

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Fiscal Year 20XX Process and Technology Improvement Grants Competitive Business

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.580

DATES:

RFA Release Date: X X, 20XX

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), X X, 20XX

Award Date: X X, 20XX

OMB Burden Statement: The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0512. The estimated average time required to complete this information collection is 39 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. 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 Services, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314 ATTN: PRA (0584-0512). Do not return the completed form to this address.

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APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This application checklist provides a list of the required documents; however the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) expects that applicants will read the entire Request for Application (RFA) prior to the submission of their application.

In order to apply, **at least four weeks** prior to submission, you must have:

- Obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
- Registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
- Registered in Grants.gov.

The RFA discusses these requirements in Section II “Federal Award Information” on page 3.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- Your application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section V “Application and Submission Information.”
 - The application should be 25 pages or less, excluding the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter(s) of commitment, letter(s) of endorsement, appendices, and required forms.
 - The application includes a line-item budget narrative, formatted in a table.
 - Line-item budget and other budget references in the application must be consistent with the SF-424A form.
- Application should meet priority requirements outlined in Section I “Program Description” and all necessary attachments.

When **preparing your budget**, ensure the following information is included:

- Cost Allocation
 - If other programs will benefit from this project, the costs supported by the grant will only fund the SNAP aspects of the project.
- Personnel
 - Proposal includes all key employees paid for by the grant.
 - Proposal identifies employees by name, position, and title.
 - Proposal reflects employees' current yearly salary as a percentage of time to be devoted to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE).
 - Fringe benefits: the budget includes fringe benefit amount along with type of benefit and basis for computation.
- Travel
 - Expenses are itemized and explained in the budget narrative. For example: origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation, and cost of each trip.
 - Attendee objectives and travel justifications are included in the budget narrative.
 - Basis for lodging estimates are identified in the budget narrative.
- Equipment
 - Equipment costs are justified in the budget narrative.
 - Types of equipment, unit costs, and number of items are listed in the budget narrative, along with basis for cost per item.

- Supplies
 - o Types of supplies, unit costs, and number of items are listed in the budget narrative, along with basis for cost per item.
- Contractual and Consultant Costs
 - o The need for a contractor has been identified in the proposal, and the cost is justified in the budget narrative.
 - o Applicants that are required to issue a bid have provided a narrative explaining the requirement and provided a reasonable estimate for contractual and consultant costs.
- Indirect Cost Information
 - o Either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or, if no agreement exists, the basis of the indirect costs requested. If none requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.
- Other
 - o Any other costs associated with this project are itemized, explained, and reasonable.

As part of the application, applicants must **certify**:

- Grant funds will be used for a new project and will not be used for ongoing costs to carry out an existing project.
- No more than 25% of the required grant funds support outreach activities.

The RFA discusses these requirements in Section II “Federal Award Information” on page 3.

When **submitting** your application, ensure you have submitted the following:

- SF-424 – [Application for Federal Assistance](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – [Budget Information and Instruction Form](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424B – [Assurances for Non-Construction Programs](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-LLL – [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#).
- Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (in Appendix A)
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 Item #15)
- FNS-906 – [Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire](#)

When applicable, application packages are required to include the following documents:

- AD-3030 – [Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Letter(s) of Commitment
- Letter(s) of Endorsement

The IRS determination letter, the letter of commitment, and the letter of endorsement are all discussed in Section V “Application and Submission Information” on page 10.

- [AD-1047](#) - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters Primary Covered Transactions
- [AD-1048](#) - Certification Regarding Department, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions

- [AD-1049](#) - Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative I – For Grantees Other Than Individuals
- [AD-1050](#) - Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative II – For Grantees Who Are Individuals
- [AD-1052](#) - Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace State and State Agencies, Federal Fiscal Year

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

Section 11(t) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (Public Law 116-94), as amended, Grants for Simplified Application and Eligibility Determination Systems and Improved Access to Benefits, authorizes the Food and Nutrition Service Agency (FNS) to annually award up to \$Xmillion* in grants to State agencies; public health, or educational entities; or private nonprofit entities, such as community-based or faith-based organizations, food banks, or other emergency feeding organizations. Grants authorized by Section 11(t), known as Process and Technology Improvement Grants, allow applicants to “develop and implement supplemental nutrition assistance program simplified application and eligibility determination systems.”

Throughout this Request for Applications (RFA), the term “State agencies” refers to the agencies of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam that administer SNAP.

***These awards are contingent upon the availability of funds.**

PURPOSE

Process and Technology Improvement Grants support efforts by State agencies and their community-based and faith-based partners to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) operations and processes.

Fiscal Year 20XX Priorities

New for 20XX: Projects that advance racial equity and inclusion and/or serve underserved populations such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; elderly persons; Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality are especially encouraged. While proposals that target these populations are not required, every project, regardless of focus, **must analyze how their project will impact racial equity and inclusion.** Please see the requirements for the new [Racial Equity and Inclusion](#) section for information on how to conduct this analysis for your proposal.

This grant competition requires applicants to respond to **at least one** of the following three priority areas and to report qualitative and quantitative data in order to measure meeting the objective(s) associated with those priority area(s).

Proposed project activities should be clearly aligned to at least one of these objective(s) in the new Activities/Indicators Tracker under [Section V](#).

- 1. Increase the use of human-centered design in SNAP applications and notices (Objective #1)**

Proposals targeted towards this priority area will aim to increase the use of human-centered design¹ in SNAP applications and notices. Such proposals could include:

- Projects that design applications to better meet the needs of SNAP applicants.
 - Applications with this approach would be easier to understand, shorter, and more user friendly. They would use plain language and consider common errors, identifying opportunities to improve the user experience.
- User testing on notices to better meet participant needs.
- User testing, including reviews with both eligibility workers and selected households, to determine new ways to ask application questions that improve clarity, accuracy, and make them easier to complete.

2. Improve preparedness for public health emergency and pandemic response by strengthening virtual and disaster response operations (Objective #2)

Proposals targeted towards this priority area will implement projects that improve day to day SNAP operations and increase adaptability and responsiveness of SNAP processes.

Such proposals could include:

- Improvements to telephonic interview and signature capabilities.
- Development and/or enhancement of mobile responsive websites and online applications.
- Development of virtual call centers and enhancement of remote work capabilities for eligibility workers.
- Modernization of verification processing such as document imaging, scanning, and categorization software and equipment (such as optical character recognition software, or software to automatically detect document types for upload into client casefiles).
- The development of more streamlined options for applicants to submit verification documents remotely. This might include online options such as client portals or secure text messaging and mobile-optimized websites.
- Staff training for public health emergency, disaster, and pandemic response.

3. Improve SNAP customer service responsiveness and effectiveness (Objective #3)

Proposals targeted towards this priority area should focus on improving SNAP customer service and increasing client access. Such proposals could include:

- Modernizing call centers. Such as:
 - Increasing the tasks call centers can complete by phone.
 - Increasing the ability to handle high call volume and overall responsiveness.
 - Improvements to the training of call center staff.
 - Improvements to call center equipment that will increase overall effectiveness.
 - Engaging in business process improvement efforts.
- Increasing effective partnerships with community partners to improve customer service responsiveness and effectiveness.

¹ <https://methods.18f.gov/about/>

- Collaborating with stakeholders in user testing, focus groups, business process improvement efforts, or other methods to determine ways to improve SNAP customer service.

The examples above are suggestions. FNS welcomes other projects that support these priorities. FNS also highly encourages applicants to propose *innovative* ideas to solve both common and unique problems. Proposed activities should clearly align to these priorities/objectives in the Activities/Indicators Tracker in Section V.

Proposals supporting any of the priority areas above will undoubtedly affect one or more aspects of the SNAP certification process. Proposals must identify how one or more of the following SNAP processes will be improved as a result of the proposed project:

- SNAP Application Intake
- SNAP Application Screening
- Interview
- Verification
- Notices
- Client Reporting
- Recertification
- Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) screening

FNS is particularly interested in projects in any of the priority areas that take advantage of existing, or create new, public-private partnerships² (PPPs) to increase food security in a cost-efficient and accountable manner. PPPs that are of particular interest to FNS³ will leverage expertise from outside the public sector to strengthen services to increase access for SNAP clients or test new technologies that benefit both public and private partners. While project proposals that rely on contractors or consultants to fulfill services are acceptable, they are not considered PPPs for purposes of this RFA.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

FUNDING AND DURATION

Process and Technology Improvement Grants are contingent on the availability of funding. FNS may allocate up to \$X in Fiscal Year (FY) 20XX for these grants. Submitting a grant proposal does not guarantee funding. FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and

² Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is defined as a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility. For purposes of this RFA, PPPs do not include service contracts, which are categorized as public procurement projects.

³ Example: the FY20 award for the San Francisco Human Services Agency features a collaboration with a University of Chicago professor on human-centered design principles.

competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available.

FNS will award the grants through a competitive process and will notify selected grantees of the grant award no later than X X, 20XX. Grantees may use the grant funds for the duration of the project period, which is expected to be X X, 20XX through X X, 20XX. FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and costs after the award of the grantee's contract.

Funding per Award

Generally, FNS awards between X-X grants annually. The amount of each award is dependent on the availability of funding and the number of awards granted. FNS anticipates that funding per award will likely range from \$X to \$X.

Type of Award

FNS will award Process and Technology Improvement Grants in the form of a Federal grant. FNS will provide funding for approved grants through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement.

Procurement Contracts

Grantees may use grant funds to procure contracts for good or services.

Allowable Uses of Funds

- Funds from this RFA are for new projects.
- If the activities funded under this grant are part of a larger eligibility system project with total projected costs exceeding \$X, an Advance Planning Document (APD) must be submitted and approved prior to the expenditure of these grant funds. Guidance on the APD process is available at www.fns.usda.gov/apd/.
- Process and Technology Improvement Grant funded projects may benefit other governmental programs; however, grant funds must only support SNAP's share of the project costs.

Restrictions on Funding Use

- Process and Technology Improvement Grant funds cannot be used for the ongoing cost of carrying out an existing project.
- FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure the applicants are eligible entities and are in compliance with all Program regulations. Projects predicated on waiving SNAP regulations are not allowable. However, if during the grant application period, a State

agency determines a waiver is needed, the State may apply for the waiver, though FNS cannot guarantee the waiver will be approved.

- Projects may not be devoted toward outreach activities. The drafting or printing of informational materials, pure application assistance, screening/pre-qualifying applicants, or other similar activities cannot be funded by Process and Technology Improvement Grants.
- Pre-award costs will not be awarded for these grant projects.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Eligible Applicants

The entities eligible to receive grants under this competition are:

- The 53 State agencies that administer SNAP⁴;
- State or local governments⁴;
- Agencies providing health or welfare services;
- Public health or educational entities; and
- Private non-profit entities⁵ such as community-based or faith-based organizations, food banks, or other emergency feeding organizations.

Note: Any eligible entity that received a Process and Technology Improvement Grant award last fiscal year (FY 20XX) is ineligible to apply and receive a PTI grant this fiscal year (FY 20XX). This restriction only applies to the lead entity on the award (i.e. the recipient whose name appears in block 9 of the awarded project's FNS-529) and not to partner organizations or government agencies on a particular project.

Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching required for this grant.

Number of Applications and Partnership Criteria

As noted above, nongovernmental entities may apply for this grant, either individually with consent from the State agency or in partnership with the State agency.

⁴ State agencies and State and local governments should have the necessary approvals of State officials (such as councils or legislatures) of funding prior to submitting the application. Applicants should also acknowledge in their application that all necessary approvals for funding have been obtained.

⁵ Non-profit organizations are required to submit a copy of the IRS Determination Letter, form 501(c)(3) or proof of application for exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, a list of their Board of Directors if applicable, and their most recent audited financial statements signed by the Treasurer or the Treasurer of the board. Educational entities are also required to submit their most recent financial statements signed by the Treasurer or Treasurer of the board. Applications submitted without these will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from consideration. All corporations, including nonprofit corporations are required to complete the attached representation regarding felony convictions and tax delinquency.

For the purposes of this grant competition, State agencies may submit more than one application each, or enter into more than one partnership. However, if the State submits more than one application, the State must make explicit in each application its relationship to any others. State agencies that submit more than one application should carefully consider the allocation of time stated in each application. State agencies with more than one partner organization may also consider submitting a single application designed to make sub-grants to the partner organizations. Proposals forwarded by any given State agency should request funding for distinct, non-overlapping activities.

FNS has designed this grant competition to allow State agencies to work in concert with nongovernmental entities that wish to apply for this grant through “[Letters of Commitment or Endorsement](#).”

IV. GRANT FORMS AND REQUIREMENTS

PRE-APPLICATION 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 (Office of Management and Budget) 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 FNS imposing special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed. The Federal repository systems FNS will review include:

1. Dun and Bradstreet is a system where applicants establish a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, which the Federal government uses 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;
2. The System for Award Management (SAM), the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry (CCR)/FedReg, Online Representations and Certifications (ORCA), and Excluded Parties List System (EPLS);
3. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) is a database that was established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, AD-3030, Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (if applicable).
5. Do Not Pay (DNP) is a repository to assist Federal agencies detect and prevent improper payments made to vendors, grantees, loan recipients, and beneficiaries.

Some of this information may take days or weeks to complete. Please plan accordingly as applications must be completely submitted in Grants.gov before the application deadline.

Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) Number

In order to submit an application via www.Grants.gov, applicants must have a valid DUNS number and registered in both the SAM and on www.Grants.gov.

Obtaining and Registering a DUNS Number

Please visit the following websites to obtain additional information on how to obtain a DUNS number (<https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>). If your organization does not have a DUNS number 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. It may take 2-3 business days to obtain a DUNS number.

System for Award Management (SAM)

The System for Award Management (SAM) combines the Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. 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. For information regarding SAM see the following link: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/index.jsf>

We strongly encourage applicants to begin the process at least 4 weeks before the due date of the grant solicitation. 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. It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM, however, in some instances, the SAM process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require 5-7 days or more. **Applicants must have a valid SAM registration no later than 3 days prior to the application due date of this solicitation.** All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25. Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete and active should contact SAM at: <https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/fsdlogin.do>.

The General Services Administration created a SAM training. To view the presentation, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmHcKCchaiY>. This training will be extremely useful for SAM users that are:

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

Grants.gov Registration

In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations as well as register on www.Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process can be accessed at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.

If you are a new user, please ensure that your organization's E-Business Point-of-Contact (EBiz 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.

Generally, the registration process takes between 3-5 business days. The Grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Please be aware that the Grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to Grants.gov should contact the Grants.gov Applicant Support team noted in Section VIII: Federal Awarding Agency Contact.

Electronic Signature

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as an AOR; **this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each RFA, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

Applicant Support

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the Center with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Online Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on **June X, 20XX**. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (**GRANTXXXXXXXX**) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking Number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When FNS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by FNS.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Grants.gov File Name Procedures

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): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

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 (e.g. & – * % / # -), this includes periods (.), or spacing followed by a dash in the file name. 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 the Grants.gov portal due to incorrect naming conventions.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity may be subject to the requirements of EO 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” This Executive Order was issued with the desire to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on State and local processes

for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The Order allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function.

If you are located within a State that does not have a Special Point of Contact (SPOC), you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency.

For a list of State agency contacts, please visit the Office of Management website at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>

Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

Applicants must also respond to the Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire 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 in Appendix A to facilitate the process. Applicants must answer all the pre-application 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.

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applicants may request a paper copy of this solicitation and required forms by contacting the FNS Grants Officer. Contact information can be found in Section VIII of this RFA.

CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

The Process and Technology Improvement Grant applications should adhere to the formats and requirements listed in this section.

Additionally, the review committee will evaluate proposals against the criteria below. The project narrative sections include a point value to indicate the importance of each section; however, reviewers will be evaluating proposals based on all sections regardless of whether point values are provided. FNS has provided a checklist at the beginning of this document to assist applicants in meeting the necessary requirements. Proposals will be scored on the basis of points and can receive up to 109 points. Every proposal must include the following sections: Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Racial Equity and Inclusion, Project Narrative

(including Project Design; Organizational Experience, Staff Capability, and Management; Evaluation; and Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency), and the Activities/Indicator Tracker. Details on requirements for each section are described below.

Cover Sheet

The cover page should include the following:

1. Applicant's name and mailing address;
2. Project title;
3. Project summary (a one to two sentence description of project); and
4. Primary contact's name, job title, phone number, and e-mail address.

Table of Contents

Proposals must include a table of contents that mirrors the outline included in this section of the RFA and include relevant topic page numbers.

Executive Summary

The executive summary must include the following:

1. The specific problem that prompted the applicant to submit a Process and Technology Improvement Grant application;
2. How exactly the project proposed in this grant application solves the problem identified;
3. Identify the State agency and/or eligible entities involved in the project;
4. Amount of funding requested;
5. Which priority area(s)/objective(s) the proposal addresses;
6. Which SNAP processes will be improved by the project; and
7. If the State or applicant has received any FNS grant in the last 3 years.

Note: The executive summary should not exceed one page.

Racial Equity and Inclusion (New in FY 20XX)

In addition to improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes, PTIGs also present opportunities to address historic inequities through innovative programs and solutions. The new *Racial Equity and Inclusion* section aligns with USDA's priorities of advancing equity⁶ by reducing systemic barriers for the historically underserved and marginalized by improving access for all SNAP clients and applicants.

In alignment with USDA's priorities, all FY 20XX proposals must (1) clearly outline the project's potential impacts on racial equity and inclusion; and (2) include analysis of the project's impacts to specific underserved communities, where relevant.

⁶ The term "equity" means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

When completing this section, applicants should consider the following guiding questions and project activity examples. Applicants are not required to submit explicit answers to these questions or incorporate these activities into their proposals, they are only meant to assist in crafting meaningful applications. While all proposals must outline and analyze how their project will impact racial equity and inclusion, they are not *required* to have significant impact in this area. However, proposals that demonstrate a project’s ability to effect a meaningful impact in this area may be awarded up to 3 bonus points (see [Bonus Points](#)).

Guiding questions:

1. How is your organization’s view on racial equity and inclusion incorporated in this project proposal?
2. What forms of diversity (racial, gender, cultural, citizenship status, linguistic, etc.) do you think strengthen the quality of the proposal and why? Does your organization’s leadership and project management team reflect this diversity?
3. How do you propose to draw upon diverse perspectives in the community or field that the proposed work will serve? Did your project design include consultation with members of the group your project intends to serve? What type of consultation?
4. Has your organization had prior success in improving access for an underserved and/or marginalized community? If so, how can lessons learned be applied to this proposal?
5. What racial equity and inclusion challenges does your organization face?
6. What policies or technologies are in place that may be barriers to meeting the needs of underserved/vulnerable populations in your project area?
7. How will you measure the impact of your proposal on promoting equity in specific communities? What data collection methodologies will be used? Are the data collection methodologies sensitive to the needs of the community they intend to serve?
8. How will the project reduce racial/ethnic disparities in access to SNAP? How will they promote equity?
9. How will racial equity and inclusion efforts extend beyond the project’s period of performance?

Project/Activity Examples:

1. Develop a specific strategy with applicable timelines to increase participation in underserved communities⁷ with specific and targeted outreach activities and consultation and partnership with representatives and organizations from underserved communities.
2. Reduce technological or process-based barriers to entry for vulnerable populations such as individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ+ persons, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations.
3. Proposals from Community-Based Organizations and/or faith-based organizations that work directly with and are comprised of members from the community they serve.

⁷ The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

4. Assess potential barriers on participation for people of color and other underserved groups and identify a specific plan to minimize barriers on participation for people of color and other underserved groups.
5. Identify a specific strategy to increase equity in the SNAP application process.
6. Utilize analytical demographic data to identify disparities and set goals to eliminate those disparities, instituting racial equity tools to analyze and change policies and practices, and organize internally to build skills and a culture that supports racial equity.

Project Narrative

The project narrative clearly articulates what project the applicant is proposing, how the project will address the specific problem identified by the applicant, and the project’s expected results and/or benefits. The proposed project methodology should describe the project design, address program specific methodology needs, procedures, timetables, monitoring/oversight, and the organization’s project staffing.

The project’s narrative should include the following four sections, in the order presented below:

1. Project Design
2. Organizational Experience, Staff Capability, and Management
3. Evaluation
4. Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency

Activities/Indicators Tracker

Proposed Activities and Indicators measuring success must be mapped to the Program Objective(s)/priority areas (as described in Section I “Program Description” under Purpose) that you choose. Please use the format below and add additional Activities/Indicators as needed. You are not required to have more than one objective, however for each objective there must be at least one proposed activity and at least one proposed indicator. Additional activities and indicators can be added by adding rows to the sample table below – there is no upper limit, but please note that you will be required to report on these indicators on a quarterly basis, where applicable. Note: Indicators are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant. Please see Appendix B for a sample of what the reporting form will look like and how these activities and indicators will be pulled in in order to help guide you to complete this section.

Objective <enter #>:	<i>Must be one of the three objectives from pages 1-3 of the RFA</i>
Proposed Activity 1:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	
Proposed Activity 2:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	

Objective <enter #>:	<i>Must be one of the three objectives from pages 1-3 of the RFA</i>
Proposed Activity 1:	
Indicator 1:	

Indicator 2:	
Proposed Activity 2:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	

Note: As mentioned above, please only include as many objectives, activities and indicators as you anticipate having for your project within your Activities/Indicators Tracker tables.

1. Project Design (35 points)

Problem Analysis

- The proposal clearly defines the problem.
- The proposal clearly defines the solution and provides evidence or compelling justification that the proposed project will solve or ameliorate the identified problem.
 - The proposal includes a proposed solution that is either innovative, building on strengths of the current SNAP processes, or helps to address ongoing issues that the applicant is encountering in their SNAP activities.

Impact

- The proposal clearly quantifies the proposed project’s direct effect on the SNAP certification process and provides measurable evidence that the proposed changes will benefit the applicant, recipient, or caseworkers. For example, proposals may demonstrate impact by measuring time savings or cost savings, listing out the benefit(s) that applicants or participants may experience while going through the application or certification process, the percentage of the caseload that is expected to benefit, or the size of positive impact on a specific population, such as elderly applicants. It is recommended to include these measurable indicators as part of the Activities/Indicators Tracker as mentioned on page 13. The proposal should also include a description of how the project integrates with and supports the State’s current or planned process improvement and/or technology initiatives.

Implementation

- The proposal clearly articulates how the applicant will implement this project.
- The proposal includes a project timeline that outlines proposed tasks and demonstrates that sufficient time is allotted for each activity.

Sustainability

- The proposal shows that the State has a plan for sustaining the project after the grant period of performance ends.

Letters of Commitment or Endorsement

- The application includes letters of commitment or endorsement that clearly outline either the State agency's endorsement or partnership with other entities by following the guidelines found on page 18 of this RFA.

2. Organizational Experience, Staff Capability, and Management (15 points)

Oversight

- The proposal describes a plan for effective and consistent oversight by qualified project managers that will be implemented throughout the project.
- The proposal includes an organizational chart for the project, including names of key personnel where applicable.

Communication

- The proposal includes an internal communication plan.
- If applicable, the proposal provides a communication plan for communicating externally with partner organizations.

Staff

- The proposal identifies the project director or manager and other key staff.
- The proposal includes resumes and proposed project job descriptions that demonstrate that staff have the appropriate technical and experiential backgrounds to implement the project.
- If there are staff hired for this project, the proposal includes job descriptions for these positions.
- Applicants should address their contingency or back-up plans in the event of key staff departures.

Time Commitment

- The proposal identifies key staff and outlines the amount of time key staff will devote to the project, expressed as a percentage of Full Time Equivalents (FTE)
- If applicable, the proposal identifies the amount of time key staff will spend managing partnering organizations.

3. Evaluation (20 points)

Evaluation

Please note: While this RFA requires completion of the [Activities/Indicators Tracker](#) we also expect the applicant to conduct their own evaluation independent of this reporting to FNS that includes evaluating overall success of the project at completion. The proposed plan should include information from the Activities/Indicators Tracker and should also include additional evaluation elements outlined below, as well as any further criteria proposed by the applicant.

- The proposal includes a comprehensive evaluation process that is specific and data-driven and measures whether the problem identified is addressed by the proposed project intervention.

- The proposed evaluation plan details who will measure the goals of the project.
- The proposed evaluation plan details what criteria will be evaluated and how the applicant will evaluate the criteria.
- The proposed evaluation plan details at what intervals during the grant period of performance the evaluation will be conducted.

4. Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency (30 points)

Applications must include the required budget forms outlined in Section IV “Grant Forms and Requirements” on page 6 and a line-item budget narrative, formatted in a table, to receive the full point value for this criterion. A well-written line-item budget narrative justifies the proposed project expenditures and assists reviewers during the proposal review process.

Budget

The proposal includes:

- A line-item budget narrative, formatted in a table. A checklist is included at the beginning of this RFA to provide additional guidance on what should be included. The budget narrative should align with the objectives described in the project description; if something is listed in the budget narrative, it should also be listed in the project description. It should provide enough detail for reviewers to easily understand how costs were determined and derived, and adequately justified based on current industry costs/standards or estimates from vendor(s) when possible. Information on costs should be obtained from applicable organizations or from online sources.
- If indirect costs are shown as a budgetary expense for the project, a copy of the approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a NICRA is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If the applicant does not have, and has never been approved for, a NICRA, they may charge up to 10% de minimis; in this instance, the applicant must note that this is what they are requesting. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be stated in the budget narrative.
- If applicable, the budget must show how the costs are allocated among the benefiting programs and demonstrate that this grant is only going to fund SNAP’s share of project costs.
- If desired, a tiered budget and narrative that describes adjustments the applicant would make if it were awarded a different level or levels of funding (only the primary budget will be analyzed against this criterion).
- All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- The proposed budget should mirror the requested amounts that are listed in the submitted SF-424A.
- All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

Efficiency

- The proposal must demonstrate that the anticipated results are commensurate with the cost of the project.

Contractual and Consultant Costs

- Proposals that include hiring a consultant or contractor must provide the following information:
 - Consultant's name and description of service;
 - Itemized list of all direct costs and fees;
 - The number of personnel, including position titles;
 - Specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the salary;
 - Number of estimated hours times hourly wage for each staff member; and
 - All expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered for the project.
- Applicants who are required to issue a bid should include a narrative explaining the requirement and provide a detailed description of contractor/consultant responsibilities/anticipated tasks and a reasonable estimate of contractual and consultant costs.

5. Presentation

FNS strongly suggests that applications closely adhere to the application format described below. FNS cannot guarantee that improperly formatted proposals will be considered. Please be as clear and concise as possible. The beginning of this solicitation includes a checklist and tips to ensure your proposal is complete and properly formatted.

Size, Font, and Page Limit

- All pages are single-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point font.
- The proposed project plan is typed on 8 ½" X 11" white paper.
- The grant application is no more than 25 pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter(s) of commitment, letter(s) of endorsement, appendices, and required forms.
- All pages, excluding the form pages, are numbered.
- The proposal is well-presented, well-written, and void of grammatical errors.

6. Bonus Points (up to 9 points total):

- i. **New in FY20XX:** Up to three bonus points will be awarded to proposals that demonstrate a project's ability to effect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion. Applicants can demonstrate meaningful impact in a number of ways including, but not limited to, conducting analysis of systemic barriers to SNAP access for underserved or marginalized communities served by the proposal and incorporating specific measures into the project design that will work to reduce systemic barriers from a structural standpoint. Applicants should refer to the [Racial Equity and Inclusion](#) section of this RFA to review requirements, guiding questions, and project/activity examples.
- ii. Up to three bonus points will be awarded to proposals that are particularly data-driven. This can include incorporating user experience testing during the proposed project (such as testing iterations of a tool with the projected user group to ensure

future rollout success) or having conducted surveys, interviews, or other data collection or research in advance of submission of a proposal in order to more accurately determine what the quantifiable problem is that the proposed solution is intended to solve. (NOTE: Pre-award costs will not be provided under this grant. Any work completed prior to receiving an award cannot be reimbursed.) Inclusion of specific quantifiable statistics to bolster the argument that the proposed project is necessary in order to better serve SNAP clients as well as mathematically sound and well-reasoned quantifiable projections for improvement to the client or eligibility worker experience may earn additional points.

- iii.* Up to three bonus points will be awarded to proposals that demonstrate a plan to collaborate with a previous PTIG grantee who completed a similar project. This could include partnering with a previous grantee to learn best practices and lessons learned, or collaborating during the application process to identify helpful tools and develop a project plan. Applicants can demonstrate partnership with a previous PTIG grantee through a Letter of Commitment from the previous grantee including what the plan to work together includes, what intervals you will meet, and what outcomes you anticipate from the partnership.

LETTERS OF COMMITMENT OR ENDORSEMENT

State agencies submitting an application on their own do not require letters of endorsement or commitment. If a State agency submits an application in partnership with other organization(s), the State must provide a letter of commitment from the proposed partner.

FNS also welcomes grant proposals from entities other than a State agency; however, such applicants must demonstrate that the State agency strongly endorses and/or is involved in the proposed project through a letter of endorsement.

Letters of endorsement from the State are also required when local or county governments submit an application.

Unless the applicant is a State agency submitting an application on its own, a letter of commitment or letter of endorsement must be included in the application package to be considered for funding. Such letters may be addressed to the FNS Grants Officer. Applications that require a letter of commitment or letter of endorsement, which fail to provide one, will not be considered. Please refer to the letters descriptions below for additional information.

Due to COVID-19, letters of commitment or endorsement should be included in the application package. Letters of commitment or endorsement mailed to FNS may not be received in a timely manner.

Letters of Commitment

A letter of commitment is required if the grant proposal is from a State agency working in partnership with another organization(s). The State agency applying must submit a letter(s) of commitment from its partners. The letter(s) of commitment must describe:

- The organization's role in the project;
- The amount of time the partner organization intends to commit to the project and an attestation that it will cooperate with the grant applicant in implementing the project; and
- The letter must be on the respective organization's letterhead and signed by an authorizing individual.

Letters of Endorsement

A letter of endorsement is required if an applicant is an entity other than a State agency and is not directly partnering with a State agency on the project. The State agency's letter of endorsement must:

- Explain that the State agency is aware of the project and its projected impact on the State's eligibility system;
- Acknowledge whether the project creates any additional work for the State agency and identify the State capacity to address the additional work;
- Express support for the proposed project;
- Describe how the proposed project will support the State agency's current or planned technology and/or business process improvement efforts and priorities; and
- The letter must be on the respective State agency's letterhead and signed by an authorizing official.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

All applications must be uploaded to www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on **XX, 20XX**. USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications. FNS will deem applications received after the deadline as ineligible and will not review late applications. FNS will not consider any additions or revisions to an application after it is submitted. Additionally, FNS will not review incomplete applications.

Please allow sufficient time to complete your application package and ensure the package is uploaded through the www.Grants.gov web portal. If the same applicant in response to this solicitation submits multiple application packages through the Grants.gov web portal, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.

USDA strongly encourages applicants to begin the process at least **4 weeks before** the due date and to submit applications to [Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) at least **1 week** before the deadline to allow time to troubleshoot any issues, should they arise. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.Grants.gov should contact the Grants.gov Applicant Support Center at 1-800-518-4726 or via e-mail at support@Grants.gov.

Additional submission information and instructions is available at:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/grantors/grantor-standard-language.html>

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

FNS will screen all applications that meet the published deadline for submission 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. All complete applications will be reviewed competitively and scored against the criteria listed in [Section V “Application and Submission Information”](#).

FNS will assemble a review panel to review and determine the technical merits of each application using the point system in Section V. One or more review panels may be comprised of United States Department of Agriculture staff, other Federal agency staff, and other individuals committed to furthering the goals of SNAP. The review panel will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components. The review panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring.

The selecting official will consider the panel recommendations. In general, awards will be granted based on rank order. However, the selecting official and FNS reserves the right to fund out of rank order and award grants to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, bolster program innovation, or project diversity. If the panel review indicates that FNS has received few or no technically acceptable proposals, the selecting official may determine that FNS will make no awards or commit less than the \$5 million set aside for this purpose.

As mentioned above, FNS is interested in funding projects that address priority areas specified in Section I “Program Description” on pages 1-3 of this RFA. However, FNS reserves the right to award grants to several such entities or not to award any grants to such entities if it does not receive acceptable applications.

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.

DEBRIEFING REQUESTS

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to discuss 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.

VII. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

FEDERAL AWARD NOTICE

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions, any contact from an FNS Grant or Program Officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. Grant funds cannot be used for pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date.

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, FNS to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

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. 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. 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.

Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, Social Security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) SP 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information, April 2010).

Applicants submitting applications in response to this RFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the USDA FNS. All Federal and non-Federal employees (e.g. contractors, affiliates, or partners) working for or on behalf of FNS are required to acknowledge understanding of their responsibilities and accountability for using and protecting FNS PII in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974; Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-06-15, *Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information*; M-06-16, *Protection of Sensitive Agency Information*; M-07-16, *Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information*; and the NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-122, *Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information*.

By submitting an application in response to this RFA, applicants are assuring that all data exchanges conducted throughout the application submission and pre-award process (and during the performance of the grant, if awarded) will be conducted in a manner consistent with

applicable Federal laws. By submitting a grant application, applicants agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality, including the following:

1. Ensuring that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained or otherwise associated with USDA FNS funded grants is securely transmitted; transmission of applications through www.Grants.gov is secure.
2. Ensuring that PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, and that PII and other sensitive data is not submitted via email.
3. Data transmitted via approved file sharing services (e.g. WatchDox, ShareFile, etc.), CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted.

Conflict Of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process

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

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 (EO) 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 <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number. To request a DUNS number visit: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

The grant recipient must also register its DUNS number in the new Systems for Award Management (SAM). If you were registered in the CCR, your company's information is already in SAM and you will just need to set up a SAM account. To register in SAM you will need your entity's DUNS number, 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 Federal 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 10 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 the FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at FOIA-FNS@usda.gov.

Privacy Act Policy

The USDA FNS Agency does not collect any personal identifiable information without explicit consent. To view the Agency's Privacy Policy Statement, visit: www.fns.usda.gov/privacy-policy.

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 [using](#) the contact information provided on page 26.

Acknowledge USDA Support

As outlined in 2 CFR 415.2, grant recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any publications written or published with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity. Recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any audiovisual which is produced with grant support and which has a direct production cost of over \$5,000.

- When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Grantees are asked to follow the [USDA Visual Standards Guide](#) when using the USDA logo.

Grant recipients may be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.

REPORTING

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. Additional information on accessing FPRS will be provided to grantees upon award.

Progress Reporting

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. The grant terms and conditions will indicate the reporting schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. Any additional reporting

requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

Quarterly Progress Reports—Quarterly progress reports must be submitted to FNS. These progress reports must be on Food and Nutrition Service Form-908. A copy of this form is provided in Appendix B, for your reference.

These reports are due 30 days after the end of federal fiscal quarter. More detailed specifications for the quarterly progress report content and submission will be included in the agreement, however a sample reporting form can be found on page 29. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

Final Report—A report reflecting the entire grant period must be submitted within 90 days of the expiration of the grant period. This report will be composed of a short executive summary and the following:

- A project description including a concise summary of the major accomplishments, the difficulties encountered, and the solutions developed to resolve the difficulties; and
- A discussion of the project results and lessons learned.

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.

FNS will host a webinar for recipients during the first quarter of the grant to provide more information on reporting responsibilities.

VIII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

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

Anna Arrowsmith, Grant Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
1320 Braddock Place, 6th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
E-mail: anna.arrowsmith@usda.gov

APPENDIX A: 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 [Financial Management](#). The Food and Nutrition Service Agency's (FNS) uses the responses to this questionnaire to evaluate the applicant's 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 the applicant organization from receiving an award. This form applies to FNS' competitive and non-competitive grant programs. Please return this questionnaire with the application package.

Organization Information

Legal Organization Name: _____

DUNS 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
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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or an “Adverse Opinion?”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Material Weakness” disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Significant Deficiency” disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hyperlink (if available):		
Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:		

Applicant Certification

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

Authorized Representative’s Signature:	
Name:	Date:
Phone:	
Email:	

APPENDIX B: DRAFT REPORTING FORM

OMB Control Number: 0584-0512
Expiration Date: 07/31/2022

Print

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT

The public burden statement: 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 0584-0512. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. 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 Services, Office of Policy Support, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302, ATTN: PRA (0584 - 0512*). Do not return the completed form to this address.

1. Recipient Organization		2. Grant Federal Fiscal Year & Quarter:	
a. Name:		3. Program Information: Program Area: Program:	
b. Address: City: State: Zip:			
4. Primary POC:		5. Recipient Account Number (FAIN):	
a. Name:	b. Title:	6. Type of Report (Select One): Final Quarterly Reporting Period: _____ Semi-Annual	
c. Telephone (Area Code & Number):	d. Email Address:		
7. Federal Grant Agreement Number:			
8. Additional POC (Optional)			
a. Name:	b. Title:	9. Certification I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete for performance of activities for the purposes set forth in the award documents.	
c. Telephone (Area Code & Number):	d. Email Address:		
10. Authorized Certifying Official			

a. Name:	b. Title:	c. Signature of Authorized Certifying Official:
13. Date Report Submitted (Month, Day, Year):		

Program Management Information

1. Progress Summary

Progress Summary, highlighting your greatest achievements and challenges to date in this reporting period. For challenges, how did you resolve or overcome them? (Max 2000 Characters):

2. Personnel Information

a. Number of FTEs: _____ b. Were there any changes in key personnel? Yes No

c. If yes, please describe the changes in key personnel, including the individual leaving the project as well as the name and contact information (email address, phone number, and name of organization) of the individual joining the project. **Note:** This information does not serve as a formal request to approve the change in key personnel. This request must be forwarded to the Grants Officer in a separate request (Max 2000 Characters):

3. Amendments (Cost and No-Cost)

a. Number of amendments this quarter? _____ b. Type of amendments? _____

c. Did the amendment(s) require FNS approval? Yes No

d. Please describe the no-cost amendments this quarter (Max 2000 Characters):

4. Expenditures/Purchases:

a. Were there any significant expenditures or purchases, including any contracts entered during this reporting period? If so, please describe (Max 2000 Characters):

5. Deviations

a. Have there been any deviations? Yes No b. Type: _____

c. Proposed Plan Activities:

d. Budget Impact: _____ e. Timeline: _____

f. Justification:

Program Management Information (Continued)

6. Upcoming Activities and Anticipated Changes

a. Please describe activities planned for next quarter (Max 2000 Characters):

b. Do you anticipate any changes in your project timeline, activities or cost? (Max 2000 Characters):

c. If yes, please explain the anticipated changes (Max 2000 Characters):

7. Final Reporting Summary (Final Reporting Period Only)

a. Are all goals and objectives completed at this time? Yes No

b. Briefly describe the goals and objectives that were not completed and why they were not completed (75 words or less):

c. Was the project budget sufficient for meeting the project goals? Yes No

d. If no to answer 6c, briefly describe why the budget was insufficient for meeting the project goals (50 words or less):

8. Additional Comments

Program Activities						
Objective 1:						
Activity	Type	Anticipated Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Optional		
				Location	Beneficiaries/Audience	Topic (if training)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						

Outcome Indicators								
Objective #:								
Activity #:								
Indicator Description	Indicator Type	Quantitative			Qualitative			Narrative
		Target	Actual (Cumulative)	Comments	% Complete (Cumulative)	Performance Status	Comments	
	quantitative							
Activity #:								
Activity #:								

Final Program Metrics (Final Reporting Period Only)		
Evaluation Metric #: _____ Type: Checklist		
Prompt: _____		
		Answer Value 1: _____
Item 1:		
Item 2:		
Item 3:		
Item 4:		
Item 5:		
Item 6:		
Item 7:		
Item 8:		
Item 9:		
Item 10:		
Comments:		
Evaluation Metric #: _____ Type: Free Form		
Prompt: _____		
Comments:		

Evaluation Metric #: _____		Type: Cross Table				
Prompt: _____						
		Answer Value 1:	Answer Value 2:	Answer Value 3:	Answer Value 4:	Answer Value 5:
Item 1:						
Item 2:						
Item 3:						
Item 4:						
Item 5:						
Item 6:						
Item 7:						
Item 8:						
Item 9:						
Item 10:						
Comments:						

The Privacy Act Statement:

Authority: Section 9 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 2018); section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)); and section 6109(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 6109(f)), authorizes collection of the information on this application.

Purpose: Information is collected primarily for use by the Food and Nutrition Service in the administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;

Routine Use: Information may be disclosed for any of the routine uses listed in the published System of Record notice <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2010/12/27/2010-32457/privacy-act-revision-of-privacy-act-systems-of-records#p-30>.

Disclosure: Furnishing the information on this form, including your SSN and EIN, is voluntary but failure to do so will result in withdrawal of store authorization to accept SNAP benefits.

APPENDIX C: TIPS FOR PROPOSAL WRITERS

The Project Design section is the applicant's opportunity to convince reviewers that the proposed project meets the selection criteria. Below are general recommendations to help applicants present their project in a way the reviewers will find most compelling and persuasive.

- Read the RFA
- Ensure the application includes all required information
- The executive summary should address which of the FY 2021 Priorities the project aims to achieve and which part of the SNAP certification process will be improved by the project. The executive summary should not exceed one page.
- Avoid circular reasoning; the problem addressed by the proposed project should not be defined as the lack of the solution proposed in the application.
- Format the application to match the outline proposed in Section V "Application and Submission Information" on page 10.
 - Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order presented in Section V.
 - Use headings to differentiate narrative sections by criterion.
- Make sure budget figures are consistent across the required forms, budgets, and narratives.
- Address how ongoing costs will be covered after the grant period ends.
- Ensure the project has a strong quantitatively-based evaluation plan that will use data to show that the project is resolving the problem identified.
- Be clear and succinct. Reviewers are not interested in jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. They are interested in learning precisely what you intend to do, and how your project responds to the selection criteria.
- Avoid simply stating that the criteria will be met. Explicitly describe how the proposed project will meet the criteria.
- Avoid making assumptions. Do not assume the reviewers know anything about you, your partner organizations, or the proposed project.
- Avoid overuse of acronyms and be sure to define any acronyms in the application.