

2025 National Household Food Acquisition Survey (FoodAPS) Pilot Test
Submitted Under Generic Clearance

Request: 1The Census Bureau plans to conduct the 2025 National Household Food Acquisition Survey (FoodAPS) Pilot Test in the Spring of 2025. We will be administering an online voluntary survey that captures unique and comprehensive data about household food purchases and acquisitions, along with factors that influence household food choice.

Purpose: The purpose of the 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test is to examine and gain knowledge about all areas of the survey life cycle for this study, with the goal of fielding a full scale, nationally representative FoodAPS survey starting in CY2027. Additionally, the 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test will test the feasibility of using model-based estimates to identify populations of interests. Previous iterations used a mailing-based screener. Another purpose is to determine whether administering the 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test via self-response only can achieve the desired response rate. Previous versions of the FoodAPS used field representatives to solicit respondent participation and collect data.

Population of Interest: The target populations for the 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) recipients; and low-income households. Respondent materials and survey instruments for the 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test will be available in English and Spanish.

Timeline: The internet instrument will be available to collect responses for a little over 12 weeks starting from March 3, 2025, through the end of the survey period, scheduled as May 30, 2025.

Experimental Design: The 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test contains three experiments: an experiment to determine the ideal reporting period length; an experiment to determine when an incentive should be offered and the incentive amount; and an experiment to determine whether an auto-dialer pre-notice increases response rates.

For a summary of all 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test experiments, see Table 1 below.

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Table 1. 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Test Experiments

Experiment	Control Group	Experimental Group	Details
Different Reporting Period Lengths	2/3 of the sample	1/3 of the sample	The control group will report for 7 days; the experimental group for 4 days.
Food Log Incentives	2/3 of the sample	1/3 of the sample	The control group will receive a \$5 promised incentive daily after completing the food log. The experimental group will receive a \$5 promised incentive daily for days 1-3; then receive a \$10 promised incentive daily for days 4-7 (conditional on completing days 1-3).
Auto-dialer Prenotice	½ the sample	½ the sample	The control group will not receive the auto-dialer prenotice call; the experimental group will receive the auto-dialer prenotice call.

Sample: The 2025 FoodAPS Pilot frame will be built from the Master Address File (MAF), which is the Census Bureau’s official inventory of known housing units. The frame will be built from the MAF extracts for the following eight states: Arizona, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and West Virginia. These states were selected to represent those with different characteristics, including urban and rural. States were also selected with a strong leaning towards states where the Census Bureau has approved agreements with state SNAP and/or WIC agencies with special approval to use the state administrative record data to validate the FoodAPS Pilot’s stratum flag predictive model and production survey data responses.

All households on the frame will be assigned to one of four strata:

1. Households participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
2. Households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and not WIC

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3. Households participating in neither SNAP nor WIC, with income less than or equal to 130 percent of the federal poverty guideline (FPL)
4. Households participating in neither SNAP nor WIC, with income greater than 130 percent of the FPL

An indicator of poverty status based on the most recent block group five-year data from the American Community Survey (ACS) will also be added to the frame to be used as a sorting variable in sampling. Households on the FoodAPS Pilot frame will be sorted by stratum, state, county, poverty status, tract, block and MAF identification (MAFID) prior to sample selection. Then, a systematic selection of households will be done within each stratum. Since WIC participation is rare, this subpopulation will be oversampled. The total sample size of 5,900 will be allocated to the four strata to minimize the expected variance of the WIC participation estimate.

Recruitment: The first of a maximum of four mailings will go out on February 27, 2025, to all sampled addresses. The first mailing will be in a windowed envelope that includes a \$5 cash “token of appreciation” prepaid incentive, an FAQ flyer, and a letter with a link to the survey and a QR code that can be scanned to take the respondent to the survey. The second mailing (03/06/2025) will also contain an FAQ flyer, and a reminder letter that will contain a link to the survey and a QR code that can be scanned to take the respondent to the survey. The third mailing (03/25/2025) will contain an FAQ flyer and a second reminder letter. Again, the letter will contain a survey link and a QR code. The fourth and final mailing will include an FAQ flyer and a third reminder letter that contains a link to the survey and QR code. This letter will go out on 4/29/2025, and the survey will close out 5/30/2025, approximately 13 weeks after the first mailing. See Attachments 1 - 2 to view all mailout materials. In addition to mailed correspondence, respondents who provide email and cell phone information will receive reminder emails and text messages at various points throughout data collection. There will also be an inbound Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) operation to answer and document respondent questions (02/27/2025 – 05/31/2025). Furthermore, the recruitment strategy will also include a telephone reminder operation (03/28/2025 – 04/04/2025) to call households and remind them to complete the Initial Interview.

Survey Administration: All sampled housing units will be mailed invitations to respond online. The online questionnaire will be administered using the survey platform Qualtrics. Qualtrics will also administer the distribution of all email invitations to other household members and email and text message reminders. Qualtrics has a FedRAMP Moderate approval and a Census Authority to Operate to collect T13 data. Respondents will receive the link to the online survey on all mailing materials.

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Questionnaire: The English online instrument specifications are attached (see Attachments 4-7: Initial Interview specification, Profile and Income Questionnaire specification, Food Log specification, and Debriefing Interview specification).

Informed Consent: The 2025 Food Pilot Test is authorized under Title 7, Section 3171 and 2026 (a) (1) of the United States Code. The Census Bureau, conducting this study on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture under 13 U.S.C. Section 8(b), is required by law to keep information confidential and can use responses for statistical purposes only (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). Responding to the survey is voluntary, and respondents may stop participating at any time, and there are no penalties for nonparticipation. The Initial Interview asks for consent for household members 17 and under to be contacted to participate. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit data.

Incentive: There will be a \$5 cash, prepaid incentive included with the invitation letter. Primary respondents that complete the Initial Interview will earn a \$40 electronic gift card. An additional \$5 electronic gift card can be earned by primary respondents who complete the Profile and Income questionnaire on behalf of other household members. Primary respondents can also earn a \$15 electronic gift card by completing the Debriefing Interview. Non-primary respondents who complete the Profile and Income questionnaire, plus their assigned number of Food Log days can earn up to a \$60 electronic gift card. Table 2 below shows maximum incentive amounts by household size.

Table 2. 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Incentive Matrix, by Household Size

Household Size	4-Day Food Log, \$5/day	7-Day Food Log, \$5/day	7-Day Food Log, \$5/day (1-3), \$10 (4-7)
1	\$75	\$90	\$110
2	\$100	\$130	\$170
3	\$125	\$170	\$230
4	\$150	\$210	\$290
5	\$175	\$250	\$350
6	\$200	\$290	\$410

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7	\$225	\$330	\$470
8	\$250	\$370	\$530
9	\$275	\$410	\$590
10	\$300	\$450	\$650
11	\$325	\$490	\$710
12	\$350	\$530	\$770

Length of Interview: We plan on contacting a sample of 5,900 addresses with up to four mailings each. We estimate that 900 of the mailings will be classified as Undeliverable As Addressed (UAAs). Those addresses will be coded as Out of Scope (OOS), bringing the universe for the study to approximately 5,000. The study is divided into four parts (Initial Interview, Profile and Income Questionnaire, Food Log, and Debriefing Interview). The information in the table below is based on an expected 10 percent household response rate (when accounting for the OOS). The expected 10 percent response rate is based on declining survey response rates, FoodAPS being a high burden survey, and the Pilot Test being the first time the data are collected via self-response only. The total estimated respondent burden for this study is approximately 4,092 hours, assuming the respondents read all paper and electronic materials and answer the survey at the expected response rate.

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Table 3. Total Estimated Burden

	Max Number of Respondents	Max Number of Occurrence	Time for each Occurrence	Estimated Burden
1st Mailing (Initial)	5,000	1	3 minutes	250 hours
2 nd Mailing (1 st Reminder)	5,000	1	3 minutes	250 hours
3 rd Mailing (2 nd Reminder)	4500	1	3 minutes	225 hours
4 th Mailing (3 rd Reminder)	4000	1	3 minutes	200 hours
Initial Interview	1000	1	45 minutes	750 hours
Profile and Income Questionnaire	1000	1	15 minutes	250 hours
7-Day Food Log Group (Control)	333	7	15 minutes	583 hours
4-Day Food Log Group (Experimental)	167	4	15 minutes	167 hours
Debriefing Questionnaire	1000	1	25 minutes	417 hours
Emails	1000	12	3 minutes	600 hours
Text Messages	1000	8	3 minutes	400 hours
Maximum Total Estimate				4,092 hours

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The following documents are included as attachments:

Attachment 1: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Respondent letters

Attachment 2: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Respondent FAQs

Attachment 3: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Respondent email invitations and email and text message reminders

Attachment 4: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Qualtrics Initial Interview specification

Attachment 5: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Qualtrics Profile and Income Questionnaire specification

Attachment 6: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Qualtrics Food Log specification

Attachment 7: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Qualtrics Debriefing Interview specification

Attachment 8: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Respondent Training video scripts

Attachment 9: 2025 FoodAPS Pilot Telephone Questionnaire Assistance scripts

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and the design of this research is listed below:

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