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SFSP RFA Webinar 110910

Hello, everybody and thank you for joining us today for the webinar on the Summer Food Service Program Delivery and Food Backpacks Demonstration Project. Before the webinar actually gets started, I just wanted to take a moment to review some of the logistics of the webinar tool. Handouts for today's session can be found in the "Handout" tab of the Live Meeting tool. The handout tab is in the top right-hand side of your screen. It looks like three little pieces of paper. If you click on that tab, you'll see that the handout for today is copy of the PowerPoint presentation, and you can click that and download it directly to your computer.

There will be a question-and-answer session following today's presentation. You may ask a question through the webinar tool by typing your question into the Q&A tab located at the top left-hand side of your screen or by pressing "*"1" on your phone, at which point you will need to record your name at the prompt, and you'll be entered into the queue to have your phone line opened by the operator to ask your question.

Streaming video will not be used for this session, so please be sure if you have a computer webcam that it is disabled. And that is all for the logistics. So I will go ahead and turn this over for today's presentation to Ms. Marisa Kirk-Epstein with the USDA Food Nutrition Service.

Thank you. Hi, I'm Marisa Kirk-Epstein. I'm with the Child Nutrition Division, and the purpose of this webinar today is to review the requests for application and answer any questions you may have as you're preparing your proposals. I have in the room here with me today, some other staff – other national office staff from the Child Nutrition Division, as well as the Office of Research and Analysis to help answer any of your questions at the end of the session. We are going to start out by reviewing the RFAs first, which will probably take about 30 minutes, and then we'll have the remaining time for questions.

Okay. So let me start out with some brief background on the Summer Demonstration Project as a whole. The Agriculture Role Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies Appropriations Act of 2010 provided the authority and \$85 million in funding for FNS to implement and test new methods for providing access to food for low-income children in urban and rural areas during the summer months when schools are not in regular session. These projects are being implemented in multiple phases.

During this past summer, 2010, FNS implemented two demonstration projects, the Activity Incentive Project that was awarded to Mississippi to examine the effects of providing funding to sponsors for enrichment activities to attract children to feeding sites, and the extending length of operation incentive project that was awarded to Arkansas to test the impacts of providing incentives to sponsors that operate 40 or more days.

In summer 2011, we're going to implement the two demonstration projects contained in this RFA, the Home Delivery and the Food Backpacks Demonstrations, as well as a proof-of-concept model for the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children, also referred to as the SEBTC demonstration, to test the affects of providing children that are eligible for free and reduced priced meals with WIC or SNAP benefits during the summer. And then in summer 2012, we're going to begin the expansion of the SEBTC demos.

So let's start out today by looking at an overview of the Home Delivery Demonstration Project. The purpose of this is to address the low summer food service program participation rates in rural areas. SFSP sponsors rural areas frequently struggle to achieve the level of participation needed at congregate feeding sites to earn enough reimbursement to continue offering meals, either because children cannot travel the long distances to the site or because there are simply not enough children in the area of the site.

The Home Delivery Demonstration Project will provide funding for approved sponsors in the selected state or states to develop ways to deliver summer meals to eligible children in rural areas at a sustainable cost. The possible methods for this demonstration may include delivery to

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homes of children certified for free or reduced price school meals, delivery to drop-off sites where parents have been informed they or their eligible children can collect the meals for off-site consumption, or other methods of providing meals that are exempt from the normal congregate feeding requirement in the SFSP. Sponsors may not serve more than two meals per child per day in this demonstration, and more than one day's worth of meals may be delivered at one time, but not more than four days at one time.

In accordance with our regulations the definition of rural used in this RFA for eligibility in this demonstration project is "Any area in a county which is not part of a metropolitan statistical area, or any pocket within a metropolitan statistical area, which, at the option of the state agency and with FNS concurrence, is determined to be geographically isolated from urban areas." The Home Delivery Demonstration Project is not intended to fund a couple of types of options. These are it's not intended to fund mobile feeding sites or transporting children to a congregate meal site, since these efforts are already allowable in the SFSP. Instead, the intent of this demonstration is to evaluate if 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.

Okay. Let's now turn to the Food Backpacks Demonstration. The purpose of the Food Backpacks Demonstration Project is to address the risk of hunger children may face during the days that SFSP sites are not operating. Most SFSP sites do not operate seven days a week, so this demonstration will supplement the traditional SFSP by utilizing an additional method of meal delivery during the summer days on days that meals are not available at SFSP sites.

The Food Backpacks Demonstration Project will provide funding for approved sponsors in the selected state or states to provide eligible children with food backpacks that they can take home with meals to cover the days that SFSP meals are not available, which are typically on the weekends. Backpacks may only be provided during the weeks of approved SFSP operation, and approved sponsors must operate a congregate meal sites under the SFSP for a majority of the week and use the backpacks to supplement this traditional meal service. Backpacks are not intended to replace a congregate meal program nor reduce the number of days a congregate meal program operates.

The goal of the Food Backpacks Demonstration project is to evaluate. It's 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 National School Lunch Program during the school year. More than one meal may be sent home with each child; however, the food provided is only intended to replace the meal or meals that would be served if the site was open.

The food backpacks are not intended to supply the entire food needs for the child during the time between the receipt of the food backpack and the next meal service at the site. For example, a site approved to serve lunch Monday through Friday may only provide two lunches in food backpacks handed out to children on a Friday.

For both of these demonstration projects, the meal requirements are as follows: First, food safety must be emphasized through food selection and packaging, as well as through instructions on storage and preparation that accompany the food. As with the regular SFSP meal service, sponsors must ensure that the food meets state and local health and safety requirements. Second, meals must comply with the SFSP meal pattern, or a healthful nutritionally balanced alternative must be proposed. Third, the food does not have to be provided in unitized meals, but the food must be comprised of items that can be assembled into a meal for the child with minimum preparation and with few or preferably no additional ingredients contributed by the household. Finally, if the meals are not provided unitized, sponsors must provide a menu so participating households know which food items in combination comprise a nutritionally balanced meal.

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For these two demonstration projects, at a minimum, USDA will need sponsor meal delivery count data for each state, for each sponsor participating in the demonstration, as well as site level participation data for all SFSP sites in the state. The state agency will be responsible for collecting the data necessary for the demonstration and providing it to USDA or its evaluation contractor. This may require the state agency to establish additional reporting procedures for participating sponsors.

In addition to administrative data the evaluation will rely on surveys of participating families; therefore, sponsors must consider how they will gather and provide USDA with contact information for families willing to participate in the evaluation. An evaluation will be incorporated into the demonstration project to assess how effective these SFSP modifications are at increasing food security and participation in the SFSP.

All evaluation components will be designed and led by USDA or its contractors. The evaluator will conduct interviews with state staff, sponsor staff, and the parents or guardians of households with a child receiving benefits under the demonstration. The state agencies should submit signed letters of commitment from sponsors agreeing to participate in the evaluation component.

The state agency is the only entity eligible to apply directly with FNS to be awarded participation in one of these demonstration projects. All state agencies that administer the SFSP are eligible to apply for the Home Delivery and Food Backpacks Demonstration Projects. Although this RFA is limited to state agencies, most demonstration project funds will pass through selected state agencies to approve sponsors for implementation. State agencies may apply to both but will not be selected for participation in both. A separate application must be submitted for each demonstration project for states planning to apply for both. States applying for both Home Delivery and Food Backpacks Demonstration Projects should indicate which type of project they prefer to operate if both applications are competitive.

Sponsors apply for participation in these demonstrations in a different way from the state agencies. Sponsors apply for participation by submitting individual proposals to their state agency who will then select the proposals to include in their application to FNS. Any institution that meets the definition of sponsor in our summer regulations is eligible to submit an individual proposal to their SFSP state agency, including public and private non-profit school food authorities, public and private non-profit daycare, units of local, municipal, county, or state government, and private non-profit organizations.

Previous SFSP participation is not a requirement to participate in a Home Delivery Demonstration Project; however, only experienced sponsors who successfully operated the SFSP during summer 2010 may apply to conduct a Food Backpack Demonstration Project. State agencies are responsible for conducting outreach to interested and eligible SFSP sponsors and for collecting and screening individual sponsor proposals to ensure their adherence to the requirements of this RFA. The state agencies should submit only eligible and acceptable proposals that meet these criteria. However, FNS will select the state or states that will participate in the demonstrations, as well as the sponsors that will participate from among those included in the selected state's application. It is possible that not all sponsors for which a state agency submits an application will be selected to participate.

The types of children that are eligible to receive meals through these demonstration projects are as follows: For the Backpack Demonstration Projects, children, ages 18 and younger who are normally eligible to receive meals at SFSP sites and who attend the SFSP site are eligible to receive backpacks. For the Meal Delivery demonstrations, only children identified by school districts as eligible for free and reduced price school meals and whose parents give consent are eligible to receive delivered meals.

Meal delivery demonstrations require working with local schools to identify children certified for free or reduced price school meals. Household eligibility may be determined using the immediate

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preceding school year's free and reduced price meal certification from a child school. Although the SFSP serves preschool children, preschool children do not receive school meals during the year and are, therefore, not eligible to be enrolled in the meal delivery system. Parents or guardians must consent to participate in the meal delivery before meals are delivered to a household.

In order to apply for consideration to be selected for the Home Delivery or Food Backpacks Demonstration Projects, interested and eligible state agencies must submit the following in their application: First, a plan of operation that describes how they will implement the project if chosen. Plans should be brief but must include sufficient detail to provide assurances to FNS that the demonstration project will be successful. This includes submission of the following information: Description of the need for the demonstration in the state and how the state agency will manage the demonstration project, including oversight and monitoring of project activities, financial responsibilities, and reporting in cooperation with evaluation, a proposed plan for how the state agency will disperse the funds to selected sponsors, and how the state agency will ensure that the money is spent appropriately. It should also include information on staffing, including how the state agency will staff the project, including the position, titles, and experience of the key staff members that will have responsibilities under the project, the proportion of their time that will be devoted to the demonstration project, and a summary of each individual's roles and responsibilities.

It should also include information on the budget, and applicants should provide a detailed budget narrative for all administrative funds and describe how those costs relate to the project objectives. The state agency must include standard form 424 and 424a. State agency plans of operation should not exceed five pages and should be single-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font.

The second thing that state agencies need to include in their application is the sponsors' proposals that the state agency has assessed for eligibility in the project. And the state agency also needs to submit signed letters of commitment from the state commissioner or a prevalent position expressing that the state will follow through with participating in the demonstration project, and signed letters of commitment from each sponsor.

In addition, for the Home Delivery Demonstration, local schools that will supply the demonstration operator with the names and addresses of free and reduced priced certified children must sign letters of commitment. And the final thing that needs to be included in the applications are the following assurance and disclosure forms that must be completed and submitted to FNS.

The following is information on application submission. The deadline is on or before December 15th, 2010, by 5:00 p.m., and the applications must be submitted either electronically at the following website, or by mail, and applications may not be accepted by fax or e-mail. In addition, late applications and additions or revisions to submitted applications will not be considered.

FNS presumes that the state agencies currently administering the SFSP have the capacity to manage the program, and, therefore, will be considering the state agency proposal primarily on the proposed capacity to add the demonstration activities to current responsibilities and their abilities to compile necessary data for the evaluation component.

The state agency plans will be reviewed by FNS by using the following criteria: proposal quality and effectiveness, state agency management, state agencies ability to contribute to the evaluation component, and budget appropriateness and economic efficiency. And more detail is included on this in the RFA.

The award decision for state agencies will be primarily be based on the merit of the sponsors' proposals it submits with its application. Individual proposals must be submitted by the state agencies for each sponsor wishing to participate in the demonstration. The panel will numerically

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score each individual sponsor proposal contained in each state agency application using the following evaluation criteria: the merit of project design, which will be worth 40 points; organizational experience, and management and staff capability, which will be worth 30 points; and budget appropriateness and economic efficiency, which will be worth 30 points.

Each individual sponsor proposal should not exceed four pages and should be single-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font. And finally, this is a list of the critical dates to keep in mind, most importantly, the applications are due on December 15th. And FNS anticipates selecting one state for each demonstration project but may decide otherwise, based on the proposals.

So now we will go to our question-and-answer portion. Should I start with the phone? Operator, are there any questions, or you may open the line for questions at this time.

Thank you. If you have a question, please press “*1” on your touchtone phone. Please unmute your phone and record your name at the prompt. That’s “*1” if you have a question. To withdraw your request you may press “*2.” One moment please. We have a question coming in. I have two questions and I can’t hear a name on either one. I’ll go ahead and open one line. If you press “*1” your line is open. Please check your mute button. If you press “*1” for a question, your line is open. Please speak. One moment for our next question. Our next question comes from Randy Moens [PH]. Go ahead, sir. Your line is open.

The reimbursement for meals, is it the same as what it currently is for, you know, breakfast, lunch meals, snacks?

Yes, the reimbursement is the same. (Note: We have corrected this answer in the Q&As. Reimbursement for the meals in both demonstrations will not operate like it does in the SFSP. Instead, sponsors must include anticipated food costs in their proposed budgets, and reimbursements will be paid monthly as allowable and approved costs are incurred).

Okay. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Bev Benish [PH]. Go ahead, ma’am, your line is open.

We are calling from a smaller state, Nebraska, and we were just wondering if, for the statistical analysis, if you’re looking for a larger participating population or would a smaller state have an equal chance in this project for the Backpack Project?

I can’t see why it would be any different. It’s going to be the number of children, and in a state like Nebraska, for certain, you would have the opportunity to have more than enough children. I think states even smaller than Nebraska would be okay.

Thank you.

Uh-huh.

My next question comes from Heather Simpson [PH]. Go ahead, ma’am, your line is open.

Hi. Can you hear me?

Yes.

Yes, we can.

Okay. My question is about the budget. How do you recommend budgeting for the number of meals that will be served at a site if we don’t know how many meals we’ll be serving until it happens?

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I think – this is Melissa Rothstein [PH] from Child Nutrition. I think I would advise planning for – preparing that budget in the same way that you would prepare to sponsor a site, where you make projections based on the best available information that you have at the time based on the demographics, how your site is situated. That's how I would proceed. Does that help you?

Yes. So then what would happen if we were able to increase participation at a level that exceeded the amount of our grant?

We are constrained by budget considerations here overall for these projects, but certainly we would be able to work with you as the project unfolded. There would ultimately be a cap, but we would allow some room for that to occur.

Okay. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Daisy Rodriguez. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

Hi. My question has to do with the individual sponsor proposals. So am I to understand we submit those to the state; however, FNS will review all the proposals, not only the state but the individual sponsor proposals, and if any of the sponsor proposals are not acceptable, will they be declined?

Yes. The state is going to look at the proposals that get submitted to assess their eligibility and submit the strongest ones to us, and then we will be scoring them and making the award based on those individual sponsor proposals. But it is possible that if a state submits several sponsor proposals, FNS would choose to only fund some of them, and some of that would be based on the score that the proposal received, and we would also take into account budget considerations as well.

Thank you.

Our next question comes from Wanda Fecuty [PH]. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

Hi. We have several questions here in Pennsylvania and I'll start with the easiest ones first. Does the household agreement to participate, is that a prerequisite to getting the meals?

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Okay. And is there a minimum number of sponsors that we have to submit for? Can it just be one sponsor or do we have to submit proposals for more than one?

No. It is fine to submit one or more than one. There are no requirements there and we will make our decisions on award based on a variety of factors, and if several states have valid proposals that only fund one or two sponsors we may choose to fund more states. It depends on how the scores play out and what the funding situation looks like for us.

Okay. For the meal delivery method, do the meals need to be signed for at the time of delivery?

I'm not sure that there's a requirement in the RFA that the meals be signed for. I believe there is a requirement though, that the household – in order to receive the meals, that you have advance notification and basically acceptance from the household that they want to receive the meals. I do think it would be important though, to have some kind of controls in place to track those meals to make sure that they're going where they need to.

Okay.

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While it may not be a requirement it would be recommended?

Okay. My last question, and this is probably the more complicated one, on page eight of the RFA, under the meal delivery, midway through that first paragraph, it says that the meal delivery must be made only to children in households that have been certified eligible for free or reduced price meals and enrolled to participate in the meal delivery. Household eligibility may be determined using the immediate preceding school years free and reduced price meal certification from a child's school. Although the SFSP serves preschool children, preschool children do not receive school meals during the year, and are therefore not eligible to be enrolled in the meal delivery demonstration. Does that mean that only preschool children that are not part of a household that contains school-age children or is that even if there's school age children that are eligible and there are also pre-school age children in that household, only the school-age children can get the meals?

It is that only the school age children, for the meal delivery option, can get the meals.

Is there an explanation behind that?

Yeah. As we were talking through that the -- because the purpose of this particular -- because the purpose of these demos in general is to provide meals during the summer time because students are missing the National School Lunch Program meals, we're targeting the benefit through meal delivery to that population, and only to that school-age population. In contrast, the Backpack Program, because it is being served in conjunction with an existing Summer Food Service Program site, it's difficult to actually divide them into different groups, the preschool kids versus the school- age kids, but we are making that distinction just for the Meal Delivery one because of the replacement, the idea that these are replacing National School Lunch Program meals.

Thank you.

So before we take the next phone question, we're going to take a couple of the questions that came through online. So the first question is: the letter of intent should consist of what points?

I believe there is a sample of intent in the package, but regardless, the idea is just that you write to FNS, the address given in the RFA, and tell them that your state agency is intending to apply for this demonstration. It's not a binding obligation in any sense. It's just really a work planning tool for FNS. If you think you're serious about applying, we would highly encourage you to submit that. We like to know how many we might get so that we can plan appropriately for staff to review them.

We already answered that one. Okay. What is the due date for sponsor proposals? Is it determined by the state agency? Yes, this is determined by the state agency, based on how much time they may need to assess those.

Does the School Food Authority need to submit proposals at the school level?

A school food authority could be an eligible sponsor for these demos, and so whoever the eligible sponsor would be would have to have one application. If it's the school food authority, and they plan to have several sites under them, that one application from the School Food Authority would describe and encompass all of the sites under them at various schools or other locations.

(INAUDIBLE)

No. If we're understanding the question correctly, I think it's asking whether proposals need to be submitted at the school level.

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(INAUDIBLE)

If that was your question and we didn't quite answer it, please let us know.

This next question says: "In California we don't collect data for meals prepared, operating costs by site, administrative costs by site, and all non-USDA income received. Would we not be eligible?"

Well, for purposes of this evaluation, that would be a requirement. We understand that many states don't collect that right now, but a very important part of all of these Summer Food for Children demonstrations is the evaluation, and that was stressed very strongly in the law that gave us the money and the requirements to conduct these demos. So that will be part of the demonstration requirements.

Okay. Can you please repeat the critical dates and application submission website and mailing address? The slides are available on – let's see – under "content," you can see the slides. You can download that yourself, and then they are also contained in the RFA, which is available on our website.

And why don't you – you can back up the slide and have it up there as well.

Well it's on two different –

There we go. I would put it on that one.

Here's the critical date.

The critical date – and as Marissa mentioned earlier, the most critical date is that applications are due from states to FNS no later than December 15th, and so eligible sponsors will need to work with their respective state agencies if they're interested in applying to find out what states expect of them in order to submit these on time.

Yeah. We'll go back to the phone line now and take a couple of phone questions. So, operator, can you open the lines again.

Thank you. Once again, if you have a question, it's "*1" on your touch tone phone, and record your name at the prompt. Our next question comes from Sandra Kengis [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

Hi. I'm wondering if schools that are provision-two schools are eligible to participate in the Home Delivery demo, because in those instances we would not have individual information on children who are eligible for free and reduced price meals.

Thanks for your question, Sandra. I don't know that we actually address that in the RFA, but the answer would be no. The way that we are determining eligibility is based on current free and reduced price school eligibility information, and, as you mentioned, provision two or three schools don't necessarily have that information on hand because it's usually several years old.

Okay. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Lynn Ladd [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

I believe you may have already addressed this in regards to how many states will be awarded. The last slide said that FNS anticipates selecting one state for each demonstration project. I was just looking for clarification on what you meant by the "demonstration project." Is it the – each

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demonstration of the Backpack and the Home Delivery, or is it the one previous, the Activities one that was out last spring and all the other ones?

It's this one here that we're talking about, one for Meal Backpack – one for Food Delivery and one for Backpacks. And like I mentioned a few minutes ago, we may actually select more. It really depends on budget issues and the quality of the individual sponsor proposals.

Okay. But right now the anticipation is two states?

Two total, yes.

Okay. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Betty Goodman [PH]. Betty, your line is open, go ahead.

Hi. I'm asking this from the viewpoint of a sponsor. The Food Backpack Project, is this a regular backpack that we should include the cost of in our budget?

Yeah. The cost of the backpacks can be budgeted for and covered under the Demonstration Project. Yes.

Okay. And how will we know which program our state is applying for? Do we have to get that information from them because we live in an urban area, so the home delivery would apply?

Yeah. I would strongly encourage any sponsor who is interested to talk immediately with their state agency to determine whether – what their plans are for application. And as Marissa mentioned earlier, states can apply for both. It's very unlikely that we're going to choose one state to do both projects, but they certainly can apply for both.

Okay. Thank you.

Mm-hm.

Our next question comes from Victoria Moore [PH]. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

Hi. I'm calling from the standpoint of a sponsor, and our concern deals with in your instructions the parent/guardian name, address, consenting information, and we're looking at the Backpack, but when you did your demonstration you did not say that that had to be given.

For the Backpack, I believe that it does, and I believe that the RFA talks about that. For either project we definitely need some consent from the parent. If you're going to be sending food home or if you're going to be delivering it, they need to know in advance and say that it's okay for that to happen. We also need consent, because this is a demonstration project, for these parents to participate in demonstration evaluations. That's not required, that they participate, but they do need to be informed about it.

Okay. I don't have a problem with that. My concern would be, then, is there a sample consent form or do we need to create one on our own if we're selected?

We can certainly work with you to develop a consent form that would explain the project fairly. And it's an important part of the project, but we're certainly there with you to make sure that it covers what it needs to.

Thank you.

Our next question comes from Libby Albert [PH]. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

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Hi. I'm calling from the western regional office and my first question is if state agencies have questions do you want them to come through us or is there somebody they should contact in headquarters with their questions?

No. That's a great question, Libby. Actually, no, they shouldn't come through the regional offices. I know usually that's the way it works, but there is a contact point in the request for application, and all the questions need to come to that contact point. For these grants the name is Dawn Washington [PH], and there is contact information in the RFA. If regional offices do get questions they need to forward them to Dawn Washington as well.

Okay. Okay. Great. And then I've got a couple other questions. In the RFA, there's something in there that says that FNS – an FNS panel will evaluate the viability and merits of the applications received by November 19th, 2010, and – but the deadline is December 15th.

Oh, then that's a mistake in there, and I appreciate that you caught that. We will issue a clarification and make sure everybody is aware that's a typo.

Okay. That's on page 11.

Page 11. Yep.

And then my third question is about Head Start children that are enrolled in schools, are they eligible if they're getting school meals?

We actually had not thought about them, but I think the answer would be yes, that they would be, because they are getting an SLP school meal and because the school would have individual eligibility information for them.

Okay. Thank you.

Okay.

Once again, if you have a question, it's "*1" on your touch tone phone. Please unmute your phone and record your name at the prompt. Are you ready for the next question?

I think we'll take a couple of the online ones now. Thank you.

Okay. Mm-hm.

Okay. So the Backpack program, can vended sponsors participate?

Yeah, and for the backpacks, yes, they can. They still need to meet all of their requirements, but it doesn't have to be a self-prep sponsor, it can be vended.

Also, can open sites serve all children at the site or just free and reduced?

For the Backpack Program you can serve any eligible child who comes to your SFSP site. So you don't have to, for the Backpack Program, determine which children are free and reduced. It's based on eligibility for participation in the Summer Food Service Program.

Okay. Under "Application submission" it states that the application may be submitted electronically or via email, but then the next line states that applications are not accepted by fax or email. I think it should say "by mail." Is this the slide or the –

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It can either be submitted on GRANTS.GOV, which is a portal for submission of grant applications to the Federal Government, or it can be submitted in hard copy, essentially by mail, and so faxed and email applications are not allowed, and we apologize if there was confusion there.

Oh. We'll take some more phone questions now.

Thank you. Our next phone question comes from Karen Davis [PH]. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

I'm curious how much you expect the amount of time that parents or children will be participating in the evaluation process of the project.

This is Ted Mackle [PH] in the Office of Research and Analysis, and that's not entirely clear yet because the contract to get the evaluation contractor is still out on the street, but there would be one and possibly two interviews. I can't imagine that they would last much longer than a half an hour because that's sort of pushing how long you can get people, and the parents – when the evaluator contacts them, they have the right to either participate or not as they choose.

Do you know if they'll be done by phone primarily or --

No, I don't know at this point. It could very well.

I guess I'm just curious how much contact information, if it was telephone, email, you know, how extensive it needed to be.

We would like full contact information.

Thank you.

Yep.

Our next question comes from Terri Bitner [PH]. Go ahead, sir, your line is open.

My question has already been answered. Thank you.

Thank you. Our next person waiting for question is Tiffany. Go ahead, Tiffany, your line is open. Tiffany, your line is open. Go ahead.

Can you hear me?

Yeah, now we can.

Okay. I was wanting to know, if we have open SFSP sites, how would you want us to kind of give out the backpacks, if we were applying for the Backpack demo, to the children that come to the open sites, being that they need not come on a regular basis?

Yeah. I think the fact that you need to get parental consent, I would expect that you would have to have some contact with the families early on and determine your universe, your population, based on who's there at the time. Certainly, you can make adjustments to that if new families or new children come to the site over time, but I think it's kind of an ongoing process of determining who your population is.

Okay.

All right, thank you very much.

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Our next question comes from Kathy Macintyre [PH]. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

Hi. We had a question about the Backpack Program. If there is a disabled child who has a specific feeding time, would we be able to serve them under the Backpack Program on a regular daily basis?

I'm not sure I completely understand your question. The Backpack Program is intended to supplement the meals that you serve at your existing Summer Food Service Program site, so you would feed the disabled child on SFSP site days however you normally do. The meals provided through the Backpack could be modified to address whatever disabilities the child has, but in terms of feeding – timing of the feeding, that would really be up to the parents for those home delivered meals, but like I said, the meal content could be modified to accommodate the disability.

Okay.

Does that help you?

It would pretty much fall under the Home Service one, right?

For – yeah. Well, the backpacks are intended to be prepared by the families and served by the families, and Food Delivery can be handled in a variety of ways, and timing could be included to accommodate the disabled child depending on your schedule of distribution, whether you're going to do a day's worth of meals at each delivery or several days. You would have to work with that on how you could accommodate that, and, again, you could modify the meal to meet the accommodation.

Okay. All right. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Sheryl McDonald [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

Hello. Two questions about the Backpack Program. Does the state have to make the program available to all sponsors; meaning, can we just pick some sponsors that we want them to apply, or do we have to let all of our sponsors apply? And is there anywhere I can get some examples of food items that are being put in the backpacks?

Okay. As to your first question, whether you have to make it available to all sponsors, I would highly encourage you to, if you're considering applying for the Backpack demo, to make all of your sponsors aware of it.

Okay.

I think that would be advisable. And then, certainly, as the RFA says, if sponsors are interested and submit an application to you, we would expect that a state agency would "screen the application" to make sure that they meet the requirements, and that they're acceptable proposals, and then you submit those that are acceptable and that meet the requirements set forth in the RFA to FNS. Does that answer your question?

In part. And it's because the Backpack Program is supposed to be introduced to successful sponsors, and if we know some that weren't operating that great, we would not want to introduce this program to them.

No. I would – I'm glad you clarified because I would strongly advise that if there are particular concerns and deficiencies in the past from a sponsor that you know about, that that would not be an appropriate sponsor to participate in the demo, and you should not forward that application to FNS.

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Okay. But go ahead and make them aware and let them possibly submit an application to the state?

I would make them aware and I would also have – if you do run into that situation, I would also have some dialogue with that sponsor. You know, not all deficiencies would warrant not being submitted for this. I think that you would want to work with them and determine what was appropriate.

Okay.

And then what was your second question?

About examples of food items that –

Oh, the content of the backpacks. Yeah, I think that it's fair to say that there are quite a number of backpack programs that have started over the last several years through the Feeding America Network and other food banks.

Yeah.

And I would highly recommend that you find information about the kind of things they put in their backpacks in terms of food safety and perish ability. Please keep in mind, though, that we are looking, through our request for applications, for nutritionally balanced meals that meet the food meal pattern, or that comes close or has a reason for not meeting them exactly. So I would look to Feeding America and other food bank networks that have tried this already.

Okay. And these are food items that can be prepared by the adult in the household, not necessarily something that the child could manage themselves?

Yeah, it doesn't have to be something that the child can manage. We're looking for easy to prepare items, but there's no requirement that the child would have to prepare it.

Gotcha. Thank you.

Okay. Sure.

We'll take a couple of the online questions at this time. So first of all, if we currently have a Backpack Program going on through the school year, which is sponsored by local businesses and church groups, can we submit a sponsor proposal? The answer to that is yes.

Yeah. And the intention of this, as stated in the RFA and this presentation, is summer time. So if you have a Backpack Program going on during the school year then it would be perfectly acceptable to submit a summertime proposal.

Okay. The next question: do you think there will be a confidentiality issue with the Home Delivery Project if the sponsors provided information of a child's eligibility?

We're certainly concerned about confidentiality, but I think that sponsors, right now, through the Summer Food Service Program and through the other child nutrition programs are responsible for information, which is subject to confidentiality provision, and so we would expect that confidentiality would be protected.

And the contract for the evaluation contract will contain strong confidentiality language.

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Okay. For the application requirements for the state agency's plan of operation, could you repeat what needs to be included in the staffing? Let me find that slide.

Okay.

Okay. For staffing, it is – and this also is included in the RFA, but it's how the state agency will staff the project including the position titles and experience of the key staff members that will have responsibilities under the project, the proportion of their time that will be devoted to the demonstration project, and a summary of each individual's roles and responsibilities.

Okay. The next question is that: I understand that the cost backpacks will be included in the budget proposal, but other type of packaging can be used in the preparation of backpack meals. Can you give me more information on if you are talking about actual backpacks?

No, as we stated in the RFA, it does not actually have to be a backpack. It can be any type of pouch or bag to contain the food items. Okay. We'll go back to the phone, and I think we only have a couple more minutes. But, operator, can you open the lines again, please.

Sure. Our next question comes from Sanda – excuse me, Sandra Lanner [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

I'm going back to the question about provision two and three schools. Couldn't they participate if they're in a base year and they would be collecting applications or --

My concern about that is that the anticipation is that these would continue for the next year as well, and so we would prefer, because these are demos, not to use provision two and three schools at this time.

Okay.

Thanks for your question.

Thank you.

Our next question comes from Bridget Widell [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

Hi. Thank you. We're wondering if there's a minimum number of participants required for the Home Delivery Program?

No, there is not.

Okay. Because – all right – we live in – we're in Vermont and the areas that we're targeting would be very rural and the populations are really small, so we just weren't sure if that would impact, you know, the strength of our proposal, having smaller numbers of children served.

No, I think it's a challenge in rural areas to have a lot kids to begin with, so I don't think that's necessarily unique to your area.

Okay. Great. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Jenny Bass [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

Yeah. In the RFA it says that household eligibility may be determined using the immediate preceding school year's free and reduced price meal certification, but is it limited to that? So, for example, if someone is eligible for free and reduced price meals this year, but wasn't last year, can they also participate in the program?

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Well, the idea is, and maybe I'm misunderstanding your question, if we're having this in summer 2011, next summer, the idea is to use the data from the school year that just ended like a week before.

Oh, so – okay.

I thought that you might have misunderstood that. So it's this school year's data is going to be used for summer 2011.

Okay. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Peg Howard [PH]. Go ahead, ma'am, your line is open.

Hi. I have basically two questions. We run a lot of open sites which, you know, is either approved by school data or census data, so we do not collect any applications. So how would we qualify those kids to take the backpack meals with them for the weekend?

The Backpack Program is based on eligible sites in the summer program.

Okay. All right. And would that –

You don't need the application information, but you do need the permission from the parents.

Okay. And what about the Migrant Program, would that be the same thing? Could that be part of the backpack?

Yeah, as an eligible site.

Okay. All right. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Uzaski [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

Hi. I have a clarification and a couple questions. In the Backpack Program, it says that the parents may be declined to receive food backpacks or to participate in evaluations. So I just want to clarify that they can – the kids can participate, but the parents can decline the evaluation part?

That is correct.

Yes. The declining the evaluation doesn't come at the front. The first agreement is to get the backpacks and to have their information shared with the evaluator. When the evaluator, assuming it's a phone interview, when they call up, they then can say, "No, I don't want to be surveyed," but they're still eligible for the food.

Okay. Thanks. Then back to that collecting the data with the operating costs, administrative costs, and the other USDA income, do we have to collect that for just the sponsors participating in the demonstration project or for all the sponsors in Summer Food Program? Does that make sense?

Participating.

Thank you.

And the final one has to do with eligibility with the meal delivery option, and the question is districts in rural pre-school children and teach them and then provide care and meals to the children through CACFP, are they eligible or qualified for the Meal Delivery?

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No.

Okay. Thanks.

Our next question comes from Gloria. Go ahead, your line is open.

Hi. Thank you. Would there be – this is for Backpack – would there be any kind of format for the sponsor's budgets just as a guidance piece or do they just submit the budget as they see fit?

Did we put a prototype -- I'm asking Marissa -- did we put a prototype in the application?

Yeah, I don't -- I don't recall if we have a prototype in the application. Typically we do have something. We're looking right now.

Yeah. I don't recall. Can I go with my next question?

Sure. Absolutely.

Okay. I was wondering about separating cost and the – because these meals will probably be made out of the same kitchen as the summer meals, but they would have to – I'm sure the grant will have to be kept separate, any thought given to some guidance on that?

Nothing in particular other than that we do want to keep these costs separate so that we have an understanding of the cost and of the impact. So I don't know that I have specific guidance on that. It's possible your state could help.

Okay. Thank you.

I would argue to submit what you think is a reasonable living up to, you know, the steward of what we want, and if the site is -- the sponsor is selected for award and we need more information, we'll just get clarification.

Okay. Thank you. And I have one more question about menus. I understand there's flexibility in that, but we still are thinking about the summer meal pattern must be followed, is that correct?

Yes. Yes.

Okay. The meal couldn't be substituted then, like, with yogurt or something?

No. The idea is that it follows the pattern.

The pattern, okay. Thank you very much.

Our next question comes from Bev Benish [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open.

I have a question of clarification, and this is with the allowable and non-allowable cost on page seven of the RFP.

Okay.

It states in there that the state agency is to provide their own administrative costs, and I was – you had talked before about how we need to demonstrate capacity within our state agency to do this project. But our allowable costs, would that include a grant project manager?

Yeah, certainly. Certainly, that would be acceptable.

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Oh, we have another question real quick here.

Okay.

I'm not sure how to ask the question. On Page 9 of the project it talks about project data, and it's asking for separate information on meal count for the sponsors that are participating in the demonstration, and then they want site-level participation for all summer food programs in the state.

Right.

So you want information from those participating and then every site, so if we have one sponsor that has 30 sites, you need site information, meal count for each one of those?

I actually think, you know, I think we'd like to answer that. The data question in particular, I'd like to reserve response on that and post a response on the website for that data question.

Okay. Great.

Because I think there's some confusion here about what exactly we need.

All right. Thank you.

And also, operator, it looks like we're closing up with our time. It looks like it's just about 2:30 or slightly after.

Okay. I do have one more question in queue. Do you want to close now or do you want to go with one more?

That would be fine. That would be fine.

One more?

Yes.

Okay. It's from Betsy Breeding [PH]. Go ahead, your line is open, ma'am.

Yes, in our Backpack Program we use a shelf-stable milk, but for our SFSP sites, we use real milk. Is there a stipulation?

No, either is fine. And you need to consider, of course, food safety issues with the backpacks.

Great. Thank you so much.

I just – we also got – before we close I wanted to say that we did get several questions online that we weren't able to answer verbally here. For both that data question as well as the ones we got online that we didn't have enough of an opportunity to answer, we will draft responses, written responses and post them on the website. We will also send a message out through the FNS partner web when that is completed so that you have – so that state agencies have notification that that information is up there. And if you have questions beyond what was addressed here or beyond what you submitted in writing, certainly you are encouraged to contact the grant officer who is in the RFA, and as I mentioned earlier, her name is Dawn Washington and her information is at the back of the RFA.

Thank you very much, everybody, for attending.