

Evaluation of the ART Grants

Client: Abt; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Overview

Federal legislation in 2004 and 2010 amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, which originated in 1946 to provide low-cost or free lunches to qualified students. With the amendments, state agencies were required to conduct additional reviews of local education agencies (LEAs) that administer the program, provide oversight and training of LEAs, and implement a more robust and unified system for accountability. As part of the 2010 legislation, via the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) established the Administrative Review—or AR—which mandated several changes to LEA procedures.

To assist state agencies in implementing the new AR requirements, FNS funded Administrative Review Training (ART) Grants to focus on three main areas.

- Train and oversee local education agency (LEA) administrative personnel in school meal operations.
- Update processes and systems to comply with the AR.
- Improve technology to address administrative error through targeted monitoring and increased training in error-prone LEAs.



This study describes the short- and long-term effects of the ART Grants, examines how grantees sustain their activities after funding has ended, and identifies challenges to implementation and sustainability. Twenty-one states with ART Grants ending by fiscal year 2017 were recruited to participate in the study.

As a subcontractor to Abt, Insight—

- Developed and tested interview protocols for state agencies and LEAs
- Conducted telephone interviews with 11 state agencies and 22 LEAs