

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2011
Administer Researcher-Initiated Grants for Research on the WIC Program
Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
Request for Application (RFA)**

**Cooperative Agreement Applications Due
to FNS on or before Midnight Eastern Time (ET) on July 18, 2011.**

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number is 10.586

For each of 3 separate research areas, the purpose of this RFA is to select an institution-/organization (i.e. accredited university) that can develop and administer a series of researcher-initiated grants pertinent to the research area, coordinate activities among researchers and widely disseminate findings. The research areas are described in Attachments 1 through 3. Institutions may submit an application on 1 or more of the 3 areas but a separate application is required for each area.



Keywords: WIC, periconceptual, nutrition education, social media, FNS, USDA, research

WIC- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

Periconceptual period – The time period immediately prior to conception and in the first few days and weeks following conception—nutrition can impact placental and embryonic development with critical lifelong implications.

Nutrition education –individual and group sessions and the provision of materials that are designed to improve health status and achieve positive change in dietary and physical activity habits, and that emphasize the relationship between nutrition, physical activity, and health, all in keeping with the personal and cultural preferences of the individual.

Social media - Primarily Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. This interaction, and the manner in which information is presented, depends on the varied perspectives and "building" of shared meaning among communities, as people share their stories and experiences.

FNS – Food and Nutrition Services

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

Research – Defined as human activity based on intellectual application in the investigation of matter. The primary aim for applied research is discovering, interpreting, and the development of methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge on a wide variety of scientific matters of our world and the universe.

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Fiscal Year (FY) 2011
Administer Researcher-Initiated Grants for Research On The WIC Program
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
Request for Application (RFA)

Overview

Background

FNS announces the availability of funds for 3 grant opportunities that are referred to as Attachments 1 through 3, involving researcher-initiated projects to demonstrate creative approaches to evaluate or develop aspects of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), coordinate activities among researchers, and widely disseminate findings.

WIC was established to counteract the negative effects of poverty and nutritional risk on prenatal and pediatric health and provides a combination of direct nutritional supplementation; nutrition education and counseling; and increased access to health care and social service providers for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to the age of five years. States, U.S. territories and Indian Tribal Organizations receive Federal grants which are used to cover the cost of foods purchased with WIC benefits, along with specified nutrition services and administrative costs.

Average WIC monthly participation in 2010 was 9.2 million, up from 8.0 million in 2005. Children ages 1 to 4 years comprise about a half of WIC participants, while women and infants each are about a quarter of the participants. Currently, WIC serves half of the infants in the United States and roughly one-third of mothers in their prenatal period. Over half of the pregnant women participating in WIC enroll in their first trimester.

The substance of the 3 WIC-related grant opportunities is described in Attachments 1 through 3. Institutions can apply on more than one of the Attachments, if desired. However, a **single application that combines responses to multiple attachments will be rejected. Independent applications are required to apply on more than 1 attachment.**

Purpose

Grantees (Recipients) shall work cooperatively with FNS to:

- Support researcher-initiated projects that use a common approach to reporting findings to ensure transparency and facilitate a meta-analysis of all projects;
- Coordinate activities among researchers;
- Effectively use technology and digital media to achieve desired outcomes; and
- Advance communication and coordination to improve target behaviors.

The recipients of the grants and cooperative agreements will be required to demonstrate a thorough understanding of FNS programs and the food, nutrition and health issues facing eligible participants of FNS nutrition assistance programs.

NOTE: When applying, please review Attachments 1 through 3 for background information on the grant areas and evaluation factors that will be used by FNS evaluators.

Authority

The Authority for this program is contained in the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 Section 17 (g) (5) as amended (http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Legislation/CNA_1966_12-13-10.pdf) and Section 1472 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, 7 U.S.C. 3318, codified at 7 CFR 2.19(a)(3)(x) in January 2009. Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary of Agriculture may award competitive grants and cooperative agreements for the support of research projects to further USDA food and nutrition assistance programs.

Basis of Award

Evaluation Information

Panel Review: All applications that meet the deadline for submission will be screened for completeness and conformity to the requirements of this solicitation. If deemed fully responsive and consistent with the agency's priorities, the request will be considered for funding.

The evaluation criteria discussed in Attachments 1, 2, or 3, will be reviewed by a panel of evaluators and used to score proposals. The proposals will be ranked by score starting with the highest score. The panel will present their recommendation to the selecting official based on this ranking. Awards will be considered based on rank order, however, the selection official reserves the right to fund out of rank order based on the Agency's priorities and consistent with goals and objectives. FNS also reserves the right to fund successful applications at an amount less than requested if it is judged that an application can be implemented at a lower funding level. At the completion of the review and awards process, FNS will provide funding for the approved applicant upon receipt of a properly executed agreement.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weights are specified in Attachments 1, 2 and 3. In addition, please review the below.

All applicants will be notified whether their proposal has been accepted for an award by FNS.

Overview

The guidelines below are provided to assist you in preparing a proposal. Please read these guidelines carefully before preparing your submission.

A Checklist is provided at the end of this document (see table of contents) to help you in submitting the necessary information for completing a proposal. An application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (R&R) form is required in the proposal and application package, downloadable from http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp.

Applications shall be submitted electronically to www.grants.gov. FNS will not accept mailed or hand-delivered applications.

DEADLINE: Applications are DUE on or before July 18, 2011.

Project Summary Page

The proposal must start with a Project Summary Page that shall include:

- The names and institutions of the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and complete contact information for the Principal Investigator;
- The total amount of funding requested;
- The project start and end dates; and
- A project summary of no more than 2 pages.

The project summary is not intended for the general reader. It may contain technical language comprehensible by persons in disciplines relating to researcher-initiated projects for the topic in the specific Attachment of the application. The project summary shall be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and shall focus on the overall project goal(s), supporting objective(s), and plans to accomplish project goal(s).

Assume this grant will be awarded August 2011, please provide a table with anticipated timeframes for subgrantee RFA to post, subgrantee proposal due date, subgrantee start dates, workshop/conference timeframe with FNS approval, etc.

For example:

Subgrantee Timeframes

	Date	Duration from Grant Award (weeks, months, etc.)
Subgrantee RFA posting		
Subgrants proposals due and expected amounts given: a) Overall amount of subgrants b) Subgrants range amount given - What, if any, dollar limits or ranges will be specified for subgrant applications c) Estimates of Subgrants - How many subgrants are anticipated?		
d) Subgrants start dates		
e) Workshop/conference (36 to 48 months with FNS approval) after receipt of the grant award		

Project Description

The project description may not exceed 5 pages of text and may not exceed a total of 10 pages including figures, tables, and attachments. All proposals are to be formatted for standard 8½” x

11” paper. Margins must be at least 1 inch, type size must be 12 point, and there shall be no page reductions. The project description shall include the following:

- ✓ *Project Activity* – A clear description of the activity to be undertaken, including where, when, and how.
- ✓ *Rationale and Significance* – The rationale behind the idea being proposed, how does it relate to the impact of the WIC program?
- ✓ *Relationships to be established* – The extent that the proposal requires collaboration by the Recipient with State or local implementing agency or agencies (such as a WIC clinic) include the names of the relevant implementing agency or agencies and a description of the actions that will be taken to establish a working relationship.
- ✓ If applying for Attachment 1 or 2, the project description shall describe how the institution will announce the availability and objectives of the competition for subgrants for researcher-initiated projects.
- ✓ If applying for Attachment 1 or 2, the project description shall describe how the applicant will structure the competitive process for awarding subgrants.
- ✓ If applying for Attachment 1 or 2, the project description shall contain statements that should applicant be selected for the Cooperative Agreement then:
 - Prior to selecting any subgrantees, it will submit to FNS summaries of all proposals ***submitted*** by researchers applying for subgrants and discuss the proposals with FNS (final selection rests with the Recipient).
 - Each summary shall include a half page abstract of the proposed research, the name(s) of the Principal Investigator(s), name of institution, and total budget.
 - After subgrantees are selected, the Recipient shall submit updated summaries for the ***selected*** subgrantees.
 - For workshops/conferences, it is grantee sponsored (Recipient). The grantee proposal shall provide an estimate of the number of anticipated attendees and a preliminary list of the types of people that are expected to be invited to participate.
 - **In addition, Grantee will monitor completion of subgrants' progress and discuss how this will be done.**

Interim Deliverables – Once awarded the recipient will provide quarterly progress reports and financial reports to identified FNS contact persons.

Final deliverable(s) – The project description shall address what types of deliverables will be submitted and/or published for each researcher-initiated project. The project description shall address what types of deliverables will be submitted and/or published by each subgrantee at the end. It shall also describe what types of deliverables will be submitted and/or published by the Recipient during and at the end of the Cooperative Agreement. For internal use informational

purposes, FNS shall be provided an electronic copy of all manuscripts resulting from this grant and subgrants (for Attachment 1 or 2), at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.

Dissemination of findings — The project description shall address how the findings will be disseminated to WIC Program stakeholders and the academic community. If applying for Attachment 1 or 2, the Recipient shall plan, convene and actively participate in a workshop/conference approximately 36 to 48 months after receipt of the grant award, as a component of the dissemination process. The purpose will be to discuss findings and accomplishments that resulted from the researcher-initiated grants and work-to-date by the Recipient and subgrantees. Grant funding may be used to cover travel expenses and other expenses associated with this workshop/conference. The workshop/conference shall be held at FNS headquarters or another location in the Washington DC metropolitan area agreeable to FNS. In reference to Attachment 1 and 2, all subgrantees shall attend and actively participate in this workshop/conference. The Recipient shall prepare and publish a summary of this workshop/conference within 6 months of the event.

Note: the sections detailed below are not included in the page limitations for the Project Description section.

Citations to Project Description

All references cited shall be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and shall conform to an accepted journal format.

Budget and Staffing Narrative

Applicants shall provide a detailed explanation for all funds requested on the Budget Form (SF 424A) and describe how those request for funds relate to the project objectives and proposed activities. To assist reviewers in determining whether the budget and staffing are adequate and appropriate, the narrative shall be brief but include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine the role and level of involvement of assigned staff. The budget narrative shall briefly describe how the requested funds will be spent, including specifics on travel, equipment, and personnel. For example – Travel of \$15,000 will be based on 3 employees X 5 trips X avg. \$1,000 per trip or Equipment of \$50,000 will be based on purchase of 5 computers at \$900 each, 2 printers at \$100 each, etc. Budget shall include costs of travel to the project workshop/conference (at approximately 36 to 48 months) sponsored by the grant recipients who will discuss findings and accomplishments that resulted from researcher-initiated projects. The total funds awarded to a Recipient will range from \$250,000 to \$2 million, depending on the grant Attachments 1 through 3.

In reference to Attachment 1 and 2, the competitive subgrantees, collectively, shall receive no less than 51 percent of the total amount awarded to the grantee (Recipient).

Vitae and Publications List

To assist reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, the proposal shall also include a short curriculum vitae and publication list of the Principal

Investigator and key personnel who expect to work on the project. Vitae are limited to 2 pages for each individual and the publications list shall focus on the past 5 years with a limit of 2 pages.

Indirect Cost Rate Schedule

Applicants shall indicate whether or not a discount on indirect costs is included. The applicant is encouraged to consider dedicating less of budget needs to indirect costs, while allowing a larger percentage of the applicant's budget to support the identified expenditures associated with the proposed budget's direct costs.

Current and Pending Support

In order to document the time availability of the key personnel proposed to work on a grant, the proposal must list any other current public or private research support (including in-house support) to the Principal Investigator or co-investigators. Explain how support for the proposed staff salary is allocated across this and other projects. .

Analogous information must be provided for any pending proposals, including this proposal, that are now being considered by, or that will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Note that this proposal must be listed as *Pending*.

Recipients shall also include a brief statement of research objectives or project summaries for all projects listed in Current and Pending Support. Concurrent submission of identical or similar proposals to other possible sponsors will not prejudice proposal review or evaluation. However, a proposal that duplicates or overlaps substantially with a proposal already reviewed and funded (or that will be funded) by FNS will not be funded under this program.

For each of the key personnel, the following information shall be included under the heading "Current and Pending Support," and record information for active and pending projects in separate sections showing:

- person's name,
- supporting agency,
- total funding amount,
- effective and expiration dates,
- percentage of time committed for each year over the duration of this project, and
- title of project.

All current research to which the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and other senior personnel have committed a portion of their time must be listed, whether or not salary for the person involved is included in the budgets of the various projects. Narrative shall be included to clarify availability for each person in any instance where the active and pending projects suggest that time availability for work on this grant might be insufficient.

Eligibility for Cooperative Agreement

This Request for Application (RFA) is open to accredited colleges/universities offering advanced degrees at the PhD level in biological and social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, education, nutrition, public health and economics. This is a requirement for the selected recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, not the subgrantees if applying for Attachment 1 or 2.

Amount of Funds Available

FNS anticipates awarding one Cooperative Agreement for each attachment area. Funding is available for: Attachment 1 up to \$1,000,000; Attachment 2 up to \$2,000,000; and Attachment 3 up to \$250,000. The amount of funds awarded under this RFA depends on the quality of applications/proposals received. FNS reserves the right to award Cooperative Agreements under this announcement in a subsequent fiscal year without further application submission, subject to the availability of funds. Therefore, applications submitted under this request may also be used to fund a Cooperative Agreement in FY 2012.

Funding Priorities and Use of Funds

Objectives

FNS's primary objective for this Cooperative Agreement is to support academic interest in exploring better ways to assess and improve WIC's impacts on food, nutrition and health of FNS program participants. The products should enhance knowledge and further research and intervention activities.

Application Information

How To Obtain Application Material

FNS is using the Internet for primary distribution of information and application materials for this Cooperative Agreement. All applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov. If you have questions, contact:

Leslie Byrd
Grants Management Division
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302
Office: (703) 305-2867
Fax: (703) 605-0363

Application Process

Submission Requirements

The purpose of a grant proposal is to persuade FNS and members of the review panel that the proposed project is important, methodologically sound, and worthy of support under the evaluation criteria listed in each Attachment. The application shall be self-contained, clearly present the merits of the proposed project, and be written with care and thoroughness. It is important that all of the essential information for a comprehensive review be included. Omissions often result in processing delays and may jeopardize funding opportunities.

In preparing the proposal, applicants are urged to ensure that the name of the Principal Investigator and the name of the submitting institution are included on the Application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (R&R Family) forms.

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants, which are located at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp:

Grants.gov Forms:

- ✓ SF424 (R&R) Form
- ✓ Research and Related Other Project
- ✓ Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
- ✓ Research & Related Budget
- ✓ Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile
- ✓ Research & Related Personal Data
- ✓ Project/Performance Site Location(s)
- ✓ HHS Checklist (08-2007) [E.O. 12372, only applicable to participating states]
- ✓ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

The following USDA forms are required of grant applicants, which are located at http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/ocio_forms.html:

- ✓ AD-1047 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension
- ✓ AD-1048 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension (Lower Tier contractual budget line)

The following OMB form is required of grant applicants, which is located at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sfillin.pdf>:

- ✓ SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Format and Content of Proposals

For electronic submissions through Grants.gov, the proposal and all attachments must be submitted in portable document format (pdf). Using pdf allows applicants to preserve the formatting of their documents. In order to save a document as a pdf, the applicant will need to use pdf generator software. Grants.gov has published the following web page on tools and software that the applicant can use: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp.

The submission through Grants.gov must contain an Application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (R&R), including authorized electronic signatures from your organization.

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (R&R)

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the duration of the project, which is not to exceed 60 months. Funding levels are to be inclusive of indirect costs where applicable. Funds may be requested under any of the budget categories listed, provided that the item or

service requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the proposed project, allowable under applicable Federal cost principles, and not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute or regulation. Budget items include:

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual items
- Other direct costs
- Indirect charges

Salaries of faculty members and other personnel who will be working on the project may be requested in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

Indirect costs are limited to the most favorable rate the institution has given to any Federal government agency.

Electronic copies of the standard budget form and general instructions are available at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp: as part of the application package. Specific instructions for completing the proposal budget form are found below.

If applying for Attachment 1 or 2, the university awarded one of the Cooperative Agreements (“Recipient”) shall be responsible, in consultation with FNS, for planning and implementing procedures to competitively solicit and select innovative research proposals that will increase understanding of the impacts of WIC. It will be up to the Recipient to obtain researcher-initiated proposals to be awarded subgrants under the Cooperative Agreement. The Recipient shall encourage a variety of research methods to collect new information to more fully address the objective of evaluating the WIC Program.

What/When/Where To Submit

The complete application package (see Checklist) **must be uploaded** on www.Grants.gov on or before **Thursday, July 18, 2011 at Midnight** Eastern Daylight Time. Applications received after the deadline date and/or time will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. FNS **WILL NOT** consider any additions or revisions to applications once they are received. ***FNS will not accept mailed or hand-delivered applications.***

FNS will not accept applications sent via U.S. Mail, email, or fax.

1) Submit application through electronically through Grants.gov

The www.grants.gov is a government-wide website designed for electronic submission of applications/proposals. We advise that you allow ample time to familiarize yourself with the system’s requirements. You will need both a Data Universal Number (DUNS) and a Contract Registry Number (CCR) to access the system. You can contact Dun and Bradstreet at 1-800-234-3867 to obtain a DUNS number if you do not have one already.

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; you need to be sure that you have confirmation that your application was **accepted**.

- 2) Late applications will not be considered in this competition. We will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received.
- 3) Applications submitted without all the required supporting documents, forms, certification, and signatures will not be considered for competition.

All questions regarding the application should be referred to Leslie Byrd at leslie.byrd@fns.usda.gov.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposal contains all pertinent information when originally submitted. Prior to submitting, it is urged that the application be compared with the Checklist (see table of contents).

Award Administration

FNS reserves the right to negotiate with the Principal Investigator and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions or funding level prior to recommending any project for funding.

A proposal may be withdrawn by the Principal Investigator at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the proposal.

Award Process

A panel appointed by FNS will review applications and make recommendations for funding to the FNS selection officials. The proposals will be ranked by score starting at the highest score and presented to selecting officials based on this ranking. The final decision to award the Cooperative Agreement is at the discretion of USDA selecting officials. Selecting officials will consider the panel rankings and comments, recommendations from FNS staff, and other pertinent information before deciding which proposals to fund. FNS selecting officials reserve the right to fund proposals out of rank order based on written assessments made by evaluation panel members, information provided by USDA and agency priorities.

FNS reserves the right to fund successful applications at an amount less than requested if federal funding is not sufficient. FNS reserves the right to award Cooperative Agreements in a subsequent fiscal year without further re-competition, subject to the availability of funds.

Post-Award Activities

FNS expects that the selected university will participate in activities, to include attendance at conferences and training sessions, to disseminate and share information about the development and administration of the series of researcher-initiated grants to demonstrate creative approaches to evaluate WIC impacts, coordinate activities among researchers, and widely disseminate findings.

These activities may necessitate travel and associated training/conference fees, which are an allowable expenditure under the grant.

Duration of Awards

The total period for which a Cooperative Agreement is awarded may not exceed 60 months.

Notice of Award

A competitive grant award document, containing the budget's approved funding amount, terms and conditions of the award, and other necessary information will be prepared and forwarded to each grantee, along with a Notice of Competitive Grant Award by USDA.

Management Information

Once a grant has been reviewed and recommended for funding, specific management and information relating to the applicant shall be requested on a one-time basis prior to the award.

Authorization to make changes in approved project plans, budget, period of support, etc., will be governed by the terms and conditions of the competitive grant award agreement. The terms and conditions will set forth the kinds of post-award changes that may be made by the awardee (Recipient) and the kinds of changes that are reserved to the FNS Office. It is urged that all key project personnel and authorized organizational representatives read them carefully.

Financial Obligations

For any competitive grant awarded, the maximum financial obligation of FNS shall be the amount of funds authorized for the award, this amount will be stated on the award instrument.

Nothing in these guidelines or any program announcement shall obligate FNS, the Department, or the United States to take favorable action on any application received in response to any announcement, or to support any project at a particular level. Further, neither the approval of any application nor the award of any project grant shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

Awardees will be required to ensure that all funds are expended in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant award, departmental regulations, and the applicable Federal cost principles in effect on the date of the award. Responsibility for the use and expenditure of grant funds may not be transferred or delegated in whole or in part to another party (even if a grantee enters into a contractual relationship with that party), unless the grant agreement itself is transferred in whole or in part to another party by FNS.

Release of Information

FNS receives Cooperative Agreement proposals in confidence and will protect the confidentiality of their contents to the extent permitted by law. When a proposal results in a Cooperative Agreement, however, it becomes part of the public record and is available to the public upon written request.

Reporting Requirements

The Recipient of the grant will need to report several items to FNS on the progression of the project(s). Please note the below reporting elements will be required from the awardee (Recipient).

Programmatic Program Reporting

Quarterly progress reports and financial reports shall provide FNS with progress of the subgrants. The report shall include the following:

- Cover page with title, period of performance covered and number in the sequence of reports;
- Brief description of the purpose and scope of the subgrants;
- Description of the activities, by task, that were carried out during the reporting period;
- Descriptions of the activities planned for the next reporting period;
- Discussion of problems and delays encountered during the reporting period and steps taken or proposed to resolve them;
- Discussion of anticipated problems and recommendation for avoiding or resolving them;
- Schedule identifying for each task and deliverable the dates on which work started, was expected to end and actually ended;
- Table with dollars budgeted, dollars spent during the reporting period and cumulatively, and dollars remaining;
- Table with hours budgeted, hours spent during the reporting period and cumulatively, and hours remaining by person and combined project staff for each task; and
- In reference to Attachments 1 and 2, the workshops/conferences will have a 36 to 48 month sharing information session midway.

The final programmatic program report will incorporate all findings below:

- completed process evaluation;
- completed impact evaluations; and
- lessons learned.

The Recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 reports into the Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) quarterly. The awardee must obtain e-authentication certification, access to FPRS, and post the SF-425 data on-line. More detailed specifications for the report will be included in the cooperative agreement.

7 CFR 3019.13 - Debarment and suspension.

Applicant chosen for the award shall comply with the nonprocurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing E.O.s 12549 and 12669, "Debarment and Suspension," codified at 7 CFR 3017. This common rule restricts subawards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. Therefore the approved grantee will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and subgrantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a subgrant award by checking the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) found at www.epls.gov.

2 CFR Part 25 – Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance applicants, as well as active grant recipients and their direct subrecipients of a subgrant award. To request a DUNS number visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The grant recipient must register its DUNS number into the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) as the repository for standard information about applicants and recipients, and the registration must be maintained in the CCR throughout the performance period of the grant award. To register a DUNS number and or maintain a CCR registration visit ww.ccr.gov. OMB requires grant recipients DUNS number registered in CCR be current in order to access (usaspending.gov) the federal prime grant recipient reporting website.

FNS may not make an award to an entity until the entity has complied with the requirements described in 2 CFR 25.200 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active CCR registration with current information.

2 CFR Part 170—Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation

As required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109–282), as amended by section 6202 of Public Law 110–252, hereafter referred to as “the Transparency Act”, requirements for recipients' reporting of information on subawards and executive total compensation.

Prime Grant Recipients awarded a new Federal grant greater than or equal to \$25,000 as of October 1, 2010 are subject to FFATA subaward reporting. The prime recipient is required to file a FFATA subaward report by the end of the month following the month in which the prime recipient awards any subgrant greater than \$25,000. The grants subaward reporting data must be entered into the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.fsr.gov. Specific OMB award terms and conditions will be included in all grant awards.

Copyrights

USDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes:

- (a) The copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and
- (b) Any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.”

Terms and Conditions of Award

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations and the corresponding cost circular that establishes the principles for cost determination found at OMB Code of Federal Regulations Cost Principles: 2 CFR, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 225: State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments, Part 220: Institutions of Higher Education and Hospitals, and Part 230: Non-Profit Organizations.

- a. 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information” **
- b. 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and Central Locator Contractor Registration” **
- c. 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”
- d. 7 CFR Part 3015: “Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations”
- e. 7 CFR Part 3017: “Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- f. 7 CFR Part 3018: “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- g. 7 CFR Part 3019: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organization”.
- h. 7 CFR Part 3021: “Government-wide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- i. 2 CFR Part 175: “Trafficking in Persons: Grants and Cooperative Agreements”
- j. 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Members of Congress”

**** New regulations applicable this year. Please see the following page for additional information.**

Copies of these documents are available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html> or upon request, from:

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CHECKLIST

All proposals submitted under this RFA must contain the applicable elements described in this announcement, and must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov by **midnight on July 18, 2011**. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to sending. **Applicants that don't fully address RFA checklist items will be eliminated.**

- ✓ Application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (R&R)
 - Is all required information accurate and complete?
 - Is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number: 10.586?
 - Has the authorized organizational representative signed Application for Federal Assistance SF-424 (R&R)?
 - Is the CFDA subject WIC grants?
 - If the application is in response to Attachment 1, is the Funding Opportunity Title: **“ESTABLISH UNIVERSITY-BASED GRANTS TO ASSESS WIC IMPACTS ON PERICONCEPTIONAL NUTRITION”**? If the application is in response to Attachment 2, is the Funding Opportunity Title: **“ESTABLISH THE USDA CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ON WIC NUTRITION EDUCATION INNOVATIONS”**? If the application is in response to Attachment 3, is the Funding Opportunity Title: **“THE WIC RESEARCH INFORMATION NETWORK”**?
 - Is the application only in response to 1 of the 3 attachments? **An application that combines responses to multiple attachments will be rejected. Independent applications are required to apply on more than 1 attachment.**
 - Have you included a telephone number, fax number, and/or e-mail address where a message may be left for you?
 - Have you included the total funding amount? If the application is for Attachment 1 or 2 is a minimum of 51 percent of the total grant amount allocated to competitive subgrants for researcher-initiated projects from internal and external researchers?
 - Are budget items complete?
 - Does the budget include travel to FNS?
 - Is the summary budget included?
 - Is the requested funding within the stated limit?
 - Does the budget include funding to plan, convene and participate in a workshop/conference at about the 36 to 48 month of the project, and publish a summary of a workshop/conference?
 - Is the budget duration within the stated limit of 60 months?

- ✓ Proposal and all attachments are in PDF format.

- ✓ The following forms are required of grant applicants:
 - Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile
 - Research and Related Other Project
 - Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
 - Research & Related Budget
 - Research & Related Personal Data
 - Project/Performance Site Location(s)

- HHS Checklist (08-2007) [E.O. 12372, only applicable to participating states]
- Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- AD-1047 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension
- AD-1048 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension (Lower Tier contractual budget line)
- SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

✓ Project Summary Page

- Is the project title listed at the top?
- Has the Project Summary been included?
- Does the summary include research objectives?
- Is the summary no more than 2 pages?
- Do the name and institution of the Principal Investigator and co-investigators appear on the page?
- Does the page include the total amount requested?
- Does the page include the start and end date? Please provide the table timeframes for sub grantees RFA to post, proposal due date, research start dates, workshop/conference exception date (with FNS approval), etc. with grant being awarded August 2011.

✓ Project Description

- If applying for Attachment 1 or 2, does the proposal describe how the grantee will structure the competitive process? NOTE: Grantee will monitor completion of subgrants progress and discuss how this will be done.
 - How will the institution announce the availability and objectives of competitive subgrants to researchers including those at other institutions?
 - Who is eligible to apply?
 - How much time will be allowed between announcement and when applications are due from researchers?
 - How many subgrants are anticipated? What, if any, dollar limits or ranges will be specified for subgrant applications? Please include in the "Subgrantees Timeframe Table."
 - Who will be involved in the selection of subgrantees?
 - How will applicants to the competitive subgrants be asked to address collaboration with State and local WIC agencies?
 - What will be the evaluation factors and criteria used to rate applicants and make award to subgrantees?
- Does the proposal include all the necessary components?
- Does the proposal adhere to the format and page limitations as specified?

✓ Is the budget and staffing narrative included?

✓ Documentation from Collaborator(s), or Host Institution (where appropriate)

✓ Vitae and Publications List(s)

- Are vitae included for the Principal Investigator and key personnel?
- Are the vitae limited to 2 pages each?

- Are listed publications limited to 2 pages in the last 5 years?
- ✓ Indirect Cost Rate Schedule
 - Indicate whether or not a discount on indirect costs is included. The applicant is encouraged to consider dedicating less of budget needs to be slated for indirect costs, to allow a large percentage of the application's budget to support the identified expenditures associated with the proposed budget's direct costs.
- ✓ Current and Pending Support
 - Is the table of current and pending support for each of the key personnel included and complete?
 - Is there a narrative explanation for times when availability for this grant appears insufficient?

ATTACHMENT 1

ESTABLISH UNIVERSITY-BASED GRANTS TO ASSESS WIC IMPACTS ON PERICONCEPTIONAL NUTRITION

BACKGROUND

The concept for this line of research originated from an FNS-sponsored Institute of Medicine (IOM) workshop/conference entitled “*Health Impacts of WIC – Planning a Research Agenda*” conducted in July 20-21, 2010. The purpose for the workshop/conference was to present and discuss issues related to future priority WIC research topics, methodological challenges and potential solutions in relation to maternal and child health outcomes and costs. Some areas of discussion during this meeting were WIC birth outcomes, obesity, breastfeeding, food insecurity, nutrition education and periconceptional care. FNS recognizes the importance of sound nutrition during the periconceptional period and through this grant process is seeking to further investigate *on a social science research level* how to enhance and document WIC's impact on periconceptional nutrition.

Currently, WIC serves half of the infants in the United States and roughly one third of mothers in their prenatal period. Over half of the pregnant women participating in WIC enroll in their first trimester. In addition, because children may continue participating through their 5th birthday and their mothers may experience a subsequent pregnancy during this time, many families with children maintain a connection to WIC during the periconceptional period.

PURPOSE

FNS announces the availability of funds and a RFA to develop and support a university-based grant series for researcher-initiated projects to demonstrate creative approaches to evaluate the impacts of WIC on periconceptional nutrition.

FNS focus for this project is the direct and indirect effects of WIC participation by one or more family members during the periconceptional period and the implications for service delivery. During the periconceptional period—the time period immediately prior to conception and in the first few days and weeks following conception—nutrition can impact placental and embryonic development with critical lifelong implications. This project shall support a university-based grant series for researcher-initiated projects to demonstrate creative approaches to evaluate WIC impacts on periconceptional nutrition, coordinate activities among researchers, and widely disseminate findings from current research.

FNS does not anticipate any expansion of WIC benefits or increased program costs to enhance direct WIC services in the periconceptional period. However, some features of program operations and service delivery vary across the almost 2000 local agencies, and some existing benefit delivery systems may better support periconceptional nutrition as an offshoot of providing direct benefits to infants and children. It is also possible that there will be some ways to enhance the positive effects of WIC's services on mothers' periconceptional nutrition without increasing WIC benefit costs. The creative approaches to service delivery and evaluation addressed by this Cooperative Agreement shall be based on applying social science research methods on a small scale to demonstrate study designs that can document any effects of WIC on

periconceptional nutrition and identify approaches to further improve WIC's impacts at this critical stage of development.

We anticipate the institution awarded the Cooperative Agreement ("recipient") will:

1. Develop and administer a competitive process to solicit, evaluate, and fund nationwide sub-grants for researcher-initiated projects on the impact of WIC nutrition education.
2. Coordinate efforts among the sub-grantees.
3. Assess the findings from the sub-grantees' evaluations of WIC's impact on nutrition.
4. Produce a summary and synthesis of these and related efforts (such as a meta-analysis on the results) and widely disseminate this information.
5. Sponsor and coordinate a workshop/conference on observations and findings. The cooperative agreement application and the proposal shall provide a preliminary list of the types of people that will be invited to participate in the workshop/conference. Sub-grantees shall attend and actively participate in this workshop/conference. The Recipient shall prepare and publish a summary of this workshop/conference within 6 months of the event. Each project description in the workshop/conference summary shall include a description of the types of deliverables that will be submitted and/or published by each subgrantee.
6. Provide FNS for internal use and informational purposes with an electronic copy of all manuscripts resulting from this grant and its subgrants at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.

The recipient and the subgrantees shall provide FNS with recommendations for cost-neutral approaches to improving WIC's impact on periconceptional nutrition and an estimate of the cost-benefit associated with these impacts.

Some examples of the type of subgrantee research projects that USDA is hoping to elicit might be:

1. A non-WIC eligible woman who comes in 4 times a year to the local WIC clinic for her child or children to receive WIC food, nutrition education and referrals. This may present the opportunity to gain knowledge on periconceptional nutrition care without changing the focus on the child. For example, nutrition education on fruits, vegetables and whole grains for the certified child WIC participant may have potential nutritional benefits for the mother's next pregnancy if she also increased consumption of these foods throughout the periconceptional period. This allows not only the WIC participant child to gain improved nutrition, but the mother as well without substantively changing the focus of the child's nutrition session. It is possible that the structure of nutrition education for WIC child participants at some agencies already does a better job of simultaneously promoting improved nutrition for the child's mother. Likewise, it might be possible to test whether nutrition during the periconceptional period varies between women who keep all of their scheduled appointments and those who don't.
2. Current WIC benefits include referral to other programs and social service sites (such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program], Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] and, when needed, food banks/food pantries). The literature on hunger in the U.S. (referred to

as food insecurity) indicates that mothers in food insecure households will reduce their food consumption (quantity and variety) and eventually skip meals or go entire days without food in an effort to protect the children in the household from food limitations. In such situations, a mother may be in her next periconceptional lifestage unknowingly and reduce her own consumption to protect her preschool child from skipping a meal. Therefore, WIC's current contributions to preventing food insecurity from impacting the participating child could be preventing some mothers from reducing their own consumption thereby improving periconceptional nutrition. Different approaches to the referral component of WIC benefits could have dramatically different impacts on household food security and therefore different impacts on periconceptional nutrition.

FNS involvement with the recipient will be to:

1. Approve the final RFA for the subgrantee competition issued by the university “recipient”.
2. Provide comments on the recipient’s plans to announce the competition.
3. Provide comments on a recipient-provided list of all applicants for the competitive subgrants (the recipient-provided list shall include the principal investigator(s), institutional affiliation(s), and summary of the applicants proposed objectives and methods).
4. Review of a recipient-provided list of all awardees of the competition (including subgrant title, dollar amount of the sub-grant, contact information for the principal investigators, brief narrative description, project time frame and expected products).
5. Approve the date, location, and time of the workshop/conference.
6. Review and comment on the workshop/conference agenda.
7. Review and comment on recipient-provided dissemination plans.

The recipient will verify the Excluded Parties List to determine the, <https://www.epls.gov/>, federal debarment and suspension status of applicants before awarding a subgrant.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria - Total Possible = 100%

An application that combines responses to multiple attachments will be rejected. Independent applications are required to apply on more than 1 attachment.

The evaluation criteria and weights are detailed below:

Research Merit – Suggested work has relevance to USDA WIC program and policies and is likely to further advance knowledge *on a social science research level* of how to enhance and document WIC's impact on periconceptional nutrition. **(25%)**

Overall Approach – Quality of proposed plans for conducting a competitive process to: solicit and award researcher-initiated sub-grants; to coordinate activities among researchers; widely disseminate findings; sponsor a conference; and approach to ensuring subgrantees have good working relationships with WIC agencies. **(25%)**

Feasibility – Overall approach is reasonable and appropriate while demonstrating: experience and ability in the areas of periconceptional nutrition and research: coordination of efforts among multiple research organizations; capacity to follow up with progress and financial reports to

ensure the subgrantees are on track; and safeguards that no subgrantee is disbarred or suspended from federal government sponsored work. **(25%)**

Staffing/Budget/Timeline – The budget shall be consistent with objectives and timelines. The amount of funds allocated for staffing and activities shall be reasonable based off the procurement strategy. The competitive subgrantees, collectively, shall receive no less than 51 percent of the total amount awarded to the Recipient. **(25%)**

ATTACHMENT 2

ESTABLISH THE USDA CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ON WIC NUTRITION EDUCATION INNOVATIONS

BACKGROUND

The WIC Program serves low-income nutritionally at-risk pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and children up to their fifth birthday. The purpose of WIC is to provide supplemental foods and nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support, as an adjunct to good health care, during critical times of growth and development, to prevent the occurrence of health problems, including drug abuse, and improve health status.

The WIC Program reaches an average of over 9 million women, infants and children each month, including the caregivers of one-half of all infants and one quarter of all preschoolers in the U.S., as well as one-third of all expectant mothers. Half of WIC participants are children 1 to 4 years of age, and most of these children have participated in WIC since their prenatal period.

WIC provides nutrition education to all participants as part of their benefits. The nutrition focus of the program in general, combined with the substantial investment in providing direct nutrition education is reflected in the fact that almost 90 percent of the public health nutritionists in the U.S. worked within WIC in 2006-2007.¹ In addition to the ongoing developments in WIC nutrition education supported by the annual WIC Nutrition Services and Administration grants to each of the 90 State WIC Agencies, the Food and Nutrition Service has annually awarded special project grant fund which, by law, can only be awarded to the State WIC Agencies. Since 1999, these WIC Special Project Grants have largely focused on sustainable, cost-neutral innovations to revitalize quality nutrition services in the Program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Food and Nutrition Service in establishing a “*USDA Center for Collaborative Research on WIC Nutrition Education Innovations*” is to enhance the effort to identify, develop, evaluate and disseminate innovative and effective WIC nutrition education interventions. This is to be accomplished by providing grant funding for a university-based center with this charge, including a program of sub-grants to support development and evaluation of WIC-focused researcher-initiated innovations from researchers across the nation.

Accordingly, FNS announces the availability of funds and a RFA to develop and support the “*USDA Center for Collaborative Research on WIC Nutrition Education Innovations*” (“Center”), which will include a university-based grant series for researcher-initiated projects to design, implement and evaluate innovative WIC-based nutrition education interventions to improve nutrition behaviors. The Center will also promote innovative and high-quality research on WIC-based nutrition education, coordinate activities among researchers, and widely disseminate findings.

¹ Haughton, B & George, A, 2007: *Survey of the Public Health Nutrition Workforce:2006-07* (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/resources/SurveyofthePublicHealthNutritionWorkforce2006-07.pdf> accessed March 9, 2011)

FNS does not anticipate any expansion of WIC program costs to adopt and implement interventions to improve nutrition behaviors. Within this constraint, examples of issues that may be explored include, but are not limited to:

- Identification of effective models of nutrition education to improve short- and long-term food and nutrition behavior among WIC participants,
- More effective uses of technology and digital media to achieve desired outcomes, and
- Advances in communication and coordination among WIC staff, WIC participants, physicians and child care providers to improve target behaviors.

The Center will direct a program of sub-grants to support researcher-initiated projects that use a common approach to reporting findings to ensure transparency and facilitate a meta-analysis of all projects. The Center will work cooperatively with FNS to select sub-grantees and disseminate findings. FNS reserves the right to expand the scope of the Center from interventions addressing WIC nutrition education advances to similar efforts in other FNS programs.

We anticipate that the university awarded the cooperative agreement for this Center will:

1. Develop and administer a competitive process to solicit, evaluate, and fund nationwide sub-grants for researcher-initiated projects on the impact of WIC nutrition education.
2. Coordinate efforts among the sub-grantees.
3. Assess the findings from the sub-grantees' evaluations of WIC's impact on nutrition.
4. Produce a summary and synthesis of these and related efforts (such as a meta-analysis on the results) and widely disseminate this information.
5. Sponsor and coordinate a workshop/conference on observations and findings. The cooperative agreement application and the proposal shall provide a preliminary list of the types of people that will be invited to participate in the workshop/conference. Sub-grantees shall attend and actively participate in this workshop/conference. The Recipient shall prepare and publish a summary of this workshop/conference within 6 months of the event. Each project description in the workshop/conference summary shall include a description of the types of deliverables that will be submitted and/or published by each subgrantee.
6. Provide FNS for internal use and informational purposes with an electronic copy of all manuscripts resulting from this grant and its subgrants at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.
7. Periodically provide FNS with recommendations for cost-neutral approaches to improving WIC nutrition education efforts, including estimates of the cost-benefit associated with these recommendations.

FNS involvement with the recipient will include:

1. Approving the final RFA for the sub-grantee competition issued by the university "recipient".
2. Providing comments on the recipient's plans to announce the competition.
3. Providing comments on a recipient-provided list of all applicants for the competitive sub-grants (including the principal investigator(s), institutional affiliation(s), and summary of the applicants proposed objectives and methods).

4. Review of a recipient-provided list of all awardees of the competition (including sub-grant title, dollar amount of the sub-grant, contact information for the principal investigators, brief narrative description, project time frame and expected products).
5. Approving the date, location, and time of the workshop/conference.
6. Review and comment on the workshop/conference agenda.
7. Review and comment on recipient-provided dissemination plans.

The recipient will verify the Excluded Parties List to determine the, <https://www.epls.gov/>, federal debarment and suspension status of applicants before awarding a sub-grant.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria - Total Possible = 100%

An application that combines responses to multiple attachments will be rejected. Independent applications are required to apply on more than 1 attachment.

The evaluation criteria and weights are detailed below:

Research Merit – Suggested work has relevance to USDA's WIC program and policies and is likely to advance innovations in WIC nutrition education that improve nutrition behaviors. **(25%)**

Overall Approach – Quality of proposed plans for conducting a competitive process to: solicit and award researcher-initiated sub-grants; to coordinate activities among researchers; widely disseminate findings; sponsor a conference; and ensure sub-grantees have good working relationships with WIC agencies. **(25%)**

Feasibility – Overall approach is reasonable and appropriate while demonstrating: experience and ability in the areas of nutrition behavior and education; coordination of efforts among multiple research organizations; capacity to follow-up with progress and financial reports to ensure the sub-grantees are on track; and safeguards that no sub-grantee is disbarred or suspended from federal government sponsored work. **(25%)**

Staffing/Budget/Timeline – The budget shall be consistent with objectives and timelines. The amount of funds allocated for staffing and activities shall be reasonable based off the procurement strategy. The competitive sub-grantees, collectively, shall receive no less than 51 percent of the total amount awarded to the Recipient. **(25%)**

ATTACHMENT 3

THE WIC RESEARCH INFORMATION NETWORK

BACKGROUND

*WIC Works Resource System*² is an online data and information system which serves as an education and training resource center for staff of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), USDA and State and local WIC Agencies, public health professional and the public at large. This web-based system has been delivering services since 2000. It began as a joint project between the National Agricultural Library/Food and Nutrition Information Center, USDA/Food and Nutrition Service, and the University of Maryland. The WIC Works mission is “to serve as an encompassing resource for WIC nutritionists and other WIC professionals nationwide.” WIC Works has grown to become an informative and thorough online resource for health and nutrition professionals.

PURPOSE

The *WIC Research Information Network* is envisioned as a new module to the WIC Works Resource System that will facilitate rapid advances in WIC research and translation of research into policy and practice through improved networking and access to information. The purpose is also to facilitate use of research information by program managers, policy officials and the public through access to reliable up-to-date summary information on WIC research findings and progress. In addition, the *WIC Research Information Network* will support a web-based social network for researchers to facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration and stimulate innovative competition involving all aspects of WIC studies.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the grant will be create and maintain the *WIC Research Information Network*. This is envisioned as requiring work to:

- i. Create and maintain a website providing a comprehensive easily searchable catalogue and annotated bibliography of WIC studies (published, near publication, ongoing and planned) with links to the publications, websites, presentations, authors and sponsors, providing swift access to detailed information.
- ii. Develop and routinely disseminate through the web a monthly executive summary of new developments in WIC research that is widely used and highly regarded by program managers and other stakeholders.
- iii. Create and maintain an easily searchable data base of topic-specific executive summaries of research findings on WIC for use by program managers, policy officials and the public.

² http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=12&tax_level=1&tax_subject=642

- iv. Create and maintain an easily searchable data base of study design documents and questionnaires used in WIC studies, with links to validation studies, data sets and computer code used in analysis.
- v. Create, maintain and provide access to a monitored, refereed social network that enables all people interested in WIC research to register, provide contact information, and use the network to efficiently facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration and stimulate innovative competition involving all aspects of WIC studies.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria *Total Possible = 100%*

The evaluation criteria and weights are detailed below:

Research Merit – Suggested work is likely to enhance the ability of previous, ongoing and future WIC-related research to improve WIC program management, service delivery and policy development. **(25%)**

Overall Approach – Quality of proposed plans for developing and maintaining a secure and robust web-based *WIC Research Information Network* as envisioned as a module attached to the *WIC Works Resource System*, or an alternative that will better facilitate rapid advances in WIC research and translation of research into policy and practice through improved networking and access to information. **(25%)**

Feasibility – Overall approach is reasonable and appropriate while demonstrating experience and ability in the areas of: web-based development and research; supporting a social network for researchers to facilitate ongoing communications and collaborations. **(25%)**

Staffing/Budget/Timeline – The budget should be consistent with objectives and timelines. The amount of funds allocated for staffing and activities should be reasonable based off the procurement strategy. **(25%)**