



Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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DATE: October 7, 2016

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SUBJECT: Model Functional Requirements for State and Local Information  
Technology Systems

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the release of the first version of the “*Model Functional Requirements for State School Meal Programs Information Systems*” and “*Model Functional Requirements for Local School Meal Programs Information Systems*” tools. These tools can be found at the following link:  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/guidance-and-resources>.

Functional requirements describe the function of an information technology (IT) system, or *what* the IT system will do. Functional requirements do not describe how the system will perform the function, which is known as system design requirements. These newly created model functional requirements documents specify what functional requirements State and local IT systems should include to meet school meal program requirements and support program operations. They were created from a collaborative effort between the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), and State and local agency staff and help to align the school meal programs with technology guidance already available in other FNS programs. For example, in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) the FNS 901 Handbook (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/apd/fns-handbook-901-advance-planning-documents>) describes FNS policies and procedures that State agencies must follow in order to receive Federal funding to develop, acquire, and/or implement IT systems. Although it describes IT planning processes that are not mandatory for the Child Nutrition Programs at this time, administrators of the Child Nutrition Programs may find the FNS 901 Handbook to be a helpful resource.

While it is not required, State and local agencies administering the school meal programs (i.e., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Special Milk Program) may choose to use the *Model Functional Requirements for State School Meal Programs Information Systems* and *Model Functional Requirements for Local School Meal Programs Information Systems* tools in the development or

enhancement of IT systems for the school meal programs, or in the procurement for the development or enhancement of their IT systems. These Microsoft Excel documents may be edited so that each State and local agency can adapt the functional requirements to their needs. The “Tool Instructions” tab within the two documents provides information on how to navigate through the documents, as well as how to use the filter and search functions of the software.

**NOTE: It is critical that a State or local agency review the model functional requirements document carefully prior to use in the development/enhancement or procurement for the development/enhancement of their school meal programs’ IT system to ensure the functionalities listed within the documents fit the State or local agency’s individual needs.**

State agencies are encouraged to distribute this information to local school food authority Program operators. It is important to note these are dynamic, or living, documents that will change as the school meal programs’ regulations and policies change; therefore, these documents will be updated periodically. Should you have comments, suggestions or additions you would like FNS to consider for the next iteration of these documents, please use the following email address:

- For the State Model Functional Requirements for School Meals Programs, please use: [StateMFRComments@fns.usda.gov](mailto:StateMFRComments@fns.usda.gov)
- For the Local Model Functional Requirements for School Meals Programs, please use: [LocalMFRComments@fns.usda.gov](mailto:LocalMFRComments@fns.usda.gov)

Local school food authority Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional office.

**Original Signed**

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Director  
Program Monitoring and Operational Support Division  
Child Nutrition Programs