

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. During the question-and-answer session, please press “*1” on your touch-tone phone. Today’s conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. Now I will turn the meeting over to Miss Audrey Rowe.

Thank you, operator. Hello, and welcome to all of you. Thank you for joining us today for this consultation session on the “Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.” My name is Audrey Rowe, and I’m the administrator for the Food and Nutrition Service within the United States Department of Agriculture, and I will be your consulting official. I’d like to welcome tribal leaders and members to today’s important consultation session. And I’d like to say on behalf of the administration how seriously we take these consultation sessions, and we look forward to your input and your feedback as we go through today’s session.

Many of you may be aware that last month, on December 2nd, the President hosted the White House Tribal Nations Conference with tribal leaders and representatives from multiple agencies. This was the third conference hosted by the President to continue to build upon our commitment to strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship in Indian Country. The President’s commitment is one shared by myself and all of my staff and colleagues who are here today within the Food and Nutrition Service.

I am here today to consult with you openly and to listen to your comments so that as administrator I can make any necessary improvements to our programs or to our studies as we go forward. Many of you joining us today are familiar with the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, also known as “FDPIR.” FDPIR provides nutritious USDA foods to low-income households living on Indian reservations and to low-income American Indian households residing in approved areas near reservations or in Oklahoma.

Currently, the program provides monthly assistance and nutrition education to approximately 276 tribes throughout the 100 ITOs, Indian Tribal Organizations, and five state agencies. Over the years program participants have seen many changes, many positive changes to the food package. Households can select from over 70 products; including meats, poultry, beans, eggs, nuts, canned fruits and vegetables, pastas, cereals, rice, milk, and cheese. FNS has also made a concerted effort to offer a variety of fresh produce items. Through strong partnerships and collaborations, FDPIR has become integral to the nutrition safety net, ensuring that approximately 78,000 individuals living on or near Indian reservations have access each month to nutritious USDA foods and to nutrition education.

The purpose of today’s consultation meeting is to introduce a national study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian reservations and to consult with you, tribal leaders, regarding the study and how it will be conducted. This will be a very important study to all of us. The last time we had a national study, it was conducted in 1990. Since then

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

significant changes have occurred in the program, including changes to eligibility rules, foods offered, and food delivery options. This study will help us to understand on a national basis who is being served by the program and how we can make the program even more effective.

In order for us to have an open dialogue, I have asked the research team involved in this study to join me today. For many of you joining us today this may be the first opportunity to learn about the study, and I want to ensure we provide enough information for us to engage in constructive dialogue.

Joining me today to support our discussions are Nancy Pindus from the Urban Institute here in Washington, D.C., Carol Hafford from NORC at the University of Chicago, and Walter Hillabrant from Support Services International. I would like to welcome them to our session and thank them in advance for making their presentations.

I would also like to welcome our Food Distribution Team here at FNS for the Food Distribution Program. We have a stellar group of USDA/FNS employees and leaders who work on this program, and I'm very proud that they are my colleagues and my staff who work together to improve and continue to work to improve these kinds of programs. First, Laura Castro and then Dana Rasmussen, all of us will cover various aspects of the study and its objective.

As I mentioned, I'd like today's session to be an open dialogue. I want to hear from you on your thoughts and comments about the study so that I can ensure the study is conducted properly and meets our objectives. We are in the design stage for the study and want to be sure that your ideas and concerns shape it.

Today's consultation session, which is also available as a web meeting, as well as a conference call, is a format we are still learning from. This format will not be the only format for our consultation sessions but one of many types, which may include in person. We are looking for a variety of ways to provide an open dialogue.

Now before we get started I'd like to turn it over to our moderator for today, another stellar FNSer Barbara Lopez, to talk about logistics for today's meeting. She will discuss today's agenda, how to access meeting materials, how to ask questions, or make a comment over the phone, as well as have you submit a written comment. I would like to mention that today's session and all of your comments will be part of the official record. I will also ask Barbara to lead participant introductions where tribal leaders and/or designees can join us in introductions. We'd like to know who is out there providing consultation to us. I look forward to hearing from you and learning who is joining us today. And now I will turn it over to Barbara Lopez.

Thank you, Audrey, and thank you all for joining us today. I would like to first go over general logistics for today's consultation session to ensure everyone joining us has the

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

materials available. Some of you are joining us through the web meeting where you can see the slides for today's presentation directly on your computer screen.

If you are joining us through the web meeting, I would like to draw your attention to the upper right-hand corner of your screen. You're going to see a series of icons, and one of those icons looks like three little pieces of paper. That is the "Handout" section. If you click on that little icon you will be able to download directly to your computer today's meeting materials. Those include three documents. We have today's agenda, which highlights the different aspects of the study we will be covering today, along with the various speakers and presenters. We have also included a project description of the FDPIR study, and we also included the presentation, which currently, if you are logged onto the web meeting, you will be able to see all the slides; however it's also offered as a handout so you can follow along. Use it for reference later today and in the future as well.

These three documents were also e-mailed to tribal leaders earlier this week, as well as this morning, so you may have received these materials via e-mail. For reference we now have a USDA food and Nutrition Service tribal page on the public website. Here you will find information about all of our ongoing consultation sessions, as well as today's consultation session on the study of FDPIR. The website is a good resource where you can find different information. You could register for our consultation sessions. You can sign up to receive reminders, as well as download meeting materials. This is a really great link to have, and it's listed here on your slide as well.

If you are joining us on the conference call only and not on the web meeting, I'd like to share with you that link. It is WWW.FNS.USDA.GOV/FNS/TRIBAL. We also want to make sure everyone joining us via the "conference call only" that you have the materials available, especially the presentation to ensure you can follow along. Again, these materials were e-mailed earlier to tribal leaders but if for some reason you do not have them, then you can please let us know during the introductions, which we will begin shortly, and we will make sure we can send them to you during today's meeting. Again, you can also go to that tribal webpage to download them directly since they are posted there.

If you are following along on the conference call today and do have the presentation in front of you, we are currently on slide number four. I would also like to share with you the various options on how you can engage in dialogue, how you can submit a question or a comment, both written and over the phone. If you are joining on the webinar, you could submit a written question by clicking the Q&A menu item, which is on the top part of your webinar screen. You click on that little Q&A, you will get a little pop up, and you will be able to submit a written question directly to us.

You can also engage in dialogue over the phone and connect directly with us by pressing "*1" on your phone. By doing so, the operator will record your name and your tribe, and then the operator will be able to open up your line and connect you directly

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

with us. I'll be going through these instructions again when we reach the various points where we can engage in dialogue as well.

We would like to now start with introductions over the phone and see who is joining us for today's consultation session. We'd like to welcome tribal leaders and members, as well as ensure you have the available handouts to make sure you can follow along with our discussion, so please let us know. To join in introductions, you're going to press "*1" on your phone. You will be able to record your name and you'll be able to join us for introductions. Just as a reminder, today's session is being recorded and transcribed, and it will be part of the official USDA consultation record. It's very important that we capture everyone that is joining us today so we can include it in our consultation records.

ATTENDEES:

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Bud Squirrel, Cherokee Nation.
Jenny Kendall, Cherokee Nation
Ella Sands, Cherokee Nation
Tim Kid, Cherokee Nation.

Ruth Reifel, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Commodity Food Distribution Program Director.

Denise Dodson, Ho Chunk Nation

Gregory Nothstine, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Michael Pierre, Commodity Director, Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Eloise, your line is open.

Linda Walker, Commodity Foods Director, Yakama Nation
Harry Smiskin, Tribal Chairman, Yakama Nation.

Tracy Potts, Commodities Coordinator, Prairie Band Potawatomi

Anna Cruce, Program Manager, Muscogee Creek Nation
Anita Lowe, Certification Specialist Supervisor, Muscogee Creek Nation
Nelson Harjo, Warehouse Manager, Muscogee Creek Nation

James White, Seneca Nation of Indians

Shauna Wilmagloth, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians

Mary Tatum, Program Manager, Gila River Indian Community

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

Darien Dixon, Warehouse Supervisor, Gila River Indian Community

Jose. (INAUDIBLE).

Connie Martinez, Program Director, Pueblo Acoma Food Distribution Program,

Florence Calabaza, Program Director, Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos.

Charles "Red" Gates, designee for Tribal Chairman, Charles W. Murphy, and he's asked me to make a statement up front that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe does not consider these conference calls as consultation sessions for standing. Thank you.

Richard John, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Klein Loop, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Susie Roy, Program Director Food Distribution Program, Leech Lake Reservation

Mary Greene Trottier, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe

Laura Jackson, FDPIR Program Assistance, Little River Band.

Gordon Sam, Mississippi band of Choctaw Indians,

Tod Robertson, Seminole Nation.

Andrew Rave Ho Chunk Nation Food Distribution Program Director and I do have all the materials.

Betty Jo Graveen, Program Director, Lac Du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians. Mr. Thomas Malson, he can't be available today, but he would prefer to have consultation face to face with USDA, just a message from him. Thank you. I do have all my materials.

Darlene Sanchez, Mountain Plains Region Food and Nutrition Service
Sarah Smith Holmes, Mountain Plains Region Food and Nutrition Service
Gina O'Brian, Mountain Plains Region Food and Nutrition Service
Kathy Sweitzer, Mountain Plains Region Food and Nutrition Service

Florissa Kanuho, Pawnee Nation,

Gloria Goodwin, White Earth in Minnesota

Jim Kemble, Ponca Tribe Food Distribution

Alicia Dominguez, Food Distribution, Eight Northern Indian Pueblos

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

Troy Littleraven, Program Director, Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribe

Kayleen Morris, Cowlitz Tribe in Longview, Washington.
Ed Archer, Cowlitz Tribe in Longview, Washington.

Chris Narducci, Urban Institute
Diane Lieby, Urban Institute.

Peggy Bazant, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

Richard John, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Colleen Luke, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Richard Vaughn

Dan Dougherty, Eight Northern Indian Pueblos in Northern New Mexico

Michelle Billy, Program Director, Chippewa-Cree Rocky Boy, Montana

Chris Henley, South West Regional Office,

Thank you everyone, for joining us in introductions. I will now hand it back to Audrey Rowe to introduce the research presentation and study overview.

Thank you, Barbara. Okay. Let's go ahead and get started. I'd like to introduce Laura Castro and Dana Rasmussen from the Food Distribution Program to provide a study overview.

Thank you, Audrey. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as well to consultation call. I am the director of the Food Distribution Division at USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, and I am very pleased that we are beginning this study and are beginning the first of several consultations we will have as this study progresses.

As you hear more about the study today, please keep in mind that we are doing this research to get the information that all of us need to make FDPIR work now and in the future. Making decisions about what to offer, what eligibility criteria is appropriate, and how much funding is needed to support the programs depend on having information about the needs of our FDPIR participants. We have such study data on participants in many of our larger programs. Having a nationally representative FDPIR study will help ensure that FDPIR gets the resources it needs.

We cannot make this study work alone. Your help and input is the key to the study's success. We will make sure that we keep you informed and engage you throughout the study. After these consultation calls, we will be posting materials and updates on our

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

website and provide a link to those materials to interested parties, including the FDPIR Program Community, and the National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations, or NAFDPIR.

In addition, if you would rather not ask a question or provide comments on today's call or if you have any comments or input after the call ends, we will also have a dedicated e-mail address that you can use to provide comments. That e-mail address, I'll give it to you now, and you will see it again throughout our study presentation, it's TRIBALAFFAIRS@FNS.USDA.GOV.

Up next I would like to introduce Dana Rasmussen who is our chief of the policy branch in Food Distribution Division, and he will talk about the purpose of the study and benefits of the study for both USDA Food and Nutrition Service and our FDPIR Tribes. Thank you again, and welcome to this important consultation call.

Thank you, Laura, and welcome, everyone, to the consultation call today. As some of you on the call may know, the last national study, as Audrey mentioned, of FDPIR was completed over two decades ago in 1990. That's quite a long time, and a great deal has changed since then. With regard to this new FDPIR study, first and foremost, we want to obtain an updated description of the participants and programs. To do this, USDA, along with the Urban Institute and its partners, will work to describe changes in the program and participants since that 1990 study. This includes changes to delivery options, foods offered, nutrition education, eligibility rules, and demographics. Now to give you an idea of the scope of this FDPIR study, we want to cover several things.

First, we want to obtain an updated demographic profile of households and individuals that currently participate in FDPIR, including their participation in other assistance programs. For example, we don't know the number of seniors participating in FDPIR nationally in relation to other age groups. Program managers may know this locally, but FNS needs this information from a national standpoint to help make better decisions about the foods offered, eligibility requirements, and other issues.

Second, we want to assess FDPIR's contribution to the participants food supply. We know that FDPIR contributes greatly to each participant's food supply, but we want to measure it or quantify it.

Third, we also want to quantify the extent to which FDPIR participants switch between FDPIR and SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program, formerly known as food stamps. This would include determining the main reasons for movement between the two programs.

Fourth, we want to explore the reasons why fewer individuals are participating in FDPIR. Now we hear anecdotally that the level of the average monthly person of SNAP benefits in comparison to FDPIR is the primary cause in recent years. However, participation in FDPIR has been declining for quite sometime and we want to quantify all

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

the potential reasons for that participation decline lane try to figure out why this is taking place.

We also want to obtain descriptive information on key aspects of FDPIR program operations; in particular, we want to know what's changed in the last 20-or-so years. Again, we know some things anecdotally in our conversations with program managers and staff, but actual data is very beneficial in helping us determine program needs.

In addition, we want to ascertain the resources devoted to nutrition education and the format of the information provided directly to FDPIR participants; in other words, what works best within available funding. We also want to identify factors that affect program managers' decisions on which FDPIR foods are ordered and offered. You know, we're talking about participant appeal, shelf life, variety, nutritional content, or perhaps some combination thereof. Furthermore, we want to learn more about the approaches used to distribute food packages to participants and why they are selected. For example, the grocery store concept has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, and quantitative data would be very useful showing the advantages of this concept in comparison to other available distribution methods. Of course, as we know, some of these answers anecdotally, but to really measure what works we need data across all programs.

And finally, we want to ascertain participant satisfaction with administrative practices and the food package. This will let us know if we need to make changes that would positive impact participants. Ultimately, the goal of the study is to give us the information we need to improve the program. We have invested a great deal of funding in the study, separate from FDPIR program resources, with the idea that this research will provide the latest information to help us make informed decisions about the program; in turn, helping to make it better for participants and program operators.

Now as Laura mentioned, given the wide range of topics that we want to learn more about, this study will not be successful without your help. In addition, although we know the general scope of the study, you may have suggestions for topics or issues that you'd like us to cover as we carry out this study. These calls represent an opportunity for you to provide input and let us know if there are any specific issues that you think would be a good idea to address within the scope of the study.

Now we're on to slide nine, which talks about study benefits for both us here at FNS and tribes. We want to obtain current information to help us make decisions about how to better administer the program. In particular, we want to identify the needs of participants and identify the ways to make the program more beneficial to participants. We may obtain information that could not only help us make the program better for participants but FDPIR Indian Tribal Organizations and state agencies as well.

And we also want to obtain information representative of all FDPIR ITOs or Indian Tribal Organizations and state agencies, which we can then share with the program

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

community. We not only want to conduct the study with your input but we also want to share the information obtained from this study with you. We view this as a study that will not only benefit USDA but all FDPIR programs.

One example that we can provide, we do work with an FDPIR food package view workgroup, which consists mainly of program directors and nutrition professionals appointed by the National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations or NAFDPIR. If we learn from the study that participants are not satisfied with some aspect of the food package, we can work with the workgroup to change that.

Now in addition, if the study reveals that we should change something in our program regulations or policy to help the program run more smoothly, or better benefit participants, we'd have the supporting data necessary to make that case. We could then work with the program community to see what would work and what would not work. With that being said, I'd like to again thank you for participating on this call. We've had a great turnout here today.

Nancy Pendus from the Urban Institute will speak for a few minutes and provide an overview of the study. After that, we'll open up the line for questions, comments, or any input that you might have. And with that, I'll hand it over to Nancy.

Thank you, Dana. Well welcome to everyone on the call. This is Nancy Pendus. I'm the director of the study at the Urban Institute, and I want to start by saying how pleased we are to be working on this study. Some of you may remember us. The Urban Institute, with Support Services International, conducted a much smaller study of the FDPIR Program in 2008 and 2009. We had wonderful cooperation from a very dedicated group of FDPIR directors and staff. And so we look forward to working with you again and providing information that will improve the program for ITOs and for participants.

This is just a bit of a study snapshot here. This is on slide ten. The study sponsor, as you have heard, is the USDA/FNS Office of Research and analysis, and they're working in close cooperation with Food Distribution Divisions.

Our next slide, which is slide 11, I just want to introduce our project team a little bit here. FNS selected the Urban Institute, which is a nonprofit policy research organization in Washington, D.C., to conduct this study, along with NORC at the University of Chicago and Support Services International or SSI. Other names that you will be hearing at the Urban Institute are Diane Lieby, the project manager, and Chris Narducci, a research associate at the Urban Institute. NORC is a nationally-known survey research firm.

Carol Hafford and Suzanne Bard will be responsible for the case record review and participant survey as part of this study. Walter Hillabrant, president of SSI, is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Tribe and worked with us on the earlier FDPIR study, and Carol and Walter are here with me today and will be covering some

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

parts of this presentation. With respect to oversight of the study, the Federal Office of Management and Budget, or OMB, and USDA will be reviewing everything that we propose to do, and they do take this responsibility very, very seriously.

Just another part of the study snapshot now is a tentative timeline to give you a sense of what we're planning, at least at the front end here. Some key dates, these first two telephone consultations will be held this month. Then we are going to be working on instrument design for several months through August. We will also be contacting FDPIR programs that are selected to be part of the sample. And then as we develop the instruments, we will be submitting that package to the Food and Nutrition Service, which would then submit that for approval to the Office of Management and Budget.

After the consultation in January, follow-up consultations will be planned for the tribes that are in the study sample. The format and timing of those isn't confirmed yet, but these January calls and the future consultations are very important, and we really need your input to make this study a success.

At the end of the study there will be a final report, and the final report will be completed in late 2014, which will combine the findings across all the tribes in the study. On the top it's the demographics, eligibility, food products, delivery options, nutritional education, and access to supermarkets. There will be various opportunities to access, share, and discuss the report as part of the dissemination process. So that gives you a basic snap shop of the study.

I think at this point we are going to give you an opportunity to sort of think about what you've heard so far and an opportunity to get some input from you if there are any early questions on the study or on any of this presentation. I'll hand it back to Barbara.

Okay. Great. Thank you, Nancy. We're going to go ahead and open the session for consultation and open dialogue. Just as a reminder, you can press "*1" on your phone, and the operator will assist you in connecting your fine line with us. That's "*1" on your phone if you have any questions or comments. And, operator, please.

One moment, please. One moment for the first question.

Go ahead, operator.

Question from Gregory Nothstine. Your line is open.

Oh, yeah, thank you. This is Gregory Nothstine Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. It's a late morning. Thank you for having this teleconference. I was listening to Dana give the overview of the objectives, and I was just curious, in the data mining of determining how many elders or senior citizens are benefitting from the program over a period of years, if you will, I was just curious how difficult it would be to

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

use AIS to maybe track that or if it was used in that fashion? So that was my only question.

Thanks, Greg, and I think that's something we can look into and explore with our AIS expert. This is Dana Rasmussen, by the way, responding to you. We can talk to Doug Freezin [PH] who handles AIS to see what possibilities are there. I know that was something that came up. Urban Institute had asked about any available system that is we could piggyback on to help ease the study process.

And, operator, please, is there another question in the queue or a comment?

Apparently there are no questions.

Okay. Thank you so much. We'll go ahead and continue now on with the next section, covered by Ms. Nancy Pindus on how the study will be conducted.

Okay. Thank you very much, and we're looking forward to some more questions as we go on with some of the study information. The next three slides, which will be slides 6 -- starting with slide 15, will be -- they will highlight the topics that we're going to try and learn about in this study, and for the first slide in that series, I'm going to turn this over to Walter Hillabrant who will talk about some of the chief study topic.

Thank you, Nancy, and bonjour. Hello to everyone. I'm looking forward to working on this study and finding ways to strengthen this important program. Right now we're on slide 16, and I'll be doing 16, 17, and 18. One of the key project goals is to provide an updated national profile of FDPIR participants, as you have heard. This profile can be compared to prior times to determine the nature of change, if any, in participants' overtime. This profile includes demographic information such as participant's age and gender, household composition; that is, who lives in the household with the participant; employment status, indicators of economic hardship, and FDPIR eligibility factors such as length of certification period and changes in circumstances that affect eligibility.

Going to the next slide, 17, still talking about the key parts of the study design, other participant information collected will help show how the program affects FDPIR participants. We will seek information from participants about how they store and prepare foods, how they pick up, acquire food, as well as barriers to accessing program benefits like distance to FDPIR distribution sites, participants' transportation options. We'll be looking at participant sources of food and the role played by FDPIR. We'll look at the satisfaction with the program and suggestions for program improvement directly from participants. And we want to find out what factors influence participation in FDPIR and other related programs.

Turning to slide 18, the study seeks to compliment the profile of FDPIR participants, with a profile of program services and activities across sites. To do that, we will collect information about the FDPIR program operations. For example, we will describe the

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

nature of nutrition education activities and factors influencing these activities, including nutrition education grants. We will also collect information about activities coordinated with other programs such as WIC and SNAP. We will look at the way that FDPIR grantees distribute food, which we believe is in a variety of ways. We will identify food distribution methods and their advances and their disadvantages.

Finally, we will identify factors affecting participation in the program in general, as well as the reasons for decreases and increases in participation at different sites. We will be collecting this information from administrators and selected staff. The perceptions about factors affecting program participation will compliment the reports. And with that, I'm going to turn this over to Carol.

Hello, this is Carol Hafford from NORC at the University of Chicago. I'd like to begin by saying that we at NORC are looking forward to working with the tribes and collecting information that will be helpful to the FDPIR participants and programs in FNS. I'll begin by saying a bit about sampling in general before moving on to the data collection.

Sampling is a way of obtaining representative data from a limited number of programs, which represents the larger group, in this case, all FDPIR programs. As the goal of the study is to describe the FDPIR participants and programs, a nationally representative sample of programs will be drawn. This will allow for most large, some medium, and a few small food distribution programs to be included in the sample across Indian country and across the FNS regions. This is a fair way to ensure that all FDPIR participants within these tribes have an equal chance to be selected for participation in the study. When we analyze the data from the study, we'll be able to describe common characteristics and variations across tribes in the ways that would describe the key topics presented in slide 16 and 17, and there will be 26 tribes in the study sample.

I'm moving on now to slide 20, describing the data collection component. This is a new data collection and will involve three parts. The first is a case record review, participant surveys, and site visits. I'll explain a bit about each one. The purpose of the case record review is to obtain information that will describe current program participants and their characteristics. This includes the household composition, the presence of elders and children, sources and fluctuation in income, other resources or benefits that are available to the household.

The case record will occur with the 26 sampled sites and about 32 records will be reviewed at the sites with a little more at the larger sites. NORC staff will work with each tribe or ITO to conduct the case record review, making sure to respect tribal procedures. And since many programs use paper records, the case review will usually involve a visit to the FDPIR office by researchers to abstract participant information from the records. All information drawn from the case record reviews will be carefully protected and will maintain participants' privacy.

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

The second component of the data collection is a telephone or in-person survey program participants. The survey provides a way for participants to share their thoughts and suggestions about the FDPIR program in their community. It should take about 30 minutes and will be conducted by NORC-trained field interviewers that have experience conducting surveys in Indian Country. The survey will be conducted with the same households that were sampled for the case record review, and an incentive will be provided.

The third part of the data collection involves site visits to a number of tribes and ITOs to learn more about FDPIR program operation. During the visits, the Urban Institute and SSI will conduct staff interviews, hold discussion groups with FDPIR participants and nonparticipants, and tour the FDPIR program facility. It's important to note that all components of the data collection will be reviewed by federally-approved institutional review boards at the Urban Institute and NORC. We'll ensure that participants provide informed consent and that their confidentiality is protected. Personal identifiers will be removed from all data collected and data that will be stored securely.

Now moving on to slide 21, this concerns tribal involvement in the study. And our goal across the study team is to work collaboratively with the tribes in conducting the various components of the data collection. Tribal involvement is very important to the success of the study. Once the sample of FDPIR programs is selected, we'll be reaching out to selected tribes individually and respectfully ask that you work with us in a number of ways to conduct this study using methods that pose the least burden and the most benefit to the tribe.

For the tribes in the sample this includes working with our outreach staff to tailor information materials, procedures, and schedules for your tribes, advising us about tribal protocols to conducting research in your community such as obtaining tribal resolutions and logistical planning for the data collection and encouraging participation in this survey and in this (INAUDIBLE).

We also welcome input from all tribes and ITOs on data collection topics, and we'll be asking for volunteers from a small number of you to help in pretesting the survey questionnaire and the site visit discussion guide. It's important to notice while participation in the study may offer opportunities to build tribal capacity to conduct similar studies. Some examples are learning how to poll a sample of case records, extracting data from case records, or helping with logistical considerations for conducting focus groups, so we will be exploring ways to do that with you.

So in conclusion, and before I turn this back over to Nancy Pindus, I'd like to say that NORC looks forward to your insights and working with all of you. Thanks for listening.

Thanks for that explanation, Carol. I'm just wanting to let you know what's coming next, and this would be on slide 22. The next task that we'll be working on are the data collection instruments. This includes the participant survey, forms for getting the case

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

record data, and discussion guides for site visits. These are reviewed carefully by the project team and by FNS.

A variety of information must be submitted then by FNS to the Office of Management and Budget for review and clearance. And we can't begin data collection until we've received approval from OMB. So in the next month, we'll be selecting the sample of tribes for the study, and when that is approved by FNS, we will begin the outreach that Carol described to tribes to learn about their procedures and systems and facilitate their participation in the study. And I'll turn to the next slide. This is where we really need your input.

The next task we'll be work on are the data collection instruments, and then we want to know strategies from tribes for encouraging participation by FDPIR staff and program participants in the sample tribes. We really need the participating ITOs assistance in making this study a success. We can't say that often enough. And we'll respect tribal customs, procedures, and calendars when it comes to conducting the study on respective reservations.

We'll also want to hear from you about any potential concerns you might have ability the study and about topics or questions that we should include that it would help us to understand about why participation is declining or how the program can be improved. We're currently completing our study plan and then we'll be designing instruments. And we'll do our best to incorporate your input and address any concerns at this stage of the project. I'm now going to turn it back to Barbara Lopez to open it up for your questions, consultation, and discussion.

Great. Thank you, Nancy, and thank you to all the research team for all the important information shared regarding the study. We're going to stop there and open up the session for consultation and open dialogue, so once again, press "*1" on your phone and you'll be able to record your name and tribe, and the operator will assist you in connecting you with us. So if you have a question or comment, please press "*1." And, operator, please.

One moment, please. One moment for the first question.

Betty Jo Graveen, your line is open.

Oh, I'm sorry. How many tribes did you say that you were going to select? I mean is it 20 tribes? This is real -- our connection here is pretty bad, but I'm trying to listen to this. But how many tribes in this study are going to be -- are you going to select?

We'll be selecting 26 tribes for the study.

Out of -- what's the total amount of tribes of FDPIR across the country?

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

I think it's 105. It's 100 ITOs and tribes.

Yeah, we have 100 Indian tribal organizations in five states participating in the program.

Okay. Well I don't think you're going to get a true picture with that many tribes. That's my opinion, because every program is different, I mean in their locations. I just don't think that it's -- but like I said, that's my opinion, and I don't think you're going to get an accurate picture of the -- I participated in the last time when they came here.

Well thanks for the comments, and we will certainly consider that.

Okay. Thank you.

Our next question comes from Gregory Nothstine. Your line is open.

Yeah, thank you. Gregory Nothstine, ANT&C. One of the things that we've been experiencing here in Alaska was a question brought up by one of our certification specialists, the difference in equity between administering SNAP and FDPIR was the eligibility -- length of eligibility for able-bodied adults. Unemployment in rural Alaska is relatively high, and this SNAP office of the state realizes that, and they will be able to certify an able-bodied adult for six months up to eight months during the course of a seasonal period; whereas here at FDPIR, able-bodied adults will only be certified for maybe a month to two months at most. And I was curious how the Paper Reduction Act quantified or was at least quantified into the application process for certifying able-bodied adults on a one-month, a two-month basis. So I'm just curious. Some would just rather not have to do the paperwork and go over to SNAP rather than have to continue filling out an application or get recertified every two months. So that was one of the concerns or at least the experiences we were seeing pop up. So I just wanted to add that as a comment.

Greg, this is Dana Rasmussen, and perhaps one question I would have for you would be, is this a state-enforced certification period?

I'm not sure I'm following you on that. I mean this SNAP would -- the SNAP office here at Alaska, at least the field agents, would certify able-bodied adults up to about six months.

Okay.

And for our program, which is an alternative of SNAP, which has a slightly higher income eligibility limit, would be eligible for this program if they failed to meet the eligibility requirements for SNAP, that we would have to certify them for maybe a month to two months at the most.

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

I got you. I think one thing that Urban Institute can look at would be certification periods for various eligible individuals and to see if that may be impacting participation in the program. And the interaction between FDPIR and SNAP is something to consider. Thank you.

Sorry. Currently there are no questions.

Okay. So we'll go ahead and move on to our next section, which is Part 3, and I'd like to introduce Mr. Dana Rasmussen to cover next steps.

Thanks, Barbara. Thanks to everyone, again, for being on this call today. This is a very brief section and then we want to open it up again for comments and put any questions that you may have. Regarding next steps, if you don't want to provide input on this call, we will have an e-mail address set up for you. We do have an e-mail address set up for you. It is TRIBALAFFAIRS@FNS.USDA.GOV. That e-mail address will be posted at the end of this presentation. And we do encourage you to contact us at any time about any questions, comments, or input that you may have regarding this study.

We also want to let you know that with the permission of the NAFDPIR board, the Urban Institute will provide an update on this study at this summer's NAFDPIR conference, which will be held the week of June 24th in Niagara Falls. In the future we do plan to conduct consultation sessions. Of course the most immediate one would be on January 26th, which would essentially be -- we would provide repeat information that we're providing here today. But we also want to have consultation sessions with tribes selected to participate in the study sample. We're hoping to conduct those consultation sessions both in person and via conference call. Now those dates have not been announced or set, but look for those sessions to take place, of course, after that study sample is selected. We'll keep you informed regarding the dates of those sessions once we have further information.

Of course we want to work the schedule these consultations with respect to other conferences, meetings, cultural events that might be taking place, so we want to work to schedule our next consultation sessions with the study sample around anything else that might be going on within the tribal community, or the FDPIR community for that matter. And we will do our best to work around those events. We'll also keep the program community updated on the latest regarding the study via e-mail, FDPIR related conference calls, and via our FNS website. We'll be sure to provide a link or links to where any additional information has been posted when that information is available.

I would like to thank you again for participating and providing input today, and we look forward to a collaborative effort between USDA, the researchers, and the tribal community. With that being said, I'd like to turn it over to Barbara Lopez once again.

Great. Thank, Dana. Thanks so much. And thanks, everyone, for joining, again. We are at the end of our presentation, so we are opening up the lines now for consultation.

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

So once again, if you have any comments or questions, you can press “*1” and engage in dialogue directly over the phone. As Dana mentioned, there will be another opportunity to join a consultation session. We’ll be covering the same material next week, on Thursday, January 26. If you are interested in joining again, we’ll be sending that information to you directly. So once again, please press “*1” on your phone. And, operator, please.

One moment, please. Mr. Squirrel, your line is open?

This is Bud Squirrel, with Cherokee Nation. One comment I have is to make sure that when you go out to the tribes to do the study, make sure you allow enough time to do an effective job. A lot of times we have had visitors from USDA from various regional or headquarters programs, and it seems like they’re just now getting to know their way in and out our doors, and then they’ve got to leave the next day or two, you know, two afternoons later. So make sure there’s enough time to do an effective job for your study. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you, Bud.

Once again, to ask a question, please press “*1.” One moment. At this time there are no questions.

Okay. Thank you, operator. And just as a quick reminder, today’s session is being recorded, and we will be transcribing today’s session and making it available. So if you’re interested in referencing today’s session, we will make that available for you as well. There are no more comments, and I’d like to now introduce Audrey Rowe for some closing remarks.

Thank you, Barbara, and I’d like to thank all of you for joining us today. I certainly appreciated hearing your questions and your comments with regard to how we can make this study a success. As Barbara said, today’s session is being recorded and transcribed and will be included in the official consultation record.

Let me also remind you again that there is another consultation session next week on this study, so those of you who are on today may want to spend some time absorbing the information you receive and join that call and provide further questions and/or comments to help us continue to improve this study. You can also find updated information on our website, and I’ll repeat that again. It’s WWW.FNS.USDA.GOV/FNS/TRIBAL .

I thank you for spending the time that you spent today with us. I’m looking forward to future consultations. Another one of our officials will be the consulting official with next week’s call, but I certainly look forward to seeing many of you in June at the conference, and, again, hearing your comments and hearing any questions that you may have. So thank you for joining us. I want to thank our researchers. I want to thank our staff who

USDA
Tribal Consultation
Study of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
January 18, 2012

are here today in Washington and Chicago for joining us on this call, and with that, I will turn it back to you, Barbara.

Thank you so much, and operator, we're ready to conclude today's call. Thank you.

Thank you for your participation. You may disconnect at this time.