2016 International Conference on Questionnaire Design, Development, Evaluation, and Testing (QDET2) Identifying Sources of Measurement Error in Household Applications for School-Based Meals

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## Rationale for Research

Aim of our research is to understand how the content and design of the program application form contributes to household misreporting

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service spends approximately \$16B annually to provide school meals to children, with errors in school reimbursement costing approximately 5 percent of net costs.

- Key sources of measurement error by household applicants are household size and income


## Review of Forms

- FNS- and locallydeveloped application forms (min of 11)
- Best practices for visual design
- Clarity of instructions
- Measurement of key elements including the construction of household roster, and sources and frequency of child and adult income


## In-Person Interviews

- Identify 10+ school districts across U.S. representing variation in geography, demography, and school types
- Conduct structured interviews with school officials at each site
- Recruit and interview approximately 165 adults who applied for school meal benefits in current year and vary by gender, age, race, ethnicity, education, household composition, and socioeconomic status, to understand sources of reporting error.
- Obtain information on household composition, formal and informal income sources by adults and children, and child and school characteristics.






