools *applied to participate* in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in SY 2022-2023?**

If none, please enter 0.

NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
(RANGE 0-6000)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF C1>0

**C3. How many elementary school students in your State were served under the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in SY 2022-2023?**

NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
(RANGE 0-6000)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## D. SUBSIDIES

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

The following questions are about the subsidies and support your State provided to SFAs in SY 2022-2023.

ALL STATES ANSWER EXCEPT FOR CA, NV, MA, ME, AND VT

**D1. In addition to Federal reimbursements, did your State provide subsidies to SFAs for breakfasts in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1  
 No ..... 0 SKIP TO D3  
NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF D1=1 OR IF STATE IS CA, NV, MA, ME, AND VT

**D2. Which of the following subsidies did your State provide to SFAs for breakfasts in SY 2022-2023? [IF STATE= CA, NV, MA, ME, VT: Please think about both subsidies your State provided for universal free meals and other subsidies your State provided.]**

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- State offered universal free breakfast ..... 1  
 Per-meal reimbursement based on the number of free meals ..... 2  
 Per-meal reimbursement based on the number of reduced-price meals ..... 3  
 Per-meal reimbursement based on the number of paid meals ..... 4  
 Annual lump sum ..... 5  
 Supplement to cover specific costs ..... 6  
 Amount based on a percentage of low-income students ..... 7  
 Other (*Specify*)..... 99

Specify

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL STATES ANSWER EXCEPT FOR CA, NV, MA, ME, VT

**D3. In addition to Federal reimbursements, did your State provide subsidies to SFAs for lunches in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1  
 No ..... 0 SKIP TO E\_Intro  
NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF D3=1 OR IF STATE IS CA, NV, MA, ME, AND VT

**D4. Which of the following subsidies did your State provide to SFAs for lunches in SY 2022-2023? [IF STATE= CA, NV, MA, ME, VT: Please think about both subsidies your State provided for universal free meals and other subsidies your State provided.]**

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- State offered universal free lunch..... 1
  - Per-meal reimbursement based on the number of free meals..... 2
  - Per-meal reimbursement based on the number of reduced-price meals..... 3
  - Per-meal reimbursement based on the number of paid meals ..... 4
  - Annual lump sum..... 5
  - Supplement to cover specific costs ..... 6
  - Amount based on a percentage of low-income students ..... 7
  - Other (*Specify*)..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**



## E. PROCUREMENT AND BUY AMERICAN

The Buy American provision requires SFAs to procure, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodities or products. A domestic commodity or product is defined as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States or a food product that is processed in the United States substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the United States.

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

ALL ANSWER:

- E1. Does your State have a policy on the Buy American provision? State policies may be identical to the Federal policy or may include Federal and/or State-specific policy components.**
- Yes..... 1
  - No ..... 0 SKIP TO E8
  - NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF STATE HAS A BUY AMERICAN POLICY (E1=1)

- E2. What components are described in your State's Buy American policy?**

*Select all that apply*

- Buy American provision requirement to procure domestic commodities or products ..... 1
  - Definition of a domestic commodity or product ..... 2
  - Criteria for SFAs to determine exceptions to the Buy American provision ..... 3
  - Requirement for SFAs to document the Buy American provision in all procurement solicitations and/or contracts ..... 4
  - Requirement for SFAs to document the Buy American provision in all procurement procedures and/or document prototypes..... 5
  - Encouragement for SFAs to procure domestic foods from local, regional, small, women-owned, and/or minority-owned businesses ..... 6
  - Encouragement for SFAs to order USDA Foods..... 7
  - State procurement reviews to ensure SFA compliance with the Buy American provision ..... 8
  - Other (*Specify*)..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**ANSWER IF YOU SELECTED ANY ITEM IN E2AS A COMPONENT OF YOUR STATE'S BUY AMERICAN POLICY (E2\_1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, OR 99)**

**E3. Does your State provide guidance to SFAs on the following policy components?**

RESPONDENT: Only answer for components selected in E2. If components are not described in your State's Buy American policy, skip that row.

	<i>Select one per row</i>	
	Yes	No
a. Buy American provision requirement to procure domestic commodities or products	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. Definition of a domestic commodity or product	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
c. Criteria for SFAs to determine exceptions to the Buy American provision	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
d. Requirement for SFAs to document the Buy American provision in all procurement solicitations and/or contracts	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
e. Requirement for SFAs to document the Buy American provision in all procurement procedures and/or document prototypes	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
f. Encouragement for SFAs to procure domestic foods from local, regional, small, women-owned, and/or minority-owned businesses	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
g. Encouragement for SFAs to order USDA Foods	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
h. State procurement reviews to ensure SFA compliance with the Buy American provision	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
i. [FILL E2 OTHER RESPONSE]	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....	M	

ANSWER IF YOU SELECTED YES FOR ANY ITEM IN E3AS A COMPONENT THAT YOUR STATE PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON IN ITS BUY AMERICAN POLICY (E3\_A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, OR I=1)

**E4. What methods are used to share guidance on your State's Buy American policy with SFAs?**

*Select all that apply*

- Online documents and resources..... 1
  - Handbooks / guides ..... 2
  - In-person presentations..... 3
  - Webinar presentations..... 4
  - Phone or email communications ..... 5
  - None - State does not provide guidance to SFAs on Buy American policy ..... 0
  - Other (*Specify*)..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF STATE HAS A BUY AMERICAN POLICY (E1=1)

**E5. How does your State agency ensure SFA compliance with the Buy American provision? For each compliance review activity, please indicate the type of review your State uses to check compliance.**

Select all that apply per row or 'Compliance not checked'

Compliance review activity	During administrative review	During procurement review	During other review	Compliance not checked
a. Check that SFAs are procuring domestic commodities/products	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. Check that contract solicitations contain Buy American language	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
c. Check that contracts contain Buy American language	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
d. Check that supplier invoices or receipts show that solicited domestic commodities/products were provided by the contractor	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
e. Look at food product labels in SFA storage facilities	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
f. Share sample Buy American language that SFAs can use in solicitations, contracts, and other documents	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
g. Other ( <i>Specify</i> ) <input type="text"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF STATE HAS A BUY AMERICAN POLICY (E1=1)

Exceptions to the Buy American provision are allowed when the use of domestic foods is not practical. That is, domestic foods are in inadequate supply, low quality, or substantially higher in price than non-domestic foods.

E6. Do you use any of the following information, documented by SFAs, to verify that an exception to the Buy American provision is needed?

	Select one per row	
	Yes	No
a. The domestic food product is in inadequate supply	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. The domestic food product is low quality	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
c. The domestic food product is substantially higher in price than the non-domestic food product counterpart	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
d. Alternative domestic food product options were researched and considered	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
e. The domestic food product availability or pricing was verified using a third-party verification (for example, the Agricultural Marketing Service report)	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
f. Other (Specify)	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF STATE HAS A BUY AMERICAN POLICY (E1=1)

E7. Does your State provide SFAs with guidance and/or a reporting template for documenting exceptions to the Buy American provision?

	Select one per row	
	Yes	No
a. Our State provides SFAs with guidance	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. Our State provides SFAs with a reporting template	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

SFAs may apply the geographic preference option when procuring foods. That is, they may apply a local preference in procuring unprocessed or minimally processed agricultural products that are locally grown or raised. SFAs may define “local” as they choose. “Local” may be defined, for example, as coming from the same city/county, within a mileage radius, within a day’s drive, within the State, or within the region. SFAs may procure local foods from a variety of sources, such as farmers, ranchers, dairies, fishers, food processors, and distributors. The definition of “local” may vary across products (for example, 50 miles for apples, 100 miles for potatoes, and within the county for dairy).

E8. Do any SFAs in your State apply geographic preference when procuring local foods?

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 2
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

E9. Regardless of whether or not SFAs in your State apply geographic preference, does your State agency provide reimbursement or incentive to SFAs for local food procurement?

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 2 GO TO E11
- Don't know ..... d GO TO E11
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF STATE PROVIDES REIMBURSEMENT TO SFAS FOR LOCAL FOOD PROCURMENT (E9=1)

E10. How many SFAs did your State reimburse for local food procurements in SY 2022-2023?

NUMBER OF SFAS

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**E11. Does your State agency provide training to SFAs on local food procurement on the following topics?**

*Select one per row*

	Yes	No
a. How to procure local foods from different sources (for example directly from producers, through distributors, through USDA programs like DoD Fresh)	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. How to target local foods in procurement solicitations	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
c. Preparing and using local foods in program meals	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
d. Local food procurement policies and regulations	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
e. Other topics related to local food purchasing (Specify)	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## F. WRAP-UP

This final section is about USDA resources and comments for FNS.

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

ALL ANSWER:

**F1. Thinking about all resources available from USDA, do you prefer to use USDA resources online or as paper copies?**

- Online ..... 1
- Paper copies ..... 2
- No preference ..... 3
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F2. Is there anything else FNS should know about State and local efforts to provide CN Program meals during SY 2022-2023?**

- No other comments ..... 0

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.

ALL ANSWER:

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this survey here: \_\_\_\_\_**

Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing the whole survey.

**Thank-you for completing the pretest! Please email your completed survey to [SMOstudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOstudy@mathematica-mpr.com). Please keep a copy of this survey so you can reference it during the debriefing phone call.**

**You have finished the survey. Thank you!**



**Appendix M.3a**

**SMO SFA Director Survey – Revised**

**Universal Free Meals Version**



OMB Clearance Number: 0584-0607  
Expiration Date: 12/31/2024



# School Food Authority (SFA) Director Survey

## School Year 2023–2024

*REVISED*

*March 3, 2023*

**Sponsored by:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has contracted with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. Updated information about school-based Child Nutrition (CN) Programs will help FNS effectively oversee these programs and inform both policy decisions and future training and technical assistance.

The survey topics cover School Year (SY) 2022-2023 and include:

- School participation
- State-provided universal free meals
- Eligibility determination and verification
- Meal prices
- Funding and expenditures
- Procurement and Buy American
- Meal preparation and service

Cooperation by States and districts is required under Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. At the same time, recognizing the administrative effort associated with participating in research studies, SMO has been designed to limit participant burden to the extent possible. **It should take about 30 minutes to complete the survey.**

To avoid redundant information requests, the survey focuses only on questions that cannot be answered with administrative data you have already reported to your State agency on CN program participation. The study team will receive those data from your State agency.

All information collected for this study is for research purposes only and will be kept private to the full extent allowed by law. Personally identifiable information (PII) will not be used to retrieve survey records or data.

We thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in this important study. If you have any questions about the study or about completing this survey, please email [SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com) or call Mathematica toll-free at 833-440-9475.

## Glossary

**Buy American provision:** School food authorities (SFAs) in the continental United States are required to purchase, to the maximum extent practical, domestic commodities or products. A domestic commodity or product is defined as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States and a food product that is processed in the United States substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the United States and territories.

**Elementary Schools:** Schools with students in any span of grades from prekindergarten through grade 6.

**Middle Schools:** Schools with students in any span of grades from 6 through 9.

**High Schools:** Schools with students in any span of grades from 9 through 12.

**Other schools:** Schools that do not meet the elementary, middle, or high school definitions, such as 6-12, K-8, or K-12/K-13.

**Paid Lunch Equity provision:** SFAs participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) with a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account are required to increase the prices charged for paid meals until their weighted average lunch prices meet the difference between Federal reimbursements for free and paid lunches.

**School food authority (SFA):** The governing body that has the legal authority to operate a lunch or breakfast program in one or more public or private schools.

**Scratch-based food preparation:** produces meal components from whole or minimally processed basic ingredients, often using a recipe.

## A. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

ALL

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the survey here: \_\_\_\_\_**

This section focuses on the Child Nutrition Programs your school food authority (SFA) used to provide meal service during school year (SY) 2022–2023. SY 2022–2023 is July 2022 through June 2023.

ALL ANSWER:

The following are school levels that your SFA might have:

- Elementary schools with students in any span of grades from prekindergarten through grade 6
- Middle or junior high schools with students in any span of grades from 6 through 9
- High schools with students in any span of grades from 9 through 12
- Other schools that do not meet the elementary, middle, or high school definitions, such as 6–12, K–8, or K–12/K–13

**A1. Does your SFA have elementary, middle, high, or other schools?**

*Select all that apply:*

- Elementary schools ..... 1
- Middle schools ..... 2
- High schools ..... 3
- Other schools: (Specify grade levels) ..... 4
- 
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**A2. During SY 2022–2023, for which school levels did your SFA use the following Child Nutrition Programs to provide meal service?**

	[A1_1=1] Elementary	[A1_2=1] Middle	[A1_3=1] High	[A1_4=1] Other	Did not use	Don't know
a. National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. School Breakfast Program (SBP)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....						M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.

## B. STATE-PROVIDED UNIVERSAL FREE MEALS

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

The next few questions are about State-provided universal free meals. Some States recently enacted legislation which requires school breakfasts and lunches to be provided at no cost to all children in the State.

ANSWER IF STATE= CA, MA, ME, NV, VT

**B1. Did your SFA elect or continue operating any of the following provisions in SY 2022-2023?**

- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)..... 1
- Provision 2 or 3..... 2 SKIP TO B3
- None ..... 0 SKIP TO B4
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO C\_INTRO
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF B1=1, SFA USED CEP IN SY 2022-2023

**B2. Was the decision to elect or continue operating CEP made as a result of your new State legislation?**

- Yes, elected CEP as a result of new State legislation ..... 1
- Yes, continued to operate CEP as a result of new State legislation ..... 2
- No, new State legislation had no impact on decision to operate CEP ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF B1=2, SFA USED PROVISION 2 OR 3 IN SY 2022-2023

**B3. Was the decision to elect or continue operating Provision 2 or 3 made as a result of your new State legislation?**

- Yes, elected Provision 2 or 3as a result of new State legislation..... 1
- Yes, continued to operate Provision 2 or 3as a result of new State legislation ... 2
- No, new State legislation had no impact on decision to operate Provision 2 or 3..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF B1=2 OR 0, SFA DID NOT USE CEP IN SY 2022-2023

**B4. Was your SFA eligible to elect CEP in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1
- No, ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## C. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND VERIFICATION

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**This section is about your SFA's practices related to certification for free and reduced price school meals and verification during SY 2022-2023.**

ALL ANSWER:

**C1. Did your SFA collect household applications to certify children for free and reduced price school meals in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO D\_Intro
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF C1=1, SFA COLLECTED HOUSEHOLD APPLICATIONS IN SY 2022-2023

**C2. Was the application your SFA used for free or reduced price school meals in SY 2022-2023 based on the USDA online application?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF C1=1, SFA COLLECTED HOUSEHOLD APPLICATIONS IN SY 2022-2023

**C3. Did your SFA use the following household application formats for free or reduced price school meals in SY 2022-2023?**

*Select one per row*

	YES	NO
a. Electronic or web-based application	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. Computer-read or scannable paper application	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
c. Manually reviewed and entered paper application	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
d. Other household application format	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M



ANSWER IF YOU SELECTED YES TO MULTIPLE RESPONSES IN C3

**C4. Which format of household applications for free or reduced price school meals was used most often in your SFA for SY 2022-2023? Please order the application formats from most used to least used, with one being the most used.**

- Electronic or web-based application
  - Computer-read or scannable paper application
  - Manually reviewed and entered paper application
  - Other household application format
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## E. FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**This section focuses on your SFA's funding and expenditures during SY 2022-2023.**

ALL ANSWER:

**E1. How did the additional per meal reimbursements from the Keep Kids Fed Act (KKFA) of 2022 impact your SFA's finances during SY 2022-2023? Please consider how the reimbursements helped cover meal costs.**

- No impact on finances ..... 1
- Slightly improved finances ..... 2
- Moderately improved finances ..... 3
- Substantially improved finances ..... 4
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**E2. To assist school districts experiencing supply chain disruptions, FNS allocated relief funding to State agencies called Supply Chain Assistance Funds. State agencies distributed Supply Chain Assistance funds to eligible SFAs to be used exclusively to procure unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products or commodities. The funds were to help SFAs deal with challenges such as unanticipated cancellation of food and supply contracts, reduced availability of certain foods, unexpected substitution of certain products, unpredictable increases in food and supply prices, or other obstacles related to pricing and/or availability.**

**Did your SFA receive Supply Chain Assistance Funds in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO E4
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO E4
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E2=1, YOUR SFA RECEIVED SUPPLY CHAIN ASSISTANCE FUNDS IN SY 2022-2023

**E3. In SY 2022-2023, which of the following food products did your SFA purchase with Supply Chain Assistance funds?**

*Select all that apply*

- Fluid milk..... 1
- Other dairy foods ..... 2
- Fruits ..... 3
- Vegetables ..... 4
- Grains ..... 5
- Meats or meat alternates ..... 6
- Local foods ..... 7
- Other: (Specify) ..... 99
- 
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**E4. FNS provides Equipment Assistance Grants to State agencies on an annual basis, which they can award competitively to eligible SFAs. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, FNS provided additional Equipment Assistance Grant funds in recognition of supply chain challenges .**

**Did your SFA receive any Equipment Assistance Grants in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO E7
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO E7
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E4=1, YOUR SFA RECEIVED EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS IN SY 2022-2023

**E5. Did the equipment procured using the Equipment Assistance Grants allow your SFA to replace equipment, increase capacity, or acquire new equipment?**

*Select all that apply*

- Replace aging or broken equipment ..... 1
- Increase capacity (for example, buying an additional freezer)..... 2
- Acquire new equipment, neither replacing nor increasing capacity (for example, buying a pizza oven when SFA did not previously have one)..... 3
- Don't know ..... 0
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E4=1, YOUR SFA RECEIVED EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS IN SY 2022-2023

**E6. What types of equipment did your SFA procure using the Equipment Assistance Grants?**

*Select all that apply*

- Cart ..... 1
- Cold food table (for example, serving bar or sandwich prep table)..... 2
- Countertop equipment (for example, griddle, microwave, or blender) ..... 3
- Food mixer ..... 4
- Ice machine ..... 5
- Range or oven ..... 6
- Work table..... 7
- Dishwasher – sink or supplies ..... 8
- Food warmer..... 9
- Freezer ..... 10
- Holding and proofing cabinet..... 11
- Processing/packaging (for example, dough press or shrink wrap machine)..... 12
- Refrigerator ..... 13
- Steam table..... 14
- Transportation (for example, food transport van or lift gate) ..... 15
- Farm to School or school garden supplies ..... 16
- Service (for example, point of service hardware or electronic menu boards) ..... 17
- Other: (Specify)..... 99
- Don't know ..... 0
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## F. PROCUREMENT AND BUY AMERICAN

IF YOUR SFA IS IN ALASKA, HAWAII, OR A U.S. TERRITORY, SKIP TO SECTION G

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

This section asks about practices related to domestic commodities and products and local food procurement. Please respond for SY 2022-2023 unless otherwise specified.

The Buy American provision requires SFAs to procure, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodities or products. A domestic commodity or product is defined as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States and a food product that is processed in the United States substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the United States and territories.

ALL ANSWER:

**F1. In which of the following does your SFA include the requirement for domestic commodities and products?**

*Select all that apply*

- Solicitations (for example, invitations for bids, requests for proposals)..... 1
  - Contract language ..... 2
  - Product specifications..... 3
  - Purchase orders ..... 4
  - Procurement procedures / plans ..... 5
  - Other procurement documents..... 6
- Specify
- None of the above ..... 0
  - Don't know ..... d
  - NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F2. How does your SFA ensure contractor compliance with the Buy American provision?**

*Select all that apply*

- By monitoring solicitation language ..... 1
  - By monitoring contract language ..... 2
  - By verifying with the vendor that the domestic commodity or product that was solicited for and awarded is in fact the food received ..... 3
  - By reviewing delivery invoices or receipts ..... 4
  - By reviewing product labels or product codes ..... 5
  - By conducting reviews of storage facilities ..... 6
  - Other (*Specify*) ..... 99
- Specify
- None of the above ..... 0
  - Don't know ..... d
  - NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F3. Does your SFA ask food suppliers for the percentage of U.S. content in end products?**

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F4. This question asks about product specific challenges your SFA may have experienced with complying with the Buy American provision. For each of the challenges listed below, has your SFA experienced the challenge for no products, some products, or all products?**

Select one response per row

	NO PRODUCTS	SOME PRODUCTS	ALL PRODUCTS	DON'T KNOW
a. Domestic commodity or product supply is limited or unreliable.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Domestic commodities or products do not meet preferred quality standards.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Domestic commodities or products are more costly than their non-domestic food counterparts.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Using domestic commodities or products increases administrative burden.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....				M

ALL ANSWER:

**F4a. This question asks about general challenges your SFA may have experienced with complying with the Buy American provision. For each of the statements, do you agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree with the statement?**

Select one response per row

	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	DON'T KNOW
a. Our SFA does not understand what language to include in solicitations and contracts.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Our SFA does not have enough staff to ensure compliance.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Our SFA staff need additional training to understand compliance.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Food suppliers are not responsive to requests about the percentage of U.S. content in end products.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
e. Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>				
NO RESPONSE .....				M

ALL ANSWER:

SFAs may use exceptions to the Buy American provision when the use of domestic commodities or products is not practical. That is, domestic commodities or products are in inadequate supply, low quality, or significantly higher in cost than non-domestic commodities or products.

**F5. Does your SFA use one or more thresholds to determine that a cost is significantly higher for a domestic commodity or product and thus warrants an exception?**

- Yes, use one threshold for all domestic commodities or products ..... 1
- Yes, use different thresholds for different domestic commodities or products ..... 2
- No, do not use any thresholds for any domestic commodities or products..... 0
- Not applicable – all of our procurements conform to Buy American ..... n
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F5=1, YOUR SFA USED ONE THRESHOLD TO DETERMINE A HIGHER COST OF A DOMESTIC COMMODITY OR PRODUCT IN SY 2022-2023

**F5a. What threshold does your SFA use to determine that a cost is significantly higher for a domestic commodity or product and thus warrants the use of an exception?**

*Select one only*

- Cost of domestic commodity or product is 1-10% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 1
- Cost of domestic commodity or product is 11-20% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 2
- Cost of domestic commodity or product is 21-30% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 3
- Cost of domestic commodity or product is at least 31% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 4
- Other (Specify)..... 99

Specify

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M



ALL ANSWER:

**F6. Has your SFA procured any of the following foods under an exception to the Buy American provision in SY 2022-2023? When responding about fruits and vegetables, consider fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and juice forms.**

Select one response per row

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Fruits	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Vegetables	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Grains	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Meats/Meat Alternates	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
e. Fluid Milk	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
f. Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>			
NO RESPONSE .....			M

ANSWER IF F6A, B, C, D, E, OR F = 1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FOODS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F7. Why did your SFA use an exception to the Buy American provision in SY 2022-2023?**

Select all that apply

- Supply issue - the domestic commodity or product was not produced or processed in sufficient quantities ..... 1
- Quality issue - the domestic commodity or product was not of satisfactory quality ..... 2
- Cost issue - the cost of a domestic commodity or product was significantly higher than the non-domestic commodity or product..... 3
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

IF ALL RESPONSES TO F6A-F=0 OR D, SKIP TO SECTION G

ANSWER IF F6A, B, C, D, E, OR F=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FOODS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F8. About what percentage of your SFA's total commercial food purchase expenditures (in dollars) were exceptions to the Buy American provision (i.e. non-domestic commodities or products) in SY 2022-2023?**

PERCENT

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6A, B, C, D, E, OR F=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FOODS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

The next questions ask for the percentage of individual food procurements that were exceptions to the Buy American provision in SY 2022-2023.

**F9. Does your SFA track individual food procurements under an exception to the Buy American provision?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO G\_Intro
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO G\_Intro
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F9=1, YOUR SFA TRACKED INDIVIDUAL FOOD PROCUREMENTS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F10. What unit of measure does your SFA use to track individual food procurements under exceptions to the Buy American provision?**

- Dollars..... 1
- Pounds..... 2
- Cases..... 3
- Other unit..... 99

Specify

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6A=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FRUITS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11a. About what percentage of fruit procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Consider all forms of fruit, including fresh, frozen, canned, dried, single-serve packs (for example, fruit cups), and juice. Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6B=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED VEGETABLES UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11b. About what percentage of vegetable procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Consider all forms of vegetables, including fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and juice. Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6C=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED GRAINS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11c. About what percentage of grain procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6D=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11d. About what percentage of meat/meat alternate procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6E=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FLUID MILK UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11e. About what percentage of fluid milk procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6F=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED OTHER COMMODITIES UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11f. About what percentage of [FILL F10F SPECIFY] procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## G. MEAL PREPARATION AND SERVICE

This section focuses on the meals your SFA prepares and serves.

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

ALL ANSWER:

**G1. From what sources does your SFA get standardized recipes?**

*Select all that apply*

- USDA..... 1
  - Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)..... 2
  - State agency..... 3
  - Food Service Management Company..... 4
  - Created in-house ..... 5
  - None – SFA does not use standardized recipes ..... 0
  - Other (Specify)..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF SFA USED STANDARDIZED RECIPES IN SY 2022-2023, G1=/=0

**G2. The USDA [Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](https://theicn.org/cicn/usda-recipe-standardization-guide-for-school-nutrition-programs/) [LINK: <https://theicn.org/cicn/usda-recipe-standardization-guide-for-school-nutrition-programs/>] is a “how-to” guide on recipe standardization for school nutrition recipe developers. How helpful was the USDA Recipe Standardization Guide?**

- Not at all helpful..... 0
  - Slightly helpful..... 1
  - Somewhat helpful ..... 2
  - Very helpful ..... 3
  - N/A - did not use USDA Recipe Standardization Guide ..... n
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF SFA USED STANDARDIZED RECIPES IN SY 2022-2023, G1=/=0

**G3. If your SFA writes standardized recipes, what additional trainings or resources would be helpful for your SFA?**

*Select all that apply*

- Incorporating more local foods into recipes..... 1
  - Incorporating more whole foods into recipes..... 1
  - Customizing recipes to reflect cultural foodways ..... 2
  - Developing seasonal menus and recipes..... 3
  - Determining how recipes credit toward the meal pattern requirements..... 4
  - Conducting menu or nutrient analysis ..... 1
  - No additional trainings needed for recipe development ..... 0
  - Not applicable – SFA does not write standardized recipes ..... n
  - Other (Specify)..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G4. Thinking about all resources available from USDA, do you prefer to use USDA resources online or as paper copies?**

- Online ..... 1
- Paper copies ..... 2
- No preference ..... 3
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G5. During SY 2022-2023, did your SFA use scratch cooking methods to prepare meals at breakfast or lunch?**

**Scratch-based food preparation** produces meal components from whole or minimally processed basic ingredients, often using a recipe..

*Select all that apply*

- Used scratch cooking methods to prepare reimbursable breakfasts ..... 1
- Used scratch cooking methods to prepare reimbursable lunches ..... 2
- Did not use scratch cooking methods ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF G5=1 OR 2, YOUR SFA USED SCRATCH COOKING METHODS IN SY 2022-2023

**G6. How often did your SFA use scratch cooking methods to prepare reimbursable meals during SY 2022-2023?**

*Select one response per row*

	Never	Less than once per week	Once per week	2-4 times per week	Every day	Don't Know
a. [G5=1] Breakfast	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. [G5=2] Lunch	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....	M					

ANSWER IF G5=0, YOUR SFA DID NOT USE SCRATCH COOKING METHODS IN SY 2022-2023

**G7. How much do the following potential barriers prevent your SFA from scratch cooking more often? Please indicate whether each item is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier for your SFA.**

*Select one response per row*

	Major barrier	Minor barrier	Not a barrier	Don't know
a. SFA needs to change SFA oversight/monitoring methods	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Unsure how to modify or are overwhelmed to modify program operations for scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Not enough staff to scratch cook	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Staff do not have enough culinary skills or training	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
e. Lack of interest or resistance from staff	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
f. Lack of interest or resistance from school administration	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
g. Not enough time for scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
h. Not enough space for scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
i. Not enough large equipment (e.g., refrigerators, ovens)	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
j. Not enough small equipment (e.g., food processors, knives)	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
k. Cost of foods	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
l. Cost of labor hours	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
m. Need to change procurement strategies and processes	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
n. Need to identify new vendors to procure foods for new menus	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
o. Locked into a contract with a vendor, cooperative purchasing group, or FSMC that doesn't sell what we'd need	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
p. Need to solicit or identify new recipes	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
q. Need to change menu and nutrition analysis methods to ensure menus meet meal pattern requirements	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
r. It's more challenging to prepare kosher or halal foods or foods for special diets with scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
s. Concern about more waste	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
t. Concern about lower participation	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>



u. Concern about student or parent acceptance of new recipes or menus      0       1       2       d

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G8. During SY 2022-2023, how often did your SFA offer a daily menu for breakfast that did *not* include any animal-based proteins (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or dairy)?**

*Select all that apply*

- Never ..... 0
- Less than once per week..... 1
- Once per week ..... 2
- 2-4 times per week ..... 3
- Every day ..... 4
- Don't know ..... d

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G9. During SY 2022-2023, how often did your SFA offer a daily menu for lunch that did *not* include any animal-based proteins (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or dairy) ?**

*Select all that apply*

- Never ..... 0
- Less than once per week..... 1
- Once per week ..... 2
- 2-4 times per week ..... 3
- Every day ..... 4
- Don't know ..... d

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G10. What are the biggest challenges your SFA has faced in making accommodations for students with disabilities?**

*Select all that apply*

- Meal or food component substitutions..... 1
- Cross-contamination/cross-contact ..... 2
- Ingredient tracking ..... 3
- Physical accessibility of meal service..... 4
- Tracking individual student needs ..... 5
- Obtaining needed medical statements ..... 6
- Working with parents or guardians ..... 7
- Training staff..... 8
- Other (Specify)..... 99

Specify

NO RESPONSE..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

ALL ANSWER:

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this survey here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing the whole survey.**

**Thank-you for completing the pretest! Please email your completed survey to [SMOstudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOstudy@mathematica-mpr.com). Please keep a copy of this survey so you can reference it during the debriefing phone call.**

**You have finished the survey. Thank you!**

**Appendix M.3b**

**SMO SFA Director Survey – Revised**

**Paid Meals Version**



OMB Clearance Number: 0584-0607  
Expiration Date: 12/31/2024



# **School Food Authority (SFA) Director Survey**

## **School Year 2023–2024**

*March 3, 2023*

**Sponsored by:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has contracted with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. Updated information about school-based Child Nutrition (CN) Programs will help FNS effectively oversee these programs and inform both policy decisions and future training and technical assistance.

The survey topics cover School Year (SY) 2022-2023 and include:

- School participation
- State-provided universal free meals
- Eligibility determination and verification
- Meal prices
- Funding and expenditures
- Procurement and Buy American
- Meal preparation and service

Cooperation by States and districts is required under Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. At the same time, recognizing the administrative effort associated with participating in research studies, SMO has been designed to limit participant burden to the extent possible. **It should take about 30 minutes to complete the survey.**

To avoid redundant information requests, the survey focuses only on questions that cannot be answered with administrative data you have already reported to your State agency on CN program participation. The study team will receive those data from your State agency.

All information collected for this study is for research purposes only and will be kept private to the full extent allowed by law. Personally identifiable information (PII) will not be used to retrieve survey records or data.

We thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in this important study. If you have any questions about the study or about completing this survey, please email [SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOStudy@mathematica-mpr.com) or call Mathematica toll-free at 833-440-9475.

## Glossary

**Buy American provision:** School food authorities (SFAs) in the continental United States are required to purchase, to the maximum extent practical, domestic commodities or products. A domestic commodity or product is defined as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States and a food product that is processed in the United States substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the United States and territories.

**Elementary Schools:** Schools with students in any span of grades from prekindergarten through grade 6.

**Middle Schools:** Schools with students in any span of grades from 6 through 9.

**High Schools:** Schools with students in any span of grades from 9 through 12.

**Other schools:** Schools that do not meet the elementary, middle, or high school definitions, such as 6-12, K-8, or K-12/K-13.

**Paid Lunch Equity provision:** SFAs participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) with a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account are required to increase the prices charged for paid meals until their weighted average lunch prices meet the difference between Federal reimbursements for free and paid lunches.

**School food authority (SFA):** The governing body that has the legal authority to operate a lunch or breakfast program in one or more public or private schools.

**Scratch-based food preparation:** produces meal components from whole or minimally processed basic ingredients, often using a recipe.

## A. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

ALL

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for the survey here: \_\_\_\_\_**

This section focuses on the Child Nutrition Programs your school food authority (SFA) used to provide meal service during school year (SY) 2022–2023. SY 2022–2023 is July 2022 through June 2023.

ALL ANSWER:

The following are school levels that your SFA might have:

- Elementary schools with students in any span of grades from prekindergarten through grade 6
- Middle or junior high schools with students in any span of grades from 6 through 9
- High schools with students in any span of grades from 9 through 12
- Other schools that do not meet the elementary, middle, or high school definitions, such as 6–12, K–8, or K–12/K–13

**A1. Does your SFA have elementary, middle, high, or other schools?**

*Select all that apply:*

- Elementary schools ..... 1
- Middle schools ..... 2
- High schools ..... 3
- Other schools: (Specify grade levels) ..... 4
- 
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**A2. During SY 2022–2023, for which school levels did your SFA use the following Child Nutrition Programs to provide meal service?**

	[A1_1=1] Elementary	[A1_2=1] Middle	[A1_3=1] High	[A1_4=1] Other	Did not use	Don't know
a. National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. School Breakfast Program (SBP)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....						M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.

## C. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND VERIFICATION

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**This section is about your SFA's practices related to certification for free and reduced price school meals and verification during SY 2022-2023.**

ALL ANSWER:

**C1. Did your SFA collect household applications to certify children for free and reduced price school meals in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO D\_Intro
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF C1=1, SFA COLLECTED HOUSEHOLD APPLICATIONS IN SY 2022-2023

**C2. Was the application your SFA used for free or reduced price school meals in SY 2022-2023 based on the USDA online application?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF C1=1, SFA COLLECTED HOUSEHOLD APPLICATIONS IN SY 2022-2023

**C3. Did your SFA use the following household application formats for free or reduced price school meals in SY 2022-2023?**

*Select one per row*

	YES	NO
a. Electronic or web-based application	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
b. Computer-read or scannable paper application	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
c. Manually reviewed and entered paper application	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
d. Other household application format	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....	M	



ANSWER IF YOU SELECTED YES TO MULTIPLE RESPONSES IN C3

**C4. Which format of household applications for free or reduced price school meals was used most often in your SFA for SY 2022-2023? Please order the application formats from most used to least used, with one being the most used.**

- Electronic or web-based application
  - Computer-read or scannable paper application
  - Manually reviewed and entered paper application
  - Other household application format
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## D. MEAL PRICES

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**This section is about your SFA's practices related to meal prices during SY 2022-2023.**

ALL ANSWER:

**D1. Do all schools in your SFA serve all school meals at no charge to students?**

- Yes ..... 1 SKIP TO E\_Intro  
 No ..... 0  
 NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF D1=0 AND A2B=1, 2, 3, OR 4, SOME SCHOOLS IN YOUR SFA CHARGED FOR MEALS AND SCHOOLS IN YOUR SFA PARTICIPATED IN THE SBP IN SY 2022-2023

**For these questions, please record your responses separately by school level.**

- Elementary schools are schools with students in any span of grades from prekindergarten through grade 6.
- Middle schools are schools with students in any span of grades from 6 through 9.
- High schools are schools with students in any span of grades from 9 through 12
- Other schools are schools that do not meet the elementary, middle or junior high, or high school definitions, such as 6-12, K-8, or K-12/K-13.

**D2. In schools that charge for SBP breakfasts, what was the average price charged for paid breakfasts in your SFA during SY 2022-2023? Please exclude \$0 meal prices from average price calculations.**

**If breakfasts are served free of charge to all students in a school level, please select the appropriate box.**

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOLS
a. Paid breakfast price	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
b. Not applicable – Breakfasts are served free of charge to all students	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....	M			

ANSWER IF D2 > 0, AVERAGE PRICE FOR PAID BREAKFASTS IN ANY SCHOOL LEVEL IN YOUR SFA WAS GREATER THAN \$0 IN SY 2022-2023

D3. In schools that charge for SBP breakfasts, what was the average price charged for reduced price breakfasts in your SFA during SY 2022-2023? Please exclude \$0 meal prices from average price calculations.

If breakfasts are served free of charge to students certified for reduced price meals, please select the appropriate box.

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOLS
a. Reduced price breakfast	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
b. Not applicable – Breakfasts are served free of charge to students certified for reduced price meals	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE ..... M				

ANSWER IF D1=0 AND A2A=1, 2, 3, OR 4, SOME SCHOOLS IN YOUR SFA CHARGED FOR MEALS AND SCHOOLS IN YOUR SFA PARTICIPATED IN THE NSLP IN SY 2022-2023

D4. In schools that charge for NSLP lunches, what was the average price charged for paid lunches in your SFA during SY 2022-2023? Please exclude \$0 meal prices from average price calculations.

If lunches are served free of charge to all students in a school level, please select the appropriate box.

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOLS
a. Paid lunch price	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
b. Not applicable – Lunches are served free of charge to all students	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE ..... M				

ANSWER IF D3 >0, AVERAGE PRICE FOR PAID LUNCHES IN ANY SCHOOL LEVEL IN YOUR SFA WAS GREATER THAN \$0 IN SY 2022-2023

D5. In schools that charge for NSLP lunches, what was the average price charged for reduced price lunches in your SFA at the beginning of SY 2022-2023? Please exclude \$0 meal prices from average price calculations.

If lunches are served free of charge to students certified for reduced price meals, please select the appropriate box.

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOLS
a. Reduced price lunch	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
b. Not applicable – Lunches are served free of charge to students certified for reduced price meals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF D1= 0, SOME SCHOOLS IN YOUR SFA CHARGED FOR MEALS IN SY 2022-2023

The next questions are about the Paid Lunch Equity provision.

**D6. The Paid Lunch Equity rule requires SFAs participating in the NSLP to provide the same level of financial support for lunches served to students who are not eligible for free or reduced price lunches as is provided for lunches served to students eligible for free lunches. SFAs participating in the NSLP with a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account are required to increase the prices charged for paid meals until their weighted average lunch prices meet the difference between Federal reimbursements for free and paid lunches.**

FNS recognizes that during SY 2022-2023, requiring SFAs to increase their paid meal prices could place a burden upon families who have not paid for meals over the last two school years. FNS offered States a waiver to allow SFAs flexibility in meeting the Paid Lunch Equity requirements in SY 2022-2023. Your State may have elected to use this waiver.

During SY 2022-2023, what actions did your SFA take in response to the Paid Lunch Equity provision in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?

Select all that apply

- Increased paid lunch prices in all schools ..... 1
- Increased paid lunch prices in some schools ..... 2
- Added funds from non-Federal sources to the nonprofit school food services account ..... 3
- Used the Paid Lunch Equity **waiver** for SY 2022-2023 ..... 4
- No action taken – Paid lunch pricing already complied with provision ..... 5
- No action taken – Operating balance was positive ..... 6
- Don't know ..... d
- Other (*Specify*) ..... 99
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF D1= 0, SOME SCHOOLS IN YOUR SFA CHARGED FOR MEALS IN SY 2022-2023

**D7. In SY 2022-2023, did your SFA lower prices for paid meals in any schools compared to prices charged prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (in SY 2019-2020)?**

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO E\_Intro
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO E\_Intro
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF D7=1, YOUR SFA LOWERED PRICES FOR PAID MEALS IN SY 2022-2023

**D8. In which school levels were prices lowered?**

*Select all that apply*

- Elementary schools ..... 1
- Middle schools ..... 2
- High schools ..... 3
- Other schools: (Specify grade spans) ..... 4
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## E. FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

This section focuses on your SFA's funding and expenditures during SY 2022-2023.

ALL ANSWER:

**E1. How did the additional per meal reimbursements from the Keep Kids Fed Act (KKFA) of 2022 impact your SFA's finances during SY 2022-2023? Please consider how the reimbursements helped cover meal costs.**

- No impact on finances ..... 1
- Slightly improved finances ..... 2
- Moderately improved finances ..... 3
- Substantially improved finances ..... 4
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**E2. To assist school districts experiencing supply chain disruptions, FNS allocated relief funding to State agencies called Supply Chain Assistance Funds. State agencies distributed Supply Chain Assistance funds to eligible SFAs to be used exclusively to procure unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products or commodities. The funds were to help SFAs deal with challenges such as unanticipated cancellation of food and supply contracts, reduced availability of certain foods, unexpected substitution of certain products, unpredictable increases in food and supply prices, or other obstacles related to pricing and/or availability.**

**Did your SFA receive Supply Chain Assistance Funds in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO E4
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO E4
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E2=1, YOUR SFA RECEIVED SUPPLY CHAIN ASSISTANCE FUNDS IN SY 2022-2023

**E3. In SY 2022-2023, which of the following food products did your SFA purchase with Supply Chain Assistance funds?**

Select all that apply

- Fluid milk..... 1
- Other dairy foods ..... 2
- Fruits ..... 3
- Vegetables ..... 4
- Grains ..... 5
- Meats or meat alternates ..... 6
- Local foods ..... 7
- Other: (Specify) ..... 99
- 
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**E4. FNS provides Equipment Assistance Grants to State agencies on an annual basis, which they can award competitively to eligible SFAs. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, FNS provided additional Equipment Assistance Grant funds in recognition of supply chain challenges.**

**Did your SFA receive any Equipment Assistance Grants in SY 2022-2023?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO E7
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO E7
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E4=1, YOUR SFA RECEIVED EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS IN SY 2022-2023

**E5. Did the equipment procured using the Equipment Assistance Grants allow your SFA to replace equipment, increase capacity, or acquire new equipment?**

Select all that apply

- Replace aging or broken equipment ..... 1
- Increase capacity (for example, buying an additional freezer)..... 2
- Acquire new equipment, neither replacing nor increasing capacity (for example, buying a pizza oven when SFA did not previously have one)..... 3
- Don't know ..... 0
- NO RESPONSE ..... M



**E6. What types of equipment did your SFA procure using the Equipment Assistance Grants?**

*Select all that apply*

- Cart ..... 1
- Cold food table (for example, serving bar or sandwich prep table)..... 2
- Countertop equipment (for example, griddle, microwave, or blender) ..... 3
- Food mixer ..... 4
- Ice machine ..... 5
- Range or oven ..... 6
- Work table..... 7
- Dishwasher – sink or supplies ..... 8
- Food warmer..... 9
- Freezer ..... 10
- Holding and proofing cabinet..... 11
- Processing/packaging (for example, dough press or shrink wrap machine)..... 12
- Refrigerator ..... 13
- Steam table..... 14
- Transportation (for example, food transport van or lift gate) ..... 15
- Farm to School or school garden supplies ..... 16
- Service (for example, point of service hardware or electronic menu boards) ..... 17
- Other: (Specify)..... 99
- Don't know ..... 0
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

The next set of questions is about your SFA's approach to unpaid meal charges that occur when students who are not eligible for free meals do not have funds to pay for meals. Questions pertain to SY 2022-2023 unless otherwise specified.

**E7. Does your SFA have a local unpaid meal charge policy, or did your State develop a State-level unpaid meal charge policy for all SFAs to follow?**

*Select all that apply*

- Local unpaid meal charge policy ..... 1
- State-level unpaid meal charge policy ..... 2
- Does not apply – all schools in my SFA serve meals at no charge ..... 3 SKIP TO F\_Intro
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO E9
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E7=1 OR 2, YOUR SFA HAD A LOCAL OR STATE-LEVEL UNPAID MEAL CHARGE POLICY IN SY 2022-2023

**E8. What are the components of the meal charge policy used by your SFA?**

*Select all that apply*

- Students unable to pay receive and are charged for regular, reimbursable meals (breakfast, lunch, and/or afterschool snacks) ..... 1
  - Students unable to pay receive and are charged for an alternate meal ..... 2
  - Students unable to pay receive an alternate meal at no cost ..... 3
  - Students unable to pay have a limit on the number of meals they can receive and be charged for ..... 4
  - Students unable to pay are denied a meal ..... 5
  - Households are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price school meals when their student is unable to pay ..... 6
  - Households are notified of low or negative balances (for example, phone calls, text messages, and/or notes sent home) ..... 7
  - Outside funding sources (for example, community donations) are provided to pay for meals or debt when students incur meal charges ..... 8
  - Other (*Specify*) ..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**E9. Does your SFA keep track of the amount of money owed because of unpaid meal charges?**

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO F\_Intro
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E9=1, YOUR SFA TRACKED THE AMOUNT OF MONEY OWED DUE TO UNPAID MEAL CHARGES IN SY 2022-2023

**E10. At the end of SY 2022-2023, what was the total amount of money owed to your SFA because of unpaid meal charges? If the exact amount is not known, please provide your best estimate.**

Please enter the amount of money owed at the end of SY 2022-2023. Then select an option to indicate whether this is the actual amount or your best estimate. If you do not have enough information to provide a reasonably close estimate, please select "Don't Know."

**If no money was owed to your SFA because of unpaid meal charges, enter "0".**

DOLLARS

- Actual amount owed ..... 1
- Estimated amount owed ..... 2
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

IF E10=0, SKIP TO F\_INTRO

ANSWER IF E10>0, THE AMOUNT OF MONEY OWED TO YOUR SFA WAS GREATER THAN \$0 IN SY 2022-2023

**E11. How much of this money has been recovered since the end of SY 2022-2023? If the exact amount is not known, please provide your best estimate.**

Please enter the amount of money recovered since the end of SY 2022-2023. Then select an option to indicate whether this is the actual amount or your best estimate. If you do not have enough information to provide a reasonably close estimate, please select "Don't Know."

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Year 3

DOLLARS

- Actual amount recovered ..... 1
- Estimated amount recovered ..... 2
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E10>0, THE AMOUNT OF MONEY OWED TO YOUR SFA WAS GREATER THAN \$0 IN SY 2022-2023

**E12. What strategies did your SFA use to recover money from households with unpaid meal charges in SY 2022-2023?**

*Select all that apply*

- Billed or otherwise notified households of negative balances ..... 1
- Provided households with a repayment plan..... 2
- Involved school staff member to facilitate household repayment process..... 3
- Took nonfinancial actions with parents (for example, not allowed to receive student's grades) ..... 4
- Used administrative actions with student (for example, not allowed to participate in programs and events, such as field trips or prom)..... 5
- Used a debt collection agency..... 6
- Other (*Specify*)..... 99
- .....
- None (SFA did not use any strategies to recover unpaid charges)..... 0
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF E12=1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, OR 99, YOUR SFA USED STRATEGIES TO RECOVER UNPAID MEAL CHARGES IN SY 2022-2023

**E13. Which, if any, of these strategies to recover money from households with unpaid meal charges were successful in SY 2022-2023?**

*Select all that apply*

- Billed or otherwise notified households of negative balances ..... 1
- Provided households with a repayment plan..... 2
- Involved school staff member to facilitate household repayment process..... 3
- Used administrative actions with student (for example, not allowed to graduate or participate in programs and events, such as field trips or prom) ..... 4
- Used a debt collection agency..... 5
- [FILL E12\_99] ..... 99
- None- No strategies were successful ..... 0
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

**F. PROCUREMENT AND BUY AMERICAN**

IF YOUR SFA IS IN ALASKA, HAWAII, OR A U.S. TERRITORY, SKIP TO SECTION G

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

This section asks about practices related to domestic commodities and products and local food procurement. Please respond for SY 2022-2023 unless otherwise specified.

The Buy American provision requires SFAs to procure, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodities or products. A domestic commodity or product is defined as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States and a food product that is processed in the United States substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the United States and territories.

ALL ANSWER:

**F1. In which of the following does your SFA include the requirement for domestic commodities and products?**

*Select all that apply*

- Solicitations (for example, invitations for bids, requests for proposals)..... 1
  - Contract language ..... 2
  - Product specifications..... 3
  - Purchase orders ..... 4
  - Procurement procedures / plans ..... 5
  - Other procurement documents..... 6
- Specify
- None of the above ..... 0
  - Don't know ..... d
  - NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F2. How does your SFA ensure contractor compliance with the Buy American provision?**

*Select all that apply*

- By monitoring solicitation language ..... 1
  - By monitoring contract language ..... 2
  - By verifying with the vendor that the domestic commodity or product that was solicited for and awarded is in fact the food received ..... 3
  - By reviewing delivery invoices or receipts ..... 4
  - By reviewing product labels or product codes ..... 5
  - By conducting reviews of storage facilities ..... 6
  - Other (*Specify*) ..... 99
- Specify
- None of the above ..... 0
  - Don't know ..... d
  - NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F3. Does your SFA ask food suppliers for the percentage of U.S. content in end products?**

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**F4. This question asks about product specific challenges your SFA may have experienced with complying with the Buy American provision. For each of the challenges listed below, has your SFA experienced the challenge for no products, some products, or all products?**

Select one response per row

	NO PRODUCTS	SOME PRODUCTS	ALL PRODUCTS	DON'T KNOW
a. Domestic commodity or product supply is limited or unreliable.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Domestic commodities or products do not meet preferred quality standards.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Domestic commodities or products are more costly than their non-domestic food counterparts.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Using domestic commodities or products increases administrative burden.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....				M

ALL ANSWER:

**F4a. This question asks about general challenges your SFA may have experienced with complying with the Buy American provision. For each of the statements, do you agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree with the statement?**

Select one response per row

	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	DON'T KNOW
a. Our SFA does not understand what language to include in solicitations and contracts.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Our SFA does not have enough staff to ensure compliance.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Our SFA staff need additional training to understand compliance.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Food suppliers are not responsive to requests about the percentage of U.S. content in end products.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
e. Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>				
NO RESPONSE .....				M

ALL ANSWER:

SFAs may use exceptions to the Buy American provision when the use of domestic commodities or products is not practical. That is, domestic commodities or products are in inadequate supply, low quality, or significantly higher in cost than non-domestic commodities or products.

**F5. Does your SFA use one or more thresholds to determine that a cost is significantly higher for a domestic commodity or product and thus warrants an exception?**

- Yes, use one threshold for all domestic commodities or products ..... 1
- Yes, use different thresholds for different domestic commodities or products ..... 2
- No, do not use any thresholds for any domestic commodities or products..... 0
- Not applicable – all of our procurements conform to Buy American ..... n
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F5=1, YOUR SFA USED ONE THRESHOLD TO DETERMINE A HIGHER COST OF A DOMESTIC COMMODITY OR PRODUCT IN SY 2022-2023

**F5a. What threshold does your SFA use to determine that a cost is significantly higher for a domestic commodity or product and thus warrants the use of an exception?**

*Select one only*

- Cost of domestic commodity or product is 1-10% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 1
- Cost of domestic commodity or product is 11-20% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 2
- Cost of domestic commodity or product is 21-30% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 3
- Cost of domestic commodity or product is at least 31% more than the non-domestic commodity or product ..... 4
- Other (Specify)..... 99

Specify

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M



ALL ANSWER:

**F6. Has your SFA procured any of the following foods under an exception to the Buy American provision in SY 2022-2023? When responding about fruits and vegetables, consider fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and juice forms.**

Select one response per row

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Fruits	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Vegetables	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Grains	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Meats/Meat Alternates	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
e. Fluid Milk	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
f. Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	1 <input type="radio"/>	0 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>			
NO RESPONSE .....			M

ANSWER IF F6A, B, C, D, E, OR F = 1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FOODS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F7. Why did your SFA use an exception to the Buy American provision in SY 2022-2023?**

Select all that apply

- Supply issue - the domestic commodity or product was not produced or processed in sufficient quantities ..... 1
- Quality issue - the domestic commodity or product was not of satisfactory quality ..... 2
- Cost issue - the cost of a domestic commodity or product was significantly higher than the non-domestic commodity or product..... 3
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

IF ALL RESPONSES TO F6A-F=0 OR D, SKIP TO SECTION G

ANSWER IF F6A, B, C, D, E, OR F=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FOODS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F8. About what percentage of your SFA's total commercial food purchase expenditures (in dollars) were exceptions to the Buy American provision (i.e. non-domestic commodities or products) in SY 2022-2023?**

PERCENT

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6A, B, C, D, E, OR F=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FOODS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

The next questions ask for the percentage of individual food procurements that were exceptions to the Buy American provision in SY 2022-2023.

**F9. Does your SFA track individual food procurements under an exception to the Buy American provision?**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 0 SKIP TO G\_Intro
- Don't know ..... d SKIP TO G\_Intro
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F9=1, YOUR SFA TRACKED INDIVIDUAL FOOD PROCUREMENTS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F10. What unit of measure does your SFA use to track individual food procurements under exceptions to the Buy American provision?**

- Dollars..... 1
- Pounds..... 2
- Cases..... 3
- Other unit..... 99

Specify

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6A=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FRUITS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11a. About what percentage of fruit procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Consider all forms of fruit, including fresh, frozen, canned, dried, single-serve packs (for example, fruit cups), and juice. Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6B=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED VEGETABLES UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11b. About what percentage of vegetable procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Consider all forms of vegetables, including fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and juice. Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6C=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED GRAINS UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11c. About what percentage of grain procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6D=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11d. About what percentage of meat/meat alternate procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6E=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED FLUID MILK UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11e. About what percentage of fluid milk procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF F6F=1, YOUR SFA PROCURED OTHER COMMODITIES UNDER AN EXCEPTION TO BUY AMERICAN IN SY 2022-2023

**F11f. About what percentage of [FILL F10F SPECIFY] procurements were not domestic commodities or products in SY 2022-2023? Enter your best estimate.**

PERCENT (RANGE 1-100)

- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

## G. MEAL PREPARATION AND SERVICE

This section focuses on the meals your SFA prepares and serves.

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the start time for this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

ALL ANSWER:

**G1. From what sources does your SFA get standardized recipes?**

*Select all that apply*

- USDA..... 1
  - Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)..... 2
  - State agency..... 3
  - Food Service Management Company..... 4
  - Created in-house ..... 5
  - None – SFA does not use standardized recipes ..... 0
  - Other (Specify)..... 99
- Specify  (STRING 150)
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF SFA USED STANDARDIZED RECIPES IN SY 2022-2023, G1=/=0

**G2. The USDA [Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](https://theicn.org/cicn/usda-recipe-standardization-guide-for-school-nutrition-programs/) [LINK: <https://theicn.org/cicn/usda-recipe-standardization-guide-for-school-nutrition-programs/>] is a “how-to” guide on recipe standardization for school nutrition recipe developers. How helpful was the USDA Recipe Standardization Guide?**

- Not at all helpful..... 0
  - Slightly helpful..... 1
  - Somewhat helpful ..... 2
  - Very helpful ..... 3
  - N/A - did not use USDA Recipe Standardization Guide ..... n
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF SFA USED STANDARDIZED RECIPES IN SY 2022-2023, G1=/=0

**G3. If your SFA writes standardized recipes, what additional trainings or resources would be helpful for your SFA?**

*Select all that apply*

- Incorporating more local foods into recipes..... 1
  - Incorporating more whole foods into recipes..... 1
  - Customizing recipes to reflect cultural foodways ..... 2
  - Developing seasonal menus and recipes..... 3
  - Determining how recipes credit toward the meal pattern requirements..... 4
  - Conducting menu or nutrient analysis ..... 1
  - No additional trainings needed for recipe development ..... 0
  - Not applicable – SFA does not write standardized recipes ..... n
  - Other (Specify)..... 99
- Specify
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G4. Thinking about all resources available from USDA, do you prefer to use USDA resources online or as paper copies?**

- Online ..... 1
- Paper copies ..... 2
- No preference ..... 3
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G5. During SY 2022-2023, did your SFA use scratch cooking methods to prepare meals at breakfast or lunch?**

**Scratch-based food preparation** produces meal components from whole or minimally processed basic ingredients, often using a recipe.

*Select all that apply*

- Used scratch cooking methods to prepare reimbursable breakfasts ..... 1
- Used scratch cooking methods to prepare reimbursable lunches ..... 2
- Did not use scratch cooking methods ..... 0
- Don't know ..... d
- NO RESPONSE ..... M

ANSWER IF G5=1 OR 2, YOUR SFA USED SCRATCH COOKING METHODS IN SY 2022-2023

**G6. How often did your SFA use scratch cooking methods to prepare reimbursable meals during SY 2022-2023?**

*Select one response per row*

	Never	Less than once per week	Once per week	2-4 times per week	Every day	Don't Know
a. [G5=1] Breakfast	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. [G5=2] Lunch	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
NO RESPONSE .....	M					

ANSWER IF G5=0, YOUR SFA DID NOT USE SCRATCH COOKING METHODS IN SY 2022-2023

**G7. How much do the following potential barriers prevent your SFA from scratch cooking more often? Please indicate whether each item is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier for your SFA.**

*Select one response per row*

	Major barrier	Minor barrier	Not a barrier	Don't know
a. SFA needs to change SFA oversight/monitoring methods	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
b. Unsure how to modify or are overwhelmed to modify program operations for scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
c. Not enough staff to scratch cook	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
d. Staff do not have enough culinary skills or training	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
e. Lack of interest or resistance from staff	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
f. Lack of interest or resistance from school administration	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
g. Not enough time for scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
h. Not enough space for scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
i. Not enough large equipment (e.g., refrigerators, ovens)	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
j. Not enough small equipment (e.g., food processors, knives)	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
k. Cost of foods	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
l. Cost of labor hours	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
m. Need to change procurement strategies and processes	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
n. Need to identify new vendors to procure foods for new menus	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
o. Locked into a contract with a vendor, cooperative purchasing group, or FSMC that doesn't sell what we'd need	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
p. Need to solicit or identify new recipes	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
q. Need to change menu and nutrition analysis methods to ensure menus meet meal pattern requirements	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
r. It's more challenging to prepare kosher or halal foods or foods for special diets with scratch cooking	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
s. Concern about more waste	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>
t. Concern about lower participation	0 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	d <input type="radio"/>



u. Concern about student or parent acceptance of new recipes or menus      0       1       2       d

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G8. During SY 2022-2023, how often did your SFA offer a daily menu for breakfast that did *not* include any animal-based proteins (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or dairy)?**

*Select all that apply*

- Never ..... 0
- Less than once per week..... 1
- Once per week ..... 2
- 2-4 times per week ..... 3
- Every day ..... 4
- Don't know ..... d

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G9. During SY 2022-2023, how often did your SFA offer a daily menu for lunch that did *not* include any animal-based proteins (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or dairy) ?**

*Select all that apply*

- Never ..... 0
- Less than once per week..... 1
- Once per week ..... 2
- 2-4 times per week ..... 3
- Every day ..... 4
- Don't know ..... d

NO RESPONSE ..... M

ALL ANSWER:

**G10. What are the biggest challenges your SFA has faced in making accommodations for students with disabilities?**

*Select all that apply*

- Meal or food component substitutions..... 1
- Cross-contamination/cross-contact ..... 2
- Ingredient tracking ..... 3
- Physical accessibility of meal service..... 4
- Tracking individual student needs ..... 5
- Obtaining needed medical statements ..... 6
- Working with parents or guardians ..... 7
- Training staff..... 8
- Other (Specify)..... 99

Specify

NO RESPONSE..... M

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this section here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing this section.**

ALL ANSWER:

**PRETEST RESPONDENT: Please list the time you finished this survey here: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please check this box if you were interrupted for any length of time while completing the whole survey.**

**Thank-you for completing the pretest! Please email your completed survey to [SMOstudy@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SMOstudy@mathematica-mpr.com). Please keep a copy of this survey so you can reference it during the debriefing phone call.**

**You have finished the survey. Thank you!**

## **Appendix M.4**

### **SMO SA CN Director Debrief Protocols**

**SMO OY3: SA CN Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol**

<b>RESPONDENT ID:</b>	
<b>INTERVIEWER NAME:</b>	
<b>SA DIRECTOR NAME:</b>	
<b>STATE:</b>	

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today for the pre-test of the State Agency Child Nutrition Director survey for the School Meals Operations study Year 4 data collection. [INTERVIEWERS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES]

Do you have a copy of the survey in front of you? We also have a copy of your survey responses too, for reference.

*If no:* It will help our discussion if you have it in front of you. We can give you a minute to get it. (We can also email you a new copy of the survey now if necessary.)

As we mentioned, this call should take about 30 minutes. Our goal today is to get your feedback on the survey, particularly if anything was confusing or difficult to answer, and your suggestions for revisions. We will first talk about your reactions to the survey overall, and then we will ask about specific survey questions. We'll use your feedback to improve the survey. As a reminder, the responses you entered in the survey are only for the pre-test and will not be analyzed or reported.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Would you mind if I recorded our conversation to make sure I capture everything accurately?

1. I wanted to start by asking you what you thought of the questions overall. Take a moment to flip through the pages.
  - a. What did you think of the organization and flow of the questions?
  - b. Were there any questions or response options that might be confusing for respondents?
    - i. *If yes:* What do you think is confusing? How do you think we should change the question or response options to make it less confusing?
  - c. Did any questions seem like they were missing a response option?
    - i. *If yes:* What response options do you think we should add?
    - ii. Were there any questions you did not know how to answer?
      1. *If any questions left blank:* I see you left questions [numbers] blank. Can you tell me why?
2. *If time not recorded:* About how long did it take you to answer the entire survey, including time spent gathering information?
  - a. *If more than 30 minutes:* Did any sections take particularly long to complete?
3. Looking at section A, SY 2022-2023 Fiscal Action Waiver, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?

**SMO OY3: SA CN Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol**

- a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section A?
4. *If CA or ME, ask:* Looking at section B, State-Provided Universal Free Meals, we ask about challenges that your State agency has experienced with application collection now that school meals are not tied to the Free and Reduced-Price Meals Application. What other challenges did your State agency experience? Are there any other challenges other State agencies might experience that we should include here?
5. Looking at section C, USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, were there any questions that were difficult to answer?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Do you recommend changing any of the questions in section C?
6. In C1, we ask how many elementary schools participated in the FFVP and then how many schools applied to participate in C2. Is the number of elementary schools that were awarded FFVP the same as those that participated in the Program?
  - i. *If needed:* Thinking about C1, the number of elementary schools that participated in the FFVP, based on what you know, how common or uncommon is it for schools to apply, but not participate in FFVP?
7. We're also considering adding a question about States returning FFVP funds back to USDA. We understand that your State returned funds for the previous school year (2021-2022). Can you share why you had unused funds?
  - i. Do you know of other common reasons why States might return the FFVP funds to USDA?
    1. Would the following responses be relevant?
      - a. not being able to operate the program to the full capacity
      - b. States are not able to get the funding out to schools (due to schools not applying for FFVP and therefore a lack of awardees)
8. Looking at section D, Subsidies, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section D?
9. *IF CA or ME, or if D1=1 or D3=1, ask:* In D2 and D4, we ask about subsidies and support your State provided to SFAs in SY 2022-2023. Are the response options provided sufficient? Is there other wording around universal free meals that would be more meaningful for States?
10. Looking at section E, Procurement and Buy American, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?

**SMO OY3: SA CN Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol**

- a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions that you recommend changing in Section E?
11. *If E1=1, ask:* In E2 and E3, which asks about the components described in your State's Buy American Policy, are there any other responses that we should consider including?
  12. *If E1=1, ask:* In E6 we ask about the types of documentation your agency reviews to verify an exception to the Buy American provision is needed. Were the items provided accurate? Are there any other types of documentation you recommend we add?
  13. In E11, we ask about training your State agency provides to SFAs on local food procurement. Are there any other types of training we should add?
  14. In F1, we ask if you prefer to use USDA resources online or as paper copies. Was this question easy or difficult for you to answer? What did you think of when answering this question?

Those are all the questions I had for you. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Thanks again for your feedback. It will be very helpful as we make our revisions.

## **Appendix M.5**

### **SMO SFA Director Debrief Protocols**

**SMO OY3: SFA Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol**

<b>RESPONDENT ID:</b>	
<b>INTERVIEWER NAME:</b>	
<b>SFA DIRECTOR NAME:</b>	
<b>SFA NAME:</b>	
<b>STATE:</b>	

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today for the pre-test of the SFA Director survey for the School Meals Operations study. [INTERVIEWERS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES.]

Do you have a copy of the survey in front of you? We also have a copy of your survey responses too, for reference.

*If no:* It will help our discussion if you have it in front of you. We can give you a minute to get it. (I can also email you a new copy of the survey now if necessary.)

As we mentioned, this call should take about 30 minutes. Our goal today is to get your feedback on the survey, particularly if anything was confusing or difficult to answer, and your suggestions for revisions. We will first talk about your reactions to the survey overall, and then we will ask about specific survey questions. We'll use your feedback to improve the survey. As a reminder, your responses you entered in the survey are only for the pre-test and will not be analyzed or reported.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Would you mind if I recorded our conversation to make sure I capture everything accurately?

1. I wanted to start by asking you what you thought of the questions overall. Take a moment to flip through the pages.
  - a. What did you think of the organization and flow of questions?
  - b. Were there any questions or response options that might be confusing for respondents?
    - i. *If yes:* What do you think is confusing? How do you think we should change the question or response options to make it less confusing?
  - c. Did any questions seem like they were missing a response option?
    - i. *If yes:* What response options do you think we should add?
    - ii. Were there any questions you did not know how to answer?
      1. *If any questions left blank:* I see you left questions [numbers] blank. Can you tell me why?
2. *If time not recorded:* About how long did it take you to answer the entire survey, including time spent gathering information?
  - a. *If more than 30 minutes:* Did any sections take particularly long to complete?



**SMO OY3: SFA Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol**

3. *If SFA is in CA or ME:* Looking at section B, Universal Free Meals, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section B?
4. Looking at section C, Eligibility Determination and Verification, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section C?
5. *If multiple formats selected in C3, ask:* How easy or difficult was it to rank the most used household applications for free or reduced price school meals in question C4?
  - a. *If difficult:* How would you change this question to make it easier to answer?
6. *If SFA is in AZ or WI:* Looking at section D, Meal Prices, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section D?
7. *If D1=0, ask:* In question D6, we ask about actions your SFA took in response to the Paid Lunch Equity provision. Were the response options listed sufficient or are there any other items we should include?
8. Looking at Section E, Funding and Expenditures, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section E?
9. *If SFA is in AZ or WI:* In question E7, we ask if your SFA has a local unpaid meal charge policy, or if your State developed a State-level unpaid meal charge policy for all SFAs to follow. Do you think SFA directors who complete this survey will know what an unpaid meal charge policy is or would a description of it be helpful? How would you describe it to someone?
10. *If E7=1 or 2, ask:* In E8, we ask about the components of your SFA's local meal charge policy. Are there any additional components that we should include?
  - a. The second response option states that students unable to pay receive an alternate meal. Are you familiar with alternate meals? *If yes:* How would you describe an alternate meal?

### SMO OY3: SFA Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol

11. *If E9=1, ask:* E10 and E11 ask about unpaid meal charges owed to your SFA. When we field the survey in fall 2023, would you expect to provide the dollar amount owed to your SFA and the dollar amount that your SFA has recovered for the time frames specified? *If no*, is there some other time frame or information you would be able to provide?
  - a. How does your SFA track unpaid meal charges?
12. Looking at Section F, Procurement and Buy American, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section F?
13. Question F4a asks about general challenges your SFA may have experienced with complying with the Buy American Provision. Item B states, “our SFA does not have enough staff to ensure compliance.” Does your SFA also monitor compliance or is compliance only monitored by the State?
14. In F5 we ask if your SFA used one or more thresholds to determine that a cost is significantly higher for a domestic commodity or product, and thus warrants an exception to Buy American. Do you think SFA directors completing this survey will understand what was meant by “threshold”? How would you describe that term?
  - a. Would it be helpful if we provided an example of a threshold?
15. *If F9=1, ask:* In F10, we ask about the unit of measure your SFA uses to track individual food procurements under exceptions to Buy American. Was this question difficult to answer?
  - a. *If difficult:* How would you change this question to make it easier to answer?
  - b. Does the unit vary based on how the commodity is received?
16. *If any item in F6=1, ask:* In F11a-f, we ask for the percentage of procurements that were not domestic commodities or products in SY 22-23. Did you find it easy or difficult to provide percentage estimates?
17. Looking at Section G, Meal preparation and service, were there any questions that were difficult to answer in this section?
  - a. Were there any questions that took particularly long to answer?
  - b. Were there any questions you recommend changing in section G?
18. *If G1≠0, ask:* In G3, we ask about additional trainings or resources that would be helpful for your SFA in writing standardized recipes. Were the response options we provided sufficient? Can you think of additional response options we should include?

**SMO OY3: SFA Director Survey Pre-Test Debrief Protocol**

19. In G4, we ask if you prefer to use USDA resources online or as paper copies. Was this question easy or difficult for you to answer? What did you think of when answering this question?
20. *If G5=0, ask:* In G7, we ask about potential barriers that might prevent your SFA from scratch cooking. What did you think of these items? Were there any items that might be confusing for respondents?
21. Lastly, as we continue to revise the survey, we may make changes to which topics are covered. Of the topics included in this pre-test version of the survey, which would be most helpful for you to hear from other SFAs about what they are doing? Which topics would be the least helpful?

Those are all the questions I had for you. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Thanks again for your feedback. It will be very helpful as we make our revisions.