
Survey of Food Assistance Information Systems Child Nutrition Program Directors

Responding Agency

[Affix label here]

If necessary, make corrections to the contact information appearing above by crossing out incorrect information and writing in corrections.

Introduction

This is a survey of child nutrition program directors in 26 states. The information from this survey is for a study being conducted by Abt Associates Inc. for the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

The survey collects general information about the computer information systems that maintain data **at the state level** for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The survey is part of a larger study to compile data on information system capabilities of all major USDA programs, including the Food Stamp Program (FSP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

The goal of the study is to determine the availability of program administrative data that could be used by USDA to study program operations and for research examining rates of multiple program participation.

Questions about the content of the survey may be directed to:

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Abt Associates Inc.
55 Wheeler Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

617-520-3061 (*voice*)
617-520-2954 (*fax*)
jesse_valente@abtassoc.com (*email*)

Please return the completed survey in the envelope provided by the date indicated in the cover letter. If you lose the envelope, please return the survey to Mr. Jesse Valente at the above address. You may also fax the completed survey.

Instructions

Most questions on this survey are about the information systems maintained by the offices of State Child Nutrition Directors. The survey contains four main sections corresponding to CN programs: NSLP for public schools, NSLP for private schools, CACFP, and SFSP. In some states, different directors oversee different programs. Please complete the sections of the questionnaire that are within your administration.

In addition to questions about the child nutrition programs, some questions broadly relate to student information maintained by the state Department of Education. Please complete these questions if you are a CN administrator of NSLP for public schools.

We understand that data systems may be in a period of rapid development. For example, some states are in the process of implementing web-based technology. For all questions, you should report the current status of your system.

Please respond to all questions. The responses do not need to be typed. Please feel free to add explanatory notes in the margins, if needed. If you need clarification of the meaning or intent of survey questions, you may phone or email the contact person designated on the cover page. Abt Associates will follow up with you after we receive the instrument to obtain information for any questions that are left blank.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires that all persons who respond to this collection of information be informed that they are not required to respond unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. (See 5 CFR 1320.5(b)(i)). The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average 108 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions and complete the information collection. Comments on the burden or content of this collection of information may be sent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program, Attn: Parke Wilde, 1800 M Street, Room S2092, N.W. Washington, DC 20036.

Question Format

All questions require a single-response, unless **(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)** appears above response categories. The survey contains three types of questions:

Type of Question	Sample Question
Questions with pre-specified response categories. → Answer question by placing an X in the box next to the correct response.	1. During what year did you receive this survey? ☐ 1. 2000 ☒ 2. 2001 ☐ 3. 2002
Questions requiring numeric open-end response. → Answer question by providing response in specified format.	2. During what calendar month did you receive this survey? MONTH (ENTER 1-12): 0 9
Questions requiring open-end response. → Answer question by writing response in space provided.	5. Provide respondent name. Jane Doe

Part I - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Public Schools

A. Statewide Student Information System

A1. Does the state Department of Education maintain a statewide student information system (SIS) containing student records?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No → **GO TO PAGE 3**

A2. Which of the following types of student records are maintained in the statewide student information system?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Student demographics
☐ 2. Student transcripts
☐ 3. Student transfer records
☐ 4. Student immunization records

A3. What type of software runs the student information system?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. DB2
☐ 2. Legacy system
☐ 3. ORACLE
☐ 4. SAS
☐ 5. SYBASE
☐ 6. Other, specify below:

A4. Is the file structure for the student information system best described as a relational database, a flat file, a hierarchical file, or something else?

(CHECK ONE)

- ☐ 1. Relational database
☐ 2. Flat file
☐ 3. Hierarchical file
☐ 4. Other, specify below:

A5. Which of the following data items are maintained in the state's information system for individual students?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Name
☐ 2. Grade level
☐ 3. Address
☐ 4. Phone number
☐ 5. Gender
☐ 6. Date of birth
☐ 7. Social Security number
☐ 8. Race or ethnicity
☐ 9. Primary language
☐ 10. NSLP certification date
☐ 11. NSLP certification type (free versus reduced-price meals)
☐ 12. Parent or guardian name

A6. Is the state student information system maintained through computer networking of school districts or through periodic file submissions by districts to the state?

- ☐ 1. Computer network → **GO TO PAGE 2**
☐ 2. File submission
☐ 3. Combination of both
☐ 4. Other, specify below:

A7. What methods do districts use to submit files?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Web-based file upload
☐ 2. Email file
☐ 3. Mail physical media (Disk/CD-ROM/Tape/)
☐ 4. Other, specify: _____

A8. How often do districts submit files to the state?

- ☐ 1. Monthly
☐ 2. Each quarter/semester
☐ 3. Twice per year
☐ 4. Once per year → in Fall ☐ or Spring ☐
☐ 5. Other, specify: _____

Part I - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Public Schools

A. Statewide Student Information System (continued)

A9. Is the state Department of Education planning upgrades to the statewide student information system in the next two years?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

If Yes, briefly explain planned upgrade or attach a description.

GO TO PAGE 4

Part I - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Public Schools

B. Questions for States with No Statewide Student Information System

B1. Is the state Department of Education planning to implement a statewide student information system in the next five years?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No → **GO TO QUESTION B3**

B2. What is the expected year of implementation?

Year:

B3. Does your department currently have access to student records identifying students certified for free or reduced-price meals?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

If yes, please describe the means of access to student records?

Part I - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Public Schools

C. National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

C1. Does your department have a system in place to accept electronic submission of meal claims from school food authorities at public schools?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No → **GO TO QUESTION C4**

C2. What methods of electronic submission are used by public school SFAs in your state?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Web-based forms
☐ 2. Email reports
☐ 3. Electronic file transfer that is not email
☐ 4. Other, specify below:

C3. Approximately what percent of public school SFAs submit school meal reports electronically?

%

C4. Do any public school districts in your state use direct certification to establish eligibility for school meals?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No → **GO TO PAGE 5**

C5. Indicate the methods of direct certification used by public school districts in your state.

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Letter from FSP to students
☐ 2. Computer match by the SFA/district or its contractor
☐ 3. Computer match by the state FSP
☐ 4. Computer match by the state Dept. of Education or other state agency administering school meals
☐ 5. Other, specify: _____

C6. How many public school districts use the FSP letter method?

C7. How many public school districts do the match themselves or by contractors?

C8. How many public school districts have their data matched by the state FSP?

C9. How many public school districts have their data matched by the state Dept of Education or another state agency?

→ **IF ZERO, GO TO PAGE 5**

C10. Which of the following data items are used when the Dept. of Education (or other state CN agency) matches public school student records to food stamp records for direct certification?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Student first name
☐ 2. Student last name
☐ 3. Student date of birth
☐ 4. Student SSN
☐ 5. Student gender
☐ 6. Student race/ethnicity
☐ 7. Parent/guardian name
☐ 8. Family's food stamp case number
☐ 9. Family's TANF¹ case number
☐ 10. County of residence
☐ 11. Street address
☐ 12. City
☐ 13. Zip
☐ 14. Phone number
☐ 15. Other, specify below:

¹ TANF may be known by another name in your state. Please see the cover letter.

Part I - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Public Schools

D. Point-of-Sale (POS) Systems For School Meal Programs

D1. Are point-of-sale (POS) systems used by any public school SFAs in your state?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No → **GO TO PAGE 6**

D2. How many public school districts in your state use POS systems?

NUMBER DISTRICTS:

Check here if number is an estimate ☐

Check here if statistics not available ☐

D3. How many public schools in your state use POS systems?

NUMBER SCHOOLS:

Check here if number is an estimate ☐

Check here if statistics not available ☐

D4. We are interested in interviewing three public school districts in your state that have implemented a district-wide information system that includes student data on NSLP application, certification, and participation. Which public school districts in your state are likely to have an information system that comprehensively tracks NSLP data?

Please indicate the name of the school system; name, title and address of contact person; and phone number. If you do not know of any public school districts that are likely to have an information system that tracks NSLP data, please provide information for the three largest school systems in your state.

1. School system

Contact name

Contact title

Contact address

Contact phone

2. School system

Contact name

Contact title

Contact address

Contact phone

3. School system

Contact name

Contact title

Contact address

Contact phone

D5. Does your department maintain a list of public school SFAs using POS systems? If yes, please include list when returning survey.

- ☐ 1. Yes, will include list with survey
☐ 2. No, do not have a list

Part II - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Private Schools

E. National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

E1. Does your department have a system in place to accept electronic submission of meal claims from SFAs at private schools?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No → **GO TO QUESTION E4**

E2. What methods of electronic submission are used by private school SFAs in your state?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ 1. Web-based forms

☐ 2. Email reports

☐ 3. Electronic file transfer that is not email

☐ 4. Other, specify below:

E3. Approximately what percent of private school SFAs submit school meal reports electronically?

%

E4. Do **any** private school districts in your state use direct certification to establish eligibility for school meals?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No → **GO TO PAGE 7**

E5. Indicate the methods of direct certification used by private school districts in your state.

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ 1. Letter from FSP to students

☐ 2. Computer match by the SFA/district or its contractor

☐ 3. Computer match by the state food stamp agency

☐ 4. Computer match by the state Dept. of Education

☐ 5. Other, specify below:

E6. How many private school districts use the FSP letter method?

E7. How many private school districts do the match themselves or by contractors?

E8. How many private school districts have their data matched by the state FSP?

E9. How many private school districts have their data matched by the state Dept. of Education?

IF ZERO, GO TO PAGE 7

E10. Which of the following data items are used when the Dept. of Education matches private school student records to food stamp records for direct certification?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ 1. Student first name

☐ 2. Student last name

☐ 3. Student date of birth

☐ 4. Student SSN

☐ 5. Student gender

☐ 6. Student race/ethnicity

☐ 7. Parent/guardian name

☐ 8. Family's food stamp case number

☐ 9. Family's TANF¹ case number

☐ 10. County of residence

☐ 11. Street address

☐ 12. City

☐ 13. Zip

☐ 14. Phone number

☐ 15. Other, specify below:

¹ TANF may be known by another name in your state. Please see the cover letter.

Part II - To Be Completed by CN Directors of NSLP for Private Schools

F. Point-of-Sale (POS) Systems For School Meal Programs

F1. Are point-of-sale (POS) systems used by any private school SFAs in your state?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No → **GO TO PAGE 8**
☐ 3. Don't know → **GO TO PAGE 8**

F2. How many private school districts in your state use POS sale systems?

NUMBER DISTRICTS

Check here if number is an estimate ☐

Check here if statistics not available ☐

F3. How many private schools in your state use POS systems?

NUMBER SCHOOLS

Check here if number is an estimate ☐

Check here if statistics not available ☐

F4. INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

F5. Does your department maintain a list of private school SFAs using POS systems? If yes, please include list when returning survey.

- ☐ 1. Yes, will include list with survey
☐ 2. No, do not have a list

Part III - To Be Completed by CN Directors of SFSP

G. Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

G1. Does your department maintain an electronic database of SFSP sponsors?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

G2. Do you maintain SFSP site information in an electronic database?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

IF NO TO BOTH QUESTIONS G1 AND G2, GO TO QUESTION G5.

G3. On what type of computer does the SFSP database reside?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Single PC
☐ 2. PC network server
☐ 3. Mainframe
☐ 4. UNIX minicomputer
☐ 5. Other, specify below:

G4. What type of software is used to maintain the SFSP database?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. MS-Word
☐ 2. WordPerfect
☐ 3. Ms Excel
☐ 4. Lotus 123
☐ 5. MS Access
☐ 6. FoxPro
☐ 7. Paradox
☐ 8. Rbase
☐ 9. Oracle
☐ 10. DB2
☐ 11. SAS
☐ 12. Custom mainframe software
☐ 13. Other, specify below:

G5. Does your department have a system allowing SFSP sponsors to electronically submit applications or claims reports?

(CHECK ONE)

- ☐ 1. Yes, applications only
☐ 2. Yes, claims reports only
☐ 3. Yes, both applications and claims
☐ 4. No, neither

G6. Is your department planning any system changes or implementation of new technology for administering the SFSP in the next two years?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

If yes, please describe planned changes:

Part IV - To Be Completed by CN Directors of CACFP

H. Child And Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

H1. Does your department maintain an electronic database of CACFP sponsors?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

H2. Do you maintain CACFP site information in an electronic database?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

IF NO TO BOTH QUESTIONS H1 AND H2, GO TO QUESTION H5.

H3. On what type of computer does the CACFP database reside?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. Single PC
☐ 2. PC network server
☐ 3. Mainframe
☐ 4. UNIX minicomputer
☐ 5. Other, specify below:

H4. What type of software is used to maintain the CACFP database?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ 1. MS-Word
☐ 2. WordPerfect
☐ 3. Ms Excel
☐ 4. Lotus 123
☐ 5. MS Access
☐ 6. FoxPro
☐ 7. Paradox
☐ 8. Rbase
☐ 9. Oracle
☐ 10. DB2
☐ 11. SAS
☐ 12. Custom mainframe software
☐ 13. Other, specify below:

H5. Does your department have a system allowing CACFP sponsors to electronically submit applications or claims reports?

(CHECK ONE)

- ☐ 1. Yes, applications only
☐ 2. Yes, claims reports only
☐ 3. Yes, both applications and claims
☐ 4. No, neither

H6. Does your department maintain any information about CACFP participants (individual children or adults) or do you have access to records of CACFP participants?

- ☐ 1. Maintain participant records
☐ 2. Have access to participant records
☐ 3. Neither

H7. Is your department planning any system changes or implementation of new technology for administering the CACFP in the next two years?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

If yes, please describe planned changes:

Part IV - To Be Completed by CN Directors of CACFP

I. Confidentiality and Release of Records

- I1. This question is about use of student records for research purposes. Federal government agencies, such as USDA, often use administrative records to study program operations and patterns of participation in their programs. Are there any special procedural requirements that must be met when government agencies request student records from your state?

- ☐ 1. Yes → SPECIFY BELOW
☐ 2. No → GO TO QUESTION I2

Specification of requirements:

- I2. Did the state Child Nutrition Director answer these questions or designate someone else to answer?

- ☐ 1. Answering himself/herself → Please provide email address for follow-up purposes:

Email: _____

- ☐ 2. Someone else → Please provide your name and contact information for follow-up purposes.

Respondent: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

This completes our survey. Thank you very much for your cooperation!