

March 2025

SUPPORTING STATEMENT – PART A for

OMB No.: 0584-0474

USDA NATIONAL HUNGER CLEARINGHOUSE DATABASE FORM

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APPENDIX A1: LEGAL AUTHORITY

APPENDIX A2: USDA NATIONAL HUNGER CLEARINGHOUSE DATABASE FORM FNS-543

A1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

This is a revision of a currently approved information collection. Section 26 of the National School Lunch Act, which was added to the Act by Section 123 of P.L. 102-446 on November 2, 1994 (Legal Authority - Appendix A1), mandates that FNS enter into a contract with a non-governmental organization to establish and maintain a national hunger clearinghouse that provides information about organizations and programs located throughout the United States that assist low-income individuals or communities regarding food assistance and other programs that .

Section 26(d) of this Act was most recently amended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024 (Pub. L. 118-42) on March 9, 2024, to extend funding for the Clearinghouse through fiscal year 2024. FNS recently awarded another five-year contract (one year with four options) to the hunger advocacy organization Hunger Free America on May 17, 2024 to maintain the clearinghouse.

The USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse collects, updates, and make available information and resources to help people access food and nutrition help. The Clearinghouse includes the USDA National Hunger Hotline, (1-866-3 HUNGRY or 1-866-348-6479, and 1-877-8-HAMBRE or 1-877-

842-6273), and a texting service (914-342-7744) which refers people in need anywhere in the U.S. to food pantries, soup kitchens, government programs and other grassroots organizations.

FNS began data collection activities for the National Hunger Clearinghouse in May 1996. The USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse Database Form (FNS-543, Appendix A2) is filled out by organizations and local government programs that assist low-income individuals or communities to find immediate food help or apply for nutrition assistance. The organizations submit data annually about the type of services they provide and their respective target markets. The information submitted via form FNS-543 is maintained in the USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse Database. The public can access the database via a public-facing website (<https://findfood.hungerfreeamerica.org/>) to find food assistance in their area. Information is collected and maintained throughout the year by the USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse contractor, which is currently Hunger Free America.

A2. Purpose and Use of the Information.

Indicate how, by whom, and agency for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate how the has actually used the information received from the current collection.

The information collected voluntarily on the FNS-543 provides the public with information on where to find nutrition assistance. Using the FNS-543 form, organizations will submit this form to provide or update important information such as operation hours, phone numbers, contact names, target population, types of services provided to the community, etc. The information is submitted to the National Hunger Clearinghouse almost exclusively through an electronic online form. The

information is used by individuals to find food help in their area, which can include FNS nutrition programs.

A3. Use of information technology and burden reduction.

Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

In compliance with the E-Government Act of 2002, FNS has reviewed this information collection in an effort to make electronic collection available to respondents. The USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse uses computer and telecommunications technologies, when feasible, to connect to the targeted audience. The information is available free of charge through a toll-free telephone line (1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8HAMBRE), texting service (919-342-7744), and via the internet at <https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/about/our-work/usda-national-hunger-hotline>.

Organizations may electronically submit their information via email or mail to the HFA contractor to be included in the Clearinghouse database located at <https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/about/our-work/usda-national-hunger-hotline>. Based on information provided by the contractor, FNS estimates that approximately 100% of our respondents in 2024 submitted data for the FNS-543 electronically.

Burden Reduction Efforts

The modified Form FNS-543 contains 14 less questions than the previous form. The form also contains less words in its summary paragraph explaining the form's purpose. The new form is also a fillable .pdf form, whereas the previous form was not. It required organizations to print out the form and fill it out by hand.

A4. Efforts to identify duplication.

Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.

The data requirements for this data collection have been carefully reviewed to determine whether the needed information is already available. Although there are similar data collections, those do not meet the needs of this congressionally-mandated clearinghouse. FNS is mandated to enter into a contract with a non-governmental organization to establish and maintain a clearinghouse. The FNS managed data collection is necessary to meet our needs.

A5. Impacts on small businesses or other small entities.

If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The burden for this information collection is minimal and participation is voluntary.

Information being requested or required has been held to the minimum required for the intended use.

The sizes of the organizations vary, ranging from large national groups to small volunteer-run

grassroots organizations. FNS estimates out of 600 respondents (using FNS-543) approximately 50 percent are considered small business or entities.

The FNS-543 is easily read online at https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/about/our_work/usda-national-hunger-hotline. The information is readily available to the respondents and they can start and stop at their leisure when visiting the website.

A6. Consequences of collecting the information less frequently.

Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted, or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

This is an ongoing data collection. If this data is not collected or is collected less frequently, FNS would not be in compliance with the congressional mandate or have the ability to aid low-income individuals in finding food help. The database provides valuable information to groups that assist low-income individuals or communities regarding nutrition assistance programs or other assistance like shelter. The Clearinghouse database is the only readily available source of current information on local programs, surplus and emergency food distribution networks, and USDA food programs and policies.

In order to maintain the database, information like program names, addresses, email contact information, etc. must be collected from organizations contained in the database.

A7. Special circumstances relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5.

Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner

consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

Collection of Race/Ethnicity Data

The collection of information does not collect race and ethnicity data.

A8. Comments to the Federal Register Notice and efforts for consultation.

If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.

A Federal Register Notice announcing the 60-day notice was published on November 7, 2024 (Citation-89 FR88230). In response to this notice, FNS didn't receive any comments.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The External and Governmental Affairs Division coordinated with Hunger Free America to develop the form as they understand what kinds of information the clearinghouse needs since they use it to help people find food help when they call or text the National Hunger Hotline.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of

information activity is the same as in prior years. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

The External and Governmental Affairs Division distributed the public notice to partner organizations within their distribution list requesting comment and received no response directly or through the public comment process. Specifically, three partner organizations were directly contacted for comments, please see listed below:

- National CACFP Sponsors Association
alexia@cacfp.org
- National Council on Aging
Brandy.Bauer@ncoa.org
- Maryland Hunger Solutions
lnjones@mdhungersolutions.org

However, no responses were received from any of the three partners.

A9. Explain any decisions to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts will be provided to respondents.

A10. Assurances of confidentiality provided to respondents.

Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Agency complies with the Privacy Act of 1974. There is no PII in this information collection request. It has been reviewed and cleared by FNS Privacy Officer, Deea Coleman, on 3/3/2025.

A11. Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection does not involve questions of a sensitive nature. There is no PII in this information collection request. It has been reviewed and cleared by FNS Privacy Officer, Deea Coleman, on 3/3/2025.

A12. Estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

A. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than

one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.

The table below shows the yearly estimated burden for the 600 respondents included in this data collection for FNS-543 displayed for the affected public (400 food banks and 200 other not-for-profit organizations). The overall burden for this collection is 40 burden hours and 600 responses. There is no recordkeeping burden imposed on the respondents in this data collection.

The calculation of the burden for FNS-543 is described below:

FNS-543. An average of four hundred (400) food banks and two hundred (200) not-for-profit organizations submit 1 form annually for a total of 600 annual responses. The annual reporting burden for the FNS-543 is 4 minutes (0.0667 hours). (600 organizations x 1 annual report= 600 total annual responses x 4 minutes (0.0667 hours) per response) = 40.02 burden hours.

BUSINESS REPORTING BURDEN FOR FNS-543

Estimated Number of Respondents: 600

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1

Estimated Total Annual Responses: 600

Estimated Time per Response: 4 minutes (0.0667 hours)

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 40.02 hours

TABLE. BUSINESS ESTIMATED ANNUAL REPORTING HOUR BURDEN

FNS-543 (Business Agency Reporting Burden)

Affected public	Respondent Type	Estimated # Respondent	Responses annually per Respondent	Total Annual Responses	Estimated Avg. # of Hours Per Response	Estimated Total Hours
Organizations	Food Banks	400	1	400	0.0667	26.86
	Not For Profit	200	1	200	0.0667	13.34
	Total Reporting Burden	600		600		40.02

B. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

The estimated total cost to respondents for the entire collection is \$1,382.30. Community and social service specialists at food banks and not-for-profit organizations are most likely to complete the FNS-543. They have a mean hourly wage of \$25.97 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211099.htm>), thus the annual respondent cost for this affected public is estimated at \$1,039.32. An additional 33% of the estimated base annual respondent cost must be added to represent fully loaded wages, equaling \$342.98. Thus the total annual respondent cost is \$1,382.30.

A13. Estimates of other total annual cost burden.

Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-

up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operational/maintenance cost associated with this information collection.

A14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The total estimated cost to the Federal Government for this information collection is \$164,180.91.

The annual hours worked on preparing this data collection and the hours worked to monitor the clearinghouse is approximately 30% of an employee's time. For the purpose of this annualized cost estimate, the Program Analyst at a GS-13 Step 7 for the Washington, D.C. locality area using the Federal GS Pay Scale published in 2024

(<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2024/general-schedule/>) has an annual adjusted pay of \$141,557. An additional 33% of the annual adjusted pay must be added to represent fully loaded wages, equaling \$46,713.81. The contract has an annual cost of \$250,000, which an estimated 30% goes to maintaining the National Hunger Clearinghouse. The calculations for the estimated cost are $(\$141,557 * 30\%) + (\$250,000 * 30\%) + \$46,713.81 = \$164,180.91$.

A15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments.

Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

This is a revision as a result of program changes, with slight changes to the form questions, for a currently approved data collection. FNS is requesting 40.02 burden hours and 600 total annual responses for this collection. The old burden amount was 49.98 hours and 600 total annual responses. The reporting hours in this submission will decrease by 9.96 hours. The burden hours have been decreased because the number of questions in the new form have been decreased from 28 to 12.

A16. Plans for tabulation, and publication and project time schedule.

For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

This collection does not employ statistical methods and there are no plans to publish the results of this collection for statistical analyses.

A17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date.

If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all instruments.

A18. Exceptions to the certification statement identified in Item 19.

Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.