APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This appendix presents the data collection methods used to conduct interviews with state administrators, current sponsors, and former sponsors, and interviews and observations at the sites. In each case, the universe or sample for the interviews is discussed, as are the materials sent to respondents, the training of staff, the conduct of the interview and observations, the data processing, and the results of the interviews. Then, key data cleaning decisions that involved consistency checks across several data sources are discussed. Finally, this appendix discusses the development of the 2001 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsor-Site Database.

A. STATE DATA COLLECTION

1. Interview Universe

The state administrator interviews are a census of administrators at agencies responsible for the SFSP in each state or territory in which the program operated in 2001. Interviews were conducted with administrators in all 50 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. In New York, two agencies administer the SFSP: (1) the state education agency administers the program for school and government sponsors; and (2) the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regional office administers it for nonprofit sponsors, residential camps, and National Youth Sports Programs. A separate interview was completed with each agency, thereby essentially treating the agencies as two separate "states." The FNS regional office administers the program in Michigan and in Virginia, so the FNS staff member with major responsibility for the program in each of those states was interviewed.[1] As Guam did not operate the SFSP in 2001, no one from Guam was interviewed.

2. Preinterview Activities

In spring 2001, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) mailed a letter to the state SFSP contact designated by FNS. A contact person, generally the main person responsible for the SFSP at the agency, was then chosen by each state agency. MPR contacted these people several times in the spring to obtain sample frame information for the sponsor and site samples.

On August 28, 2001, MPR mailed a second letter to all the state contacts. The letter thanked them for their help during the spring and summer months and informed them about the requests to be made of them during the next few months. The letter outlined the additional sponsor and site lists required to build a sample for the former sponsor data collection effort, and to complete the sponsor and site database. It also requested final meal counts, by sponsor, which would become part of the sponsor database. In addition, the letter informed the state administrators that MPR staff would be calling to set up appointments to conduct telephone interviews with them. The letter included a sheet that listed some of the questions that would be covered during the

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[1]The terms "state agency" and "state administrator" are used in this appendix for convenience, but they always include regional-office administered programs.

interview. Its primary purpose was to list questions that might require state administrators to look up information in their records prior to the interview.

Because of the importance of the relationships with state administrators and the qualitative nature of the interviews, MPR decided that professional staff working on the study would conduct all the state administrator interviews. The survey director and project director conducted a 3-hour training session. Four professionals received training in conducting the interviews from the project director and survey director. During the training, each question was reviewed individually, with particular focus on those related to the pilot program to simplify reimbursement rules. In addition, the training covered the qualitative nature of the survey, and staff were encouraged to write margin notes to fully explain answers or comments provided during the interview.

The states were divided among the staff. Whenever possible, states were assigned to staff who had had contact with the states' administrators during previous phases of the study.

3. The Interview

The first interview was conducted on September 26, 2001, and the last one, on October 29. Interviews were conducted with administrators from all 54 state agencies, for a final response rate of 100 percent. The interview with the state administrator in Puerto Rico was conducted in Spanish by a bilingual member of the project team, with help from another MPR staff member experienced in translation. State administrators were encouraged to elaborate on their responses during the interview. The average length of the interview was 60 minutes, with the interviews ranging from 25 minutes to nearly 2 hours (1 hour and 55 minutes).

In most cases, interviews were conducted with one respondent. However, 13 state administrators invited others on their staff to participate. In some states, for example, multiple respondents completed the interview because the administrator was new to the program; in some states in which other departments or other staff handled funding, these staff participated because the administrator did not feel able to answer questions about funding.

The MPR project director encouraged research staff who would later be analyzing the data to listen to one or more state interviews (with the respondent's permission). This participation was designed to help the researchers better understand how the program works at the state level. Six state interviews had more than one MPR staff member on the call.

4. Postinterview Activities

Because of the qualitative nature of the interview and the many open-ended questions asked, the interviewer inputted onto a computer the state administrator's verbatim statements and any additional comments made during the interview. This information was then coded and edited by senior research staff responsible for analyzing the data. Each staff member kept track of his or her own interviews and followed up with state administrators to obtain any information that had not been provided during the interview (for example, because the state administrator had to consult records). Most followup occurred by electronic mail. All questionnaires were reviewed

and edited by the survey director or her assistant prior to data entry. They were then data entered and 100-percent verified. The data were reviewed and cleaned prior to analysis.

Because the interviews were a census of all state SFSP administrators in 2001, it was not necessary to construct weights to represent the universe of state agencies. The responses also have no sampling error. (They may have recall or reporting error.)

MPR merged the interview data and data on the type of state agency, which was obtained from the state Management and Administrative Plans (MAPs). MPR also compared the state interview data with data on the sponsor and site lists received from the states. In the many cases in which small discrepancies between the interview data and the lists were identified, MPR followed up with the state agency. Most of the discrepancies (usually involving only one or two sponsors) were resolved. The sponsor and site list data provided the following variables: (1) number of sponsors; (2) number of sponsors, by type; and (3) number of new sponsors. The list database also was the source of a variable for the number of sites per state. The data reported in the state administrator interview was used for all data missing from the lists. The final state interview data file reflects the best estimates of these quantities.

B. SPONSOR SURVEY

1. Sample Selection

The sample for the sponsor survey was selected from lists of SFSP sponsors from summer 2000 and lists of expected new sponsors that had completed applications or attended training to be SFSP sponsors in 2001. Of the 138 sponsors in the primary sample, 130 were continuing sponsors; the other 8 were new. Three sponsors were selected from the replacement sample to replace 3 eligible sponsors who refused to participate in the survey at the outset, bringing the total primary and replacement sample released to 141.

Eligibility criteria required that the organization serve as a sponsor of the SFSP in the summer of 2001. In recognition of the fact that the lists would include some ineligible programs, calls were made to screen selected programs for eligibility. These calls identified 10 ineligible sponsors—8 year 2000 sponsors that did not participate in 2001, and 2 new sponsors that never opened their SFSP sites. The total eligible sample therefore consisted of 131 sponsors ([138 primary sample members + 3 replacement sample members = 141 total sample] – 10 ineligible members = total eligible sample of 131).

2. Initial Contacts

Sponsors were first contacted by telephone to obtain the site lists to be used in sampling for the site visits. During these initial calls, sponsors were notified about the sponsor survey and site visits and were screened for eligibility. At that time, three sponsors refused to participate in the study.

The SFSP sponsor survey was designed to be a self-administered mail survey with telephone followup. Two versions of the questionnaire were developed: (1) a version that sponsors would complete on their own, and (2) a version that would be administered by a telephone interviewer.

Because different sponsors began and ended their operations at different times, the selected sponsors were sorted by opening date. (For follow-up purposes, careful attention also was given to program closing dates.) Shortly after the opening date for each program, a packet was mailed to each sponsor that contained a letter providing information about the study; the study brochure; the self-administered questionnaire; and a preaddressed, postage-paid envelope. Prior to mailing these materials, survey staff extracted information about each program from the sponsor's application and recorded it on the sponsor questionnaire. Respondents were instructed to review the extracted information; update it, if necessary; and add any missing information.

3. Mail Survey and Telephone Followup

The advance letter asked the sponsors to complete the survey as soon as possible. The preaddressed, postage-paid envelope included in the mailed packet of survey materials made it easy for the sponsors to return the self-administered survey. MPR staff carefully monitored both incoming and outstanding surveys. As new information was received, the survey status for each case was updated in the tracking database.

Sponsors who had not returned a completed survey within a reasonable period were contacted by telephone. Before doing so, however, MPR project staff reviewed the contact sheet for each case to make sure there were no special issues with the sponsor, and to determine whether a site visit with that sponsor had been scheduled soon. If so, followup was delayed until after the site visit. If there were no unusual circumstances surrounding the case, followup proceeded. MPR staff developed a telephone script to determine whether the sponsor had received the survey materials. A sponsor who had received them was asked when he or she would be able to return the completed survey to MPR. This date was recorded on the sponsor's contact sheet. If the survey was not received by that date, MPR staff again called the sponsor. A sponsor who had not received the survey materials was mailed a new survey packet, with later followup, if necessary. Ten sponsors required a second mailing of survey materials.

The mailing of survey materials and follow-up reminder calls proved to be a highly efficient method of collecting data for the sponsor survey. MPR's pretest experience led it to expect only 20 percent of surveys to be completed by mail. However, 94 out of 126 total completed surveys (75 percent) were completed by mail. Possible facilitating factors include the well-received study brochure and efforts by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) staff, state agency staff, and some advocacy groups to make sponsors aware of the study and of its importance.

4. Telephone Survey and Telephone Followup

Three telephone interviewers participated in a 4-hour training session on July 13, 2001. They received background information about the SFSP Implementation Study and were trained in administering the sponsor survey over the telephone. They then received a total of 53 contact

sheets for sponsors who were delinquent in returning their completed surveys, to be used for additional followup.

Professional staff at MPR, including the project director, the survey director, and a survey associate who had worked on previous rounds of sponsor contacts, received the remaining 33 outstanding cases for telephone followup. The sponsors in these cases were large and complex or had some special issue. This intensive followup produced more mail completes than telephone completes, because many sponsors preferred to complete the survey on their own, rather than have it administered to them over the telephone. MPR survey staff notified the telephone center staff whenever completed surveys were mailed back. Telephone center staff, in turn, removed that sponsor's contact sheet from the sample designated for telephone followup.

Telephone center staff received an August cut-off date to complete their work. After that date, telephone center staff returned the few remaining incomplete cases to senior MPR staff for more intensive followup. Most of these cases mailed completed surveys to MPR after additional telephone reminders; only three were completed over the telephone. In all, 32 interviews were completed by telephone—29 by telephone center staff, and 3 by senior survey staff. The telephone interviews took an average of 45 minutes to complete.

All but 2 of the 126 surveys were completed by mail or telephone by September 15. Senior staff required 2 more weeks to obtain the last two self-administered completes, which were surveys of large sponsors; these sponsors had to gather information from multiple sources to complete the survey.

5. Editing, Coding, and Data Entry

A survey associate edited and coded each questionnaire that was returned to MPR. The associate called the sponsors, if necessary, to obtain missing data or to clarify responses. Because the majority of the completed surveys had been self-administered, 73 cases required call backs. Although time-consuming, this process was successful; all but five respondents were contacted in this way.

The edited and coded surveys were delivered to the data entry department, where numeric data were entered into a specially created data entry program. In addition, open-ended responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and were coded by the research staff who were conducting the analysis. Data files were then produced, and the data were cleaned.

6. Sponsor Survey Results

Overall, the sponsor survey ran smoothly and successfully. The response rate for the self-administered mail survey was much higher than expected. As a result, the telephone center staff's effort was lower than expected. The final results are shown in Table A.1.

Surveys were completed with 126 of the 131 eligible sponsor cases, for a 96-percent response rate. Only five sponsors in the sample refused. Three refused during the initial screening calls, and two "passively" refused by failing to complete the survey even after repeated

TABLE A.1

RESULTS OF THE SPONSOR SURVEY

Final Status	Primary Sample	Replacement Sample	Total Sample
Completed—Self-Administered	92	2	94
Completed—Telephone	31[a]	1	32
Final Refusal	5		5
Ineligible—Former Sponsor	8		8
Ineligible—New Sponsor that Did Not Open Sites	2		2
Final Status Total	**138**	**3**	**141**
Total Records			**141**

[a]One interview completed in person during a site visit was counted as a completed telephone interview.

contact attempts. The cooperation level among the sponsors was very high, contributing significantly to the high response rate. Follow-up efforts by survey staff also were important in bringing the survey to a successful conclusion.

C. SITE DATA COLLECTION

This section discusses the methods used to conduct the site-level data collection effort. It covers the hiring and training of interviewers, the selection of sites for visits, preparations for the site visits, the procedures used by the interviewers on site, the processing and coding of the documents, and the results of the site visits.

1. Hiring and Training of Interviewers

MPR hired 15 experienced field interviewers to conduct the site visits. The interviewers came from geographically dispersed parts of the country (four from the East Coast, four from the Midwest, five from the South, and two from the West Coast). Many had previous experience in food and nutrition data collection. MPR also subcontracted with Garcia Research Associates, a California-based research firm, to conduct all the California site visits. All five Garcia

interviewers were bilingual in Spanish, as were two of MPR's interviewers, and these interviewers were prepared to conduct interviews in Spanish, if necessary.

Three-day interviewer training was conducted in Philadelphia on May 31, June 1, and June 2, 2001. Laura Kalb, the survey director, Ronette Briefel, one of the principal investigators, Anne Gordon, the project director and principal investigator, and Barbara Schiff, the training coordinator, conducted the training. During the first day, the interviewers learned about the research questions and design of the study, reviewed general interviewing techniques and recording conventions, and reviewed the site supervisor questionnaire and site observation forms in detail. The first day also covered the importance of establishing rapport and gaining cooperation.

The second and third days focused on the meal and plate waste observations. The second day began with a discussion of administrative and travel issues, which was followed by a general discussion of SFSP meal observations and plate waste observations. Interviewers were taught the procedures for these observations, including procedures for describing foods in detail and for visually and manually estimating food quantities. The interviewers (1) were taught to read food labels; (2) learned to observe and record the details about the food, such as the brand name, form, and preparation method; (3) practiced visually estimating portion sizes of foods served; (4) practiced measuring and recording the portion sizes of foods left on the plate (plate waste); and (5) learned how to randomly sample meals and plate wastes. On the third day of training, the interviewers had additional practice in meal observations. They also discussed and practiced plate waste observations. During this training session, each interviewer received direct feedback.

All attendees received a written training manual that covered the information presented during the training. They also received a bag containing measurement and visual aids to be used in the field to facilitate and standardize the meal and plate waste observations. These aids included measuring cups and spoons, a ruler, paper towels, bottled water, laminated guides listing common abbreviations and probes to use in describing common foods, and visual aids to help with portion measurement. In addition, each interviewer was given a photo identification badge showing the study logo, a brochure about the study, and a letter from USDA about the study, which they could show to program staff. All interviewers were given a toll-free help-line number at MPR for use if they encountered problems.

2. Selecting Sites

Because the goal was to produce a dataset linking the sites to their sponsors, the first step in selecting sites was to select a national probability sample of sponsors. One or more sites was randomly selected from each selected sponsor. At least one of each sampled sponsor's sites was selected for a visit. For larger sponsors, as many as four sites were selected. Samples of "replacement" sites also were created, in which as many as two "replacement" sites were matched to each "primary" site. A replacement site could therefore substitute for a primary site that refused to allow a site visit, or that closed before a visit could be scheduled.

To be eligible for the study, an eligible sponsor had to operate the site. Eligible sponsors were those approved for the 2001 Summer Food Program in the 48 contiguous states and the

District of Columbia that operated at least 1 site for at least 1 week between June 9, 2001, and August 31, 2001. Because 9 of the original 138 sponsors sampled were found to be ineligible for the survey before the site sample was selected, 9 sites were excluded from the 178 initially allocated to the sponsor sample. Thus, 169 sites were released for interviews. In addition, 3 replacement sponsors (and 3 corresponding sites) were added to the samples due to early sponsor refusals, yielding a total of 172 sites released.

Four sites were ineligible. (In one case, the sponsor also was ineligible; in the other cases, the sponsor was eligible but the site never opened.) These sites represented a proportion of the population that was ineligible for the study, so they were not replaced. Two eligible sites that could not be visited were replaced. However, each of the initial replacements was found to be ineligible or unavailable for interview and was subsequently replaced with a second replacement. Thus, 176 sites (172 sites plus 2 sets of replacements) were released for interview; 5 of these sites (4 sites plus 1 replacement) were ineligible.

The data collection plan was to observe the lunch meal at each site, and to observe one other meal at sites that served additional meals. Some sites served all three meals, so random selection was used to choose between breakfast and supper. Some sites also provided snacks. If interviewers were aware that sites served snacks, they recorded that snacks were provided, but they did not observe meals served or plate wastes during snacks.

One goal of the data collection plan was to capture the variety of foods provided to children. Interviewers were instructed to observe 10 plates at sites that permitted children to select from a variety of food items (which typically occurred when food was served in a cafeteria setting).[2] They also were instructed to observe 10 plates in schools that used "offer versus serve (OVS)," an option carried over from the National School Lunch Program, which permits children to refuse some of the required meal components. If children were not offered choices but, rather, received a "standardized" or unitized meal, interviewers were asked to observe five plates.

To ensure that the visits represented the range of program operations at a site, the day of the week for the site observation was selected at random from the days that the site was open. The selected day of the week served as a target date for scheduling the interviewers. Table A.2 compares the distribution of the days scheduled for visits with the actual days of the visits.

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[2]The observed food and portion sizes for the randomly selected sample of 5 to 10 children are referred to as "plates" for short. However, the foods often were served in a bag, in a box, or on a tray.

TABLE A.2

PREFERRED AND ACTUAL SITE VISIT DAYS

Preferred Day of Visit	Preferred Visits Scheduled		Actual Visits	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Monday	31	19.0	22	16.7
Tuesday	34	21.0	41	25.3
Wednesday	28	17.3	32	19.8
Thursday	40	24.7	40	24.7
Friday	28	17.3	21	12.9
Saturday	1	0.6	1	0.6
Sunday	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	**162**	**100.0**	**162**	**100.0**

To capture variations in site operations among the early, middle, and late stages of operation, visits were scheduled on the basis of the sites' actual dates of operation such that interviewers conducted one-third of the visits during the first days of the operation, one-third during the middle, and one-third near the end. The actual visits came close to achieving this result, as shown in Table A.3.

TABLE A.3

STAGE OF SITE OPERATIONS WHEN VISIT OCCURRED

Stage of Operations	Number of Sites	Percentage of Sites
Early	55	34.0
Middle	57	35.2
Late	50	30.8
Total Visits	**162**	**100.0**

3. Pre-Visit Activities

After the site sample was selected, MPR staff created a spreadsheet that included the site ID; the site's name; the meal service to be observed; the preferred day of the week for the visit; the dates of operation; and the estimated attendance, by meal. This information became the basis for the interviewer assignment tracking spreadsheet. To determine the date of the visit and the interviewer or interviewers to assign, the MPR field director reviewed the sampled sites according to the following criteria (in order of importance):

1. Dates of operation, particularly closing dates

2. Geographic proximity of a site to other sampled sites

3. Geographic proximity of sites to interviewers

4. Size of the site (to determine whether one or two interviewers were necessary)

Scheduling occurred on an ongoing basis throughout the summer. After a tentative interviewer assignment had been made, field supervisors telephoned interviewers to confirm their availability and willingness to travel to the assigned site on the preferred date. After interviewers accepted the assignment, they were asked to make their travel plans. Whenever possible, MPR gave interviewers 7 to 14 days' notice, so that it could economize on airfare. The first sites were visited on June 11, 2001; the last site was visited on August 16, 2001.

Concurrent with the assignment of sites to interviewers, MPR staff telephoned the sponsoring organizations to inform them that one of their sites would be visited at some point during the next 2 weeks. These calls were used to:

1. Confirm that the site had opened and would be open during the scheduled visit time

2. Confirm that the site served the meals selected for observation, and confirm the hours of meal service

3. More accurately estimate the number of participants, to determine whether more than one interviewer was necessary

4. Determine how food usually was distributed to children, to determine whether more than one interviewer was necessary

5. Determine whether any special activities were scheduled on the proposed day of the visit, such as off-site field trips

6. Confirm the site's address and the contact person's name

During calls to sponsors that ran multiple sites, MPR staff asked about several sites, so that the sponsors would not know which site had been selected. The sponsors also usually did not know which day had been selected. Calls to the sponsors were made up until the day before the

visit. Sponsors who could not be reached by the third day before the scheduled visit were faxed a brief letter informing them that a site would be visited during the next few days. The letter asked that they call MPR to confirm the status of the site. MPR staff faxed letters to 13 sponsors, in some cases the day before the visit, and subsequently spoke with staff in all 13 offices before sending interviewers to the selected sites.

MPR staff used information obtained during the telephone calls to create "site information sheets." A site information sheet, which was given to the interviewer(s) assigned to visit that site, listed the site's address, contact person's name, meal(s) to be observed, meal service hours, sponsor's name and telephone number, and number of plates to observe (5 or 10 meals). The site information sheets also contained a comments section, for notes about information obtained during the telephone call to the sponsor's contact.

Interviewers were informed whether MPR had confirmed the information on the site information sheet. In addition, interviewers received directions to the sites, obtained from on-line sources.

4. On-Site Procedures

a. Arrival

Interviewers were instructed to arrive at the site 1 to 1.5 hours before the scheduled start of lunch. If breakfast was to be observed, interviewers were asked to arrive about 30 minutes before the start of breakfast. Interviewers at sites that only served lunch spent an average of 4 to 5 hours on site. Interviewers observing two meals were on site for an average of 7 to 8 hours.

On arrival, interviewers asked to speak with the site supervisor, to explain the purpose of the visit, and to inform them about their plans for the day. They presented the SFSP Implementation Study brochure to site personnel and, if necessary, showed the supervisor the letter from USDA. MPR usually did not contact a site before the visit. Sites that were the only ones run by their sponsor knew that a visit was to take place. However, they were not told the specific date of the visit, unless necessary (for example, staff of a camp site on an island had to inform the interviewer about the boat schedule). At a few sites (nine sites, or 5.6 percent of visits), a representative of the sponsor came to the site during the visit to observe data collection and to offer assistance. Although the interviewers had no trouble obtaining access to sites, they sometimes had difficulty convincing site staff that they were not state or USDA monitors, despite their training on how to introduce themselves.

Interviewers then located the kitchen (or food preparation area) to determine how meals were distributed to children. They also observed the general surroundings and any other indoor and outdoor site activities throughout the visit.

b. Site Observations

Interviewers completed several site observation forms during the course of the visit. One module collected general information about the site setting and operations, including information on the site's location and other activities at the site; interviewers were instructed to add detailed comments to the form or in an attachment to the form containing additional comments. Interviewers completed a separate participation module for each meal observed; while the children came in for their meal, they counted the children and observed their characteristics. The module asked primarily for quantitative information (numbers or percentages), so interviewers were instructed to obtain the most accurate numbers possible by estimating from observation, consulting staff, or referring to sign-in sheets. Interviewers did not ask children any questions. For the module on meal service, interviewers observed and recorded how, when, and where the children were served meals; for example, this form included observations on whether seconds were served and on whether meal components were carried off site. Only one of these forms was completed per visit. For all the observations, interviewers remained in an unobtrusive spot in the dining area, where they were able to see the children and food handlers without interfering with the meal service.

c. Site Supervisor Interview

The site supervisor questionnaire was administered in person with the site supervisor or other knowledgeable site staff. Interviewers were encouraged to speak with the most knowledgeable people available during the visit; they were not limited to one respondent only. In about one in five visits (18.5 percent), the site supervisor survey questions were asked of multiple respondents. Interviewers conducted all but two of the site supervisor interviews during the visit. In the two other cases, the interviewer conducted the interview with the site supervisor by telephone, on another day.

The site supervisor interview could be conducted at any time at the site supervisor's convenience, except while meals were being served. If the interviewer was on site to observe lunch or lunch and dinner, the interview usually was conducted just before lunch. If the interviewer was observing breakfast, it usually took place between breakfast and lunch.

The interview took about 30 minutes. The questionnaire began with a series of questions and their answers precoded by MPR staff who obtained the information from the state. During the interview, interviewers confirmed the information and obtained answers to questions with missing information. Site supervisors were then asked questions about the number of meals usually served, activities available at the site, site staffing, relations with the sponsor, training received, characteristics of participants, and whether they perceived a need for more outreach for the site.

d. Meal Observations

Interviewers began the meal observation portion of the visit before the children arrived, by talking with kitchen staff or other knowledgeable staff about the meal to be served. They looked

at the kitchen facility or area where meals were being prepared or assembled. Whenever possible, they examined packages or food labels in order to obtain accurate measurement information. If the meal included mixed dishes, such as lasagna, the interviewers tried to obtain the recipes, to aid in coding for nutritional analysis. They also asked food service personnel to tell them the food items and portion sizes to be served, but they did not touch any food prior to the plate waste segment of the study. They also listed all the foods served at the meal (and described the foods in detail) and recorded (from labels) or estimated portion sizes. Based on the number of choices available and on whether OVS was used, they determined whether they should observe 5 or 10 plates. They were instructed to make this decision at every site, regardless of the information contained on the site information sheet.

After the interviewers determined the number of plates to observe, they asked the staff for an estimate of the number of children participating. They also asked the staff how the children received their meals. They could then calculate the sampling interval for selecting plates for observation. If two interviewers were on site, one usually identified the child/plate to observe and continued to do the sampling while the second observed and recorded the food served to or selected by the child. Interviewers observed the food served by casually strolling behind the selected child and looking at the plate. They had been instructed not to ask children what they were served, touch a child's food, or ask a child to delay eating so they could observe the food. Interviewers relied on visual estimates and the information obtained from food servers or package labels for portion size measurements. Interviewers often recorded additional information or details about the food in the comment section of the form.

e.   Plate Waste Observations

Regardless of the number of meals observed, interviewers were instructed to randomly select 10 plates at the end of each site's meal observation period, to observe the types and amounts of uneaten food (plate waste). Interviewers generally stood next to the area where children deposited their plates after eating and randomly selected every nth plate for plate waste observation. After selecting a plate, the interviewers put it aside and continued to count and select the other plates.

To accurately observe plate waste, interviewers at some sites had to ask site staff to change the usual arrangements for discarding food, or to help gather plates. Requests to site personnel to alter their usual routine most often were at locations at which site staff normally cleared plates or portions of meals as the children finished eating. For example, staff sometimes threw away the milk cartons and cleared plates separately. In these cases, staff were asked to leave the milk cartons with the plates. Interviewers often had to ask site staff to help gather plates at sites at which all children left the meal area at the same time. Interviewers who needed assistance informed the staff member which plate to remove for observation.

A plate waste form was filled out for each meal observed (with one exception, discussed below). After the plates had been collected and, in most cases, after the children had left the eating area, the interviewers measured and recorded the types and amounts of plate waste. They listed the foods in the same order on the plate waste form as they did on the meal observation

form. Any foods observed during the plate waste portion that had not been recorded during the meal observation were added to and described on the plate waste form.

The interviewers measured food volume by pouring or scraping the leftover foods into a beaker or measuring cups or spoons. In some cases, they used rulers or two-dimensional visual aids to measure the length, height, and width of food. They also visually estimated the proportion of the original serving of each food that was uneaten (half eaten, only a quarter of the food left, and so on). Combining actual measurements with visual estimates sometimes enabled the interviewers to more accurately determine the original portion size served to children. In these cases, the interviewers would revise the meal observation form to reflect the newly estimated portion size.

Children at many sites placed unwanted food in a "share box," where it could be taken by other children. The interviewers also recorded the uneaten foods placed in the share box that had not been taken by other children by the end of the meal service. Because this food had been served at the meal, the interviewers merely recorded the name of the food item, without a detailed description, and the numbers of each item placed in the box.

5. Processing and Coding of Documents

The interviewers were instructed to send all site materials to MPR once per week, via overnight delivery service. A transmittal form on the front of each site envelope listed the names and numbers of each form in the packet. MPR field coordinators reviewed their interviewers' work for accuracy and completeness. They contacted interviewers by telephone to obtain clarification or more detail, if necessary. In five cases, the field coordinator called the site supervisor directly to obtain information missing from supervisor surveys. MPR tracked the receipt of every document in a receipt control database.

a. Editing and Checking of Documents

Field coordinators received training in quality control specifications and editing procedures for all site materials.[3] Field coordinators checked and edited the site materials they received from the interviewers they supervised. Answers to open-ended questions and interviewers' comments were entered into a database. The field coordinators gave the interviewers feedback about the quality of their work. After the forms (other than the meal-related forms) were edited, they were sent to the data entry department for a second round of quality control editing and for data entry.[4] The site supervisor questionnaire and observation forms were data-entered and 100-percent verified. The data were then cleaned and edited by research staff.

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[3]The training did not cover meal observation, plate waste, share box, or recipe forms.

[4]Appendix E discusses quality review and coding procedures for the meal and plate waste forms.

6. Results of Site Data Collection

a. Overall Response Rates and Completion Status

Of the 176 sites released, 168 were eligible for the study, 5 were ineligible, and 3 did not have their eligibility determined. MPR staff visited 162 sites between June 11, 2001, and August 16, 2001, for a completion rate of 95 percent.[5] No refusals occurred during a site visit. Sponsors refusing to participate were replaced, as were their sites. One sponsor, who had two sites in the sample, agreed to the sponsor interview but refused to allow site visits. That sponsor was not replaced; the sites were coded as refusals. A total of 160 of the 165 eligible primary sites sampled were visited, resulting in a 95-percent response rate (based on the primary sample only). Two replacement sites also were visited. Site supervisor interviews were completed at all sites visited; sites labeled as "partial completes" had less than the desired number of meal observations or plate wastes. Table A.4 shows the final disposition of the sample, by primary sample and by total sample.

b. Use of Multiple Visitors

To monitor quality and to continually improve operations, MPR professional staff visited 10 percent of the sites (17 sites) during the data collection phase. These professionals observed 10 of the 15 interviewers working for MPR and staff from the subcontractor, Garcia Research Associates. Interviewers were given immediate feedback on their work. USDA staff accompanied MPR staff and field interviewers on four site visits. Overall, one-quarter of the sites were visited by multiple interviewers or by interviewers accompanied by MPR professional staff (40 sites). In general, sites were visited by more than 1 interviewer if they were large (serving meals to 200 or more children) or if they permitted children to choose the types of foods they wanted, such as sites operating on college campuses, in large cafeterias.

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[5]Response rate calculations assumed that the eligibility rate for sites with undetermined eligibility status and the eligibility rate for sites with known status were the same.

SITE STATUS SUMMARY

	Primary Sample	Total Sample
Eligibility Determined		
Eligible		
Complete	155	156
Partial complete: some meals not observed	4	5
Partial complete: some meals not served and/or could not observe	1	1
Final site refusal: sponsor refused site visit	2	2
Unavailable for visit before closing	1	1
Unavailable for visit: other reason	2	2
Total	165	168
Ineligible		
Site never opened	4	4
Site open less than 1 week in June, July, and August	0	1
Total	4	5
Total	**169**	**173**
Eligibility Not Determined		
Refusal by Sponsor: Site Eligibility Could Not Be Determined	3	3
Total	3	3
Total	**172**	**176**

c. Meals Observed

MPR instructed the interviewers which mealtimes to observe at each selected site. As noted, the interviewers were told to observe lunch and either breakfast or supper, based on a random selection, at sites that served three meals per day. Table A.5 shows the number of sites where MPR planned to observe each grouping of mealtimes and the actual number of sites where interviewers observed the mealtimes, based on the 162 sites visited.

Selected meals differed from observed meals for several reasons. MPR staff was informed during the telephone calls to the sponsors or after arrival on site that six sites did not serve the meal scheduled for observation. Five of the six sites did not serve breakfast; the sixth did not serve supper. In most cases, the meal was dropped because of low participation.

TABLE A.5

MEALS SELECTED AND MEALS OBSERVED

Meal Selected for Observation	Number of Sites		
	Selected	Observed	Difference
Breakfast Only	0	1	+1
Lunch Only	56	65	+9
Breakfast and Lunch	94	84	-10
Lunch and Supper	12	12	0
Total	**162**	**162**	

At three of the sites that served all three meals, interviewers substituted a different meal for one of the meals scheduled for observation. Supper was substituted for breakfast at two of the sites; breakfast was substituted for supper at the third site. MPR staff added a breakfast observation at a fourth site after learning that the site served more than just lunch.

Interviewers were unable to observe breakfast at four sites or lunch at one site, even though the meal was served on the day of the visit. The interviewers in these cases ran into logistical problems, such as road construction, a change in the time meals were served, or additional travel time to a replacement site after first having attempted to visit the primary site (which caused them to arrive too late to observe breakfast).

d.   Completion Rates for Meal and Plate Waste Observations

Interviewers were instructed to observe foods served for either 5 plates or 10 plates at each meal, depending the variety of food available to participants. They were able to observe all the plates requested at more than 9 out of 10 mealtimes (Table A.6). In the other cases, the interviewers were able to gather information on some plates, but not the full number desired.

Logistical difficulties associated with collecting plate waste prevented interviewers from always collecting all 10 plate wastes at the completion of the meal (Table A.7). The interviewers conducted fewer than 10 plate waste measurements at 19 out of 162 sites, or 12 percent of all sites. The number of plate waste measurements ranged from 3 to 10 across sites. In one case, an interviewer was unable to conduct any plate waste measurement at lunch because the site staff accidentally threw away the 10 plates set aside for plate waste measurements.

TABLE A.6

PERCENTAGE OF MEALS WITH COMPLETE MEAL OBSERVATIONS

Meal	5 Plates Observed		10 Plates Observed	
	Number of Attempts	Actual (Percentage of Attempts)	Number of Attempts	Actual (Percentage of Attempts)
Breakfast	58	54 (93)	27	27 (100)
Lunch	124	124 (100)	37	36 (97)
Supper	9	9 (100)	3	3 (100)
Total	**191**	**187 (98)**	**67**	**66 (99)**

TABLE A.7

PERCENTAGE OF MEALS WITH 10 COMPLETED PLATE WASTE OBSERVATIONS

Meal	10 Plate Wastes Collected	
	Number of Attempts	Actual (Percentage of Attempts)
Breakfast	85	77 (91)
Lunch	161	150 (93)
Supper	12	11 (92)
Total	**258**	**238 (92)**

Table A.8 shows the actual numbers of plates served and "plate wastes" for which data were entered into the FIAS system for nutrient analysis.

D. FORMER SPONSORS

For the purposes of this study, former sponsors are defined as sponsors that participated in the SFSP in 2000 but not in 2001. The survey of former sponsors collected information about sponsors that left the program and about the factors that led them to withdraw.

TABLE A.8

SAMPLE SIZES FOR MEAL AND PLATE WASTE OBSERVATIONS
(Number)

Meal	Plates Entered into FIAS	Plate Wastes Entered into FIAS
Breakfast	556	815
Lunch	989	1,570
Supper	75	119
Total	**1,620**	**2,504**

1.   Sample Selection

The target population for the survey of former sponsors included all sponsors that participated in the SFSP in 2000 (in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia) but not in 2001. In August 2001, MPR requested that all state agencies provide a list of their former sponsors. By October, each one had complied with this request. The sample frame was compiled from the state-provided lists. There were a total of 367 former sponsors in the sample frame. MPR then selected a representative sample from the sponsors in this frame, with the goal of obtaining 100 completed interviews with former sponsors. MPR expected that some sponsors on the list would be ineligible for the survey because of errors in state records (that is, they may not have participated in the SFSP in 2000, or they may have participated in 2001). A sample of 160 former sponsors was selected based on the assumption that 90 percent of the selected former sponsors would be eligible, and that 70 percent of eligible former sponsors would complete the survey.

2.   Initial Contacts

During the second week of October, the selected former sponsors were sent a letter and the study brochure via overnight delivery. The letter informed the former sponsors that they would be contacted by telephone for an interview about their experiences in sponsoring the SFSP, and about their reasons for leaving the program. Within days of receiving the letter, three organizations contacted MPR with the information that they did not fit the eligibility requirements because they had not been sponsors in 2000. During the next several days, approximately six letters were returned to MPR because of incorrect addresses. MPR locators were able to obtain a correct address or telephone number for all six letters.

3. Telephone Survey and Followup

On October 15, 2001, three MPR executive interviewers (interviewers experienced in talking with program staff) and their supervisor participated in a 3-hour training session on administering the interview of former sponsors. All three interviewers had conducted interviews for the sponsor survey and therefore were familiar with the SFSP. A substantial amount of training time was devoted to determining the eligibility status of the program, and to identifying the most knowledgeable respondent. The interviewers were coached on asking additional questions to obtain this information.[6]

Interviewing began on October 16, 2001, and concluded on November 16, 2001, with 131 completed interviews. The average interview length was 20 minutes.

MPR obtained an 89 percent response rate (131 interviews of former sponsors out of 148 eligible). Only one respondent no longer was on the staff of the selected former sponsor. During the interviews, 12 sponsors were deemed ineligible because they had been sponsors in 2001, had not been sponsors in 2000, or no longer were in operation. Most of the former sponsors were cooperative and did not find the interview burdensome; however, there were three refusals. In three cases, the interviewers successfully reached the program (and thus knew that the respondents were eligible) but were unable to reach the most knowledgeable person. The interviewers were unable to complete interviews in 11 cases mainly because no one was knowledgeable enough to answer any of the survey questions.

Two factors may explain the higher-than-expected response rate. It probably helped that the interview was brief. It is also possible that the fall was a better time to attempt this type of interview than was the summer, when the pretest was attempted.

Completed surveys were edited and coded by professional survey staff before being sent to the quality control and data entry departments. In data entry, the numeric data were entered into a specially created program and were 100-percent verified. In addition, all open-ended responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, to be coded by research staff. The data were then cleaned, and a data file was produced. The final results are shown in Table A.9.

E. DATA CLEANING FOR KEY SPONSOR AND SITE VARIABLES

In the process of analyzing the various datasets, additional data cleaning occurred. In particular, consistency between the sponsor interviews and applications and between the sponsor and site interviews was checked (for key variables). This section documents the procedures used

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[6]If the interviewer was informed that the most knowledgeable person had left to take another job, the case was referred to MPR senior project staff, who decided whether to allow the interviewer to interview the person who had left. Only one interview was completed with someone no longer employed by the former sponsor.

TABLE A.9

RESULTS OF SURVEY OF FORMER SPONSORS

Final Status	Total Sample
Complete	
Telephone	130
Telephone—respondent not currently on staff	1
Ineligible	
Sponsor in 2001	4
Not a sponsor in 2000	7
Organization no longer in existence	1
Final Refusal	2
Final Refusal—Unknown Eligibility	1
Unable to Reach Respondent	
Known eligible	3
No knowledgeable person on staff	11
Final Status Total	**160**
Total Completes	**131**

in the data cleaning of the following key variables in the sponsor and site data: (1) sponsor type, (2) open or enrolled status of sites, and (3) type of meal preparation.

Sponsor type is a key variable in this analysis. Although Chapter II focuses on this variable as measured in the Sponsor-Site Database, the variable as measured in the sponsor survey also is used in many analyses. However, respondents to the sponsor interview did not always know the category to which their program belonged. The study adhered to the following rules for cleaning the data from the sponsor survey: (1) sponsors who said their type was not any of the specified options or who gave multiple answers were coded on the basis of data from sponsor application or sponsor lists provided by the states, the organization name, or a review of their hard-copy instrument, as needed; (2) senior staff reviewed each instance in which sponsors' responses differed from their applications (in all but one instance, the application category was determined to be correct); and (3) all Upward Bound programs were classified as residential camps, as that classification is most consistent with FNS policies. Two sponsors for which application forms were missing were found to have been incorrectly classified both in the sponsor and site interviews; they were residential camps but had reported themselves as nonprofit organizations.

The sponsor interview asked sponsors *how many of their sites are open, and how many are enrolled sites* (that is, sites serving only children enrolled in a program). All the sites of sponsors that were camps or National Youth Sports Programs (NYSPs) were classified as camp sites or NYSP sites, respectively, regardless of how the sponsors answered those questions. For other sponsors, the responses to questions about open/enrolled status in the sponsor and site interviews were compared. The data were inconsistent for about 10 percent of sites. In general, the site data were recoded to match the sponsor interview.[7] In a few cases, however, the sponsor data were revised because both the sponsor application and the site interview suggested that the sponsor interview data were incorrect.

Data on *type of meal preparation* (on-site preparation, central kitchen preparation, school food authority vendor, or private vendor) were reported by sponsors and by site supervisors. The instructions on the self-administered sponsor instrument were not specific as to whether sponsors could indicate multiple answers or only one response, but in the telephone interviews, only one response was permitted. The category of "both on-site preparation and central kitchen" was added for the sponsor data, because it was sometimes marked on the self-administered surveys; it should be interpreted as meaning that some of the sponsor's sites prepared meals on site, and that other sites received meals from a central kitchen.[8] Because this response was not permitted in the telephone interviews, these data may understate the proportion of sponsors who used both central kitchens and on-site preparation and may overstate the proportions who use *only* on-site preparation *or* central kitchens.

One edit made to sponsor data on meal preparation was to recode six single-site sponsors who reported using a central kitchen to on-site preparation. In addition, one sponsor who coded both "school food authority vendor" and "private vendor" was recoded as just "school food authority vendor."[9] One large sponsor reported using self-preparation but also had reported elsewhere using central kitchens for a subset of sites; this sponsor was recoded as "both on-site preparation and central kitchen."

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[7]In all cases in which the site data were recoded, the sponsor reported that all its sites were open, but the site supervisor reported that the site was enrolled. We suspect that these sites may have served an enrolled program, such as a summer school, but also were open to the community. However, the misperception of the site supervisors does create some concern about how "open" the sites truly were. It is also possible that a site was a "restricted open" site, which is a new category and thus likely to lead to some confusion.

[8]For the purposes of this study, meals that were delivered from a central kitchen but were warmed on site were considered to have been prepared by a central kitchen. The meals were categorized in this way because, at the site level, only one type of meal preparation could be coded.

[9]In rare instances (with state approval), sponsors may use multiple vendors or even serve vended meals at some sites and prepare meals at other sites. In the few instances of this in the sample, sponsors appear to have reported the most common type of meal preparation method.

After their initial cleaning, the sponsors' responses were compared with the site supervisors' responses; if the two did not match, both instruments and the sponsor applications were reviewed. As with open/enrolled status, about 10 percent of sites provided information that conflicted with the sponsor data. Often, it appeared that the site supervisor accurately reported that the food came from elsewhere but misreported the source; in such cases, the sponsor information seemed likely to be more accurate, particularly when it also was confirmed by the sponsor application. In a few cases, however, the sponsor data were revised; in these cases, the site and application information indicated a different response, or the hard-copy instrument provided conflicting information. At three school-sponsored sites, there was clear evidence that meals were prepared on site by a private vendor; in these cases, the site supervisors reported "on-site preparation," whereas the sponsors reported using a "private vendor." This apparent discrepancy was left as is, because of the way that skip patterns in the instruments follow from these questions.

F. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SFSP 2001 SPONSOR-SITE DATABASE

As part of the SFSP Implementation Study, MPR created a database with information on all SFSP sponsors and their food service sites in 2001. Creating this database required extensive interaction with SFSP state agencies to obtain lists of sponsors and sites with the types of information required for the database, and to resolve discrepancies in the lists received. MPR would like to acknowledge the very high level of cooperation on this endeavor. After the lists were received, MPR staff extensively checked and edited the lists, and then data-entered the information into a standard format.

This discussion begins with a description of procedures for collecting and editing the data for the SFSP 2001 Sponsor-Site Database. The second section describes the database, which is in Access format. Data from the database provided control totals for development of survey weights.

1. Data Collection and Editing Procedures

a. Request for Administrative Data from State Contacts

As noted, on August 28, 2001, MPR mailed a letter to all SFSP state administrators to inform them of the forthcoming request for various lists of administrative data.[10] The list requests were outlined in a one-page form, "2001 Information From States," that asked the state administrators for the date on which they would have final 2001 site information, sponsor information, and meal counts. In addition to the mailing, all 54 state administrators were contacted by telephone in September. Although the main purpose of the calls was to schedule interviews with the state administrators, MPR also followed up on its requests to receive lists by

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[10]In the case of states in which the FNS regional offices run the program, we contacted the appropriate regional office.

November, and to receive final meal counts by December. Most of the state administrators reported that their site and sponsor lists would be available between late September and early November, and that their final meal counts would be available in early December.

MPR requested the following information:

- Final 2001 site list that included site name (linked to a sponsor), address, and telephone number; starting and ending dates of operation; average daily attendance for each meal served; types of meals served; and, if available, information on whether the site was an open, enrolled, or camp site

- Final 2001 sponsor list that included sponsor name, address, and telephone number; starting and ending dates of operation, sponsor type (school, government, nonprofit, NYSP, or residential camp); meals served; and number of sites

- Final 2001 meal counts, by type of meal served, for each sponsor

Later that fall, MPR also asked the state administrators to identify their "new" sponsors, defined as sponsors that participated in the SFSP in fiscal year 2001 but had not participated in fiscal year 2000.

b. Receipt of Lists

MPR received site and sponsor lists from all 54 state agencies during the fall or early winter (Table A.10). All the state agencies also provided final meal counts, with the first received in October 2001, and the last on January 30, 2002. Professional survey staff used a tracking system to track submitted and outstanding lists on an ongoing basis. Any state agencies that did not provide lists by November 1, 2001, received E-mails, with follow-up calls and faxes, as needed. MPR project staff held daily meetings to receive updates of the lists. MPR recognized how much it was asking of the state agency staff, especially staff in agencies that maintained records in a format that made it difficult to send the requested information. MPR communicated its appreciation to the agency staff.

c. Format and Quality of the Lists

Lists were received in many different formats. Some were sent electronically, in Excel, Word, or Access; others were hard-copy versions sent by fax or through the mail. Although some states' site lists were embedded in their sponsor lists, most states maintained separate site and sponsor lists.

After receiving the site lists, MPR staff examined them to determine whether they contained, at minimum, a site name, address, and indication of its sponsor. If this information was missing, MPR called the state agency to obtain it. At the end of November, MPR compiled a report assessing the overall quality of site lists received to date; the assessment was based on a preliminary review of the lists. All but three states' lists had street and town information; two of

the three had information for some of the sites. Eight lists did not include zip code information, and five had zip codes only (no address) for some sites. Nearly half (21 lists) had no telephone numbers, and 5 provided telephone numbers for only some sites.

TABLE A.10

NUMBER OF SPONSOR AND SITE LISTS RECEIVED, BY MONTH

Month	Sponsor Lists	Site Lists
September[a]	34	27
October	11	14
November	8	10
December	1	2
January	0	1

[a]Includes one sponsor list that was received in August.

d. Reconciling Discrepancies in the Lists

To obtain complete, accurate information, MPR staff conducted several checks after receiving the lists. The process began with a count of the number of sponsors on the site list, and a comparison of that number with the number of sponsors on the state's sponsor list. In the case of about 35 states, the 2 numbers did not match because sponsors listed on the site list were not included on the sponsor list, or because sponsors on the sponsor list had no sites on the site list (or both). In addition, for about 25 states, the number of sites on the sponsor list and the actual number of sites obtained from the site list differed.

MPR telephoned or E-mailed the state agency to resolve these discrepancies. When nearly all the data had been provided, MPR used the number of sites on the site list as the final site count to resolve remaining discrepancies. Examples of issues encountered include the following:

- To obtain complete site-level address information for some state agencies' lists, MPR had to search a database constructed from application information and which therefore included sites that never opened during the 2001 season.

- One state agency listed site and sponsor names differently on different lists, thereby making it extremely difficult to link sites with sponsors.

- One state agency indicated that it does not clean out previous years' data from its lists, so the lists would include sites that did not operate in 2001.

In the second check, MPR staff compared the number of sponsors that the state contact person had provided during the state administrator interview with the number of sponsors listed on the 2001 sponsor list. MPR staff called the state contact to resolve any discrepancies between the two numbers. The sponsor lists or state interview data were then adjusted, as needed, so that the number of sponsors from the two sources was the same. Discrepancies may have arisen for a number of reasons. For example:

- Sponsors that had both vended and self-preparation sites were counted twice on one state's sponsor list, but had been reported as one sponsor during the interview.

- One sponsor in another state was listed twice on the lists (once for its rural sites and once for its urban sites), but was reported in the interview as a single sponsor.

- Some state administrators had difficulty categorizing sponsors that participated for a short time and then stopped participating or closed early. Some state administrators included these sponsors on their lists but did not think of them as "current sponsors" during the interview.

- Some lists included sponsors that applied but never opened, were subsequently determined to be ineligible, or were not approved. These sponsors usually were not included in the count reported during the interview but might appear on the lists. Many state administrators reported that their sponsor lists were created early in the summer and did not reflect actual sponsor participation.

- In some cases, the information from multiple lists had to be combined (for example, one list included the type and number of sites, whereas another included address and contact information). Occasionally, two lists differed in the number of sponsors.

The state contacts were very helpful and cooperative in resolving these discrepancies. They informed MPR staff that they benefited from the process, as MPR identified computer errors in their report specifications, and errors in list-keeping practices.

e. Data Entry Specifications

After assessing the quality and completeness of the lists, MPR professional staff established specifications for data entry. Because site lists and sponsor lists were data entered separately, MPR created a "Sponsor Link ID number" that it assigned to each sponsor, with the same number assigned to all the sponsor's sites.

The following information was data entered for all sites:

- State ID number

- Sponsor link ID number

- Site name

- Site address

- Site telephone number

- Dates of operation—start and end dates for the site's program

- Meals served (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)

- Average daily attendance for each meal served

- Type of site—whether an open site, enrolled site, or camp (residential)

The following variables were data entered for all sponsors:

- State ID number

- Sponsor link ID number

- Sponsor name

- Sponsor address

- Sponsor telephone number

- Type of sponsor: defined as government = G, school = S, nonprofit = N, NYSP = Y, residential camp/Upward Bound = R. Multiple types (as many as three) could be entered in this field.

- Number of sites

- Dates of operation

- Meals served—indicators for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack

- Meal count: total meal count, by meal, for all months of operation. If provided, total meals served was entered.

- New sponsor

f. Editing of Lists

Because each state's lists came in a different format, they had to be edited, and the location on the lists for the information discussed in the preceding section had to be marked by hand so that data entry clerks could enter the information into a standardized format. Survey staff assigned sponsor link numbers to each sponsor in each state and then marked the lists to indicate where each variable appeared on the list, to facilitate data entry. If a state's list was missing a variable (such as telephone number), that fact was noted at the top of the list. The following general rules were applied when editing site lists:

- If two addresses were given (P.O. box and street address), the actual address was entered.

- If missing area codes could be determined from other sites or outside information, the area code was added.

- If only one average daily attendance number was given, it was applied only to lunch; the list indicated whether other meals were served but did not include the average daily attendance number missing for those meals.

- Any sites that were not approved or that never opened were excluded from both the sponsor list and the site list.

- Site type (open, enrolled, or camp) was determined from the information on the state agency's list. If it was missing, the type was left blank. For consistency, the following types of sites were coded as follows (if no other information was given):

(Site type listed)	(Coded as)
Migrant =	missing type
NYSP =	enrolled
Nonresidential day camp =	missing type
College/university =	missing type
Upward Bound =	camp

- If the site list showed two snacks, the average daily attendance numbers for the two were added and divided by two for an average daily attendance, so that only one average daily attendance number was entered for snacks.

- If a sponsor's only site had no information on meals, dates of operation, or telephone number (but had the same address as the sponsor), the sponsor's meals served, dates of operation, and telephone number were used.

- If differences in the number of sites could not be reconciled even after multiple discussions with the state administrator, the number of sites entered was based on the site sheets or information provided by the state agency, rather than on the counts given on the sponsor list.

In addition to these guidelines, special circumstances were dealt with on a state-by-state basis.

As with the site lists, the sponsor lists had to be reviewed and edited before data entry. Complete sponsor lists included information about the sponsors (name, address, dates of operation, number of sites, and so on) and meal count information, which usually came from a different office and often was provided on a separate list. The meal count information was

appended to the sponsor lists prior to data entry. During preparation of the sponsor lists for data entry, some sponsors were seen to have missing meal counts. In about 25 states, at least 1 sponsor was not listed on the meal count list, was listed but had a meal count of 0, or had meal counts but was not on the sponsor list.

To resolve these discrepancies, MPR telephoned or E-mailed the state contact to obtain more information. MPR staff were instructed to ask specifically whether the sponsor had operated sites in summer 2001, had served children but never filed a meal claim, or had a meal claim pending. Sponsors that had never opened or that did not serve any children SFSP meals were removed from the sponsor database. More generally, after discussions with ERS, MPR decided that meal count data would be the final determinant of sponsorship. For example, a sponsor with two agreement numbers, separate meal claims, but the same name in both cases was counted as two sponsors. Conversely, if the state agency counted an organization as two sponsors (for example, City of XX Self-prep and City of XX Vended), but the organization filed only one claim, then the number of meals was combined, and the sponsor was counted only once.[11]

In addition to these cases, the following rules were used for editing sponsor lists:

- Most sponsors had a single designation of sponsor type (government, school, nonprofit, NYSP, residential camp). However, some states allowed a single sponsor to be assigned multiple type codes (most often, government and NYSP when the program was run at a public university). After checking with FNS, MPR decided to allow multiple-type listing, with as many as three types per sponsor, but to count the sponsor only once. This situation occurred in only one state and affected only five sponsors.

- If a sponsor had only one site, the state agency did not provide specific information on the sponsor, and MPR had more detailed site-level information, the information from the site list was applied to the sponsor.

- If a sponsor's list did not contain dates of operation, MPR took the earliest site opening date and the latest site closing date from that sponsor's site information and used those dates for the sponsor's dates of operation.

- If a sponsor listed morning and afternoon snacks on its meal counts, the two snacks were added and one number was entered.

- "Seconds" on a sponsor's list were added to the original meal count.

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[11]Out of more than 4,000 sponsors nationwide, 25 had applied to the SFSP program, operated as part of SFSP for the summer, but did not file meal claims for various reasons. These sponsors were included in the database with a special code, but they and their sites are omitted from all tabulations in this report.

- MPR entered a total meal count number, if the state agency provided the number. If it did not, MPR entered the meal counts for the specific meals but did not total them. If the state agency provided the meal counts by month (which often occurred), the meal counts were added to obtain summer totals.

- Year-round schools' meal counts for all months of operation were added to produce a total count.

- A sponsor that had operated under a different organization name and that operated in 2001 as a new entity/organization was considered a "new" sponsor. A sponsor that operated in previous years but not in 2000 and that operated in 2001 was considered "new."

In addition to these guidelines, special situations were dealt with on a state-by-state or sponsor-by-sponsor basis.

g.   Tracking Systems and Data Checks

Due to the size of the lists and the extensive alphabetical character fields (name and address fields), MPR did not verify data entry of the lists. Instead, MPR staff visually spot-checked each state's site and sponsor lists while conducting SAS checks for out-of-range and questionable data. Staff used spot-checking to determine whether any systematic problems were occurring. If a systematic mistake was identified, the list was returned to data entry, and the entire list was reentered. Automatic SAS checks were then run and corrections made, as needed. A tracking system was established to ensure that all site and sponsor lists were spot-checked and corrected, and that SAS checks were reviewed and corrections made, if necessary.

2.   The Linked Sponsor-Site Database

After the data files were checked and cleaned, they were loaded into the Access database. All sponsor and site data are contained in a single linked database. There are a total of 4,397 sponsors in the Access database. Twenty-five sponsors did not file meal claims but did participate in the SFSP. (Their applications were approved, and state staff monitored them in 2001.) These sponsors are included in the Access database, with a flag indicating that they did not file claims. The database lists a total of 35,530 sites (including those from sponsors that did not claim any meals).