

APPENDIX C10. FSMC/DISTRIBUTOR RECRUITMENT CALL SCRIPT  
(GROUPS 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3, FOA)

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in understanding school food purchasing practices, the nutritional quality of school meals and snacks, the cost to produce school meals, and student participation and dietary intakes. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to monitor program operations. 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]. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.25 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314 ATTN: PRA (0584-xxxx). Do not return the completed form to this address.

OMB Number: 0584-xxxx  
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## FSMC/DISTRIBUTOR RECRUITMENT CALL SCRIPT

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The following talking points are to be used during discussions with FSMCs and distributors.

### **Introduction**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling from [FIRM] on behalf of U.S. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to follow up on a letter sent to [FSMC/Distributor contact] regarding the 2024-2025 National School Foods Study. Could I speak to her/him?

I am following up on a letter sent to you on [DATE] regarding the study. The letter advised you that a member of the study team would be reaching out to your office to provide more information. During this call, we'd also like to coordinate your company's cooperation and the participation of sampled SFAs served by your company. Do you recall this letter?

### **IF YES, RECALLS LETTER:**

- Identify whether you are speaking to the right person who can make a decision;
- If you are not talking with the right person clarify who we should be speaking to;
- Identify other executives who have to be on board;
- Confirm if we need to contact them individually.

### **IF NO, DOES NOT RECALL LETTER:**

- Offer to email letter;
- Identify whether you are speaking to the right person;
- Identify if anyone else should receive the letter.

### **The Study**

[FSMC: FNS has contracted with Mathematica, and its research partners, Decision Information Resources and ProTeam, to conduct the National School Foods Study for school year 2024–2025 [IF MANAGES OA SFA:, including the Outlying Areas]. [SFA NAME(S)] was/were selected as part of FNS's study sample, and although we would typically reach out directly to SFAs, in cases where there is a Food Service Management Company involved, such as [FSMC Company Name], we have found it to be helpful to reach out to the management company directly as well.]

[DISTRIBUTOR: FNS has contracted with Mathematica, and its research partners, Decision Information Resources and ProTeam, to conduct the National School Foods Study for school year 2024–2025. As part of this study, we will be collecting food purchase data from select SFAs served by your company. [SFA NAME(S)] was/were selected as part of FNS’s study sample, and while we will also reach out directly to SFAs, we have found it to be helpful to reach out to the distributors directly as well so you are prepared to support them.]

Today we would like to explain the study and what we will be asking of SFAs. Once you have had an opportunity to ask questions we will ask that you endorse this study by reaching out to participating SFAs to encourage their participation. That usually makes the process of getting each SFA on board easier for all involved and helps make the study run smoothly.

**Why is it important for your FSMC to endorse the study and assist with SFA participation?**

The food service operations of over [20%] of the country’s school districts are managed by FSMCs. The participation of the sampled school districts administered by your company, as well as other FSMCs, is critical to gaining a representative picture of school meals nutrition and costs.

**Why is it important for your distribution company to endorse the study and assist with SFA participation?**

The majority of SFAs are served by broadline distributors like your company. The participation of the sampled school districts served by your company, as well as other distributors, is critical to gaining a representative picture of school meals nutrition and costs.

**What are the study objectives?**

The study has many key objectives. These include:

[IF GROUP 2A, 2B, 3]

- Describing SFA and school environments, food service operations, and school/student participation;
- Determining the food and nutrient content of school meals and snacks and examining compliance with updated meal standards;
- Determining the cost to produce school meals, including indirect and local administrative costs;
- Describing and assessing student characteristics, participation, satisfaction, and dietary intake; as well as
- Describing and assessing plate waste;
- Assessing the effects of the updated nutrition standards by examining how characteristics and outcomes have changed since implementation;
- and examining interrelationships among nutrition quality, cost, and student participation.

[IF GROUP 1A, 1B]

- Develop national estimates of the types, amounts, and costs of food purchases and USDA Foods;
- Describe school food purchase practices and identify relationships between food purchase practices/school district characteristics and the costs of foods.

[IF OA] The National School Foods Study will determine the cost of producing reimbursable meals for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, including indirect and local administrative costs. It will also examine the ratios of revenues to costs. Reimbursement rates for school meals sold in the contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia are assessed periodically using a rigorous cost study methodology and now we are applying that methodology to [State/territory].

**More specifically, what type of information will be collected?**

More than 1,000 school districts [GROUP 2a, 2b, 3; and some of their schools,] nationwide will participate in the study. Data collection activities will be limited to only those necessary for success of the study. [Groups 2a, 2b, & 3: The SFAs that you oversee will be asked to participate in our study activities that focus on student nutrition, student meal program participation, and the school environment]. [Group 2a & 2b: These SFAs will *not* be asked to participate in the extensive cost and revenue portions of the study.] During school year 2024–2025, these SFAs and schools will be asked to complete or support completion of [INTERVIEWER: EDIT THE LIST TO INCLUDE ONLY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE FSMC/DISTRIBUTOR’S SFAS. REFERENCE *DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES TABLE* TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES]:

- SFA Director Survey

[Group 1a or 1b]

- Providing food purchase data and program data for their assigned quarter
- Providing annual program data

[Group 2a, 2b, or 3]

- School Nutrition Manager Survey and Menu Survey
- Observations of meal periods in sampled schools

[Group 2a or 3]

- Principal survey

[Group 3, FOA,]

- Cost interviews with SFAs, SNMs, and principals

[LOA]

- Cost interviews with SFAs

[Group 3]

- Observations of self-serve or made-to-order bars and plate waste

[Group 2a or 2b]

- Student interviews and 24-hour dietary recalls
- Reimbursable Meal Sale Data Request Form

[Group 2a]

- Parent interviews

[If FOA] Mathematica is selecting a sample of SFAs and schools needed to produce cost estimates for [Alaska/Guam/Hawaii]. Data collection activities will be limited to only those

necessary for success of the study. The SFAs that you oversee will be asked to participate in the study activities related to the cost and revenue portions of the study.

### **Protecting Privacy**

All information gathered for this study is for research purposes only and will be kept private to the fullest extent allowed by law. (GROUPS 2, 3: Responses will be grouped with those of other study participants, and no individual schools, districts, or students will be identified in reports. We will inform parents of the study and our privacy practices.) (OA: We will group responses with those of other study participants. Study reports will not identify individual schools or respondents.) We are not conducting audits or monitoring visits. Participation in the study will not affect Federal meal reimbursements or school meal program benefits to students participating in the school meal programs.

### **What is required to obtain the FSMC/distributor endorsement and their agreement to assist the sampled SFAs in participating in this study?**

Discuss specific next steps and check the following:

- Do we need to provide any further information?
- What are the steps in obtaining FSMC/distributor endorsement?
- How long do you anticipate it will take to get this endorsement?
- What can we do to facilitate the process?
- Identify the main point of contact within the FSMC/distributor.
  - Are there national versus regional contacts?

### **Communication with SFAs managed by the FSMC**

Arrange to send the list of SFAs served by this FSMC/distributor (provided by the States'/Territories' CN offices) to FSMC/distributor main contact for review and confirmation that the FSMC/distributor serves these SFAs (it is possible some changes have occurred that have not been captured by the States at the time they verified the sampled SFAs).

Explain that it is possible to uncover some additional FSMC-managed/distributor-served SFAs during the recruitment process.

Discuss how districts will be informed that the FSMC/distributor has endorsed the study and that they will work with the sampled school districts to participate in the study.

[FSMC: Discuss whether FSMC would require review of some of the data provided by their SFAs/schools (e.g., food purchase costs) prior to releasing them.]

### Data Collection Activities Table

All incentives will be provided in the form of a gift card.

| Instrument                   |   | Admin                | Respondent                       | Group(s)  | Time       | Incentive |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| SFA Director Survey          | This survey will ask about district policies, the school environment, and food service operations.                  | Web survey           | SFA Director                     | 1a        | 1.5 hours  | \$75      |
|                              |   |                      |                                  | 1b        | 1.25 hours | \$60      |
|                              |   |                      |                                  | 1c, 2a, 3 | 45 minutes | \$35      |
|                              |   |                      |                                  | 2b        | 20 minutes | \$25      |
| Quarterly Food Purchase Data |   | Electronic Submittal | SFA Director                     | 1a, 1b    | 6 hours    | \$275     |
| Quarterly Program Data Form  |   | Web                  | SFA director                     | 1a, 1b    | 15 mins    | n/a       |
| SNM Survey                   | This survey will ask about district policies, the school environment, and food service operations.                  | Web                  | School Nutrition Managers (SNMs) | 2a, 3     | 20 MINS    | N/A       |
|                              |   |                      |                                  | 2b        | 20 minutes | N/a       |
| Principal Survey             | This survey will ask about district policies, the school environment, and food service operations.                  | Web                  | Principals                       | 2a, 3     | 30 minutes | n/a       |
| Observation Guide            | Data collectors will observe one lunch and one breakfast period (if the school participates in the School Breakfast | On-site observation  | Schools (SNMs)                   | 2a, 3     | 20 minutes | N/a       |
|                              |   |                      |                                  | 2b        | 20 minutes | n/a       |

| Instrument                   |  | Admin                         | Respondent                      | Group(s)    | Time       | Incentive                           |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
|                              | Program) in each sampled school to document characteristics of foodservice operations  |                               |                                 |             |            |                                     |
| Menu Survey                  | This survey will collect detailed information on the foods offered and served in each sampled school during a target week, as well as a la carte foods offered on a single day. The Menu Survey includes a questionnaire about foodservice operations that the school nutrition manager completes. | Web                           | SNMs                            | 2a, 3, FOA  | 9 hours    | \$225 (\$75 pre-pay/\$150 post pay) |
|                              |  | In person                     |                                 | 2b          | 30 minutes | n/a                                 |
| SFA On-site Cost Interview   | This interview is to gather information about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs.  | In-person                     | SFA directors/business managers | 3, FOA, LOA | 3.25 hours | \$150                               |
| SFA Follow-up Web Survey     |  | Web                           | SFA directors                   | 3, FOA      | 30 minutes | n/a                                 |
| SFA Follow-up Cost Interview | This interview is to gather information about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs.  | Telephone plus screen sharing | SFA directors/business managers | 3, FOA      | 2 hours    | \$90                                |
| SNM Cost Interview           | This interview is to gather information about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative   | In person                     | SNMs                            | 3           | 90 mins    | \$50                                |

| Instrument                                |   | Admin   | Respondent                     | Group(s)      | Time    | Incentive |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|
|   | costs.  |   |                                |               |         |           |
| Principal Cost Interview                  | This interview is to gather information about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs.   | In person   | Principals                     | 3, FOA        | 45 mins | \$40      |
| On-Site Self-Serve/Made-to-Order Bar Form |   | On-site observation   | Schools                        | 3             | 10 mins | n/a       |
| Plate Waste Observations                  | At a subset of schools, data collectors will estimate the proportion of foods wasted by students in order to assess the nutrient and food group composition of foods wasted, and to assess the relationship between plate waste and characteristics of students, school food environments, and school foodservice operations. | On-site observation   | Lunch & Breakfast trays (SNMs) | 3 (subsample) | 10 mins | n/a       |
| AMPM (24-Hour Dietary Recall)             |   | Field staff administer during target week alongside the student | Students                       | 2a, 2b        | 45      |           |



| Instrument   |   | Admin                                | Respondent | Group(s) | Time       | Incentive  |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|--|
|  |   | interview with a telephone follow-up |            |          |            |  |
| Student Interview with AMPM (24-Hour Dietary Recall) | Professional data collectors will interview a small sample of students and their parents to obtain information on student characteristics, dietary intake, and consumption of and satisfaction with school meals. Data collection activities will differ for elementary school students and those in middle and high schools and have been designed to be age appropriate. Kindergarten and prekindergarten students will not be included in the study. | In person                            | Students   | 2a, 2b   | 12 minutes | Elementary - \$5<br>Middle/High School - \$15                                  |
| Parent Interview                                     | See student interview description<br><br>The parents of elementary students will receive a higher payment because they will need to assist their children with the 24-hour recall.  | Web or telephone                     | Parents    | 2a       | 25 minutes | Parent of Elementary student - \$25<br><br>Parent of Middle/High School - \$15 |

| Instrument                               |  | Admin                                       | Respondent | Group(s) | Time       | Incentive |
|--|--|---|------------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Reimbursable Meal Sale Data Request Form | SNMs will provide POS report or complete hard-copy form to indicate whether sampled students obtained a reimbursable breakfast and/or lunch on the day referenced in the 24-hour recall. | Field staff gather this during school visit | SNM        | 2a, 2b   | 10 minutes | n/a       |