

On-Site vs. Remote Records Data Collection

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Overview of Today's Presentation

- **Introduction**
- **Study Background**
 - On-site records collection
 - Remote records collection
- **Findings**
 - Schedule implications
 - Quality of data collected
 - Cost implications
- **Recommendations**

Study Background

- **National Estimates of National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) Erroneous Payments (APEC-II)**
- **Student records data from school food authorities (SFAs) or school districts in SY 2012-2013**
- **In-person survey with parent/guardian shortly after record collection**
- **Intentional Study Design**
 - **Fall: On-site data collection due to tight schedule**
 - **Spring: Remote data collection to maximize cost savings**

Research Questions

- How does an electronic request for records data compare to an in-person data collection?
- How does the method of records collection affect the:
 - project schedule?
 - quality of data?
 - cost of the collection?

Records Request

- **List of all meal program applicants**
 - Meal status (free/reduced/denied)
 - Application number
 - Application/Certification date
- **Contact Information**
 - Student name
 - Student grade
 - Parent/guardian name(s), address(es), phone(s)

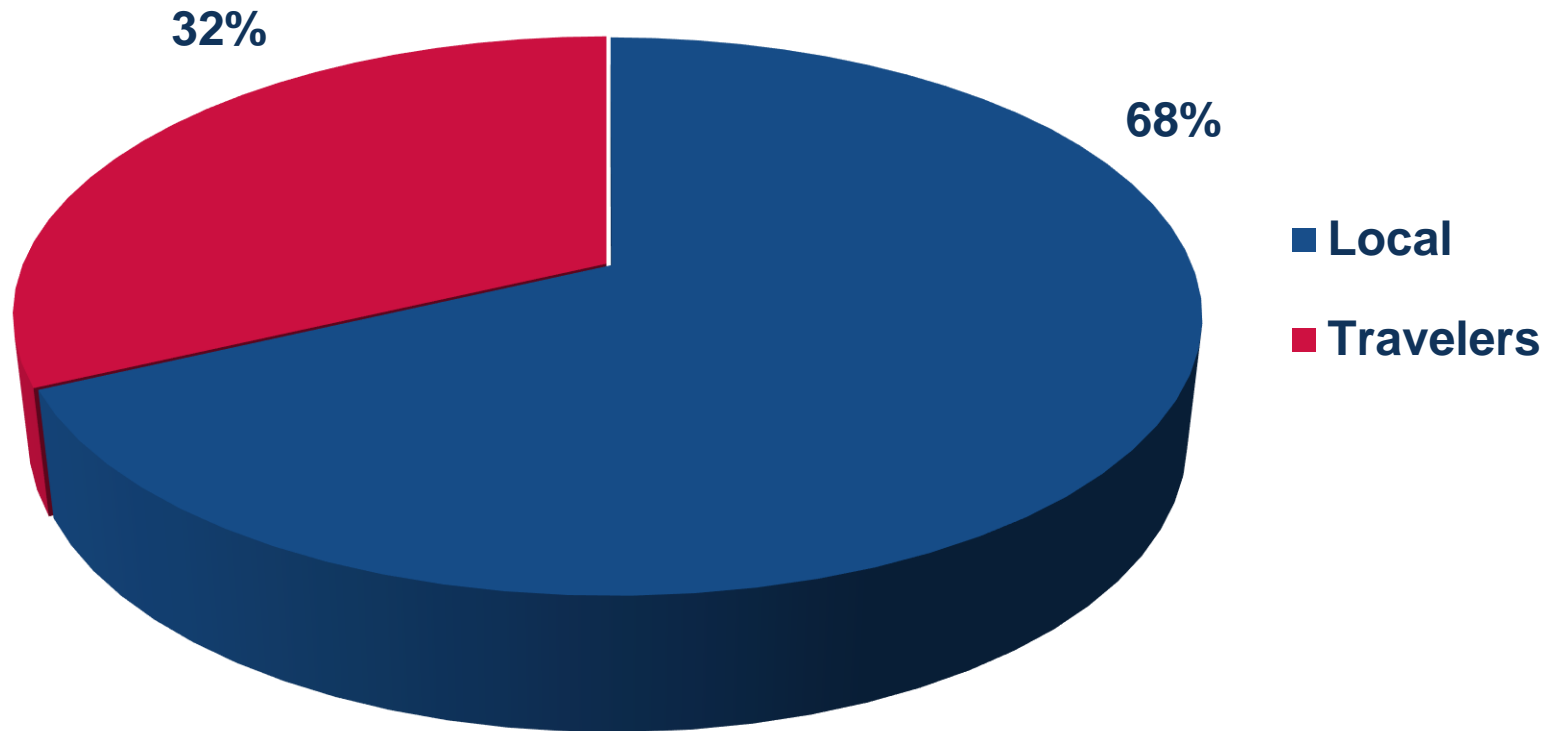


On-Site Records Collection

- **Summer 2012: sent data request to districts asking what type of data they have available, scheduled visits**
- **Prepared “data collection plan” for field staff**
- **On-site records collection scheduled for September 2012**

On-Site Records Collection

Percent of Districts Visited by Field Staff Type



Remote Records Collection

- Rolling basis from December 2012 to June 2013
- Project staff made requests to districts by phone and email
- Uploaded data files to secure file transfer website
- Project staff who made the request performed sample selection, using same tools as on-site records collection

Method Comparison

- **Key differences for remote records collection**
 - **Sampling turnaround**
 - **A smaller number of project staff contacted and sampled districts**
 - **Fewer schools sampled**
 - **Fewer students selected**

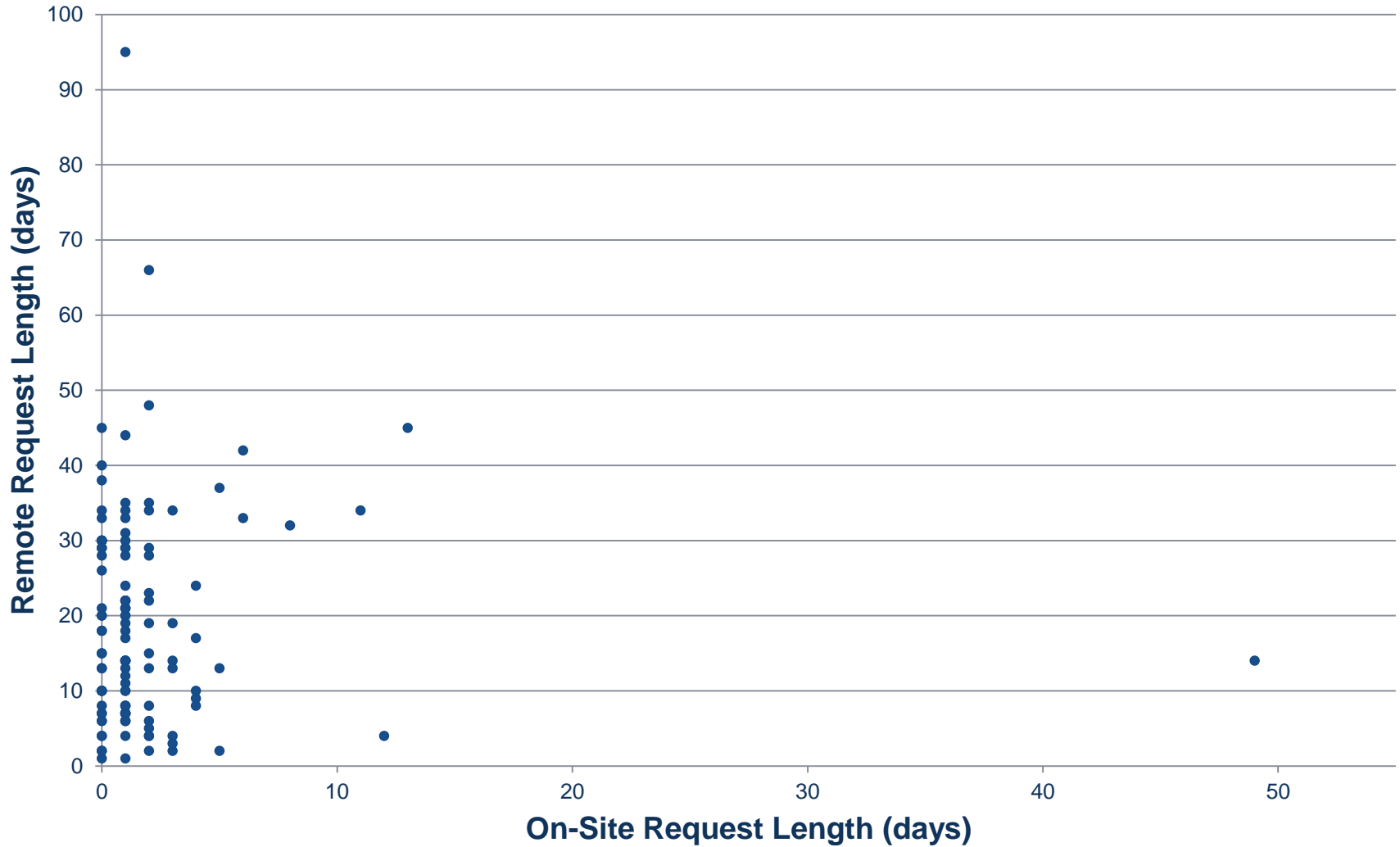
| | On-Site Records Collection | Remote Records Collection |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Timeline | Two weeks | One month |
| Total Staff | 44 | 4 |
| Total Districts Sampled | 126 | 125 |
| Total Schools Sampled | 373 | 358 |
| Total Students Sampled | 5,944 | 1,937 |

Findings—Impact on Schedule

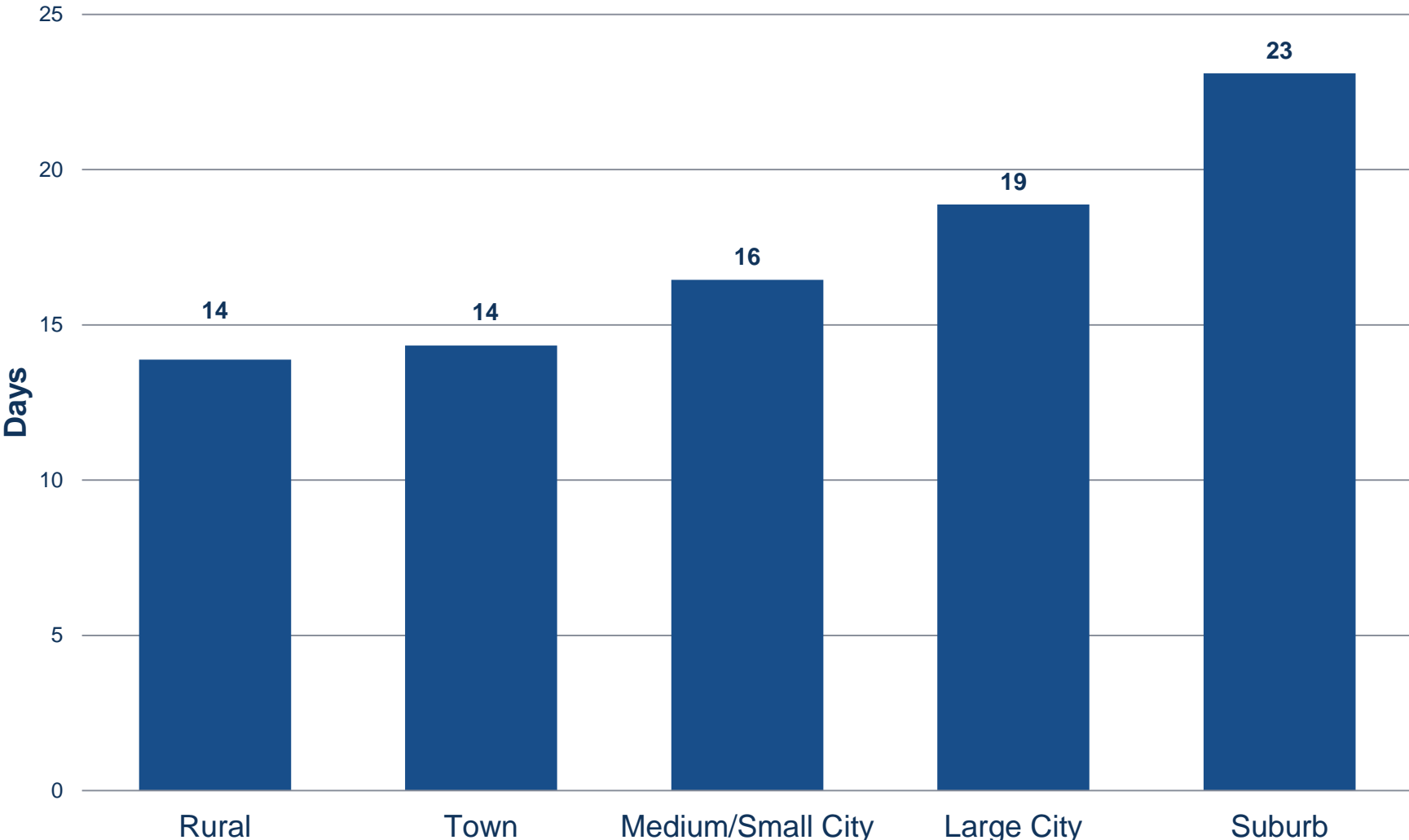
- Turnaround was much quicker through the on-site method
- On-site records collection: 2-day average request span
- Remote records collection: 19-day average request span



Request Length by District



Request Length by Locale Type



Findings—Impact on Quality

- Quality of contact information important for survey fielding
- Virtually same proportion of cases with complete addresses and phone numbers using each method
- A larger proportion of cases selected on site included multiple phone numbers

| | On-Site | Remote |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|
| % with Complete Address | 99% | 98% |
| % with Phone Number | 99% | 98% |
| % with Multiple Phone Numbers | 19% | 14% |

Findings—Impact on Quality

- Impact on survey final disposition: same proportion of cases (1%) not completed due to address quality issues (e.g., wrong address, address doesn't exist)



Findings—Impact on Cost

- **Cost Drivers**
 - Labor
 - Travel
 - Sample size

| | On-Site Records Collection | Remote Records Collection |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Total Staff | 44 | 4 |
| Total Districts Sampled | 126 | 124 |
| Total Schools Sampled | 373 | 356 |
| Cost per District | On-site is 5x more costly than remote | |
| Cost per School | On-site is 5x more costly than remote | |

Key Findings

- **On-site records collection has quicker turnaround than remote collection**
- **On-site records collection has higher costs than remote collection**
- **The quality of these data, as measured by completeness, are not necessarily affected by the method of record collection**

Additional Considerations

- **Data provider's technological capabilities**
 - Burden that either mode creates/alleviates
- **Complexity of the data request**
- **Sensitivity of the data request**
 - Security requirements (contractual or data provider)

Recommendations

- **Extensive training for on-site staff**
 - Hands-on practice
 - Rigorous certification requirements
 - User-friendly data entry
- **Tools for efficient management of on-site records collection**
 - Facilitated by broadband internet cards
 - Tracked using CAPI infrastructure
- **Secure file transfer website for data transferred directly from district**

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For More Information

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