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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

***Child Nutrition Programs***

***National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program***

***Fiscal Year 20XX***

***Administrative Review and Training (ART) Grants***

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.579

DATES:

RFA Release Date: *XXX X, 20XX*

Application Submission Date: *XXX X, 20XX*

Award Date: *XXXX 5, 20XX*

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**APPENDICES:**

- **APPENDIX A: RFA Budget Narrative Checklist**
- **APPENDIX B: FY 20XX ART Planning Grant Proposal Template and Instructions**
- **APPENDIX C: FY 20XX ART Implementation Grant Proposal Template and Instructions**
- **APPENDIX D: Grant Program Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire**

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265) amended Section 22 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a requirement that State agencies conduct additional administrative reviews of selected Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). It also amended Section 7 of the Child Nutrition Act to provide annual funding for States to be used for oversight and training of LEAs. Both of these requirements are focused on LEAs that have demonstrated a high level of, or a high risk for, administrative error. To assist State agencies in achieving this requirement, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has up to \$X.X million available in fiscal year (FY) 20XX to fund Administrative Reviews and Training (ART) Grants for oversight and training.

The ART grant funds will be available on a competitive basis only to the 57 State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), and are for the purpose of identifying, reviewing, monitoring and training LEAs that have demonstrated a high level of, or a high risk for, administrative error. FNS is offering two types of ART Grants: Planning and Implementation. States may apply for *either* a Planning grant *or* an Implementation grant, as described within this Request for Applications (RFA), but *not both* in a given RFA solicitation.

The purpose of this RFA is to solicit applications from eligible entities and describe:

- Types of grants available;
- Which entities are eligible to apply for grant funds;
- Requirements for submitting a successful application;
- How applications will be reviewed and selected; and
- Terms and conditions that grantees must adhere to.

FNS intends to work collaboratively with grant applicants and grantees throughout the application process and the life of grants awarded through this RFA. Within approximately three weeks of this RFA's publication, FNS will conduct a webinar with all State agencies and FNS Regional offices to review the RFA and address questions regarding the application process. Notification of the webinar date, time and call-in information will be communicated to State agencies via the FNS Regional offices and the FNS Child Nutrition Program's PartnerWeb at <https://www.partnerweb.usda.gov>.

Brief descriptions of previously awarded ART grant projects are located on the FNS School Meals Grants website at the following link: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/grants>. Applicants may find this site helpful in exploring possibilities for viable use of grant funding.

## II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

### 1. Purpose of Grant Funding

FNS expects to award up to \$X.X million in grant funding to State agencies for the purpose of decreasing administrative errors in those LEAs and schools that are experiencing, or likely to experience, program administrative errors. For FY 20XX, State agencies should focus on one or more of the following areas in developing their ART Grant applications:

- Training of LEA administrative personnel in application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming procedures. Training may include web-based training sessions;
- Oversight and training activities focused on the nutritional quality of school meals;
- Modifications that may be necessary to update processes and systems to comply with revisions to the Administrative Review process first implemented in school year 2013-2014; and
- Technology improvements which demonstrate an ability to address administrative errors and improve program integrity through the use of targeted monitoring and increased training in error-prone LEAs. States choosing this option must clearly demonstrate how the proposed technology can be used to implement State-level activities, specifically review and training activities associated with error prone LEAs. For example, proposals may include the following:
  - Development of data analysis tools to monitor application, certification (including direct certification), verification (including direct verification), meal counting and meal claiming procedures for error-prone school districts;
  - Training methods utilizing web-based technology; or
  - Other innovative State-level automated solutions to identify and reduce administrative errors in error-prone school districts.

### 2. ART Grant Types

The FY 20XX ART Grant award process involves two types of awards:

- ART Planning Grants for awards up to \$XXXXXX, with grant periods of up to **one year**; and
- ART Implementation Grants for awards up to \$XXXXXX, with grant periods of **one to three** years.

State agencies may apply for either type of grant (i.e., Planning or Implementation), but not both in a given RFA solicitation. **Only one grant application will be accepted from a State agency in response to this solicitation.** In addition to this section, see **Section IV, Application and Submission Information**, for information on the required content for a grant application submission.

FNS will award these funds using a cooperative agreement to allow FNS more active participation with the cooperator during both project development and project execution. Examples of FNS participation include activities such as the following:

- Ongoing evaluation of quarterly progress and financial reports to monitor the grantee's project activities and ensure that the objectives, terms and conditions of the agreement are met;
- Periodic on-site and off-site technical assistance to provide evaluation and guidance on project activities and outputs as they relate to child nutrition program objectives, including:
  - Providing program guidance on curriculum development;
  - Evaluation of training materials and websites;
  - Evaluation of technology improvements;
  - Review of project plans and milestones;
  - Review of procurement documents for sub-grantee involvement (i.e., requests for proposals, contracts, performance work statements, and project plans); and
  - Other technical assistance related to project objectives; and
- Periodic collaborative meetings for multiple grantees for the purposes of technical assistance, training, problem solving and sharing successful or promising practices. Meetings may be conducted as webinars, teleconferences or training workshops in the Washington, D.C. area or in another city more centrally located within the contiguous United States.

### **Planning Grants**

Planning grants are intended for State agencies administering the NSLP and SBP that know they need to reduce program administrative errors in LEAs, but may need to conduct additional *research* to identify the most effective way to decrease errors and improve program integrity. Therefore, potential uses of Planning grant funds include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- Feasibility studies and cost/benefit analyses to plan for automation projects;
- Conducting an internal review of the State's administrative processes;
- Detailed analysis of past Administrative Reviews to identify most frequent Program requirements found to be out of compliance or the potential for noncompliance;
- Hiring a contractor or university to conduct a study of the processes and recommend solutions;
- Consulting with stakeholders; and
- Assessing current training and oversight capabilities, needs and effective training methods.

State agencies that are awarded Planning grants from this solicitation may apply for funding for an Implementation grant at the next annual opportunity (FY 20XX) in order to carry out an implementation project in follow-up to their Planning grant activities and outcomes. Planning grant funds may be used to complete the planning for the implementation project and to develop

an ART Implementation Grant application based on the Planning grant project outcomes. However, State agencies awarded an ART Planning Grant in FY 20XX who then apply for an ART Implementation Grant in FY 20XX are not guaranteed to receive an FY 20XX Implementation grant award. Due to funding limitations each year, all ART Grant awards, both Planning and Implementation, are competitive awards and will be based on the evaluation criteria stated in each fiscal year's grant RFA. Consequently, FNS encourages State agencies to apply for an ART Planning Grant to conduct activities that would be beneficial in helping them reduce Program administrative errors, even if they do not receive an ART Implementation Grant award and have to rely on other resources to implement solutions identified as a result of the Planning grant activities.

State agencies must address all of the questions in **Appendix B: ART Planning Grant Proposal Template and Instructions** to develop an ART Planning Grant application. The instructions are designed to assist State agencies in developing a fully responsive ART Planning Grant application for viable planning activities and to bring consistency to the proposal process for evaluation purposes.

The maximum amount of any *single* ART Planning Grant is \$XXXXXXX. However, FNS retains authority to award less than the amount requested in the grant application.

### **Implementation Grants**

Implementation grants are intended for State agencies administering the NSLP and SBP that know *what* they need to do to improve program integrity through their State's administrative training and oversight processes, but lack the resources to implement those changes. Potential uses of Implementation grant funds include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- Developing and delivering training to LEA administrative personnel;
- Improving State-level technologies to enhance State-level monitoring capability to identify and address program administrative errors in error-prone LEAs and schools;
- Upgrading software; and
- Purchasing hardware to implement changes accordingly.

State agencies must address all of the questions in the **Appendix C: ART Implementation Grant Proposal Template and Instructions** to develop an ART Implementation Grant application. The instructions are designed to 1) guide applicants in thinking through all aspects of implementing proposed solutions, with particular emphasis on reducing risks associated with technology related aspects of their proposals, and 2) assist applicants in considering and capturing budget items such as, but not limited to, costs for personnel, hiring contractors, purchasing equipment, developing training, supplies and travel (including travel for State agency staff to attend at least one three-day annual FNS technical assistance and training meeting for grantee States). Following the guidance in Appendix C will assist applicants in developing fully responsive ART Implementation Grant applications and help to bring consistency to the proposal process for evaluation purposes.

The maximum amount of any *single* ART Implementation Grant is **\$XXXXXX**. However, FNS retains authority to award less than the amount requested by an applicant. The size of ART Implementation Grants will likely vary significantly, based on differences in project scope, the responsiveness of application packages, and clarity of demonstrated need.

**NOTE:** Applicants for the ART Implementation Grant should include in their budget estimates the following FNS sponsored collaborative activities for each year of the requested grant period of performance:

- 1) Estimated cost of travel and time for two State project staff to participate in an annual FNS technical assistance meeting lasting three full days at a location to be determined. Note: for budgeting purposes, State agencies should use Washington, DC as the location for the meeting (costs should be itemized);
- 2) Grant personnel costs to participate in quarterly technical assistance calls or webinars (generally one hour each); and
- 3) Personnel and contractor costs for preparation and participation in annual technical assistance and evaluation State site visits (one day each) and conference calls (approximately two per year at two hours each) with FNS contractors and staff.

**The request for these funds should be clearly indicated in the Budget Narrative Justification, Standard Form 424, and Standard Form 424A (Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs).** Sufficient funds should be budgeted in the proposal and reserved in the course of the project to meet this requirement.

### **3. Application and Review Dates**

The deadline for submitting ART Planning Grant and ART Implementation Grant applications may be found in Section IV, D. Submission Dates and Times. FNS will process grants within approximately 90 days from the application deadline.

### **4. Award Periods**

The award period for the FY 20XX ART Planning Grants and ART Implementation Grants will be as follows, beginning from the date of the award:

- ART Planning Grants will be awarded for up to one year; and
- ART Implementation Grants will be awarded for one to three years.

All grant funds must be obligated and all program activities under the grant (other than activities relating to the close out of the grant) must be completed by the end of the award period. The close-out of the grant must occur no later than 90 days following the end of the award period, and all obligations incurred under the grant must be liquidated by this date. Any funds that are not liquidated within 90 days following the end of the award period must be returned to FNS. In addition, the final progress reports are due to FNS no later than 90 days following the end of the award period. Please see Section VI. Federal Award Administration Information for details on reporting requirements.

## **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants include all State agencies that administer the NSLP and SBP. In this instance, the term State agency means 1) the State educational agency; and 2) any other agency of the State which has been designated by the Governor or other appropriate executive or legislative authority of the State and approved by USDA to administer the NSLP and SBP in LEAs. Only one grant application (planning or implementation) will be accepted from a State agency in response to this solicitation. However, in instances where there are two agencies within a State, such as in the case where the public and private agencies are different, separate applications are acceptable.

2. Preapplication Screening Requirements

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, Federal Awarding Agencies, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.400, are required, prior to making a Federal award, to review information available through various OMB-designated repositories for eligibility qualification or financial integrity, and to have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive Federal awards. The evaluation of the information obtained from the designated repository systems and the risk assessment may result in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency (FNS) imposing special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed. The Federal repository systems FNS will review include:

- a) SAM, the *System for Award Management*, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS;
- b) FAPIIS, the *Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System*, is a database that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
- c) Dun and Bradstreet, the system where applicants establish a DUNS number which is used by the Federal government to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems. The Federal government requires that all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals other than sole proprietors have a DUNS number.
- d) U.S. Department of Agriculture, AD-3030, *Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants*.

Applicants must also respond to the preapplication assessment questions below to allow FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, and history of performance, reports and findings from audits. A questionnaire containing these questions has been provided to facilitate the process. Applicants must answer all the preapplication questions. While answering "yes" may be an indicator of risk, the consideration and evaluation of these questions is only an indicator of potential risk and may or may not result in an additional oversight requirements or special conditions be placed on an award should an award be made. Decisions regarding additional oversight requirements will take into consideration the total number of risks identified.



1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
5. Is there a separation of duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
6. Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
7. Does your organization have a property/inventory management system in place to track the location and value of equipment purchased under the award?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
8. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
9. If the answer to question number 8 is yes, was this report issued under the Single Audit requirement? If no, a hyperlink or copy of the report will be required.  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
10. If answer to question 8 is yes, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or “Adverse Opinion”?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
11. If answer to question 8 is yes, is there a material weakness disclosed?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
12. If answer to question 8 is yes, is there a significant deficiency disclosed?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

3. Cost sharing or matching considerations

Applications received after the deadline date (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information) will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. FNS will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications. Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, and certification will not be considered (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information and Appendices B and C). Also, applications not submitted via the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) portal will not be considered (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information).

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements to participate in either the ART Planning or ART Implementation grant projects.

4. Other eligibility criteria

Suspended or debarred organizations are ineligible to submit applications in response to this grant solicitation. State agencies may apply for either type of grant (i.e., Planning or Implementation), but not both in a given RFA solicitation

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION (REQUIRED)

1. Applicants may obtain the RFA package by downloading the application from the FNS website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/grants> or by downloading the application from the Grants.gov site at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website.

Applicants may also request a paper copy of this solicitation and required forms by contacting the FNS Grants Officer:

XXXXX XXXXXX, Grants Officer  
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS  
E-mail: [XXXX.XXXXX@fns.usda.gov](mailto:XXXX.XXXXX@fns.usda.gov)

2. Application Format

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following applicant format:

- a. "8 ½ by 11" page size on white paper with at least 1 inch margins on the top and bottom;
- b. All pages single spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font size (smaller font may be used in tables, charts and graphs as long as they are clearly readable);
- c. The project description with relevant information (not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter of commitment(s), endorsement letter(s), budget narrative(s), appendices, and required forms) should be captured on no more than:
  - i. **10-page** maximum length for **Planning** grant narrative response to **Appendix B**;
  - ii. **35-page** maximum length for **Implementation** grant narrative response to **Appendix C**; and
- d. All pages, excluding the form pages, must be sequentially numbered.

### 3. Application Content

To be considered complete, the ART Grant application must include all the required documents and information listed in the Table 1 below for the specific type of grant (i.e., planning or implementation grant).

### 4. Special Instructions

- a. Late application submission will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received.
- b. Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, certification will not be considered.
- c. Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov portal will not be considered.
- d. If multiple application packages are submitted through the grants.gov web portal by the same applicant in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.
- e. 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.
- f. Grant awards are subject to the availability of funds.
- g. There are no cost sharing or matching requirements to participate in either the ART Planning or ART Implementation grant projects.

**Table 1: ART Planning and Implementation Application Content**

<b>Required Documents</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Cover Sheet</b>	At a minimum, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State agency name and mailing address;</li> <li>- Agency Administrator's name, job title, phone number, e-mail and Fax contact information;</li> <li>- Primary application contact person's name, job title, phone number and e-mail address; and</li> <li>- Grant program title and subprogram title (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	Include relevant topic page numbers
<b>Application Project Summary</b>	Brief abstract clearly summarizing the proposed project activities, goals and objectives, as well as anticipated solutions and outcomes that would result if the proposal is funded (maximum 250 words).
<b>Project Narrative</b>	The project narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing and how it will address a solution, the expected results and/or benefits once the solution is achieved, and how it will meet the RFA program scope and objectives. The proposed project methodology should describe the project design, address program specific methodology needs, procedures, timetables,

<b>Table 1: ART Planning and Implementation Application Content</b>	
<b>Required Documents</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
	monitoring/oversight, and the organization's project staffing.
<b>Application Budget Narrative</b>	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. All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

### Required Grant Application Forms

All applicants must complete the following forms:

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants. They are located at [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms\\_repository\\_information.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp):

The following required OMB forms can be obtained at:

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

#### (A) Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

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."

**Electronic Submission:** The complete application must be uploaded to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by **11:59 PM, Eastern Time, on XXXX X, 20XX**. Applications received after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. USDA will no consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications.

#### Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) Number

In order to submit an application via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), applicants 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 the grants.gov application submission process. Please visit the following websites to obtain additional information on how to obtain a DUNS number ([www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

**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 to obtain.

System for Award Management (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.

For additional information regarding SAM see the following link:

[https://www.acquisition.gov/SAM\\_Guides/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.pdf](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:

**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>.**

### **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** grant the due date of the grant solicitation.

**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 [www.grants.govapplicants/get\\_reistered.jsp](http://www.grants.govapplicants/get_reistered.jsp). Generally, the registration process takes between **3-5 business days**.

If you are a new user, please ensure that your organization's Point-of-Contact (POC) has designated you as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). If you are not designated as an AOR, you will be unable to submit your application package through the grants.gov web portal.

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.

**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](http://www.grants.gov) portal due to incorrect naming conventions.**

In order to submit an application via grants.gov, applicants 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 the grants.gov application submission process. All applicants must have SAM 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](http://www.dnb.com)) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; you need to be sure that you have confirmation that the application was accepted. For tools and tips regarding [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), please visit: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html>.

5. Submission Dates and Times

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application must be uploaded on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time **XXXX X, 20XX**. 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](http://www.grants.gov) should contact the grants.gov Support Center at **Local Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726** or **via e-mail at support@Grants.gov**

## 6. Funding Restrictions

In addition to the administrative requirements contained in this RFA, the provisions below will also be a part of the agreement between FNS and the State agency.

- Funds authorized cannot be used to replace existing funding (e.g., State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds) earmarked by the State agency for administrative review, oversight and training.
- Funds cannot be used for local-level expenses.
- Funds cannot be used to shift existing staff from their normal duties paid with State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds to support the grant activities unless the staff that are reassigned are replaced with additional staff in the positions that are vacant.
- Funds must be expended in accordance with activities outlined in the applicant's approved proposal.
- Funding for approved proposals will be provided through the Letter of Credit process in the same manner as other funds. However, State agencies will be required to separately track and report these funds via SF-425 Financial Status Report.
- Funds authorized under the ART Grants cannot be used to replace or augment funding allocated for existing review requirements. In addition, pursuant to Section 7(g) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, funds authorized cannot be used to replace funding allocated for training in administrative practices (including training in application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming procedures) which is required to occur at a minimum of once a year.

## 7. Other Submission Requirements

**Electronic Submission:** The complete application must be uploaded to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on **XXXX X, 20XX**. Applications received after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. USDA will not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications.

Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) should contact the grants.gov Support Center at **Local Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726** or **via e-mail at support@Grants.gov**

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

## 1. Review Criteria

### EVALUATION OF GRANT APPLICATION CRITERIA

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure that they contain the required documents and information. 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.

#### Evaluation Factors and Criteria

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

FNS will evaluate the applications in accordance with the criteria outlined in this section to select applications for awards. The actual number of awards will depend on the quality of the applications and the availability of funds. Funds will be made available via a Cooperative Agreement award document following the award announcements. There are no cost sharing or matching requirements to participate in either the ART Planning or ART Implementation grant projects.

#### Initial Screening

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure that they contain the required documents and information. Eligible and responsive applications are those that meet the following requirements:

- a. Submitted by eligible applicants (see Section III, Eligibility Information);
- b. Submitted on or before the required deadline (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information);
- c. Are complete (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information); and
- d. Are in the required format (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information).

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.

## 2. Review and Selection Process

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 panel will assign each application a score using the evaluation criteria and weights as specified below for each planning or implementation grant application evaluation component. 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 accept the panel's recommendation or to select an application for funding out of 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.

**NOTE:** If a discrepancy exists between the total funding request (submitted on SF-424, SF-424A, and budget or budget narrative) within the application package in response to this solicitation, FNS will only consider and evaluate the estimated funding request contained on SF-424.

### **Scoring for Planning Grant Applications:**

#### **Project Purpose, Goals and Impact on Program Integrity (35 points)**

- The significance of the Program administrative errors, or the risk of these errors, to be addressed is clearly demonstrated and proposed planning activities are appropriate to address the administrative errors identified;
- The project goals and objectives are in line with the ART Planning Grant focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section II, Federal Award Information;
- The planning activities to be completed during the grant period clearly support;
- Identification of ways to reduce program administrative errors in error-prone LEAs and schools; and
- Planning for implementation of solutions to improve program integrity, including the areas of application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming.

#### **Project Planning Design and Management (35 points)**

- The project organization, project management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, risk management planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicate that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project; and
- The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the Planning grant time frame.

#### **Budget Plan (20 points)**

- The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project;
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives;
- The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals;
- Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated; and
- If indirect costs are included, the applicant agency's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency is provided and the indirect cost rate is applied correctly to allowable direct costs.

**Sustainability and Transferability (10 points)**

- The proposed planning project is likely to produce outcomes and information that not only will aid the applicant State agency in implementing program improvements, but also will produce knowledge that is transferable to other State agencies for similar improvement projects; and
- The applicant demonstrates that the State agency has the capacity to implement program improvements in follow-up to the Planning grant activities, when ART Planning Grant funding ends.

**Scoring for Implementation Grant Applications:**

**Project Purpose, Goals and Impact on Program Integrity (35 points)**

- The significance of the Program administrative errors, or the risk of these errors, to be addressed is clearly demonstrated and proposed implementation activities are appropriate to address the administrative errors identified;
- The project goals and objectives are in line with the ART Grant focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section II, Federal Award Information;
- The implementation activities to be completed during the grant period clearly support:
  - o Reduction of program administrative errors in error-prone LEAs and schools; and
  - o Implementation of viable solutions to improve program integrity, including the areas of application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming; and
- The performance measures and methods for evaluating project performance during the grant period and impact to program integrity after project completion are realistic, measureable and clearly defined.

**Project Planning Design and Management (35 points)**

- The project organization, project management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, risk management planning, system development lifecycle process planning where applicable, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, measuring performance, monitoring progress, etc.) indicate that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the implementation project successfully to meet the goals of the project; and
- The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the Implementation grant time frame.

**Budget Plan (20 points)**

- The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project;
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives;
- The budget includes a line item description for every estimated cost and shows how it supports the project goals;

- Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated;
- If indirect costs are included, the applicant agency's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency is provided and the indirect cost rate is applied correctly to allowable direct costs.

**Sustainability and Transferability (10 points)**

- The proposed implementation project is likely to produce outcomes and information that not only will aid the applicant State agency in accomplishing program improvements, but also will produce knowledge that is transferable to other State agencies for similar improvement projects; and
- The applicant demonstrates that the State agency has the capacity to implement and sustain the program improvements resulting from the Implementation grant activities after the ART Implementation Grant funding ends.

**\*\*Projects that Include U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Place Based Initiatives**

Proposals with projects that include interventions in communities that have been designated USDA Place Based Initiatives will receive five (5) bonus points. See section VIII, Other Information.

**Selection Process**

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by type (planning or implementation) and by score within the type, starting with the highest score. Applications with the highest scores for each type will be recommended to receive funding. FNS intends to award up to a total of \$300,000 in ART Planning Grants. The remaining available funds will be awarded as Implementation grants to the highest scoring Implementation grant applications.

Grantees will be selected on a competitive basis, based on an objective review of their proposals according to the technical evaluation criteria outlined in this RFA. A list of all applications deemed eligible for award will be submitted to the Selection Official for a final decision regarding funding. The Selection Official has ultimate authority to decide which applications are approved and funded, and *generally* will adhere to the recommendations made by the reviewers, provided that funding is available. However, the Selection Official reserves the right to award a grant to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, or project diversity. The Selection Official may take other factors into account when granting awards and/or not awarding a particular award.

Other USDA or FNS priorities the Selection Official may consider include, but are not limited to, the innovation demonstrated in an application, agency priorities, and the scores assigned by the technical review panels. The Selection Official may also determine that, based on their scores, few of the applications are of technical merit. In such a case, FNS may make fewer awards or smaller awards than expected, or make no awards. In addition, FNS reserves the option to select one or more lower rated applications in order to achieve a diversity of projects and regional representation. 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.

### **Determination of Award Amounts**

As part of the technical review process, FNS will review applicants' proposed budgets to ensure that all costs are reasonable, allowable and applicable. Applications selected and approved for funding with budgets that are realistic, well justified, and supported will likely be funded at the requested amounts. However, FNS reserves the right to fund applications out of rank order to achieve priorities identified earlier; or at lesser amounts if FNS determines that the project can be implemented with less funding; or at lesser amounts if Federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards. This is subject to availability of funds.

FNS will review and consider the merit of each grant application and reserves the right to fund only those applications that are able to demonstrate their capability to improve their State's administrative processes and error rates. Additionally, FNS may adjust the amounts requested in the application to ensure that funds are made available at appropriate levels. FNS also reserves the right to suspend or terminate an award for materially failing to perform in accordance with a State's application.

### 3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Date

The anticipated award date is XXXXX X, 20XX

## VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 1. Federal Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions, any contact from an 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.

### 2. Administrative and National Policy 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. Under the Privacy Act of 1974, 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. Furthermore, the applications for authorization contain personally identifying information on individuals doing business with Food and Nutrition Service. Therefore, the Food and Nutrition Service published USDA e-Authentication Service (system of records) July 26, 2006 in the Federal Register Volume 71 page 42346 to specify the uses to be made of the information in this collection. Access to records is limited to those persons who process the records for the specific uses stated in this Privacy Act notice. Records are kept in physically secured rooms and/or cabinets. Paper records are segregated and physically secured in located cabinets. Various methods of computer security limit access to records in automated databases. Any 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

## ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

### **Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions**

None of the funds made available by this or any other 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 a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

### **Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions**

None of the funds made available by this or any other 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 of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

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 System for Award Management (SAM) at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.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 SAM 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 SAM 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 SAM database, and suspension and debarment information from the SAM. 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.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

The Freedom of Information ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, provides individuals with a right to access records in the possession of the Federal Government. The Government may withhold information pursuant to the nine exemptions and the three exclusions contained in the Act.

Application packages submitted in response to this grant solicitation may be subject to FOIA by requests by interested parties. In response to these requests, FNS will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including departmental regulations.

FNS will forward a Business Submitter Notice to the requested applicant's point-of-contact. Applicants will need to review requested materials and submit any recommendations within 15 days from the date of FNS notification. FNS will redact Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

For additional information on the Freedom of Information (FOIA) process, please contact Jennifer Weatherly, FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at [FOIA@fns.usda.gov](mailto:FOIA@fns.usda.gov).

**CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS**

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II. 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 System for Award Management"
- 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 200: "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"

- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA’s implementing regulation of 2 CFR Part 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA “Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 2 CFR Part 418: USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

General Terms and Conditions of the award may be obtained electronically. Please contact the Grants Officer at:

XXXXXX Officer  
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS  
E-mail: [XXXX.XXXX@fns.usda.gov](mailto:XXXX.XXXX@fns.usda.gov)

### 3. Reporting

All State agencies receiving FY 20XX Administrative Review and Training Method II Grants are required to submit the following reports in accordance with the deadlines noted.

#### 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

Progress Reports must be submitted quarterly and include **(in narrative form)**: 1) a brief description of the planned activities for the report period; 2) accomplishments for each activity and completion dates; 3) a description of any deviations from the approved plan—this summary should discuss difficulties encountered and solutions developed; 4) any other unique aspects that would be useful to share; and 5) an overview of plans for the coming quarter. In addition, a final progress report is due to FNS no later than 90 days following the end of the award period. Completion dates and the process for reporting will be provided to those receiving awards.



The recipient may be required to submit performance/progress reports to FNS using SF-PPR, Periodic Progress Report. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

Copies of any deliverables, media or publicity releases/articles and links to materials on websites also should be included or papers resulting from the grant should be attached to the final report. All products should include an acknowledgement of the source of funding. The Federal awarding agency reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes, the copyright in any work developed under a grant, sub-grant, or contract under a grant or sub-grant or any rights of copyright to which a grantee, sub-grantee, or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support. The recipient may be required to submit performance/progress reports to FNS using SF-PPR, Periodic Progress Report.

## VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact the Grants Officer at:

XXXX XXXX, Grants Officer  
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS  
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740  
Alexandra, VA 22301  
E-mail: [XXXX.XXXX@fns.usda.gov](mailto:XXXX.XXXX@fns.usda.gov)

## VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

### **Debriefing Requests**

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of submitted proposals. This information may be useful when preparing future grant proposals. Additional information on debriefing requests will be forwarded to non-selected applicants.

## 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](http://www.grants.gov), by **11:59 PM, Eastern Time, on XXXX X, 20XX**. 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 # 10.579 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](http://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.

**APPENDIX A: 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, as well as forms SF-424 and SF-424A must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fide need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed.

<b>RFA BUDGET CHECKLIST</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Personnel</b>		
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)?		
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>		
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?		
<b>Travel</b>		
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.		
<b>Equipment</b>		
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?		
<b>Supplies</b>		
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?		
<b>Contractual:</b> (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.		
<b>Other</b>		
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.		
<b>Indirect Costs</b>		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent 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 B:**

**FY 20XX ART PLANNING GRANT  
Proposal Narrative and Instructions**

**IMPORTANT - FY 20XX ART PLANNING GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

- ✓ Applications must be submitted to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 pm ET, on June 1, 20XX. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered for funding.
- ✓ When submitted successfully, applicants must notify the FNS Grant Officer Carla Garcia (see email address below) that the application has been accepted by the Grants.gov system.
- ✓ Electronic or paper applications sent via any other method will not be accepted.
- ✓ All questions regarding the application and notifications regarding electronic submission should be referred to the FNS Grant Officer Carla Garcia via email at [carla.garcia@fns.usda.gov](mailto:carla.garcia@fns.usda.gov).

**What to Include in an ART Planning Grant Application Packet**

The Planning grant application packet must include:

1. Fully completed Appendix B template (or other format), including the cover page with abstract and responses to questions 1-7;
2. All required Federal forms: SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL;
3. Signed copy of the applicant agency's approved indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency, if indirect costs are included in budget estimates; and
4. Clear justification for any sole source contracts to be funded under the grant, including references/copies of applicable State statutes, regulations, and policies.

**Proposal Narrative:** For a Planning grant project proposal narrative to be considered complete, applicants must develop their proposal narrative by answering all questions and addressing all items listed in the *FY 20XX ART Planning Grant Proposal Template* table that follows. Applicants may choose a different format, but must address all questions in the order they are listed. You may expand the template boxes as needed to provide a complete answer to each question. The instructions are intended to simplify both the narrative development for applicants and the evaluation process for reviewers.

**Timeline:** ART Planning Grants may be awarded for up to one year. Be sure that the project timeline described in the narrative responses matches the proposed project start and end dates in Section 17 of the SF-424 application form.

**Budget:** Applicants may request funding up to \$XXXXXX for an ART Planning Grant: Be sure that all budget estimates contained in the Appendix B narrative responses match the budget

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Expiration Date: xx/xx/xxxx

estimates entered on the Budget Information Form SF-424A, and the total grant funding requested in Section 18 on the Application for Federal Assistance Form SF-424. Refer to RFA Appendix A and C for detailed instructions and examples on budget calculations.

**FY 20XX ART PLANNING GRANT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

**Cover Page**

**Enter Applicant Contact Information**

<b>State Agency Name and Mailing Address:</b>	<b>Agency Administrator :</b> Name, Job Title & Contact Information (Telephone, Email, Fax)
	<b>Application Contact:</b> Name, Job Title & Contact Information for State agency staff person(s) responsible for the application.

**PROJECT ABSTRACT**

**PROJECT ABSTRACT:** Enter brief abstract (250 word limit) clearly describing the State’s proposed ART Planning Grant project:

**FY 20XX ART PLANNING GRANT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

**1. Project Goals and Objectives:** Explain what you want to accomplish with the Planning grant. What are the project objectives and what administrative review, training and oversight focus area(s) will you address? Explain how this project will help you reduce administrative errors, improve program performance and ensure program integrity. Describe the performance measures you will use to assess the success of your project in meeting your goals and objectives. (Indicate if this project includes interventions in communities that have been designated USDA Place Based Initiatives, as listed in the RFA Section VIII, to receive five bonus points.)

**Enter Response to #1** *[expand as needed]*

**2. Project Design and Organization.** Describe the essential features of the project design, including how you will organize the project to accomplish your goals and objectives.

**Enter Response to #2:** *[expand as needed]*

**3. Proposed Grant Activities:** Provide a brief description of how you propose to use grant funds to (A) identify the reasons for your State’s administrative error rate *and* (B) determine the most effective ways to improve that rate. Your description must be sufficient to provide a *specific* understanding of your proposed grant activities, and *must* include a high level gap analysis to identify briefly where your agency is now with where you want it to be at the end of your project. The analysis activities that you carry out during your Planning grant period



may then include an intensive system or business process analysis to determine what it will take to get you to where you want to be and the most efficient way to get there (i.e., is online training the answer, do you need to develop a new automated process for data collection and monitoring, etc.).

Examples of potential grant activities include, *but are not limited to*:

- Conducting an internal analysis of your administrative system(s) and processes for training, monitoring, reporting and analyzing LEA performance and operational data. Such an analysis might cover a variety of topics, such as Information Technology (IT) capabilities and deficiencies, ability to identify and target error-prone LEAs for improvement initiatives, policies and procedures governing administrative performance requirements, staffing levels and needs, and inter-agency operations and cooperation.
- Developing business cases by conducting feasibility studies, cost/benefit analyses and detailed gap analyses to support your agency's decision making for selecting technology solutions and proposing an implementation project.
- Hiring a contractor, consultant, or university to conduct such analyses or studies.
- Following completion of research, analyses, and/or studies described above, using the planning activity results to develop an implementation project plan and ART Implementation Grant Application to be submitted for FY 20XX funding consideration.

**Enter Response to #3:** *[expand as needed]*

**4. Timeline:** Provide your proposed schedule for carrying out the ART Planning Grant activities. At minimum, your timeline must identify significant project milestones, indicate when those milestones will be met, and indicate when the grant activities will be completed. Please note that Planning grants *must* be completed no later than one year after the Planning grant award date.

**Enter Response to #4:** *[expand as needed]*

**5. Project Management and Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results (i.e., help with reduction of administrative errors and ensuring program integrity).

**Enter Response to #5:** *[expand as needed]*

**6. Staffing:** Identify the staff who will manage the grant. At minimum, you must:

- Identify the employees you will assign to manage the grant. However, if such employees are not currently on your staff, indicate whether you have the resources to hire them and (if so) when you intend to do so;
- For current employees, describe relevant qualifications and experience, and projected roles and responsibilities. For employees not currently on your staff, describe the qualifications and/or experience you will use to identify potential hires;
- Include a discussion or plan on how activities will be fulfilled should key staff leave or be removed;
- Indicate what percentage of each identified employee's time will be spent managing the grant; and
- Indicate the total cost of these staffing levels.

**Enter Response to #6:** *[expand as needed]*

**7. Budget:** Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of ART Planning Grant funds and justifying costs. Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. The budget must include a line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals.

Please use the Budget Checklist provided in **Appendix A** as a guide to ensure you have addressed all budget items. See OMB Cost Principles in 2 CFR Part 200, which addresses allowable costs. Also, Appendix C (ART Implementation Grant Proposal Template) contains budget examples and tips that are applicable to cost estimations for the ART Planning Grant as well. Refer to Appendix C for further details.

**Enter Response to #7:** *[expand as needed]*

## APPENDIX C:

**FY 20XX ART IMPLEMENTATION GRANT  
Proposal Template and Instructions****IMPORTANT - FY 20XX ART IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

- ✓ Applications must be submitted to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 pm ET, on June 1, 20XX. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered for funding.
- ✓ When submitted successfully, applicants must notify the FNS Grant Officer Carla Garcia (see email address below) that the application has been accepted by the Grants.gov system.
- ✓ Electronic or paper applications sent via any other method will not be accepted.
- ✓ All questions regarding the application and notifications regarding electronic submission should be referred to the FNS Grant Officer Carla Garcia via email at [carla.garcia@fns.usda.gov](mailto:carla.garcia@fns.usda.gov).

**Introduction**

For an Implementation project proposal to be considered complete, applicants must structure and develop their project proposal by addressing **all** items in the ***FY 20XX ART Implementation Grant Proposal Template & Instructions*** that follows. Applicants may choose a different format, but all questions must be answered in the order listed in this template. The questions are designed to guide applicants in thinking through all aspects of proposed solutions, with particular emphasis on reducing risks associated with technology related activities, building the project budget, and bringing consistency to the proposal process for evaluation purposes. The responses also establish the foundation for an overall project management plan prior to grant award. This is intended to facilitate moving forward with development of a full project management plan and successful execution of the ART Implementation Grant project for those State agencies whose applications are approved for grant funding.

**How to Use the Application Template**

Applicants may copy and use the template as it appears, or set up their own format ***as long as responses to all items are numbered and addressed in the order listed in the template***. The template contains reminder notes and tips with scenarios and suggestions for the kind of content to include in the proposal when describing the requested elements. If using the template, first read and delete the notes and tips and then insert your response. You may use (and expand as needed) the sample tables throughout or insert your own table format to address specific questions. It is permissible to use the template for some items and your own format for others, as long as all items are numbered and addressed in the order listed. Additional information may be attached to the application narratives as needed. A 35-page limit for the ART Implementation Grant Appendix C response applies to the content of the narrative proposal (responses to questions 1-22) and any attached explanations. The limit does not include other required forms

and supporting documents, such as the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, indirect cost agreement, letters of support, and other required Federal forms and assurance statements.

FNS understands that your agency may not have fully addressed every element detailed in the template prior to submission of a grant application. If an element is not addressed in your application proposal, your application should explain why. **Applications must have an entry for every item.** For each element of the guidance document, please do one of the following:

1. Respond to the element;
2. State that this element will be addressed if the State agency is awarded a grant;
3. State that this element is not applicable and why; or
4. If there is duplication with a previous answer(s), explain that the answer is included in the response to a previous item and give the referenced item and response number. However, be sure that you have provided sufficient information to fully respond to both items.

Sample worksheets for building the budget (personnel, travel, equipment related requests, etc.) are included as part of the template. **FNS encourages your agency to replicate the worksheets in your proposal if you find them to be a helpful model for your agency. Applicants are not required to use the worksheet formats displayed in this document.** Again, however, applicants should provide all information requested in the sample worksheets, in addition to other narrative information to explain estimates and calculations. Please use the Budget Checklist provided in **Appendix A** (attached to Request for Applications, RFA) as an additional guide to ensure you have addressed all budget items. See **OMB Cost Principles, 2 CFR Part 200**, which addresses allowable costs.

**Important Note:** Please check to be sure that all budget estimates contained in the Appendix C narrative responses match the budget estimates entered on the Budget Information Form SF-424A, and the total grant funding requested in Section 18 on the Application for Federal Assistance Form SF-424. Also be sure that the project timeline described in the narrative responses matches the proposed project start and end dates in Section 17 of the SF-424 application form.

### **Application Packet**

The Implementation grant application packet must include:

1. Fully completed Appendix C proposal template (or other format), including cover page and questions 1 through 22;
2. All required Federal forms: SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL (links to forms can be accessed at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html> or at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/grants>)
3. Signed copy of the applicant agency's most current approved indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency, if indirect costs are included in budget estimates; and
4. Clear justification for any sole source contracts to be funded under the grant, including references/copies of applicable State statutes, regulations, and policies.

**NOTE: Examples and tips are given for questions in the template. To use the template, review the tips and examples, then delete the tips and example data in each question and add your own information. Expand as much as needed to answer every question. You also may copy the questions to another format, if you prefer.**

## FY 20XX ART IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

### COVER PAGE

#### Enter Applicant Contact Information

**State Agency Name and Mailing Address:**

**Agency Administrator :** Name, Job Title & Contact Information (Telephone, Email, Fax)

**Application Contact:** Name, Job Title & Contact Information for State agency staff person(s) responsible for the application.

### ART GRANT APPLICATION PURPOSE

**The purpose of this grant funding is to decrease administrative errors in those local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools identified by State agencies that are experiencing, or likely to experience, Program administrative errors. State agencies should focus on one or more of the following areas. Mark all that apply to your State agency's ART Implementation Grant application:**

- Training of School Food Authority (SFA) administrative personnel in application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming procedures. Training may include internet-based training sessions;
- Oversight and training activities focused on the nutritional quality of school meals;
- Modifications that may be necessary to update processes and systems to comply with revisions to the new Administrative Review process first implemented in school year 2013-2014; and
- Technology improvements which demonstrate an ability to address administrative errors through the use of targeted monitoring and increased training in error-prone LEAs. States choosing this option must clearly demonstrate how the proposed technology can be used to implement State-level activities, specifically review and

## FY 20XX ART IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

training activities associated with error prone LEAs.

**PROJECT ABSTRACT:** Enter brief abstract (250 word limit) summarizing the State’s need for improvement in administrative training and oversight processes, project goals, objectives and proposed solution(s):

### PROJECT PURPOSE, GOALS AND IMPACT ON PROGRAM INTEGRITY

**1. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND: Provide a brief description of the FNS school meals programs operating in your state and an overview summarizing your agency’s challenges in reducing errors in administering these programs at the LEA level. Describe where gaps exist in program operations, training and oversight (systems, data, training resources, etc.) and how the grant funding will allow your agency to address these challenges to improve Program integrity.**

*[Tip: Explain the situation or factor(s) (number, size, location of LEAs; relevant IT processes; policies and procedures; staffing, reporting, etc.) that impact your State agency’s ability to identify, reduce, and prevent errors in administering school meals programs at the LEA level. Explain current processes and where there are weaknesses or missing pieces and how the grant funding would assist the State agency in identifying and working with error prone or at-risk LEAs.]*

**2. PROJECT PURPOSE, GOALS AND PERFORMANCE: Summarize the project goals, objectives and proposed solution(s) that will address the gaps identified in question #1. For each project goal, describe the performance measures that will be used to evaluate the outcomes of your project activities to determine whether your project is successful in meeting your goals and objectives and reducing Program administrative errors within the State. (Indicate if this project includes interventions in communities that have been designated USDA Place Based Initiatives, as listed in the RFA Section VIII, to receive five bonus points.)**

*[Tip: Explain what your agency expects to accomplish through the proposed project (e.g., reducing data errors, identifying error-prone LEAs, improving accuracy in application and claiming processes) and explain the proposed solution(s) that will help your project team accomplish your goals (e.g., developing a system interface to improve the quality assurance of incoming data reports from LEAs, developing online training on applications, certification and verification, counting and claiming). Then define what “success” of the proposed project looks like, once the gaps have been*

**FY 20XX ART IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

fully identified and solutions proposed in the grant application have been implemented.  
**IMPORTANT: Explain how the State agency will measure success and be able to demonstrate whether the purpose of the ART Grant has been met (e.g., what is the agency now able to do/offer/analyze, etc., that it couldn't before? Once the proposed solution is completed, how will you measure whether program integrity is improved and errors reduced? What is impacted as a result of this? How will you measure that the information or solution, once the proposed solution is completed, is helping to reduce the number of errors in error prone or high risk LEAs?)** Note: specific measures related to details of implementing the various phases of the grant project itself are to be reported in the Project Schedule and Risk Management Sections found later in Appendix C.  
**Resource:** "Defining and Measuring Success Criteria" presentation is available on the PartnerWeb under the "CN Technology" folder of the Child Nutrition Program resource tab. Also, a "Defining and Measuring Success Worksheet" is also available in the same folder of the PartnerWeb; the worksheet can be used as a guide for completing question #2.]

Sample Table: Project Goals, Objectives, Solutions and Performance Measure

**Project Goal 1:**

Objectives	Proposed Solutions
A.	
B.	

**Project Goal 1 Performance Measures and method of evaluating error reduction impact of solution after implementation:**

[Tip: What are the indicators that would show the results of the ART Grant funding? What needs to be measured to show change has occurred?]

**Project Goal 2:**

Objectives	Proposed Solutions
A.	
B.	

**Project Goal 2 Performance Measures and method of evaluating error reduction impact of solution after implementation:**



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*[Tip: What are the indicators that would show the results of the ART Grant funding? What needs to be measured to show change has occurred?]*

**PROJECT PLANNING, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT**

**3. PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS:**

- a) Identify the internal entities (offices within your agency) and external entities (LEAs, other experts or key partners, other government agencies) the State agency engaged in planning a solution(s) and developing this grant proposal. Explain briefly the role each played during your project planning and solution development processes and the steps taken to ensure the proposed project solutions will be compatible with other State government and LEA business processes.**

*[Tip: Review your proposed solution(s) and list all of the offices within your organization that need to collaborate with your team to achieve project success according to the established time and budget requirements. These are the offices you have contacted (or will contact) concerning integration of the project with their business processes. You should work with internal offices such as IT, Finance, Acquisition, Human Resources, Communications, and/or any other applicable internal or external offices such as the LEA or point of sale vendors used by the LEA to understand how initiatives (e.g., enhancing an IT solution, providing end-user training) will impact current systems, financial planning and payment processes, and internal training policies.]*

- b) Identify the required partners (internal and external agencies, stakeholder groups, etc.) or vendors that will work with your State agency to successfully complete the project. Explain their roles in the project and steps you have taken to ensure their commitment and availability to partner with your agency in carrying out the proposed implementation activities and sustaining the solutions following implementation, as applicable.**

*[Tip: Consider those internal and external offices, organizations, and vendors whose assistance or contributions may directly impact the success of the project, including progress toward meeting key project milestones, deliverables, and staying on schedule. Name the partners, and indicate how the collaboration between the project team and partners will strengthen your agency's project proposal application and their role if any with ongoing implementation once the project is fully completed. Letters of support or partnership are not required; however, they may demonstrate a well-supported project plan. Letters of support will not count in the 35-page limit for the narrative proposal.]*

To avoid duplication, a table such as the following may be used to list the internal and external entities described in 3a and 3b combined.

*Sample Table: Internal and External Entities Involved with Project Planning and/or Implementation*

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Organization and Contact Name	Brief Description of Connection to Project in <u>Planning/Solution Development and/or Implementation</u>	Check Phase	
		3a Planning	3b Implem
1.			
2.			

**4. TIMELINE: List the proposed grant project timeline for each key phase of the project, including major milestones and deliverables, with estimated start and end dates for each. Assume a start date no earlier than 90 days from the Request for Applications due date.**

*[Tip: Describe how long each phase of your project will take and include the key milestones and deliverables mapped to each phase. For example, provide a timeline with milestone information for: each phase of the project and major task areas necessary for accomplishing a solution; Launch period for each solution; Implementation period for each solution; Operations period for each applicable solution and major task areas necessary for accomplishing a solution; Major benchmark and deliverable dates; and Anticipated project completion date. Applicants need to demonstrate a realistic approach to planning the project timeline. It is strongly recommended that offices within your State agency are consulted to develop a realistic timeline (e.g., State procurement office if the proposal includes a procurement task, State technology division if the proposal includes in-house system development). A project timeline will help reduce extension requests. Refer to the Sample Timeline Table below as a sample method to provide timeline details within your proposal.]*

Sample Table: Proposed Timeline with Key Phases, Major Milestones, Deliverables & Dates

Key Phases and Major Tasks	Begin Date	Major Milestones	Target Date	Deliverables	End Date
(Example) Grant Project Management	9/01/17	- Assess all required deliverables and assign staff and completion dates to all milestones and deliverables	9/05/17	-Completed Project Plan	9/10/17
		- Risk assessment and recommendations memo based on internal review of project plan and grant requirements	9/10/17	-Completed Risk Management Plan	9/15/17

**5. RISK MANAGEMENT:**

- a) Identify existing and/or probable project risks. Note: Indicating there are no risks, is not a reasonable approach to the project. All projects involve some risks, (i.e. unexpected change in staff, unforeseen costs, etc.).**

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*[Tip: To provide information on your project’s risks, your agency and partners should consider the realities of the work involved that are exposed to potential breakdown. Causes of risks may include any of the following, as well as others: a complex timeline, inability to procure an acceptable vendor in time to meet the project timeline, unexpected project costs, use of flawed data, or involvement of a high number of partners that have not traditionally worked together, inadequate requirements for system development, system testing failures, etc. Some risks may be known or assumed in advance, while other risks are seen as potential or probable. **Resource:** A presentation on Risk Management is available on the PartnerWeb under the “CN Technology” folder of the Child Nutrition Program resource tab.]*

- b) Briefly describe how the project will be managed to minimize overall risks. In reference to the risks identified in #5a above, explain what actions the project team and partners will take to reduce the potential negative impacts from those risks. Describe the processes that the State agency will implement to monitor, identify and mitigate risks that become known throughout the life of the project, in addition to those identified upfront before the project begins.**

*[Tip: Describe how the State agency will track and monitor for project risks throughout the project. In describing actions that will be taken to minimize identified and/or probable risk(s), address what actions the agency plans to take to mitigate the risk and reduce the potential for negative outcomes. Give responses specific to the potential risks already identified in #5a, as well as the processes you will put in place to mitigate risks that surface after the project begins.]*

**6. PROJECT TRACKING AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT: Briefly describe how the project will be managed to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results (i.e., reduce administrative errors and ensures Program integrity). Include a description of the method(s) and tools that will be used to track project progress, ensure that project risks are identified and mitigated, and ensure the quality and acceptability of deliverables throughout the project. Indicate the frequency and method(s) that will be used for project monitoring and tracking.**

*[Tip: Provide information on how often the project schedule will be reviewed and the process for adjusting the schedule; what will be the processes for monitoring budgeted costs and deliverables; list the tools that will be used to help manage the grant, e.g., Microsoft Excel to track budget estimates (forecasts and actual); requirements traceability matrix for testing all system requirements; review/approval process for key deliverables using Microsoft Project (or other tools); and checklists for compliance with project requirements.]*

*Example explanation, “Two project assistants, R. Thompson and J. Smith, will create an Excel tracking sheet tool with key milestones and budget details for every phase central to accomplishing each deliverable. The tool will track the review and approval decision points for each deliverable, including rejection and revision when deliverables do not meet the requirements. Every applicable project accomplishment will be recorded with weekly status updates, after which the project assistants will then load the applicable dates and background information into the tracking sheet tool. At the end of each week the project assistants will produce a report including deadlines that must be met over the next two weeks; milestone dates that have been missed and by how much time; other deadlines that are put at risk due to the unmet milestone(s); and a summary of risks reported back by project staff as vetted by applicable project managers. A process will be in place for all core managers and staff to receive this weekly progress report. The reports will be saved past the period of performance of the grant and corrective project plans will be put in place (by the applicable managers) for milestones and/or deliverables that are delayed by more than 21 days. The Excel tracking sheet*

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*tool will be designed and finalized within a week of the project kick-off."*

**7. STAFFING PLAN: Briefly describe the plan for staffing the grant project with the needed personnel, including the process for identifying and hiring or contracting for needed staff.**

*[Tip: Include a copy of the anticipated organizational chart for all grant project staff showing how they report to the agency administrator identified on the cover page. List title and name of project staff if known. Explain if agency staff will be used and/or if staff or contractors will have to be hired. Briefly define the process to be used for hiring and the anticipated timetable.]*

**8. KEY PERSONNEL: Identify the roles, responsibilities, and level of relevant experience for all project personnel supporting the project at least 20% of the time, or managing key project areas if less than 20% on the project.**

- a) **As part of this response, list the name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) that will be responsible for: 1) monitoring project scope, tracking schedules/costs/resources, monitoring for quality assurance, and submitting progress reports to FNS; 2) verifying overall goals of the grant have been met; 3) measuring results to determine if the project activities are indeed helping to reduce administrative errors in LEAs; and 4) assuring that the plan for sustainability of the project is implemented.**
- b) **Identify the funding source (e.g., ART grant, State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds, or other) for each staff person listed. If a staff person assigned to the project is being transferred from another role currently funded by SAE funds, include an explanation for how the individual's SAE funded duties will be handled once the grant project begins. Note: Staff funded directly by the grant (hired directly by the State agency or via a contract for services) and staff funded by SAE or other means should all be listed here to fully demonstrate the overall project staffing.**
- c) **Indicate whether each identified staff person is a State employee or a contractor.**

*[Tip: The Sample Personnel Table below will help guide you in providing sufficient staffing information, although additional narrative may be needed to fully respond to a), b) and c) above. Regardless of what format is used, indicate the title of the project role, name of staff (if known), whether or not the person is already on board as an existing State employee or contractor, whether the person is internal to the agency but being transferred from other responsibilities, or if the person is yet to be identified and/or hired. Also show the percent of time the staff person will work on the project throughout the grant period and the source of funding for each person. If a staff member is an existing employee paid for through State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds, but you plan to charge this person to the grant, explain how you will replace them on the SAE work previously assigned.]*

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*Sample Personnel Staffing Table*

Position Title	Staff Name	Existing, Transfer, or New Hire / State Staff or Contractor	Project Role & Duties	Minimum Level of Direct Experience Required	Percent Time on Project	Funding Source
(Example) LEA Coordinator	Mary Andrews*	Existing- State Staff	Facilitates applicable project work among LEAs	3 years successful experience in providing similar stakeholder coordination support for CN programs.	50%	ART Grant
(Example) Lead Database Analyst	TBD	New Hire- Contractor	Manage development of new databases for business intelligence tools	5 years successful experience in database development and certification in business intelligence design	100%	ART Grant

(Example) \*A half-time temporary employee will be hired and funded with SAE funds to perform the SAE functions Mary would have done if she were not coordinating activities related to grant.

**9. TRAINING - PURPOSE AND CONTENT: Describe the purpose of any training that is central to the project plan scope.**

*[Tip: Explain why training is needed in the project, including the type of training and the benefits of administering/offering the specified training. Note: Training must be related to new systems developed and/or additional training for administrative reviews or other core purposes related to the ART grant. Training funded with this grant may not supplant other required training.]*

**10. TRAINING – LOGISTICS: Summarize the training logistics – Type of training (in person, online, other), location and number of sessions, length of sessions, who will deliver the training, the audience for each training event, etc. Note: All costs related to proposed training must be reported in the appropriate budget plan cost category: personnel, travel, supplies, contractual, etc. Training related costs are not reported separately on Budget Form SF-424A.**

***[TIP: EXPLAIN WHICH GROUP OF EMPLOYEES (TITLE OF INDIVIDUALS) WILL TAKE THE TRAINING; WHETHER THE TRAINING IS ADMINISTERED ONLINE, BY CD-ROM, OR IS CLASSROOM-BASED; AND SPECIFY THE TRAVEL PLANS (LOCATION, TRAVEL MODE, ETC.) REQUIRED TO ATTEND CLASSROOM-BASED TRAINING. IF USING THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SAMPLE TABLE, PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAIL AS APPLICABLE FOR YOUR PARTICULAR PROJECT. IF YOUR STATE AGENCY PREFERS NOT TO USE THIS TABLE, IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE CONTENT WITHIN THE ART GRANT APPLICATION PROPOSAL DESCRIBING THE TRAINING LOGISTICS.]***

*Sample Training Logistics Table*

Training Name	# Attendees	Participant Description	Location	Travel Requirement
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(Example) ABC Training Course	10	LEA Reporting Analysts	Online	None
(Example) New Procedures Training	500	School Meals Directors & Managers	5 Regional Locations	2 trainers will travel by car to each of 5 Regions- 5 trips, 1.5 days each with one night's lodging and meals each trip.

**11. TECHNOLOGY GAP ANALYSIS: Summarize the gap analysis performed on your current automated processes.**

*[Tip: Provide goals for the future system processes, and a needs assessment to improve the current state of the existing system. This summary should provide evidence that the agency's internal IT staff validated the gap analysis/functionality, and strongly agrees that the technology solution meets the agency's needs and goals stated in the ART grant project proposal.]*

Sample Gap Analysis Table		
End State (Desired)	Current State	Gaps/Action
(Example) Agency is able to collect and report the number of free meals served daily at the site level for each school within each LEA in the State.	System collects and reports meals served monthly at the LEA level, but not daily at the site level.	Require software that will provide capability for collecting and reporting meals served daily at the site level for each school in each LEA in the State.

**12. PROPOSED TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION:**

**a) Briefly summarize the functional requirements and type of technology solution needed for project completion.**

*[Tip: Explain the function, capabilities, and/or features of the system that are required for the success of the project. For example, "System X needs to support input from end users; System X needs to track the number of free meals from school Y; System X needs to track the number of reduced meals from school Y." Include diagrams, charts, or tables for further explanation as needed. In anticipation of this grant, list the hardware/software you have researched as possible candidates to procure: Include hardware/software type and functionality, and identify possible vendors. If there is an upgrade to an existing system, name the hardware/software. In inquiring about items that involve acquisition, FNS reminds agencies that they must comply with all State and Federal acquisition regulations.]*

**b) Summarize the proposed hardware/software configuration.**

*[Tip: Provide details of the proposed new and/or existing systems design. Include information regarding the type of system, hardware/software's platform, data storage methods, data security methods, relevant charts, and diagrams.]*

**c) Explain how the proposed technology solution will fit into your business and organizational needs.**

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*[Tip: Provide details in your agency's proposal that evidences that x, y and z offices have reviewed relevant proposal components and agreed with the feasibility of acquiring such solutions, and on the proposed schedule and cost.]*

- d) If there is an existing system/software application in place with similar functions, describe the integration plans and its ability to integrate with the existing databases.**

*[Tip: Explain how your agency or applicable partner offices would integrate the new equipment/software with the existing system. Provide evidence that the new hardware/software will be able to communicate with the existing system, for example, include verification information from your IT Office describing the integration within the ART project proposal.]*

- e) If there is a need to migrate or convert data to the new system, describe the process.**

*[Tip: Explain what procedures are needed to transfer old data into the new system; describe if and how unused data will be archived, discarded, or cleansed.]*

- f) Describe the test plan for your system/software, including user acceptance testing.**

*[Tip: Describe how you will verify that your system and/or software are functioning properly; provide the high level functional, data, user and system performance testing procedures; and include the test item, risk issues, and features to be tested complete with proposed test schedule, if available.]*

## PROJECT BUDGET PLAN

**13. PLANS FOR ALLOCATING COSTS: If the ART grant project proposal includes the implementation of an automated system solution that will benefit programs other than the FNS school meals programs (for example, developing an automated system that will benefit both the school meal programs and the Child and Adult Care Food Program), the State agency's application must clearly describe the cost allocation methodology that will be used to determine the cost share for each program.**

**Only the cost share that can be reasonably allocated to the school meals program can be charged to the ART Grant funding.** Please describe the State agency's cost allocation methodology, if applicable to this project:

**14. STATE PERSONNEL & FRINGE COSTS: Summarize the projected Level of Effort (LOE), inclusive of time and cost, for project staff that are (or will be) hired directly by the State**

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**agency. Include only personnel costs that will be covered with ART grant funding. If fringe benefits will be charged to the grant, include a list or description clearly identifying what has been included in determining the fringe benefit amount. If listing fringe benefit costs as a percentage of total salary, clearly show methodology for calculating; or if actual cost is known state as such. Fringe benefit costs should be shown by individual. If no fringe benefit costs will be charged to the grant, explain why.**

*Note: Staff hired or expected to be hired as part of a Contract for Services are to be included in the Contractual Costs section (question 18), later in Appendix C. Do not report contractor staff in this section. Also, if indirect costs will be charged on personnel costs, report the indirect costs charged to personnel as part of the Indirect Cost section (question 20), later in Appendix C.*

*[Tip: Describe how the LOE was calculated for staff hours and labor costs to complete project work. The Personnel Cost Breakdown Table will assist in determining Total Cost of Project Personnel to be supported by the grant funding. If using the framework of the sample table, provide additional detail as applicable for your particular project. If your State agency prefers not to use this table, it is necessary to provide content within the ART application proposal describing how LOE estimates were calculated.]*

Sample Level of Effort Table

Quantity	Position Title/Role	Hourly Rate or Annual Salary	Total Hours on ART Grant Project	Direct Personnel Cost to be charged to grant	Fringe Benefit Cost List % of salary or actual cost by individual
(Example) 1	ABC Systems Administrator (2 years on project at 25% time)	\$20/hour	520 hours annually x 2 years = 1040 hours	\$20,800	30% x \$20,800 = \$6,240
(Example) 1	Trainer (1 year on project at 50% time)	\$25/hour	1040 hrs annually x 1 year	\$26,000	30% x \$26,000 = \$7,800
<b>Total Cost of State Personnel supported by ART Grant funding</b>				<b>\$46,800</b>	<b>\$14,040</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>				<b>Section B. Line 6a</b>	<b>Section B. Line 6b</b>

*Example: The 30% fringe benefit cost, was derived by calculating the projected annual total fringe benefit costs for all full time School Program staff and dividing by total salaries. Fringe benefit costs included are single dental plan coverage, single health insurance coverage, \$50,000 in life insurance, long term disability, worker’s compensation, 15 days annual sick leave, and 8 paid holidays.*

**15. TRAVEL COSTS:** Summarize the anticipated travel details and costs for all phases of the ART Grant project. In this section, for each year of the grant period, be sure to include the estimated cost of travel to be charged to the ART grant funding as necessary to accomplish the project. All



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**costs must be itemized and calculations explained.**

*Important: Travel costs for contractors should be included in their Contract for Services and included in the Contractual Costs section (question 18), later in Appendix C. Do not report contractor travel costs in this section. Also, if indirect costs will be charged on travel costs, report the indirect costs charged to travel as part of the Indirect Cost section (question 20), later in Appendix C. Include in this section travel costs associated with two State staff attending annual 3-day ART Grantee meetings sponsored by FNS (as noted in RFA) during each year of the grant period.*

*[Tip: Include the positions of individuals traveling, the purpose of travel, projected location and mode of travel. The sample Travel Cost Breakdown Table will assist in determining Total Costs for Travel to be supported by the grant funding. Provide sufficient detail within the travel categories to identify if the travel is related to training (noted above), meetings with stakeholders for input, visits for a software demonstration, etc. Only actual travel related costs should be reported here. If using the framework of the sample table, provide additional detail as applicable for your particular project. Applicants may choose to use a different format, but must provide all the requested information.]*

Sample Travel Cost Breakdown				
Name(s) or Position(s) Traveling & Purpose	Type of Expense	Quantity	Unit Rate	Line Total
<i>(Example) Trainer traveling to deliver 2 one day regionally based application training sessions for LEA staff,</i>	Mode of Travel: Rental of car (unlimited mileage) for 3 days	3days	\$60/day	\$180
	Meal and/or Per Diem Expenses:	3 days	\$70/day	\$210
	Lodging Expenses:	2 nights	\$100/night	\$200
	Other Travel related expenses:			
<b>Total for Travel</b>				<b>\$590</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>				<b>Section B. Line 6c</b>

**16. EQUIPMENT COSTS: Provide estimated costs for all hardware and other equipment items costing \$5,000 or more.**

*(Equipment items costing less than \$5,000 should be listed as supplies in Cost of Supplies*

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(question 17) or as Other Costs (question 19), later in Appendix C). Costs reported as equipment should be consistent with OMB, State and local policies for capital costs.

[Tip: List the hardware/software product and how many items are needed to implement your project proposal.]

Sample Hardware/Equipment Cost Breakdown			
Item of Equipment	Quantity	Cost per Item	Total Cost
(Example) Server (describe type, size and purpose)	2	\$10,000	\$20,000
<b>Equipment Total</b>			<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>			<b>Section B. Line 6d</b>

**17. COSTS FOR SUPPLIES:** Summarize the estimated cost for all supplies. Costs reported as supplies should be consistent with OMB, State and local policies.

Note: if indirect costs will be charged on supply costs, report the indirect costs charged to supplies as part of the Indirect Cost Section (question 20), later in Appendix C.

[Tip: Include all incidental costs to be charged to the grant.]

Sample Supply Cost Breakdown				
Supply Categories	Purpose	Quantity	Unit Rate	Line Total
(Example) Workbooks for New Procedures Training	Training Manual	500 copies	\$20/copy	\$1,000
(Example) Laptops	Testing & training	2	\$1,500/ea	\$3,000
Training Related Expenses:				
List items				
General Grant Supply Expenses:				
List items				
<b>Total for Supplies</b>				<b>\$4,000</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>				<b>Section B. Line 6e</b>

**18. CONTRACTUAL COSTS:**

- a) Identify all grant work that will be outsourced to a contractor for completion. List each contract, what services will be provided under each contract, and describe the procurement process the State agency will follow to acquire the listed services. If the procurement process will vary for different contracts, describe each process separately. Be sure that all procurement processes are accounted for in the project timeline and milestones. If contractual costs are included in budget estimate and the contractor is (or will be) acquired without competition, the applicant must

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**provide justification for a sole source contract (e.g., State statute or policy references describing circumstances under which competition is not required).**

*[Tip: All contracting must be in compliance with the State and Federal procurement policies and regulations. Contracting related to the use of these grant funds will be the same as for all other federal dollars.]*

**b) Summarize the estimated cost for all Contractual Costs and explain what work is represented by the cost. (Listing only a total cost is not acceptable. Sufficient detail must be provided to allow FNS to determine how the State agency came up with the estimate(s) for any proposed contracts.)**

*[Tip: Include all contracted costs to be charged to the grant, such as training consultants, software developers, software hosting services, etc.]*

*Sample Contractual Cost Breakdown*

Contractual Categories	Purpose	Quantity	Unit Rate	Line Total
<i>(Example) Contract #1 with expert to Train the Trainers for State agency to conduct Regional New Procedures Training</i>	<i>Develop Training &amp; Train LEAs on new procedures</i>	1	<i>\$75/hr for 1,000 hrs</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>(Example) Contract #2 for Software upgrades - software developers</i>	<i>Develop web portal and reporting tools.</i>	2	<i>\$60/hr for 2000 hrs = \$120,000 ea</i>	<i>\$240,000</i>
Training Related Expenses:				
<i>List items</i>				
System Development Contract:				
<i>List items</i>				
Other Contractual expenses:				
<i>List items</i>				
<b>Total for Contractual Costs</b>				<b>\$315,000</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>				<b>Section B, Line 6f.</b>

**19. OTHER COSTS: Summarize the estimated cost for all Other Costs. Costs reported as Other should be consistent with OMB, State and local policies.**

*[Tip: Include all incidental/other costs to be charged to the grant that do not belong in another budget category.]*

*Sample Other Cost Breakdown*

Other Categories	Purpose	Quantity	Unit Rate	Line Total
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(Example) Printing Costs	Registration	10	\$100	\$1,000
(Example) Software licenses	Staff access to new software	200	1,000	\$200,000
List items				
<b>Total Other Costs</b>				<b>\$201,000</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>				<b>Section B. Line 6h</b>

**20. INDIRECT COSTS:** If indirect costs are included in the State agency’s cost estimates, you must submit a copy of your agency’s current approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (ICRA) with a Federal agency. Only indirect costs that comply with the ICRA will be allowed. Explain what rate was used and to what direct costs it was applied. Show your calculations.

*Note: be sure all indirect charges included are consistent with the State agency’s ICRA, including applicability to sub awards and other contracts. Only charge indirect costs to allowable items per the ICRA. (Refer to See OMB Cost Principles, 2 CFR Part 200.)*

*[Tip: Explain how the indirect costs were calculated – to what costs the ICRA was applied and the rate that was used. Include a copy of the signed and approved indirect cost rate agreement and any necessary explanation.]*

Sample Indirect Cost Breakdown		
Indirect Cost Rate charged to the Grant as follows:	Total Direct Costs	Direct Costs to Which Indirect Cost Rate Can be Applied
(Example) Personnel Salary Costs	\$46,800	\$46,800
Personnel Fringe Benefit Costs	\$14,040	\$14,040
Travel Costs	\$590	\$590
Equipment (Indirect not allowed for capital equip over \$5,000)	\$20,000	0
Supplies (including equipment costing less than \$5,000)	\$4,000	\$4,000
Contract #1 (usually applied to first \$25,000 per year- see ICRA)	\$75,000 (1 yr)	\$25,000
Contract #2 (usually applied to first \$25,000 per year - see ICRA)	\$240,000 (2 yr)	\$50,000
Other Direct Costs	\$201,000	\$201,000
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$601,430</b>	<b>\$341,430</b>
Indirect Cost Rate		10%
<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>		<b>\$34,143</b>
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>		<b>Section B. Line 6j</b>

**Include a Table Showing Total Direct and Indirect Costs being requested.**

Sample Total Estimated Grant Budget
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Indirect Cost Rate charged to the Grant as follows	Totals
Total Direct Costs <i>(Example)</i>	\$601,430
Total Indirect Costs <i>(Example)</i>	\$34,143
Total Estimated Project Costs= Grant Total to be Requested <i>(Example)</i>	\$635,573
<b>Enter Totals on Form SF-424A as noted</b>	<b>Section B. Line 6k</b>

**PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY**

**21. SUSTAINABILITY: Describe the plans to maintain the overall project, system and/or software. Indicate the cost of ongoing maintenance and how the State will fund these costs to keep the system in operation beyond the grant period.**

*[Tip: If there are ongoing costs associated with the grant purposes after the grant ends, describe how these costs will be covered. If the State agency anticipates a need for periodic updates to the project or system, describe how this will be accomplished. Provide information on procedures to sustain the project, system and/or software: Define the support environment, roles and responsibilities, and maintenance activities; monitor the system for continued performance and provide the necessary system modifications; and identify the support environment, including the development, maintenance, and target host environments.]*

**Ongoing Operation and Maintenance Costs after grant ends (These *will not be charged to the grant*, but are costs estimates needed for the State agency to plan and budget for sustainability of the project)**

	Quantity	Unit/Hourly Rate	Ongoing Operation & Maintenance Cost Total	How costs will be funded
<i>(Example) Maintenance contractor</i>	1	\$50.00/hr	200 hrs x \$50 = \$10,000 annually	State IT Funds
<i>(Example) Vendor annual maintenance fee for 1 year maintenance contract</i>	1 annually	\$10,000	\$10,000 annually	SAE Funds

**22. TRANSFERABILITY: Describe how the proposed implementation project is likely to produce outcomes and information that not only will aid the applicant State agency in accomplishing program improvements, but also will produce knowledge that is transferable to other State agencies for similar improvement projects.**

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**APPENDIX D:**

## **Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire**

### **Purpose**

Recipients of Federal funds must maintain adequate accounting systems that meet the criteria outlined in 2 CFR §200.302 Standards for Financial and Program Management. The responses to this questionnaire are used to assist in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency's (FNS) evaluation of your accounting system to ensure the adequate, appropriate, and transparent use of Federal funds. Failure to comply with the criteria outlined in the regulations above may preclude your organization from receiving an award. This form applies to FNS' competitive and noncompetitive grant programs.

### **Organization Information**

**Legal Organization Name:**

D-U-Ns Number:

## Financial Stability and Quality of Management Systems

Requirement	Yes	No
1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does your organization separate the duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does your organization have a property /inventory management system in place to track location and value of equipment purchased under the award?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Audit Reports and Findings

Requirement	Yes	No
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<b>1. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years? (If the answer is “Yes” and this report was issued under the Single Audit Act please note this in the box below marked “Additional Information” and if not issued under the “Single Audit Act”, please attach a copy or provide a link to the audit report in the Hyperlink space below).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or an “Adverse Opinion”?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Material Weakness” disclosed?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Significant Deficiency” disclosed?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hyperlink (if available):</b>		
<b>Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:</b>		

## Applicant Certification

I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

<b>Authorized Representative’s Signature and Date</b>
<b>Name:</b>
<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Email:</b>