

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in understanding school food purchasing practices, the nutritional quality of school meals and snacks, the cost to produce school meals, and student participation and dietary intakes. This is a mandatory collection and FNS will use the information to monitor program operations. This collection does not request any personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0698. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.08 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314 ATTN: PRA (0584-0698). Do not return the completed form to this address.

2024–2025 National School Foods Study Cost Data Collection



Below is a list of data collection activities and types of cost information we will ask for during our interviews. Please use this to help identify which staff members should contribute to each interview and what documentation would be helpful to prepare in advance.

SFA- and district-level cost data collection

Purpose: The SFA On-site Cost Interview collects detailed information on costs incurred at the SFA-level. This includes costs related to staffing (food service and non-food service staff working in support of food service), operations, food prices, indirect costs, and other expenses. *Note that though the instrument is called “On-site Cost Interview,” the interview will be carried out virtually using the WebEx application.

Scheduling information: We will schedule a virtual interview with the SFA Director and colleagues, as appropriate. The interview will last approximately 3.25 hours and the respondent will receive an incentive of \$150. The interview will include:

SFA Staff Salary and Time Allocation Interview

Asks for central food service staff's time spent on various food service-related tasks throughout the year. In addition, we will need wages, paid hours per week, paid time per year, and value of fringe benefits received per year for each job title or position mentioned. Typically, the SFA director and/or the district business manager provides this information.

Food Service Expense Statement

Reviews the SFA expense statement line-by-line and collects information on costs and cost types, such as direct, indirect, or unreported costs. We will review the line items this spring and ask for final expenses after the end of the school year. Typically, the SFA director and the district business manager provide this information together.

District Staff Salary and Time Allocation Interview

District staff who do not fall under the food service department budget may still support the food service department by providing services such as payroll and accounting, contracting, human resources, custodial and maintenance support, or computer support. We refer to these as “off-budget district staff,” if their time is not billed directly or indirectly to the food service account. Like the SFA Staff Salary and Time Allocation Interview, this interview asks for the time off-budget district staff spend on these tasks, wages, paid hours per week, paid time per year, and the value of fringe benefits received per year for each position mentioned. Typically, the SFA director and the district business manager provide this information together.

Food Cost Worksheet

Creates a list of your SFA's food vendors and the types of foods provided, then asks for copies of invoices or price agreements for all purchased foods and ingredients, including USDA Foods and USDA DOD Fresh foods, used during the week of data collection. This documentation will need to include the product name, unit size, brand, and either unit price or total cost and number of cases. Typically, the SFA director or a food service purchasing manager provides this information.

SFA Indirect Cost Interview

Asks for restricted and unrestricted indirect cost rates. We will ask you for a copy of your indirect cost allocation plan, if you have one. This data will be collected this spring and we will follow up for final information after the end of the school year.

This will be a **self-administered web survey**. Typically, the district business manager provides this information.

School-level cost data collection (needed for each sampled kitchen)

School Nutrition Manager Cost Interview

Purpose: The goal of the School Nutrition Manager (SNM) Cost Interview is to collect time and salary information for school-level and central kitchen food service staff.

Details: Asks for kitchen staff's time spent on various food service-related tasks during one school week. In addition, we will need wages, paid hours per week, paid weeks per year, and value of fringe benefits received for each job title or position.

Scheduling information: We will schedule an interview via WebEx with the school nutrition manager (SNM), sometimes called a cafeteria manager or kitchen manager. If a central kitchen prepares foods for one or more schools in the study, we will complete this interview with the central kitchen supervisor too. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes and the respondent will receive an incentive of \$50.

Principal Cost Interview

Purpose: The goal of the School Nutrition Manager (SNM) Cost Interview is to collect time and salary information for school-level and central kitchen food service staff.

Details: Asks for school non-food service staff's time spent on various food service-related tasks throughout the year (for example, a school administrator who is responsible for collecting applications for free or reduced-price meals). In addition, we will need wages, paid hours per week, paid weeks per year, and value of fringe benefits received for each job title or position mentioned.

Scheduling information: This interview will be scheduled a virtual interview with the principals of selected schools. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and the respondent will receive an incentive of \$40.

Other data collection

Menu Survey

Purpose: Collects information on the foods offered and served in reimbursable lunches, breakfasts, and afterschool snacks (if offered) during one school week.

Scheduling information: We will send a link to this web-based survey to the School Nutrition Manager (SNM). It will take approximately 9 hours in total to complete (survey sections can be broken up). The respondent will receive an incentive of \$225.

SFA Follow-Up Web Survey and Cost Interview

Details: After the end of the SY, instrument will collect final meal counts, expenses, and revenues for SY 2024–2025. Like the SFA On-Site Cost Interview, the SFA Follow-Up Cost Interview will be conducted via Webex.

Scheduling information: We will schedule a virtual interview with the SFA director in the Fall of 2025 (generally after the annual audit is complete). The interview will take approximately 2 hours. The respondent will receive an incentive of \$90. We will also send a link to a web survey, which will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

For more information

About the National School Foods Study research team

The Mathematica and Decision Information Resources team has over 30 years of experience in conducting research for government agencies and studying child nutrition programs.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Giovanna Bautista Rodriguez at gbautistarodriguez@mathematica-mpr.com or (312) 780-2172. If you would like to learn more about the study, visit <https://www.mathematica.org/sp/2024-2025-national-school-foods-study>.