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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Office of Policy Support
School Wellness Policy Cooperative Agreement

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.597

DATES:

Letter of Intent Date: [XXX](#)

Application Submission Date: [XXX](#)

Award Date: October 2014

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INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (hereafter USDA FNS) is responsible for providing nutritious meals to children through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), among others, and for monitoring compliance with 2010's Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) as described in more detail in Section II: Background. USDA FNS hereby announces the availability of funds and opportunities to conduct comprehensive school wellness policy surveillance at multiple levels, including state- and school district-levels. The funds will support public or private, non-governmental research institutions (such as accredited institutions of higher education and/or non-profit organizations) to enter into a cooperative agreement with USDA FNS for school wellness policy surveillance, research, and reporting that complement other national existing school wellness policy surveillance systems and assist the USDA in fulfilling its Congressional monitoring and surveillance mandate, as delineated in the HHFKA. The purpose of this announcement, therefore, is to describe the new opportunity and solicit proposals to support these aims.

The USDA FNS is charged with awarding funding for the next cycle of school wellness policy surveillance. In this funding cycle, the USDA anticipates awarding up to \$1,700,000 in grant funding to support either singular (one entity) or modular (collaboration among multiple entities) efforts to monitor and evaluate local school wellness policies (LWPs) of local educational agencies (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program. FNS plans to award a single grant for a maximum amount of \$1,700,000 for three years. Grant funds for public or private, non-governmental institutions will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of federal funds.

The purpose of this Request For Applications (RFA) is to:

- Provide background information and context related to existing public and private school wellness policy surveillance to date,
- Describe the type of grant available,
- Describe which entities are eligible to apply for grant funds,
- Solicit funding applications from eligible entities,
- Describe the requirements for submitting a successful application,
- Describe how applications will be reviewed and selected, and
- Describe the terms and conditions to which grantees must adhere.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 added Section 9A to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1758b), *Local School Wellness Policy Implementation*, in order to strengthen wellness policies of LEAs by placing greater emphasis on implementation and evaluation efforts.

Furthermore, authorizing language in the HHFKA directed the USDA to appropriate \$3 million

for FY 2011 for an implementation study around school wellness policies, to remain available until expended.

BACKGROUND

A. School Wellness Policy to Date

Today, many children are consuming unhealthy foods (i.e., diets high in calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium, and refined sugar) and not enough nutrients. In addition, many of these children are not meeting national guidelines for physical activity. Poor diet and physical inactivity among children can lead to an increased risk for certain chronic health conditions, including high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.¹ During 2007-2008, 20% of U.S. children aged 6-11 years and 18% of persons aged 12-19 years were obese, percentages that have tripled since 1980.² Engaging children and adolescents in healthy eating and regular physical activity can lower their risk for obesity and related chronic diseases.³⁻⁵

Healthy eating and physical activity behaviors among children and adolescents are influenced by a variety of industries and settings, including but not limited to: food and beverage industries, entertainment industries, family-, community-, and government-settings. Each of these sectors has an important role to play in improving the dietary and physical activity behaviors of youth. Schools play a significant role in the lives of children and are where children spend much of their day.⁶⁻⁹ Schools are an important setting for providing children and adolescents with a healthy environment where they can consume nutritious foods, be physically active, and learn about the importance of lifelong healthy behaviors. Research demonstrates that eating patterns established in childhood may carry over into later life. Therefore, monitoring school environments that influence diet, physical activity, and other facets of wellness are essential priorities.¹⁰

Recognizing the important role schools play in ensuring children's wellness, in 2004, Congress passed the Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act (Public Law 108-265, Section 204). This Act required each local educational agency (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or other child nutrition programs, such as the School Breakfast Program (SBP), to establish, for all schools under its jurisdiction, a local school wellness policy (LWP).

Local wellness policies are an important tool for parents, LEAs, and school districts seeking to promote school wellness and provide assurance that school meal nutrition guidelines meet the minimum federal school meal standards, with the intent of ultimately helping in efforts to prevent childhood obesity. While many LEAs included plans for implementation policies as required by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, they were not required to report on policy compliance and implementation; as a result, implementation may be insufficient and evaluation efforts were not conducted regularly.¹¹ Evidence supporting this includes:

- Data from 2006-2007 suggested local school wellness policies in two states lacked strength because they did not include enforcement mechanisms, and many did not provide specific guidelines for issues addressed by the federal mandate;¹²
- A 2006 analysis of 140 school districts nationwide found that 87-99% had a written wellness policy that addressed all of the federal requirements, but there was considerable variation in the strength of the policies;¹³
- A study published in 2007 included an analysis of 256 school districts from across the country found only 2 percent addressed how funding will be made available for implementation and evaluation of the local school wellness policy;¹⁴ and
- A national study of 256 school districts conducted in 2006-2007 found that 68 percent of districts incorporated regular policy monitoring and evaluation as part of their local school wellness policy. However, only 32 percent had a process for revising policies based on evidence of these appraisals and/or policy effectiveness and identified a specific person responsible for making policy revisions/improvements.¹⁵

The passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296) introduced new provisions for LWPs, placing greater emphasis on implementation, evaluation, and public reporting on progress of LWPs. These provisions support a robust review and reporting process at the community level, including the expansion of the team of collaborators participating in the wellness policy development to include more members from the community. This approach aims to foster broad-based, community engagement in the development and implementation of effective wellness policies.

The Act retains the requirement that each LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) establish, for all schools under its jurisdiction, a local school wellness policy. The Act incorporates new requirements both for the content of the policies and for the development, implementation, dissemination, and assessment of the policies. These requirements encompass:

- Goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other activities that support student wellness;
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available during the school day (i.e., “competitive foods”);
- Requirements to allow stakeholder involvement in policy development, implementation, and reporting and to update the community on policy content and implementation efforts; and
- A provision to designate officials responsible for ensuring compliance.

Overall, there has been significant progress in implementing, strengthening and/or expanding the comprehensiveness of all four of the required wellness policy elements, with the extent of the

progress varying greatly by element. However, there continues to be variance in levels of compliance across these mandatory policy provisions, mainly because many districts have not yet adopted competitive food and beverage guidelines. For example, as of the beginning of school year 2010–2011, most students were in a district with a policy that included goals for nutrition education (95%), guidelines for school meals (91%), and physical activity goals (90%). However, five years after the federal mandate, only 83% of students were in a district with a policy that included implementation and evaluation plans, and only 61% were in a district with competitive food and beverage guidelines.¹⁶

These and other remaining gaps in compliance demonstrate the continued need for school wellness policy surveillance systems, at least at the state- and district-levels, to monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of congressionally-mandated school wellness policies and related state laws in all 50 states.

B. Existing Government-Funded National School Wellness Policy-Related Surveillance Systems and Surveys

Three major federal-level surveillance systems and surveys are currently in place and are scheduled to continue for at least the next 2-3 years, if not indefinitely. Each of these surveillance systems and surveys is funded by a government agency, and each collects detailed data on the breadth and depth of existing state laws, district policies, and related school practices; the implementation of said laws, policies, and practices; and their effects on student health outcomes. The next section describes the strengths, primary areas of focus, periodicity, and other key characteristics for each of three major national surveillance systems and surveys. In so doing, it also highlights important gaps in what they cover, individually and collectively, and areas where linkage with other relevant surveys or research efforts would provide a more detailed picture of school wellness policies and their effects.

1. School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study/School Nutrition Dietary Assessment

The School Nutrition Dietary Assessment (SNDA) is administrated by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) every 5 years and collects and analyzes nationally representative data on school meals and the school meal environment (including competitive foods) at the district- and school-levels, with individual-level dietary information collected every 10 years.¹⁴ SNDA-V will be administered as the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study (SNMCS) in SY 2014-2015 and will include SNDA-type, meal assessment data as well as data on meal cost, dietary recall, plate waste, and meals' compliance with standards.¹⁷⁻¹⁸

SNDA/SNMCS is the only assessment that examines specifically the nutritional quality of school meals, how and if those meals are meeting the new standards, and meal cost. Examining SNDA/SNMCS data together with state law and district policy data, which SNDA does not currently collect, has the potential to demonstrate how the laws and policies at the state- and district-level are being implemented in, or affecting, lunchrooms (with regard to meal planning and meal environment) and students (with regard to meal cost and diet).

2. Classification of Laws Associated with School Students

The National Cancer Institute's Classification of Laws Associated with School Students

(C.L.A.S.S.) is a policy classification system that can be used to evaluate state-level codified laws for nutrition and physical education in schools across all 50 states and the District of Columbia by grade level. C.L.A.S.S. uses state law as the data source and scores the concordance between state laws and national school wellness policy mandates. Currently, C.L.A.S.S. measures are collected annually, with the next cycle beginning in 2014. C.L.A.S.S. data are publicly available for use by researchers, policy makers, and school administrators to obtain information on state laws associated with childhood obesity, track policy changes over time, test relationships between law and behavior, associate C.L.A.S.S. scores with state- and school district-policies, and link to information about obesity and other cancer-related behaviors. C.L.A.S.S. also offers two data visualization tools: (1) a *map* function that depicts the strength of specific policy areas by grade level across states, and (2) a *profile* function that depicts policy scores across grade levels within each state by year.¹⁹⁻²⁰

While C.L.A.S.S. is the only classification system that objectively scores state laws on nutritional and physical activity, it does not identify *specific* elements of the state laws. Therefore, additional, complementary research is required to parse out and examine relationships between *individual policy components* (e.g., addressing sugar or fat content in school foods) and related *school practices and student outcomes* (e.g., *diet, physical activity, BMI*).

3. School Health Policies and Practices Study

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Policies and Practices Study (SHPPS) is a national, comprehensive survey conducted to assess school wellness at the state-, district-, school-, and classroom-levels. SHPPS surveys cover health education, physical education, health services, mental health and social services, nutrition services, healthy and safe school environments, and faculty and staff health promotion. Due to the comprehensive design of SHPPS, wellness policy data may be linked with other school health data. SHPPS data are collected every two years, alternating school- and classroom-level data collection with district-level data collection. In its next cycle (2014), SHPPS will collect school- and classroom-level data, and in the following cycle (2016) it will collect district-level data. Beginning in 2016, SHPPS will no longer collect state-level data.²¹

SHPPS is unique in monitoring both school health policies and school wellness policies, which is essential for linking LWPs to student health outcomes such as services received, safety, and environments. The multi-level aspect of SHPPS assessments presents the opportunity for linking this data with state law data in order to show the effects of state laws on LWPs, and the effects of LWPs on overall health. However, SHPPS data are not collected annually.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The aforementioned federally funded, national-level assessments and studies, individually and collectively, provide extremely valuable data on school wellness policies and their implementation. However, there remains a gap in the surveillance and a need to monitor, collect, and analyze state law and local district policy data and their effects on the implementation of HHFKA legislation and rules and student health outcomes. Overall, what is needed is an objective, in-depth, national examination of LWPs and any associated state laws and/or district policies which can reliably examine the influence and/or impact of those state laws and/or district policies on school practices and student outcomes. In order to draw conclusions about national-, state-, and school district-level school wellness policies and compliance with federal mandates, this examination should be conducted on a large, representative sample of schools.

A study of this nature has the potential to link with (and thus reap the fullest potential from) the existing systems and surveys in ways that are complementary rather than duplicative. By building on existing surveillance systems, the proposed complementary research at the state- and district-levels would provide a much clearer picture of areas of progress and need with respect to school wellness policies at multiple levels (e.g., national, regional, state, community, and school district) and valuable guidance for implementing the HHFKA—which aims to aid in the prevention of childhood obesity by setting new nutritional standards for schools.

However, short of a national system, USDA will also consider applications for smaller examinations that focus at the State or District level.

Great progress has been made in adopting school wellness policies and in developing surveillance systems to monitor their implementation and impact. Yet continued progress in school wellness, school wellness policy development, and positive impacts will require surveillance that provides a fuller understanding of the strengths and limitations of current policies, and that chart the course for evidence-based improvements. This competitive cooperative agreement solicits applications for a national-level surveillance system that will address the most important gaps in the coverage of the existing government-funded national school wellness policy surveillance systems. Applicants seeking funding under this School Wellness Policy Cooperative Agreement should consider, at a minimum, the following specific capabilities when developing their proposals:

- The capability to link enacted school district wellness policy and related state law data with data being collected through other existing surveillance systems (e.g., SNDA, CLASS, SHPPS) in 2014-2015 (i.e., data collection occurring at various levels as outlined above);
- The capability to conduct a nationwide evaluation of the scope of “on-the-books” (enacted) school district wellness policies and related state laws;
- The ability to collect and analyze qualitative data that can explore the implementation of and compliance with HHFKA policies across various stakeholders (e.g., administrators, school food authorities, parents, children, etc.);

- The capacity to develop and disseminate timely policy briefs, fact sheets, and other translation products (e.g., infographics) to inform the USDA, Congress, and the research field of key school wellness policy surveillance results and gaps as well as to produce papers for peer-reviewed publication; and

The focus of single or multiple-entity agency funding for the winning proposal(s) should be *minimally* to compile “on-the-books” wellness policy data for a nationally representative sample of public school districts and concomitant state laws using an innovative approach that encompasses the above-listed potential areas of focus and other policy opportunities. The Grantees (Recipients) shall work cooperatively with FNS on the study design and evaluation.

Reporting Requirements

Once awarded the recipient will provide quarterly progress reports to the identified FNS contact.

The project description shall address what types of final 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 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 at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.

The project description shall address how the findings will be disseminated to School Wellness stakeholders and the academic community. Grant funding may be used to cover travel expenses and other expenses associated with this presentation. A final presentation shall be held at FNS headquarters or another location agreeable to FNS.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible Entities include public and private non-governmental entities:

- Accredited Institutions of Higher Education
- Nonprofit Organizations other than Institutions of Higher Education

APPLICATION FORMAT

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following applicant format. The proposed project plan should be typed on 8 ½” X 11” white paper with at least 1 inch margins on the top, sides, and bottom. All pages should be single-spaced, in 12 point font. The project description with relevant information should be captured on no more than 50 pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter of commitment(s), endorsement letter(s), budget narrative(s), appendices, and required forms. All

pages must be numbered. Application package should be submitted in Microsoft Word and PDF forms.

Special Instructions:

- Late application submission will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, certification will not be considered.
- Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov portal will not be considered.
- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available through future appropriations.
- Grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds.
- Cost sharing or matching for this RFA is not required but encouraged.

Cover Sheet

The cover page should include, at a minimum:

- Applicant's name and mailing address
- Primary contact's name, job title, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address
- Grant program title and subprogram title (if applicable)

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Include relevant topic page number

Application Project Summary

The application should clearly describe the proposed project activities and anticipated outcomes that would result if the proposal is funded.

Project Narrative

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

- **School Wellness Policy Surveillance System Background Information:** Briefly describe the state of your school wellness policy surveillance system efforts to date. What school wellness policy surveillance system projects, if any, have you executed to date? On what level(s) have your projects occurred (i.e., state, district, school, classroom, individual)? Please note any successes, lessons learned, or challenges.
- **Need & Readiness:** Describe any resources, infrastructure, or systems/processes already in place that will help your organization implement (or adapt and continue) a successful school wellness policy surveillance system at a national level. Clearly indicate why the organization is ready for or interested in school wellness policy surveillance and why now is the correct time to pursue a project. Do you foresee any challenges in school wellness policy surveillance, and if so, how you envision your proposed project aiding in overcoming them?

- Objectives, Activities and Timeline: Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines. All objectives should lead to the end goal of having a comprehensive school wellness policy surveillance system in place by the end of the grant period. Your project timeline should start no earlier than October 1, 2014.
- Evaluation: Evaluating the progress of your school wellness policy surveillance system, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, and assessing your system's overall impact, will be critical. Please discuss the tracking mechanisms you currently have in place that could be employed to support your school wellness policy surveillance system efforts (i.e., data linkages between school district wellness policies, related state laws, and existing school wellness policy surveillance systems. Additionally, discuss any previous experience performing multi-faceted evaluations and analyses.
- Project Management & Quality Assurance: Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar activities.
- Staffing: Identify the staff and/or contractors who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.
- Sustainability: Upon successful completion and submission of a School Wellness Policy Surveillance System and implementation plan, grant awards may be extended for future periods. However, there are no guarantees that awardees will receive subsequent grants. How will you ensure your school wellness policy surveillance system is sustainable and can be executed regardless of whether or not you receive additional federal funding?

Application Budget Narrative

The budget narrative should correspond with the proposed project narrative and application budget. The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget's direct cost. If the budget includes indirect costs, the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Federal indirect cost rate agreement.

Required Grant Application Forms

All applicants must complete the following forms:

The following required OMB forms can be obtained at:

<https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormsMenu?source=agency>

Research and Related Forms: R&R Family

1. Standard Form 424 (SF-424) – Application for Federal Assistance
2. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
3. Standard Form 424B (SF-424B) – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs

4. SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities): Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “Not Applicable.”

The following optional OMB form can be obtained at:

<https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormsMenu?source=agency>

Optional: R&R FedNonFed Budget; [R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment(s)Form, if applicable]

APPLICATION ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

FNS Application Instructions

LETTER OF INTENT

The eligible applicant that intends to submit an application should submit a Letter of Intent notice by **(insert the due date)**. This notice does not obligate the applicant to submit an application but provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The notice should include the potential applicant’s name and address, organization’s name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the primary point of contact. The applicant can send the letter via the mail or e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

[Gregory Walton, Branch Chief](#)
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail greg.walton@fns.usda.gov

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application must be uploaded on www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time **(insert the due date)**. Applications received after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. FNS will not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. FNS will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications.

Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grants officer listing above for further instructions.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

In order to submit your application via www.grants.gov, you must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered in both the new Systems for Award Management (SAM) and on Grants.gov. The applicant is strongly advised to allow ample time to initiate its grants.gov application submission. All applicants must have current Central Contractor Registry (CCR) status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25. Please visit the following

websites to obtain additional information on how to obtain a DUNS number (www.dnb.com) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

What is SAM?

The System for Award Management (SAM) is combining Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. This consolidation is being done in phases. The first phase of SAM incorporated the functionality from several systems, including the CCR.

For additional information regarding SAM see the following link:

https://www.acquisition.gov/SAM_Guides/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.pdf

Below is some additional information that should assist the applicant through this process:

DUNS Number: In order to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization does not have one, or if you are unsure of your organization's number you can contact Dun and Bradstreet via the internet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm EST. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number. Obtaining a DUNS number may take several days.

SAM Registration: For applicant organizations that were previously registered in the CCR, relevant applicant information is already in SAM; set up a SAM account as necessary to update any information. To register in SAM, the applicant's DUNS number, Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the applicant's last tax return) are all required. SAM verifies all information submitted by the applicant using several systems. This verification takes at least **48 hours** after your registration is submitted to SAM. Applicants must have a valid SAM registration no later than 3 days prior to the application due date of this solicitation. **Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete and active should contact SAM at: <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>.**

Grants.gov Registration: In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations as well as register on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process can be accessed at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. Generally, the registration process takes between **3-5 business days**.

SAM Presentation/Training

GSA has created a presentation of a SAM training. To view the presentation, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmHcKCchaiY>

This will be extremely useful for SAM users that are:

- Registering at SAM for the first time
- Setting up user permissions from CCR into the SAM registration (called migrating)
- Updating / renewing CCR record in SAM

PLEASE BE AWARE:

The grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; you need to be sure that you receive confirmation that the application was accepted.

Also, in some instances the process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require **5-7 days or more**. We strongly encourage grantees to begin the process at least **3 weeks before** grant the due date of the grant solicitation.

NOTICE: Special Characters not Supported

All applicants **MUST** follow grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided in the grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application package?

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &, -, *, %, /, #, -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached_File.pdf) in naming the attachments. **Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected. FNS will not accept any application rejected from www.grants.gov portal due to incorrect naming conventions.**

EVALUATION OF GRANT APPLICATION CRITERIA

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure that they contain the required documents and information. Application will need to be submitted by eligible applicants, meet all other eligibility requirements stated in this RFA, submitted on or before the required deadlines, are completed and are in the required format. If an application does not include all appropriate information, FNS will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

Following the initial screening process, FNS will assemble a peer panel group to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The peer panel will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components. The peer panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring. The selecting official reserves the right to award a grant to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, or project diversity. FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in future fiscal years should additional funds be made available through future appropriations.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications for this RFA.

Scoring for Grant Applications

| | |
|---|------------------|
| <p>Need, Readiness and Likelihood of Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant is appropriate for the grant, i.e. the applicant can demonstrate support and readiness for starting (or adapting and continuing) a school wellness policy surveillance system. | <p>25 points</p> |
| <p>Alignment with School Wellness Policy Surveillance System Program Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project goals and objectives are in line with the School Wellness Policy Surveillance System Cooperative Agreement focus areas and purpose of the funding described in this RFA. | <p>25 points</p> |
| <p>Project Design and Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project and reporting requirements. (Resumes of key staff are required). The management approach indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project. | <p>30 points</p> |
| <p>Sustainability and Transferability</p> | <p>10 points</p> |
| <p>Budget Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project. Project costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project’s goals and objectives. | <p>10 points</p> |

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICES AND REQUIREMENTS

CONFIDENTIALITY OF AN APPLICATION

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of FNS transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of private, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as private, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be not released to the public. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The agency requires all panel reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process. Names of applicants, including States and tribal governments, submitting an application will be kept private, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain private throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

AWARD NOTICE

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions; any contact from a FNS grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless approved and stated on FNS' signed award document.

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Only the recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425, Financial Status Report data into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. More detailed instructions for reporting will be included in the FNS Federal financial assistance award package.

PROGRESS REPORTING

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. The award document will indicate the reporting schedule for

submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Debarment and Suspension 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, “Debarment and Suspension,” is codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) found at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

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. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number. To request a DUNS number visit: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

The grant recipient must also register its DUNS number in the new Systems for Award Management (SAM). If you were registered in the CCR, your company’s information is already in SAM and you will just need to set up a SAM account. To register in SAM you will need your entity’s DUNS and your entity’s Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (as it appears on your last tax return). Registration should take **3-5 days**. If you do not receive confirmation that your SAM registration is complete, please contact SAM at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list..>

FNS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with the requirements described in 2 CFR 25 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active CCR registration with current information.

Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information 2 CFR Part 170

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Public Law 109–282), as amended by Section 6202 of Public Law 110–252 requires primary grantees of Federal grants and cooperative agreements to report information on sub-grantee obligations and executive compensation. FFATA promotes open government by enhancing the Federal Government’s accountability for its stewardship of public resources. This is accomplished by making Government information, particularly information on Federal spending, accessible to the general public.

Primary grantees, including State agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates \$25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first- tier sub-grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting

System (FSRS). In order to access FSRS a current CCR registration is required. A primary grantee and first-tier sub-grantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives. Every primary and first-tier grantee must obtain a DUNS number prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417

Section 872 of this Act requires the development and maintenance of a Federal Government information system that contains specific information on the integrity and performance of covered Federal agency contractors and grantees. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) was developed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from the CCR database, and suspension and debarment information from the EPLS. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations and the corresponding OMB Circulars that establish the principles for cost determination found at 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II: Part 220, Education Institutions (OMB Circular A-21); Part 225, State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87); and Part 230, Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122). Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and Central Locator Contractor Registration”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR Part 417: “Office of the Chief Financial Officer: Department of Agriculture Implementation of OMB Guidance on Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”

USDA Regulations

- 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”
- 7 CFR Part 3015: “Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations”
- 7 CFR Part 3016: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 7 CFR Part 3018: “New Restrictions on Lobbying”

- 7 CFR Part 3019: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations”
- 7 CFR Part 3021: “Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 7 CFR Part 3052: “Audits of State, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations”

RFA APPLICATION CHECKLIST

All proposals submitted under this RFA must contain the applicable elements as described in this announcement. The application must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov, by midnight on [add the deadline date]. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to submission.

- ✓ Read the RFA carefully, usually more than once.
- ✓ Have you obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered the number in the System for Award Management (SAM)?
- ✓ Have you verified that your Central Contractor Registration is active?
- ✓ Have you registered your entity in grants.gov and are you authorized as a user in grants.gov to submit on behalf of your agency?
- ✓ Have you prepared and submitted the appropriate forms as shown under the Required Grant Applicant Forms section of this RFA?
- ✓ Have you included the RFA CFDA # [enter the number] on your application?
- ✓ Have you included your contact information: telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address?
- ✓ Have you addressed, met, and considered any program specific requirements or restrictions?
- ✓ Is the project's proposal clearly stated?
 - Does it comply with any format requirements?
 - Does it comply with the page limitation?
 - Most importantly does it directly relate to the RFA's objectives and priorities?
 - Don't assume that reviewers know anything about your organization and its work.
- ✓ Have one or more persons read your proposal who did not participate in its writing and ensure that it was clear to them?
- ✓ Does the proposed project and budget meet the bona fide needs of the RFA?
- ✓ Is the budget summary included?
 - Does it agree with the calculations shown on the OMB budget form?
 - Is the budget in line with the project description?
- ✓ Be sure to submit a timely application into www.Grants.gov in order to meet the RFA application deadline.
- ✓ FNS reserves the right to request additional information not clearly addressed in the initial application.

RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST

This checklist will assist you in completing the budget narrative portion of the application. Please review the checklist to ensure the items below are addressed in the budget narrative.

NOTE: The budget and budget narrative must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fine need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed.

| | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| Personnel | | |
| Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading? | | |
| Are employees of the applicant’s organization identified by name and position title? | | |
| Did you reflect percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)? | | |
| | | |
| Fringe Benefits | | |
| Did you include your organization’s fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation? | | |
| Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds? | | |
| | | |
| Travel | | |
| Are travel expenses itemized? For example origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip. | | |
| Are the Attendee Objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative? | | |
| Is the basis for the lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example include excerpt from travel regulations. | | |
| | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Equipment | | |
| Is the need for the equipment justified in the narrative? | | |
| Are the types of equipment, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased listed in the budget? | | |
| Is the basis for the cost per item or other basis of computation stated in the budget? | | |
| | | |
| Supplies | | |
| Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget? | | |
| Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated? | | |
| | | |
| Contractual: (FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and associated costs after the contract is awarded.) | | |
| Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget? | | |
| A justification for all Sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost. | | |
| | | |
| Other | | |
| Consultant Services. – Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget. The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant’s name and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), Number of estimated hours X hourly wages, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project. | | |
| For all other line items listed under the “Other” heading. - List all items to be covered under this heading along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program. | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| Indirect Costs | | |
| Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from an Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most resent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application. | | |
| If no negotiated agreement exists, the basis and the details of the indirect costs to be requested should also be reflected in the budget. | | |

FOR GRANT APPLICANT USE ONLY. DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM WITH THE APPLICATION

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ATTACHMENT I: Letter of Intent to Apply

Federal agencies or research entities intending to submit an application for a cooperative agreement for school wellness policy surveillance systems are requested to submit a Letter of Intent (LoI). This can be fulfilled by completing the form below and sending it to FNS by . This LoI does not obligate the entity in any way, but will provide useful information to FNS to prepare for staffing of the review and selection process. In turn, FNS will invite all entities to participate in a basic informational conference call to review obligations and expectations of the grant as an aid in developing applications.

The LoI may be mailed or e-mailed. FNS thanks entities in advance for their cooperation with this request. The Letter of Intent should be submitted to:

Karen Castellanos-Brown, Ph.D.

Social Science Research Analyst, Special Nutrition Evaluation Branch, Office of Policy Support
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
3101 Park Center Dr.
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703)305-2732
karen.castellanos-brown@fns.usda.gov

School Wellness Policy Cooperative Agreement Letter of Intent to Submit an Application

Name of Organization:

Organization Address:

Principal Investigator:

Title:

Telephone:

Email:

Co-Investigator:

Title:

Telephone:

Email:

Co-Investigator:

Title:

Telephone:

Email: