

Appendix B: Announcement Letter of the Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Braddock
Metro Center

DATE: May XX, 2021

SUBJECT: Child Nutrition Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant: Notice of Funding
Availability

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22214

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

In each of the past two fiscal years (FYs) of 2020 and 2021, the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94) and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260) have provided the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) with \$25 million (totaling \$50 million) in State funding for the purposes of developing, improving, and maintaining automated information technology systems use to operate and manage all Child Nutrition (CN) Programs (i.e., School Meal Programs, Summer Food Service Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program). These funds will replace the competitive CN Technology Innovation Grant (TIG), which were previously administered by FNS in FYs 2017 and 2019, and be offered to eligible State agencies via a non-competitive process, per the Appropriations bills. FNS recognizes that State CN technology investments are essential to improving program accountability, data accuracy, program performance measurement, and the capacity to identify and target error-prone areas within and across the CN Programs at the State and Local Educational Agency or Sponsor Organization. Therefore, we strongly encourage every eligible State agency to apply for this non-competitive grant opportunity.

Eligibility and Funding Levels

In FY 2021, 54 States and territories (69 State agencies) are administering the CN Programs and, therefore, eligible to receive the Non-competitive TIG (nTIG). All 54 eligible States and territories will receive an equal distribution based on the \$50 million available funds (from FYs 2020 and 2021). Each State will be offered approximately \$925,926 for the purposes described herein.

In States where more than one (1) eligible agency administers the CN Programs, the funding will be divided among those agencies based on the same distribution percentages used in the State Administrative Expense funding formula, as described in Section 7 of the Child Nutrition Act and per Title 7, Part 235 of the Code of Federal Regulations. An nTIG funding allocation chart for States with more than one (1) agencies administering the CN Program is provided below.

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State agencies may accept all or a partial amount of the nTIG funds offered. States accepting the nTIG funding will have three (3) years to obligate the grant funding. If a State agency chooses to accept a partial amount of the nTIG funds offered or declines funds entirely, the remaining balance reverts to FNS. The unaccepted nTIG funds will be made available for reallocation and equally distributed to eligible State agencies that indicate a need for greater funding within their grant proposal. See “How to Apply” below and Attachment A, *Child Nutrition’s Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant Application Template*, for more information on the project and budget proposal.

Use of Funds

Potential uses for the nTIG funds may be applied toward planning and/or implementation purposes which include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- Planning activities, such as:
 - Feasibility studies and cost/benefit analyses to plan for automation projects;
 - Conducting an internal review of the State’s/LEAs/SOs data and administrative processes;
 - Hiring a contractor or university to conduct a study of the processes and recommend solutions;
 - Consulting with stakeholders; and/or
 - Assessing current training and oversight capabilities, needs and effective training.

- Implementation activities, such as:
 - Web-based software;
 - Uniform interfaces between diverse systems;
 - Interfaces to improve automation between State and local agencies, including subgrant awards to local Sponsor Organizations or Local Education Agency;
 - Technology equipment and/or software;
 - Other innovative business automation solutions to improve program operation efficiencies, accountability, monitoring and overall program integrity at the State and local levels;
 - Hiring contractors such as business analyst, project manager, program developer;
 - Training for staff and/or local Sponsor Organizations or Local Education Agency on new technology module(s) or equipment; and/or
 - Purchase hardware to implement changes accordingly.

FNS has issued a series of memoranda pertaining to topics related to State information technology solutions replacement or upgrade. This series, along with other valuable resources, can be found in the CN Program’s “Technology Training and Resources” folder on the FNS PartnerWeb at <https://partnerweb.usda.gov/sites/CNP/cndpolicy2/SitePages/TechnologyTrainingAndResources.aspx>.

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How to Apply:

To apply for an nTIG, interested State agencies must submit, via www.Grants.gov, a narrative project proposal not to exceed three (3) pages, and accompanying budget narrative not to exceed two (2) pages (in total, not to exceed five (5) pages). This application must be received **no later than close of business DAY, MONTH XX, 2021**. Application instructions and template are attached, see Appendix A, *Child Nutrition's Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant Application Template*.

Project Proposal: The project proposal **must** include the following:

- The amount of Federal funds requested;
 - Requested funding must not exceed \$925,926, or the allocated amount described in the allocation chart provided below if your State has more than one (1) agencies administering the CN Programs.
- A description of how the State agency would fulfill the purpose of developing, improving, and/or maintaining the automated information technology systems to operate and manage the for the CN Programs (i.e., School Meal Programs, Summer Food Service Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program); and
- The name(s) and title(s) of individual(s), or future title of position if not yet filled, whether the identified person is a State employee or a contract, that will be responsible for:
 - Monitoring project scope, tracking schedules/costs/resources, monitoring for quality assurance, and submitting progress reports to FNS;
 - Verifying overall goals of the grant have been met;
 - Measuring results to determine if the project goals, objectives and activities are increasing communication efficiencies in technology systems to improve program and data integrity; and
 - Assuring that the plan for sustainability of the project is implemented.

Budget Proposal: The budget narrative **must** include the following:

- A narrative description of the Federal funds requested in SF-424A, including calculations detailing how these funds requested were derived. Describe costs such as:
 - State personnel and fringe benefits;
 - Travel;
 - Equipment;
 - Supplies;
 - Contractual;
 - Other (e.g., printing, software licenses); and
 - Indirect.
- Estimated cost of travel and time for two State project staff to participate in a bi-annual CNAAT Training event held in the fall for 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, and assume next event occurring in 2022; and

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- If applicable, one (1) additional page beyond the 5-page project and budget proposal limit is allowable for answering question 7 within the template. See Attachment A, *Child Nutrition's Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant Application Template*.

Note: nTIG funds may be used for maintenance and operations expenses, however, no more than 15% of the State agencies' total budget may be used for these costs.

Grants.gov: State agencies must apply for the nTIG funds through the Grants.gov web portal at www.grants.gov. From the home page, click "Get Started", then search for the opportunity package. This funding opportunity number is: **USDA-FNS-CN-NTIG-21**

Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov portal will not be considered. In order to submit an application to the Grants.gov system, applicants must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register in both the new System for Award Management (SAM) and on Grants.gov.

The following required grant application forms are found in the application package on Grants.gov.

- SF-424 Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 - Requested funding must not exceed \$925,926, or the allocated amount described in the allocation chart provided below if your State has more than one (1) agencies administering the CN Program.
- SF-424A Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
 - Please submit a budget request (SF-424 Form) for an amount not to exceed the maximum allocated funds. FNS may adjust the award amount depending on the availability of funds.
- SF-424B 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.**"
- Forms AD-1047-1049 and AD-10-1052, as applicable. The following form is included as an attachment to this letter and should be submitted via Grants.gov with the rest of the application package.
- Financial Stability and Quality Management Questionnaire.

Application Due Date: Complete grant applications must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Daylight Time, on **DAY, MONTH XX, 2021**. Late applications will not be considered. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are submitted. Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding and/or appropriations of funds.

Award and Reporting Requirements

Grant Agreement: When awards are made, State agencies and FNS must sign a FNS-529 Grant Award form. A fully executed FNS-529 agreement, with terms and conditions, will serve as the

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official grant agreement.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this grant project award is: 10.541.

Reporting: Selected applicants will be required to provide bi-annual (two) narrative progress reports utilizing form FNS-908, and provide financial status reports quarterly through the Food Program Reporting System (FPRS). Additional details will be provided in the Terms and Conditions of the Award.

FNS Participation

FNS will provide ongoing evaluation via the bi-annual progress reports and quarterly financial reports to monitor the grantee's project activities and costs are within the nTIG's purpose. FNS may also provide periodic on-site and off-site technical assistance to provide evaluation and guidance on project activities and outputs as they relate to nTIG project, including:

- 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.

State agency's anticipating a need or desire for technical assistance should consider personnel and contractor costs involved in the preparation and participation in technical assistance and evaluation State site visits (estimate one per year at one full day each) and conference calls (estimate two per year at two hours each) with FNS contractors and staff.

nTIG Funding Allocation Chart

Below is the FY 2021 nTIG funds offered to States with more than one (1) agency administering the CN Programs. Total FY 2021 nTIG funding offered *per State* totals \$925,926.

State Agency	FY 2021 nTIG Funding Offered
Arkansas Department of Education	\$ 474,650
Arkansas Department of Human Services	\$ 451,276
Colorado Department of Education	\$ 648,830
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment	\$ 277,096
Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	\$ 578,668
Florida Department of Health	\$ 339,792

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State Agency	FY 2021 nTIG Funding Offered
Florida Department of Elder Affairs	\$ 7,466
Georgia Department of Education	\$ 655,172
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning	\$ 270,754
Illinois State Board of Education	\$ 920,647
Illinois Department on Aging	\$ 5,279
Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education	\$ 632,969
Missouri Department of Health	\$ 292,957
Montana Office of Public Instruction	\$ 579,597
Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services	\$ 346,329
New Mexico Public Education Department	\$ 555,390
New Mexico Children, Youth, & Families Department	\$ 370,536
New York State Education Department	\$ 568,410
New York State Health Department	\$ 357,516
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction	\$ 604,414
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services	\$ 321,512
Oklahoma State Department of Education	\$ 818,498
Oklahoma State Department of Human Services	\$ 107,428
South Carolina Department of Education	\$ 713,302
South Carolina Department of Social Services	\$ 212,624
Tennessee Department of Education	\$ 629,096
Tennessee Department of Human Services	\$ 296,830
Virginia Department of Education	\$ 817,924
Virginia Department of Health	\$ 108,002

If you have further questions on this grant opportunity, please contact your FNS Regional Office.

Jessica Saracino
 Acting Director
 Program Monitoring and Operational Support Division

Attachment

A: Child Nutrition's Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant Application Template

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OMB Burden Statement: This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in the distribution of nTIG funding to eligible States. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to award nTIG funding and monitor grant funding. This collection does not request any personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-[NEW]. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 20 minutes per response for reading the cover memo and approximately 14.8 hours or less per interested state to read, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete all the forms associated with applying for grant funds. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22306 ATTN: PRA (0584-NEW). Do not return the completed form to this address.