

M. Study description

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How Have SNAP State Agencies Shifted Operations in the Aftermath of COVID-19? Study

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| Study overview | <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is sponsoring the How Have Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) State Agencies Shifted Operations in the Aftermath of COVID-19? study. FNS contracted with Mathematica to conduct this study. The study will document and describe how State SNAP agencies shifted operations since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on changes related to SNAP application and recertification processes, case management, and benefit issuance. The study seeks to assess what did and did not work and why, and to understand the decision-making process that led to States’ responses to date and plans for after the public health emergency ends. The study also will identify lessons learned during the pandemic to inform continued program improvement and increased preparedness for any future disruptions that affect service delivery.</p> |
| Study activities | <p>The study involves several key tasks that will inform the findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based survey. To provide a comprehensive, nationwide picture of the adaptations State SNAP agencies have made—including changes to staffing, technology, and use of waivers and other flexibilities—the study includes a web survey of the 53 State SNAP agencies. • Virtual site visits. To complement the survey, the study includes virtual site visits (which will entail telephone interviews with program administrators and frontline staff) with five States. The virtual site visits will provide a detailed understanding of decision-making processes, how agencies implemented operational changes in practice and lessons learned related to the COVID-19 pandemic. • Administrative data. In each of the five site visit States, the study team will collect individual-level application and case records and/or aggregate performance data. These data will provide insight on how key metrics such as SNAP caseload size and composition changed after the implementation of program changes. • Document review. The study team will systematically collect publicly available documents through FNS and web searches to inform the development of data collection instruments for the survey and site visit interviews. The team will use these along with non-public documents (for example, State policy guidance) we will collect from States to confirm and clarify survey responses. |
| Study products | <p>The study team will develop several products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report. A report will summarize the findings of our analysis, including how State agencies shifted operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, best practices and lessons learned. The report will integrate findings from all study components. <p>Issue briefs. Two briefs that will synthesize key findings in an accessible format.</p> |

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| Study schedule | Study development | September 2022 to January 2024 |
| | Survey of State SNAP agencies | February 2024 to June 2024 |
| | Site visits and administrative data collection in five States | February 2024 to February 2025 |
| | Analysis and reporting | March 2025 to October 2025 |
| To learn more | Contact the Mathematica project director: | Elizabeth Brown ebrown@mathematica-mpr.com |
| | Contact the FNS project officer: | Amanda Wyant amanda.wyant@usda.gov |

Public Burden Statement

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in examining how State SNAP agencies shifted operations since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a voluntary data collection and FNS will use the information to describe how State agencies shifted operations during and after the public health emergency and identify best practices and lessons learned. This collection does not request any personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX and Expiration Date XX-XX-20XX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to take 0.0333 hours per response. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22306 ATTN: PRA (0584-XXXX).