

ATTACHMENT I

BPA PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT:

TITLE: **Evaluation of Pilot Projects to Promote Work and Increase State Accountability in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

SECTION C: PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT

C.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Agriculture Act of 2014 (PL 113-79, Section 4022) authorizes USDA to enter into cooperative agreements with State agencies to carry out pilot projects designed to raise employment, increase earnings, and reduce reliance on public assistance, including the benefits provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It also directs USDA to undertake an independent longitudinal evaluation of each pilot project using statistical methods that can determine differences in employment, earnings, and public assistance expenditures between those who receive the employment and training programs and services offered under the pilots and a control group that does not receive such services. Congress provided \$200 million to USDA to support pilot operations and evaluation.

This solicitation requests proposals to design, implement, analyze, and report the results of these independent evaluations. This effort will feature a multi-site, random assignment evaluation to measure the short- and long-term impacts of State-operated employment and training pilots. While FNS expects there to be substantial variation in treatments, populations served, and economic conditions over as many as 10 pilot sites, the intent is to design an approach to evaluation that preserves, to the extent feasible, commonality of research approach, measurement, and outcomes of interest to address the research objectives and questions described below.

C.2 BACKGROUND

C.2.1 Policy Background

SNAP is a critical work support for many low-income families. The overwhelming majority of SNAP recipients who can work do so. Among SNAP households with at least one working-age, non-disabled adult, more than half work while receiving SNAP – and more than 80 percent work in the year prior to or the year after receiving SNAP. The rates are even higher for families with children – more than 60 percent work while receiving SNAP and almost 90 percent work in the prior or subsequent year (Rosenbaum, 2013).

The number of SNAP households that have earnings while participating in SNAP has risen for more than a decade, and has more than tripled – from about 2 million in 2000 to about 6.9 million in 2012. In that same year, 30 percent of all SNAP households had earned income, and over 42 percent of all participants lived in households with earnings (Gray & Eslami, 2013).

SNAP benefits help supplement family food budgets while household members look for work or seek out higher paying jobs.

Preparing and searching for a job is an experience shared by most Americans. Most people will, at one or more points in their lives, participate in some form of education or training to prepare themselves for work and careers. Most will seek out, apply for, and accept a position of employment. Searching for work – or preparing for a better job – is an important component of a number of public assistance programs, including SNAP. SNAP provides employment and training (E&T) services to unemployed and under-employed participants. Some SNAP participants are required to participate in E&T as a condition of eligibility while others participate voluntarily. SNAP E&T programs play an important role in helping participants gain skills, training, and experience that lead to employment and greater self-sufficiency.

All 53 State SNAP agencies operate an E&T program to help job-ready SNAP recipients find work and assist others in gaining skills, training, or experience that lead to employment.¹ States have considerable flexibility to determine which services best match local needs. State agencies choose the components that make up their E&T programs, including job search and job search training, workfare, education activities, self-employment or on-the-job training, and job retention services.

Federal funds support State-administered E&T programs. The federal grant includes \$90 million that is allocated to States for the cost of administering and operating an E&T program and \$20 million for States that pledge to offer all at-risk able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) a spot in a work activity that allows them to maintain SNAP eligibility. In addition, FNS reimburses 50 percent of additional State E&T expenditures that are over and above its federal grant(s). FNS also reimburses 50 percent of State expenditures on dependent care, transportation, and other participant expenses.

In FY 2013, FNS provided \$286.5 million to States for SNAP E&T services. Of this total, 34 percent or approximately \$98 million were 100 percent federal funds; and 66 percent or \$189 million were federal reimbursements to States for the additional funds they spent to provide services. About 15 percent of SNAP recipients were registered for work; States served approximately 634,000 recipients through SNAP E&T programs.

Interested State agencies have been invited to submit applications for pilot projects that develop job-driven training programs and provide participants with pathways to employment.² The purpose of the pilot projects under that solicitation is to raise the number of SNAP work registrants who obtain employment, increase the earned income of the registrants, and reduce their reliance on public assistance.³ State applicants have wide flexibility to design and propose

¹ The count of SNAP State agencies includes the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

² See *Pilot Projects to Promote Work and Increase State Accountability in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Request for Applications* issued August 25, 2014 for information on the solicitation of proposals for pilot project operations (available on-line at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/2014-snap-e-t-pilots> .)

³ Work registrants are SNAP participants between the ages of 16 and 59 who are physically and mentally fit for employment, not subject to or complying with the work requirements under title IV of the Social Security Act or

innovative E&T treatments and enhancements to existing activities. FNS expects to award approximately \$165 million for up to 10 pilots; these pilots are expected to represent a diverse range of E&T approaches, with the potential of multiple treatment paths in some sites.

USDA is interested in projects that incorporate the following:

- Activities or services targeted to individuals with significant barriers to employment;
- Case management;
- Career pathways;
- Work-based learning, including pre-apprenticeship programs and on-the-job learning;
- Public-private partnerships.

C.2.2 Research Background

The evidence base on welfare-to-work strategies developed in recent decades is both rich and deep. And much of it is based on randomized control trials, the most rigorous evaluation approach and the one required in this solicitation. This section does not attempt to summarize what has been learned to date, but notes that much of the research base has been built on the experience of (largely) single mothers participating in the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and currently Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs.⁴ Comparable research on SNAP participants is relatively sparse. One of the major contributions of the project described here will be the extension of innovative employment and training approaches and rigorous evaluation methods within the broad cross-section of the low-income population receiving SNAP benefits. The next section describes key parameters that will shape the evaluation sought here.

C.2.3 References

Besharov, D. J., & Cottingham, P. H. (2011). *The Workforce Investment Act: Implementation Experiences and Evaluation Findings*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Gray, K. F., & Eslami, E. (2013). *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2012*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research.

unemployment compensation, not a parent or household member responsible for a child under 6 or an incapacitated person, not a regular participant in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program, not employed or self-employed more than 30 hours weekly, and not a student enrolled at least half-time in a recognized school or training program.

⁴ Those in need of additional background on welfare-to-work research and the role played by randomized assignment may refer, for example, to Besharov and Cottingham (2012), Gueron and Pauly (1991), Gueron and Rolston (2013), Hamilton et al (2001), Hendra et al (2010), and Miller et al (2009). See also the extensive portfolio of past and current research sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation available on-line at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre>.

Gueron, J. M., & Pauly, E. (1991). *From Welfare to Work*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gueron, J. M., & Rolston, H. (2013). *Fighting for Reliable Evidence*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Hamilton, G., Freedman, S., Gennetian, L., Michalopoulos, C., Walter, J., Adams-Ciardullo, D., et al. (2001). *How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs*. New York, NY: MDRC.

Hendra, R., Dillman, K.-N., Hamilton, G., Lundquist, E., Martinson, K., & Wavelet, M. (2010). *How Effective Are Different Approaches Aiming to Increase Employment Retention and Advancement? Final Impacts for Twelve Models*. New York, NY: MDRC.

Miller, C., Van Dok, M., Tessler, B. L., & Pennington, A. (2009). *Strategies to Help Low-Wage Workers Advance: Implementation and Final Impacts of the Work Advancement Support Center Demonstration*. New York, NY: MDRC.

Moffitt, R. (1992). Evaluation Methods for Program Entry Effects. In C. F. Manski, & I. Garfinkel (Eds.), *Evaluating Welfare and Training Programs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rosenbaum, D. (2013). *The Relationship Between SNAP and Work Among Low-Income Households*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

C.3 SCOPE OF WORK

C.3.1 Evaluation Overview

The authorizing statute requires an independent, longitudinal evaluation of each pilot project, using valid statistical methods, with annual progress reporting until the projects are complete.⁵ The evaluation will measure the impact of the pilots on (1) helping participants find and retain employment; (2) increasing household income; (3) reducing reliance on public assistance; and (4) improving other measures of household well-being that USDA may determine.

In general, FNS expects that this evaluation will build on the methodological precedents established in the welfare-to-work research literature – including random assignment of individuals (or offices, job centers, or work sites) to treatment and control groups; heavy reliance on existing administrative records to measure employment, earnings, program participation, and other outcomes; and both short- and long-term measures of outcomes and impacts. The

⁵ The authorizing statute requires an annual report beginning December 31, 2015, that includes the status of each pilot project, the results of any evaluation completed during the previous fiscal year, baseline information relevant to the goals and outcomes of the pilots, and the programs and services tested under the pilot. In addition to the annual progress reports, this solicitation also requires an interim report with integrated short-term results across all pilots and a final report with integrated long-term results across all pilots.

evaluation will include at least four (4) components: an implementation or process analysis to document project operations and the nature of the treatment provided; an impact evaluation to document the causal impacts of participation in the E&T pilots; a participation analysis to document patterns of participation in the treatments and any entry effects; and a cost-benefit analysis.⁶

The *implementation or process analysis* has several objectives. The principal objective is to describe and clearly document the E&T services provided and outcomes achieved in each pilot project site. Second, it will document program design and operations (for both treatment and control groups) in adequate detail to be useful to policymakers, program administrators, and others interested in implementing or modifying existing SNAP E&T services. Finally, the implementation study should be designed so that it can help answer the question of why some treatments do or do not make a difference.

The heart of this evaluation project is the *impact evaluation*. Its principal objective is to measure the causal impact of various approaches to SNAP employment and training on the principal outcomes of interest: employment, earnings and reliance on public assistance. Its second objective is to measure the causal impact of the pilot E&T services on various measures of well-being – food security, health, and housing status, for example – to identify any secondary consequences of potential interest or concern. The impact evaluation shall rest on the randomized assignment of individuals (or possibly offices, job centers, or sites) to treatment and control groups.

The *participation analysis* has two objectives. First, it should describe who participates in the SNAP E&T pilot treatments contrasted in the impact analysis, and describe their paths through the potential elements of the various E&T strategies examined. By doing so, it will shed light on potential areas for targeting and possible refinements to intake and service delivery. Second, it is critical to explore innovative approaches to measuring *entry effects*, the extent to which the offer of and requirement to participate in employment and training services affects applications for assistance and participation in public assistance programs – because some potential applicants are either encouraged by the potential to improve their employability or discouraged by the participation mandate. While applicants are encouraged to consider ways to evaluate entry effects using experimental methods, conventional experimental designs may be ill-suited for the analysis of entry effects. In that case, the evaluation is expected to consider innovative, quasi-experimental approaches for this portion of the analysis.

Given interest in SNAP E&T impacts on multiple stakeholders, the *cost-benefit analysis* will give as full an accounting as possible of the consequences of undertaking one policy course rather than another – both needed inputs and their costs and resulting outputs and benefits. The cost-benefit analysis will create and complete a social accounting matrix that aligns benefits and costs for each of several perspectives: participants, employers, government at various levels, and society as a whole.

⁶ Note that previous research on entry effects – the extent to which new work requirements affect applications for assistance and participation in public assistance programs – is sparse. See Moffitt (1992) for a discussion of the issue and potential measurement and analytic approaches. Bidders are particularly encouraged to offer innovative approaches to advance the state of the art in this area.

C.2.3 Key Research Objectives and Questions

C.3.2.1 Implementation and Process Analysis:

Research Objective 1: Document how each of the participating sites operates the pilot by describing project design, operations, and outcomes, concentrating on capturing the exact nature of each treatment delivered, and identifying specific lessons to improve policy and practice and allow replication of successful treatments in other locations.

Research Questions:

- What is the social, economic, and programmatic context in which each pilot project operates?
- How is each pilot project implemented? To what extent are the treatments implemented as planned?
- What challenges are encountered during the implementation and how are they resolved?
- What is the nature of each treatment as actually delivered? How does the treatment differ from services available outside of the pilot?
- What inputs are used to generate each treatment (e.g., partnerships, organizational structure, operating procedures, community involvement, funding)?
- What outputs and outcomes occur (for example: recruitment, enrollment, retention, completion, certification, job entry, employment retention and advancement, and earnings)?

C.3.2.2 Impact Evaluation:

Research Objective 2: Document short- and long-term causal impacts on participant activities, outputs, and outcomes, overall and as they vary with participant characteristics and program context.

Research Questions:

- What is the short-term causal impact of the pilot on participant employment and earnings?⁷
- What is the short-term causal impact of the pilot on public assistance benefits – SNAP, TANF, State General Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medicaid?
- What is the impact of the treatment on long-term earnings and welfare receipt (and broader measures of employment success and transfer program reliance)?⁸
- To what extent do impacts vary with participant characteristics?

⁷ The appropriate short-term follow-up may depend in part on the nature of the proposed State interventions and the timing of expected impacts. Strategies that focus on job search and rapid placement might be expected to show results within 6 to 12 months; strategies that focus on skill development or training may take longer. Bidders are expected to recommend and justify a definition of “short-term” and the merits of imposing a consistent definition across all projects versus allowing a more flexible definition tailored to the circumstances of each site.

⁸ In order to make results available as quickly as possible, the basic effort in this project will follow pilot participants for up to 3 years. This effort includes an option to follow participants for an additional 2 years (up to 5 years). Bidders should address the relative merits of including this additional 2-year follow-on.

- To what extent does the pilot significantly affect – either positively or negatively – measures of food security, well-being, health, or housing status?

C.3.2.3 Participation Analysis:

Research Objective 3: Examine the participation patterns – in offered employment and training services and in SNAP – in each pilot treatment and determine if participation varied within and across the pilots.

Research Questions:

- To what extent do individuals targeted for the treatment participate in the services provided? What characteristics distinguish participants from nonparticipants?
- What percentage of participants who start or enroll in each employment or training activity completes the activity or program? Do completion rates vary by participant characteristics?
- To what extent do the pilots affect entry into, exit from, and the overall level of SNAP participation in areas where the pilots operate? Do more eligible individuals choose to enroll in SNAP, encouraged by the pilot's offer of employment and training activities and the potential to improve their employability? Or are some eligible individuals discouraged from participating in SNAP due to the requirement of participation in the pilot's employment and training activities?

C.3.2.4 Cost-Benefit Analysis:

Research Objective 4: Provide a full social accounting from the perspective of governments, other program partners (educational institutions, employers), and participants of the consequences of undertaking the policy alternatives implicit in each pilot project – both needed inputs and their costs and resulting outputs and benefits.

Research Questions:

- What is the cost – overall and per participant – of operating each pilot, and if feasible critical pilot components?
- What is the cost – overall and per participant – for the SNAP E&T services that individuals in the control group receive?
- Will government gain, fiscally, from engaging SNAP recipients in employment and training services?
- At what level of government will fiscal benefits – or costs – accrue: local, state, or federal? How large are the budgetary consequences in each case?
- What is the return to employers for participating in the treatment?
- What is the return to participants from participating in the treatment (taking into account costs of participation)?
- What is the return to society as a whole of adopting more successful treatments over the alternatives, taking into account both participants' and other costs and benefits?
- To what extent are up-front costs, such as those of service delivery, offset by later benefits such as lessened public assistance use and greater employment and economic output?

C.3.3 Evaluation Design

Contractors shall include in their proposal a clear study plan reflecting the design parameters provided below. It shall include study methodology, randomization procedures, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, descriptions of data collection instruments, analytic methods to be used to address study objectives, and plans for reporting the results. At a minimum the study plan shall include:

- Research objectives and questions;
- Definition and justification of data elements and their relationship to the research questions;
- Plans for the compilations of data and methods of data analysis;
- The types of descriptive and inferential statistics, and the statistical tests that will be applied to answer the research questions;
- Plans to assess important subgroup differences;
- Plans to integrate results from the implementation, impact, participation, and cost-benefit components of the evaluation; and
- Plans for reporting and presenting study results.

There are a number of unique challenges and expectations that will shape this evaluation:

- The time available for planning, implementing, and evaluating the SNAP E&T pilots is substantially constrained by statutory deadlines not subject to change. In particular, the Request for Applications must be published no later than 180 days after enactment (August 2014), cooperative agreements must be awarded no later than 180 days after the RFA is released (February 2015), pilots are expected to be operational no later than October 2015, and all grant funds must be obligated by the end of September 2018.
- FNS anticipates the start of the evaluation (i.e., the start of random assignment, evaluation sample enrollment, and baseline data collection) on or around April 2016, at least 6 months after the mandatory October 2015 start of pilot operations.⁹ This will ensure that the evaluation examines somewhat more mature pilots, after any initial transition issues are identified and resolved. It will also maximize the time available to develop the evaluation plan, develop necessary data collection protocols and instruments, and obtain required approvals under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).
- Contractors are advised that obtaining approval for data collections under the Paperwork Reduction Act can be a lengthy process. Past experience has shown that it can take six to nine months from the first submission of a 60-day Federal Register notice to final approval of the information collection. Contractors are advised that clearance is often the primary rate limiting factor in many FNS studies. Preparation of a high-quality initial draft of instruments and justification statements, followed by timely responses to required revisions, will greatly facilitate the approval process. For additional information — including detailed guidance, a checklist for final collection request submissions, and estimated timelines, see the following

⁹ Pilots able to begin operations before October 2015 will have a longer transition period.

link (www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/information-collection).

Contractors are advised that clearance package formats that have worked at other Federal agencies may be rejected by USDA; contractors must be prepared to follow USDA requirements.

- The evaluation can anticipate but cannot currently predict substantial variation in E&T services provided to the treatment group by selected pilot sites. FNS expects to award approximately \$165 million for up to 10 pilots; these pilots are expected to represent a diverse range of E&T approaches, with the potential of multiple treatment paths in some sites. The extent to which proposed treatments share sufficient features to enable pooling of results across sites will not be known until after the sites are selected in February 2015.¹⁰ FNS expects to award the evaluation contract shortly before site applications are due in November 2014. This will provide the evaluation contractor an opportunity to participate as consultants in the review of site applications (with a primary focus on assessing their feasibility and capacity for evaluation). It will also enable the evaluation contractor to begin to tailor the evaluation plan to the specifics of the selected site proposals.
- FNS expects the contractor to design an approach to evaluating disparate treatments across multiple sites that preserves, to the extent feasible, commonality of research approach, measurement, and outcomes of interest to address the research objectives and questions addressed in Section C.3.2 above.
- The anticipated variation in proposed pilot projects is likely to pose a challenge to the design and implementation of randomization. Answers to basic implementation issues – how to inform participants about the pilot, how to protect members of the control group from the message, and where to locate random assignment in the intake and referral process to measure the full impact of the pilot treatments, for example – may vary from site to site. In their proposal, contractors should describe a workable approach to ensuring effective and consistent randomization, and for adjusting those plans as the details of State pilots become known.
- Many, if not all, of the selected sites are likely to have little experience with the design and execution of randomized control trials and will require technical assistance from the evaluation contractor to ensure that randomization occurs as planned. While the cooperative agreements with selected State agencies will include an explicit expectation to cooperate with the independent evaluation, the evaluation contractor will be expected to define and monitor the application of reasonable and appropriate expectations that balance the need to minimize burden on local agencies with the need to capture information critical to the evaluation. In their proposal, contractors should detail how they will provide technical assistance as well as what challenges to technical assistance may arise and how they will be addressed.

¹⁰ At a minimum, FNS expects each pilot to include a comprehensive assessment of participant skills, work experience, and barriers to employment; reimbursements to participants for the actual cost of transportation, dependent care, and other reasonably necessary expenses; and collaboration with the workforce agency. Proposals must be sufficiently resourced to prepare evaluations in up to 10 sites, and should offer contingencies if pooling proves feasible.

- Past evaluations of less intensive employment and training approaches such as outreach, job search and placement assistance programs suggest that impacts on employment and earnings are likely to be important but modest, entailing that overall and individual site samples will need to be relatively large to detect a policy-relevant difference. The contractor shall describe the minimum detectable difference for the three principal outcomes (employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance) with 90 percent confidence and 80 percent power implicit in its proposed sample sizes. The contractor also should determine the minimum effect size necessary for the interventions to be cost beneficial (this may be a range of effect size combinations given the multiple outcomes and whether the evaluation will have the power to rule out that these interventions are cost-beneficial. Based on past welfare-to-work research, FNS expects the cumulative research samples for less intensive employment and training approaches to be on the order of 3,000 to 5,000 per pilot, or approximately 50,000 in total.¹¹ However, the contractor is not bound by this estimate and may propose and justify larger or smaller samples as needed to meet the multiple objectives of the evaluation. Furthermore, the contractor should propose novel evaluation approaches for projects that serve substantially fewer participants.
- Overall and individual site samples must be large enough to support analysis of a limited number of key subgroup differences, given the diversity of the SNAP population in terms of their characteristics, circumstances, and job-readiness. FNS expects subgroups to be defined on the basis of factors that may include family composition (single adults, single parents, married couples), labor force attachment (recent work history), duration of SNAP receipt, demographics (including age, gender, and education), and the extent of barriers to employment (including language). The contractor shall provide recommendations for policy-relevant subgroups and a rationale for including (or not) these or others in the subgroup analysis.
- Pilots are expected to run for up to 36 months following award. The evaluation is expected to capture both short- and long-term impacts. The timing of the short-term follow-up may depend in part on the nature of the proposed State interventions and the timing of expected impacts. Strategies that focus on job search and placement might be expected to show results within 6 to 12 months; strategies that focus on skill development or training may take longer. Bidders are expected to recommend and justify a definition of “short-term” and the merits of imposing a consistent definition across all projects versus allowing a more flexible definition tailored to the circumstances of each site. In order to make results available as quickly as possible, the basic effort in this project will follow pilot participants for up to 3 years but includes an option to follow participants for an additional 2 years (up to 5 years). Bidders should address the relative merits of including this additional 2-year follow-on as well as different forms it might take (for example, longer follow-up for outcomes measurable in administrative data only). The contractor shall provide an assessment of the feasibility of these follow-up periods and, if necessary, propose and justify alternatives.

¹¹ Overall sample requirements might be less if there are sufficient similarities among pilot treatments to pool samples across sites. Bidders are reminded, however, that the authorizing statute requires an independent evaluation of each pilot project.

- Primary outcomes will be measured to the extent feasible with existing administrative data sources. Specifically, FNS intends to rely on administrative data sources, such as Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records and State agency management information systems to answer the principal research questions around employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance following receipt of E&T services. While this has become the standard approach in much welfare-to-work research, the contractor shall address known limitations (such as inclusion of only UI-covered jobs and potential attrition if sample members move out of state). The selected evaluation contractor will be responsible for obtaining, processing, and analyzing data files from each State and site.
- Secondary outcomes – indicators of food security, well-being, health, or housing status – should be measured in administrative data to the extent feasible but otherwise will be measured on a subsample of the primary samples to conserve evaluation resources.¹² Proposed sample sizes for this purpose shall be large enough to detect large (not minor) differences that may be indicative of serious benefits or harm caused by the pilots. As a result, FNS expects that the minimum detectable difference for secondary outcomes will be less, confidence intervals wider, and/or power diminished compared to these determinants of sample size for the primary outcomes.
- Full conformance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards and guidelines for surveys is required. Contractors shall note that an 80 percent survey response rate for baseline and follow-up surveys is required; if the response rate is less, a nonresponse bias analysis is mandatory. Contractors shall explain and justify their proposed procedures for ensuring that high response rates are obtained and demonstrate their understanding and acceptance of OMB standards and guidelines for calculating response rates and actions that are required if response rates are under 80 percent.
- The contractor will be expected to work with FNS and the selected pilot sites to develop procedures and materials to ensure legally effective and prospectively obtained informed consent from participants in the evaluation sample. The informed consent process will (1) disclose to potential research subjects information needed to make an informed decision; (2) facilitate the understanding of what has been disclosed; and (3) promote the voluntariness of the decision about whether or not to participate in the evaluation of the pilot projects.
- Past evaluations of welfare-to-work efforts like those contemplated here using randomized experimental designs have focused little attention on the measurement of entry effects, the extent to which new work requirements affect applications for assistance. Assessing entry effects pose special difficulties for the evaluation design and may require approaches that supplement the randomized control trial (such as use of quasi-experimental comparison sites;

¹² A small-scale participant survey may also be used to determine the extent to which control group members have access to employment and training services in the community, and to capture forms of employment (including informal work) not included in administrative records.

analysis of historical administrative information on caseload, applications, and new entrants; or small scale surveys of eligible non-participants).¹³

C.4 SPECIFIC SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

The contractor shall furnish all necessary personnel, materials, services, facilities, and otherwise do all things necessary to execute the scope of work for this project. In performance of this contract, the contractor shall complete the tasks set out below. The tasks are not intended to be restrictive and vendors are encouraged to present suggested modifications and/or additions.

Task 1 Technical Working Group

The contractor shall convene a Technical Work Group (TWG) consisting of up to six (6) members with recognized subject matter and research methodology expertise. While the TWG members shall advise the contractor on selected issues related to evaluation design and provide peer reviews of interim and final reports, the TWG is not expected to reach consensus and is not a decision-making body.

It is expected that the contractor will convene the TWG on at least three (3) occasions over the period of performance to review (1) the evaluation and study design, (2) the interim report, and (3) the final report. The contractor may also rely on TWG members for on-going consultation, guidance, and required peer review (e.g., to review documents or provide guidance at important decision points). The contractor shall consult with and receive approval from the COR prior to scheduling any meeting of members of the TWG. Topics for all meetings shall be developed by the contractor in consultation with the COR.

The contractor shall be responsible for all TWG meeting and space arrangements and related costs, per diems, and honoraria. Meeting space shall be of a sufficient size to accommodate the TWG members, the contractor's staff, and a minimum of 10 Federal staff. TWG meetings shall be held in the Washington, D.C. metro area, unless otherwise approved by the COR.

The contractor shall be responsible for the preparation of all meeting materials and an agenda for each meeting. Draft materials shall be submitted to the COR six (6) weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting to allow for agency review and approval. The contractor shall address comments received from the COR and distribute final materials to TWG members and the COR no later than three (3) weeks prior to each meeting.

The contractor shall submit draft written summaries of the TWG meetings to the COR for review and approval no later than three (3) weeks following the meeting. The contractor shall submit a final summary three (3) weeks after receipt of COR comments.

¹³ In concept, randomization across offices or sites may provide an experimental approach to the measure of entry effects. In practice, it is not likely that the resources provided for this evaluation are sufficient to support the large sample of sites needed to implement this approach.

Task 2 Pilot Project Site Selection and Support

Subtask 2.1 Consult with Pilot Project Technical Review Panel

The success of the SNAP E&T evaluation will rest in part on the commitment and participation of selected pilot sites and their ability to implement the study as designed. To that end, the contractor shall participate as consultants in the technical review of State proposals submitted in response to the RFA of August 25, 2014. The contractor shall:

- Gain a more detailed understanding of the SNAP E&T services and components that State agencies propose to offer participants;
- Assess each site's ability, appropriateness for, and willingness to participate in an evaluation;
- Perform power analyses for each of the impact evaluations.
- Provide clarifying questions for the State agency to address at the Technical Review Panel's discretion to better support a rigorous evaluation; and
- Make recommendations to the Technical Review Panel based on the contractor's assessment of the readiness and capacity of each site to effectively implement the requirements of the evaluation.

FNS expects to conduct an initial technical review of applications and provide the contractor no more than the top 15 to 20 ranked proposals for the contractor's review and assessment. The contractor shall provide a written assessment of the technical merits and challenges posed by the State proposals, clarifying questions, and its recommendations to the COR within three (3) weeks of receiving State proposals from FNS. The contractor shall participate in up to three (3) meetings of the Technical Review Panel following the initial screening to answer questions and address its recommendations regarding evaluation capacity. Contractor staff shall be subject to the same requirements for disclosure of potential conflicts of interest and protection of confidential information as other panel members.

Subtask 2.2 Provide Technical Guidance on Evaluation Design and Required Support

Participating in a random assignment experiment is often perceived as a difficult and burdensome experience for many organizations. The contractor shall be responsible for providing technical assistance and monitoring support to the pilot sites. This support is critical to the success of the evaluation as the study's results will rely on the pilot sites administering the agreed-upon services and properly implementing randomization procedures.

Representatives from all pilot sites will, as a condition of their cooperative agreement, attend an orientation meeting at FNS headquarters within two (2) months following the award of the cooperative agreement to meet with FNS and the evaluation contractor, to review the research design and to discuss preparations for meeting the research objectives. The contractor shall submit a draft agenda and proposed briefing materials to the COR for review and approval three

(3) weeks prior to the orientation meeting. The contractor shall submit final agenda and briefing materials, incorporating FNS' comments, three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

The contractor shall provide personnel to work directly with each site to support the types of activities that will be required of site staff as they implement the evaluation, including: any data collection requirements (e.g., MIS data, informed consent); explanation of random assignment procedures; outreach or marketing to achieve adequate samples; and explaining the study to partner organizations. The contractor is expected to tailor the level of technical assistance provided to sites based on what best fits their needs.

For each pilot site included in the evaluation, the contractor shall provide guidance and assistance to ensure that random assignment is implemented as planned and that SNAP E&T services are provided as intended. To the extent that the contractor's proposal includes program administrative data or other data collected by the partner sites, the contractor shall also plan to incorporate assistance around data-specific issues, including, but not limited to: (a) the proposed data elements to be collected; (b) ways to ensure that data are as reliable as possible (and technical assistance available from the contractor to assist with data reliability); (c) the processes for transferring data; and (d) safeguards for data security.

The contractor shall provide the COR with timely information on progress and problems within each program/site and recommended actions to improve performance or address problems. The COR shall be kept informed via ongoing communication and monthly progress reports or on an ad hoc basis when critical issues need a more immediate response.

Subtask 2.3 Site Implementation Monitoring Plan

The contractor shall develop a plan to monitor both programmatic and evaluation support requirements within each site over the course of the pilot to ensure that the treatment to be evaluated is operated as planned, control group services are as expected, and that all evaluation support activities (e.g., accurate and complete data collection, timely data transmission) are completed as needed and agreed in the site agreements. Plans shall address approaches to provide feedback and recommendations for corrective action, where needed, to ensure that the project progresses in accordance with the approved project work plan and time lines. In addition, the plan shall discuss the contractor's plan to identify and support corrective action in sites that do not appear to be viable for the pilot.

The contractor shall submit a draft of the site implementation monitoring plan to the COR for review and approval within thirty-one (31) weeks of contract award. The contractor shall submit a revised site implementation monitoring plan to the COR within three (3) weeks of receiving comments from the COR. The contractor shall provide the COR with timely information and feedback on the progress of each site and any recommended actions to improve performance.

Task 3 Revised Evaluation Design and Study Plan

The planned SNAP E&T pilot evaluation will require that the contractor successfully manage many moving and interrelated project activities simultaneously and under short timeframes, with

substantial initial uncertainty about the location, content, and structure of potential pilot projects. To ensure the successful completion of the project, the contractor shall develop and submit a revised study plan that reflects more detailed information and understanding of the activities required to meet the goals and objectives of the project and carry out the tasks than was reflected in the contractor's proposal. The plan shall indicate timelines for major activities (e.g., data collection, implementation site visits, etc.) and deliverables, as well as which staff member has major responsibility for tasks or activities. The plan shall provide a primary basis for assessing performance and taking action as needed to ensure timely and satisfactory completion of the project on schedule and within budget.

The contractor shall also review the cooperative agreements (including State proposals) with FNS and State agencies to determine if and how the projects differ from the assumptions used in the preparation of the original study plan. The contractor shall, in consultation with FNS, review the research approach proposed in the original study plan and revise as necessary based on the specifics of the funded projects. The plan shall include a discussion of research objectives and questions, approaches to ensuring to the extent feasible commonality of research approach, measurement, and outcomes, and integration across the principal components of the evaluation (implementation, impact, participation, and cost-benefit analyses). The plan shall describe plans to implement randomization, an approach to gathering requisite administrative records, the data elements to be used, the proposed analytic approach, the statistical methods to be used, and any anticipated challenges. The plan shall detail the final experimental and sample design including approaches for selection and recruitment. The plan shall also detail the proposed evaluation design and analytic approach to address entry effects in each pilot. It shall explicitly address changes and clarifications of the research objectives and questions, sample procedures, measurement, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of results.

The contractor shall submit a draft revised study plan within thirty-one (31) weeks after contract award. The contractor shall submit a final revised study plan, incorporating FNS' recommendations and comments, within four (4) weeks after receiving comments from the COR. These revisions shall not change the scope of work specified in the contract. Should revisions to the contract be required, they must be made with the approval of the FNS Contracting Officer.

Task 4: Develop Data Collection Plan and Instruments

Subtask 4.1 Pre-Test Implementation of Randomization Procedures

Lessons from prior evaluations of employment and training programs have shown the importance of pre-testing new processes and procedures, including randomization before full-scale implementation in the pilots. All sites approved for inclusion in the evaluation shall operate in a "pilot test" status for up to two (2) months. The pilot test period shall allow for implementation of all aspects of the evaluation including the random assignment to treatment and control groups. The contractor shall monitor all pilot tests to determine that all evaluation support activities are being carried out by site staff as needed and required, that the program being evaluated is being carried out as planned, and that control group services are as expected. The contractor shall provide information on site performance during the pilot period to the COR

at least biweekly. Issues, problems and resolutions shall be communicated orally and documented in regular progress reports.

The contractor shall provide a summary memorandum of the results of the pre-test across all sites to the COR within two (2) weeks of the pre-test's conclusion.

Subtask 4.2 Final Data Collection Plan and Instruments

The contractor shall prepare a final data collection plan and all required data collection protocols and instruments. Based on the revised evaluation and study plan (Task 3), the contractor shall develop final instruments and administrative record protocols to collect data necessary to support the evaluation.

FNS intends that the principal data source for the SNAP E&T Pilot evaluation will be administrative data. Specifically, FNS intends to rely on administrative data sources, such as Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records and State agency management information systems to answer the principal research questions around employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance following receipt of E&T services. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining and processing appropriate data files from State and local pilot sites as necessary to support the evaluation for the duration of the pilot and evaluation.¹⁴

In order to address a greater range of outcomes than is possible using administrative data, the contractor shall supplement administrative data with survey data on a subsample of both treatment and control groups in all of the sites according to the approved evaluation design and data collection plan. The survey shall collect information on those topics that are appropriate given the treatment designs and outcomes intended.

Given extensive previous research experience, FNS expects that most data collection instruments will have been tested and used successfully in similar contexts. If the contractor and FNS determine that new survey or data collection instruments are needed, the contractor will conduct a pre-test, ensuring that no single instrument is tested on more than nine (9) respondents. The contractor shall submit an update on the results of the pre-tests to the COR within ten (10) days of the end of the pre-testing. Recommended changes to the survey questions based on pre-test results shall be presented to the COR for review and approval. Results of the pre-test will be used to refine data collection instruments prior to submission for approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Information collection instruments intended for use among program participants must be available in both English and Spanish. Depending on the pilot site, additional translations may be required. Contractors should address how they plan to develop and test instruments for Spanish language audiences and other non-English speakers as needed.

¹⁴ FNS may pursue a centralized data matching agreement with the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families to obtain access to the National Directory of New Hires. This agreement, if available, would obviate the need for separate data sharing agreements with each pilot State to gain access to quarterly UI records. Because FNS cannot guarantee access to the National Director of New Hires at this time, the contractor shall assume that it will be responsible for obtaining data files from the States and pilot sites.

The contractor shall submit a draft data collection plan, including all information collection instruments and protocols within thirty-seven (37) weeks of contract award. The contractor shall submit a final data collection plan, instruments, and protocols, incorporating FNS' recommendations and comments, within four (4) weeks of receiving the COR's comments.

Subtask 4.3 Develop Paperwork Reduction Act Clearance Package

The contractor shall prepare the required publication notices and clearance package for submittal to OMB to obtain approval for all data collection activities in all components of the evaluation subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. The clearance package shall provide an explicit, concise description of the direct links between the study objectives, research questions, variables, instrument items, data analysis plans and desired products. The OMB data collection package shall contain copies of all final data collection instruments that have been fully pretested and a supporting statement as set forth in the revised Standard Form No. 83a, "Instructions for Requesting OMB Approval under the Federal Reports Act, as Amended." Sections A and B of the OMB package shall comply with OMB requirements. It shall include a summary of public comments received in response to the 60-Day Federal Register Notice concerning the information collection and any actions taken in response to these comments. If necessary, study instruments and scripts shall be modified by the contractor to reflect comments from OMB. The contractor shall include OMB-required statements on all data collection forms and recruitment materials being administered to respondents and participants on the estimated burden of the data collection.

The contractor shall submit a draft Federal Register Notice inviting public comment on the proposed information collection to the COR for review and approval within thirty-one (31) weeks of contract award. The contractor shall submit a revised Federal Register Notice within two (2) weeks of receiving comments from the COR.

The contractor shall submit a draft OMB justification package to the COR for review and approval within thirty-seven (37) weeks of contract award. The contractor shall submit a revised OMB justification package within two (2) weeks of receiving comments from the COR.

The contractor should be aware that the OMB data collection package will be reviewed by multiple groups within FNS including staff in the Office of Policy Support (OPS) and the Planning and Regulatory Affairs Office (PRAO), as well as USDA's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Revisions to the package may be required after each level of review and the OMB package will not be considered an acceptable deliverable until it receives official OMB clearance.

Subtask 4.4 Data Collection Training

If necessary to administer household or other surveys, the contractor shall select and train experienced data collectors. The staff shall demonstrate the ability and experience to administer the instruments and follow interview protocols reliably and consistently through certification tests, role plays, or other methods to provide an assurance of readiness. Data collector training shall include, at a minimum, an overview of the study, data collection instruments, procedures

for data collection, and simulated data collection exercises. Training shall be scheduled with adequate lead notice so that FNS, at its discretion, may attend and participate either in person or via telephone. FNS may, at its option, invite others to observe.

The contractor shall develop a draft and final version of data collectors training materials (including training scripts and practice exercises) to accompany the data collection instruments. If multiple types of training are provided, the contractor shall provide FNS with each training package. The training package shall include, at a minimum, an overview of the study, data collection instruments (e.g. screenshots, instructions), privacy protections, simulated data collection exercises and any other necessary information to facilitate the collection of complete and accurate data.

The contractor shall submit draft data collectors training materials to the COR for review and approval within sixty-three (63) weeks of contract award. The contractor shall submit revised training materials within two (2) weeks of receiving comments from the COR. Within one (1) week of completion of any necessary training, the contractor shall submit to the COR a memorandum summarizing the training sessions indicating data collector's readiness to collect the data needed for this evaluation.

Task 5 Execute Evaluation Plan

Subtask 5.1 Conduct Implementation and Process Evaluation

The contractor shall conduct a state-of-the-art implementation evaluation study at each pilot project site. Within its technical proposal, the contractor should outline a detailed approach to conduct and report on the implementation evaluation. This approach should discuss innovative strategies for conducting the implementation evaluation, which may include, but are not limited to: site visits, onsite observations, time studies, program data collection, surveys of program staff, and other state-of-the art methods. The contractor's approach should discuss timelines for conducting the implementation study, plans to analyze the data gathered, and any potential challenges (along with proposed resolutions).

Subtask 5.2 Conduct Impact Evaluation

The contractor shall conduct a state-of-the-art impact evaluation at each pilot project site. Within its technical proposal, the contractor should outline a detailed approach to conduct and report on the impact evaluation. The contractor's approach should discuss timelines for conducting the impact study, plans to analyze the data gathered, and any potential challenges (along with proposed resolutions).

Primary impacts – on employment, earnings, and public assistance receipt – will be largely based on administrative data. As part of their proposal, the contractor shall articulate its plan to gather and use administrative data, including the proposed data sources, specific data items that may be included in the data, frequency of data collection, the processes required to access them, the timing of accessing these data, any challenges to either accessing or using the data source, and how they plan to address these challenges.

The contractor shall be responsible for completing any State or local approval processes necessary to access these administrative data. This may include approval packages, proposals to access data, paperwork, or other activities. FNS anticipates that the approval process will vary for each site and data source accessed. If the data source requires that the Federal Government request the data, the contractor shall assume that they will be principally responsible for drafting materials, though the COR will assist as required. The contractor shall ensure that their plan for administrative data collection allows enough time to seek and gain approval for the particular data sources.

FNS anticipates that administrative data will not be sufficient to capture measures of a number of secondary outcomes of interest, including more detailed background characteristics on program participants; their motivation to search for a job; their perceptions of the employment and training process and services received from outside the SNAP E&T system; detailed information about employment experiences; and indicators of personal and family well-being (e.g., food security, self-esteem, health, self-efficacy, and mental health). Gathering information on some of these measures could provide useful information about the non-economic benefits of E&T services and the participants that use these services. However, given resource constraints, it is not likely feasible to conduct a longitudinal follow-up survey on the entire evaluation sample in each pilot project site. Instead, FNS intends that this survey will be administered to a reasonable subsample of study participants.

The contractor shall be responsible for developing and executing follow-up surveys to be administered at baseline, 6 to 12 months after enrollment, and again 3 years after enrollment. (Contractors should discuss alternative approaches to the timing of this data collection.) The contractor shall be responsible for tracking participants from intake to ensure that they can be reached to complete a longitudinal follow-up survey. As part of their proposal, contractors should discuss their approach to implementing the follow-up survey on a subsample of study participants, including: estimated time to complete survey, strategies for selecting a subsample of participants, plans to track participants for the follow-up survey, and any challenges they foresee with completing this task and how they will address them.

The contractor shall be responsible for conducting an impact analysis in accordance with its proposal and the revised study plan.

Task 5.3 Conduct Participation Analysis

The contractor shall conduct an analysis of the patterns of treatment and control group members' participation in SNAP and in employment and training services at each pilot site. Within their technical proposal, bidders should outline a detailed approach to conduct and report on the participation analysis. The contractor's approach should discuss timelines for conducting the participation analysis, plans to analyze the data gathered, and any potential challenges (along with proposed resolutions).

The principal objectives of this analysis are to describe who participates in – and their paths through –the SNAP E&T pilot treatments, contrast those services with those received by control group members, and determine the extent to which the offer of and requirement to participate in

employment and training services affects applications for assistance and participation in public assistance programs. The contractor shall pay particular attention to the role of entry effects, supplementing data from the randomized control trial as necessary to determine the extent to which each pilot's work requirements and services encourage or discourage applications for assistance.

Task 5.4 Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis

The contractor shall conduct a state-of-the-art cost-benefit analysis of the patterns of participation in SNAP and in E&T services at each pilot site. Within its technical proposal, the contractor should outline a detailed approach to conduct and report on the cost-benefit analysis. The contractor's approach should discuss timelines for conducting the cost-benefit analysis, plans to analyze the data gathered, and any potential challenges (along with proposed resolutions).

The principal purpose of this analysis is to help determine the relationship between impacts and the programs' cost and whether any positive impacts achieved by the programs are worth the programs' costs from the perspective of the recipient, the government (Federal, State, and local), and the taxpayer. The contractor shall consider all costs and benefits, both financial and non-financial. Costs will include, but are not limited to, program operating costs, administrative costs, averaged costs per participants and increased work-related (e.g., transportation, child care) costs. Benefits will include, but are not limited to, increased economic output produced by the recipients while in the program and post-program, increased tax payments, reduced welfare payments, reduced dependence on welfare programs, and other similar benefits. The analysis will detail all assumptions and calculations in determining costs and benefits, including those pertaining to decay rates, and will include a sensitivity analysis of the major assumptions.

Task 6 Reporting

FNS is interested in research that is of the highest scientific rigor and communicated in a policy relevant fashion. The contractor shall propose an approach to documenting, communicating, and presenting the results of the evaluation and supporting analyses to FNS, the broader research and policy field, and the programs and sites that participate in the pilot. At a minimum, this plan shall include mandated annual progress reports to Congress; draft, revised, and final reports following periods of short- and long-term data collection; and briefings to FNS and other relevant policy officials.

Interim and final reports from this study shall be subject to formal peer review as influential scientific information. The contractor shall arrange for peer review in accordance with OMB guidance, subject to FNS approval.¹⁵ The contractor shall determine the appropriate time to solicit peer review comments, provide reviewers sufficient time to provide a thoughtful review, and compile reviewers' comments. The contractor shall provide a detailed memorandum outlining the reviewers' comments and subsequent changes to the final reports. The contractor may use members and meetings of the Technical Working Group for the purpose of this peer review.

¹⁵ See [Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review](#), December 2004.

It shall be the contractor's responsibility to notify the COR of invitations received by contractor or consultant staff to make presentations on the study sufficiently in advance (a minimum of 30 work days is requested) to allow for review of the request within FNS prior to the deadline for response. If approval is provided, the contractor shall submit to the COR for approval at least two weeks prior to the scheduled presentation copies of papers or slides prepared for presentation. Unless approved by the COR, the contractor shall not present data or information related to the study that has not been previously made public or released by FNS. FNS shall inform the contractor whether or not any information or data has been embargoed and give appropriate notice when it is officially released.

Subtask 6.1 Annual Progress Reports to Congress

The contractor will provide FNS Annual Congressional Status Reports that will form the basis for FNS' submission of required annual reports to Congress. These reports will provide detailed implementation status, activities of the evaluations, and early results (if available) of process and impact evaluations of each pilot project. FNS will specify the desired format. Each year the contractor shall provide text to an outline provided by FNS in a microcomputer word processing format agreeable to FNS. The draft version of each annual report must be provided by October 15 of each calendar year for the duration of the contract. The revised version shall be provided by November 15 of each calendar year for the duration of the contract. FNS reserves the right to modify the revised version before its submission to the Congress by the Secretary.

Subtask 6.2 Interim Report

Upon completion of the analysis of the short-term round of data collection for all pilot sites, the contractor shall submit an interim report describing the pilot project and impacts. The contractor shall prepare a draft, revised, and final report that details and integrates the results from each project. The draft and revised report shall be submitted to FNS for review and comment along with a summary of the changes made in reference to prior comments. The revised interim reports will be circulated for peer review, responses to which will be provided by the contractor in a memorandum to the COR.

The interim report may consist of multiple volumes if determined appropriate by the contractor, with the approval of the COR. If the interim report does consist of multiple volumes, the contractor shall prepare an integrated summary report for a non-technical audience that briefly synthesizes interim results from all four study components (implementation, impact, participation, and cost-benefit analyses) and across all pilot sites. At a minimum, the interim report (or each volume of the interim report) shall include:

- an executive summary;
- an introduction and background to the pilot project and evaluation;
- a description of study issues, objectives and research questions;
- a discussion of the research methods employed;
- a presentation of evaluation results organized by research objectives;
- a discussion of the study limitations;
- a summary of the study conclusions; and

- any technical appendices necessary to fully document the analytic procedures used, including the data collection instruments.

The contractor shall provide a detailed outline – in draft and revised final – of the interim report to the COR for approval. The contractor shall provide the COR draft tables and graphics that present the major preliminary findings. The contractor shall be prepared to have discussions with the COR and other FNS staff that focus on the interpretation, implication, and presentation of preliminary findings. Such discussions will also offer the opportunity to identify additional analyses that might be needed to thoroughly understand the results.

The contractor shall submit an electronic copy of the interim report, associated appendices, and executive summaries in a microcomputer word processing format agreeable to FNS and a PDF file. The timing of interim reports will be determined based on the duration of operation of the demonstration projects. The contractor shall submit a draft interim report to the COR within two hundred-eighteen (218) weeks of contract award for review. The contractor shall submit a revised draft interim report within four (4) weeks of receipt of comments from the COR. The contractor shall submit a final interim report within four (4) weeks of receipt of revised comments from the COR.

The contractor shall conduct a briefing at FNS Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia presenting an overview of the interim study results coordinated with the submission of the revised draft of the interim report. The briefing shall provide an overview of the study, including the purpose, objectives and research questions, methodologies, and key findings. Up to four (4) additional presentations may be required at locations to be announced (e.g., national meetings, Congress). The briefing may be recorded at the discretion of FNS.

The contractor shall provide proposed presentation materials and handouts to FNS for review at least two (2) weeks prior to the briefing for review. The contractor shall provide ten (10) hard copies and an electronic copy of the approved presentation materials for distribution at the briefing. The presentation will be prepared in PowerPoint or a similar format.

Subtask 6.3 Final Report

Upon completion of the analysis of the long-term round of data collection for all pilot sites, the contractor shall submit a report describing the pilot project and impacts. The contractor shall prepare a draft, revised, and final report that details and integrates the results from each project. The draft and revised report shall be submitted to FNS for review and comment along with a summary of the changes made in reference to prior comments. The revised interim reports will be circulated for peer review, responses to which will be provided by the contractor in a memorandum to the COR.

The final report may consist of multiple volumes if determined appropriate by the contractor, with the approval of the COR. If the final report does consist of multiple volumes, the contractor shall prepare an integrated summary report for a non-technical audience that briefly synthesizes final results from all four study components (implementation, impact, participation, and cost-

benefit analyses) and across all pilot sites. At a minimum, the final report (or each volume of the final report) shall include:

- an executive summary;
- an introduction and background to the pilot project and evaluation;
- a description of study issues, objectives and research questions;
- a discussion of the research methods employed;
- a presentation of evaluation results organized by research objectives;
- a discussion of the study limitations;
- a summary of the study conclusions; and
- any technical appendices necessary to fully document the analytic procedures used, including the data collection instruments.

The contractor shall provide a detailed outline – in draft and revised final – of the final report to FNS for approval. The contractor shall provide the COR draft tables and graphics that present the major preliminary findings. The contractor shall be prepared to have discussions with the COR and other FNS staff that focus on the interpretation, implication, and presentation of preliminary findings. Such discussions will also offer the opportunity to identify additional analyses that might be needed to thoroughly understand the results.

The contractor shall submit an electronic copy of the final report, associated appendices, and executive summaries in a microcomputer word processing format agreeable to FNS and a PDF file. The timing of final reports will be determined based on the duration of operation of the demonstration projects. The contractor shall submit a draft final report to the COR within three hundred-twenty (320) weeks of contract award for review. The contractor shall submit a revised draft final report within four (4) weeks of receipt of comments from the COR. The contractor shall submit a final report within four (4) weeks of receipt of revised comments from the COR.

The contractor shall conduct a briefing at FNS Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia presenting an overview of the final study results coordinated with the submission of the revised draft of the final report. The briefing shall provide an overview of the study, including the purpose, objectives and research questions, methodologies, and key findings. Up to four (4) additional presentations may be required at locations to be announced (e.g., national meetings, Congress). The briefing may be recorded at the discretion of FNS.

The contractor shall provide proposed presentation materials and handouts to FNS for review at least two (2) weeks prior to the briefing for review. The contractor shall provide ten (10) hard copies and an electronic copy of the approved presentation materials for distribution at the briefing. The presentation will be prepared in PowerPoint or a similar format.

Task 7 Data Files and Documentation

Task 7.1 Interim Data Files and Documentation

At the time of submission of revised draft of the interim report, the contractor shall provide a copy of the restricted use data files used for generating the analyses presented in the draft and provide the computer code used by the contractor for analyses that appear in the interim report. The files shall be complete, such that FNS can quickly and easily replicate all analyses without further information from the contractor. At the time of submission of the final interim report, the contractor shall provide a copy of the restricted use files and documentation, reflecting any comments from the COR.

These files shall be provided in micro-computer format for use with suitable analytic software approved by FNS. In addition, the contractor shall provide full documentation for these data files including:

- File structure (data set name, record format, record length, block size, and number of records);
- Code book (record layout including variable names, variable format, variable labels, value labels, and missing values);
- Formulation of any calculated variables; and
- Computer code (SAS/STATA, etc.) used to clean the data, assemble the analytic data bases, and generate all tables, graphs and flowcharts that appear in the final report.

Where relevant, the contractor will provide complete interview transcripts, along with analytic coding in a format approved by FNS, as restricted use data files with the relevant draft report(s).

The contractor shall prepare and submit to FNS upon acceptance of the interim report a separate set of public use data files that eliminates confidential information and is ready for copying and dissemination to the public. These public use data files should include a file that provides the codebook and documentation of these data sets. The public use files should be complete such that another researcher could use the files without needing any further guidance from FNS or the contractor, and thus must include any necessary explanations for using weights, imputations procedures, and similar information. The Contractor shall employ masking and other strategies as appropriate to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the sample members, as it applies. The contractor shall provide draft public use file documentation for review and approval to the COR concurrent with submission of the final interim report. The contractor shall provide final public use file documentation within four (4) weeks of receiving comments from the COR.

The contractor shall submit public use files in a machine-readable and open format that is nonproprietary, publicly available and without restrictions on its use, consistent with OMB Memorandum M-13-13, [*Open Data Policy-Managing Information as an Asset*](#).

Task 7.2 Final Data Files and Documentation

At the time of submission of revised draft of the final report, the contractor shall provide a copy of the restricted use data files used for generating the analyses presented in the draft and also provide the computer code that was used by the contractor for all analyses that appear in the final report. The files shall be complete, such that FNS can quickly and easily replicate all analyses without further information from the contractor. At the time of submission of the final report, the contractor shall provide a copy of the restricted use files and documentation, reflecting any comments from the COR.

These files shall be provided in micro-computer format for use with suitable analytic software approved by FNS. In addition, the contractor shall provide full documentation for these data files including:

- File structure (data set name, record format, record length, block size, and number of records);
- Code book (record layout including variable names, variable format, variable labels, value labels, and missing values);
- Formulation of any calculated variables; and
- Computer code (SAS/STATA, etc.) used to clean the data, assemble the analytic data bases, and generate all tables, graphs and flowcharts that appear in the final report.

Where relevant, the contractor will provide complete interview transcripts, along with analytic coding in a format approved by FNS, as restricted use data files with the relevant draft report(s).

The contractor shall prepare and submit to FNS upon acceptance of the final report a separate set of public use data files that eliminates confidential information and is ready for copying and dissemination to the public. These public use data files should include a file that provides the codebook and documentation of these data sets. The public use files should be complete such that another researcher could use the files without needing any further guidance from FNS or the contractor, and thus must include any necessary explanations for using weights, imputations procedures, and similar information. The Contractor shall employ masking and other strategies as appropriate to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the sample members, as it applies. The contractor shall provide draft public use file documentation for review and approval to the COR within TBD weeks of contract award. The contractor shall provide final public use file documentation within four (4) weeks of receiving comments from the COR.

The contractor shall submit public use files in a machine-readable and open format that is nonproprietary, publicly available and without restrictions on its use, consistent with OMB Memorandum M-13-13, [*Open Data Policy-Managing Information as an Asset*](#).

GOVERNMENT OPTIONAL TASKS

The business and technical proposals for each option described below are to be clearly segregated from the materials related to the core study. At the Government's sole discretion at any time during the contract period of performance and via the issuance of one or more unilateral

change orders to the contractor, the Government may elect to exercise any or all of the following options. Technical approaches for each option shall be included as part of the technical and price proposals for the overall evaluation contract.

Option A: 5-Year Follow-Up

FNS is interested in the extent to which any observed impacts persist over time. FNS may elect to extend the contract to enable the contractor to conduct additional rounds of data collection via surveys and administrative data in order to analyze longer-term (5-year) effects. The timing of the additional administrative data collections, household surveys, and scope shall be recommended by the contractor and approved by FNS. The scope of data collection, analysis and reporting is expected to be comparable to the short- and long-term (3-year) tasks included in the core study. Results from these analyses will be presented in subsequent reports.

If FNS elects to exercise this option, the contractor shall submit a detailed plan for carrying out the option for COR review and approval. If the option is elected, the contractor will be expected to develop measures and information collection protocols and instruments, prepare the necessary clearance documents, conduct the additional follow-up and analyses, and prepare draft and final reports. In the conduct of this task, the contractor shall submit to the COR for review and approval drafts and subsequent final versions of each document required to complete the task (i.e., data collection plan, draft instrument, publication notices, OMB clearance package, revised instrument). The requirements for deliverables as set out for the core study shall apply to deliverables under this option, including draft, revised, and final reports.

Option B: Dissemination Plan

Evaluations of this magnitude pose special challenges to communicating results to a broad range of policy, research, and public interests in a clear and concise manner, while maintaining the scientific integrity of the project's findings. To supplement the traditional release of the technical reports included in the core tasks, this option calls for consideration of a broader range of communication channels and vehicles to ensure that results filter effectively into the public domain.

If FNS elects this option, the contractor shall develop a comprehensive plan for disseminating and communicating the project's findings to a broad audience of interested stakeholders in policy, research, and advocacy communities. The dissemination plan may include social media channels, conference presentations, policy briefings, working papers, scholarly journal articles, reports on special topics, and research or issue briefs, and opinion pieces for placement in popular and professional media. The plan should present a range of options; consider who should be responsible for execution; describe how they can be integrated coherently; and present proposed timelines for implementation.

The contractor shall submit a draft dissemination plan to the COR for review and comment within eight (8) weeks of the exercise of this option. The contractor shall submit a revised dissemination for approval within four (4) weeks of receiving comments from the COR. If the

plan is approved, the contractor will execute the dissemination plan in accordance with the tasks, assigned responsibilities, and deadlines included therein.

Option C: Special Analyses, Briefings and Presentations

At the discretion of the government, the contractor shall perform research and analyses related to the study area as requested by FNS and produce documents (e.g., short reports and/or briefs) that reflect the results of these analyses. The contractor may also propose analyses to be considered for such reports and issue briefs to the COR. After agreement is reached on a topic, the contractor shall submit a memorandum outlining the proposed approach for carrying out the work involved. The COR, with input from other federal staff and officials, will make the final determination about report topics.

The contractor shall perform the following activities for any reports and/or briefs authorized under this task:

- Consult with the COR and other federal staff, as appropriate, for initial discussion and guidance on each topic and obtain COR approval to undertake work on the topic.
- Submit draft plans 30 days after the COR agrees on each topic and final, detailed plans two (2) weeks after receipt of comments, for undertaking the work involved including data sources, timelines, briefing outline and table shells (if appropriate) to the COR for discussion and approval.
- Submit a draft report or issue brief on the schedule approved by the COR, and a final report/brief two weeks after receipt of comment. The final report/brief should be submitted in hard copy and electronic format as required for all deliverables.

At the discretion of FNS and the COR, the contractor shall brief FNS officials and staff on the status of the project or other related topics. The scheduling of the briefings shall be arranged by the COR. The contractor shall prepare a briefing agenda and materials in draft form and submit to the COR for review and comment no later than one (1) week prior to the briefing. The final agenda and materials shall be submitted to the COR no later than three (3) working days prior to the briefing.

SCHEDULE OF DELIVERABLES

Task		Deliverable	Due
1	Technical Working Group	1.1 Draft agenda and meeting materials	6 weeks before each meeting
		1.2 Final agenda and meeting materials	3 weeks before each meeting
		1.3 Draft meeting summary memorandum	3 weeks after each meeting
		1.4 Final meeting summary memorandum	3 weeks after COR comments
2	Pilot Project Site Selection and Support	2.1 Assessment, clarifying questions and recommendations to Technical Review Panel	3 weeks after receipt of State proposals from FNS
		2.2.1 Draft pilot orientation agenda and briefing materials	3 weeks before meeting
		2.2.2 Final pilot orientation agenda and briefing materials	3 business days before meeting
		2.3.1 Draft site implementation monitoring plan	31 weeks after contract award
		2.3.2 Final site implementation monitoring plan	3 weeks after COR comments
3	Update Evaluation Design and Study Plan	3.1 Draft revised study plan	31 weeks after contract award
		3.2 Final revised study plan	4 weeks after COR comments
4	Develop Data Collection Plan and Instruments	4.1.1 Summary memorandum of randomization pre-test	2 weeks after pre-test ends
		4.2.1 Draft Data Collection Plan and Instruments	37 weeks after contract award
		4.2.2 Final Data Collection Plan and Instruments	4 weeks after COR comments
		4.3.1 Draft 60-Day Federal Register Notice	31 weeks after contract award
		4.3.2 Final 60-Day Federal Register Notice	2 weeks after COR comments
		4.3.3 Draft OMB Package	37 weeks after contract award
		4.3.4 Revised OMB Package	2 weeks after COR comments

Task	Deliverable	Due
	4.3.5 Final OMB Package	2 weeks after COR comments
	4.4.1 Draft Data Collection Training Manuals	63 weeks after contract award
	4.4.2 Final Data Collection Training Manuals	2 weeks after COR comments
	4.5.1 Training Summary Memoranda	1 week after training
5	Execute Evaluation Plan	To be determined based on revised evaluation design and study plan (Task 3)
6	Reporting	
	6.1.1 Draft annual progress report to Congress	Annually by October 15
	6.1.2 Revised annual progress report to Congress	Annually by November 15
	6.2.1 Draft outline of interim report	200 weeks after contract award
	6.2.2 Revised outline of interim report	2 weeks after COR comments
	6.2.3 Draft interim analytic tables and graphs	TBD
	6.2.4 Draft interim evaluation report	218 weeks after contract award
	6.2.5 Revised interim evaluation report	4 weeks after COR comments
	6.2.6 Final interim evaluation report	4 weeks after COR comments
	6.2.7 Draft interim briefing materials	2 weeks before briefing
	6.2.8 Final interim briefing materials	1 business day before briefing
	6.3.1 Draft outline of final report	304 weeks after contract award
	6.3.2 Revised outline of final report	2 weeks after COR comments

Task		Deliverable	Due	
	6.3.3	Draft final analytic tables and graphs	TBD	
	6.3.4	Draft final evaluation report	320 weeks after contract award	
	6.3.5	Revised final evaluation report	4 weeks after COR comments	
	6.3.6	Final evaluation report	4 weeks after COR comments	
	6.3.7	Draft briefing materials	2 weeks before briefing	
	6.3.8	Final briefing materials	1 business day before briefing	
7	Data Files and Documentation	7.1.1	Draft interim restricted use data files and documentation	Concurrent with revised interim report
		7.1.2	Revised interim restricted use data files and documentation	Concurrent with final interim report
		7.1.3	Draft interim public use data files and documentation	Concurrent with final interim report
		7.1.4	Revised interim public use data files and documentation	4 weeks after COR comments
		7.2.1	Draft final restricted use data files and documentation	Concurrent with revised final report
		7.2.2	Revised final restricted use data files and documentation	Concurrent with final report
		7.2.3	Draft final public use data files and documentation	Concurrent with final report
		7.2.4	Revised final public use data files and documentation	4 weeks after COR comments
*	Project Orientation	Orientation meeting agenda	2 work days before meeting	
		Orientation summary memorandum	2 weeks after meeting	
*	Periodic Reports	Monthly progress reports	Monthly by the 15th	

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	PERFORMANCE DELIVERABLE MONITORED	SURVEILLANCE METHODOLOGY	PERFORMANCE RATING	SURVEILLANCE FREQUENCY	MONITORING PERFORMED
<p>Quality of Products or Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete per approved study plan • Accurate per approved study plan • Drafts reflect FNS's feedback on prior drafts • Based on state-of-the-art research methods according to peer review • Well-written with proper grammar 	<p>All deliverables as described in the PWS and specified in the approved Schedule of Deliverables</p>	<p>100% inspection</p>	<p>Government acceptance or rejection</p>	<p>Per contract's approved schedule of deliverables</p>	<p>Acceptance or rejection of each deliverable is noted via a government transmittal sheet attached to the deliverable</p>
<p>Schedule</p>	<p>On time</p>	<p>All deliverables as described in the PWS and specified in the approved Schedule of Deliverables</p>	<p>100% inspection</p>	<p>Exceptional Very Good Satisfactory Marginal Unsatisfactory</p>	<p>Per contract's approved schedule of deliverables</p>	<p>Contractor Performance and Rating System(CPARS)</p>

Cost Control	According to the FFP listed in the approved budget per task in the schedule of deliverables	All deliverables as described in the PWS and specified in the approved Schedule of Deliverables	100% inspection	Exceptional Very Good Satisfactory Marginal Unsatisfactory	Per contract's approved schedule of deliverables and each deliverable's accompanying invoice	Contractor Performance and Rating System(CPARS)
Business Relations	Professional and respectful of all parties	Regular and ad-hoc meetings between contractor and Government	Semiannual performance evaluation	Exceptional Very Good Satisfactory Marginal Unsatisfactory	Semiannual	Contractor Performance and Rating System(CPARS)
Management of Key Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate academic credentials for the work involved • Attends scheduled meetings • Available for ad-hoc meetings as necessary for contractual concerns • Time is scheduled per the staff loading chart in the contractor's proposal 	Regular and ad-hoc meetings between contractor and Government	Semiannual performance evaluation	Exceptional Very Good Satisfactory Marginal Unsatisfactory	Semiannual	Contractor Performance and Rating System(CPARS)

RATINGS DEFINITIONS

Exceptional	Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds many to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed was accomplished with few minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor was highly effective.
Very Good	Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds some to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed was accomplished with some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor was effective.
Satisfactory	Performance meets contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor appear or were satisfactory.
Marginal	Performance does not meet some contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed reflects a serious problem for which the contractor has not yet identified corrective actions. The contractor's proposed actions appear only marginally effective or were not fully implemented.
Unsatisfactory	Performance does not meet most contractual requirements and recovery is not likely in a timely manner. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains a serious problem(s) for which the contractor's corrective actions appear or were ineffective.