For the past year, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has been in the process of developing an automated system that will help support FNS and State agencies (SAs) in conducting the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Management Evaluations (MEs). The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that FNS is in its final stages of approving the ME tool for implementation. The SFSP ME tool is a web based application that will automate the manual process currently in place for conducting SFSP MEs and reporting review results.

We are pleased to inform you that the SFSP ME system has successfully passed the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) phase at various levels. Currently this tool is scheduled to be released to a production environment on September 15, 2010, and will be ready for implementation for the FY 2011 SFSP ME reviews.

**System Overview**

The automated system will standardize the way in which MEs are conducted throughout the country by utilizing the SFSP ME annual guidance, a standard set of questions that are linked to regulations and broken down into functional and sub-functional areas. After logging into the system, users will be able to select areas they wish to evaluate for a particular SA. Each functional and sub-functional area will contain questions for which several possible findings or observations may be added to the ME.

Highlights that FNS and the SAs can expect to see in the automated system include:

- Ability for FNS and SAs to enter and track ME data collected during the ME process from before the on-site visit to after the ME is closed out;
- Ability for FNS to electronically generate the contents of an ME Report, as well as generate management report(s);
- Automation of the send and receive process for submitting the ME Report to the SA;
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- Ability for the SA to electronically access and view the information pertaining to its MEs and respond to FNS with corrective action plans (CAPs) and supporting documentation;

- Ability for FNS and SAs to facilitate an automated review and approval process when closing out findings; and

- Ability to access information more easily and conveniently while completing an ME or responding to FNS or SAs.

Please note that this system only accommodates SFSP MEs at this time. Regional Offices conducting joint MEs for multiple programs will have to use the normal manual processes to complete the MEs for other programs, while using the SFSP ME tool to complete the review and report for SFSP.

User Access

The SFSP ME tool allows for different types of users. Typically users may be situated at a State agency, regional office, or at the FNS national office. Different users will have profiles and access levels tailored to meet specific business needs in the system. FNS regional office and headquarter’s staff, as well as volunteers from State agencies, participated in testing the functionality and usability of the system. As the SFSP ME tool will be ready to go live on September 15, 2010, please note the following important points regarding user access and its functionalities.

- Two different levels of access will be created to use the SFSP ME automated tool. One URL (website address) will be available strictly for conducting real MEs. We refer to this tool environment as Production. A second URL will be available strictly for testing and training purposes and is referred to at the User Testing (UT) environment.

- Access to UT Environment:
  
  o If your region or SA is interested in conducting testing or training in the UT environment, you may request test IDs by sending an email to bramaramba.kowtha@fns.usda.gov. Please specify how many IDs you will need. FNS is also looking into the process of creating a set of test IDs (including multiple user profiles) for each region. Once these IDs are available, they will be sent to regions via email.

  o If you have participated in ME tool testing earlier, you may have received test IDs. These test IDs created during the UAT period are no longer valid.
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- **Access to Production for ME Reviews:**
  
  o All regional office staff who are scheduled to conduct or participate in the SFSP Management Evaluations are required to request access to the Production system by submitting a User Access Request Form (FNS-674) to FNS headquarters. For initial system implementation (and those SAs that scheduled MEs in October or November 2010) please submit signed FNS-674 forms by September 24, 2010. For all FNS staff who will need access to Production following the initial round, all FNS-674 access forms should be submitted at least two months in advance.

  o Regions should work with their assigned SAs and coordinate the forms submission. All FNS-674s for SA staff should be signed both by the SA requestor and the appropriate regional office program representative. Remember that the forms must be submitted at least two months in advance.

  o All completed FNS-674 forms should be scanned and emailed to our headquarters SFSP ME Tool system administrator, BJ Kowtha, at bramaramba.kowtha@fns.usda.gov.

**Training and Support**

Multiple training resources will be available to support users, including the following:

- User manuals for various access levels are already built into the system.

- The tool also comes with training modules in the form of short topic video segments in the Help section.

- FNS headquarters and regional office staff are in the process of determining additional training needs for users.

- The development contractors will provide support during the 30-day warranty period (September 15 – October 15, 2010).

- For ongoing support during the life of this tool, FNS is in the process of identifying IT service desk support for this project.

Thank you in advance for your support in moving forward with the SFSP Management Evaluation tool implementation. As more information is available concerning implementation and training, further updates will be released. We trust that you will find it to be an asset during Regional Directors
the SFSP ME review process. If you have questions about the information in this memorandum, please contact BJ Kowtha, at bramaramba.kowtha@fns.usda.gov. BJ also may be reached at 703-605-4390.

Cynthia Long
Director
Child Nutrition Division