

**U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE**

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

FNS STORE VISIT CONTRACTORS

Training Materials

DELTA-21 RESOURCES, INC.

July 2006 edition

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1. Project Management

1.1 Project Manager and Assistant to the Project Manager's Responsibilities

Evi Bunch is the Delta-21 USDA FNS project manager for the Southwest Region. She currently is available on Monday through Friday at the corporate office. Patricia Jones is the Delta-21 USDA FNS project manager for the Southeast Region. She is currently available Monday through Friday at the corporate office.

The project manager and/or assistant to the project manager will:

- 1.1.1 Ensure the completeness of all Call Orders through data collection from the field staff, contact with the field staff, and review of store deliverables.
- 1.1.2 Assign Call Orders to the appropriate field staff or subcontractors in a timely manner.
- 1.1.3 Be available to provide technical guidance on contract issues as well as general assistance to field reviewers while conducting store visits.
- 1.1.4 Provide feed-back on the quality and timeliness of deliverables submitted.

1.2 Field Reviewer's and Subcontractor's Responsibilities

- 1.2.1 Acknowledge receipt of Call Orders and confirm understanding of special instructions by Close of Business the day the stores are assigned.
- 1.2.2 Immediately communicate with Delta-21 any impediments affecting timely submission of deliverables.
- 1.2.3 Resolve any problem issues with the assistance of Delta-21.
- 1.2.4 Read and thoroughly understand all provisions of the Delta-21 Training manual.
- 1.2.5 Ensure strict adherence to all contract and work agreement requirements.
- 1.2.6 Provide all required supplies and equipment.

1.2.7 Locate and visit all stores assigned and confirmed to be his/her responsibility.

1.3 Technical Assistance and Support

1.3.1 Delta-21 will map or locate the general vicinity of all Call Orders received and will use that information for the assignment of work. Delta-21 will assist all field personnel who are unable to locate a store with their available resources.

1.3.2 Delta-21 will provide all field reviewers and subcontractors with an initial set of blank forms, and will provide pre-printed forms for each call order via email (pdf format) or through access to Delta-21's internet-based website. Delta-21 will make part numbers of supplies available when possible. If at any time Delta-21 chooses to purchase storage media in bulk and offer it to the field staff, each staff member will be notified of said availability.

1.4 Problem Resolution

Delta-21 is committed to supplying deliverables to the USDA that are technically sound and provide valuable information to the USDA. Any problems or issues encountered during the course of field reviews should be directed to the Project Manager or Assistant to the Project Manager as soon as possible.

2. Supplies

2.1 Items Supplied by Delta-21 Resources Inc.

Each Field Reviewer will initially be given a field package that consists of the following items:

- a) Access to website to obtain all necessary field data collection forms: Survey, Checklist, Store Diagram, Photographer's Certification, Consent Form, Letter of Introduction (including other languages)
- b) Identification Badge
- c) Copy of the Delta-21 Resources Inc. Training Manual
- d) Sample Store Visit Deliverable with Copies of Store Photographs as an example of what is acceptable Delta-21 quality
- e) Information Sheet that Provides Phone Numbers and E-mail Addresses of Key Personnel, Mailing Information, and Emergency Pager or Cell Phone Numbers for Questions or Road Emergencies

This package will include the basic supplies necessary to begin store visits. Replacement supplies will be provided upon request of the Project Manager or Assistant Project Manager.

2.2 Field Reviewer shall provide the following supplies:

- a) Digital camera – capable of taking photos 800x600 pixels or larger with autofocus and built-in flash with removable storage media
- b) Approved removable storage media for capturing individual store data
- c) Writing utensils (blue or black ink)
- d) Liquid paper
- e) Clipboard
- f) Cellular phone
- g) Vehicle in good working order
- h) Computer with e-mail and internet capability
- i) Mapping software

2.3 Available Resources

As described above, each Field Reviewer has available an information sheet that provides for real time access to emergency assistance, whether it be automobile trouble, directions, or data collection questions.

2.3.1 Mapping Software (The geographical plotting of stores is also provided when call orders are initially distributed to the Field Personnel to assist in assignment, and to plan efficient routes.)

2.3.2 Delta-21 has mapping software and Internet access to driving directions and Yellow Pages.

2.4 Reviewer Identification

Delta-21 will provide all staff and subcontractor staff with a photo identification badge that defines their association with Delta-21 and the USDA Food Stamp Program, and will be presented to the retailer at the beginning of each store visit. The numbers and a single sample copy of each badge will be presented to the appropriate USDA Field Offices. Each badge is 2" x 3.5" in size, plastic laminated, and contains a clear and professional looking photo. All badges will be returned and accounted for in instances of termination of any personnel and at the end of the contract period.

Each badge will contain information for the Field Reviewer's height, weight, hair color, and eye color. The identification badge will be worn in

full view at all times attached to a lanyard that is placed around the Field Reviewer's neck. Each reviewer will also be expected to show additional proof of identification, such as a driver license, if requested by the store personnel.

3. Procedures for Receiving Call Orders

Assignments by e-mail (or in rare instances, by facsimile) to field personnel or subcontractors will include the call order and any special instructions.

- 3.1 Field personnel and subcontractors will acknowledge receipt of the assigned call order by Delta-21 by electronic mail within 24 hours. Stores accepted by subcontractors and field reviewers verbally or in writing will be the responsibility of said personnel. Any fees, charges, expenses or liquidated damages assessed by the USDA will be passed on to subcontractors and field reviewers who fail to complete accepted store assignments by the assigned deadline.
- 3.2 Delta-21, the subcontractors and field reviewers will review Call Orders for clarity and duplication.
- 3.3 Field Reviewers and subcontractors will invoice Delta-21 after deliverables have been shipped (refer to consultant agreement or subcontract for details).
- 3.4 The Southeast region involves two time zone regions, the Eastern Standard Time zone and the Central Standard Time zone. The project office of Delta-21 in Knoxville, Tennessee is located in the Eastern Standard Time zone. Delta-21 will maintain Eastern Standard Time hours that compensate for the lag in time in the Central Standard Time zone and the Mountain Standard Time zone will also assure that time differences are clear when dealing with field personnel.

4. Store Visit Preparation

Each Field Reviewer will conduct a pre-store visit preparation check which will assure that each store can be completed in an efficient manner. All items in the Field Package, as described above, are examined to assure that all the necessary materials are available to complete the call order, paying special attention to assure that there is sufficient quantity of storage media and data collection forms.

- 4.1 Field Reviewer will verify store hours of operation, i.e. call Delta-21 if illegible or if hours are "different". If store hours need to be verified via telephone contact with the store in advance of the visit, such phone

contact with the stores must not state the purpose of any visit, and the result of which will be documented in the “comment” section of the Survey Form.

- 4.2 Field Reviewer will plan route and generate directions for him/herself. (Delta-21 is available to provide assistance when the reviewer’s materials leave a gap.) The route should be mapped by store address and hours of operation to ensure the most time efficiency.
- 4.3 When possible, make hotel reservations ahead of time.

5. Store Visit Procedure

5.1 Attire

Reviewers will dress in attire, at a **minimum**, considered “business casual”. Clothing and headwear shall be laundered and neat in appearance and free of holes, sweat stains or other signs of excess wear. Shorts, skorts and mini skirts are not considered business casual attire. Each Reviewer will keep their Delta-21 issued ID badge in plain view while on the store premises.

5.2 Etiquette

- 5.2.1 Field Reviewers will conduct themselves in a professional manner appropriate for representing the U.S. Government, and Delta-21.
- 5.2.2 Reviewers will not engage in argumentative behavior with store employees or patrons while conducting a store review.
- 5.2.3 Reviewers will not make a purchase of goods or services at the store in which they will conduct or have conducted a store review on an open call order. The only exception to this is when traveling through remote areas and the reviewer is in need of gasoline or the use of restroom facilities. Reviewers will not accept store gifts, refreshments or discounted merchandise from store staff.
- 5.2.4 Reviewers will not conduct any business marketing for themselves and/or Delta-21 while conducting a store review.
- 5.2.5 Reviewers will not use any contacts or information gained from conducting store visits to make business contacts, market other business services, or otherwise profit from contacts made during store visits.

- 5.2.6 Reviewers will refer all questions related to Food Stamp eligibility, and the outcome of the store review to the appropriate USDA FNS Field Office on the Letter of Introduction. Reviewer will not answer any questions pertaining to store eligibility, quantity of merchandise in stock or Electronic Benefit Redemption equipment.
- 5.2.7 Reviewers shall not leave cigarette butts or dispose of other trash at an assigned location.
- 5.2.8 Only personnel that have been issued an identification badge by Delta-21 Resources Inc. may accompany and assist with the completion of store visit contracted data collection.
- 5.2.9 Children may not accompany badged personnel into a store being visited at any time before, during or after a visit.

5.3 Safety Awareness

Delta-21 places the safety of our Field Reviewers and the USDA Field Office personnel above all else and encourages a clear understanding of procedure that includes perceived threat and direct threat, and takes a pro-active planning approach. As overall procedure, Delta-21 can provide a field support team that may accompany the Field Reviewer during the visit, or will assist in contacting local authorities as needed to assure safe visit to the area. Personnel are required to immediately report to the Project Manager personal threats, or threats to specific USDA personnel or USDA Field Offices.

5.3.1 High Crime Areas

Delta-21 administrative staff monitor and maintain information that formally identifies geographical areas of high crime and is communicated verbally upon field store assignment and generally through regular training. As an incumbent to the Southeast region, Delta-21 has already experienced several instances of store visits in high crime areas, and incidents of threat. These instances have been few, but personnel were able to respond in a proper manner that assured safety and store visit completion due to proper training and staff communication.

Case Example: Field Reviewer received a call order of stores in an urban area. After mapping call order, Delta-21 administrative staff reminded Field Reviewer of stores being located within statistically high crime areas. Field reviewer arrived at the store and was refused consent to conduct the store review in a verbally abusive

manner. After following the proper “consent refusal action” and attitude as trained, the Field Reviewer exited the store to take the four required external photos. While outside the Field Reviewer was blocked from taking photos with continual threat escalation, including an attempt to grab camera and verbal threats to remove the film as the Field Reviewer was leaving. Field Reviewer completed three of the required photos before the owners were outside the store. As per training, the Field Reviewer stopped taking photos immediately when the owners (3) exited the store and indicated that they wanted no photos taken of the outside. The Field Reviewer left the site by driving a couple of blocks away and contacted the Project Manager via car phone to report the incident and to check in prior to completion of the final photo. The Field Reviewer then waited 30 minutes and returned to take the last picture from public property across the street and within sufficient distance to be unnoticed by the store owners. The Field Reviewer left the location and again notified the Project Manager of safe completion. The Field Reviewer described the incident in the final paperwork, and the Project Manager notified the FNS Field Office of the incident as a courtesy.

In this instance the Field Reviewer followed trained procedure to assure personal safety, provided immediate communication to the Project Manager and subsequently to the USDA Field Office, and understood the requirement of Delta-21 to complete the store visit.

5.3.2 Remote Areas

Delta-21 is aware that the Southeast and Southwest Regions contain rural and remote areas. Communication with the Project Management and staff is the key to insuring safe and complete coverage of remote areas. Delta-21 offers the following support to our field reviewers:

1. Commercially available mapping software.
2. Internet driving directions and Yellow Pages.
3. Directions from local emergency agencies.
4. Check-in and Check-out with Delta-21.

5.3.3 Inclement Weather

Field staff will make every effort possible to visit stores, but in the instances of inclement weather, contact Delta-21, and specific guidance will be issued on a case by case basis.

5.3.4 Vehicle Maintenance

It is the responsibility of the field staff to maintain their personal

vehicles, and to keep a detailed mileage log for their own records.

6.0 Conducting Store Visits

For each store listed in a Call Order the Contractor shall locate the store and make an unannounced visit in person. After carefully verifying the opening and closing times, and reviewing the call order, the Field Reviewer will plan a route as needed and computer generate driving directions. Any store special instructions will be noted and each store will then be located and an unannounced in person visit conducted **no earlier than 6:00 a.m.** or **later than 8:00 p.m. (local prevailing time)** as long as there is sufficient light to photograph the exterior of the store. If the store's regular business hours are not within those times, the visit shall be made during a time that the store is stated as being open for business. The visit shall be no earlier than one-half hour after stated opening time or later than one-full hour before stated closing time. On occasion, the Field Office may require that the Contractor conduct the store visit during a specific time period, for example, to visit a bakery within two hours of opening or a fish market, which is only open on weekends.

The Contractor may, if necessary, call the store on the day of or the day before the visit to confirm the store's hours of operation. The contractor shall not state the purpose of the visit or schedule the visit during the call. *If a call is made*, the contractor shall document the call (date, time, response) on the Survey Form in the "comments" section." When conducting a store visit, there are six possible occurrences. Contractor requirements for each type of occurrence are described below. The six types of occurrences include: 1) store is open for business; 2) store cannot be located; 3) store is out of business; 4) store is not open for business; 5) consent is refused; and, 6) language barrier exists.

6.1 Store is Open for Business

For safety reasons, the Field Reviewer will not take any exterior pictures until the Reviewer has been introduced to the store owner/manager, even though all store visits require exterior photos. After verbal introduction to the store owner or responsible party with the USDA introduction letter, proper identification of the Field Reviewer is offered, and consent form is executed by the store manager, the store information will be collected as specified on the field forms, including the collection of any available flyers, and taking photographs. Each store will have photographs taken according to section 11 below, covering all the designated Food and Non-food groups.

6.1.1 Self-Introduction

The Contractor shall locate the store owner or the manager on duty(or, if neither of them are available, a supervisor or whichever employee is in charge of the store at that time), the Contractor shall

show that person their ID and provide the retailer with a Letter of Introduction that will explain the purpose of the visit is to observe the store's contents and to take some photographs for the FNS' use in considering the store's application to accept food stamp benefits or eligibility to continue to accept food stamp benefits and the FNS Field Office telephone number to call with questions. This letter shall be provided in the native language of the store owner/manager/clerk when available. The letter is to be retained by the retailer.

NOTE: The Contractor shall NOT provide advice and/or interpretation of the Food Stamp Program rules or regulations to store personnel. The Contractor shall NOT make an eligibility decision and shall NOT discuss the probable outcome of the visit with store personnel.

6.1.2 Obtain Consent

The next step is to obtain consent to proceed with the visit. Have the store owner, manager or store representative to sign the consent form. You must have consent before proceeding with the store visit. (With verbal consent see 8.2.5.)

The Contractor shall request the name of the current store owner (including spelling, if necessary). The Contractor shall request the date ownership began or length of period of ownership, and note it on the Survey Form. If ownership information is not known by the store personnel on duty, the "Did not know" box on the Survey Form should be marked.

6.1.3 Reserved for future use

6.1.4 Complete Survey Form

The survey form provides the FNS with general information about the store, store conditions and non-food stock and services.

6.1.4.1 General Store Information - Outside the Store

The Contractor shall make initial observations outside of the store. The Contractor shall record and/or verify the following on the survey form:

6.1.4.1.1 Store Name, Owner Name, Store Phone Number and Physical and Mailing Address Information. Confirm accuracy of information provided and note any changes or corrections in the "comments" section of page 2.

6.1.4.1.2 Posted Hours of Operation

The Contractor shall list actual posted days and hours of operation, which are generally located on the entrance door

to the store, or posted on the window. Sometimes the days/hours of operation are listed on the sign with the store name or posted inside the store near the door. If no hours/days of operation are seen posted, the appropriate box on the Survey Form shall be checked. The Contractor shall then ask what the operating hours are and note them in the appropriate area of the Survey Form.

6.1.4.1.3 Description of Location/Area

The Contractor shall indicate the type of location. Examples include: residential, commercial, industrial, and other (strip mall, etc.) The Contractor shall indicate the type of area. Examples include: urban, suburban, and rural. Definitions of these types may be found in the glossary section

6.1.4.1.4 Secondary Customer Entrance

The Contractor shall indicate whether there are any secondary customer entrances. Secondary customer entrances may be used by retail customers in a wholesale establishment or by carryout customers in a grocery or restaurant. The Contractor may see a secondary entrance while approaching the building. If a public drive exists, the Contractor shall drive around the building to check for any secondary entrances. The Contractor shall stay in his or her vehicle and not put himself or herself in a dangerous position by looking for a hidden entrance. Once inside the store, the Contractor shall check for any secondary customer entrances, which can be seen from the inside of the store.

6.1.4.1.5 Food Stamp Benefits Accepted Sign Displayed

The Contractor shall indicate on the Survey Form whether or not a Food Stamps or EBT Accepted sign is displayed. There are a large variety of examples for this category. These signs can range from a banner hanging on the outside of the building, crude hand-painted signs in the windows, or rollup signs with flashing lights, to being incorporated in the same sign with the store name. Occasionally, these signs may be found inside the store on a bulletin board, on a poster on the wall, or on a sign behind the cash register. There is also an official sign from the FNS, which is a small door decal that states "WE ACCEPT FOOD STAMPS". A sign with the State's electronic benefits transfer (EBT) logo may be displayed in lieu of other signs.

6.1.4.1.6 Description of Store (type of business)

The Contractor shall indicate the type of business on the Survey Form. Examples include: convenience store, grocery store, and specialty store (bakery, meat/butcher shop, produce stand, farmers' market, natural/health food store),

combination store (general stores with food such as K-Mart). Other examples include combination stores and retailer/wholesaler (for example, a bakery that wholesales its goods). To determine whether to indicate that a store is a retail/ wholesale business, the Contractor shall look for a retail area that is distinct from a wholesale warehouse, with a cash register, advertising, or a separate customer entrance. Copies of promotional flyers on the store's merchandise or photos of promotional displays shall be included. Definitions of these types can be found in the glossary section.

6.1.4.2 General Store Information - Inside the Store

The Contractor shall make the bulk of their observations inside the store. The Contractor shall spend a few minutes at the front end of the store to complete the general store characteristics. The Contractor shall record the following on the Survey Form:

6.1.4.2.1 Shopping Carts/Baskets Available

The contractor shall note whether shopping carts and baskets are available for customer use, versus there being only bags and boxes available.

6.1.4.2.2 Number of Cash Registers

All cash registers may not be located at the front of the store. The Contractor should ask how many there are, if in doubt. The Contractor shall check for registers behind Plexiglas walls, which are often difficult to see.

6.1.4.2.3. Point of Sale (POS) Devices

The Contractor shall indicate on the Survey Form whether or not a store has any POS devices that read the Food Stamp card, and if so, how many. These are the small machines in which people can use cards to debit accounts or charge accounts or can be part of the cash register system. POS devices may be used for EBT (electronic benefits transfer) in some areas. The number of POS devices may differ from the number of cash registers. The Contractor should ask how many there are, if in doubt. Contractors shall not count POS devices at gas pumps, car washes or for other outside operations not related to the sale of food items.

6.1.4.2.4 Optical Scanners

The Contractor shall indicate whether the store has any optical scanners. These are the devices used to scan food product bar codes. It is generally easy to distinguish the presence of optical scanners in a large supermarket, however, these can easily be missed in smaller stores. Smaller stores often have an optical scanner(s), but it may be a small device close to the cash register. The Contractor

shall check closely for these devices. The Contractor should ask if there are any, if in doubt. Optical scanners must not be confused with scales.

6.1.4.2.5 Are Hot Foods Served/Is There a Cold, Prepared Food/Deli Section?

The Contractor shall indicate on the Survey Form if any hot food is served at the store and if so, what type(s). The Contractor shall also indicate if the store has a deli section and/or sells cold, prepared food, and if so, what type(s). Some stores will have a take-out food counter or deli and others may have just a few hot or cold prepared items at the counter, such as hot dogs, pizzas, chicken, sandwiches, salads, etc. The Contractor shall note in the "Comments" section whether food for sale for home preparation and consumption is stored or displayed with the same food stock used for preparing hot and/or cold foods intended for on-site consumption. This information should be provided on the Survey Form, although these food items are not to be counted on the checklist (see Items Not To Be Counted), in photographs, nor in the store sketch.

6.1.4.2.6 Is There a Dining Area?

The Contractor shall indicate whether or not the store has a dining area on the Survey Form and sketch; and, if so, note what type. The types of dining areas encountered will vary greatly. There may be just one table and a few chairs available for customers to use while consuming food or beverages for sale in the store, a stand-up counter, a fast food area with booths, or a restaurant-type dining area.

6.1.4.3 Completing the Remainder of the Survey Form

The Contractor shall note the general characteristics of the store as he/she moves about to begin the food inventory. Most items are self explanatory, but listed below are some that require specific explanation.

6.1.4.3.1 Non-Food Stock and Services

The Contractor shall note in the "Comments" section, other items carried in significant quantities that are not on the form.

a) **Auto Parts** - The Contractor shall indicate that a store has auto parts when the store has more than a few quarts of oil. The Contractor shall look for oil filters, spark plugs, air filters, etc.

b) **Hardware** - The Contractor shall indicate that a store has hardware only if there are more than a few household items (e.g., rolls of duct tape and picture hangers). The Contractor shall look for small hand

tools, nails, screws, sandpaper, paint, etc.

c) **Clothing** - The Contractor shall indicate that the store has clothing only if the store has more articles of clothing than just a few T-shirts, hats or pantyhose.

d) **Gift Items** - The Contractor shall indicate whether the store has gift items such as teapots, books, audio tapes, CD's, cookware, decorative home items, paintings, and candles.

e) **Videos/DVDs/games** - The Contractor shall indicate whether or not the store has videos, DVDs or games. This includes both rental and those available for sale. The Contractor shall not include blank videos or DVDs for recording in this category.

f) **Pharmacy** - The Contractor shall indicate that a pharmacy is present only when there is a pharmacist who works on the premises dispensing prescription drugs.

6.1.4.3.2 Store Conditions - The Contractor shall check all that apply.

a) **Dirty/Unsanitary, Dusty/Faded Labels**

Some stores will be obviously dirty. Sometimes at first glance, things look neat and tidy. However, the Contractor may find canned and packaged items that are covered with dust, as if they have been sitting in the same spot for a long time.

b) **Empty/Moldy/Broken Coolers**

The Contractor shall note observations of coolers that have mold growing or coolers that are broken or just empty in the "Comments" section.

c) **Empty Shelves**

The Contractor shall indicate whether there are any empty shelves. The Contractor shall indicate if the shelves are entirely empty, or if food items have been pushed to the front of the shelf and the space behind them is empty. The Contractor shall note any variances in the "Comments" section.

d) **Salvage Goods**

The Contractor shall note whether the store has any salvage goods (food items). Salvage goods may be items marked for clearance in some stores. They will be found in a grocery cart or displayed in some other manner. Often the cans/packages are dented, crushed, or sample sized. Some stores only carry salvage goods, and these store types will be readily identifiable. The Contractor shall note observations of

salvage goods in the “Comments” section.

6.1.4.3.3 Other Comments

The Contractor shall include any noteworthy observations in writing in the “Comments” section of the Survey Form. There is no precise definition for this section, but in addition to elaborating on other areas of the Survey Form, the Contractor could include such things as: (1) No customers, or (2) Store very busy.

6.1.4.3.4 Survey Certification

The Contractor reviewers shall print his/her name, and sign the Survey Form. The date and time of the visit shall also be provided. The initial time logged on the survey form should be recorder just prior to entering the store and the final time logged on the Photographer’s Certification should be recorded after completing and exiting the store. If a revisit to the store needs to be made, or a second attempt is made if the store was closed on the first attempt, both the first and second dates and times should be provided.

6.1.5 Complete Store Sketch

The sketch provides the FNS with a good overview of the entire store and a sense of the variety and depth of all types of stock in the store. Some tips for your sketch layout are to draw the store entrance(s) for orientation. Draw the aisles as they appear in the store. Indicate what foods are on each of the shelves. Draw hot food area, microwave, dining area. Also indicate non-staple foods and non-food items as well as staple foods. Note where cash registers are located and identify where the following items are located in the store:

6.1.5.1 **Staple foods:**

meat, poultry, fish sections; bread, cereal sections; vegetables, fruit sections; and dairy product sections.

6.1.5.2 **Other foods:**

restaurant and dining areas; and prepared and hot food sales areas.

6.1.5.3 **Non-foods:**

various stock and services provided by the store.

6.1.5.4 **Store entrance(s):**

front entrance(s); side and rear entrance(s); retail customer entrance(s) in wholesale establishments; and carryout customer entrances in stores or restaurants.

6.1.5.5 **Cash register(s)/point-of-sale devices/check-out area(s):**

front-entrance location(s); secondary or rear-entrance

location(s); location(s) throughout store; and location(s) behind plexiglass/security areas.

Sketches should be as detailed as possible, while remaining neat and legible. It is not necessary to write every single item on the sketch. The main products on each shelf or in each store section should be recorded. Summary labels such as “canned vegetables” may be used, where appropriate. Only the abbreviations provided in the legend of the sketch may be used – descriptions of the food products and non food items must be written out.

6.1.6 Complete Checklist

The inventory checklist gives the FNS a general sense of the store’s food stock. You may request a copy of the FSP Guidebook for more detailed instructions on counting staple foods. A brief summary follows: The Contractor shall complete the Checklist in accordance with the following instructions:

6.1.6.1 COMPLETING THE CHECKLIST

The Contractor shall document observations of foods belonging to the four staple food categories. General instructions and examples of food items for each category are listed below.

6.1.6.1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION: COUNTING UNITS

For each type of food observed in the store, the reviewer shall record in the appropriate column of the checklist: 1) a count of the number of units of each food item, and 2) if any of those items are perishable foods.

1 - 5 Units: The Contractor shall note the ACTUAL number of units found, or

6 - 20 Units: The Contractor shall put an “X” in the column under this heading, or

> 20 Units: The Contractor shall put an “X” in the column under this heading.

** A UNIT is counted "as sold as". A six pack of juice is counted as one unit, not six; unless sold individually. A unit is determined by the manner in which items are marketed and sold. In well-stocked stores, there may be many items with more than 20 units. It is not necessary to count every item. For example, if a store obviously has more than 20 units of a particular type of item, the column for that item can simply be marked without determining an actual count. It is important to remember: (1) Different sizes are not different varieties; and (2) Variety is not multiple brands. A store that

has a national brand and a store brand of a particular food type has only (one) 1 variety of that food type.

6.1.6.1.2 Counting Perishable (F/F/R) Items

The Contractor shall indicate if there are any perishables for any row in each category on the checklist for which quantities are noted. Perishables are: 1) Fresh Foods (F) that could spoil or suffer significant deterioration in quality within two to three weeks, 2) Frozen Foods (F), or 3) Refrigerated Foods (R). It is suggested that the review of the staple food stock begin by counting the perishable items in each food group first. Once it has been determined that any one food type has more than 20 units, there is no need to count any more items of that food type. Example: If a store has 20 loaves each of fresh white and whole wheat bread, and 5 loaves of frozen rye bread, the Contractor shall indicate that the store has greater than 20 units of Loaf Bread, and check the F/F/R column.

6.1.6.2 EXAMPLES OF FOODS BY STAPLE FOOD CATEGORY

6.1.6.2.1 BREAD/CEREALS CATEGORY:

Breads/Buns/Rolls (Fresh): The Contractor shall include all types of packaged breads, hot dog/hamburger buns, sub/hoagie buns, dinner rolls, muffins, etc.

Tortillas/Pitas: The Contractor shall include all flat breads, which are usually found in the same section as the breads listed above, and tortillas, which are usually found in the refrigerated section.

Breads (Refrigerated): The Contractor shall include biscuits in a can, crescent rolls, English muffins, bread sticks, pie crusts, etc.

Breads (Frozen): The Contractor shall include packaged loaves to be baked, bagels, garlic breads, dinner rolls, etc.

Cereals (Hot/Cold): The Contractor shall include all varieties, boxed, bagged, instant, flakes, oatmeal, cream of wheat, etc.

Pastas: The Contractor shall include all varieties of noodles, spaghetti, rigatoni, lasagna, macaroni, etc., and other pastas. The Contractor shall also include combination items whose primary ingredient is pasta, such as macaroni and cheese, and hamburger/tuna helpers.

Rices: The Contractor shall include all varieties, boxed and bagged mixes (Rice-a-Roni, etc.), white, brown, wild, specialty rice, etc.

Flour/Grits/Corn Meal: The Contractor shall include all varieties. Flours could include white, wheat, buckwheat, bran, etc.

Crackers/Stuffing Mixes: The Contractor shall include all types of crackers (e.g., saltines, snack, soup, oyster, party crackers, etc.) Stuffing mixes may be boxed or in bags.

Infant Cereals: The Contractor shall include all varieties. Infant cereals are usually boxed and are available in only a few varieties (e.g., rice, rice & banana, etc.)

NOTE: Breads marketed as animal feed are not considered food for human consumption and should not be included.

6.1.6.2.2 DAIRY PRODUCTS CATEGORY:

Milks (Fresh): The Contractor shall include all types (e.g., whole, low fat, skim, white, chocolate, buttermilk, goat's milk, kosher milks, Smilks (these are fruit flavored milks).) **NOTE:** Rice and soy milk, and cream of coconut are NOT dairy products.

Milk (Canned/Powdered): The Contractor shall include evaporated milks, condensed milks, and powdered milk.

Cheeses: The Contractor shall include all types (e.g., block, sliced, grated, shredded, processed, American, Colby, Swiss, Velveeta, etc.) Cheeses can be packaged or sold by the pound, as found in a deli.

Cottage Cheeses/Cream Cheeses: The Contractor shall include all varieties (e.g., large and small curd, low fat, cream cheeses that are flavored, and spreadable cheeses.)

Butter/Margarine: The Contractor shall include quarters, pounds, and tubs.

Yogurt (Fresh): The Contractor shall include all flavors, singles, pints, and quarts.

Infant Formula: The Contractor shall include canned and powdered infant formula which is animal-based, rather than plant-based.

6.1.6.2.3 MEAT/POULTRY/FISH CATEGORY:

Eggs (fresh): The Contractor shall include eggs in a carton, brown, white, and egg substitutes.

Fresh Meats/Poultry: The Contractor shall include both fresh meat and poultry as found at a meat counter to be packaged by customer request, and fresh meats and poultry that are ready wrapped in a variety of cuts and types such as hamburger, steaks, pork chops, lamb, sausage, fryer chicken, stew meats, etc. The Contractor shall note if "Meat Bundles" are offered. These are special bulk or family-sized packages for a discounted price. For example, a BEEF BUNDLE may include 10 lbs. of ground beef, 10 cube steaks, and 5 lbs. of stew meat for one price. There are also chicken and pork bundles, as well as variety bundles. The promotion of meat specials or bundles shall be noted on the

Survey Form, and copies of any advertising flyers promoting such specials shall be included with the deliverable, per Task 3.1.8.

Meat/Poultry (Frozen): The Contractor shall include all varieties of frozen meats and poultry. Examples include ground beef, hamburger patties, fried chicken, family pack Salisbury steak, Bratwurst, sausages, etc.

Meat (Processed/Packaged): The Contractor shall include all packaged sandwich meats (e.g., bologna, olive loaf, ham, pickle loaf etc.), hot dogs, and sausages.

Deli Meats: The Contractor shall include all varieties of deli meats, both those sliced upon request and those that are already sliced and sold by the pound. Deli meats can include bologna, turkey, salami, ham, chicken, roast beef, olive loaf, etc.

Meat/Poultry Canned: The Contractor shall include all varieties of canned meat and poultry. Examples include Spam, Vienna sausages, chunk chicken and ham, ham roasts, Treet, meat spreads, potted meats, etc.

Fish/Seafood (Fresh): The Contractor shall include all varieties of fresh fish and seafood including fish and seafood that is packaged upon customer request or pre-wrapped.

Fish/Seafood (Frozen): The Contractor shall include all varieties of frozen breaded fishes, fish sticks, frozen filets, shrimp, etc.

Fish/Seafood (Canned): The Contractor shall include all varieties of canned fish and seafood. Examples include tuna, salmon, mackerel, oysters, shrimps, clams, sardines, herring, etc.

6.1.6.2.4 FRUITS/VEGETABLES CATEGORY:

Fresh Fruits: The Contractor shall include all varieties of fresh fruits. Common examples include apples, bananas, oranges, peaches, pears, etc. Some fruits will be packaged, some loose, and some may be seasonal items.

Frozen Fruits: The Contractor shall include all varieties of frozen fruits such as strawberries, blueberries, mixed fruits, etc.

Canned Fruits: The Contractor shall include all varieties of canned fruits. Common types include fruit cocktail, peaches, pears, mandarin oranges, pineapple (sliced, chunks, crushed), applesauce, etc.

100% Juice (Fresh): The Contractor shall include all varieties of fresh juice, such as orange juice, apple juice, and grape juice. The 100% juice mark must be on the container for the item to count as juice. These juices are usually found

in the refrigerated section and may be packaged in plastic containers like milk. Juice drinks such as Fruitopias, Five-Alive, Sunny Delight, and anything ending in "ade" are not 100% juices and shall not be included.

100% Juice (Frozen): The Contractor shall include all varieties of frozen 100% juice. The 100% juice mark must be found on the container for the item to count as juice. Fruit or juice drinks as defined above are not to be counted.

Dried Fruits: The Contractor shall include all varieties of dried fruits, such as raisins, prunes, apples, apricots, figs, dates, etc.

Fresh Vegetables: The Contractor shall include all varieties of fresh vegetables. Common examples include potatoes, tomatoes, onions, lettuce, and carrots. NOTE: "Deer Feed" vegetables are not considered food for human consumption, and shall not be included.

Frozen Vegetables: The Contractor shall include all varieties of frozen vegetables, such as green beans, corn, mixed vegetables, peas, potatoes, etc.

Canned Vegetables: The Contractor shall include all varieties of canned vegetables, such as mixed vegetables, green beans, peas, sauerkraut, all beans (baked, navy, kidney, etc.), corn, potatoes, tomatoes of all types (stewed, paste, sauces, whole, spaghetti sauces), etc.

100% Juice (Canned/Bottled): The Contractor shall include all varieties of canned and bottled juice. The 100% juice mark must be found on the container for the item to count as juice. Examples include tomato, carrot, and V-8. Hi-C is not 100% juice, nor is Gatorade. Items that say beverage or drink generally are not 100% juice.

Dried Vegetables: The Contractor shall include all varieties of dried vegetables. Examples include beans, peas, boxed potatoes, etc.

Infant Fruits/Vegetables: The Contractor shall include all varieties of infant fruits and vegetables marketed for young children. Do not include fruit cobblers, etc.

Infant Juice: The Contractor shall include all varieties of 100% juice marketed for young children. The 100% juice mark must be found on the container for the item to count as juice. Fruit or juice drinks as defined above are not to be included.

Infant Formula: The Contractor shall include canned and powdered infant formula, which is plant-based, such as made from soy beans.

6.1.6.2.5 COMBINATION FOODS/MULTI-INGREDIENT

ITEMS

The Contractor shall include combination foods such as potpies, pasta, pizza, canned chili, and soups in the category which represents the main ingredient of the food item. A combination food should be counted as a unit of the food item that represents the primary, or most common, ingredient. This can be determined by checking the ingredients label. However, TV dinners that have two or more separate staple food servings that include meat, poultry or fish should be counted as meat, poultry or fish. Vegetarian TV dinners should be counted as the main vegetable staple food. If the main ingredient is not listed on the checklist, the Contractor shall write-in the item of combination food in the blank spaces provided on the Checklist.

Hot and Ready-to-Heat Foods

Hot foods and foods marketed to be heated or eaten in the store should not be counted on the Checklist. Hot foods may include such items as pizza, hot dogs, and chicken, etc.

Cold, Prepared Foods

Cold, prepared foods not intended to be heated or eaten on the premises should not be counted as staple foods, as they are not intended for home preparation and consumption. Examples include: prepared sandwiches and salads, etc.

OTHER STAPLE FOODS

The Contractor shall also include “other staple foods”, defined as items that are not specifically listed on the Checklist, but are types of staple foods which may be found in retail stores.

ITEMS NOT TO BE COUNTED

There are certain food items found in retail food stores that are not to be counted on the checklist. Some are accessory foods that are eligible foods that FNS does not consider when deciding if a store is eligible. Other examples include items for employee personal use and items used for producing an item for sale (such as flour used to make bread). Such items should NOT be included in the photographs or on the sketch.

Accessory Foods

Accessory items are considered non-staple food items, and include: condiments (catsup, mustard, pickle relish, etc.), candy, spices, coffee, tea, cocoa, sodas and non-carbonated drinks other than 100% juice.

6.1.7 Take color photographs of store interior

When taking onsite store photographs there are three primary target areas of quality control. The first is to insure that all photos for each individual store visit have the required completeness of content. This is addressed with a checklist which summarizes the required photos, and contains suggestions from the USDA Contractor Guidebook for determining priorities on additional photos. The second is to provide good quality photos understanding the basics of digital photography which is covered during your initial training. The third is the assurance that storage media are not mixed with other store photos. This is controlled by using a separate storage media (disk), and beginning the disk with the outside picture showing the store name. Storage media must be labeled with the store name, state/field office, store number on call order and call order number (ex. TN 355-9 Weigle's Farm Store #119).

Each field reviewer will take NO LESS than 24 exposures per store, beginning photography with the outside picture, making sure the store name is clearly visible. If for some reason the store name is not visible or is not the same as the name listed on the call order, the first picture will be of the store survey form completed with the name of the store on the call order and any names changes, if applicable.

The Contractor shall provide digital color photographs as listed below. Contractors shall include a minimum of 24, not to exceed 40, in-focus color photos with each store visit deliverable submitted. This includes photos for each staple food category, non-staple/eligible food stock and non-food stock as described above to capture the overall nature of the store's business. Of the 24 to 40 photographs, the Contractor shall exercise discretion in determining how many photos to take of each of the following categories, ensuring that all categories are properly included among the photographs and reflect the entries on the checklist.

6.1.7.1 - Meat, poultry, fish staple food section(s).

If concentrated in one part of store, take photo(s) that best shows breadth and depth of stock. If relevant products are located in more than one aisle, take photos that include most of the items checked on checklist. Perishable items should be well represented in photos. Variety must be shown.

6.1.7.2 - Bread, cereals staple food section(s).

If concentrated in one part of store, take photo(s) that best shows breadth and depth of stock. If relevant products are located in more than one aisle, take photos that include most

of the items checked on checklist. Perishable items should be well represented in photos. Variety must be shown.

6.1.7.3 - Vegetables, fruit staple food section(s).

If concentrated in one part of store, take photo(s) that best shows breadth and depth of stock. If relevant products are located in more than one aisle, take photos that include most of the items checked on checklist. Perishable items should be well represented in photos. Variety must be shown.

6.1.7.4 - Dairy products staple food section(s).

If concentrated in one part of store, take photo(s) that best shows breadth and depth of stock. If relevant products are located in more than one aisle, take photos that include most of the items checked on checklist. Perishable items should be well represented in photos. Variety must be shown.

6.1.7.5 - Cash register/checkout area.

Take photo(s) that best shows the total checkout area (s) from a wide-angle shot that shows the over-all space available in the checkout area to the customer.

6.1.7.6 - Non-foods:

Take photo(s) that best shows the breadth and depth of items. Items carried in the largest quantities should be well represented in photos, and noted on the Survey Form and in the Sketch. If the items in the largest quantities do not include alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, etc.), but these items are present in the store, take photo(s) which best show the breadth and depth of these items. There shall be 2 non food photos per store when alcohol and other non food products are sold.

6.1.7.7 - Other:

Take photo(s) of any dining area, posted menus or price lists (both permanent and for special sales), and hot foods.

6.1.7.8 - Store Overview:

If there are any remaining frames available, take photos of the entire store from a corner. If possible, stand on a step ladder or a sturdy empty crate to get the best angle. Otherwise, hold the camera above the shelving and aim diagonally downward.

6.1.8 Signed statement by photographer

The Contractor shall include a statement that verifies the photographs are the ones taken of the subject store and they accurately portray the situation at that store on that date and time. The certification shall be signed by the photographer and submitted with the photographs.

6.1.9 Review Forms for Completeness

Delta-21 will submit as part of the deliverable the following field forms as provided by the USDA:

- a) Field Office Call Order Cover Letter
- b) Survey Form
- c) Checklist
- d) Sketch of the Store
- e) Store Visit Consent Form
- f) Photographer's Certification Statement

All forms will be completed during the onsite store visit and will be rechecked prior to submission to the Delta-21 project office or to the appropriate FNS Field Office. Items that are not applicable will be marked "N/A" or "-" to assure that they were not left out. As an example for the survey form, stores that have no adverse store conditions will have "N/A" placed in this section. Narratives must be legible and will be checked for sufficient explanation and understanding. Forms will be completed using ink.

6.1.10 Copies of flyers on store sales

The Contractor shall obtain a copy of any promotional flyers available to customers in the store, which advertise special sales occurring at the time of the visit. Such flyers may include a variety of food categories or specify items in one particular category. These flyers, scanned into a PDF file format, shall be included with the deliverable. If multiple copies of the advertisements are not available to customers, such as those posted in a common area, then a photo(s) shall be taken which provides an adequate representation of such promotions. Such photos should be clear enough to allow the viewer to be able to read the information displayed.

6.2 WHEN THE STORE CANNOT BE LOCATED:

6.2.1. Document survey form

The Contractor shall report on the Survey Form that the store could not be located at (give time) on (give date) at the prescribed address. The Contractor shall also attempt to locate a store with the same name near the specified address (within at least the equivalent of two city blocks), including inquiring of personnel in at least one other business establishment, and so note on the Survey Form. If such store is not found, the Contractor shall proceed with step 6.2.2. The Contractor shall report the store as not located at or near specified address on the Survey Form, and in the "Comments" section, note what attempts were made to locate the store. If store

is found, Contractor shall proceed from step 6.1.

6.2.2. Provide photographs of area

If no store can be located at the specified address, the Contractor shall provide FNS with **six (6)** color photographs of the immediate area, with any street address(s), street signs or route markings visible, to confirm store is not at or near the specified address.

6.2.3. Signed statement by photographer

The Contractor shall include a statement that verifies the photographs are the ones taken of the alleged location of the subject store and that they accurately portray the situation at that location on that date and time. The certification shall be signed by the photographer and submitted with the photographs.

6.3 WHEN THE STORE IS OUT OF BUSINESS:

6.3.1. Document survey form

The Contractor shall report on the Survey Form that the store was found to be out of business at (give time) on (give date) at the prescribed address. The Contractor shall also check to find out if the store may have relocated by attempting to locate a store with the same name near the specified address (within at least the equivalent of two city blocks), including inquiring of personnel in at least one other business establishment, and so note on the survey form that the store is out of business or has relocated. If such store is not found, the Contractor shall proceed with step 6.3.2., and note in the "Comments" section, what attempts were made to locate the store. If store is found at a new location, Contractor shall proceed from step 6.1 and attempt to proceed with visit at new location.

6.3.2. Provide photographs

The Contractor shall provide FNS with **six (6)** color photographs of storefront/customer entrance that shows building facing street with store name visible (if still posted) and secondary customer entrance, if applicable.

6.3.3. Signed statement by photographer

The Contractor shall include a statement that verifies the photographs are the ones taken of the alleged location of the subject store and that they accurately portray the situation at that location on that date and time. The certification shall be signed by the photographer and submitted with the photographs

6.4 WHEN THE STORE IS NOT OPEN FOR BUSINESS:

6.4.1 Reviewer must make an additional attempt to visit

If store is located, but not open for business on arrival, the Contractor shall make at least one additional attempt to visit the store during the reported hours of operation. The second visit shall be made after a minimum of two hours from the time of the first attempt, unless this would fall during a time when the store would normally be closed, in which case the second attempt would need to be made no earlier than the next day the store is normally open. If the store hours are visibly posted and differ from the hours provided by the USDA then the second visit must be made during the posted hours.

6.4.1.1. If note/sign posted

If there is an indication that the store will reopen later on the same day as the initial attempt, the second attempt should be made between the time the store is expected to open and one hour from the store's expected close of business for that day. If there is an indication that the store will reopen within a few days of the initial attempt, the Contractor should determine whether the second attempt can be made given the 10 or 30 day Call Order deadline in which to complete the visit. If a second attempt is not possible, the Contractor shall report the store on the Survey Form as not open for business at (give time) on (give date) and take photographs as described in step 6.4.2., including a photograph(s) of the posted note/sign indicating when the store will be reopened. If a second attempt is possible, the Contractor shall proceed per step 6.4.1., including a photo-graph(s) of any posted sign/note if the store remains unopened.

6.4.1.2. If Second Attempt Fails

If the second attempt fails, the Contractor shall report the store on the Survey Form as not open for business at either (give times) on (give dates). Times and dates shall be given for both attempts. A note should be made as to whether or not the store's days and hours of operation are posted and, if so, what they are. Take photographs as described in step 6.4.3.

6.4.2 Exception

An exception to the requirement that a second attempt be made is if information is obtained on the first visit, which removes the need for another attempt. For example, if the store is under construction and not expected to be open before the due date of the Call Order.

Such information and its source must be noted on the Survey Form and the field reviewer shall contact the Delta-21 project manager.

6.4.3. Provide photographs

The Contractor shall provide FNS with **six (6)** color photographs of: storefront/customer entrance that shows building facing street with store name visible (if posted), secondary customer entrance if applicable, and note/sign (if posted) indicating when/if store will reopen.

6.4.4. Signed statement by photographer

The Contractor shall include a statement that verifies the photographs are the ones taken of the subject store and that they accurately portray the situation at that store on that date and time. The certification shall be signed by the photographer and submitted with the photographs.

6.5. WHEN CONSENT IS REFUSED:

6.5.1. Provide explanation statement to store personnel

If the store owner, manager, or person left in charge of the store refuses consent, the Contractor shall provide the person refusing consent with a statement in the Letter of Introduction that explains: *The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has informed the Contractor that without the reviewer's completed observations, FNS cannot process its review of the store's eligibility, and may therefore deny or withdraw this store's authorization to accept food stamp benefits based on Food Stamp Program (FSP) Regulations. FSP regulations require retailers to provide FNS with necessary information.* If feasible, the Contractor shall wait for the store owner or manager to read the Letter before leaving the store. If the store owner or manager reconsiders and decides to sign the Consent Form after reading the Letter or contacting the FNS Field Office directly, the Contractor shall continue to conduct the visit. If not, the Contractor shall leave the store. If the store owner, manager or person left in charge of the store refuses to sign the Consent Form, but grants or indicates verbal consent, or does not express a verbal refusal of consent, the Contractor shall note how consent was provided and by whom on the Consent Form (and may also note in the "Comments" section of the Survey Form), and continue to conduct the visit.

6.5.2. Provide documentation to FNS

If the attempt to obtain consent from the store owner, manager or person left in charge of the store is unsuccessful, the Contractor

shall provide documentation to that effect. For any attempts that were made to obtain consent, the Contractor shall write in the Comments section of the Survey Form the following information: 1) name, title, or other description of the person refusing consent; and 2) a brief explanation describing the situation (i.e., language barrier, outright verbal refusal, inability to contact owner, etc.). Note should also be made of whether the Letter of Introduction provided in step 6.5.1. was explained to the store personnel.

6.5.3. Provide photographs

The Contractor shall provide FNS with **six (6)** color photographs of the following: storefront/customer entrance that shows building facing the street with store name visible (if posted) and secondary customer entrance if applicable. Although taking this photo after consent is refused may be uncomfortable, once outside the store the Contractor should be able to find a public space from which to take photo(s).

6.5.4. Signed statement by photographer

The Contractor shall include a statement that verifies the photographs are the ones taken of the subject store and that they accurately portray the situation at that store on that date and time. The certification shall be signed by the photographer and submitted with the photographs.

6.6. WHEN LANGUAGE BARRIER EXISTS:

6.6.1. Attempt to obtain translator

FNS will provide a copy of the Consent Form in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Arabic. The Contractor may provide its own translations of the form in other languages, if pre-approved by FNS. These forms will be available on the Delta-21 forms website for field reviewer use. In some situations, the Contractor may not be able to communicate with the store owner, manager or person in charge of the store, due to their lack of a common language or inability to read one of the non-English-language versions of the Consent Letter. If feasible, the Contractor shall wait for the store owner, manager or person in charge to obtain a translator who can either interpret the Contractor's explanation or read the consent Letter. If a translator is not available, the Contractor shall provide a copy of the Letter of Introduction (in the appropriate language if known, or in English) prior to leaving the store. If a language barrier results in the absence or refusal of consent by a retailer, the Contractor shall complete the deliverable following sections 6.5.2-6.5.4.

6.6.2. Provide documentation

If the attempt to obtain consent from the store owner, manager or person left in charge of the store is unsuccessful, the Contractor shall provide documentation to that effect. For any attempts that were made to obtain consent, the Contractor shall note on the Survey Form, Consent Form, or any other document included in the deliverable, the following information: 1) store name, 2) date of visit, 3) name, title, or other description of the person refusing consent, and 4) a brief explanation describing the situation (i.e., language barrier, outright verbal refusal, inability to contact owner, etc.).

6.6.3. Provide photographs

The Contractor shall provide FNS with **six (6)** color photographs of the following: storefront/customer entrance that shows building facing the street with store name visible (if posted) and secondary customer entrance if applicable.

6.6.4. Signed statement by photographer

The Contractor shall include a statement that verifies the photographs are the ones taken of the subject store and that they accurately portray the situation at that store on that date and time. The certification shall be signed by the photographer and submitted as a PDF (portable document format) file with the photographs.

6.7 Additional Forms from Revisits

If a revisit to the store becomes necessary, an additional Consent Form and Photographer Certification Statement are to be included with the deliverable. The date(s) and time(s) of the revisit shall also be noted on the Survey Form and Checklist, as appropriate, and additional information provided and circled to differentiate the additional information from the initial information.

7. Post Store Visit Activities

Immediately concluding each store visit, the Field Reviewer will assure that all mandatory photos were taken for the occurrence encountered by reviewing a simple check list summarizing the procedure for each possible occurrence. After the completion of the entire call order, the storage media and forms will be sent to Delta-21 Resources Inc. or the subcontractor office. All store packages will be then be put together according to the deliverable format described in section 8.3, reviewed for completion and accuracy, and submitted to the Delta-21 Project Office in Knoxville, Tennessee for QC review, when applicable, prior to the **6-day** or **20-day** deadline depending on the type of call order. Included in the

submission will be a comment log to the Delta-21 Project Manager that describes any unusual occurrences or experiences, and any advice on best practices that could assist other Field Reviewer's efficiency.

8. Deliverable Preparation

8.1 Photographs

Photographs must be taken at a size larger than 800X600 pixels to meet the contract requirements. Photos that are taken at or sent to Delta-21 at a size smaller than 800X600 pixels (such as 640X480 pixels) will be rejected and are to be re-taken at the expense of the field reviewer.

The primary problem that Delta-21 encounters with digital photographs is blurred photographs that are caused by the user moving the camera before the image is written to the storage media. The photographer can not rush through the photography process and must give the camera time to lock into focus and write the image before the camera is moved. The higher the pixel count of the camera the more sensitive it is to user movement. Another cause of poor photo quality is taking photos of food stock through the glass coolers and not opening the doors.

8.1.1 Photo Quality

All photos will be reviewed in the digital camera while the field reviewer is still at the store to ensure clarity and completeness of photographic capture of the required photos and breadth of store inventory. If there are bad sectors or problem writing to the disk, the reviewer will re-shoot the entire store at that time. Delta-21 will make reasonable effort to recover corrupt photo files from storage media, however it is the responsibility of the field reviewer to re-take any required photos that are lost at his/her expense.

8.1.2 Marking and Packaging Storage Media and Forms

After taking the required photos and reviewing for completeness and accuracy, each burned disk will be immediately placed into an envelope, along with the corresponding survey forms for storage until shipment to Delta-21 Resources Inc. A Sharpie or other permanent marker should be used to write unique identifying information on the disk(s) for each store such as State, Call Order Number and Store Number and Store name. It is the responsibility of the field reviewer to ensure that the storage CD is not scratched during shipment to Delta-21 and shall securely package all CDs in the shipping box. (Use of individual jewel cases, envelopes or plastic bags for each CD is the safest method to reduce damage to the CD as well as using boxes and not soft packs or envelopes.)

8.1.3 Quality Control

Photo quality is also ensured by the initial test period where the Field Reviewer is given stores to complete and the Project Manager provides immediate feedback. Additional feedback is received by the Field Reviewer over the period of contract performance as Delta-21 receives the completed deliverables and quality reviews are conducted prior to submission to the FNS. The Project Manager will also routinely communicate with the FNS Field Office to assure that their needs and preferences are being met. As with all aspects of conducting store visits, if a Field Reviewer repeatedly submits unacceptable photos, he/she will be dismissed.

8.2 Report Forms

Section 6.9 provides a list of forms that will be included in each deliverable. The following is a quick overview of the forms and important tips to be followed. (Letter of Introduction and consent form are discussed in section 5.5 and 5.6.)

8.2.1 Survey Form

The Survey Form provides the FNS with general information about the store. Prior to arrival at the store, the reviewer should have their forms organized. Verify by writing “same” or “N/A” or “none” as appropriate. A response to every item on each form, even if not applicable, will indicate that there were no oversights during the field visit. The most commonly overlooked questions are: name of owner & length of ownership, directions/ cross street, optical scanners and comments (number of customers, loitering, hot food available).

8.2.2 Checklist of Food Inventory

The checklist provides the Field Office with a general idea of the retailer’s food stock. For each type of food observed in the store, you will mark (“X”) two items on the checklist. The first is the number of units of each food item and if any of those items are perishable foods. In the quantity column of 1-5 units you will need to use the actual number to indicate quantity instead of an “X”. Also beware that items included in the same count may be in different parts of the store. For example you find 2 cans of asparagus on the canned vegetable aisle and 12 bags of frozen broccoli in the freezer section. You will want to mark (“X”) 6-20 and perishable. You may want to use a blank piece of paper on your clipboard until you have determined your final count. If items are sold individually or as an individual serving you will need to circle

the “X” in the quantity column.

Remember that there are certain food items that you will find in retail stores that you will never count on the checklist. These are considered non-staple food items, or accessory items. Accessory items include condiments, jelly & preserves, candy, spices, coffee, tea, sodas, cocoa and non-carbonated drinks (other than 100% juice). Hot foods and foods marketed to be heated or eaten in the store also should not be counted on the checklist.

8.2.3 Sketch of the Store

The sketch or diagram of the store layout is the last form you will need to complete before leaving the store. The sketch is to provide the Field Office with a good overview of the entire store and a sense of the variety and depth of all types of stock. It also allows them to tie the photos to the store lay-out.

Some tips for drawing your sketch might be to first draw the store entrance(s) for orientation. Sometimes by doing the outside perimeter walls first it will give you an orientation as to where to draw the aisles in proportion to the perimeter stock. Note the key on the bottom of the sketch (only those items are allowable short-hand) and be sure to indicate the location of all applicable items. The following items must be marked on every sketch when present: entrance(s); drive-thru windows; cash register(s) AND EBT device(s); non-food; hot foods location; dining area or restaurant; and all main food categories marked on the inventory.

8.2.4 Photographer’s Certification Statement

This statement will need to be completed at the time of your departure. If you and your spouse are both badged and authorized to do store visits make sure to have the person who took the photos to sign this statement.

8.2.5 Consent Form

This form is to be signed and dated by the store employee that provided consent (their title is to be included also). In the case where verbal consent is provided, for example via telephone by the owner or manager, make a note in the comments section listing the name and title of the person giving verbal consent, however, still have an employee that is present at the time of the visit sign the form.

8.3 Packaging & Marking of Completed Deliverables

When possible Delta-21 will hold all single store information until the entire call order is completed, and then submit prior to the due date as a single package defined as one call order.

- a. Survey Forms
- b. Check List (inventory)
- c. Sketch of the Store
- d. Photographer's Certification Statement
- e. Store Visit Consent Form
- f. Photographs: There will be a minimum of 24 photographs and a maximum of 30 photographs arranged in order with the mandatory photos first.

Should a store be revisited for the same call order, the date and time of the revisit will be noted on the appropriate parts of the deliverable. Deliverable formats should be uniform across the region to meet contract requirements.

8.4 Final Quality Review

Delta-21 must receive the completed deliverables from the Field Staff within the specified Delta-21 schedule for new authorizations and reauthorizations, 6 days and 20 days respectively. Each store visit package will be reviewed by the Project Manager or Project Manager Assistant to assure completeness, accuracy, and deliverable consistency. Each call order will be checked to assure that all the stores were visited. The specific review includes examination of the forms to determine if all survey items were addressed, check list completeness, comparison with the photos to assure the check list is accurate, sketch quality, photo quality, photo content, and deliverable packaging. In addition, the consent form and photography certification is verified, and any narratives are checked to assure understanding and intent. Any discrepancies are handled through phone contact with the Field Reviewer, or reassignment to field personnel for immediate turnaround. This quality control review will be conducted as soon as possible.

The QC checklist will be submitted to Delta-21 when the field reviewer or subcontractor invoices Delta-21 in instances where Delta-21 does not perform the QC review.

9. Deficiency Management

9.1 Responsiveness

Deficiency correction occurs as a result of two workflow processes. The first would be in response to the internal quality control review conducted

by the Delta-21 Project Office prior to final submission. Any discrepancy that cannot be resolved through phone conversation with the Field Reviewer will be reassigned back to the original reviewer, a new reviewer, or completed by the Delta-21 Project Support Team, depending on the most efficient scheduling determined by the Project Manager. Any disagreement between the Project Manager and the Field Reviewer or Subcontractor will be forwarded to the Project Liaison for final ruling and correction determination.

9.2 Corrective Measures

The second workflow process to address deficiency would be after final deliverable submission by Delta-21 and the issuance of a deficiency report by the USDA Field Office. The Project Manager will immediately reassign back to the original reviewer, a new reviewer, or the Delta-21 Project Support Team the information necessary to satisfy the deficiency. Once corrected this information will again be received by the Project Manager for final quality control and USDA submission. In some cases when the USDA Field Office chooses, missing or incomplete information will be requested via fax and Delta-21 will submit the correction via fax or media requested.

All assessed liquidated damages will be deducted from field reviewer compensation.

10. Deliverable Quality

Quality control begins with the corporate plan. Delta-21 maintains a company wide Quality Assurance Plan (QA Plan) that sets forth and references guidelines, procedures, and specific individual responsibilities to assure the quality of work performed by Delta-21 meets the standards required by our Government clients. This QA Plan reaffirms Delta-21's commitment to excellence in conduct of operations to ensure that work activities are executed in a formal, ethical, and disciplined manner that embodies a continuous effort to improve performance. The purpose of the QA Plan is to define the criteria that all Delta-21 personnel and subcontractors must consider when performing their day-to-day work. Ten criteria are used in this QA plan to organize the range of activities common to all Delta-21 projects: Quality Management Program; Personnel Training and Qualification; Quality Improvement; Documents and Records; Work Processes; Design; Procurement; Inspection and Tests; Management Assessment; and Independent Assessment. Each employee and subcontractor is provided a copy and required to read and discuss on a routine basis quality improvement issues with the Project Manager.

All deliverables will be subject to a quality control review not only by the Field

Reviewer during the assembly of each store package, but also under the guideline of the Delta-21 QA Plan. One copy of the Delta-21 QC checklist must be returned to Delta-21 and will be kept on file with the documentation for each call order.

11. Photography

The role that the physical quality of the storage media, camera, and photography technique plays in assuring a quality product as well as the mandatory photos is vital to the USDA. Your photos allow the Agency to “see” the store conditions that were described on the forms. The QC Checklist, as well as the photo checklist, delineates all the different photos that need to be represented in the deliverable. The mandatory photos are:

- a) wide shot of store building showing exterior products for sale including the gas pumps (from the outside with the signage if possible, if not shoot another photo of the sign)
- b) all customer entrance(s) (some stores have more than one or separate for wholesale customers)
- c) all checkout area(s) - (not just the cash register equipment or 1 check out station when multiple stations are present)
- d) Hot and/or Prepared foods and Dining areas - (include all applicable dining area/hot foods/microwave/prepared foods/deli area/menus)
- e) Non-food items – 2 photos minimum – alcohol and one other type (make sure to shoot the largest area of non-food items, e.g., automotive, beer, hunting/fishing, household cleaning items, health and beauty, but only a couple of pictures **AND** the alcohol (beer, wine or liquor)).

The other photos need to consist of the following:

- f) non-staple food items (candy, soda, condiments...)
- g) breads/cereals
- h) dairy products
- i) meat/poultry/fish
- j) fruits/vegetables

As an example, you should photograph canned fruits and vegetables as well as fresh produce whenever both are available. The more important picture to capture would be the fresh produce. However, if you were in a convenience store with no fresh produce, you would need to clearly photograph the canned produce showing the labels and quantities that will support your inventory checklist. Four in-focus photographs per staple food group are the minimum allowable. “Variety” must be captured in the photographs of each store. Photos showing depth and breadth of the entire food stock are to be included as well as mid-range photos which emphasize the staple food groups.

12. Items Not Covered Here

The Consulting Agreements between individual reviewers and Delta-21, Consulting

Agreements between individual reviewers and our subcontractors and the Contracts between the subcontractors and Delta-21 contain other, proprietary information in addition to the information contained in these materials. Please refer any questions that you may have to your Project Manager or Regional Assitant. This manual can not anticipate every situation or answer every question that you may encounter while completing store inspections. Employees of Delta-21 are expected to exercise discretion and use independent judgment when they encounter situations not outlined in this manual.