C. Study Overview

A. **OMB Number:** 0584-####
Expiration Date: MM/DD/20YY

Study Background

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is sponsoring this research study, *Understanding Risk Assessment in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Payment Accuracy* (SNAP RA study), to better understand how SNAP State agencies use case-profiling tools to estimate whether a case is at risk of payment error. Case-profiling tools may also be known as error-prone profiles or risk assessment tools. FNS contracted with Westat, an independent research organization, to conduct this study with the following goals:

- Identify where, when, and how State agencies use case-profiling tools to flag cases at risk of payment error.
- Determine any challenges or best practices in the development and use of the tools.

The findings will be used to compile strategies and lessons learned for developing and implementing case-profiling tools and to inform guidance and technical assistance to State agencies.

Examples of Case-Profiling Tools

SNAP case-profiling tools can range in sophistication from a simple checklist that helps eligibility workers identify cases likely to have a payment error to complex analytics tools incorporated into a State's eligibility system. Two hypothetical examples follow:

Example 1. Checklist of Criteria to Flag Cases for Review

State agency A determined payment errors were concentrated in large households of six or more people and in households with no reported income. State agency leadership requires a second review for all applications meeting either criterion prior to eligibility and benefit determination. When processing applications, eligibility workers flag all such cases for supervisors to review.

Example 2. Integrated Case-Profile Tool

State agency B used several years of Quality Control data to develop a machine-learning model that predicts the most error-prone cases. The model is integrated into the eligibility system, which automatically assigns a risk score once case information is complete. If the score is above a certain threshold, the case is flagged as high risk and undergoes a quality assurance review within 30 days of becoming an active case.

Data Collection Activities and Timeline

Westat will conduct the following data collection activities:

- **Survey** of all State agencies to assess their use of risk assessment tools
- **Interviews** in six State agencies to gather indepth information on the development and use of risk assessment tools
- **SNAP Administrative Data Request** to assess the accuracy, equity, and effectiveness of case-profiling tools.

Table C.1. displays the timeline for these activities.

Table C.1. Data Collection Timeline

Activity	Expected Start Date
SNAP State Director Online Survey	June 2024
Key Informant Interviews in Six State Agencies	August 2024
SNAP Administrative Data Request	August 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who Is Being Asked to Participate in This Study?

We will conduct an online survey of all State agencies. The survey link will be sent to the SNAP Directors, who may share the link with other relevant staff as needed. The web survey should take about *[X]* minutes to complete.

Following the survey, we will select six State agencies for case studies. As part of those case studies, we will seek to interview the following types of staff via telephone or videoconference:

- Program staff involved in developing the case-profiling tool
- IT or data staff involved in developing and/or implementing the tool
- Staff who routinely use the tool

The interviews will vary in length between 30 and 90 minutes, depending on the type of staff being interviewed.

2. Why Should I Participate?

Case-profiling tools have the potential to increase payment accuracy and reduce staff workloads. FNS may use the results of this study to inform future guidance on the use of these tools. Participation by all State agencies will provide the best possible understanding of case-profiling tools in SNAP administration. Keep in mind that this is a research study; it is not an audit or monitoring visit.

3. Will the Information I Provide Be Kept Private?

All information gathered will be used for research purposes only and kept private to the extent allowed by law. FNS will receive survey data that have been stripped of identifying information. All findings from survey and SNAP QC data will be reported in the aggregate and at the individual State level. No individual persons will be identified or reported in the writeup of those findings. FNS will receive redacted transcripts of the interviews. Findings from interviews will be linked to the respondent's State agency, but no other identifying information will be reported.

To Learn More

Please email the Westat Research Project Director, Betsy Thorn, at bthorn@insightpolicyresearch.com, or the FNS Project Officer, Eric Williams, at eric.williams@usda.gov.

This information is being collected to provide the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) with key information on case-profiling tools used by SNAP State agencies. This is a voluntary collection, and FNS will use the information to examine risk assessment tools in SNAP. This collection requests 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-####. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.042 hours (2.5 minutes) 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-####). Do not return the completed form to this address. If you have any questions, please contact the FNS Project Officer for this project, Eric Williams, at eric.williams@usda.gov.