

**Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC)  
(SNAP and WIC Models)  
2012 Request for Application (RFA) Questions and Answers**

**Confidentiality of participants**

**1. Should States protect the personal information of the potential demonstration households?**

Yes, any free and reduced price lunch (FRP) eligibility and personal information on the application are sensitive and must be kept confidential. The proposal must discuss how you will protect the confidentiality of the selected households.

**2. Upon providing benefits to the selected SEBTC participants, if we have other State interfaces (i.e. for use in medical identification or case management assistance) does the confidentiality of participant information prevent us from sending eligibility information to the other interfaces?**

If individuals within the selected households are participating in FNS programs such as NSLP, SNAP or WIC, then sharing of FRP information is allowable. Sharing of eligibility information with other entities is not allowed without consent from the families.

**Recruiting of Participants**

**3. Can we pre-recruit participants for the program?**

You may inform eligible households of the SEBTC program in general. However, the random selection of participants will be conducted by the FNS contract evaluators.

**4. How does the consent process work?**

The consent process happens before the random assignment (and before households know which group they will be in) into either the treatment or control group. States may choose an “active” consent process through which eligible households must explicitly opt-in to the program, or “passive” consent wherein household are informed of their eligibility and are considered willing participants unless they explicitly opt-out of the program.

- 5. Can we send notices to families of children eligible for FRP meals asking if they are interested in participating and ask them to return the notice with contact info, then the FNS evaluators will select the treatment and control groups?**

Yes, families must be notified and given the opportunity to opt-in (active) or opt-out (passive) of the demonstration. Also see question 4 above.

- 6. Each household selected to participate in the treatment group will receive benefits for all children in the household who are certified for free and reduced-priced school meals at the end of the 2011/2012 school year. Does this mean all children in the household or only those who are school age?**

The benefit is only for children enrolled in and certified eligible for FRP meals in the participating school and other school aged children in their household that may be attending non-participating schools.

### **Eligibility**

- 7. How will States collect the eligibility data of the potential demonstration household?**

The eligibility data will be taken from the individual School Food Authority (SFA) database or the State Department of Education database. Either method is acceptable as long as all certified eligible children (NSLP/Direct Certified/Individual Eligibility Applications) within the school district are captured.

- 8. Can we directly solicit permission from the parents requiring them to return a form stating their child can participate and their willingness to participate in the evaluation**

Yes, this would be considered “active consent”.

- 9. Can the demonstration area consist of more than one SFA in order to achieve the 20,000-24,000 children certified for free or reduced-priced meals?**

Yes, the demonstration area can be made up of more than one contiguous SFA’s to reach the 20,000-24,000 eligibility pool.

- 10. Do we need to keep picking SFA’s to get to the 20-24,000 eligible for FRP meals and another 20-24,000 kids who are not eligible for FRP meals?**

No, the contiguous demonstration area will be a collection of one or more SFAs with a total of 20,000 - 24000 children certified eligible for FRP meals.

**11. Our State may have to use nearly all of the SFAs in the State to have an eligibility pool of 20,000 – 24,000 children, is this ok?**

Yes.

**12. Can we exceed the 20,000 - 24,000?**

Yes, but States should keep it as close as possible to that range. Regardless of the size of the eligibility pool, only the households of 5,000 certified eligible children will be selected to participate in the program.

**13. The approximate benefit level is \$60/month per eligible child. Eligible child for SFSP is “under the age of 19.” For this demonstration project, will it be only those attending school?**

Yes, the benefit is only for children eligible for FRP meals that attended school during the immediately preceding academic year.

**14. Our school districts may end and start school on different dates. Would it be agreeable with FNS for us to propose one date for the beginning of the project (example, the first day that a school in the demonstration area lets out for the summer) and one date for the ending of the project (example, the last date that a school would start the following school year – i.e., one school starts September 1, one the 5<sup>th</sup> – could we set our end project date for September 5<sup>th</sup>?)**

Yes.

**15. Would it be permissible to end the project on a set date (make the accounts inactive as of that date) and expunge 15 or so days later so that the retailers can balance their accounts.**

Yes.

### **Evaluation**

**16. Who will actually select the treatment and control groups, the evaluation contractors or the State?**

The grantee and/or its partners will provide the data for the process. The evaluation contractors will actually select the groups.

**17. Is FNS evaluating both the treatment and control groups?**

Yes.

**18. Will you allow small incentives in the evaluation process?**

Yes, this is part of the evaluation plan and should not be factored into the State operational plan or budget.

**19. Could you define “data” so we know exactly what you are looking for? The RFA states that applicants should describe how we will provide data on SEBTC eligible households to the evaluator for random assignment of participants into subject and control groups.**

The data, in this case, comprise a complete list of the households in the demonstration area – with current contact information – that have children certified eligible for free or reduced price meals.

**Separate Letter of Credit**

**20. What is the Letter of Credit process? Will State’s need a separate SEBTC letter of credit?**

A LOC is an acronym for “Letter of Credit” which is the process by which FNS establishes funding at Treasury for our grantees/vendors to be able to request/draw funds once services/work has been completed (i.e., establishes a checkbook at treasury with a set dollar amount that you may spend).

States cannot co-mingle funds because the SEBTC demonstration is funded through a unique appropriation and not through the regular Child Nutrition Program funds. It is critical that the State’s EBT processors fully understand this and are involved in the development of the State’s SEBTC proposal. The proposal must identify how the processor will prevent the co-mingling of funds.

**21. Is the Letter of Credit provided separately for SEBTC?**

Yes.

**22. Throughout the grant application it is quite clear the SEBT benefits must not be commingled with SNAP benefits regarding reporting/appropriations etc. However, can a State put the SEBTC benefit on the same EBT card in a different “slot”? We are able to put multiple benefits on the same card, and feel this will be the most efficient way to distribute the benefits. Also this would still allow the State to keep the benefits separate (on paper) and track accordingly.**

Yes, the SEBTC funds may be put on the same EBT card as SNAP but must have a different line of accounting (i.e. different slot). Your proposal should clearly identify how the state intends to accomplish this.

### **SNAP ALERT**

- 23. The RFA states FNS will develop new EBT Program Type codes to be used for SEBTC transactions and transactions that may be a mixture of SNAP and SEBTC benefits. Please explain this sentence in terms of ALERT files.**

The ALERT submission file specification currently contains a 2 character field (positions 72 and 73) called “EBT Program”. At present all data received in the ALERT file contains 00 (where 00 = SNAP). We would propose an additional program type code to be applied to SEBTC-only transactions. For States which could have mixed transactions, we will require the State to divide the transaction out to two separate records, one with the SNAP value and one with the SEBTC value. Additional program type codes would be set up, e.g., 03 for partial SNAP and 04 for partial SEBTC. Exact EBT Program numbers to be used are TBD and would be discussed prior to implementation.