



# **Subtask 7.2: Congressional Status Report on the 2012 Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations**

**Final**

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# 1. Introduction

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides nutrition benefits during the summer to children living in low-income areas. Despite aggressive efforts, data reveal that the SFSP reaches a fraction of the eligible child population and substantially less than the National School Lunch Program during the school year (USDA, 2010; Nord & Romig, 2006).

Authorized under the 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (P.L. 111-80, 749[g]), FNS initiated demonstration projects to develop and test methods of providing access to food for low-income children in urban and rural areas during the summer when school is not in session. The initiative is being implemented in three phases (USDA, 2011). In summers 2010 and 2011, Phase 1 addressed the financial constraints that prevent some sponsors from staying open for long periods of time during the summer and the restrictions on funding enrichment activities that attract participants and sustain attendance at SFSP sites. Projects in Phase 1 (now complete) were the Extending Length of Operation Incentive and Activity Incentive demonstration projects. Phase 2 (summers 2011 and 2012) involved the implementation of two additional demonstration projects – Meal Delivery and Food Backpack<sup>1</sup> – to address the challenge of serving enough children to operate sustainably and the risk of hunger that comes when sites are not open 7 days a week. Phase 3 (summers 2011 and 2012) consists of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) which uses the technologies of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to deliver benefits to eligible households. The purpose of SEBTC is to provide an additional approach to food access in the summer needed by children not adequately served by congregate feeding sites.

The USDA's FNS engaged Westat to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of Phase 1 and 2 demonstration projects (also known as "Enhanced Summer Food Service Program [eSFSP] demonstrations") -- Extending Length of Operation Incentive, Activity Incentive, Meal Delivery, and Backpack. Operations for Phase 1 ended in 2011. Phase 2 operations (Meal Delivery and Backpack) continued in summer 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to in this report as "Backpack demonstration project."

As directed by Congress under 749(g) of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act to submit an annual report detailing the progress it has made in using the \$85 million appropriated for demonstration projects under the Act, FNS has thus far submitted two yearly progress reports to Congress (USDA, 2011a; USDA, 2011b). This report covers the progress of the Enhanced Summer Food Service Program Demonstrations in 2011 and 2012 and will be incorporated into the third yearly report to Congress on these demonstrations.

The report begins with a brief description of the eSFSP demonstrations (Chapter 2) and a summary of the design and methodology of the evaluation of eSFSP demonstrations (Chapter 3). We then summarize 2011 evaluation progress and results (Chapter 4) and the status of the evaluation in 2012 (Chapter 5). The report ends with a discussion of the final plans for the eSFSP evaluation (Chapter 6).

## 2. Overview of eSFSP Demonstration Projects

FNS implemented four eSFSP demonstration projects -- under study by Westat (Table 2-1) -- to identify ways to reach a greater number of SFSP eligible children and stabilize food security in the summer. The Extending Length of Operation Incentive project, implemented in Arkansas, provided an additional \$0.50 per lunch at SFSP sites that offered meals for 40 or more days in the summer.<sup>2</sup> The Activity Incentive demonstration project in Mississippi was designed to determine whether providing sponsors with additional funding to create recreational or educational activities at their sites would increase SFSP participation. Sponsors selected by the Mississippi State grantee were given a grant of up to \$5,000 per site per year to implement enrichment activities at SFSP meal sites.

Two other demonstration projects began in the summer of 2011 and continued in 2012 -- the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects. The Meal Delivery demonstration project offered breakfast and lunch delivery to the homes or drop-off sites near homes of eligible children in rural areas. Meal Delivery funding was awarded to State agencies in Delaware, Massachusetts, and New York, and only children identified by school districts as eligible for free or reduced price school meals were eligible to participate.

State agencies in Arizona, Kansas, and Ohio were awarded funds to implement the Backpack demonstration project. This project provided weekend and holiday meals to children already participating in the SFSP. Children, age 18 and younger, normally eligible to receive meals at SFSP sites, were eligible to receive meals under the Backpack demonstration project. Each site operated the SFSP for varying lengths of time and had varying start and end dates. Similarly, eligible children could choose to participate for the entire duration or a part of the duration the SFSP was offered. Although sponsors of both the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations were expected to participate in the SFSP, the meals that were provided to children were consumed offsite and not at SFSP feeding sites.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2011, special consideration was also given to some sponsors that were located in flooded areas of Arkansas where some of their sites were prevented from operating 40 or more days during the summer. Thus, the 40-day cutoff criterion was relaxed if sponsors operated in school districts where the number of weekdays of SFSP operation during the entire summer was less than 40 days long but they operated for every weekday for the remainder of the summer.

Table 2-1. Overview Description of Demonstration Projects

Characteristics	Type of demonstration project			
	Extending Length of Operation Incentive	Activity Incentive	Meal Delivery	Backpack
Years of operation	2010-11	2010-11	2011-12	2011-12
Location (State)	Arkansas	Mississippi	Delaware, Massachusetts, New York	Arizona, Kansas, Ohio
Sites Claiming Incentive Funding	2010 - 163 2011 - 200* (8 interviewed)	2010 - 22 2011 - 41** (6 interviewed)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of sponsors in 2011	97**	22**	4	16
Purpose	To determine whether intervention (i.e., incentive) can improve access to meals for low income children for a longer period of time during the summer	To determine whether intervention (i.e., incentive) can increase SFSP participation	To determine whether non-congregate meal service will increase SFSP participation and ensure a more consistent level of food security among rural, low income children at a sustainable cost	To evaluate if providing a supply of nutritionally-balanced foods on the days that children do not receive meals through the congregate SFSP will help maintain the nutritional status children gain from participating in the NSLP during the year
Intervention	Sponsors given additional \$0.50 reimbursement per lunch served at sites open 40+ days during the summer	Sponsors given grant of up to \$5,000 per site per year to plan and implement new enrichment activities at SFSP meal sites. Funds paid for equipment and other expenses	Approved sponsors developed ways to deliver summer meals to eligible children in rural areas	Funding provided to approved sponsors to provide food backpacks to take home with meals to cover the days that SFSP meals are not available, typically on weekends

\*Due to flooding in some parts of Arkansas in 2011, the 40-day cutoff criterion was relaxed if sponsors operated in school districts where the number of weekdays of SFSP operation during the entire summer was less than 40 days long but they operated for every weekday for the remainder of the summer; data provided by Insight Policy Research (IPR).

\*\*Data obtained from IPR.



Table 2-1. Overview Description of Demonstration Projects (continued)

Characteristics	Type of demonstration project			
	Extending Length of Operation Incentive	Activity Incentive	Meal Delivery	Backpack
Eligibility	Sponsors in the State that operated at least one SFSP meal service site	Sponsors in the State that operated at least one SFSP meal service site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State agencies that administer the SFSP</li> <li>Sponsors approved by FNS</li> <li>Commitment to participate in SFSP and operation of demonstration project through summer 2012.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State agencies that administer the SFSP</li> <li>Sponsors approved by FNS</li> <li>Commitment to participate in SFSP and operation of demonstration project through summer 2012</li> <li>Successful sponsor operation of SFSP site in 2010</li> </ul>
Sponsor requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sponsors open for 40+ days were automatically approved as demonstration project sponsors</li> <li>Provision of project data</li> <li>Compliance with evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sponsors open for a minimum of 30 days during the summer could apply to receive demonstration funds</li> <li>Provision of project data</li> <li>Compliance with evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 2 meals per child per day; no more than 4 days at one time</li> <li>Compliance with SFSP meal patterns or equivalent</li> <li>Provision of project data</li> <li>Compliance with evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of backpacks or packages to carry food home</li> <li>Contents of backpacks - the same meal types (i.e. breakfast, lunch and/or supper) served at SFSP site</li> <li>Compliance with SFSP meal patterns or equivalent</li> <li>Provision of project data</li> <li>Compliance with evaluation</li> </ul>

Table 2-1. Overview Description of Demonstration Projects (continued)

Characteristics	Type of demonstration project			
	Extending Length of Operation Incentive	Activity Incentive	Meal Delivery	Backpack
Eligibility of demonstration participant	Same as SFSP (children age 18 and younger)	Same as SFSP (children age 18 and younger)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children identified by school districts as eligible for free or reduced price school meals</li> <li>▪ Parent or guardian consent required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as SFSP</li> <li>▪ Consent not required</li> <li>▪ Sponsors required to notify parents or guardians of SFSP participants about program</li> </ul>

Sponsors in the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects were selected by the States and approved by FNS. In the Meal Delivery demonstration project, parents of eligible children were required to return a signed consent form so their children could participate in the Meal Delivery demonstration project. The Backpack demonstration project did not require a signed consent. However, sponsors were required to notify parents about the Backpack demonstration project and describe the meals that would be provided.

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### 3. Summary of Design and Methodology of eSFSP Demonstration Evaluation

The evaluation of the eSFSP demonstrations uses a mixed method research design to meet FNS evaluation goals. The design has three primary components: (1) a household questionnaire data collection (administered to parents or caregivers of Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration project participants) and analysis, (2) site visits to all four types of demonstration projects and key informant interviews, and (3) cost data collection and analysis for all four types of demonstration projects.

Development of the sampling frame for the household questionnaire data collection consisted of obtaining names of demonstration project participants and parents or caregivers and then turning over the names and contact information in the sample to Westat's Telephone Research Center (TRC). Interviewers then administered a 30-minute telephone questionnaire to parents or caregivers of Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration project participants in English or Spanish using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The questionnaire included questions on targeting accuracy (whether those for whom the demonstration project food was intended actually consumed the food) and food security.<sup>3</sup> The food security section of the questionnaire contained the same 18-item/30-day reference period food security module contained in the yearly United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service survey of food security.

To examine implementation of the four types of demonstration projects, Westat conducted site visits and key informant interviews using semi-structured interview guides. Project costs were also ascertained. In summer 2011 project costs were examined for all four types of demonstration projects, with sponsor level data for the Extending Length of Operation Incentive and Activity Incentive projects provided by State grantees. Westat obtained sponsor level data directly from Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration project sponsors and also obtained State level costs of administering the grant from State grantees. Cost data collection in 2012 again consists of data collection from State grantees and sponsors in the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS), food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

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## 4. Summary of 2011 Evaluation Results

Westat submitted a 2011 Demonstration Evaluation Report to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in July, 2012 (Elinson et al., 2012). The following summarizes the major results from that report.

### 4.1 Household Questionnaire Data Collection and Analysis

In summer 2011 Westat completed 668 interviews (143 Meal Delivery and 525 Backpack). Eighty-two percent were conducted in English and 18 percent in Spanish. In fall 2011, a total of 471 interviews were completed (102 Meal Delivery and 369 Backpack), with the same English/Spanish distribution as in the summer (82 percent in English and 18 percent in Spanish).

Cooperation rates<sup>4</sup> in the summer and fall were over 90 percent for both types of demonstration projects combined. In the summer, the overall response rate<sup>5</sup> among those for whom there was contact information was 69.2 percent (64.6 percent for the Meal Delivery demonstration and 70.6 percent for the Backpack demonstration). Fall data collection consisted of re-contacting those respondents who were interviewed or partially interviewed in the summer. The re-contact rate<sup>6</sup> was 87.1 percent for both demonstrations combined. The response rate in fall 2011 was 78.0 percent for Meal Delivery respondents and 76.0 percent for Backpack respondents.

**Demonstration project participants.** Among children who were reported by respondents to have participated in the two demonstration projects, about half were female and half male; 62 percent were between the ages of 5 and 11. In addition, 52 percent of telephone interview respondents were non-Hispanic white, and 69 percent lived in a home where only English was spoken. About 20 percent lived with a never married parent or guardian,<sup>7</sup> and 86 percent of respondent households participated in one or more nutrition assistance programs. About 72 percent of participants lived in a household in which the annual income was \$25,000 or less, and 90 percent lived in a household with an income less than 185 percent of the poverty threshold.<sup>8</sup> In a comparison between Meal

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<sup>4</sup> Cooperation rate: The proportion of all cases interviewed of all eligible units ever contacted.

<sup>5</sup> Response rate: The number of complete interviews with reporting units divided by the estimated number of eligible reporting units in the sample.

<sup>6</sup> Re-contact rate: The estimated proportion of all eligible cases in which some responsible housing unit member was reached.

<sup>7</sup> 13.4 percent were not married and lived with a partner; 14 percent were widowed, divorced or separated.

<sup>8</sup> The 2010 poverty threshold for two adults and two children, obtained from the Bureau of Census website in 2011, was \$22,113. 185 percent of the poverty threshold was \$40,909.05.

Delivery and Backpack participants, Backpack participants were younger than Meal Delivery participants, primarily due to eligibility requirements in which Meal Delivery participants had to be in school and eligible for free or reduced price meals, while the Backpack demonstration allowed preschool-age children to participate.

Meal Delivery families differed from Backpack families in a number of ways. For example, compared to Backpack families, Meal Delivery families had lower income and were more likely to participate in other nutrition assistance programs. More Meal Delivery respondents compared to Backpack respondents

reported themselves to be non-Hispanic Black or non-Hispanic White and that only English was spoken at home. Differences in income-related factors may again be related to the eligibility requirements of the two demonstration projects since Meal Delivery participants needed to be eligible to receive free or reduced price meals. Differences in race-ethnicity may be explained by the location of the

demonstration projects. For example, the location of one of the Backpack demonstration projects was in Arizona, which has a large Hispanic population.

#### Key Findings for the Meal Delivery and Backpack Demonstrations in 2011

- About 50 percent of survey respondents reported that they missed at least one meal pick-up from a Meal Delivery drop-off site.
- Among households in which children participated in the Backpack demonstration at all, 61 percent took home backpacks on at least 75 percent of the weekends for which they were available.
- About 86 percent of all food items in both demonstration projects were consumed completely.
- Food consumption varied by type of food, with juice having the highest percent for “drank or ate it all” (95 percent) and vegetables and meat with the lowest percent (77 percent and 78 percent, respectively).
- 26 percent of food items were reported as being shared with others.
- Respondents reported that food was shared most often with children in the household in the demonstration project. The exception was vegetables which were mostly shared with an adult in the household.
- Among children, after adjusting for all other factors, there were no differences in food security in the summer and fall 2011. The key predictors for food secure children were participation in a Meal Delivery demonstration project, high self-reported annual household income ( $\geq \$35,000$  versus  $< \$10,000$ ), the perception by the respondent that food expenditures were the same in the summer as in the fall, and respondent interview within 7 days of demonstration project closure.
- In all comparisons between nationwide data on food security and demonstration project households, higher percentages of food secure households were found nationwide. This includes comparisons among households with children less than age 18 and comparable families receiving WIC and SNAP benefits in the previous 30 days.

**Participation.** A separate report submitted to FNS examined the impact of enhancement demonstrations on participation at SFSP sites as measured by meals served and average daily attendance in 2010 and 2011 (Peterson et al., 2011; Peterson et al., 2012). In Westat’s evaluation



report, participation is the extent to which children participated in the demonstrations (i.e., received meals or picked up backpacks each week). It was not expected that demonstration project participants would participate every available week, and, in fact, it was found that about 50 percent of survey respondents reported that they missed at least one meal pick-up from a Meal Delivery drop-off site. Among those who reported that at least one backpack was brought home, about 61 percent of households reported 75 percent or more participation in terms of the number of backpacks per child per week brought home.<sup>9</sup> Participation in the Backpack demonstration project was related to parent satisfaction with the healthiness of the food, the variety of the food, the convenience of the food, and the fact that members of the household liked the food. Participation also appeared to vary somewhat by income and by whether the household participated in another nutrition assistance program in addition to the demonstration project. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation – an indicator of low income -- appeared to be the single best predictor of Backpack participation.

**Food consumption and sharing.** Since food was consumed offsite in both the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects, targeting accuracy -- the extent to which the children who participated in the demonstrations ate the food themselves -- was particularly important to examine. Thus, we examined food consumption and food sharing as indicators of targeting accuracy. If the food was reported as being shared, the questionnaire inquired about those with whom the food was shared. Food consumption was determined for each food item reported in the most recent meal or backpack and was found to vary substantially by type of food. Among all food items reported by respondents, juice had the highest percent for “drank or ate all” (95 percent), and vegetables and meat had the lowest (77 percent and 78 percent, respectively). About 86 percent of all reported food items in both demonstration projects were consumed completely, and 26 percent of items were reported as being shared with others.<sup>10</sup>

There was little difference in food consumption between the two types of demonstration projects. Among the items reported, only milk and juice showed any difference; milk consumption was slightly higher, as reported by Meal Delivery respondents, while consumption of juice was slightly higher according to Backpack respondents. Moreover, there was a consistent pattern of higher

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<sup>9</sup> Backpack participation was calculated by using the number of backpacks that households were reported to have received and dividing this by the number of children in the household who participated in the demonstration project and again by the number of weeks that the demonstration project operated.

<sup>10</sup> Some respondents may not have understood the question on consumption because some items were reported as both consumed completely and shared. The question on food consumption was clarified in the 2012 data collection.

consumption among persons with lower economic means. For example, food consumption was highest for SNAP participants, households with less income versus more income, and less education versus more education.. Attitudes were also associated with food consumption, and consumption was higher among households that reported a higher level of satisfaction with the healthiness and convenience of the food provided.

As reported by survey respondents, when food was shared, it was most frequently shared with another child in the household who was in the demonstration or with an adult in the household, and less frequently with someone outside the household. In most cases, the ordering for food sharing was (1) a child in the household in the demonstration, (2) adults in the household, (3) a child in the household not in the demonstration, (4) pets, and (5) a friend outside the household (who may or may not have participated in the demonstration project). For example, 45 percent of milk items were reported as being shared with another child in the household in the demonstration; 35 percent with an adult in the household; 28 percent with a child in the household not in the demonstration; and 5 percent with friends (who may or may not have participated in the demonstration project). Sharing of fruit, bread/grains, and mixed food all followed this ordering. However, there were exceptions, such as vegetables, where 73 percent were shared with an adult in the household; 61 percent with another child in the household in the demonstration; and 16 percent with a child in the household not in the demonstration.

**Food Security.** A variety of analyses were conducted on food security in this study -- to examine food security during summer 2011 compared to fall 2011, to compare food security between Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration participants, and to identify predictors of food secure adults, children, and households. Due to small sample size and lack of baseline data and a comparison group, all results of these analyses should be considered preliminary and exploratory. Moreover, due to low coverage<sup>11</sup> in the Backpack demonstration project, non-respondent bias potentially exists. If all or most Backpack participants were covered, findings might be interpreted with more confidence.

In a descriptive analysis that compared food security in summer 2011 with food security in fall 2011, we found that food security was the same in summer and fall for adults and households in the Meal Delivery demonstration project and adults, children, and households in the Backpack demonstration

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<sup>11</sup>The number of children in families who returned a form with contact information as a percentage of the number who were estimated to have participated in the demonstration project

project. The percentage of food secure children was higher in the summer than in the fall in the Meal Delivery demonstration project.

When we compared food security between the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects in a descriptive analysis, there were greater percentages of food secure adults, children, and households in the Meal Delivery than in the Backpack demonstration in the summer. In the fall, food security was the same for both Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations in adults, children, and households.

We also evaluated whether food security varied by demographic and other characteristics in a covariate analysis. Statistically significant results of this analysis were then used in an adjusted analysis which allowed us to observe differences with respect to one variable while adjusting for others. The adjusted analysis for adults showed that being food secure may be slightly less likely in the summer than the fall; there was no difference in food security by type of demonstration; and adults were more likely to be food secure among higher household income levels ( $\geq$  \$35,000 versus  $<$  \$10,000) and less likely to be food secure in households if the respondent was never married and there was at least one non-English language spoken at home. The timing of the interview (whether the interview was conducted within 7 days of demonstration project closure or more than 7 days after project closure) was not a significant factor in adult food security after adjusting for all other variables.

In children, food security was the same in the summer and fall 2011, after adjusting for all other factors. The key predictors for food secure children were participation in a Meal Delivery demonstration project, high annual household income ( $\geq$  \$35,000 versus  $<$  \$10,000), a perception by the caregiver respondent that food expenditures were the same in the summer as in the fall, and respondent interview taking place within 7 days of demonstration project closure after adjusting for all other factors.

In the adjusted analysis for household food security, there was no difference in food security status between summer and fall or by type of demonstration project. Predictors of food secure households were household income (the higher the income the more likely to be a food secure household) and the respondent never having been married. One or more non-English languages spoken in the home was a predictor of food insecure households. Interview timing was not a significant factor for household food security after adjusting for all other variables.

Findings on food security during summer 2011 were compared to the national food security measures developed from data collected in December 2010 using a 30-day reference period in an 18-item food security module (the same module used in this study). In all comparisons, food security was higher nationwide compared to households of participants in the two demonstration projects. Comparisons were also made between National benchmarks and household survey data in fall 2011 when the children were back in school and participating in the school lunch and breakfast programs. Differences in food security between demonstration project participants followed up in fall 2011 and food security nationwide were consistent with all comparisons with summer data. Food security was considerably lower in the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects than all U.S. households, households with children younger than age 18, and comparable families receiving WIC<sup>12</sup> and SNAP<sup>13</sup> benefits.

## 4.2 Site Visits and Key Informant Interviews

Site visits and key informant interviews provided in-depth information on the implementation of all four types of eSFSP demonstration projects. The four types of demonstration projects differed in most aspects of implementation – recruitment and outreach, delivery of benefits, training and technical assistance, and monitoring – primarily due to the nature and requirements of each type of demonstration project.

**Recruitment and outreach.** In the Extended Length of Operation Incentive, selection of sponsors was based on an ability to stay open longer. In the Activity Incentive, sponsors were chosen based on their ability to identify sites that could offer incentives. In the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations, State grantees selected sponsors (approved by FNS) based on their ability to recruit parents and children. To identify appropriate sponsors, the State grantee in the Extending Length of Operation Incentive demonstration first identified the parts of the State with the lowest income levels and greatest need (based on the percentage of families eligible for free or reduced price meals) and then attempted to recruit sponsors to keep their sites open longer within those low-income areas. Recruitment consisted of announcements at SFSP full day trainings, local town hall meetings, and SFSP application trainings. The State grantee in the Activity Incentive demonstration

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<sup>12</sup> WIC: Special Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children

<sup>13</sup> SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

issued a Request for Application (RFA) to select sponsors to participate in this demonstration. Awardees would receive an incentive grant of up to \$5,000 to offer educational or recreational activities at their site. The State identified areas of the State in most need. Outreach to sponsors to apply for the grant included an announcement at SFSP trainings, a mailout of a letter to potential sponsors, and distribution of a media release.

Meal Delivery sponsors worked first with schools to identify children who were eligible for free or reduced price meals. Outreach efforts then consisted of the distribution of flyers, invitational letters and packets to eligible families, and word of mouth. Backpack demonstration project outreach consisted of mailings to parents through schools, media releases, and distribution of flyers.

**Delivery of benefits.** Among the four types of eSFSP demonstration projects, the type of benefits differed as well as the target of each type of benefit. For the Extending Length of Operation Incentive demonstration project, the benefit was an extra \$0.50 per lunch for those sites open 40 or more days during the summer. Although the benefit was directed at sponsors as an inducement to stay open longer, the children were expected to benefit by the sites operating more days than usual during the summer. The benefit in the Activity Incentive demonstration was the provision of a grant to sponsors that would enable sites to fund activities. The activities were expected to draw more children and sustain their participation. The benefits in the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations consisted of the food provided to the children participating in the projects during times when food was not typically provided in the SFSP (i.e., weekends and holidays) and in rural parts of the State not typically served by the SFSP.

Sponsors participating in the Extending Length of Operation Incentive demonstration reported that the extra \$0.50 per lunch provided opportunities to operate on weekends, purchase more food to be able to serve more children, hire additional staff to assist with serving the children, and help to offset transportation costs for food delivery. Additionally, funds were used to host special events such as waterslide days, picnic days, and mascot costume parties with Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Thus, like the Activity Incentive demonstration project, some of the sites in the Extended Length of Operation demonstration project also provided additional activities to participants.

In the Activity Incentive demonstration, the incentive was used for both indoor and outdoor activities onsite (e.g., arts and crafts, songs and poetry, cooking and sewing class, exercise sessions, field sports), as well as field trips to a variety of community activities (e.g., zoo, theater). Incentive

funds were supplemented by community partner organizations that provided transportation for field trips, donations of gifts to use as game prizes, school and other supplies, and staffing.

The distribution of meals was handled differently in the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects. All Meal Delivery sponsors used a drop-off location to distribute meals. In addition to using a drop-off location to deliver meals, the Massachusetts sponsor also delivered meals to some children's homes. Meal Delivery meals were prepared in one central location and then delivered to the sites or homes. Food was provided cold but could be warmed up at home. All food distributed in the Backpack demonstration projects was shelf stable and was distributed at SFSP sites.

Backpack projects varied by bag type. Some used reusable grocery bags, plastic grocery bags or zip top bags. Some of the Ohio and Arizona sponsors used actual backpacks which needed to be returned each week. Backpack or bag distribution occurred at the end of the week. If distribution was on Thursday, then meals for three days were provided in backpacks or bags. If distribution was on Friday, only two days' worth of meals were provided. Backpacks or bags were typically distributed by having the children line up and pick up a backpack or bag(s). As each child took a backpack or bag, staff or volunteers checked off backpack count forms at the site. Some of the foods provided by the Backpack demonstration required preparation at home before eating. For example, one sponsor provided all ingredients and recipes in the backpack so the foods could be assembled at home into nutritious, hot meals.

**Training, Technical Assistance, and Monitoring.** Training and technical assistance in the Extending Length of Operation Incentive and Activity Incentive demonstration projects were specific to the SFSP. On the other hand, all Meal Delivery and Backpack sponsors received training that was specific to the demonstration project. All demonstration projects received monitoring from State grantees characterized by visits to each sponsor and site. Monitoring visits and ongoing technical assistance for the Extending Length of Operation Incentive and Activity Incentive were consistent with State visits and technical assistance typically provided for all SFSP sponsors and sites. Ongoing technical assistance to Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations were ad hoc and informal, with most State grantees and sponsors relying on email and telephone to answer questions on issues that arose.

Some sponsors provided nutritional information and educational materials to demonstration project participants and their families (e.g., in Delaware, Massachusetts, Kansas, and Ohio). A few Backpack projects also held parent orientations.

### **4.3 Cost Data Collection and Analysis**

Cost data collection and analysis provided information on the cost per meal of each project, project startup costs and ongoing administrative costs. In 2011 there was variation in how data were collected from each type of demonstration project as well as the data elements provided. Westat received cost data from five out of eight State grantees on their startup and administrative costs. We also received data on the costs to sponsors. The Extending Length of Operation Incentive and Activity Incentive had been collecting cost data from sponsors since 2010, and State grantees were concerned that an increase in the amount of data collected might undermine sponsor participation in 2011. Thus, the State grantees provided Westat with administrative data that had already been collected from their sponsors. Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects provided cost data directly to Westat and contained more details. It should also be noted that there was significant variation across sponsors both in format and completeness of the information that was reported.

As a result of these issues (i.e., incomplete data, inconsistent categorization of data, and wide variation in costs among sponsors within the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects), the 2011 cost data were not considered to be as reliable as anticipated. Thus, findings from the cost data analysis were not reported. These reliability issues are being addressed in 2012 data collection through more extensive training to State grantees and sponsors, earlier data collection, and immediate followup on missing or inconsistent data.

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## 5. Evaluation Status in 2012

Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects operated again in summer 2012. Meal Delivery demonstrations again were staged in Delaware, Massachusetts, and New York. The three Backpack demonstrations operated in Arizona, Kansas, and Ohio. The evaluation design and methodology for 2012 is fundamentally the same as it was in 2011, except that the Extending Length of Operation and Activity Incentive demonstration projects are no longer included. The study continues to use a mixed method research design containing three primary components: (1) a household questionnaire data collection (administered to parents or caregivers of Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration project participants) and analysis, (2) site visits to Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects for observation and key informant interviews, and (3) cost data collection and analysis for Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects. The status of each component is described below.

### 5.1 Household Questionnaire Data Collection

To build the sampling frame for the evaluation in 2012, Westat again asked demonstration project sponsors to provide names of demonstration project participants and their parents or caregivers. This information was forwarded to Westat's Telephone Research Center (TRC) so that parents or caregivers could be contacted for a 30-minute telephone interview. To date, summer 2012 telephone interviews have been completed, and the last round of data collection in fall 2012 is underway.

In summer 2012, a total of 743 interviews were completed or partially completed (Table 5-1) – 188 Meal Delivery and 555 Backpack. Overall, 91.9 percent of the interviews were conducted in English and 8.1 percent in Spanish. A greater percentage of Spanish interviews were conducted for the Backpack demonstration, with 7.4 percent of the Meal Delivery interviews in Spanish and 8.3 percent of the Backpack interviews in Spanish. Final interview results represent an 82.4 percent contact rate, 88.0 percent cooperation rate, 3.7 percent refusal rate, 2.9 percent ineligibility rate, and 70.0 percent response rate (Table 5-2).<sup>14</sup> The summer 2012 response rate for Meal Delivery interviews was 66.1 percent and for Backpack interviews was 71.5 percent.

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<sup>14</sup>Contact rate: The estimated proportion of all eligible cases in which some responsible housing unit member was reached; Cooperation rate: The proportion of all cases interviewed of all eligible units ever contacted; Refusal rate: The estimated proportion of all cases interviewed of all eligible units ever contacted; Ineligibility rate: The proportion of contacted cases found to be ineligible; Response rate: The number of complete or partially complete interviews with reporting units divided by the estimated number of eligible reporting units in the sample.

**Table 5-1. Summer 2012: Number of Completed and Partially Completed\* Interviews by Language and Type of Demonstration Project**

Interview language	Meal Delivery		Backpack		Both demonstrations	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
English	174	92.6	509	91.7	683	91.9
Spanish	14	7.4	46	8.3	60	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*A partially completed interview is one in which the entire food security section of the questionnaire was completed.

**Table 5-2. Summer 2012: Completion Rates by Demonstration Type**

Completion rate	Meal Delivery (%)	Backpack (%)	Both demonstrations (%)
Contact rate	74.2	85.4	82.4
Cooperation rate	94.3	86.0	88.0
Refusal rate	3.2	3.9	3.7
Ineligibility rate	5.0	2.2	2.9
Response rate	66.1	71.5	70.0

## 5.2 Site Visits and Key Informant Interviews

Site visits to Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstrations were conducted between June 20, 2012 and August 17, 2012. Site visit training took place on June 14, 2012. Key informant interviews were conducted with all State grantees and sponsors using the same interview guide that was used in summer 2011 except that the interview guide was updated slightly to inquire about changes from the previous year. In addition to key informant interviews, interviewers also used a checklist to record specific observations (e.g., accessibility measures, signage, backpack/bag storage prior to distribution) (Appendix A).

All State grantees and sponsors were interviewed for a total of 26 State grantee and sponsor key informant interviews (Table 5-3). Westat staff visited 19 food distribution sites, and an observation checklist was completed for 18 sites.

**Table 5-3. Status of Site Visits and Key Informant Interviews**

	State grantee	Sponsors	Sites	Observation checklist
<b>Backpack</b>				
Arizona	1	3	3	3
Kansas	1	7	8	8
Ohio	1	6	4	3
<b>Backpack total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Meal Delivery</b>				
Delaware	1	1	2	2
Massachusetts	1	1	1	1
New York	1	2	1	1
<b>Meal Delivery total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Grand total</b>				
	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>

### 5.3 Cost Data Collection

Westat is currently collecting 2012 cost data from State grantees and sponsors. To date, Westat has received completed cost instruments from all four Meal Delivery sponsors and 15 out of 16 Backpack sponsors (Table 5-4). One Meal Delivery and one Backpack State grantee have not yet submitted a completed cost instrument. To improve the accuracy and interpretation of the data Westat receives, the project economist immediately follows up by telephone with each sponsor and State grantee. Data collected thus far show large differences in costs (e.g., startup, space, food distribution) between a demonstration project that can piggy-back off an existing food program compared to a standalone program. In addition, since Backpack programs differ in the types of bags they provide (e.g., plastic bags, school backpack) and requirements for re-using the bags (some give out a new bag with each distribution; others re-use bags), costs for backpacks appear to differ dramatically among the Backpack demonstrations.

**Table 5-4. Status of Cost Data Collection: Number of Cost Instruments Received**

Type of Instrument	Meal Delivery	Backpack	Both demonstrations
State grantees	2	2	4
Sponsor	4	15	19

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## 6. Final Evaluation Plans

The end date for the eSFSP demonstration evaluation is September 15, 2013. Remaining tasks include the completion of fall 2012 telephone interviews, cost data collection, and analysis of all three types of data (telephone interview, key informant interviews and site visit observations, and cost data).

Analysis of the 2012 telephone interview data will consist of an examination of the extent to which demonstration project participants received meals and backpacks and an assessment of targeting accuracy and food security. As we did in 2011, we will compare the food security of demonstration project participants between summer and fall 2012 – for the Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects separately, as well as food security measures *between* Meal Delivery and Backpack demonstration projects during summer 2012 and during fall 2012. Further analysis of food security will consist of an examination of the association between adult, child, and household food security and a variety of covariates (e.g., participation in other nutrition assistance programs; perception of change in food expenditure; participant age and gender; socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent and household; and parent satisfaction with the food in the demonstration project). We will conduct an analysis to evaluate food security status while adjusting for the covariates that exhibit a significant bivariate association with food security. Finally, we will compare food security obtained through our study with national benchmarks published annually by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Analysis of key informant data will again examine startup activities; roles and responsibilities; recruitment and outreach; food distribution logistics; oversight and monitoring; training, technical assistance, and family education; and perceived strengths and weaknesses of the demonstrations. We will also compare findings in 2012 with those in 2011 to determine the ways in which early issues were resolved. For the cost analysis, we will again examine costs per meal and give special attention to some of the reasons for variations in costs.

Westat will submit a final report on the eSFSP demonstration evaluation to FNS by May 27, 2013.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Site Observation Form**

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## Site Observation Form

State (circle one): Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, Arizona, Kansas, Ohio

Sponsor:

Site:

No.	Type of Demonstration	Site Environment	Description
1	Meal Delivery and Backpack	What has been done to make the site appealing to children? Examples: toys, books, drawing supplies available	
2	Meal Delivery and Backpack	What kinds of accessibility measures have been taken?	
3	Meal Delivery and Backpack	Is there any signage for the project or for the place where meals/bags are distributed?	
4	Meal Delivery and Backpack	At what type of location are project sites located (e.g., school cafeteria, school classroom, activity room at park, community center, church hall)?	
5	Meal Delivery and Backpack	Is the space shared with another program or organization?	
6	Meal Delivery and Backpack	Is drop-off or distribution inside or outdoors?	
7	Meal Delivery and Backpack	If drop-off or distribution is outdoors, how is drop-off or distribution handled in case of inclement weather.	
8	Meal Delivery and Backpack	Is informational material available?	
9	Meal Delivery and Backpack	Is informational material available in appropriate translations?	
10	Meal Delivery and Backpack	If informational material available how is it made available or distributed? Examples: left on table; placed in backpack or bag	
11	Meal Delivery and Backpack	Who picks up the food/bags (children, adults, both)?	

### Site Observation Form (continued)

No.	Type of Demonstration	Site Environment	Description
12	Meal Delivery and Backpack	<p>What is done if there are meals/backpacks (bags) left over?</p> <p>Examples: takes leftover food to local pantry; takes leftover food to the next drop-off location</p>	
13	Backpack only	<p>How are backpacks/bags stored prior to distribution?</p>	
14	Backpack only	<p>Do children eat any of the food onsite (e.g., do they open up bags to take out and eat any of the food)?</p>	
15	Backpack only	<p>Do children share any of the food onsite?</p>	
16	Backpack only	<p>What is done if there are more children than backpacks or bags?</p>	