

Appendix A. Legal Authority

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requirement that the Secretary reduce payments in accordance with paragraph (3).

(5) ALLOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—No funds or expenditures described in subparagraph (B) may be used to pay for costs—

(i) eligible for reimbursement under subsection (a) (or costs that would have been eligible for reimbursement but for this subsection); and

(ii) allocated for reimbursement to the supplemental nutrition assistance program under a plan submitted by a State to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to allocate administrative costs for public assistance programs.

(B) FUNDS AND EXPENDITURES.—Subparagraph (A) applies to—

(i) funds made available to carry out part A of title IV, or title XX, of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq., 1397 et seq.);

(ii) expenditures made as qualified State expenditures (as defined in section 409(a)(7)(B) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 609(a)(7)(B)));

(iii) any other Federal funds (except funds provided under subsection (a)); and

(iv) any other State funds that are—

(I) expended as a condition of receiving Federal funds; or

(II) used to match Federal funds under a Federal program other than the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION, AND EVALUATIONS

SEC. 17. [7 U.S.C. 2026] (a)(1) The Secretary may enter into contracts with or make grants to public or private organizations or agencies under this section to undertake research that will help improve the administration and effectiveness of the supplemental nutrition assistance program in delivering nutrition-related benefits. The waiver authority of the Secretary under subsection (b) shall extend to all contracts and grants under this section.

(2) The Secretary may, on application, permit not more than two State agencies to establish procedures that allow households whose monthly supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits do not exceed \$20, at their option, to receive, in lieu of their supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits for the initial period under section 8 and their regular allotment in following months, and at intervals of up to 3 months thereafter, aggregate allotments not to exceed \$60 and covering not more than 3 months' benefits. The allotments shall be provided in accordance with paragraphs (3) and (9) of section 11(e) (except that no household shall begin to receive combined allotments under this section until it has complied with all applicable verification requirements of section 11(e)(3)) and (with respect to the first aggregate allotment so issued) within 40 days of the last benefit issuance.

(b)(1)(A) The Secretary may conduct on a trial basis, in one or more areas of the United States, pilot or experimental projects de-

signed to test program changes that might increase the efficiency of the supplemental nutrition assistance program and improve the delivery of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits to eligible households, and may waive any requirement of this Act to the extent necessary for the project to be conducted.

(B) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—

(i) PROGRAM GOAL.—The Secretary may not conduct a project under subparagraph (A) unless—

(I) the project is consistent with the goal of the supplemental nutrition assistance program of providing food assistance to raise levels of nutrition among low-income individuals; and

(II) the project includes an evaluation to determine the effects of the project.

(ii) PERMISSIBLE PROJECTS.—The Secretary may conduct a project under subparagraph (A) to—

(I) improve program administration;

(II) increase the self-sufficiency of supplemental nutrition assistance program recipients;

(III) test innovative welfare reform strategies;

or

(IV) allow greater conformity with the rules of other programs than would be allowed but for this paragraph.

(iii) RESTRICTIONS ON PERMISSIBLE PROJECTS.—If the Secretary finds that a project under subparagraph (A) would reduce benefits by more than 20 percent for more than 5 percent of households in the area subject to the project (not including any household whose benefits are reduced due to a failure to comply with work or other conduct requirements), the project—

(I) may not include more than 15 percent of the number of households in the State receiving supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits; and

(II) shall continue for not more than 5 years after the date of implementation, unless the Secretary approves an extension requested by the State agency at any time.

(iv) IMPERMISSIBLE PROJECTS.—The Secretary may not conduct a project under subparagraph (A) that—

(I) involves the payment of the value of an allotment in the form of cash or otherwise providing benefits in a form not restricted to the purchase of food, unless the project was approved prior to the date of enactment of this subparagraph [August 22, 1996];

(II) has the effect of substantially transferring funds made available under this Act to services or benefits provided primarily through another public assistance program, or using the funds for any purpose other than the purchase of food, program administration, or an employment or training program;

- (III) is inconsistent with—
- (aa) paragraphs (4) and (5) of section 3(m);
 - (bb) the last sentence of section 5(a), insofar as a waiver denies assistance to an otherwise eligible household or individual if the household or individual has not failed to comply with any work, behavioral, or other conduct requirement under this or another program;
 - (cc) section 5(c)(2);
 - (dd) paragraph (2)(B), (4)(F)(i), or (4)(K) of section 6(d);
 - (ee) section 8(b);
 - (ff) section 11(e)(2)(B);
 - (gg) the time standard under section 11(e)(3);
 - (hh) subsection (a), (c), (g), (h)(1)(F), (h)(2), or (h)(3) of section 16;
 - (ii) this paragraph; or
 - (jj) subsection (a)(1) or (g)(1) of section 20;
- (IV) modifies the operation of section 5 so as to have the effect of—
- (aa) increasing the shelter deduction to households with no out-of-pocket housing costs or housing costs that consume a low percentage of the household's income; or
 - (bb) absolving a State from acting with reasonable promptness on substantial reported changes in income or household size (except that this subclause shall not apply with regard to changes related to supplemental nutrition assistance program deductions);
- (V) is not limited to a specific time period;
- (VI) waives a provision of section 26; or
- (VII) waives a provision of section 7(i).
- (v) **ADDITIONAL INCLUDED PROJECTS.**—A pilot or experimental project may include projects involving the payment of the value of allotments or the average value of allotments by household size in the form of cash to eligible households all of whose members are age sixty-five or over or any of whose members are entitled to supplemental security income benefits under title XVI of the Social Security Act [(42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.)] or are receiving assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), the use of identification mechanisms that do not invade a household's privacy, and the use of food checks or other voucher-type forms in place of EBT cards.
- (vi) **CASH PAYMENT PILOT PROJECTS.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations under section 18(a), any pilot or experimental project implemented under

this paragraph and operating as of October 1, 1981, involving the payment of the value of allotments in the form of cash to eligible households all of whose members are either age sixty-five or over or entitled to supplemental security income benefits under title XVI of the Social Security Act [(42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.)] shall be continued if the State so requests.

(C)(i) No waiver or demonstration program shall be approved under this Act after the date of enactment of this subparagraph unless—

(I) any household whose food assistance is issued in a form other than EBT cards has its allotment increased to the extent necessary to compensate for any State or local sales tax that may be collected in all or part of the area covered by the demonstration project, the tax on purchases of food by any such household is waived, or the Secretary determines on the basis of information provided by the State agency that the increase is unnecessary on the basis of the limited nature of the items subject to the State or local sales tax; and

(II) the State agency conducting the demonstration project pays the cost of any increased allotments.

(ii) Clause (i) shall not apply if a waiver or demonstration project already provides a household with assistance that exceeds that which the household would otherwise be eligible to receive by more than the estimated amount of any sales tax on the purchases of food that would be collected from the household in the project area in which the household resides.

(D) RESPONSE TO WAIVERS.—

(i) RESPONSE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of receiving a request for a waiver under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall provide a response that—

(I) approves the waiver request;

(II) denies the waiver request and describes any modification needed for approval of the waiver request;

(III) denies the waiver request and describes the grounds for the denial; or

(IV) requests clarification of the waiver request.

(ii) FAILURE TO RESPOND.—If the Secretary does not provide a response in accordance with clause (i), the waiver shall be considered approved, unless the approval is specifically prohibited by this Act.

(iii) NOTICE OF DENIAL.—On denial of a waiver request under clause (i)(III), the Secretary shall provide a copy of the waiver request and a description of the reasons for the denial to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(2)(A) The Secretary may conduct demonstration projects to test improved consistency or coordination between the supplemental nutrition assistance program employment and training pro-

gram and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program under title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

(B) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary may, as part of a project authorized under this paragraph, waive requirements under section 6(d) to permit a State to operate an employment and training program for supplemental nutrition assistance program recipients on the same terms and conditions under which the State operates its Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program for recipients of aid to families with dependent children under part F of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 681 et seq.). Any work experience program conducted as part of the project shall be conducted in conformity with section 482(f) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 682(f)).

(C) A State seeking such a waiver shall provide assurances that the resulting employment and training program shall meet the requirements of subsections (a)(19) and (g) of section 402 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 602) (but not including the provision of transitional benefits under clauses (ii) through (vii) of section 402(g)(1)(A)) and sections 481 through 487 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 681 through 687). Each reference to “aid to families with dependent children” in such sections shall be deemed to be a reference to supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits for purposes of the demonstration project.

(D) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this paragraph, participation in an employment and training activity in which supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits are converted to cash shall occur only with the consent of the participant.

(E) For the purposes of any project conducted under this paragraph, the provisions of this Act affecting the rights of recipients may be waived to the extent necessary to conform to the provisions of section 402, and sections 481 through 487, of the Social Security Act.

(F) At least 60 days prior to granting final approval of a project under this paragraph, the Secretary shall publish the terms and conditions for any demonstration project conducted under the paragraph for public comment in the Federal Register and shall notify the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(G) Waivers may be granted under this paragraph to conduct projects at any one time in a total of up to 60 project areas (or parts of project areas), as such areas are defined in regulations in effect on January 1, 1990.

(H) A waiver for a change in program rules may be granted under this paragraph only for a demonstration project that has been approved by the Secretary, that will be evaluated according to criteria prescribed by the Secretary, and that will be in operation for no more than 4 years.

(I) The Secretary may not grant a waiver under this paragraph on or after the date of enactment of this subparagraph [Aug. 22, 1996]. Any reference in this paragraph to a provision of title IV of the Social Security Act shall be deemed to be a reference to such provision as in effect on the day before such date.

(c) The Secretary shall develop and implement measures for evaluating, on an annual or more frequent basis, the effectiveness of the supplemental nutrition assistance program in achieving its stated objectives, including, but not limited to, the program's impact upon the nutritional and economic status of participating households, the program's impact upon all sectors of the agricultural economy, including farmers and ranchers, as well as retail food stores, and the program's relative fairness to households of different income levels, different age composition, different size, and different regions of residence. Further, the Secretary shall, by way of making contracts with or grants to public or private organizations or agencies, implement pilot programs to test various means of measuring on a continuing basis the nutritional status of low income people, with special emphasis on people who are eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance, in order to develop minimum common criteria and methods for systematic nutrition monitoring that could be applied on a nationwide basis. The locations of the pilot programs shall be selected to provide a representative geographic and demographic cross-section of political subdivisions that reflect natural usage patterns of health and nutritional services and that contain high proportions of low income people. The Secretary shall report on the progress of these pilot programs on an annual basis commencing on July 1, 1982, to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, together with such recommendations as the Secretary deems appropriate.

(d) EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES PROGRAM.—

(1) ELECTION TO PARTICIPATE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the other provisions of this subsection, a State may elect to carry out an employment initiatives program under this subsection.

(B) REQUIREMENT.—A State shall be eligible to carry out an employment initiatives program under this subsection only if not less than 50 percent of the households in the State that received supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits during the summer of 1993 also received benefits under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) during the summer of 1993.

(2) PROCEDURE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A State that has elected to carry out an employment initiatives program under paragraph (1) may use amounts equal to the allotments that would otherwise be issued to a household under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, but for the operation of this subsection, to provide cash benefits in lieu of the allotments to the household if the household is eligible under paragraph (3).

(B) PAYMENT.—The Secretary shall pay to each State that has elected to carry out an employment initiatives program under paragraph (1) an amount equal to the value of the allotment that each household participating in the program in the State would be eligible to receive under this Act but for the operation of this subsection.

(C) OTHER PROVISIONS.—For purposes of the supplemental nutrition assistance program (other than this subsection)—

(i) cash assistance under this subsection shall be considered to be an allotment; and

(ii) each household receiving cash benefits under this subsection shall not receive any other supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits during the period for which the cash assistance is provided.

(D) ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS.—Each State that has elected to carry out an employment initiatives program under paragraph (1) shall—

(i) increase the cash benefits provided to each household participating in the program in the State under this subsection to compensate for any State or local sales tax that may be collected on purchases of food by the household, unless the Secretary determines on the basis of information provided by the State that the increase is unnecessary on the basis of the limited nature of the items subject to the State or local sales tax; and

(ii) pay the cost of any increase in cash benefits required by clause (i).

(3) ELIGIBILITY.—A household shall be eligible to receive cash benefits under paragraph (2) if an adult member of the household—

(A) has worked in unsubsidized employment for not less than the preceding 90 days;

(B) has earned not less than \$350 per month from the employment referred to in subparagraph (A) for not less than the preceding 90 days;

(C)(i) is receiving benefits under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.); or

(ii) was receiving benefits under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) at the time the member first received cash benefits under this subsection and is no longer eligible for the State program because of earned income;

(D) is continuing to earn not less than \$350 per month from the employment referred to in subparagraph (A); and

(E) elects to receive cash benefits in lieu of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits under this subsection.

(4) EVALUATION.—A State that operates a program under this subsection for 2 years shall provide to the Secretary a written evaluation of the impact of cash assistance under this subsection. The State agency, with the concurrence of the Secretary, shall determine the content of the evaluation.

(e) The Secretary shall conduct a study of the effects of reductions made in benefits provided under this Act pursuant to part 1 of subtitle A of title I of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, the Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981, the Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982, and any other

laws enacted by the Ninety-seventh Congress which affect the supplemental nutrition assistance program. The study shall include a study of the effect of retrospective accounting and periodic reporting procedures established under such Acts, including the impact on benefit and administrative costs and on error rates and the degree to which eligible households are denied supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits for failure to file complete periodic reports. The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate an interim report on the results of such study no later than February 1, 1984, and a final report on the results of such study no later than March 1, 1985.

(f) In order to encourage States to plan, design, develop, and implement a system for making supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits available through the use of intelligent benefit cards or other automated or electronic benefit delivery systems, the Secretary may conduct one or more pilot or experimental projects, subject to the restrictions imposed by subsection (b)(1) and section 7(f)(2), designed to test whether the use of such cards or systems can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations while ensuring that individuals receive correct benefit amounts on a timely basis. Intelligent benefit cards developed under such a demonstration project shall contain information, encoded on a computer chip embedded in a credit card medium, including the eligibility of the individual and the amount of benefits to which such individual is entitled. Any other automated or electronic benefit delivery system developed under such a demonstration project shall be able to use a plastic card to access such information from a data file.

(g) In order to assess the effectiveness of the employment and training programs established under section 6(d) in placing individuals into the work force and withdrawing such individuals from the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the Secretary is authorized to carry out studies comparing the pre- and post-program labor force participation, wage rates, family income, level of receipt of supplemental nutrition assistance program and other transfer payments, and other relevant information, for samples of participants in such employment and training programs as compared to the appropriate control or comparison groups that did not participate in such programs. Such studies shall, to the maximum extent possible—

(1) collect such data for up to 3 years after the individual has completed the employment and training program; and

(2) yield results that can be generalized to the national program as a whole.

The results of such studies and reports shall be considered in developing or updating the performance standards required under section 6.

(h) The Secretary shall conduct a sufficient number of demonstration projects to evaluate the effects, in both rural and urban areas, of including in financial resources under section 5(g) the fair market value of licensed vehicles to the extent the value of each vehicle exceeds \$4,500, but excluding the value of—

(1) any licensed vehicle that is used to produce earned income, necessary for transportation of an elderly or physically disabled household member, or used as the household's home; and

(2) one licensed vehicle used to obtain, continue, or seek employment (including travel to and from work), used to pursue employment-related education or training, or used to secure food or the benefits of the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

(i) The Secretary shall conduct, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary shall prescribe, for a period not to exceed 4 years, projects to test allowing not more than 11,000 eligible households, in the aggregate, to accumulate resources up to \$10,000 each (which shall be excluded from consideration as a resource) for later expenditure for a purpose directly related to improving the education, training, or employability (including self-employment) of household members, for the purchase of a home for the household, for a change of the household's residence, or for making major repairs to the household's home.

(j) The Secretary shall use up to \$4,000,000 of the funds provided in advance in appropriations Acts for projects authorized by this section to conduct demonstration projects in which State or local supplemental nutrition assistance program agencies test innovative ideas for working with State or local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute benefit trafficking.

(k) PILOT PROJECTS TO EVALUATE HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROMOTION IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers to be appropriate, pilot projects to develop and test methods—

(A) of using the supplemental nutrition assistance program to improve the dietary and health status of households eligible for or participating in the supplemental nutrition assistance program; and

(B) to reduce overweight, obesity (including childhood obesity), and associated co-morbidities in the United States.

(2) GRANTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may enter into competitively awarded contracts or cooperative agreements with, or provide grants to, public or private organizations or agencies (as defined by the Secretary), for use in accordance with projects that meet the strategy goals of this subsection.

(B) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a contract, cooperative agreement, or grant under this paragraph, an organization shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(C) SELECTION CRITERIA.—Pilot projects shall be evaluated against publicly disseminated criteria that may include—

(i) identification of a low-income target audience that corresponds to individuals living in households with incomes at or below 185 percent of the poverty level;

(ii) incorporation of a scientifically based strategy that is designed to improve diet quality through more healthful food purchases, preparation, or consumption;

(iii) a commitment to a pilot project that allows for a rigorous outcome evaluation, including data collection;

(iv) strategies to improve the nutritional value of food served during school hours and during after-school hours;

(v) innovative ways to provide significant improvement to the health and wellness of children;

(vi) other criteria, as determined by the Secretary.

(D) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds provided under this paragraph shall not be used for any project that limits the use of benefits under this Act.

(3) PROJECTS.—Pilot projects carried out under paragraph (1) may include projects to determine whether healthier food purchases by and healthier diets among households participating in the supplemental nutrition assistance program result from projects that—

(A) increase the supplemental nutrition assistance purchasing power of the participating households by providing increased supplemental nutrition assistance program benefit allotments to the participating households;

(B) increase access to farmers markets by participating households through the electronic redemption of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits at farmers' markets;

(C) provide incentives to authorized supplemental nutrition assistance program retailers to increase the availability of healthy foods to participating households;

(D) subject authorized supplemental nutrition assistance program retailers to stricter retailer requirements with respect to carrying and stocking healthful foods;

(E) provide incentives at the point of purchase to encourage households participating in the supplemental nutrition assistance program to purchase fruits, vegetables, or other healthful foods; or

(F) provide to participating households integrated communication and education programs, including the provision of funding for a portion of a school-based nutrition coordinator to implement a broad nutrition action plan and parent nutrition education programs in elementary schools, separately or in combination with pilot projects carried out under subparagraphs (A) through (E).

(4) EVALUATION AND REPORTING.—

(A) EVALUATION.—

(i) INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide for an independent evaluation of projects selected

under this subsection that measures the impact of the pilot program on health and nutrition as described in paragraph (1).

(II) REQUIREMENT.—The independent evaluation under subclause (I) shall use rigorous methodologies, particularly random assignment or other methods that are capable of producing scientifically valid information regarding which activities are effective.

(ii) COSTS.—The Secretary may use funds provided to carry out this section to pay costs associated with monitoring and evaluating each pilot project.

(B) REPORTING.—Not later than 90 days after the last day of fiscal year 2009 and each fiscal year thereafter until the completion of the last evaluation under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that includes a description of—

(i) the status of each pilot project;

(ii) the results of the evaluation completed during the previous fiscal year; and

(iii) to the maximum extent practicable—

(I) the impact of the pilot project on appropriate health, nutrition, and associated behavioral outcomes among households participating in the pilot project;

(II) baseline information relevant to the stated goals and desired outcomes of the pilot project; and

(III) equivalent information about similar or identical measures among control or comparison groups that did not participate in the pilot project.

(C) PUBLIC DISSEMINATION.—In addition to the reporting requirements under subparagraph (B), evaluation results shall be shared broadly to inform policy makers, service providers, other partners, and the public in order to promote wide use of successful strategies.

(5) FUNDING.—

(A) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

(B) MANDATORY FUNDING.—Out of any funds made available under section 18, on October 1, 2008, the Secretary shall make available \$20,000,000 to carry out a project described in paragraph (3)(E), to remain available until expended.

(1) COOPERATION WITH PROGRAM RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—Subject to the requirements of this Act, including protections under section 11(e)(8), States, State agencies, local agencies, institutions, facilities such as data consortiums, and contractors participating in programs authorized under this Act shall—

(1) cooperate with officials and contractors acting on behalf of the Secretary in the conduct of evaluations and studies under this Act; and

(2) submit information at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require.

(m) EVALUATION OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall conduct an independent evaluation of a representative sample of States—

(A) to assess the implementation and impact of the eligibility requirements described in subsections (l) through (n) of section 6 in States that have formerly implemented or continue to implement those requirements, and the feasibility of implementing those requirements in other States;

(B) to assess the factors that contributed to the decision of States that formerly implemented the eligibility requirements described in each of subsections (l) through (n) of section 6 to cease such implementation;

(C) to review alternatives to the eligibility requirements described in each of subsections (l) through (n) of section 6 that are used by other States to assist participants in the supplemental nutrition assistance program to make or receive child support payments and the effectiveness of those alternatives; and

(D) to evaluate the costs and benefits to households and to State agencies, of requiring State agencies to implement each of the eligibility requirements described in subsections (l) through (n) of section 6.

(2) EVALUATION.—The evaluation under paragraph (1) shall include, to the maximum extent practicable, an assessment of—

(A) the manner in which applicable State agencies implement and enforce the eligibility requirements described in subparagraph (A) of such paragraph, including—

(i) the procedures used by each State to determine cooperation, to sanction participants for failure to cooperate, and to determine good cause for noncooperation under each of subsections (l) through (n) of section 6; and

(ii) the manner in which each State aligns the procedures for implementing those eligibility requirements with procedures for implementing other Federal programs that require cooperation with child support enforcement, including the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families established under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.), and programs carried out under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9857 et seq.);

(B) the Federal, State, and local costs associated with implementing those eligibility requirements, including costs incurred under this Act and by child support enforcement agencies for personnel, technology upgrades, and other costs;

(C) the effect of those eligibility requirements on the establishment of new child support orders, the establishment of paternity, changes in child support payments to custodial households, and changes in arrears owed on child support orders;

(D) with respect to the eligibility requirements under each of subsections (l) through (n) of section 6—

(i) the number of individuals subject to those requirements;

(ii) the number of individuals in each State who meet those requirements; and

(iii) the number of individuals in each State who fail to meet those requirements;

(E) the number of individuals in each State for whom good cause for noncooperation has been found under section 6(1)(2);

(F) the impact of those eligibility requirements on the supplemental nutrition assistance program eligibility, benefit levels, food security, income, and economic stability of—

(i) individuals subject to those requirements;

(ii) the household members of those individuals, including children; and

(iii) households with nontraditional family structures, including a household in which a grandparent is the primary caretaker of a grandchild of the grandparent.

(3) STATE AGENCY COOPERATION.—Each State agency selected under paragraph (1) shall provide information to the Secretary necessary to conduct the evaluation under such paragraph.

(4) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report describing the findings from the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1).

(n) LONGITUDINAL DATA FOR RESEARCH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (3) through (5), a State agency may, on approval by the Secretary, establish a longitudinal database that contains information about households and members of households that receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the State.

(2) PURPOSE.—Each longitudinal database established under paragraph (1) shall be used solely to conduct research on participation in and the operation of the supplemental nutrition assistance program, including duration of participation in the program.

(3) REQUIREMENTS FOR DATABASES.—Prior to the approval of State agencies to establish longitudinal databases under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) identify features that shall be standard across States such as database format to facilitate use of longitudinal databases established under paragraph (1) for research purposes;

(B) identify features of longitudinal databases established under paragraph (1) that may vary across States;

(C) identify a procedure for States operating longitudinal databases under paragraph (1) to use a unique identifier to provide relevant information on household members who receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program for the purpose of comparing participation data in multiple participating States over time while protecting participant privacy;

(D) establish the manner in which data security and privacy protections, as required by Federal law and consistent with other appropriate practices, shall be implemented and maintained;

(E) provide direction to State agencies on the responsibilities of and funding arrangements for State agencies and any State contractors (including entities providing technical assistance) relating to the establishment and operation of a longitudinal database;

(F) provide a description of the documentation that States shall submit to the Secretary prior to allowing researchers access to a longitudinal database;

(G) consult with other Federal research agencies, including the Bureau of the Census;

(H) consult with States that have already established databases used for purposes similar to the purposes outlined in this subsection; and

(I) identify any other requirements determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(4) INCLUDED DATA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), each longitudinal database established under paragraph (1)—

(i) shall include monthly information about households and members of households that receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the participating State taken from existing information collected by the State agency including, if available,—

(I) demographic characteristics;

(II) income and financial resources (as described in section 5(g));

(III) employment status;

(IV) household circumstances, such as deductible expenses; and

(V) the amount of the monthly allotment received under the supplemental nutrition assistance program; and

(ii) may include information from other State data sources such as—

- (I) earnings and employment data from the State department of labor;
- (II) health insurance program data; or
- (III) data from participation in other programs administered by the State.

(B) DATA PROTECTION.—Any State that establishes a longitudinal database under paragraph (1) shall, in accordance with all applicable Federal and State privacy standards and requirements—

- (i) protect the privacy of information about each member of each household that receives benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program in such State by ensuring that no personally identifiable information (including social security number, home address, or contact information) is included in the longitudinal database; and
- (ii) make the data under this paragraph available to researchers and the Secretary.

(5) APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall approve the establishment of longitudinal databases under paragraph (1) in States that—

- (A) meet the requirements for databases under paragraph (3) and (4)(B);
- (B) reflect a range of participant numbers, demographics, operational structures, and geographic regions; and
- (C) have the capacity to provide on a periodic and ongoing basis household and participant data derived from the eligibility system and other data sources of the State.

(6) GRANTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may provide grants to States that have been approved by the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (5) out of funds made available under paragraph (9).

(B) METHOD OF AWARDING GRANTS.—Grants awarded under this paragraph shall be made in such amounts and under such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the purposes of this subsection.

(7) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years after the effective date of this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report on the feasibility of expanding implementation of longitudinal databases to every State.

(B) CONTENTS.—The report required under subparagraph (A) shall describe—

- (i) the cost of expanding implementation of longitudinal databases with consistent data to every State;

(ii) the challenges and benefits of using State longitudinal databases with consistent data; and

(iii) alternatives to expanding implementation of longitudinal databases with consistent data to every State that may achieve similar research outcomes and the advantages and disadvantages of those alternatives.

(8) EFFECT.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent or limit the ability of State agencies to establish or continue operating databases used for purposes similar to the purposes outlined in this subsection.

(9) FUNDING.—Of the funds made available under section 18, the Secretary shall use to carry out this subsection—

(A) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 to remain available through fiscal year 2021; and

(B) \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2022 and each fiscal year thereafter.

AUTHORIZATION FOR APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 18. [7 U.S.C. 2027] (a)(1) To carry out this Act, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2023. Not to exceed one-fourth of 1 per centum of the previous year's appropriation is authorized in each such fiscal year to carry out the provisions of section 17 of this Act, subject to paragraph (3).

(2) No funds authorized to be appropriated under this Act or any other Act of Congress shall be used by any person, firm, corporation, group, or organization at any time, directly or indirectly, to interfere with or impede the implementation of any provision of this Act or any rule, regulation, or project thereunder, except that this limitation shall not apply to the provision of legal and related assistance in connection with any proceeding or action before any State or Federal agency or court. The President shall ensure that this paragraph is complied with by such order or other means as the President deems appropriate.

(3)(A) Of the amounts made available under the second sentence of paragraph (1), not more than \$2,000,000 in any fiscal year may be used by the Secretary to make 2-year competitive grants that will—

(i) enhance interagency cooperation in nutrition education activities; and

(ii) develop cost effective ways to inform people eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits about nutrition, resource management, and community nutrition education programs, such as the expanded food and nutrition education program.

(B) The Secretary shall make awards under this paragraph to one or more State cooperative extension services (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)) who shall administer the grants in coordination with other State or local agencies serving low-income people.