

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Longitudinal Data Project – Parameters for Participation (PFP) for Interested States

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1. SNAP Longitudinal Data Project at a Glance	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Overview	4
3.1 Collaboration with the Census Bureau	4
3.2 Conducting Research	5
4. Parameters for Participation	6
4.1 Grant Funding	6
4.1.1 Types of Applications Considered	7
4.1.2 How to Apply	8
4.1.3 How to Participate	8
4.1.4 Participation at a Glance	9
4.2 How to Meet Security Requirements and Transmit Data	9
4.3 Project Requirements	10
4.4 SNAP Gold Standard	10
4.5 Project Outreach	10
5. Appendix A: Steps for Getting Started Post-Award	12
6. Appendix B: SNAP LDP Process Map	14
7. Appendix C: The SNAP Gold Standard and NIEM	17
8. Appendix D: Securely Submit Data	32

1. Introduction

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service’s (FNS) mission is to increase food security and reduce hunger for children and low-income households through access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a way that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

FNS administers the USDA nutrition assistance programs, including the cornerstone Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). FNS administers SNAP nationally, while the State and local human services agencies operate the program locally. The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, reauthorized SNAP through Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

Millions of people rely on SNAP to purchase food at authorized grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers' markets, and co-op food programs. Some participants cycle on and off the program as their eligibility status changes throughout the year. Tracking participants and their participation status over time is not currently viable for many States, making it difficult to measure program impacts. Thus, Congress set forth a legislative measure in the 2018 Farm Bill will enables research of participants over time and across State lines, also known as the SNAP Longitudinal Data Project (SNAP LDP).

1.1. SNAP Longitudinal Data Project at a Glance

The SNAP LDP aims to enable research on participation in and the operation of SNAP, including duration of participation in the Program over time and across State lines. Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022, allows States the option to participate in the SNAP LDP. Key aspects of SNAP LDP include:

- Provides \$20 million in grant funding for FY 2021 and \$5 million for each FY thereafter, for State agencies interested in establishing longitudinal research databases with eligibility, benefit, and demographic information about SNAP households and individual SNAP participants;
- Requires unique identifiers to protect individual privacy and to enable comparison of participation data across States and over time as part of a national longitudinal database;
- Requests SNAP data elements from States, if available, including demographic characteristics, income and financial resources, employment status, household circumstances, and monthly allotment amounts; and
- Requests data from other State sources, if available, including: earning and employment data, health insurance program data, and participation in other State programs.

2. Purpose

This document provides an overview of the SNAP LDP, as well as guidelines and parameters for States interested in participating, including:

- How to opt into participation,
- How to meet security requirements,
- How to transmit data securely, and
- How to apply for grant funding.

FNS will update the SNAP LDP Parameters for Participation (PFP) periodically to ensure States have current information. This document is the second edition of the PFP. The table below documents the editions and the date of the changes.

Edition	Date
Version 1.0	09/30/2020

3. Overview

The overarching goal of the SNAP LDP is to enable research on participation in and the operation of SNAP, specifically over time (e.g., duration) and across State lines. FNS has established an inter-agency agreement (IAA) with the Census Bureau to reduce the burden on States who choose to participate in the SNAP LDP and may already be transmitting other SNAP data with the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau will receive State-submitted SNAP data, assign a unique identifier for individuals, de-identify data, and create a secure longitudinal database. Participating States, at a minimum, will securely transmit the required data elements, if available, to the Census Bureau to be available for longitudinal research.

Any research conducted using the national SNAP LDP data must meet the following requirements:

- Aligns with provisions set forth in Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022,
- Adheres to the Census Bureau and State requirements as specified in the State agreements, to include the project description, and
- Meets the research goals and objectives of the SNAP LDP as determined by approval from the Census Bureau and FNS

In addition, FNS recognizes States may benefit from performing their own State-specific longitudinal research. Thus, agencies that elect to transmit data to the Census Bureau may request grant funding to establish or enhance individual State longitudinal databases. States should not make changes to their existing eligibility systems to ensure the integrity of the data and the eligibility determination process. The longitudinal database should be a separate database.

Grant funding is available for State agencies interested in participating in the SNAP LDP. Additional information about the application and types of projects eligible for funding are in **Section 4, 4.1. Grant Funding.**

3.1 Collaboration with the Census Bureau

To reduce the burden on States and protect personally identifiable information (PII), FNS is collaborating with the Census Bureau to leverage its existing process of establishing memoranda of understandings (MOUs) and securely transferring data from the States to the Census Bureau. Fundamental to the SNAP LDP is the ability to link the same person across multiple administrative files, while de-identifying the data so that personal information is not available. The Census Bureau’s approach to this applies the following security measures:

- Prior to incorporating State data into the Federal longitudinal database, the Census Bureau’s Person Identification Validation System (PVS) identifies a unique person across State datasets and within State datasets. Then a unique person identifier, also called the protected identification key (PIK), is assigned and all PII is removed. Once assigned, the PIK serves as a unique identifier across all files processed using the PVS.
- All data incorporated into the Federal longitudinal database is de-identified and no PII remains. No one—including the Census Bureau employees—can identify a participant. The de-identified data is NOT provided back to States but remains available for research as described below.
- Data may only be used for the purposes agreed upon by each State in the MOU. The Census Bureau and FNS review the research requests to ensure they meet the requirements of Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022.
- Before researchers can publish any tabulations using the data, the Census Bureau reviews the proposed release to ensure the confidentiality of individuals in the data is protected.

- States with an existing MOU, as part of other research projects, have the option to update their MOU with an amendment to easily opt into the SNAP LDP and specify SNAP LDP as an allowable use for the data. Participating States without an existing MOU will establish a new MOU with the Census Bureau. Additional information on this process is below in **Section 4, 4.1.3. How to Participate**. States will coordinate with the Census Bureau for all aspects of the data transfer process and establishing an MOU. States will coordinate with FNS for all aspects of SNAP LDP grants administration, including changes to planned implementation and research objectives and proposals.

3.2 Conducting Research

Section 11(e)(8)(A) of the [Food and Nutrition] Act (7 U.S.C. 2020(e)(8)(A)) limits the use of SNAP recipient information to those directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the provisions of the Act. The SNAP LDP establishes a set of standard and optional data elements that participating States may submit to enable longitudinal research on SNAP participation, including duration. Additionally, FNS highly encourages States to work towards the optional SNAP Gold Standard format in their SNAP LDP data submissions. The SNAP Gold Standard is a method for standardizing data across States to facilitate ease and efficiency of research and longitudinal measurement. More about the SNAP Gold Standard is located in **Section 4, 4.4. SNAP Gold Standard**.

One of the State benefits of developing a longitudinal dataset is the ability to conduct internal research on the SNAP recipient population. States can securely join recipient data with other State-maintained datasets to analyze program participation over time. Potential research project ideas suggested by States in the past have included, but are not limited to:

- Leveraging longitudinal SNAP participation data to develop pilot projects intended to reduce program churn,
- Joining longitudinal SNAP participation data with Retailer EBT data to allow a State to understand benefits redemption patterns, particularly across different income levels, counties or zip codes, and in response to the expansion of online purchasing during the Public Health Emergency,
- Combining longitudinal SNAP participation data with TANF, WIC, Medicaid, and Unemployment data to look at cross-program utilization over time,
- Aggregating longitudinal SNAP participation data with early learning, post-secondary, and workforce data to gain a more holistic view of recipients' life circumstances.

Researchers can apply to conduct research projects using SNAP longitudinal data from multiple States. Researchers must have Special Sworn Status (SSS) and a research proposal approved by the Census Bureau and FNS. SSS ensures additional protection around the data and those who achieve SSS must adhere to robust ethics, confidentiality, and privacy protection procedures. Researchers who meet this criterion may access the data at a Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC).

Upon receiving the required approvals, researchers may use the Federal longitudinal dataset to conduct research on participation in and the operation of SNAP, including duration of participation in the Program and 'movement across State lines. The following scenarios are examples of potential research topics for this data:

- Households that exit and re-enter the program within a short period of time, referred to by FNS as churn.
- Household members who over time leave their original household and join a new household (e.g., a minor reaches adult age and becomes a single household SNAP recipient).
- Household members who participate in SNAP in one State, leave SNAP, and then later re-apply in a new State.

States can conduct research internally, using SNAP LDP and other State-maintained datasets, so long as the data is housed securely within a State-maintained database and the State seeks FNS approval prior to publicly releasing any findings from the research. States that wish to conduct research using Federal or other States' data in addition to their own must seek SSS, receive formal research project approval from the Census Bureau and the State whose data is requested, where applicable, and work with the data solely within a FSRDC. For more information on how to obtain access for researchers, please contact the State's local FSRDC administrator or visit the following sites:

- <https://www.census.gov/about/adrm/fsrdc/contact.html>
- <https://www.census.gov/about/adrm/fsrdc/locations.html>

4. Parameters for Participation

Participation in the SNAP LDP is optional. The Census Bureau and FNS will leverage and modify existing MOUs, when available, for States that are interested in participating. States that do not yet have an agreement in place can establish a new MOU. Each MOU contains the research project descriptions that the State and the Census Bureau agree upon and the allowable uses of data for each project. State-provided data can only be used for the projects listed within the State's MOU. These research projects are independent of one another.

When considering participation in the SNAP LDP, interested States should conduct an informal cost-benefit analysis to determine (1) necessary costs required for this project to support grant funding requests, and (2) the benefits of participation. States should also consider the following:

- Feasibility to meet requirements set forth in Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022,
- Sustainability of the project,
- Technology requirements,
- Staff necessary to support the project, and
- Potential data standardizations or transformations that would be required.

4.1 Grant Funding

Each of the 53 agencies that administer SNAP are eligible to apply for grants to support their participation in the SNAP LDP. FNS will award grants on a competitive basis to the agencies that submit proposals. Each agency can request a grant funding amount no greater than \$2.25 million over a multiple year period of performance. However, the amount of awarded funding is at the discretion of FNS. Proposed grant projects may have a period of performance of up to four years. Proposals must include detailed project plans and budget summary information that includes the allocation of funds for each year. Additionally, State data sharing agreements with the Census Bureau may be longer than the period of performance for the grant project. This enables long-term sustainability in support of the SNAP LDP.

While FNS will review all proposals, grant requests proposing any modification of State eligibility systems related to the SNAP LDP are not allowed. The State Systems Office is responsible for the review and approval of any proposed changes to State eligibility systems. Since SNAP eligibility system data is often intermingled with other data in a data warehouse or integrated system that is used by multiple programs, the risk of the data becoming inadvertently over-written, shared, re-used, converted, or otherwise "cross-contaminated" by being too tightly coupled to the eligibility system or its primary data management environment is high. Thus, FNS strongly recommends that any technologies and databases to support the SNAP LDP are separated from the existing eligibility system to ensure traceability of funds, privacy, and data security.

4.1.1 Types of Applications Considered

All projects must support the overall goal of the SNAP LDP, which is to enable longitudinal research on participation in and the operation of SNAP over time and across State lines.

During the application process, State agencies should consider the key SNAP LDP objectives in the table below.

#	Objectives
1	Securely transmit and/or enable the secure transmission of the monthly <i>required</i> data elements for the SNAP LDP with FNS/Census Bureau on an annual basis
2	Securely transmit and/or enable the secure transmission of the monthly <i>optional</i> data elements for the SNAP LDP with FNS/Census Bureau on an annual basis
3	Improve the evaluation of SNAP data across State lines by progressing toward the Gold Standard ¹ data format
4	Enable SNAP longitudinal research

Examples of potential project ideas considered eligible are listed below. These are ideas only and applicants should identify projects that best fit the needs of the State and that can be successfully implemented in the Period of Performance (e.g., summer 2023 to summer 2027).

- Define data definitions.
- Add a calculated data element without modification to the eligibility system.
- Add a data element that is external to the eligibility system.
- Build/procure a database or longitudinal database.
- Improve technology implementation, data management, and/or business processes.
- Develop a cross-agency sharing agreement.
- Implement additional extract, transform, and load (ETL) tools for data preparation.
- Implement analysis tool or software to support SNAP data analysis as it relates to the SNAP LDP objectives.
- Improve data management processes (e.g., storage, security, standardization, transmission, and extraction).
- Improve data standardization to align to the SNAP Gold Standard, as defined in **Appendix C: SNAP Gold Standard and NIEM**.
- Develop Extract Transfer Load (ETL) queries to facilitate data transmission with the Census Bureau.

FNS highly encourages States to implement the SNAP Gold Standard format for data transmitted under SNAP LDP. Additionally, FNS encourages States to transmit data using the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), where possible. States can request grant funding to accommodate participation in both the SNAP Gold Standard and to submit data using NIEM. Additional information on the SNAP Gold Standard and NIEM submission are in **Appendix C: SNAP Gold Standard and NIEM**.

Furthermore, applicants may submit funding requests to support State-specific longitudinal research needs as an allowable cost so long as they have established an MOU to transmit SNAP LDP data with FNS and the Census Bureau. There are several potential uses for SNAP longitudinal data, particularly related to the ability to link SNAP participant data with other State datasets to gain a holistic look at program participation. Example research ideas are included within the **Section 3, 3.2. Conducting Research**.

¹ The Gold Standard is the preferred, pre-defined set of data definitions and format for consumption into the longitudinal database, which States may choose to adopt as a best practice. Additional information on the Gold Standard is in Appendix C.

4.1.2 How to Apply

To apply for grant funding, or for more details regarding the grant for the SNAP LDP, please refer to the Request for Applications (RFA) <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fm/grant-opportunities>. FNS will send notification upon posting. While grant funds are available to support participation, States are NOT required to apply for grant funds in order to join the SNAP LDP.

4.1.3 How to Participate

Described here is the process for transmitting SNAP participation data, as defined in Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022. States will prepare and extract SNAP participation data from their source system(s). Then each State will send monthly data on an annual basis via the Census Bureau’s secure Managed File Transfer (MFT). Details on the annual secure file transfer protocol (sFTP) can be found in **Appendix D: Securely Submit Data**.

Once the Census Bureau receives the data, they will perform basic quality checks and then utilize the PVS to match person records and assign unique identifiers. Finally, the Census Bureau removes all PII and stores the data in the Federal longitudinal database, which is where researchers with SSS will be able to securely access the SNAP participation data. The end-to-end process for sending data to the Federal Longitudinal Database is illustrated below in Figure 1.

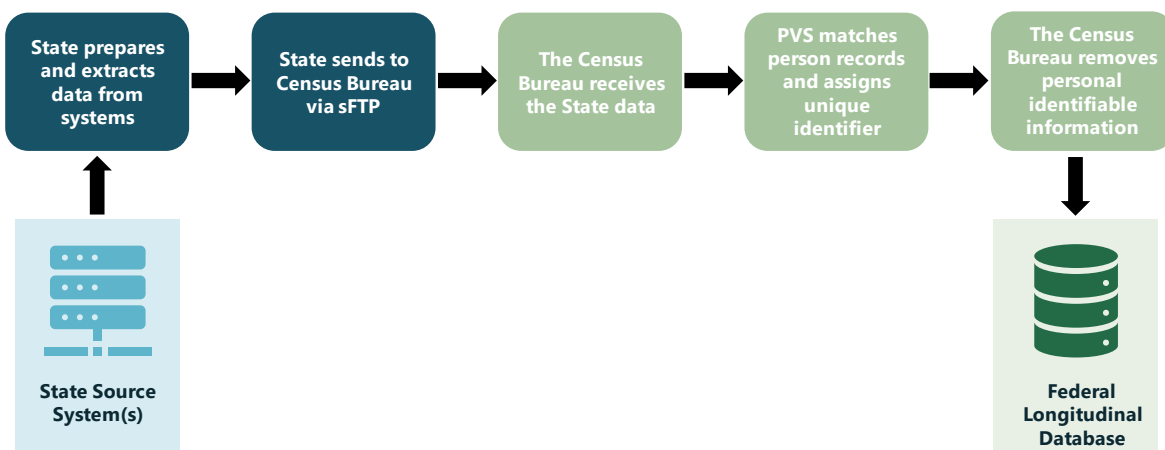


Figure 1: Process to Send Data to the Federal Longitudinal Database

For security purposes, States will not receive their data back after the Census Bureau removes all PII and assigns a unique identifier. Instead, the Census Bureau will provide each State with a table package summarizing the data provided from each State’s annual submission of monthly data files.

States wishing to participate in the SNAP LDP will work with FNS and the Census Bureau to define the requirements of their MOU. States with an existing SNAP data sharing MOU will have the option to update the existing MOU with an amendment to add the SNAP LDP. States wishing to participate in SNAP data transmission for the first time may reach out to the Census Bureau to establish an MOU for the SNAP LDP. The process to amend or establish an MOU is in **Appendix A: Steps for Getting Started Post-Award**.

Should a State wish to limit the use of their data, the State will document additional research limitations within their MOU. States must opt into the SNAP LDP for their data to be included within the National longitudinal database. States may use existing data elements within their current MOUs and update the MOU Attachment B for participation in the SNAP LDP.

If a State does not wish to participate in the SNAP LDP, no action is necessary regardless of whether or not the State has an MOU with the Census Bureau. A State is not a part of the SNAP LDP until they have established or revised a State MOU explicitly opting into the SNAP LDP.

States are eligible to receive grant funding if participating in the SNAP LDP. The State does not need a signed MOU at the time they apply for grant funding; however, States must make contact and work with the Census Bureau to sign the MOU within 30 days of award in order to ensure there are no interruptions to funds.

4.1.4 Participation at a Glance

For a State to participate in the SNAP LDP, the State must perform the following sequential actions:

- 1) The State notifies FNS and the Census Bureau of interest in participating in the SNAP LDP. Upon receiving confirmation of the State’s desire to participate, the Census Bureau will work with the State to update their existing MOU if they have one or draft a new MOU to include the SNAP LDP and associated data. Contact information is in **Appendix A: Steps for Getting Started Post-Award**.
- 2) If the State has an existing MOU, review and negotiate any additional changes to the MOU to add SNAP LDP as an approved project, including data usage and available data elements. If the State is establishing a new MOU, review and negotiate data usage and available data elements.
- 3) After final review and approval of the agreement, the State and the Census Bureau both sign the final agreement.
- 4) After finalizing signatures, the State is ready for participation in the SNAP LDP and may begin working with the Census Bureau to provide the agreed upon data. Please note, the RFA may be released prior or congruent to the development of the MOU; however, the State must begin working on the MOU with the Census Bureau within 30 days of grant award.

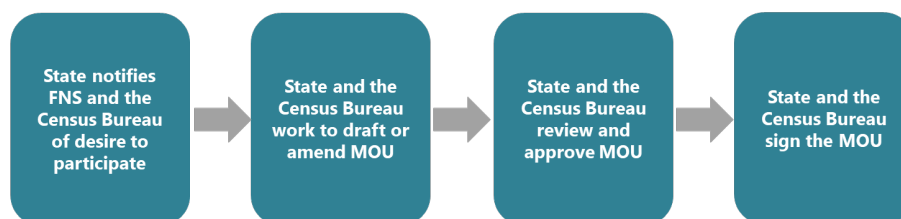


Figure 2: Steps for Establishing or Amending an MOU

In addition to the above steps, States may consider applying for grant funding to assist where necessary.

4.2 How to Meet Security Requirements and Transmit Data

As previously stated in **Section 4, 4.1.3. How to Participate**, tools and processes provided by the Census Bureau removes all PII before inclusion in the federal longitudinal database, without the loss of research functionality. The removal of PII prevents researchers from accessing PII and aligns with the security requirements established within Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022.

Additionally, the State will send data via the Census Bureau's sFTP. The State will provide adequate documentation and support of transferred files for the Census Bureau to be able to interpret the data for the uses permitted in the MOU, including definitions of active participant records, a record layout, record count, record length, and data dictionary. For more information, see **Appendix D: Securely Submit Data**.

The Census Bureau can handle multiple file types/formats and will work with each State to identify a viable data format. However, the Census Bureau prefers the following data formats:

- Fixed length text file, and
- PIPE "|" delimited text file.

Furthermore, the Census Bureau encourages the compressing or zipping of files and will work with the State to identify a common name for the files.

4.3 Project Requirements

As stated, the goal of the SNAP LDP is to enable program research over time and across State lines. As such, participating States are to share monthly information, on an annual basis, regarding households and members of households that receive benefits, including the data elements listed below.

The following data elements are required, if available:

- Demographic characteristics (e.g., name, SSN, sex, DOB, & education level),
- Income and financial resources,
- Employment status, and
- Household circumstances, such as deductible expenses.

The following data elements are considered optional, but preferred, if available:

- Earnings and employment data from the State Department of Labor and
- Health insurance program data.

As previously stated, the Census Bureau will establish the PIK and remove all PII. States may further define the above availability of these data elements within their MOU. Even if not all data elements specified in Section 17(n) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended in December 2022, are available, a State is still eligible to participate and receive the associated grant funding. States may reference a summary of the grant application process, the period of performance implementation activities, and the SNAP LDP maintenance activities in **Appendix B: SNAP LDP Process Map**.

4.4 SNAP Gold Standard

The SNAP Gold Standard is an optional standardized data format developed to facilitate the processing and use of SNAP data across States and over time. The SNAP Gold Standard format, as further defined in **Appendix C: SNAP Gold Standard and NIEM**, contains data definitions and an example format for States to submit both individual and case level files.

FNS highly encourages the use of the SNAP Gold Standard to streamline the process for incorporating State SNAP data into the national longitudinal database and as part of broader efforts across the agency to promote State data standardization. However, it is not mandatory that States use the SNAP Gold Standard to participate in the SNAP LDP or to receive grant funding. In addition, FNS highly recommends that States submit data using NIEM, which is also found in **Appendix C**. States can request grant funding to work towards the SNAP Gold Standard and to enable participation in NIEM.

4.5 Project Outreach

In addition to this Parameters of Participation, FNS will announce funding availability to make States aware of the grant opportunity associated with this project. FNS may also provide virtual or pre-

recorded training sessions and webinars to support States interested in participating and to answer any questions. To view frequently asked questions about the SNAP LDP overall, please consult the Questions and Answer (Q&A) document available on the [SNAP LDP webpage](#).

5. Appendix A: Steps for Getting Started Post-Award

To get started on your multi-year SNAP LDP award, the following steps must be initiated within the first 45 days of the start of the award date.

Finalize Grants Award with FNS Grants Management

Complete all steps in the “Award Notification” email. These steps include:

1. Establishing an ASAP account with FNS or provide your ASAP ID number.
2. Signing of the FNS-529 by the authorized agency official and return to the appropriate FNS grants officer.
3. Confirming access to the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) and a Level 2 e-authentication account.
4. Prepare to submit quarterly FNS-908 Performance Progress Reports (PPR) and financial status reports (SF-425) to the grant and program officers.

Attend Grant Kick-Off Call with FNS SNAP

After award notification, the Program Officer will invite States to participate in a kick-off call with all SNAP LDP Grantees. At the kick-off meeting, your State will provide an overview of the proposed project approach, confirm timelines and State points of contact, and raise any questions about the grant process or your State project. FNS will also use this time to outline expectations for how your State should coordinate with FNS and the Census Bureau as part of this effort.

Work with the Census Bureau to begin MOU Signature Process & Establish Data Sharing Approach and Timeline

SNAP LDP Grantees are required to establish or amend an existing MOU with the Census Bureau, including the negotiations on data usage and available data elements. After final review and approval of the agreement, your State and the Census Bureau will sign the finalized MOU.

Contact Kathy Reeves (Katherine.L.Reeves@census.gov) to inquire if your State already has an existing SNAP data sharing agreement or will require a new one. Existing SNAP data sharing agreements will require revisions to add SNAP LDP to the approved data use purposes. A template MOU can be found in **Appendix E** of the SNAP LDP Parameters for Participation.

Please note, the RFA may be released prior or congruent to the development of the MOU; however, States must begin working with the Census Bureau within 30 days of grant award notification to avoid interruption of funds. The end-to-end negotiation and signature process can take up to five months, so States must begin coordination with the Census Bureau early in their implementation.

Establish Process for Submitting Quarterly Reports to FNS

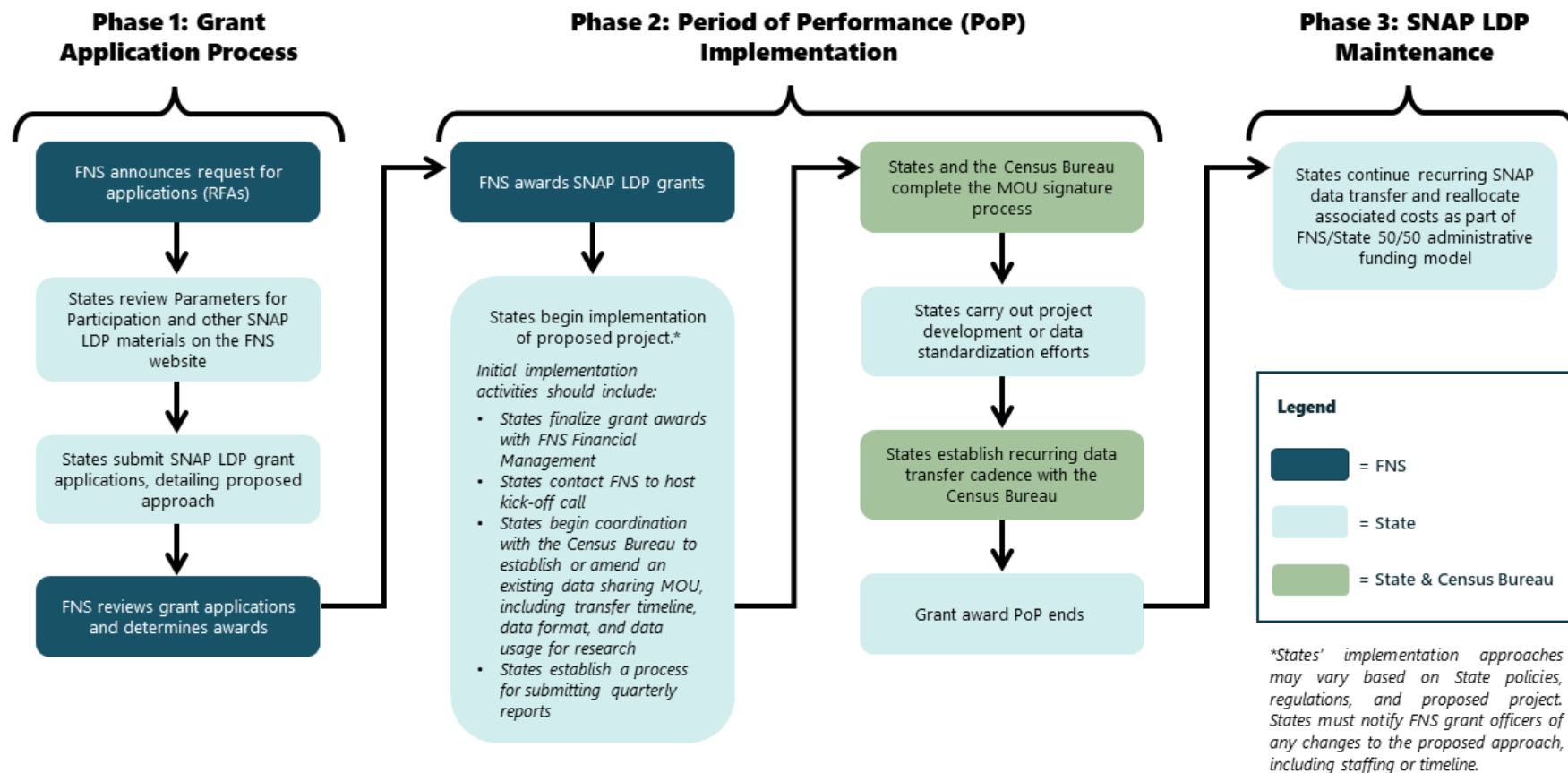
States are required to submit quarterly status reports (also known as Performance Progress Reports) for the duration of their award. States are to submit quarterly status reports to the SNAP LDP Grants Officer and Program Officer, via email, by the due dates listed in the table to the right. More information about Performance Progress Reports, including a template and training materials, can be found on the [FNS website](#). The below table indicates what the reporting period is for each quarter and when the Performance Progress Report is due at the conclusion of each quarter.

Quarter	Reporting Period	Due Date
Q1	October 1 to December 31	January 31
Q2	January 1 to March 31	April 30
Q3	April 1 to June 30	July 31
Q4	July 1 to September 30	October 31

6. Appendix B: SNAP LDP Process Map

The illustration below depicts the end-to-end process for States considering participation in SNAP LDP. These activities include the steps for submitting a grant application, finalizing an MOU with the Census Bureau, post-award development of the State’s longitudinal database capability and data sharing processes, and ongoing data sharing and maintenance efforts.

SNAP LDP PROCESS MAP



7. Appendix C: The SNAP Gold Standard and NIEM

The Gold Standard is the preferred, pre-defined set of data definitions and format for consumption into the longitudinal database, which States may choose to adopt as a best practice. While FNS highly encourages the use of the Gold Standard, it is not mandatory that States use the SNAP Gold Standard to participate in the SNAP LDP or to receive grant funding.

To comply with the SNAP Gold Standard, the State will send monthly files on an annual basis that contain the State's SNAP population.

The two tables on the following pages, **CASE LEVEL DATA** and **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL DATA**, include the requested data elements for the recommended SNAP Gold Standard. Each file contains data element definitions, formats, and examples. In addition, *Attachment A, SNAP Gold Standard* is for States to reference and contains example files.

- Case level describes the family unit or household.
- Individual level describes the individuals within each family unit or household.

Furthermore, FNS highly encourages States to participate in NIEM within the Human Services domain. Information on NIEM is found at <https://www.niem.gov/communities/human-services>.

States can apply for grant funding to both work towards the Gold Standard and/or participate in NIEM to create a robust dataset to support information sharing and interoperability.

Please reach out to the Census Bureau early on to discuss the SNAP Gold Standard format and any questions about how it applies to your States data.

CASE LEVEL DATA

Case Level Field Name	Business Definition	Format	Max Length	Required/Optional/ Situational	Example/Values
Case_Unit_ID	Identifier for a case unit, often referred to as the household		20	Required	1000
File_Month	The month the extract represents, where 20200101 represents the month of January. The records will use the first day of the represented month	YYYYMMDD	8	Required	20200101
Primary_Contact_Email	The case unit's primary contact email address, often the primary recipient's email address		50	Required	jason.smith@yahoo.com
Primary_Contact_Phone	The case unit's primary contact phone number, often the primary recipient's phone number. Should include 10-digit number with area code		10	Required	5555555555
Ben_HH_Size	Benefit Household Size, a household for SNAP consists of individuals who live together in the same residence and who purchase and prepare food together		2	Required	3
Ben_Adlt_Cnt	Benefit Adult Count, which is the count of adults in 'Ben_HH_Size'		2	Required	2

Ben_Chld_Cnt	Benefit Child Count, which is the count of children in 'Ben_HH_Size'		2	Required	1
Act_HH_Size	Actual Household Size, which are those individuals in the home that applied for the program, and are not an ancillary member.		2	Required	3
Act_Adlt_Cnt	Actual Adult Count, which is the count of adults in 'Act_HH_Size'		2	Required	2
Act_Chld_Cnt	Actual Child Count, which is the count of children in 'Act_HH_Size'		2	Required	1
Active_Participant	Indicates the case unit's SNAP participation status for the month as defined in 'Benefit_Month' (i.e., currently enrolled as of last day of the month)		1	Required	"1" = Active "2" = Inactive "3" = Other
Address_Street	The case unit's current residential address - Line 1		30	Required	1 ABC Dr
Address_Line 2	The case unit's current residential address - Line 2		30	Optional	Apt 10
Address_City	The case unit's current residential address - City		16	Required	New York City
Address_State	The case unit's current residential address - State Abbreviation		2	Required	NY
Address_Zip_Code	The case unit's current residential address - Zip Code		5	Required	10001
Address_Start_Date	The case unit's effective date of their current residential address	YYYYMMDD	8	Required	20150630

Mail_Address_Street	The case unit's current mailing address - Line 1		30	Optional / If available	1 ABC Dr
Mail_Address_Line 2	The case unit's current mailing address - Line 2		30	Optional / If available	Apt 10
Mail_Address_City	The case unit's current mailing address - City		16	Optional / If available	New York City
Mail_Address_State	The case unit's current mailing address - State Abbreviation		2	Optional / If available	NY
Mail_Address_Zip_Code	The case unit's current mailing address - Zip Code		5	Optional / If available	10001
Case_Gross_Income_Mo	The case unit's total monthly gross income. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		14	Required	250000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 250000 = \$2,500.00)
Case_Net_Income_Mo	The case unit's total monthly net income. SNAP defines net income as gross countable income minus all allowable deductions. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		14	Required	150000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 150000 = \$1,500.00)
Deductible_Expenses_Mo	The case unit's total monthly deductive expenses. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	Required	25000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 25000 = \$250.00)
Benefit_Year	Benefit year	YYYY	4	Required	2020
Benefit_Month	Benefit month	MM	2	Required	05

Benefit_Date	Each State can use this field as it sees fit, and can chose to report the latest date received, issued or redeemed within the month. The benefit type should correspond with 'Benefit_Date_Type'	YYYYMMDD	8	Optional	20200501
Application_Date	Date of SNAP benefit application	YYYYMMDD	8	Required	20200501
Cert_Start_Date	Start date of SNAP certification	YYYYMMDD	8	Required	20200501
Cert_End_Date	End date of SNAP certification	YYYYMMDD	8	Required	20200501
SNAP_Eligibility	Eligibility status		1	Required	"1" = eligible "0" = not eligible
Denial_Reason	Denial reason		4	Situational - only required if 'SNAP_Eligibility' = "0"	The State must provide the code/list in the dictionary
Benefit_Date_Type	States will select which type of benefit data is represented in 'Benefit_Date'		1	Situational – only required if 'Benefit_Date' is provided	"1" = Date Issued "2" = Date Received "3" = Date Redeemed "4" = Other
Benefit_Amount_Issued_Mo	The monthly sum of all the SNAP benefits issued to the case unit. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	Required	150000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 150000 = \$1,500.00)
Benefit_Amount_Redeemed	The monthly sum of all the SNAP benefits redeemed by the case unit. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	Required	150000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 150000 = \$1,500.00)
Benefit_Effective_Date	The most current enrollment date of a case unit receiving SNAP benefits	YYYYMMDD	8	Required	20201231

inc_rpt_req	Income reporting requirement for the case unit		1	Optional	Suggested coding below; if alternate coding (Change/Simplified/etc) is used please provide data dictionary 1="Change Reporting with \$125 change in earned income" 2="Change Reporting with change of wage rate, salary, or change in employment status" 3="Five-Hour change in hours worked and expected to continue over a month" 4="Simplified Reporting (exceeding 130% of income poverty guidelines)" 5="Quarterly Reporting" 6="Simplified Monthly Reporting" 7="Transitional benefits (no reporting requirement)"
-------------	--	--	---	----------	--

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL DATA

Individual Level Field Name	Business Definition	Format	Max Length	Example/Values
Individual_ID	Unique Identifier for an individual		20	3000
Case_Unit_ID	Identifier for a case unit, often referred to as the household		20	1000
File_Month	The month the extract represents; where 20200101 represents the month of January. The records will use the first day of the represented month	YYMMDD	8	20200101
State	The State the extract represents SNAP Data in abbreviated form		2	NY
Active_participant_ind	Indicates the individual's SNAP participation status for the month as defined in 'Benefit_Month' (i.e., currently enrolled as of the last day of the month)		1	"1" = Active "2" = Inactive "3" = Other
Benefit_Month	Benefit month	MM	2	
Relationship	Identifies the primary recipient of a case unit, often referred to as the head of household		2	"00" = Recipient "01" = Child "02" = Spouse/Partner "03" = Parent "04" = Grandchild "05" = Other Relative "06" = Other Non-Relative "07" = Grandparent "99" = Missing

				"88" = Relationship information is not collected
First_Name	The individual's name that is given to the individual, i.e. Given name		50	Jason
Middle_Name	The individual's middle name. Provide the middle initial if full middle name is not provided		24	Lewis
Last_Name	The individual's last name or surname. If the individual has more than one surname, please provide the first and second surname in order		50	Smith Garcia-Smith
Suffix_Name	individual name suffix		24	Sr
SSN	The individual's social security number		9	11111111
Rel_Child	The individual child's relationship to primary recipient. This data element is situational and is only completed when Relationship = '01' (Child) in 'Relationship'		2	"1" = Biological Child "2" = Adoptive Child "3" = Step Child "4" = Foster Child "99" = Missing "88" = Information is not collected

Race_White	Race - White (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Yes, individual is White "N" = No, individual is not White "99" = Race information is missing "88" = Race information is not collected
Race_Black	Race - Black (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Yes, individual is Black "N" = No, individual is not Black "99" = Race information is missing "88" = Race information is not collected
Race_AIAN	Race - American Indian /Alaska Native (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Yes, individual is AIAN "N" = No, individual is not AIAN "99" = Race information is missing "88" = Race information is not collected
Race_Asian	Race - Asian (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Yes, individual is Asian "N" = No, individual is not Asian "99" = Race information is missing "88" = Race information is not collected
Race_NHPI	Race - Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Yes, individual is NHPI "N" = No, individual is not NHPI "99" = Race information is missing "88" = Race information is not collected
Race_Other	Race - Other (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Yes, individual is of another race "N" = No, individual is not of another race "99" = Race information is missing

				"88" = Race information is not collected
Hispanic	Hispanic origin (self-identified)		2	"Y" = Individual is of Hispanic origin "N" = Individual is not of Hispanic origin "99" = Hispanic origin information is missing "88" = Race information is not collected
Sex	The individual's sex, based on the biological attributes of men and women		2	"M" = Male "F" = Female "O" = Other "99" = Missing "88" = Information not collected
Age	The individual's age in years		3	60
DOB	The individual's date of birth	YYYYMMDD	8	19600101
Veteran_Status	The individual's veteran status, if applicable		2	"1" = Yes, veteran "0" = No, not veteran "88" = Information Not Collected "99" = Missing
Citizenship_Status	The individual's U.S. Citizenship status		2	"1" = U.S. Citizen "2" = Non-U.S. Citizen "88" = Information Not Collected "99" = Missing

Highest_Ed	The individual's highest level of school completed		3	"1" = No schooling completed "2" = Nursery school or preschool "3" = Kindergarten "1G" = Grade 1 "2G" = Grade 2 "3G" = Grade 3 "4G" = Grade 4 "5G" = Grade 5 "6G" = Grade 6 "7G" = Grade 7 "8G" = Grade 8 "9G" = Grade 9 "10G" = Grade 10 "11G" = Grade 11 "12G" = Grade 12, no diploma "13" = Regular high school diploma "14" = GED or alternative credential "15" = Some college credit, but less than 1 year "16" = 1 or more years of college credit, no degree "17" = Associate's degree "18" = Bachelor's degree "19" = Master's degree "20" = Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree "21" = Doctorate degree "99" = Missing "88" = Information not collected
------------	--	--	---	--

Employment	The individual's employment status		2	"1" = Full-time "2" = Part-time "3" = Seasonal "4" = Unemployed "5" = Other "6" = Not in Labor Force "88" = Information Not Collected "99" = Missing
Gross_Income_Mo_Indicator	'Gross_Income_Mo' is provided for the individual		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
Gross_Income_Mo	The individual's total monthly gross income. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		14	170000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 170000 = \$1,700.00)
Net_Income_Mo_Indicator	'Net_Income_Mo' is provided for the individual		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
Net_Income_Mo	The individual's total monthly net income. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		14	55000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 50000 = \$550.00)
Income_Source_SSI	The individual received SSI income		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
SSI_Amount	The individual's monthly income from SSI. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	150000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 150000 = \$1,500.00)
Income_Source_TANF	The individual received TANF income		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
TANF_Amount	The individual's monthly income from TANF. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	130000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 130000 = \$1,300.00)

Income_Source_SSA	The individual received SSA income		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
SSA_Amount	The individual's monthly income from SSA. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	170000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 170000 = \$1,700.00)
Income_Source_UI	The individual received unemployment insurance (UI) income		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
UI_Amount	The individual's monthly income from UI. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	110000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 110000 = \$1,100.00)
Income_Source_GA	The individual received General Assistance (GA) income		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
GA_Amount	The individual's monthly income from General Assistance. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	180000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 180000 = \$1,800.00)
Income_Source_Other	The individual received income from another source.		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
Other_Income_Amount	The individual's monthly income from other sources.		8	110000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 110000 = \$1,100.00)
Earned_Income_Indicator	The individual earned a monthly income apart from SSI, TANF, SSA, UI, and GA benefits		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
Earned_Income_Amount	The individual's monthly earned income. Does not include SSI, TANF, SSA, UI, or GA. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	180000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 180000 = \$1,800.00)

State_Dept_Labor_Income_Reported	Individual's income is reported by State Department of Labor (NDNH or UI databases)		1	"1" = Yes "0" = No
State_Dept_Labor_Income	The individual's monthly income as provided by the State's Department of Labor. Implied two (2) decimals, meaning that 500 = \$5.00		8	250000 (Note: the implied two decimals, meaning that 250000 = \$2,500.00)
State_Dept_Labor_Employment	The individual's employment status as provided by the State's Department of Labor		2	"1" = Full-time "2" = Part-time "3" = Seasonal "4" = Unemployed "5" = Other "6" = Not in Labor Force "88" = Information Not Collected "99" = Missing
Health_Insurance_Program_Name	The individual's health insurance program name as defined by the State		30	Medicaid CHIP (Note: these are examples only)
Health_Insurance_Program_Start_Date	The individual's health insurance program start date	YYYYMMDD	8	20150101
Health_Insurance_Program_End_Date	The individual's health insurance program end date	YYYYMMDD	8	20190101
Health_Insurance_Plan_Type	The individual's health insurance plan type as defined by the State		30	HMO EPO PPO POS (Note: these are examples only)

Health_Insurance_Benefit_Code	The individual's health insurance benefit code as defined by the State		30	4B 02 AT DM2 CCP (Note: these are examples only)
Health_Insurance_Benefit_Name	The individual's health insurance benefit name as defined by the State		30	Comprehensive Care Program Maternity (Note: these are examples only)

8. Appendix D: Securely Submit Data

The Census Bureau's Managed File Transfer (MFT)

03/30/2020 – Version 1.1

The Census Bureau's Managed File Transfer (MFT) is a consolidated platform which processes file transfers into a single, secure and centrally managed environment, with support for file transfers between business partners (B2B) and file transfers between systems or applications (A2A).

MFT uses the TIBCO® Software Inc. platform and adheres with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) compliance, which aims to safeguard the confidentiality, security, and integrity of information while in transit. MFT gathers all the necessary audit and transfer trails during each file transmission. MFT also has additional issue monitoring features, including built-in automatic integrity checking of file content, detection of transfer errors, notification of file transmission, and recovery from points of failure.

Features of MFT include:

- Complete Security – MFT automatically encrypts all file transmissions in-flight and at-rest during the upload process, via TLS 1.2 and AES 128-bit encryption.
- Accelerated Transfers – Built-in acceleration technology within MFT defeats network latency to deliver speeds up to 30x faster than a traditional FTP upload. MFT also offers transfer of multiple files in a single transaction.
- No store and forward process – Strong proxy capabilities of MFT ensures that incoming data is delivered directly to the backend system and never stored in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) platform unencrypted.
- Multi-protocol support – For system to system file transfer outside Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS), MFT provides full support for application program interface (API), FTP Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), Secured File Transfer Protocol (sFTP) Secure Shell (SSH), Applicability Statement 2 (AS2), Common Flash Memory Interface (CFI) Protocol and Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) transmission.
- Automated Notifications – MFT offers automated file transfer notifications, user account creation, account security notifications, and is being powered by a dedicated help desk.

MFT is accessible via <https://mft.econ.census.gov>.

The IP address for mft.econ.census.gov is 148.129.68.18.

The port number for any secure website that uses https:// is 443.

If you have any further questions, you can contact us at <https://mft.econ.census.gov/cfcc/login/loginHelp.jsp>, by emailing erd.all.dqb.list@census.gov, or by calling 301-763-2095.

A Detailed Data Sheet from TIBCO on MFT is available under:

<https://www.tibco.com/sites/tibco/files/resources/ds-mft-internet-server.pdf>.