

## GETTING TO KNOW USDA'S WEB-BASED PROTOTYPE APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

#### **Presenters**

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## **AGENDA**

- What is the Web-Based Application?
- Why was the Web-Based Application developed?
- What can the Web-Based Application do?
   What are its features?
- How can I use the Web-Based Application?
- How will USDA support the Web-Based Application in the future?





## **OPI - WHO ARE WE?**



- The Child Nutrition Office of Program Integrity (OPI) is:
  - A (relatively) new office in the Child Nutrition Programs
  - Data-driven and research oriented
  - Focused on identifying process improvements across all CN programs



## WHAT IS THE WEB-BASED APPLICATION PROTOTYPE?

 A functional model of what a web-based (or online) application for free or reduced price meals could look like

- Features integrity focused, research-backed design features
- Intended to help State and local program operators and their vendors to reduce errors from incorrect household reporting





## WHY DID OPI DEVELOP A WEB-BASED APPLICATION PROTOTYPE?

- Desire to reduce program errors resulting in improper payments
- Observation that many current web-based applications do not take full advantage of their electronic platform
- Increasingly desired/needed as web-based applications become more popular





## WHO DID OPI DEVELOP THE WEB-BASED APPLICATION PROTOTYPE FOR?

- Web-based application primarily geared towards modeling sound web-based application design for:
  - State agencies
  - LEAs administering one or more school meal programs
  - Software vendors who develop and maintain web-based applications





## WHAT CAN THE WEB-BASED APPLICATION DO?

### What this IS:

- A model electronic application with design features geared towards enhancing accurate household income reporting
- A useful resource to guide State + Local officials, software vendors in their own design efforts
- A substantial head-start on developing a web-based application platform from the ground up



## WHAT CAN THE WEB-BASED APPLICATION DO?

### What this IS NOT:

- A fully functional software application connected to supporting data systems, and ready for "out-of-the-box" usage
- A national application hosted by USDA
- A product that can be immediately used by a State or local agency with no further investment of time and money





## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

pre-applica	ation front end	on	line application proce	post-application back end					
student registration	direct certification	pre-populate household information	central application logic:	school district eligibility	verification process	point of sale and reimbursement			
		nousehold information	USDA model	determination		claiming systems			
collect names and contact information	connect to State agency and other assistance program databases	connect with student enrollment database	collect eligibility information from applicant: household size, income, and other assistance program participation	automatic comparison to income eligibility guidelines; manual confirmation and certification	automatic selection of approved applications for verification; automatic identification of error prone applications, if necessary	individual student eligibility tied to meal selection, aggregation, and reimbursement claiming process			



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Sources of Income for Children								
Sources of Child Income	Example(s)							
- Earnings from work	- A child has a regular full or part-time job where they earn a salary or wages							
- Social Security - Disability Payments - Survivor's Benefits	A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits     A Parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives Social Security benefits							
-Income from person outside the household	- A friend or extended family member regularly gives a child spending money							
-Income from any other source	- A child receives regular income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust							

Sources of Income for Adults											
Earnings from Work	Public Assistance / Alimony / Child Support	Pensions / Retirement / All Other Income									
- Salary, wages, cash bonuses - Net income from self- employment (farm or business)  If you are in the U.S. Military: - Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA or privatized housing	Unemployment benefits     Worker's compensation     Supplemental Security Income (SSI)     Cash assistance from State or local government     Alimony payments     Child support payments     Veteran's benefits     Strike benefits	- Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits) - Private pensions or disability benefits - Regular income from trusts or estates - Annuities - Investment income - Earned interest - Rental income									
allowances) - Allowances for off-base housing, food and dothing		- Regular cash payments from outside household									

OPTIONAL	Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities

OF HOUSE Clinicies s Nacial and Lumic Identities	
We are required to ask for information about your children's race and ethnicity. This inform Responding to this section is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free	
Ethnicity (check one):  Hispanic or Latino  Not Hispanic or Latino  Race (check one or more):  American Indian or Alaskan Native  Asian  B	lack or African American
The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.  In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.	Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.  To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:  mail:  U.S. Department of Agriculture  Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  1400 Independence Avenue, SW  Washington, D.C. 20250-9410  fax: (202) 690-7442; or  email: program.intake@usda.gov.  This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Do not fill out For School Use Only	
Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 Weeks x 26, Twice a Month x 24 Month	lly x 12 Eligibility:
otal Income Weekly Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly Household size	egorical Eligibility O O
Determining Official's Signature Date Confirming Official's Signature	ure Date Verifying Official's Signature Date

## INCOME REPORTING EFFICIENCIES

A. Child Income Sometimes children in the household earn or receive income. Please include the TOTAL income received by all Household Members listed in STEP 1 here.										\$	Child incor	ne	Weel		ekly 2x Mon	Monthly						
B. All Adult Household Members (including yourself) List all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 (including yourself) even if they do not receive income. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total gross income (before taxes) for each source in whole dollars (no cents) only. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.																						
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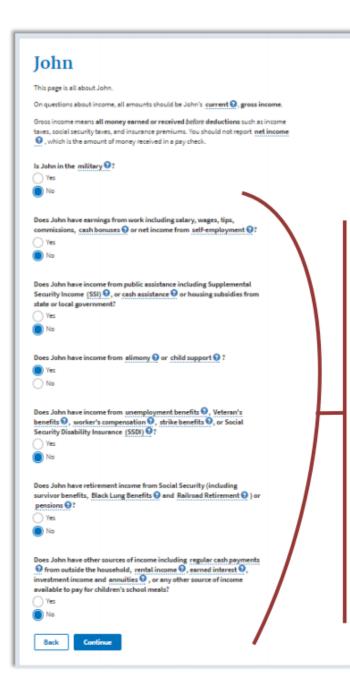




## WEB-BASED APPLICATION DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

INTEGRITY-FOCUSED DESIGN FEATURES

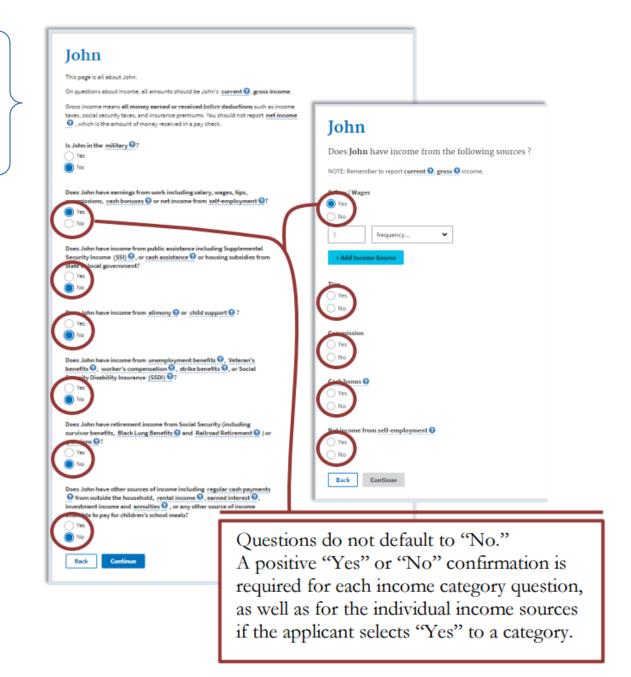
## Guided income "interview"



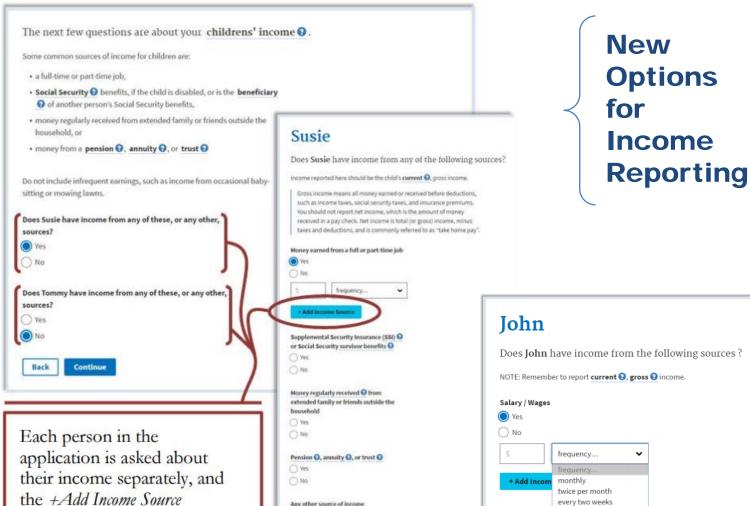
The adult income section is broken down into six descriptive categories, instead of the three broad categories used on the paper prototype and most of today's online applications. This income interview takes direct aim at a major source of applicant error – omitted income sources.



## Affirmative Responses





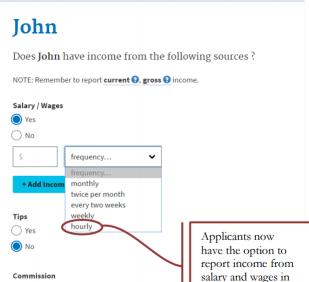


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Back

Continue

the +Add Income Source button allows an infinite number of sources of any one type of income.



hourly terms.



### Gross vs. Net Income

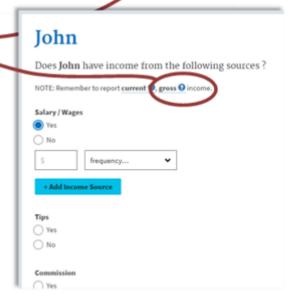
#### Susie

Does Sucie have income from any of the following sources?

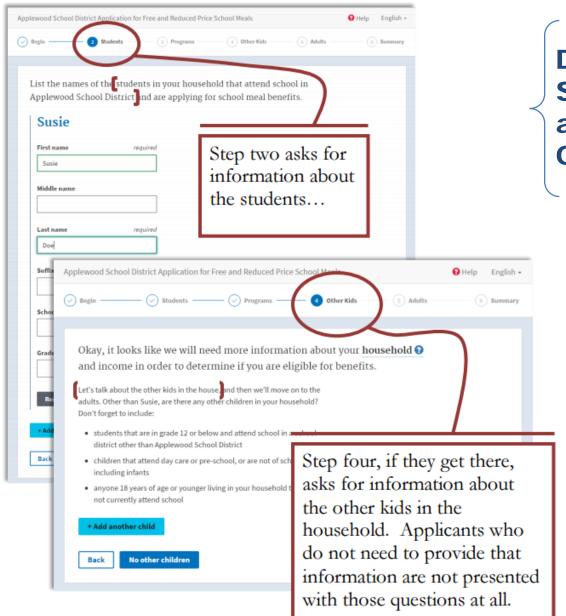
Income reported here should be the child's current 🚱 , gross income.

Gross income means all money earned or received before deductions, such as income taxes, social security taxes, and insurance premiums. You should not report net income, which is the amount of money received in a pay check. Net income is total (or gross) income, minus taxes and deductions, and is commonly referred to as "take home pay".

A detailed description of gross versus net income appears at the top of the first income screen that the applicant sees. On all subsequent income screens, the information is available in a tooltip on the word "gross."

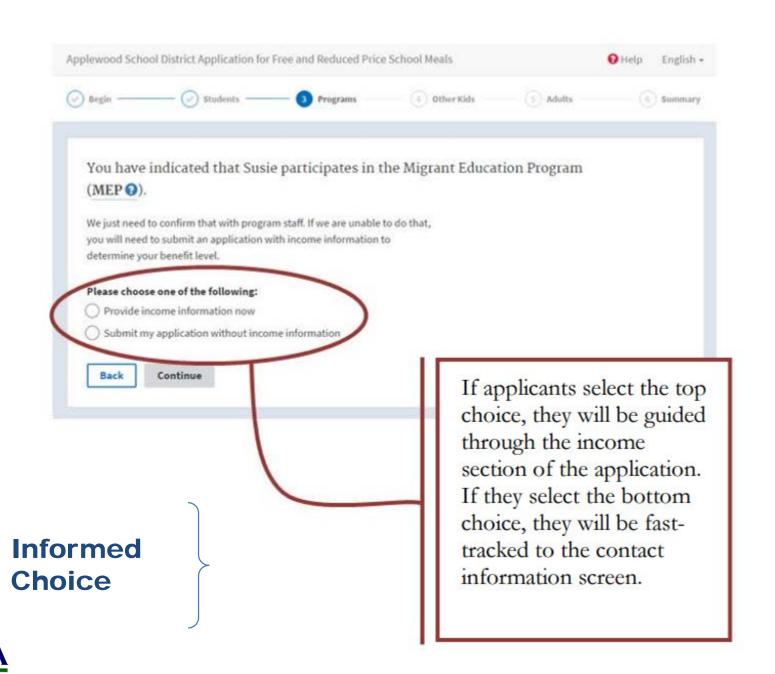


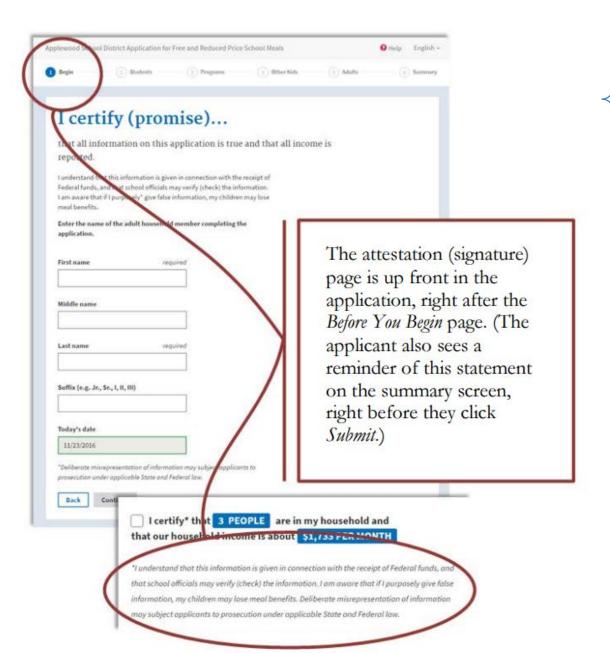






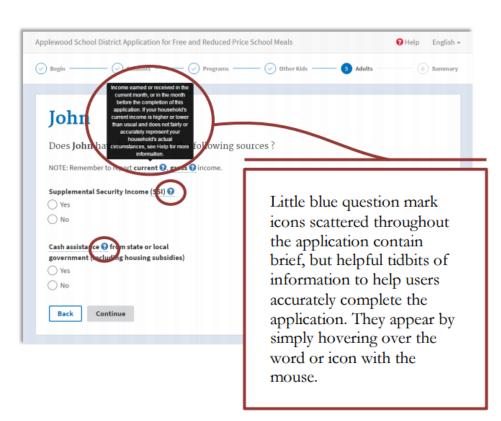




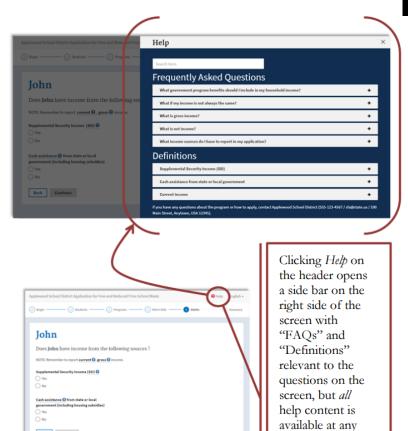


Sign Up Front





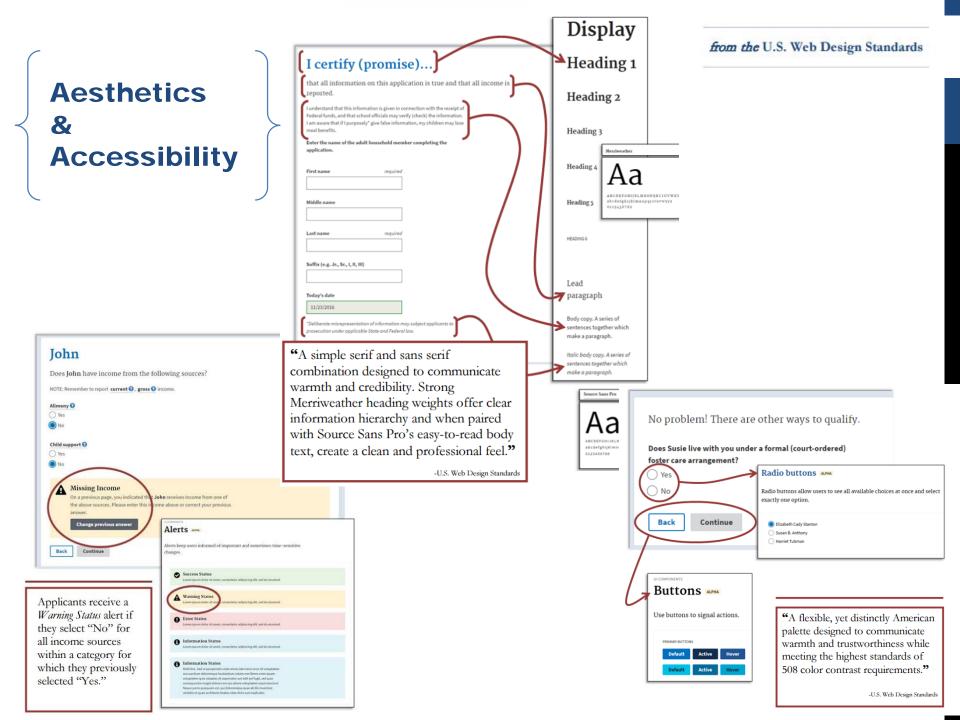
## Pop-up and Slide-out Help



time by using the search bar.

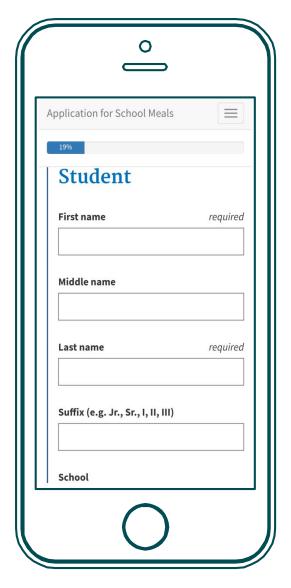
Back Continue





## OPTIMIZED DESIGN FOR ONLINE PLATFORMS

- USDA's Web-Based prototype is specifically designed to NOT be a paper application on a screen
- Design features and question format take full advantage of digital, online platform
- Mobile-friendly to accommodate all device types commonly used





## Customization: Making the Prototype Your Own

Applewood School District Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals





English +

#### Welcome!

This is the Applewood School District electronic application for free and reduced priced meals for the USDA's National School Lunch & School Breakfast Programs.

This interactive application will guide you through the application process. When you are ready to apply, click the 'Get Started' button below to begin.

If you would like to apply using the <u>paper application</u>, you can print and complete it and then return it to us at 100 Main Street, Anytown, USA 12345.

**Get Started** 

#### THIS IS NOT A REAL APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL MEAL BENEFITS

Applewood School District 555-123-4567 / sfa@state.us 100 Main Street, Anytown, USA 12345





## FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION OPTIONS



English and Spanish language included with initial release

 FNS will explore options for additional language translations





## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES FOR THE WEB-BASED APPLICATION

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT** 

## **AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

#### Available on the FNS website:

- Web-Based Interactive Demo
- Open source code (.zip)
- Q&A Guidance
- Guide to USDA's Web-Based Prototype Application
- Email contact for state and local program operators
- GovDelivery

#### Web-Based Prototype Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Featured here is USDA's Web-Based Prototype Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals, along with accompanying guidance materials and resources. The electronic prototype application is intended to be a model for how State and local program operators (or their designated vendors) may develop an effective and fully compliant electronic/online application for school meal benefits. While USDA offers both the design and code as open source publications free for all to access, these materials are not structured for direct or immediate use by households unless adapted and integrated with appropriate data management systems maintained at the State and/or local levels.

The USDA electronic prototype application is not for direct household use. If you are a parent looking to apply for school meal benefits, contact your child's school to find out where you can access their application for school meal benefits.

#### View

- Web-Based Interactive demo: This demo is intended to allow users to explore and familiarize
  themselves with the web-based prototype's design format, as well as to preview how applicants
  would complete a fully functional version of this application. Please note: This is not a working
  application that households may fill out to qualify for school meal benefits. Although it accepts
  household and income information for demo purposes, no data entered is recorded by or
  transmitted to USDA, State agencies, or other organizations.
- Open source code (.zip): A downloadable copy of the source code for USDA's electronic application
  prototype. Must be adapted to and integrated with other electronic systems prior to functional
  household use. Note: Open source development on future versions of the web-based prototype
  application is paused while we continue to evaluate functionality and initial stakeholder feedback.
  Check back periodically for updates on the future direction of the project and how you might
  contribute.
- Q&A Guidance: Commonly asked questions and answers related to the Web-Based Prototype Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals.
- Guide to USDA's Web-Based Prototype Application: A comprehensive resource targeted toward
  program officials and vendors adapting or developing web-based applications for free and reduced
  price school meal benefits. Provides technical guidance on development considerations related to
  customization, localization, and formatting, as well as general information on application design
  best practices as reflected in the Web-Based Prototype Application for Free and Reduced Price
  School Meals v1.0.

#### Check it out at:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/schoolmeals/web-based-prototypeapplication



# Q&As for USDAs Web-Based Prototype Application

### Questions at a glance...

Click on a question to jump to it below.

- 1. What is the USDA web-based prototype application for free and reduced price school meals?
- 2. Why did FNS develop a web-based prototype application?
- 3. Is use of the new application required?
- 4. Why should SFAs adopt the web-based prototype application? What are the benefits?
- 5. The prototype application is longer than my SFA's current online application. Why should we increase the burden on our families?
- 6. My SFA already has an online application. Do we have to modify ours to incorporate the elements in the new prototype application?



# Guide to USDA's Web-Based Prototype Application

v1.0

#### ICON KEY

#### Valuable information





#### **How to Use this Guide**

The "icon key" on the left shows symbols that you will find throughout the manual that emphasize certain pieces of information. "Valuable information" highlights important, take-away messages about the application.

"Q&A" is just as it sounds: a series of questions and answers on a range of topics. And the "Tech Tips" contain information related to the code or other technical aspects of the application.



## What's Next for USDA's Web-Based Prototype Application



## **QUESTION TIME**

