

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Food and Nutrition Service****Agency Information Collection Activities: Assessment of Mobile Technologies for Using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits**

**AGENCY:** Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on this proposed information collection. This is a new collection for the contract Assessment of Mobile Technologies for Using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits (Mobile Payment Pilot evaluation). The purpose of the Mobile Payment Pilot evaluation is to assess the effects of five pilot projects that will allow SNAP participants to use mobile payments to purchase food as an alternate option to a physical electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before July 31, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be sent to: Maya Sandalow, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th floor, Alexandria, VA 22314. Comments may also be submitted via email to [maya.sandalow@usda.gov](mailto:maya.sandalow@usda.gov). Comments will also be accepted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>, and follow the online instructions for submitting comments electronically.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of this information collection should be directed to Maya Sandalow at (703) 305-1615.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Comments are invited on:* (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions that were used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize

the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

*Title:* Assessment of Mobile Technologies for Using SNAP Benefits (Mobile Payment Pilot).

*Form Number:* N/A.

*OMB Number:* Not Yet Assigned.

*Expiration Date:* Not Yet Determined.

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Abstract:* The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides monthly benefits to low-income households to reduce food insecurity and improve health and well-being. Benefits are delivered via electronic benefit transfer (EBT), which is accepted at more than 250,000 authorized retailers nationwide. For nearly two decades, SNAP participants have used EBT in person at retailers, where they swipe their card at checkout using a point of sale (POS) terminal and enter their personal identification number (PIN) to pay for their purchases.

The Agricultural Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) authorized the use of mobile payments from devices like cell phones, tablets, and smart watches, as an alternate option to a physical electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card to conduct a SNAP transaction. This authorization was subject to the result of five mobile payment pilot projects. Mobile payments may improve the customer experience; save participant and retailer time; reduce potential stigma of using EBT; reduce costs; and prevent benefit fraud, loss, or theft.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) selected five State SNAP agencies to participate in the Mobile Payment Pilot: Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Oklahoma. These State pilots include a variety of design implementation strategies in terms of payment model, retail partnerships, marketing plans, and pilot scale. The Mobile Payment Pilot Evaluation will assess the effects of the pilots, using information obtained from FNS, selected State SNAP agencies, retailers, and SNAP participants. The evaluation has four objectives: (1) assessing the implementation of the pilots, (2) examining the adoption and use of mobile technologies, (3) understanding implications for program integrity, and (4) assessing replicability and costs. In each of the five sites, the evaluation will conduct three rounds of semi-structured interviews with State SNAP agencies, EBT processors, retailers, and other partners. Interviews will occur during

the pilot planning period and once the pilots are implemented, and will collect information about the pilot design and implementation.

In each of the five sites, the evaluation will also conduct two, 5-minute surveys and four focus groups among SNAP participants. One survey will be conducted among 250 participants who used mobile payments and the other will be conducted among 250 participants who did not use mobile payments. Similarly, two focus groups will be conducted with participants who used the technology and two others will be conducted with participants who did not use it.

In addition, the evaluation will collect SNAP administrative data, cost data, and retailer transaction data from the FNS ALERT and STARS systems. These data will be used to describe the adoption of mobile payment technologies and benefit redemption patterns by participant, retailer, and community characteristics.

Data collected from staff at State SNAP agencies, partners (such as EBT processors, mobile application vendors, and payment providers), and retailers will be used to describe how the pilots were planned and implemented. Data collected from SNAP participants will provide more information about their decisions to use or not use mobile payments, barriers to use, and participant satisfaction and user experience. Administrative, cost, and transaction data will provide insights on adoption and use of mobile payments. Ultimately, the findings will guide FNS in determining if expanding availability of mobile payments nationwide is cost-effective, secure, and accessible to participants.

*Affected Public:* Respondent groups identified include: SNAP participants in the pilot areas; members of State SNAP agencies; retailers in the pilot areas; and mobile payment processors and other vendors.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* The total estimated number of respondents is 21,246. The number of respondents includes: 20,330 SNAP participants (13% of whom will complete surveys or focus groups); 103 State SNAP agency and other State agency staff; 210 staff from businesses supporting the Mobile Payment Pilots (such as mobile payment processors, mobile application providers, EBT hotlines, EBT processors, and/or token services providers); and 603 retailer staff offering mobile payments, including managers and other staff. The total estimated number of non-respondents is 11,190 and includes 10,934 SNAP participants (who will be contacted to

complete surveys or focus groups), 252 staff from businesses, and 4 State SNAP agency or other State agency staff.

The evaluation team will pretest the survey and semi-structured interviews. The team will conduct pretest interviews with nine SNAP participants for the two survey instruments, three State SNAP agency staff members for the key informant interview guide, and three retailer staff members for the retailer interview guide.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* Across all respondents, the average number of responses is 7.91. Respondent groups include:

(1) SNAP participants who did and did not use mobile payments,  
 (2) State SNAP agency, other State agency, and business staff (including vendors who provide mobile application development, electronic benefit transfer processing, payment providers, and other services in support of mobile payments),

(3) Retailer staff overseeing the provision of mobile payments for the pilot projects at a corporate level, or staff working in a retailer location offering mobile payments.

SNAP participants in the pilot areas will be asked to participate in one survey or focus group (including participants who did or did not use

mobile payments). SNAP participants will receive an advance letter to notify them about the survey, emails or text messages to assess their interest in participating in the survey, and a reminder letter to encourage them to complete the survey. Participants who choose to complete the survey will complete a five minute web or phone survey. SNAP participants in the pilot areas may also receive emails or text messages to ask if they would be interested in participating in a focus group. If they choose to participate in a focus group, the participant would receive a text message or phone call with several questions to ensure they are eligible to participate, followed by reminder emails or text messages to encourage them to attend the in-person focus group.

State SNAP agency, other State agency, and business staff will respond to up to three in-person or telephone interviews. Staff from these entities will receive an email to invite them to participate in an interview, before participating in an interview lasting up to 60 minutes. Selected State SNAP agency staff will provide administrative data one time and cost data on a quarterly basis 10 times.

Retailer staff will respond to up to two in-person interviews. Retailer staff

will receive a screening telephone call to invite the retail store to participate in interviews with staff. The screener will include several questions to help the evaluation team tailor interview protocols for the store in advance. Following the screener, the retail store manager or other applicable staff will receive an email to invite them to participate in an interview. Each interview with a retail staff member will last between 15 and 30 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Responses:* 254,963 (168,077 respondents and 86,886 nonrespondents).

*Estimated Time per Response:* The estimated time of response varies from a few minutes to over an hour, depending on the respondent group, but averages 0.027 hours (or about 2 minutes) for all respondents as shown in the table below. State SNAP agency providing administrative and cost data will spend up to 8 hours per response.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 415,467 minutes (6,924 hours). See the table below for estimated total annual burden for each type of respondent.

**Tameka Owens,**

*Assistant Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.*

Type of respondents	Instruments	Sample size	Responsive				Non-responsive				Grand total annual burden estimate (hours)	Hourly wage rate	Total annualized cost of respondent burden		
			Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Total annual responses	Hours per response	Annual burden (hours)	Number of non-respondents	Frequency of response	Total annual responses				Hours per response	Annual burden (hours)
<b>Individuals/Household</b>															
SNAP Participants ...	Pretest: Client Experience Survey.	12	9	1	9	0.5000	4.5	3	1	3	0.0167	0.1	4.6	\$7.25	\$42.88
SNAP Participants ...	Pretest: Survey of Non-Adopters.	12	9	1	9	0.5000	4.5	3	1	3	0.0167	0.1	4.6	7.25	42.88
SNAP Participants ...	Client Experience Survey: Advance Letter.	12,500	10,000	1	10,000	0.0501	501.0	2,500	1	2,500	0.0501	125.3	626.3	7.25	5,902.41
SNAP Participants ...	Client Experience Survey: Email/Text.	10,000	8,000	8	64,000	0.0167	1,068.8	2,000	8	16,000	0.0167	267.2	1,336.0	7.25	12,591.80
SNAP Participants ...	Client Experience Survey: Reminder Letter.	8,125	6,500	1	6,500	0.0501	325.7	1,625	1	1,625	0.0501	81.4	407.1	7.25	3,836.56
SNAP Participants ...	Client Experience Survey.	12,500	1,250	1	1,250	0.0835	104.4	11,250	1	11,250	0.0167	187.9	292.3	7.25	2,754.46
SNAP Participants ...	Survey of Non-Adopters: Advance Letter.	12,500	10,000	1	10,000	0.0501	501.0	2,500	1	2,500	0.0501	125.3	626.3	7.25	5,902.41
SNAP Participants ...	Survey of Non-Adopters: Email/Text.	10,000	8,000	8	64,000	0.0167	1,068.8	2,000	8	16,000	0.0167	267.2	1,336.0	7.25	12,591.80
SNAP Participants ...	Survey of Non-Adopters: Reminder Letter.	8,125	6,500	1	6,500	0.0501	325.7	1,625	1	1,625	0.0501	81.4	407.1	7.25	3,836.56
SNAP Participants ...	Survey of Non-Adopters.	12,500	1,250	1	1,250	0.0900	112.5	11,250	1	11,250	0.0167	187.9	300.4	7.25	2,831.03
SNAP Participants ...	Focus Group: Recruitment Email/Text.	6,240	312	4	1,248	0.0167	20.8	5,928	4	23,712	0.0167	396.0	416.8	7.25	3,928.64
SNAP Participants ...	Focus Group: Screener.	312	250	1	250	0.0501	12.5	62	1	62	0.0167	1.0	13.6	7.25	127.81
SNAP Participants ...	Focus Group: Reminder emails/texts.	250	200	2	400	0.0167	6.7	50	2	100	0.0167	1.7	8.4	7.25	78.70
SNAP Participants ...	Focus Group Discussion Guide.	200	200	1	200	1.50	300.0	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	300.0	7.25	2,827.50
		31,264	20,330	8.15	165,616	0.026	4,357	10,934	7.92	86,630	0.020	1,722	6,079	.....	57,295.45
<b>Business (Profit, Non-Profit, or Farm)</b>															
Retail Business Staff	Pretest: Semi-structured interview guide.	3	3	1	3	1.00	3.0	0	1	0	0.0167	0.0	3.0	59.31	231.31
Vendor Staff .....	Business: Semi-structured interview invitation email.	262	210	1	210	0.0167	3.5	52	1	52	0.0167	0.9	4.4	59.31	337.36
Vendor Staff .....	Business: Semi-structured interview email.	210	210	1	210	1.00	210.0	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	210.0	59.31	16,191.63
Retail Business Staff	Retailer: Interview Screener.	800	600	1	600	0.0501	7.5	50	1	50	0.0167	0.8	8.4	22.15	961.75
Retail Business Staff	Retailer: Semi-structured interview invitation email.	600	600	1	600	0.0167	2.5	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	2.5	22.15	288.53

Type of respondents	Instruments	Sample size	Responsive			Non-responsive				Grand total annual burden estimate (hours)	Hourly wage rate	Total annualized cost of respondent burden			
			Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Total annual responses	Hours per response	Annual burden (hours)	Hours per response	Frequency of response				Total annual responses		
Retail Business Staff	Retailer: Semi-structured interview guide.	600	600	1	600	0.50	225.0	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	225.0	22.15	8,638.50
		1,065	813	2.73	2,223	0.250	557	252	1.00	252	0.017	4,208	561	.....	26,649.07
<b>State Government</b>															
State Program Staff	Prefest: Semi-structured interview guide.	3	3	1	3	1.00	1.0	0	1	0	0.0167	0.0	1.0	59.31	231.31
State Program Staff	State agency: Semi-structured interview invitation email.	94	90	1	90	0.0167	2	4	1	4	0.0167	0.07	1.57	59.31	121.04
State Program Staff	State agency: Semi-structured interview guide.	90	90	1	90	1.00	90	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	90.00	59.31	6,939.27
State Program Staff	Provide Administrative Data.	5	5	1	5	8.00	40	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	40.00	59.31	3,084.12
State Program Staff	Provide Cost Data ...	5	5	10	50	3.00	150	0	1	0	0.00	0.0	150.00	59.31	11,565.45
		107	103	2.31	238	1.195	285	4	1,000	4	0.017	0.1	284.57	.....	21,941.19
Total	.....	32,436	21,246	7.911	168,077	0.031	5,198	11,190	8	86,886	0.020	1,727	6,924	.....	105,885.71

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BILLING CODE 3410–30–P

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Utilities Service**

[Docket #: RUS–23–WATER–0001]

**Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Technical Assistance and Construction for Innovative Regional Wastewater Treatment Solutions Grant Pilot Program****AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Utilities Services (RUS or the Agency), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), announces its Technical Assistance and Construction for Innovative Regional Wastewater Treatment Solutions (TAC–RWTS) Grant Pilot Program application window for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Grants may be made to eligible entities for the study, design, or construction of regional wastewater systems for historically impoverished communities in areas that have had difficulty installing traditional wastewater treatment systems due to soil conditions. Solutions must be innovative and account for strategic management and regulatory models. Successful applications will be selected by the Agency for funding and subsequently awarded from available funds for the TAC–RWTS Grant Pilot Program. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their applications.

**DATES:** Completed applications must be filed through <https://www.grants.gov> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on July 31, 2023. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications and all supporting documentation must be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) via <https://www.grants.gov>. Instructions and additional resources, to include an Application Guide, are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/technical-assistance-and-construction-innovative-regional-wastewater-treatment-solutions-tac-rwts>, under the “To Apply” tab.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christina Cerio, Community Programs Specialist, Water and Environmental Program, RUS, USDA, by email at [water-RD@usda.gov](mailto:water-RD@usda.gov) or phone at (315) 403–3112. Persons with disabilities that require alternative means for communication should contact the

USDA Target Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice) or the 711 Relay Service.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Overview**

*Federal Awarding Agency Name:* Rural Utilities Service.

*Funding Opportunity Title:* Technical Assistance and Construction for Innovative Regional Wastewater Treatment Solutions Grant Pilot Program for Fiscal Year 2023.

*Announcement Type:* Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

*Funding Opportunity Number:* TAC–RWTS–FY23.

*Assistance Listing:* 10.761.

*Dates:* Completed electronic applications and supporting materials must be filed through <https://www.grants.gov> by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 31, 2023. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

*Rural Development (RD) Key Priorities:* The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance the following key priorities:

- Assisting rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure;
- Ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to RD programs and benefits from RD funded projects; and
- Reducing climate pollution and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.

**A. Program Description**

1. *Purpose of the Program.* Grants will be made to qualified regional consortiums to identify, evaluate, and construct economically feasible, regional wastewater systems for historically impoverished communities in areas which have had difficulty installing traditional wastewater treatment systems due to soil conditions. A successful applicant will be, or coordinate with, a regional university to solve untreated raw sewage issues with innovative technologies, while taking into consideration strategic management and regulatory models. Grants are for wastewater-related technical assistance, including such services as developing needs assessments, testing wastewater options, preliminary design assistance, developing regulatory guidance, and submitting applications for financial assistance. Additionally, the grant funds may be used to construct the identified solutions, including eligible associated costs. Funding must benefit communities that are historically impoverished, as defined within this notice.

2. *Statutory and Regulatory Authority.* The program is authorized pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 301; 7 U.S.C. 1989; 16 U.S.C. 1005; Division B, Title VII General Provisions, Section 783 of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Pub. L. 116–94); and Division A, Title VII General Provisions, Section 771 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116–260). The program is implemented through 7 CFR part 1775, Technical Assistance Grants, and the provisions of this NOFO. Other Federal statutes and regulations are listed at 7 CFR 1775.8, Other Federal statutes.

3. *Definitions.* The terms and conditions provided in this NOFO are applicable to and for purposes of this NOFO only. In addition to the definitions provided below, the definitions found in 7 CFR 1775.2, Definitions, are also applicable to this grant opportunity.

*Consortium* means regional institutions of higher education, academic health and research institutes, academic development entities, or a combination thereof, located in the region identified to be served that have experience in addressing these issues in the region.

*Consortium agreement* means a document, signed and dated, by all members of the consortium, which identifies how each organization will interact, every member’s level of commitment, roles and responsibilities, and the transfer of funds from the lead entity to other members. An appropriate level of detail should be included to outline, among other items: minimum and maximum levels of involvement, ownership of any resulting tangible or intangible items developed from the Consortium’s efforts, and the use of resources. The agreement must address whether the members of the consortium will conduct work for the project directly, via contract, or some other arrangement. As part of the application, if the consortium agreement is more than 12 months old, a certification stating that none of the members or provisions within the existing document have been modified or otherwise changed must be provided. The consortium agreement must be in effect through the defined period of performance for the proposed project.

*Eligible project costs* means only those costs incurred during the grant period and that are directly related to the use and purposes of the TAC–RWTS Grant Pilot Program. See Section C.3. of this notice for eligible project costs.

*Historically impoverished* refers to any community meeting criteria for persistent poverty counties, which according to Division A, Title VII