



United States
Department of
Agriculture



SMO

School Meals Operations Study

OMB Clearance Number: 0584-0607

Expiration date: xx/xx/20xx



About the Study

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has Child Nutrition (CN) Programs that help ensure children have access to nutritious foods all year long. FNS requires information about CN Program operations to make evidence-based decisions about program policies and budgets, identify technical assistance needs, and track important program operation information across time.

FNS contracted with Mathematica to conduct the School Meals Operations (SMO) Study. So far, Mathematica has collected four years of SMO data corresponding to school years 2019-2020 through 2022-2023. The fifth year of data collection, corresponding to school year 2023-2024, will begin in fall 2024.

Read on for more information!

Participating in the Study

Section 28 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires State Agencies to cooperate with FNS's annual evaluations of its CN Programs. The 68 State Agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are required to participate in this collection. Data collection activities have been designed to reduce participant burden as much as possible.

The **State Agency Director** will be asked to complete:

A web survey. The fall 2024 survey for State Agency Directors will gather information on CN program operations in SY 2023-2024. The survey will take an estimated 30 minutes to complete.

Administrative data requests. In spring 2025, the study team will request disaggregated FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 administrative data for fiscal year 2024, including information about school and site participation, and children's program participation.



Protecting Privacy

We will group responses with those of other study participants so the data will not identify individuals, schools, sites, outlets, school food authorities, institutions, or sponsors. Some information may be presented by State. Each respondent's personally identifiable information will be kept private to the full extent allowed by law. No individual student data are being collected.

Disseminating the Findings

FNS will consider the most effective ways to disseminate the study's findings to a broad audience and expects to release findings in 2026.

About the SMO Research Team

Mathematica is among the nation's leading research companies. The team has over 50 years of experience in conducting research for government agencies and studying Child Nutrition Programs.

For More Information

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The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting this information to understand how State agencies operated CN Programs in SY 2023-2024. This is a mandatory collection. FNS will use the information to inform its planning, policy, and guidance related to the Child Nutrition Programs. Because the personally identifiable information (PII) requested under this collection will not be used to retrieve survey records or data, requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974 do not apply. Responses will be kept private to the extent provided by law and FNS regulations. 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 0584-0607. The time required to read this brochure is estimated to average 3 minutes (0.05 hours). 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 (0584-0607).