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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

USDA Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center

Cooperative Agreement

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.549

DATES:

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(Optional)

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CN – Child Nutrition

FNS – Food and Nutrition Service

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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). The legislative authority for this grant announcement is Section 6 [42 U.S.C. 1755] (a)(3) of the National School Lunch Act.

This RFA announces the availability of funds for one new cooperative agreement for FY 2015-2019 with a public or private Academic or Research Institution. In this funding cycle, the USDA anticipates awarding up to \$2,500,000 in grant funding to support singular or modular (collaboration among multiple entities) efforts to improve nutrition program coordination in States with the highest number of persistently poor rural counties.

USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs

Through its 15 nutrition assistance programs, USDA FNS collaborates with State and local governments and Indian Tribal Organizations to improve food security and diet quality among children and low-income people throughout the nation. These programs either target children explicitly or include them among their beneficiaries. USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs improve children's food security by providing low-income households with access to a healthful diet and nutrition education. The largest programs include:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the U.S. and provides low-income individuals and families with additional resources to purchase food each month. In fiscal year (FY) 2013, SNAP served an average of 47.6 million low-income people each month at total costs of over \$76 billion in benefits. In FY 2012, 45 percent of all SNAP households contained children and 17 percent contained elderly individuals.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

The NSLP provides funds to States for lunches served to students at school and for snacks served to children participating in after school care programs. Children with families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines qualify for free meals and up to 185 percent qualify for reduced price meals. In FY 2013, average daily participation was 30.6 million in about 100,000 schools and residential child-care facilities. Approximately 70 percent of all lunches served were provided to children free or at reduced price.¹

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

SBP provides funds to States to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions across the U.S. In FY 2013, the SBP served over 13.1 million school children each day, in about 90,000 schools and residential child-care facilities. In School Year 2012-2013, SBP reached 27.3% of school children, with over 80% of participating schools serving low-income areas; almost 85% of meals served free or at reduced price. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines are eligible for

¹ NSLP National Level Annual Summary Tables: 2013. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slsummar.htm>

free meals; those from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of poverty are eligible for reduced-price meals.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The WIC program provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, breastfeeding support, health care referrals, and nutrition education. The target population for WIC benefits is low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and infants and children up to age five who are determined to be at nutritional risk. Low-income is defined in terms of a household income at or below 185 percent of poverty. States and Indian Tribal Organizations receive Federal grants which in turn are used to cover the cost of foods purchased with WIC benefits, along with specified nutrition services and administrative costs. In FY 2013, WIC served an average of 8.7 million participants each month.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

CACFP provides aid to approximately 180,000 child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons. In FY 2013, CACFP served more than 3.3 million children and 120,00 adults through child care institutions, family day care homes, adult day care centers, and after-school care programs.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The SFSP provides meals and snacks to children in low-income areas when school is not in session. Free meals, that meet Federal nutrition guidelines, are provided to all children 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. SFSP served over 2.4 million children during an average day in July 2013.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

The FDPIR is a Federal program that provides USDA foods to low-income households, including the elderly, living on Indian reservations, and to Native American families residing in designated areas near reservations and in the State of Oklahoma. In FY 2013, FDPIR served an average of about 75,600 low-income Native Americans each month. Five States and 100 ITOs operated FDPIR on 276 Indian reservations.

Exhibit 1

Of the programs listed above, the following are FNS Child Nutrition Programs:

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Purpose

The purposes of this Request For Applications (RFA) are to:

- Provide background information and context related to this RFA,
- Describe the type of cooperative agreement 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.

This RFA intends to select one institution/organization (i.e. Accredited University or Research Center) to establish the *USDA Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center*. The role of this Center will be to develop and administer a series of sub-grants pertinent to the purposes of this grant, coordinate relevant grant-related activities among sub-grantees and researchers, conduct an evaluation of sub-grantees' programs, and widely disseminate information on communities' implementation strategies and evaluation findings.

The goal of the Center will be to reduce child food insecurity by improving Child Nutrition Assistance program coordination with other nutrition assistance programs or services in persistently poor rural counties.

Funding

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of federal funds.

Approximately \$2.5 million is available for funding this new Cooperative Agreement. Multiple applications per institution will be accepted, however only one award will be made to one applicant.

The grantee will be responsible for awarding at least 51% of their awarded amount as sub-grants to persistently poor counties for the purposes of reducing child food insecurity by increasing cross-program coordination among Child Nutrition and other food assistance programs.

BACKGROUND

The USDA-FNS programs work together to help low-income families meet their nutrition needs. Counties with persistently high levels of child poverty are likely to experience significant food insecurity among children. While this grant announcement is focused on Child Nutrition programs (see Exhibit 1), it is not limited to the coordination among these Child Nutrition program services. In order to minimize food insecurity among rural children, it is important to improve collaboration with private/public partnerships to both research and implement best practices. The results of projects funded through this grant announcement will be shared broadly with policy makers, service providers, other partners, and the public to promote wide use of successful program collaboration strategies.

Persistently Poor Counties

ERS defines counties with 20 percent or more of their populations living in poverty over the last 30 years (measured by the 1980, 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses and 2007-11 American Community Survey 5-year estimates) as persistently poor.² Based on this definition, there are currently 353 persistently poor counties in the United States (comprising 11.2 percent of all U.S. counties). The large majority (85.3 percent) of the persistently poor counties are non-metro counties and the majority of persistently poor counties are concentrated in the South.² A list of the persistently poor counties in the 15 States with the highest number of persistently poor counties is provided in Appendix A.

Rural American Children and Communities and Poverty

The demographics of rural children and their families closely parallel the profile of households in poverty across the country. As with poor households in general, rural households are likely to be headed by a single, non-white female with less than a high school education.³ On the other hand, rural children are more likely to be cared for in relatives' homes than in the centers and family child care homes where the Child and Adult Care Food Program is available, potentially contributing to the lower participation rates in this program.⁴

² ERS. *Geography of Poverty*. Retrieved 6/17/14 from <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/geography-of-poverty.aspx#.U6B1jLH12O4>

³ Wauchop, B., and Shattuck, A. (2010). *Federal Child Nutrition Programs are important to rural households*. Issue Brief No. 11. University of New Hampshire: Carsey Institute. Retrieved from http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB_Wauchop_Nutrition.pdf

⁴ Swenson, K. (2008). *Child Care arrangements in rural and urban areas*. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at

Trends show that both the overall rural poverty rate and the rural child poverty rate have been higher than their urban poverty rate counterparts over the past thirty plus years.⁵ In 2012, the child poverty rate increased to record levels (26.7% in non-metro areas vs. 20.9% in metro areas). Moreover, in 2012, non-metro deep poverty rates were higher than metro poverty rates (12.2% vs. 9.2%).⁵ Tai-Seale and Chandler conducted a review of several studies that found worse outcomes in terms of nutrition, activity, and obesity for children living in rural areas compared to children living in non-rural areas.⁶

According to the Economic Research Service (ERS), households living outside metro areas have slightly higher food insecurity levels than those living in metro areas.⁷ Thirty-one percent of rural grade-school students receive reduced-price or free lunches, as compared to 25 percent of urban grade-schoolers.⁸ Wauchope and Shattuck (2010) analyzed U.S. Census Bureau, December 2007 Current Population Survey data to find that out of 2.8 million income-eligible rural households with children, about 43 percent do not participate in any of the four major Child Nutrition programs. They also found that nonparticipation rates in program eligible rural households range from approximately 1.5 million for the National School Lunch Program (55 percent) to 2.6 million (92 percent) for the CACFP.

More information on rural America can be found on the ERS website at www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population. The 2003 and 2013 definitions of metro and nonmetro areas as well as related concepts such as urbanized areas and central counties can be found at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/what-is-rural.aspx>.

Barriers to Program Participation Faced by Children in Rural Communities

Children who grow up in rural poverty face obstacles that may contribute to lack of cross-program participation in Child Nutrition programs. Various structural conditions, such as geographic isolation, fewer services, fewer jobs, and fewer opportunities are commonly thought to make it difficult for individuals in rural communities to break out of the poverty cycle. The role of environmental factors within rural communities is another important potential contributing factor to consider when examining methods of increasing program participation.

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/cc-urban-rural>

⁵ Farrigan, T. (2014). *Rural Poverty & Well-being*. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/poverty-overview.aspx#.U6Hvw7H12O4>

⁶ Tai-Seale, T., & Chandler, C. (2003). *Nutrition and Overweight Concerns in Rural Areas: A Literature Review*. Rural Healthy People 2010: A companion document to Healthy People 2010. Volume 2." College Station, TX: The Texas A & M University System Health Science Center, School of Rural Public Health, Southwest Rural Health Research Center. Retrieved from <http://srph.tamhsc.edu/centers/rhp2010/09Volume1nutrition%20.htm>

⁷ Coleman-Jensen, A., Nord, M., and Singh, A. (2013). *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012*. Economic Research Report No. (ERR-155). Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err155.aspx#.U4y0sChvB6A>

⁸ Smith, K. & Savage, S. (2007). *Fact Sheet on Food Stamp and School Lunch Programs Alleviate Food Insecurity in Rural America*. University of New Hampshire: Carsey Institute. Retrieved from http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/FS_foodinsecurity.pdf

To begin, program accessibility in rural areas is particularly critical. Both distance and lack of transportation are primary barriers to accessing resources for rural families. While children may have access to school meals if they go to school instead of being home schooled, other resources for parents with young children that require travel, such as receiving WIC, present challenges. Findings from a survey completed by 2,210 rural residents indicated a significant relationship between the distance from recreational facilities and obesity.⁹ Traveling to WIC agencies, more affordable stores, food pantries, and soup kitchens is constrained by limited transportation options. Research indicates that poor rural households are three times more likely than non-poor rural households to be without a vehicle.¹⁰

Both the quantity and quality of food available to rural families can also be limited by living in low-income communities with limited access to grocery stores or healthy, affordable food retail outlets, also known as food deserts¹¹ Also, as Wauchope and Shattuck (2010) note, among rural families experiencing poverty for the first time, lack of program awareness and stigma associated with program participation may make expanding Child Nutrition program participation rates particularly challenging.³ For these reasons, innovative outreach strategies that utilize community involvement frameworks to build awareness of Child Nutrition programs are particularly important.

PURPOSE OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Grantee (Recipient) shall work cooperatively with FNS to:

- 1) Manage a sub-grants process to support rural communities with persistent poverty.** The Grantee will monitor completion of the sub-grantees' progress. The purpose of the sub-grants is to provide resources to enable communities to increase the coordination of the federal and local, public and private nutrition assistance programs. The goal is to target awards in up to 30 of the communities identified in Appendix A as resources allow. Grantees shall plan to keep States and local agencies informed of implementation and evaluation-related activities.
 - a. The grantee will develop a Request for Proposals (RFP).** The RFP will describe the opportunity, explain eligibility for the sub-awards, and establish evaluation criteria for award. At a minimum, each sub-grantee must use the funds to 1) conduct a needs assessment within their community, 2) develop an implementation strategy based on the needs assessment, 3) implement the strategy, and 4) share the results at a conference at FNS.
 - One of the criteria for the sub-grant awards must be that the community's proposed strategy uses a community-involvement model.

⁹ Tegan, K., Boehmer, S. L., Lovegreen, Haire-Joshu, D., and R. C. Brownson. (2006). What Constitutes an Obesogenic Environment in Rural Communities? *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 20, 6, 411-421.

¹⁰ Brown, D., & Stommes, E. (2004). *Rural Governments Face Public Transportation Challenges and Opportunities*. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <http://econpapers.repec.org/article/agsuersaw/131802.htm>

¹¹ *How are food deserts identified?* Available at <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/foodDeserts.aspx>

- State and regional diversity should be considered when selecting sub-grantees.
 - Eligible sub-grant applicants are government or non-profit organizations at the State or local (city or county) level. If possible, at least one of the sub-grants shall be awarded to a community with a large Native American population;
 - Grantees shall plan to require letters of commitment from sub-grantees to demonstrate project collaboration.
 - b. Prior to selecting any sub-grantees, the Grantee will submit to FNS summaries of all proposals *submitted* by those applying for sub-grants and discuss the proposals with FNS.**
 - At a minimum, the summaries shall include the name of the Principal Investigator and community, award amount, and a brief description of the sub-grantees' timeline and proposed approach.
 - c. After sub-grantees are selected, the Grantee will submit updated summaries of *selected* sub-grantee projects for publication on FNS's website.**
- 2) Sponsor and coordinate two workshops/conferences at FNS headquarters in Alexandria, VA.** The cooperative agreement application shall provide a preliminary list of the types of people that will be invited to participate in these workshops/conferences, which shall include sub-grantees. To the extent possible, FNS prefers for all proposed attendees to attend the two workshops/conferences in person. The Grantee shall prepare and submit to FNS for publishing on the OPS web page a summary of each workshop/conference within two months of the event. The Grantee shall record and post to web a video of the proceedings from the two workshops/conferences.
- a. The first workshop/conference shall be held shortly after announcing the sub-grantees' awards.** Its purpose will be to facilitate exchange of information and ideas among the sub-grantees, share project descriptions with FNS and allow FNS to provide input on potential ways to refine the sub-grantees' projects.
 - b. The second workshop/conference shall be held at the end of the grant period and will be focused on sharing project findings.**
- 3) Conduct an evaluation of the sub-grantees' activities.** At a minimum, the study shall a) provide a detailed summary of the approaches taken by each sub-grantee, b) evaluate the sub-grantees' impact on nutrition assistance coordination, with a special emphasis on FNS's nutrition programs, and based on measures of participation in the Food and Nutrition Service's nutrition programs using participation rates.
- 4) Disseminate findings broadly among the academic and anti-hunger communities.** At a minimum, FNS requires at least one submission to a peer-reviewed journal, annual reports, and one final report publishable on the FNS web page to be completed. For internal use and informational purposes, the Grantee shall provide FNS with an electronic copy of all manuscripts and other dissemination materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides) resulting from this grant and its sub-grants at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.

Priority Areas

Based on this cooperative agreement, FNS does not anticipate any expansion of CN program authorities or new funds to adopt, implement, and monitor interventions to increase program coordination efforts.

Thus, FNS has a particular interest in funding creative approaches to improving nutrition program coordination efforts that are sustainable without the need for new, ongoing funding.

Examples of issues that may be explored include but are not limited to:

- Identification and application of effective models of sustained nutrition program coordination efforts using community involvement,
- More effective uses of technology and digital media to improve outreach, and
- Advances in communication and coordination among nutrition program staff, program participants, other local or non-local partners, and FNS.
- FNS is also interested in funding projects that engage program participants in leading cross-program coordination efforts.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Eligible Entities include governmental or non-governmental entities:

This Request for Application (RFA) is open to all Accredited Colleges/Universities, and Private or Public Research Institutions. These are requirements for the selected recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, not any potential sub-grantees.

Other Eligibility Requirements and Restrictions

- The competitive sub-grantees, collectively, shall receive no less than 51 percent of the total amount awarded to the Grantee.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- All applications must provide details on the theoretical models underpinning the applicant's program evaluation plans. At a minimum, evaluation plans must specify what data will be collected from all sub-grantees, when it will be collected and how, and how the data will be analyzed, including but not limited to how external factors potentially affecting program coordination and program participation will be accounted for in the data analyses plans.
- All applications must plan to improve program coordination among a community's anti-hunger efforts, with a special emphasis on FNS's Child Nutrition Programs.
- Applications must contain specific details of sub-grant review and award plans, including evaluation criteria and a timeline. (see APPLICATION FORMAT for more information).

- The project description shall address what types of final deliverables will be submitted and/or published for each project by the Grantee during and at the end of the Cooperative Agreement.
- All applications must address how the findings will be disseminated to stakeholders and the academic community, and dissemination plans must meet the requirements as specified on page 16.
- Applications are encouraged to include a plan for assembling a panel of anti-hunger experts, preferably from the sub-grantees' communities, as available, to review evaluation plans and provide recommendations throughout the award period. The plan should specify the number of experts and their qualifications that would be invited to provide input, their degree of involvement and participation, and any compensation to be offered to them.
- All applications must demonstrate evidence of planning to meet other Grant requirements as specified elsewhere in this RFA.

Cooperative Agreement

This grant will be awarded in the form of a cooperative agreement. This agreement is a legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the Federal government and the Grantee. The principal purpose of this relationship is to transfer something of value to the Grantee to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by law. Cooperative agreements are subject to the same administrative requirements as grants; however, they are different from either a grant or a contract. Cooperative agreements will allow more involvement and collaboration by FNS in the project compared to a grant, and they provide less direction of project activities than a contract. The roles and responsibilities of both the Grantee and FNS will be stated in the terms and conditions of the cooperative agreement.

FNS' involvement in this cooperative agreement will largely entail reviewing and providing feedback on proposed deliverables and other sources of dissemination of best practices learned from these implementation and research efforts, such as proposed publications and proposed presentation materials.

Project Roles and Responsibilities

FNS. To the extent practicable, FNS is available to provide technical consultation to the Grantee as needed. FNS will comment on major aspects for the projects in advance of their implementation in a manner and timeframe agreed upon between the Grantee and FNS.

At FNS discretion, FNS involvement with the Grantee may include:

1. Reviewing and approving the final RFP for the sub-grantee competition issued by the cooperative agreement recipient.
2. Providing comments on and having ongoing conversations with the Grantee regarding their plans to meet this RFA's requirements.
3. Providing comments on a Grantee-provided summary of all applications for the competitive sub-grants.

4. Reviewing 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 and time of the two workshops/conferences.
6. Approving the agendas for the two workshops/conferences.
7. Approving Grantee-provided dissemination plans.

Grantee. The Grantee is the Public or Private Research or Academic Institution that will be selected competitively based on the merits of its application to operate the project. The Grantee has overall responsibility for planning, implementation, and operations of the project.

The Grantee shall:

- Select or hire appropriately credentialed personnel to manage and operate the project.
- Delegate responsibilities to their staff or other partners as appropriate.
- Conduct appropriate training and provide necessary support for staff and other partners to successfully handle project responsibilities. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - providing data on participating communities to FNS;
 - coordinating site visits to participating communities for FNS if requested;
 - fulfilling obligations to sub-grantees and FNS .
- Keep FNS informed on critical junctures and checkpoints after award of cooperative agreement, including management plan, budget plan, training plans, and design and implementation plans that are submitted in preliminary form in the application.
- Meet specific obligations and approval points as specified in this cooperative agreement.
- Submit timely progress reports, financial reports and annual reports throughout the award period, and submit a final progress report and a final financial report.
- Attend progress meetings via teleconference as needed.
- Account for project funds separately from federal food nutrition assistance administrative funds and establish financial and management reporting and controls to assure that project funds are not commingled or used inappropriately. A separate and distinct audit trail must be established and maintained for the expenditure of project funds that clearly demonstrates that they are used solely for project purposes.
- Provide FNS with any data files created and used to generate reports, presentations, and publications resulting from this grant. Such data shall be accompanied with analytic code, output files, and codebooks and other applicable documentation sufficient for FNS to replicate the analyses.
- Carry out all activities necessary to fulfill the items as described in the “Purpose of Agreement” section.
- Coordinate sub-grantees’ attendance and participation in the two workshops/conferences at FNS headquarters to share project descriptions and findings.
- Coordinate other grant-related activities among the sub-grantees and researchers.
- Monitor sub-grants to ensure that sub-grantees’ activities align with their proposals.
- Produce a summary and synthesis of these and related efforts (such as a meta-analysis on the results) and widely disseminate this information.

- For internal use and informational purposes, ensure Grantee and sub-grantees provide FNS with an electronic copy of all manuscripts resulting from their sub-grants at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.

The Grantee will also verify the Excluded Parties List (EPLS) at, www.sam.gov to determine the federal debarment and suspension status of applicants before awarding a sub-grant.

In addition, the applicant must submit the following Departmental Forms:

- AD-1047 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension
- AD-1048 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions
- AD-1049 Certificate Regarding Drug Free Workplace Requirements Alternative 1 (Note that there is a version of this form for Individuals: AD-1050 and a version for State Agencies: AD-1052)

Project Administration

Orientation and Close Out Meetings. At least the Cooperative Agreement Principal Investigator shall attend an orientation meeting at FNS headquarters to meet FNS, and to discuss the sub-grant process and evaluation design within one month from date of award. The Grantee shall also attend a web-based close out meeting near the conclusion of the project to present findings and exchange information on lessons learned. The Grantee shall provide a formal presentation to FNS at that time.

Quarterly Conference Calls. Quarterly conference calls shall provide an overview of the activities conducted during the previous quarter, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget, deviations from the proposed plan, difficulties encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, assistance needed from FNS on technical issues, and major planned activities for the next quarter. Should a major issue arise between calls, the Grantee should contact the FNS Grants and Program Officer immediately. The Grantee shall provide FNS with an agenda 3 business days prior to each call. The Grantee shall also prepare minutes for each call and distribute to FNS no later than 5 business days after the call.

Project Reporting Requirements.

Quarterly Progress Reports. Quarterly progress reports and quarterly financial reports must be submitted to FNS. As outlined in 7 CFR 3016, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements, quarterly progress reports must provide a description of the activities conducted during the reporting period, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget, deviations from the proposed plan, difficulties encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, and major planned activities for the next quarter. The Grantee is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the other partners to complete this report. These reports are due within 30 days after the end of each Federal quarter.

Final Progress Reports. A final written progress report (no more than 20 pages in length) will be due 90 days after the close of the project (unless otherwise noted and justified in the application). The final progress report will be composed of a short Executive Summary and the following:

- description of the project sites and project including a rationale for project design, how it was implemented, challenges encountered and solutions;
- major accomplishments;
- difficulties encountered and solutions developed to resolve the difficulties;
- costs of implementing and operating project; discussion of lessons learned;
- recommendations for future policy consideration;

Financial Reporting Requirements.

Form SF-425, Federal Financial Report, will be used to report status 30 days after the end of each quarter. (For example January 30, April 30, July 30, and October 30.) The Grantee 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 Grantee 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.

Final Financial Report. Use Form SF-425, Federal Financial Report to report final expenditures. Report matching contributions for the this grant on the SF 425. The final Federal Financial Report is due 90 days after the end of project period of performance.

More detailed specifications for progress and financial reporting, assistance with preparation of FNS yearly reports to Congress, and the final project and financial reports will be included in the cooperative agreement established with the Grantee.

Workshops/Conferences. The Grantee shall participate in two workshops/conferences at FNS HQ.

Use of Grant Funds. All costs must be allowable, allocable, necessary and reasonable in accordance with OMB Circular A-87; and A-21, and A-122 where appropriate. Allowable use of funds includes, but is not limited to, personnel costs; training; translation of forms; other supplies; printing, duplication, and dissemination of materials; and technology (both hardware and software) necessary for operating projects and/or participating in the evaluation of the projects. An audit trail and strict accounting system to guard against commingling or improper expenditure of funds is necessary.

Award Period and Project Timeline

FNS plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the selected Grantee by January 9, 2015. The Grantee will be allowed to use the funds until expended consistent with its application plans. Assuming an award date on or before January 9, 2015, the expectation is that the projects will be completed by January 8, 2019. FNS may at its discretion extend the grant award period. All applicants should base their timelines on an anticipated **award date** of January 9, 2015. Applicants can apply for funds for four years with an end date no later than January 8, 2019.

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.

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 {INSERT DATE AFTER APPROVAL}, 2014

Assume this grant will be awarded by January 9, 2015 for a start date of January 9, 2015.

Interim Deliverables – Once awarded the Grantee will provide quarterly progress reports and financial reports to identified FNS contact persons. The Grantee will also produce a 4-10 page annual report for FNS and submit to FNS study plans for their grant and any sub-grants for publishing on the FNS website.

Final Deliverable(s) – The project description shall address what types of deliverables will be submitted and/or published for each funded project. The project description shall address what types of deliverables will be submitted and/or published by each sub-grantee before the end of the sub-grant. It shall also describe what types of deliverables will be submitted and/or published by the Grantee 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 sub-grants 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 program stakeholders and the academic community. At a minimum, the Grantee shall prepare and deliver to FNS one short four to 10 page annual report, one final report integrating all the information learned from the project in an acceptable format for FNS to publish on their website, and submit at least one peer-reviewed journal article for publication based on research using grant funds. FNS recognizes that the journal article may not be fully published by the end of the grant period, but a submitted draft is required. The Grantee shall also plan, convene and actively participate in two workshops/conferences after receipt of the grant award, as a component of the development and dissemination processes. Grant funding

may be used to cover travel expenses and other expenses associated with this workshop/conference. The workshops/conferences shall be held at FNS headquarters or another location in the Washington, DC metropolitan area agreeable to FNS. All sub-grantees shall plan to attend in person and actively participate in these workshops/conferences. The Recipient shall prepare and publish a summary of this workshop/conference within 2 months of each event.

Instructions for Application Submission

APPLICATION FORMAT

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying 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 30 pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter(s) of commitment, 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, and certifications 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. Applicants that commit matching resources, including in-kind resources, to the project will receive extra points in the scoring of proposals (see Evaluation of Grant Application Criteria).

Cover Sheet

The **one-page** 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)

Table of Contents

Include a relevant table of contents with page numbers.

Application Project Summary

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

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 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).

Project Narrative

The project narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing, how it will meet the RFA program goal and objectives, and the expected results and/or benefits of the proposed project. The proposed project methodology should describe the project design, address project specific methodology needs, procedures, timetables, monitoring/oversight, and the organization’s project staffing.

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

- **Background Information:** Provide background information on the proposed evaluation team’s experience administering similar grants and plans for requiring awarded projects to maintain a community involvement focus. Please note any successes, lessons learned, or challenges.
- **Objectives, Activities and Timeline:** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish, include specific activities you will perform to accomplish the project objectives as stated in the PURPOSE OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT section, and include deadlines. All objectives should lead to a clearly stated goal relevant to this RFA. Your project timeline should start on {INSERT DATE}, 2014.
 1. A description of how the institution will announce the availability and objectives of the competition for sub-grants (RFP development).
 2. A description of how the applicant will structure the competitive process for awarding sub-grants.
 3. Provide a table with anticipated timeframes for sub-grantee RFP posting, sub-grantee proposal due date, sub-grantee start dates, workshop/conference timeframe with FNS approval, etc.

For example:

Sub-grantee Timeframes, Number and Dollar Range

	Date	Months from Grant Award	Additional Information
Sub-grantee RFP posting			
Sub-grants proposals due			
Total dollar amount for sub-grants			
Dollar range for individual sub-grants (minimum and maximum, if these will be			\$ _____ minimum \$ _____ maximum Or __ Not

specified in the RFP)			applicable
Anticipated number (count) of sub-grants			_____ sub-grants
Sub-grant start dates			
1st Workshop/conference proposed date			
2ND Workshop/conference proposed date			

- **Evaluation:** Evaluating the impact of sub-grantees’ Child Nutrition program coordination efforts in rural counties, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, and assessing your project’s overall impact, will be critical. Please describe your evaluation and analysis plans in detail. Please include the following: the rationale behind the idea being proposed, how it meets this RFA’s requirements; a clear description of how progress will be measured, including how baseline, change over time, and comparison to other work will be established. Additionally, discuss any previous experience, if any, performing multi-faceted evaluations and analyses.
- **Dissemination:** Describe your plans for disseminating findings from this grant. At a minimum, FNS requires at least one submission to a peer-reviewed journal, annual reports, and one final report publishable on the FNS web page to be completed. Describe specific plans to make project findings accessible to others at various levels: program participants, communities, practitioners, and policy officials. FNS also requires participation in two workshops/conferences at FNS HQ as specified in this RFA.
- **Project Management, Staffing, & Quality Assurance:** Provide a clear description of the activities to be undertaken to manage the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget, and with quality results. 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, and a level of effort specified for specific staff proposed. Note any relevant experience in managing similar activities. Provide a clear description of how funds will be administered and distributed.

Appendices: The following types of information must be included in the Appendices. Additionally, appendices may include supporting documentation that addresses the applicant’s capacity to carry out the proposed project such as Letter(s) of Commitment from partnering institutions/subcontractors.

Resumes or Curriculum Vitae

To assist reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, the proposal shall also include a resume or curriculum vitae with a publication list of the Principal Investigator and key personnel who expect to work on the project.

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 requests for funds relate to the project objectives and proposed activities. 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. The budget narrative should also describe how any matching or additional funds the Grantee might receive will be used.

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 funds will be spent, including specifics on travel, equipment, and personnel, with specification of whether the funds being spent are requested as part of this Grant or will be provided by external sources. 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 two workshop/conferences required.

Indirect Cost Rate Schedule

Applicants shall indicate whether or not a discount on indirect costs is included. **Institutions with an Indirect Cost Rate higher than 49% shall not be considered.** 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. Applications will receive extra points for discounts on indirect costs (See Evaluation Criteria and Scoring).

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

The following required and optional OMB forms can be obtained at:

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

Required Grant Application Forms

All applicants must complete the following forms:

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants. They can be obtained at

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>.

- (B) Research and Related Forms: R&R Family
 1. Research & Related Application (SF-424)
 2. Assurance for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 3. R&R FedNonFed Budget; [R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment(s)Form, if applicable]
- SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities)

The required OMB form can be obtained at the following website:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf>.

APPLICATION ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

FNS Application Instructions

LETTER OF INTENT (Optional)

The eligible applicant that intends to submit an application is encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent notice by **xx, xx, 2014, 11:59 PM (EDT)**. 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:

[Dawn Addison, Grants Officer](#)

Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 732
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail dawn.addison@fns.usda.gov

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application must be uploaded on www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time **xx, xx, 2014**. 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 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 Central Contractor Registry (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 <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. Generally, the registration process takes between **3-5 business days**.

Allow your entity ample time to complete the necessary steps, for the submission of your grant application package, on grants.gov.

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted.

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

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: 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** 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, including but not limited to: all supporting documentation, the narrative proposal, Letters of Commitment from established partners specified in the application, and Agreement to Cooperate with FNS. Complete applications will need to be submitted by eligible applicants, meet all other eligibility requirements stated in this RFA, submitted on or before the required deadlines, and be 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 an evaluation panel to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The evaluation criteria discussed below 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 make an award out of rank order 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 the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available through future appropriations.

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 following selection criteria and weights will be used to evaluate applications for this RFA. All applicants will be notified whether their proposal has been accepted for an award by FNS.

The recipient of this cooperative agreement will be required to demonstrate a thorough understanding of community involvement models of social change, FNS nutrition assistance programs, and the food, nutrition, and health issues facing participants of FNS programs.

Scoring for Grant Applications

1. Project Design and Implementation Plan (40 points)

- Degree to which the project goals and objectives are in line with the Cooperative Agreement's focus areas and goals and objectives as described in this RFA.
- Degree to which applicant's proposal demonstrates a high likelihood of success

based on previous experience and a clearly articulated logic model Degree to which a clear and realistic timeline for successfully implementing, operating, and concluding the project is included. The timeline includes a project activity chart showing key activities and their due dates.

- Degree to which the proposal narrative clearly describes the applicant's proposed project.
- Degree to which implementation and evaluation plans demonstrate understanding of FNS requirements, along with the capacity and commitment to fulfill those requirements in a high quality manner.

2. Staffing Plan (15 Points)

- Degree to which the Staffing Plan identifies and describes the roles and responsibilities of key personnel and other partners and staff involved in the proposed project.
- Degree to which the Staffing Plan documents show the key personnel have the necessary and relevant education, skills, and experience for their proposed roles on the project.
- Degree to which Staffing Plan provides sufficient information to document that the time commitment of key personnel appears to be appropriate for their roles in the project.
- Degree to which Staffing Plan demonstrates that partners, if any, have appropriate experience and commitment to effectively fulfill their proposed roles within the time and financial constraints of the project. Letters of commitment are required from established partners in the application and serve as evidence of these commitments.

3. Management Plan (20 Points)

- Degree to which the Management Plan articulates how the applicant will provide the oversight necessary to ensure high quality products, services, or outcomes and to keep the funded projects on time and within budget.
- Degree to which the Management Plan demonstrates effective internal controls of funds that are provided to partners and local agencies that ensure funds are used only for project purposes, with an accounting record and audit trail.
- Degree to which the Management Plan provides a plan for managing personnel associated with the project and for addressing any contingencies such as loss of key personnel.

- Degree to which the Management Plan shows potential for strong interrelationships, teamwork, and cooperation between the Grantee and partners, including sub-grantees.

4. Budget (15 points)

- Degree to which the application includes a budget narrative describing how costs within the budget categories were derived and links between expenditures and specific activities/tasks.
- Degree to which the Budget considers all necessary implementation and operation costs. For example, applicants proposing to hold stakeholder discussions must specify how they will use grant funds for hosting, facilitation, and follow-up of stakeholder engagement strategies.
- Degree to which the costs are reasonable. The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project, including if applicable, the use of matching funds or cost sharing available.

5. Matching Resources /Discounts on Indirect Costs (10 points)

Degree to which the applicant commits matching resources, including in-kind resources, to the project.

Whether discounts are provided on indirect costs and whether they seem reasonable.

Total Possible Points = 100

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 a confidential, 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 confidential, 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 confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential 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,” 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 Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) found at www.epls.gov.

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.

Sections 738 and 739 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55) (*applicable only if an eligible entity is a corporation*)

Section 738 (Felony Provision) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to any corporation that was convicted (or had an officer or agency of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation, or such officer or agent, and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government.

Section 739 (Tax Delinquency Provision) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that (has) any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

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

Appendix A:

List of Persistently Poor Counties in 15 States with the Highest Number of Persistently Poor Counties

	State	Persistently Poor Counties				
1.	Alabama	Barbour	Conecuh	Lowndes	Pickens	
		Bullock	Dallas	Macon	Pike	
		Butler	Escambia	Marengo	Sumter	
		Choctaw	Greene	Monroe	Wilcox	
		Clarke	Hale	Perry		
2.	Arkansas	Bradley	Jefferson	Nevada	Searcy	
		Chicot	Lafayette	Newton	Woodruff	
		Columbia	Lee	Phillips		
		Crittenden	Mississippi	Poinsett		
		Desha	Monroe	St. Francis		
3.	Georgia	Atkinson	Clinch	Hancock	Seminole	Turner
		Bacon	Crisp	Jefferson	Stewart	Ware
		Baker	Decatur	Jenkins	Sumter	Warren
		Ben Hill	Dooly	Johnson	Talbot	Washington
		Brooks	Dougherty	Macon	Taliaferro	Wheeler
		Hamilton	Madison	Marion	Tattnall	Wilcox
		Bulloch	Early	Mitchell	Taylor	
		Burke	Emanuel	Peach	Telfair	
		Calhoun	Evans	Quitman	Terrell	
		Clarke	Grady	Randolph	Toombs	
		Clay	Greene	Screven	Treutlen	
4.	Kentucky	Bath	Fulton	Leslie	Owsley	
		Bell	Harlan	Letcher	Perry	
		Breathitt	Hart	Lewis	Powell	
		Casey	Jackson	Lincoln	Robertson	
		Clay	Johnson	McCreary	Rockcastle	
		Clinton	Knott	Magoffin	Rowan	
		Cumberland	Knox	Martin	Russell	
		Elliott	Laurel	Menifee	Wayne	
		Estill	Lawrence	Monroe	Whitley	
		Floyd	Lee	Morgan	Wolfe	
5.	Louisiana	Acadia	East Carroll	Morehouse	Sabine	West Carroll
		Avoyelles	East Feliciana	Natchitoches	St. Helena	Winn
		Bienville	Evangeline	Orleans	St. Landry	
		Catahoula	Franklin	Ouachita	Tangipahoa	

		Claiborne	Lincoln	Red River	Tensas	
		Concordia	Madison	Richland	Washington	
6.	Minnesota	Adams	Coahoma	Jefferson	Montgomery	Sunflower
		Amite	Copiah	Jefferson Davis	Neshoba	Tallahatchie
		Attala	Covington	Kemper	Noxubee	Tunica
		Benton	Forrest	Lafayette	Oktibbeha	Walthall
		Bolivar	Franklin	Lauderdale	Panola	Washington
		Chickasaw	Grenada	Leake	Pike	Wayne
		Choctaw	Holmes	Leflore	Quitman	Wilkinson
		Claiborne	Humphreys	Lowndes	Scott	Winston
		Clarke	Issaquena	Marion	Sharkey	Yalobusha
		Clay	Jasper	Marshall	Simpson	Yazoo
7.	Missouri	Carter	New Madrid	Reynolds	Texas	Wright
		Dunklin	Oregon	Ripley	Washington	St. Louis
		Mississippi	Pemiscot	Shannon	Wayne	
8.	New Mexico	Cibola	Guadalupe	McKinley	San Miguel	Taos
		Doña Ana	Luna	Roosevelt	Socorro	
9.	North Carolina	Bertie	Columbus	Martin	Pitt	Tyrrell
		Bladen	Halifax	Northampton	Robeson	Washington
10 .	Oklahoma	Adair	Choctaw	Hughes	Okfuskee	
		Caddo	Coal	Johnston	Pushmataha	
		Cherokee	Harmon	McCurtain	Tillman	
11 .	South Carolina	Allendale	Colleton	Jasper	Marlboro	
		Bamberg	Dillon	Lee	Orangeburg	
		Clarendon	Hampton	Marion	Williamsburg	
12 .	South Dakota	Bennett	Corson	Mellette	Todd	
		Buffalo	Dewey	Roberts	Ziebach	
		Charles Mix	Jackson	Shannon		
13 .	Tennessee	Campbell	Cocke	Grundy	Johnson	Scott
		Claiborne	Fentress	Hancock	Lake	
14 .	Texas	Bee	El Paso	Jim Wells	Maverick	Val Verde
		Brazos	Falls	Karnes	Presidio	Webb
		Brooks	Floyd	Kinney	Real	Willacy
		Cameron	Frio	Kleberg	Reeves	Zapata
		Crosby	Hall	Lamb	Robertson	Zavala
		Dimmit	Hidalgo	La Salle	San	

					Augustine	
		Duval	Houston	McCulloch	Starr	
		Edwards	Hudspeth	Marion	Uvalde	
15	West Virginia	Braxton	Clay	Lincoln	Mingo	
.		Calhoun	Gilmer	McDowell	Webster	