



## **Community Innovation and Outreach (CIAO) Cooperative Agreement**

### **Fiscal Year 2022 Request for Applications (RFA)**

**Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.557**

**Release Date: May 31, 2022**  
**Application Due Date: 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), August 1, 2022**  
**Anticipated Award Date: August 29, 2022**

OMB BURDEN STATEMENT: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. FNS plans to seek OMB approval of these reporting requirements under control number 0584-0512 and will not request this information if these requirements are not approved at the time that the information would be due. The estimated average time required to complete this information collection is up to 50 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.



## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This Application Checklist provides applicants with a list of the required documents. However, FNS expects that applicants will read the entire RFA prior to the submission of their application and comply with all requirements outlined in the solicitation. The Application Checklist is for applicant use only and should not be submitted as part of the Application Package.

Complete the following **at least four weeks** prior to submission:

1. Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number;
2. Register the UEI number in the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
3. Register in Grants.gov.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

Application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section IV [Application and Submission Information](#). This includes page limits, priorities, and all necessary attachments.

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

1. All key staff proposed to be paid by this grant.
2. The percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTEs).
3. Your organization's fringe benefit rate and amount, as well as the basis for the computation.
4. The type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds.
5. Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justifications and basis for lodging estimates.
6. Types of equipment and supplies, justifications, and estimates, ensuring that the budget is in line with the project description.
7. Information for all contracts and justification for any sole-source contracts.
8. Justification, description, and itemized list of all consultant services.
9. Indirect cost information (either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or if no agreement exists and the applicant has never been approved for a NICRA, they may charge up to 10% de minimis). If applicant is requesting the de minimis rate or indirect costs are not requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.

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

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

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# 1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

## Program Description

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the nutrition assistance programs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). FNS works to promote nutrition security through the administration of 15 Federal nutrition assistance programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

WIC is a Federal nutrition assistance program that serves low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to five years old who are at nutritional risk. WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition education including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and social services to participants in all 50 states, 33 Indian Tribal Organizations, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Despite evidence that WIC contributes to healthy outcomes, only about 57 percent of WIC eligible mothers and children participated in the program in 2019. Therefore, FNS is interested in increasing the number of individuals enrolled and actively participating in the Program for their full period of eligibility. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) (Public Law 117-2) provided FNS with funding to carry out WIC outreach, innovation, and program modernization efforts to increase participation and benefit redemption.

FNS anticipates awarding up to \$20 million to a Grantee (for the purpose of this RFA, this term is used in a general way to include cooperators who are awarded and manage cooperative agreements) to ultimately test the effectiveness of community outreach strategies in increasing WIC participation, especially among underserved populations within a community. This announcement of funding is for a one-time cooperative agreement with an accredited institution of higher education (college/university), nonprofit research entity, or other nonprofit organization. The recipient of this cooperative agreement, referred to in this document as the Grantee as noted above, will have documented experience in public health and communications. The Grantee must complete the objectives of this RFA.

Of the \$20 million in award funds, up to \$5 million may be reserved for the Grantee's direct and indirect administrative costs and approximately \$15 million must be awarded as subgrants through a competitive process to WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits, with an emphasis on supporting projects with at least one of the following overarching goals:

- Use community-level data to test new ways of delivering WIC messaging and conducting outreach designed to increase WIC participation<sup>1</sup> and retention; and
- Expand partnerships with community-based organizations to connect underserved populations with WIC benefits and services.

The Grantee's high-level objectives include:

- Developing and implementing a minimum of two funding opportunities for WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits;
- Managing subgrants and providing technical assistance to WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits (referred to in this document as subgrantees) to ensure projects are successfully implemented;
- Applying an implementation science framework that includes a logic model and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be used to assess and report project outcomes;

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<sup>1</sup> WIC participation refers to individuals enrolled in the Program and redeeming benefits.

- Developing an evaluation strategy that supports the application of the most rigorous evaluation methods appropriate for funded projects in order to build the evidence-base that informs WIC outreach practices;
- Providing a national summary report that includes, but is not limited to, a summary of the projects, the technical assistance provided, the evaluation approach, results and implications;
- Developing a WIC outreach framework based on general recommendations, best practices formed during project observation, specific lessons learned, and evaluation results for WIC agencies and/or partners to use to reach underserved populations to increase awareness and access to WIC services by all eligible participants; and
- Creating and providing timely updates to national resources for WIC Program operators and partners based on lessons learned from evaluations.

The subgrant projects are intended to 1). increase awareness, among underserved populations, of the WIC benefits and services available within a specified jurisdiction, 2). increase program participation<sup>2</sup> and retention, and/or 3). identify effective communication and outreach methods for increasing participation among those eligible but not utilizing WIC services.

FNS recognizes outreach efforts will have the greatest impacts when goals are shared by participating programs and community-based organizations. Therefore, we encourage both grantee and subgrantee applicants to engage with community leaders in project development to support strong, meaningful collaborations, and to focus on their shared equity goals for Program outreach, access, and delivery. For example, both a WIC local agency and a community organization may share the goal of reducing the maternal mortality rate among Black women. Additionally, this funding opportunity will include a Grantee-developed partner matching strategy to assist subgrantees. Partner matching will pair WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits based on alignment of project goals, capabilities, and needs. The Grantee is responsible for employing methods of finding potential partners and helping foster a relationship between subgrantees and their partners.

Through FNS's listening sessions we have learned that community partners stand ready to improve community awareness of WIC. Innovations in technology and communication strategies provide new opportunities to increase WIC awareness and participation. In collaboration with FNS, the Grantee will develop two subgrant funding opportunities, i.e., Requests for Application (RFA), to be issued sequentially. Both RFAs should also provide standardized evaluation objectives for applicants that is informed by the Grantee's evaluation strategy. The first funding opportunity will solicit novel proposals from a wide range of entities that align with the overarching goals described in this RFA. The Grantee will develop a second funding opportunity to be released approximately 18 months after the first funding opportunity allowing entities that wish to participate more time to develop their projects. The second funding opportunity will, in addition to soliciting novel proposals as described in the first funding opportunity, include three model projects designed by the Grantee for adoption by subgrantees. The Grantee will work with FNS to develop selection criteria and make recommendations for awards. Additional rounds of funding may be considered, depending on resource availability. The Grantee will be responsible for awarding subgrant funds.

The Grantee will draft the RFAs for both rounds of subgrant funding opportunities, including a simple fillable template to facilitate application. In addition, the Grantee will host webinars to respond to questions and provide FNS-approved information to potential subgrant applicants before each round of subgrant awards. The Grantee will ensure that the RFAs are broadly circulated among the general public and in forums accessible to potential applicants including WIC State and local agencies and/or nonprofits including community organizations that support underserved populations. As part of this

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this RFA, participation could include certification, enrollment, nutrition education engagement, benefit issuance, and/or benefit redemption

effort, the Grantee will identify nongovernment partners that support underserved populations to amplify the subgrant opportunities in appropriate circles. Community organizations and other nonprofits applying for subgrant funding must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with, or a Letter of Commitment from, a WIC State or local agency to ensure cooperation and timely access to participation and retention data necessary to conduct project activities and evaluation.

Subgrant proposals will be evaluated on how well they meet at least one of the two overarching goals of this effort, i.e., using community-level data to test new ways of delivering WIC messaging and conducting outreach designed to increase WIC participation and retention; and expanding partnerships with community-based organizations to connect underserved populations with WIC benefits and services. Selection priority will be given to projects that incorporate both goals, are sponsored by applicants that are part of or already serve historically underrepresented communities, take place in locations facing multiple structural and health-related inequities, and are designed in such a way that the key project activities can be adapted by other WIC agencies.

Via subgrant RFAs and open Q&A with prospective applicants, the Grantee will ensure awarded subgrant projects are also developed in such a way that they can be scaled up and sustained beyond the grant timeline, if they are found to be successful at improving WIC participation. Once the Grantee awards the above mentioned subgrants, it must provide technical assistance and management including: reviewing subgrantee quarterly progress and financial reports, facilitating scheduled and ad hoc meetings with individual subgrantees and partner groups, and hosting orientation and closeout meetings for both rounds of funding. Further, the Grantee must provide a platform for subgrantees and their partners to communicate and share project updates and lessons learned at regular intervals to inform implementation strategies. Separately, the Grantee shall create, host, and maintain a webpage to provide frequent public-facing subgrant updates that use data to illustrate the projects' effect on WIC participation and retention, an ongoing collection of promising practices, and information about upcoming subgrant opportunities including model project types.

To help FNS better understand the outcomes of this project and the respective subgrant projects that are funded through this grant program, the Grantee, subsequent to award, shall develop for FNS approval a comprehensive implementation science framework and evaluation strategy. The framework shall articulate how the project aligns with the four stages of implementation science (i.e., assess, prepare, implement, and evaluate)<sup>3</sup>. When describing the evaluation strategy, applicants shall include a logic model and theory of change that demonstrates how the project will achieve the goals specified in this RFA, and how the evaluation will measure the extent to which subgrant projects contribute to the intended outcomes. FNS's intent is for the Grantee to assess these goals using evaluation methods with the highest level of rigor appropriate for the implemented strategies/solutions.

The Grantee will also work with FNS to define and implement a set of valid and reliable metrics that measure participation and retention rates in alignment with existing FNS data collection. Subgrant projects will measure changes to enrollment, engagement, and retention in WIC as well as effectiveness of connecting underserved populations with WIC benefits and services. The Grantee will work with subgrantees to evaluate their projects, including supporting measurements beyond the minimum required set provided in subgrant RFAs such as concurrent self-evaluations and/or optional additional metrics to support specific project goals. The Grantee will also work with the subgrantees to create an evaluation plan that balances rigor, suitability, and feasibility.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute. (2019). Implementation science at a glance: a guide for cancer control practitioners. NIH publication number 19-CA-8055. Available at: <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/NCI-ISaaG-Workbook.pdf>. Accessed on May 16, 2022.



With the input of FNS, the Grantee will define standardized metrics (i.e., KPIs) that measure the outcomes of subgrant projects and can be summarized across projects to evaluate the success of the entire effort. Required KPIs include, but are not limited to:

- WIC participation counts
- WIC participant engagement
- WIC participant retention
- WIC enrollment
- WIC awareness

The Grantee’s management of the subgrants will also entail working directly with subgrantees and their partners as they develop, implement, and evaluate innovative communication and outreach strategies to reach WIC participants and eligible nonparticipants to increase awareness, enrollment, and engagement, particularly within underserved populations. The Grantee will also be responsible for preparing a national summary report of the evaluation and developing national resources informed by subgrant projects for WIC partners and program operators. These resources will guide users through tested implementation strategies and document best practices learned through subgrant projects to ensure optimal outcomes for the WIC community.

Beyond the evaluation activities of this grant and its subgrants and throughout the course of the project, FNS will be conducting evaluation of all ARPA-funded projects on WIC outreach, innovation, and program modernization efforts. As such, the Grantee may be asked to participate in FNS-sponsored surveys, interviews, and focus groups that are part of this larger evaluation. In its application, the Grantee shall affirm their willingness to participate in any data collection activities related to the overarching evaluation.

### Key Objectives

Below is a list of the Program Objectives. As demonstrated in the Activities/Indicators Tracker section below, proposed activities should be clearly aligned to these Objectives.

#	Objectives
1	Provide management and technical assistance to potential subgrant applicants throughout the application and award process and to subgrantees throughout the duration of the project.
2	Create an FNS-approved implementation framework and evaluation strategy and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to identify project outcomes.
3	Develop and award Round 1 of FNS-approved subgrants to WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits to fund novel community outreach projects.
4	Monitor and evaluate Round 1 subgrant projects, draft evaluation summary report, and submit for FNS review.
5	Create three evidence-informed model project opportunities for FNS approval (including one with a partner matching component) for testing in a minimum of three locations.
6	Develop and award Round 2 of FNS-approved subgrants to WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits to fund novel and model community outreach projects.
7	Monitor and evaluate Round 2 subgrant projects, finalize evaluation summary report, and submit for FNS review.
8	Create and update multiple FNS-approved national resources including a national summary report and an outreach framework for WIC Program operators and partners.

## Paperwork Reduction Act

USDA will seek OMB approval for this Request for Application (RFA) and reporting requirements under OMB Control Number 0584-0512. USDA will submit the renewal/revision of OMB Control Number 0584-0512 to OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in June 2022. The information to be collected and submitted by applicants will not be received by USDA until the Information Collection Request 0584-0512 has been approved by OMB. The instructions for submission of applications under this RFA reflect this timing. USDA will not request this information if these requirements are not approved at the time that the information would be due.

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in awarding grant funds associated with the Community Innovation and Outreach cooperative agreement program. This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information for making decisions about grant awards and related activities. 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 will be 0584-0512 as explained in the previous paragraph. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average up to 50 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. FNS is currently collecting public comments on the information collection request 0584-0512. Members of the public can 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 (0584-0512). Do not return the completed form to this address.

## 2. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

The following information is intended to provide applicants with information to help applicants make informed decisions about proposal submissions.

- Total amount of funding expected to award: Up to \$20 million
- Anticipated number of awards: 1
- Anticipated award announcement date: August 29, 2022
- Expected amounts of individual Federal awards: \$20 million
- Anticipated start dates and period of performance: September 9, 2022 through March 6, 2027; not to exceed 5 years
- Anticipated amounts and/or numbers of individual awards: 1
- Estimated funding per award: \$20 million
- Application due date: August 1, 2022

Please note:

- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding and/or appropriations of funds.

- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional subgrants this year or the subsequent fiscal year, should additional funds become available.

### Funding and Award Period

This cooperative agreement is issued under Section 1106 of Subtitle B, Title I of ARPA. This section authorizes funding to carry out outreach, innovation, and program modernization efforts, including appropriate waivers and flexibility in order to increase participation and redemption of benefits in WIC.

In Fiscal Year 2022, USDA’s FNS expects to award up to \$20 million to accomplish the goals and deliverables described in this RFA. FNS plans to announce the selected Grantee by August 2022 and enter into a cooperative agreement with the Grantee in August 2022. The Grantee will be allowed to use funds consistent with their application. Subgrant applicants may apply for funds for up to a 2-year period of performance.

Estimated Award and Performance Timeline	
5/31/2022	CIAO Cooperative Agreement RFA release
6/14/2022	Optional Letter of Intent to apply due
8/1/2022	CIAO Cooperative Agreement RFA applications due
8/29/2022	CIAO Cooperative Agreement award
NLT 10/31/2022	Round 1 subgrant RFA release
NLT 12/31/2022	Round 1 subgrant RFA applications due
NLT 1/31/2023	Round 1 subgrant awards
2023	National resource creation and draft release
NLT 5/30/2024	Round 2 subgrant RFA release
NLT 7/31/2024	Round 2 subgrant RFA applications due
NLT 8/31/2024	Round 2 subgrant awards
2024	National resource update and final release
2027	CIAO Cooperative Agreement expiration

FNS will accept one application package per applicant. The Grantee will be responsible for utilizing their awarded amount to carry out a competition to award, in a minimum of two rounds, a minimum of 25 subgrants that support WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits to expand and test outreach at the community level. The total funding available for these efforts is \$20 million and will be distributed among the Grantee (to support administrative and evaluation efforts) and subgrantees (to support individual project efforts). Approximately \$15 million is intended for individual subgrant awards.

### Allowable Costs

Among other costs, budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, and, whether in-person or virtual, FNS-approved meeting, conference, and training travel expenses. Budgets may not include equipment, supplies, or other travel expenses. The grantee should refer to 2 CFR 200.403, Factors of Allowable Costs, for further guidance.

### Purpose of Cooperative Agreement

This grant will be awarded in the form of a cooperative agreement. This agreement is a legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the Federal government and the Grantee. Cooperative agreements allow more FNS involvement and collaboration in the project compared to a typical grant and provide less direction of project activities than a contract. The roles and responsibilities of both the Grantee and FNS will be stated in the Terms and Conditions of the cooperative agreement.

FNS's involvement in this cooperative agreement will largely entail serving as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to provide key input and information to the team, reviewing and providing feedback on deliverables, and providing input on the subgrantee selection and performance processes. FNS will approve model project opportunities, subgrantee selection criteria, and final subgrantee award decisions as well as all public-facing communications and national resource materials.

To the extent practicable, FNS is available to provide policy and technical consultation to the Grantee through a series of pre-planned feedback sessions and/or standing meetings. FNS will comment on major project aspects and issues in advance of their implementation in a manner and timeframe agreed upon between the Grantee and FNS. At FNS's discretion, FNS involvement with the Grantee may include:

1. Providing comments on and having ongoing conversations with the Grantee regarding plans to meet this RFA's requirements;
2. Reviewing plans specified in Application and Submission Information section of this RFA and plans associated with subgrant projects funded by this cooperative agreement;
3. Reviewing and/or co-authoring documents; and
4. Receiving files for all Grantee-produced documents and data collected during this cooperative agreement.

### **Program Specific Requirements**

Grant applicants must demonstrate the following program specific requirements in their proposals and include a crosswalk that explicitly indicates how the proposal will achieve each requirement:

1. Recent experience in public health and communications;
2. Knowledge about WIC benefits and services or demonstrated access to SMEs in these areas for the duration of the cooperative agreement;
3. Experience analyzing WIC or other public health data to make outreach and engagement recommendations;
4. As evidenced by work references, experience with and/or capacity for providing high-quality technical assistance to WIC or other public health agencies, and community practitioners;
5. As evidenced by work references, experience conducting high-quality evaluations in partnership with WIC or similar public health programs as evidenced by reports, publications, and/or other materials (including links to evidence if published);
6. Experience with and/or capacity for designing, implementing, and coordinating a competitive RFA process that solicits proposals from State and local agencies, community organizations, and/or other nonprofits. All applications must clearly articulate an administration plan for awarding and managing competitive subgrants;
7. Experience in developing online applications, templates, and/or forms and planning relevant technical support for applicants;
8. Experience developing, testing, and transferring innovative outreach strategies at State and local agencies, community organizations, and/or other nonprofits;
9. Experience in program evaluation, including study design, data collection and analysis.
10. Description of a plan to test strategies implemented by subgrantees, as well as a clear description of how products developed from the partnership and innovation projects could be transferred or replicated;
11. Experience in designing implementation resources for State and local public health agencies community organizations, and/or other nonprofits;
12. Description of the expected set of final deliverables that will be submitted by the Grantee during and at the end of the cooperative agreement. All reports or products generated by efforts funded through this cooperative agreement are subject to review by FNS before publication, including review of final reports before submission;

13. Description of how findings will be disseminated to stakeholders (FNS, partner organizations, and WIC State and local agencies and their staff) and how dissemination plans meet the requirements as specified in this RFA; and
14. Description of a clear timeline for carrying out all proposed activities and demonstration of evidence of planning to meet other requirements as specified in this RFA.
15. Creation of an overall project implementation and evaluation framework that shows how the proposed work will accomplish the objectives and measure the KPIs set forth in this RFA.

The Grantee is the accredited institution of higher education (college/university), nonprofit research entity, or other nonprofit organization that will be selected competitively based on the merits of its application. The Grantee has overall responsibility for administering the competitive subgrant RFAs, awarding and monitoring subgrants, coordinating project implementations, evaluating project success, providing evaluation-based technical assistance, developing and disseminating multiple national resources, and reporting to FNS.

The Grantee shall:

1. Select or hire appropriately credentialed personnel to manage and operate project components;
2. Delegate responsibilities to their staff or other partners as appropriate;
3. Conduct appropriate training and provide necessary support for staff, partners, and subgrantees to successfully perform project responsibilities. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
  - a. providing data on participating WIC State and local agencies and external organizations to FNS,
  - b. providing subgrantees training and/or consultation on Section 508 compliance to ensure that all documents circulated or published meet Section 508 standards, and
  - c. coordinating site visits to participating sites for FNS if requested;
4. Keep FNS informed on critical junctures and checkpoints after award of cooperative agreement, including updates to plans that are submitted in preliminary form in the application, as well as plans developed after award of subgrants;
5. Meet specific obligations and approval points as specified by the cooperative agreement;
6. Submit timely progress reports, financial reports, and annual reports throughout the award period and submit a final progress report and final financial report;
7. Attend and facilitate grant and subgrant progress meetings;
8. Ensure subgrantees account for project funds separately from Federal food and nutrition assistance administrative funds and establish financial and managerial reporting controls to assure project funds are not commingled or used inappropriately. The Grantee must establish and maintain documented evidence clearly demonstrating expenditures of project funds are used solely for project purposes;
9. Provide FNS with any data files created and used to generate reports, presentations, and publications resulting from this grant. This includes materials created by subgrantees, including outreach materials. Such data shall be accompanied with analytic code, output files, and codebooks and other applicable documentation sufficient for FNS to replicate analyses;
10. Carry out all activities necessary to fulfill the items as described in this RFA;
11. Coordinate other grant-related dissemination activities; and
12. For internal use and informational purposes, provide FNS with an electronic copy of all documents resulting from this cooperative agreement.

The focus area of the subgrants is expanding community outreach and engagement with the WIC Program. FNS is interested in testing innovative, evidence-informed, State- and local agency-level outreach and engagement efforts to reach the WIC eligible population and increase community-level awareness of WIC availability and services to increase the number of people applying, enrolling and participating in the Program. Approaches should be based on, or informed by, the best available

evidence and data. Subgrant projects may include developing partnerships with community organizations to reach underserved populations and reduce disparities in Program delivery, using community-level data to reformat and test WIC messaging and outreach efforts, or other novel, data-driven engagement strategies.

Examples of approaches that may be explored through subgrant projects include, but are not limited to:

- Collaborating with community organizations serving immigrant communities to engage with communities and spread information about WIC eligibility and facilitate enrollment.
- Collaborating with area hospitals other health service providers including family physicians, gynecologists, obstetricians, pediatricians, and Indian Health Service Hospitals to increase awareness of WIC services to eligible nonparticipants and facilitate certification.
- Collaborating with local and community programs (e.g., the Maternal Child Health Bureau Home Visiting Program) to advertise WIC services to eligible community members and provide enrollment opportunities.
- Collaborating with local military family support organizations to increase awareness and enrollment in the WIC Program by military personnel.
- Collaborating with organizations working to reduce the maternal mortality rate among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to increase awareness of WIC services to eligible nonparticipants and facilitate certification.
- Collaborating with community programs serving individuals with disabilities.
- Using innovative communication strategies, tools, and social media platforms to connect potential applicants with WIC benefits and services.
- Using data analytics to identify underserved populations and target outreach and enrollment efforts.
- Engaging enrolled but inactive participants to participate in the WIC Program (e.g., through redeeming benefits and/or receiving nutrition education).
- Engaging technical resources to communicate and spread WIC Program and eligibility information with limited English proficiency populations.
- Examining previous and current communications to identify areas for potential translation into additional languages that meet specific community needs.
- Developing technical resources that help local WIC staff design and implement effective communication strategies to ensure eligible nonparticipants are aware of the WIC Program and their eligibility.
- Examining previous and current communications for Section 508 compliance and enhanced accessibility potential to identify tools that increase usability and engagement.
- Examining previous and current communications formats to expand to new media platforms and/or use new functionalities that generate a visible increase in interactive participation.
- Examining previous and current media engagement and tools for new testing opportunities such as built-in metrics, added measurements, and statistical modeling capabilities, including functionality that allows the WIC agency to adjust marketing materials according to real time response tracking.
- Developing outreach and engagement strategies to retain infants and young children in the WIC Program through their period of eligibility.
- Engaging organizations that serve seniors who are responsible for their WIC eligible grandchildren or relatives.
- Engaging childcare organizations that cater to WIC eligible populations.

The Grantee will be responsible for the oversight and management of a wide range of subgrant projects and for providing technical assistance to subgrantees in support of creation and execution of projects. The Grantee will assist FNS with assessing proposed subgrant budgets to determine

reasonable and necessary spending to meet individual entity needs and correspond to project goals. Currently FNS expects individual subgrant awards from \$100,000 and not to exceed \$1,000,000 for the five year project period. Funding will correspond with subgrantee's organization size, resources, and capabilities as well as the overall level of effort of each proposal. The Grantee will need to promote subgrant opportunities appropriately to secure a variety of effective projects.

The Grantee shall work cooperatively with FNS to:

1. Develop and manage a competitive subgrant award process with at least two rounds of awards to WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits to implement projects expected to enhance community outreach and messaging and expand community partnerships. FNS anticipates a minimum of 10 subgrants to be awarded during Round 1 and a minimum of 15 subgrants to be awarded during Round 2. The Grantee, along with guidance and approval from FNS, will select, award, and monitor the subgrants through regular communication, reports, and meetings. In addition to unique proposals, Round 2 will include at least three model projects informed by Round 1 learning or other best practice evidence designed by the Grantee for adoption by subgrantees.
2. Develop a Request for Application (RFA) as a fillable application for subgrantees for each round of awards. The RFA shall require proposals to use the fillable RFA application created by the Grantee. The RFA will describe the opportunity, explain subgrant eligibility, and establish selection criteria for the award. The subgrant application must include the following:
  - a. A description of the applicant's organization, including relevant special interest in outreach and the geographic area(s) (counties and zip codes) in which they plan to carry out the outreach services.
  - b. Using a community needs assessment strategy, a description of the populations served by the subgrant applicant including demographics of current WIC participation and/or retention data;
  - c. Documentation of support from the relevant WIC State agency if submitted by a local agency or a nongovernment partner;
  - d. Description of the project and how it will either reduce disparities in service delivery and/or improve program participation and retention;
    - a. If for Round 2 and selecting one of the model projects, a description of how the applicant will adapt project to meet the needs of their population.
    - b. If for Round 2 and applicant would like to participate in the partner matching project, a description of how the partner would be able to facilitate and support project goals.
  - e. A plan illustrating how the subgrantee will participate in the evaluation as they implement their approach and measure the outcomes of the selected project;
  - f. An itemized budget of intended costs to implement the project;
  - g. Description of proposed staff roles, responsibilities, hours, and documentation of relevant experience;
  - h. Documentation of procedures used to maintain the quality and integrity of all data and analyses;
  - i. Documentation of procedures and protocols used to ensure the privacy and safety of individuals when collecting data at the individual-level;
  - j. Demonstrated compliance with Federal regulations for all proposed strategies/solutions;
  - k. A description regarding the sustainability of the innovation beyond the grant period, should the effort be successful.
3. The Grantee will host at least three webinars focused on the subgrant RFAs. The first webinar will be presented to all FNS stakeholders to walk through the finalized subgrant RFAs following draft review. The second and third webinars will be informational webinars to coincide with the posting of each subgrant RFA to help inform potential applicants and provide answers to questions.



4. Prior to selection of subgrantees for each round, the Grantee will submit to FNS a ranking of the proposals and summaries of all proposals submitted and discuss the proposals with FNS. At a minimum, summaries shall include the following information: the name of the WIC State or local agency, nonprofit, or community organization and point of contact for the project, the requested award amount, a brief description of the proposed project, and a subgrant timeline. Population, State, regional, operational, and system diversity should be considered when selecting subgrantees. FNS will approve final selection decisions for the subgrants.
5. Based on Round 1 subgrant learning and prior to Round 2 RFA release, the Grantee will submit to FNS at least three model projects for adoption by the subgrant applicants. One of the model projects will have a partner matching component.
6. After subgrantees are selected, the Grantee will publish updated summaries of selected subgrant projects on the public-facing website created for this effort and, upon request, prepare publication material for FNS's website.
7. In collaboration with subgrantees, the Grantee will execute an evaluation design of the highest level of rigor appropriate for the implemented strategies/solutions that documents outcomes, and, where-feasible, impacts, however significant, on improving WIC enrollment, participation, and retention outcomes. The evaluation methods should align with the standards and use definitions consistent with those expressed in OMB Memorandum [M-20-12 \(whitehouse.gov\)](#). Applications for this RFA should articulate the Grantee's approach to developing an evaluation plan for subgrant projects. Other measures, including Key Performance Indicators, shall be included in the evaluation to capture relevant outcomes and process metrics; all included process variables and outcomes must be clearly measured. While not required, some subgrantees may also wish to internally evaluate their projects as an optional subgrant activity. Therefore, the Grantee will assist subgrantees in establishing, conducting, and otherwise supporting their concurrent self-evaluations. The Grantee shall:
  - a. Build on the preliminary evaluation plan submitted with the cooperative agreement application to develop a comprehensive evaluation plan for subgrant projects and submit it to FNS for approval within 2 months of awarding subgrants. The evaluation plan will outline project design and evaluation outcomes with clearly stated operational definitions and a timeline outlining specific implementation and evaluation milestones. Additionally, the Grantee will help any subgrantees perform optional internal project evaluations, including the development and implementation of any individual project outcomes and measures beyond those established in the overall evaluation effort.
  - b. Use validated or develop sound methodological and statistical methods to conduct the evaluation.
  - c. Provide subgrantees and FNS with evaluation results.
  - d. Provide FNS with a summary report that includes, but is not limited to, a summary of the projects, the technical assistance provided, the evaluation approach, results and implications.
8. At a minimum, FNS requires the Grantee to receive quarterly reports and a final report from each subgrant project, and this information will need to be summarized into a quarterly and final report from the Grantee and submitted to FNS. Final reports shall describe the subgrant projects; the approach to evaluation, including methodology and any guiding theories or framework; results of the implemented projects; and a discussion of strengths, limitations, lessons learned, and possible next steps in dissemination. Final reports must also include an executive summary.
  - a. The Grantee shall provide FNS with an electronic copy of all dissemination materials (e.g., outreach materials and documents, PowerPoint slides, and demonstration and operational versions of applications) resulting from grant and subgrant activity at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published. FNS will provide comments and approval on documentation at our discretion.



- b. Materials generated by efforts funded through this cooperative agreement may be reviewed by FNS before general distribution. Information to be published by FNS on the USDA website requires FNS review and clearance.
9. The Grantee will use their demonstrated technical and subject matter expertise to aid subgrantees working to use community-level data to test new ways of delivering WIC messaging and/or conducting outreach. Technical assistance includes providing guidance and consult regarding project idea development, project implementation, ensuring projects are designed to meet the intent of enhancing subgrantee technology and novel strategies for outreach, and/or evaluation requests, in coordination with FNS.
10. The Grantee will use their demonstrated technical and subject matter expertise to aid subgrantees working to expand community outreach. Technical assistance includes providing guidance and consult regarding project idea development, project implementation, ensuring that the projects are designed to meet the intent of enhancing subgrantee outreach and partnership building, and/or evaluation requests, in coordination with FNS. Additionally, the Grantee will ensure subgrant projects are designed in way that is scalable and sustainable beyond the grant period.
11. The Grantee will create multiple national resources, including an outreach framework for WIC State agencies based on general recommendations and best practices formed during project observation, specific lessons learned provided by project stakeholders, and evaluation results. The resources will be dynamic and engaging, web-based, and contain interactive components where appropriate for the material and audience. The resources shall focus on evidence-informed implementation and evaluation strategies and technical considerations.
12. The Grantee will sponsor and coordinate scheduled and ad hoc meetings with FNS and with FNS and the subgrantees. At a minimum, the Grantee will host the following meetings: a kick-off and planning orientation meeting with FNS at the beginning of the cooperative agreement; host virtual post-competition orientation meetings for each round of subgrantee projects; host closeout meetings with the subgrantee and FNS at the completion of each round; host a closeout meeting with FNS at the end of the cooperative agreement.
  - a. The orientation meeting shall be held within 45 days after award. The Grantee will present its plan to disseminate the RFA, provide technical assistance to subgrantees and their community partners, and manage the competitive RFA subgrant process, and develop the model project ideas. The Grantee will also present an updated administration plan for the competitive RFA process for the subgrants. FNS will provide input during the presentation and subsequently on any materials generated for the meeting via email. Additionally, potential evaluation strategies shall be presented.
  - b. The two subgrantee orientation meetings for both rounds shall be held within 45 days after award. The Grantee will present information about project timeline, expectations, and next steps. The subgrantees to present an overview of their project plans and concepts to FNS and the Grantee, who will provide feedback during this meeting and through subsequent communications.
  - c. The two subgrantee closeout meetings for both rounds shall be held at the end of the subgrant period. It will include presentations of project findings, limitations, and sustainability considerations from subgrantees. The Grantee will present a collective presentation reviewing individual project accomplishments, lessons learned, evaluation results, and dissemination plans.
  - d. The Grantee shall host periodic meetings with FNS and subgrantees, to provide technical assistance and to discuss any issues related to project implementation and evaluation.
13. The Grantee will work collaboratively with FNS and FNS-sponsored contractors on an as-needed basis to clarify work being accomplished and to participate in any surveys, interviews, or focus groups related to WIC outreach, innovation, and program modernization efforts.

## Meetings

In monthly meetings with FNS, the Grantee and subgrantees shall provide an overview of the activities conducted since the last meeting, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget, deviations from the proposed plan, lessons learned and challenges encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, preliminary findings, assistance needed from FNS on technical issues, and major planned activities for the next quarter. Should a major issue arise between meetings, the Grantee shall contact the FNS Grants and Program Officers immediately. The Grantee shall provide FNS with an agenda a minimum 3 business days prior to each call. The Grantee shall also prepare minutes for each call and distribute to FNS no later than 5 business days after the call.

## Deliverables

Deliverables of this cooperative agreement include, but are not limited to: an updated subgrant administration plan, subgrant RFAs, subgrant application summaries, an updated evaluation plan and multiple rounds of evaluation reporting, development of multiple model project opportunities, and development of multiple national resources. The national resources include, at a minimum, a national summary report and a national resource document informed by the lessons learned from the subgrant projects.

Additionally, the Grantee will provide quarterly progress reports and financial reports, including FNS-908 Performance Progress Reports, to identified FNS contact persons and FNS-sponsored contractors. The Grantee will also produce an annual report (not to exceed 10 pages) for FNS to publish. Annual reports will include a description of the focus area, the implemented projects by subgrantees, and status of implementation and evaluation for that year and, in subsequent years, since the last annual reporting. The annual report is due no later than December 31st of each year.

## Reports and Products Review

All reports and products generated by efforts funded through this cooperative agreement are subject to review and approval by FNS before publication. This includes reviews of communications materials meant for general and WIC audiences, presentations, final reports, and other items. All materials that will be published on FNS's website must be Section 508-compliant. Please see <http://www.section508.gov/> for more information. The Grantee is responsible for delivering compliant documents to FNS for publication. All deliverables funded by this cooperative agreement must be provided in an acceptable format for FNS to publish on its website and project findings shall be prepared for presentation at one or more national conferences.

Project timelines should factor in FNS review of reports and products, with 3 weeks for items 30 pages or less, and 6 weeks for items greater than 30 pages in length.

## Data and Materials Property

The State possesses and retains all right, title, and interest in and to State data; Grantee and subgrantee use and possession thereof is solely on the Federal Government's behalf. The Federal Government possesses and retains all right, title, and interest in and to materials developed as part of this cooperative agreement. FNS may use or modify materials created by the Grantee and subgrantees and may distribute them to other WIC State and local agencies. All data, records, documents, communications, and other materials developed and used in the performance of this cooperative agreement and shall be maintained by Grantee and subgrantees and made accessible for a period of 3 years from the date of final payment under this Agreement, or for such further period as may be necessary to resolve any matters which may be pending.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

## Eligible Applicants

This Request for Applications (RFA) is open to all accredited institutions of higher education (colleges/universities), nonprofit research entities, and other nonprofit organizations with documented experience in public health and communications. There shall be a single Grantee, but the Grantee may partner with other organizations through subawards to meet RFA requirements.

FNS is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of our programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply for funding opportunities as grant or subgrant recipients.

## Cost Sharing or Matching Considerations

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements. Any matching or cost sharing offered is at the discretion of the applicant. Any cost sharing or matching may be presented in a percentage amount.

## Other Eligibility Criteria

FNS will accept only one application from each applicant. Suspended or debarred organizations are ineligible to submit applications in response to this grant solicitation.

## Pre-Award Screening Requirements

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, prior to making a Federal award, Federal awarding agencies, in accordance with regulations at 2 CFR 200.205, are required to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualifications or financial integrity information. Additionally, Federal awarding agencies are required to have a framework in place for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive Federal awards. The FNS review of risk posed by applicants will be based on the following:

1. SAM.gov, the *System for Award Management*, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS;
2. FAPIIS, the *Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System* that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is a number that is used by the Federal government to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements; *and*
4. FNS Risk Assessment Questionnaire  
Applicants must complete the Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire that allows FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, history of performance, and reports and findings from audits. The questionnaire contains several questions that may be an indicator of potential risk.

The evaluation of the information obtained from the designated systems and the risk assessment questionnaire may result in FNS imposing special conditions or additional oversight requirements that correspond to the degree of risk assessed.

## Acknowledgement of 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.

1. 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 should follow the [USDA Visual Standards Guide](#) when using the USDA logo.

2. Grant recipients may be asked to host USDA officials for one or more site visits during their grant award period of performance. All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.

## 4. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### Content and Form of Application Submission

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following application format. The proposed project plan should be presented on 8 ½” x 11” white paper with at least 1-inch margins on the top and bottom. All pages should be single-spaced, in 12-point font. The project description with relevant information should be captured on no more than 25 pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter(s) of commitment, endorsement letter(s), budget narrative(s), appendices, and required forms. All pages, excluding the form pages, must be numbered.

#### Cover Sheet

The cover page should include, at a minimum:

1. Applicant’s name and mailing address;
2. Primary contact’s name, job title, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address;
3. Grant program title and subprogram title (if applicable);

#### Table of Contents

The Table of Contents should include relevant sections, subsections, and associated page numbers.

#### Application Project Summary

The application should clearly describe the proposed project activities and anticipated outcomes that would result if the proposal were to be funded. Summaries are limited to no more than 1 page or 350 words and should describe the KPIs to be measured.

#### Project Narrative

The project narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing and how it will address a solution, the expected results and/or benefits once the solution is achieved, and how it will meet the RFA program scope and objectives. The proposed project methodology should describe the project design, address program specific methodology needs, procedures, timetables, monitoring/oversight, and the organization’s project staffing. The management plan should describe administrative procedures, staffing, quality assurance, and other activities as described below, including any additional specific RFA requirements.

The project narrative should also clearly identify what the applicant is proposing for the competitive RFA process and how it will solicit, evaluate, and select subgrant proposals submitted by WIC State and local agencies and their community partners. The applicant should describe how selection priority will be given to projects sponsored by applicants that are part of or already serve historically underrepresented communities, take place in locations facing multiple structural and health-related inequities, and are designed in such a way that the key project activities can be adapted by other WIC agencies. The applicant will also describe its capacity to provide technical assistance to subgrant recipients, develop at least three model projects, develop a partner matching component, conduct an evaluation and report on KPIs related to subgrant projects, and develop resources based on lessons

learned from the work completed under this RFA. The project narrative should also indicate plans for disseminating all project deliverables.

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

- **Introduction:** Provide background information on the proposed team's experience and plans for administering a competitive subgrant award system for WIC State and local agencies (or similar public health programs) and their community partners that will inform development of national resources. Please note any successes, lessons learned, and challenges from previous research and evaluation efforts.
- **Background:** Describe what is known and highlight what is not known about this project.
- **Objectives, Activities, and Timeline:** Clearly state project objectives, use descriptive statements that specifically discuss what the project team hopes to accomplish, and include specific activities and deadlines that accomplish all project objectives. All objectives should lead to a clearly stated goal of this RFA, and the proposal should include a logic model showing how objectives and goals will be accomplished. The project timeline should start on the award date and end no more than 60 months later. For planning purposes, use the date of award as planned and include dates for important project milestones and deadlines and include dates for items described in the Key Objectives, Purpose of Cooperative Agreement, and Program Specific Requirements sections of this RFA.
- **Management Plan:** Describe activities to be undertaken to manage the project to ensure activities are completed on time, within budget, and with high-quality results, including how the grantee will manage contractors to ensure timely, high-quality results. Applicant should describe its organizational structure and identify the staff and/or contractors who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience, and level of effort specified for each specific staff proposed. Note any relevant experience in managing similar activities. Explain contingency plans for staff turnover. Describe how communication, quality assurance, recordkeeping, and accounting activities will be executed. Provide a clear description of how funds will be administered and distributed.
- **Administration Plan:** Describe and justify the team's plan capacity to administer a competitive RFA process that includes an overview of the procedures for developing the solicitation, promoting the solicitation among WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits and selection criteria for received proposals. Planned items that will be included in the solicitation beyond those required by this RFA should also be explained. The applicant should additionally describe plans to manage and collaborate with subgrantees.
- **Technical Assistance Plan:** Indicate the process, frequency, and mode by which the Grantee will interact with subgrantees (both individually and as a group) to provide assistance, including how subgrantees will be able to request assistance and how requests for assistance will be managed. The plan should describe the personnel that will perform this function, as well as a process to document and track each technical assistance experience. The purpose of technical assistance is to support project objectives using knowledge gained and resources developed as a part of the study and implementation plan. Applicants should articulate a clear plan to communicate the RFA requirements, prior to award, to interested stakeholders through webinars and individual technical assistance.
- **Evaluation Plan:** A key component of this work is evaluating implemented projects to build evidence on effective WIC outreach practices. Applicants should demonstrate their capacities and relevant expertise to provide guidance on how to plan, prepare, and implement projects

following the principles of implementation science<sup>4</sup> and community-based participatory research<sup>5</sup>. Applicants should also demonstrate how to systematically collect data before, during, and after implementation of subgrant projects to rigorously evaluate outcomes of implemented strategies and use evaluation findings to inform recommendations and resource development. Describe plans and specific evaluation strategies to test projects chosen by WIC State and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits and develop evidence-informed model project opportunities. Describe how the implementation framework and evaluation strategy incorporates an equity lens to reach underserved populations, target community-informed inequities, and measure impact on reducing identified inequities. Identify the target hypotheses and/or research questions to be evaluated. Describe how innovation projects found to be effective could be scaled, transferred, or otherwise replicated by WIC agencies and community partners. Please provide details for 2 to 3 previous evaluation projects which required quasi-experimental or experimental study designs, the creation of theory-based logic models, the development of validated measures for short- and intermediate-term outcomes, and publication and dissemination of results.

- **Dissemination Plan:** Describe plans for disseminating findings from and resources developed as a part of this grant. Describe specific plans to make project findings accessible to stakeholders, including USDA FNS, WIC State and local agencies, nonprofits, community partners, and others identified throughout the course of this project. Indicate possible opportunities to present at conferences, participate in workgroups, host roundtable discussions, and present webinars.

Activities/Indicators Tracker

Proposed activities and indicators measuring success must be mapped to Key Objectives (as described in the Program Description section of this RFA) in the below format. Note: Indicators are defined as any metric you anticipate will be trackable during the period of performance of the grant including (but not limited to): attendee numbers, deliverable acceptance, and training assessment results.

(Sample)

S A M	<b>Objective 3:</b> Award Round 1 of subgrants to WIC State and local agencies to fund community outreach projects.	
	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
	Develop RFA for subgrant projects.	RFA accepted by FNS.
	Administer awards according to approved plans. Deliver a proposal summary capturing all responses to each round of solicitation.	Proposal summary accepted by FNS. Quality and completeness of subgrant solicitation and subgrant project proposals as collaboratively determined by appropriate stakeholders.
<b>Objective 4:</b> Monitor and evaluate Round 1 subgrant projects, draft evaluation summary report and submit for FNS review		

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute. (2019). Implementation science at a glance: a guide for cancer control practitioners. NIH publication number 19-CA-8055. Available at: <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/NCI-ISaaG-Workbook.pdf>. Accessed on May 16, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Wallerstein, N., Duran, B., Oetzel, J. G., & Minkler, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Community-based participatory research for health: Advancing social and health equity*. John Wiley & Sons.

P L E	Activity	Indicator
	Assist subgrantees in development of implementation plans for each project that outline key stakeholders (both staff resources and target audiences), goals, activities, analytical metrics (including baselines and desired outcomes), timelines, and costs.	Interim and final project implementation plans accepted by FNS.
	Evaluate projects and deliver project reports for each selected proposal which present enrollment and retention data as well as other measurement results over a defined period.	Interim and final project reports accepted by FNS. Quality and completeness of projects and reports as collaboratively determined by appropriate stakeholders.

Application Budget Narrative

The budget narrative should correspond with the proposed project narrative and application budget. The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget’s direct costs. If the budget includes indirect costs, the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Federal indirect cost rate agreement. All nonprofit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

Indirect Cost Rate

A current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), negotiated with a Federal Negotiating Agency, should be used to charge indirect costs. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a NICRA is used, the percentage and base should be indicated and the approved indirect cost rate must be provided. 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 indicate they are requesting the de minimis rate. 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. However, as described in § 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. For questions related to the indirect cost rate, please work with the Grant Officer as noted in Section VII of this RFA. The Grantee may charge up to \$5 million for direct and indirect administrative costs.

Required Grant Application Forms

Please refer to the [Application Checklist](#) for a list of required grant forms.

**Submission Date**

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 PM EST on the due date listed on the cover page.

- Applications must be submitted via [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). Applications not submitted via Grants.gov (e.g., mailed, e-mailed, or hand-delivered) will not be considered.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications unless they are submitted via Grants.gov by the deadline. No additions or revisions will be accepted after the deadline.



- If multiple application packages are submitted through Grants.gov by the same applicant in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, and certification will not be considered. Applications missing a written proposal or budget narrative will not be considered.
- FNS reserves the right to request clarification on any application submitted in response to this solicitation.

FNS strongly encourages applicants to begin the registration process at least **four weeks before the due date** and to submit applications to Grants.gov at least **one week** before the deadline to allow time to troubleshoot any issues, should they arise. Please note that upon submission, Grants.gov may send multiple confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was **accepted**. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to Grants.gov should contact the Grant Officer noted in the [Agency Contacts](#) (Section VII) of this RFA. FNS will evaluate submission issues on a case-by-case basis.

### **Preparing for Electronic Application Submission through Grants.gov**

Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](#), Dun, & Bradstreet, and Sam.gov in order to submit an application to FNS via Grants.gov, as required. FNS strongly encourages applicants to begin the registration process at least **four weeks before the due date**.

In order to submit an application, you must:

1. **Obtain a UEI number**
2. **What is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)?**  
A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is a unique number assigned to all entities (public and private companies, individuals, institutions, or organizations) who register to do business with the federal government. ([U.S. General Services Administration](#))
3. **What is the difference between a "DUNS UEI" and a "SAM UEI" in the System for Award Management ([SAM.gov](#))?**  
"DUNS UEI" refers to your current 9-digit Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number issued by [Dun and Bradstreet](#). "**SAM UEI**" refers to your **new 12-character** unique entity identifier that will be assigned by SAM.gov.
4. **Which UEI should I enter into the UEI field on the Grants.gov website and mobile app?**  
Grants.gov encourages applicants to use their "**SAM UEI**" after they have been assigned one. Grants.gov also accepts applicants' "DUNS UEI", provided the "DUNS UEI" is available in SAM.
5. **Which UEI should I enter into application package forms?**  
If the field label reads "DUNS", enter your "DUNS UEI". If the field label reads "UEI", enter your "SAM UEI".
6. **Where do I go to learn more about the UEI?**  
The U.S. General Services Administration [Unique Entity Identifier Update page](#) contains the most up-to-date information about the UEI.

NOTE: On and after April 4, 2022, entities can register in SAM.gov and will be assigned their Unique Entity ID (SAM) within SAM.gov. They will no longer obtain or use a UEI (DUNS) for entity registration or reporting. For additional information on the UEI process, please visit:



7. Register in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov)
  1. SAM.gov combines Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one system. For additional information regarding SAM.gov, see the following link: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM>.
  2. Must have your organization's UEI, entity's Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on last tax return). **It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM.gov; 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**.
  3. All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with two CFR Part 25.
  4. We strongly encourage applicants to begin the process **at least 3 weeks** before the due date of the grant solicitation.

8. Create a Grants.gov Account:

**How to Register a Grants.gov Account**

1. Click the **Register** link in the top-right corner of the Grants.gov banner.
2. Click the **Get Registered Now** button on the Register page.
3. Complete the **Contact Information** and **Account Details** sections. All fields with a red asterisk (\*) are required.
  - o Email Address - When entering an email address, please keep in mind that all correspondence with Grants.gov will be sent to that email address.
  - o Username - Enter a username to log in to Grants.gov. It may only contain alphanumeric characters, question marks, periods, dashes, underscores, and the @ symbol. Your username cannot contain a space, nor can it only include numbers. Select a username you will remember.
  - o Password - The password you choose must meet the following password requirements:
    - Must contain at least eight (8) characters
    - Must contain at least one (1) uppercase letter (A-Z)
    - Must contain at least one (1) lower case letter (a-z)
    - Must contain at least one (1) number (0-9)
    - Must contain at least one (1) special character (e.g., ! @ # \$ % ^ & \*)
    - Cannot be the same as the previous six (6) passwords
4. Cannot contain dictionary words, names, or your Username Select whether to subscribe or unsubscribe from Grants.gov Communications. The **Alerts** are important messages about time-sensitive or major system changes. The **Newsletter** features training, system enhancement updates, and other resources to help the federal grants community.
5. Click the **Continue** button.
6. Click the **Send Temporary Code** button, then access your email account to access the temporary code.
7. Enter the temporary code you received in the email from Grants.gov into the **Temporary Code** field and click the **Continue** button.
8. Decide if you would like to add a profile to your Grants.gov account or click the **Continue** button to log in. You need to [add a profile](#) to submit an application. After registering, review the [Workspace Overview page](#) to learn how to apply for a grant.

1. **Authorize Grants.gov Roles**

**How to Authorize Grants.gov Roles (steps for the EBiz POC)**

1. [Log in to Grants.gov as an EBiz POC](#), using your DUNS number and password.
2. Click the Manage Applicants link, search for the new user, and assign the appropriate roles in Grants.gov. For more detailed instructions, review the [Applicant Management help article](#).
3. After approval, Grants.gov automatically sends the registered applicant a notification email.

To learn more about the E-Biz POC role and other profile roles, please visit <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>.

## 2. **Track Role Status**

After registering with Grants.gov and adding a profile, you may want to check whether roles have been added to your profile. For more information about roles, review the [Workspace Roles page](#) on grants.gov.

### **How to Track Role Status**

1. [Log in to Grants.gov](#).
2. Click the **My Account** link in the top banner.
3. Click the **Manage Profiles** tab on the My Account page.
4. Review the **Role(s)** column in the My Applicant Profile(s) table.

To track your role request, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>

*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 web forms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA) or RFA, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

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](mailto:support@grants.gov). 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.

For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, please contact the Grant Officer noted in the [Agency Contacts](#) (Section VII) of this RFA.

## Grants.gov Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 PM EST on the due date listed on the cover page, as detailed [here](#). 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 FNS funding.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission could 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 prematurely because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Additional Information on Grants.gov and the Registration Process:

### **NOTICE: Special Characters and Naming Conventions**

All applicants **MUST** follow Grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided by Grants.gov [per the Grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)]:

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

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (examples: & – \* % / # ' -). This includes periods (.) and spacing followed by a dash in the file. To separate words in naming a file, use underscore, as in the following example: Attached\_File.pdf.

**Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected. FNS will not accept any application rejected from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) portal due to incorrect naming conventions.**

**Additional information and applicant resources are available at:**

**<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>**

## 5. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### Evaluation of Grant Application Criteria

#### 1. REVIEW CRITERIA

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure the applicants are eligible and in compliance with all Program regulations. FNS will not approve any waivers from Program regulations for any projects submitted in response to this solicitation. FNS will also pre-screen all applications to ensure that they contain the required documents and information, including but not limited to the project and budget narratives and all supporting documentation. Complete applications will need to be submitted by eligible applicants, meet all other eligibility requirements stated in this RFA, submitted on or before

the required deadlines, and be in the required format. If an application does not include all appropriate information, FNS will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

## 2. EVALUATION FACTORS AND CRITERIA

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

All applicants will be notified whether their proposal has been accepted for an award by FNS. The Project Narrative should demonstrate knowledge of WIC benefits, services, and operations and the landscape of potential solutions to overcome barriers to message delivery and subsequent enrollment. This knowledge will be demonstrated through citing peer-reviewed literature on these subjects as well as local, State, or national reports of analysis or projects, and referencing prior work done in this area by the applicant. The Project Narrative should also demonstrate a subgrant approach that considers equity. The recipient of the award will also understand WIC services and participant experiences, which should be clearly demonstrated in the application.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points Allocated</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	<b>20 Points</b>
Plan describes and clearly demonstrates: the roles and responsibilities of key personnel and other partners and staff involved in the proposed project; key personnel and their relevant education, skills, and experience as it relates to the WIC Program; community outreach, and communications strategies for their proposed roles on the project; and staff experience with writing, analysis, WIC project evaluation, and resource development including notable past grant effort experience in the form of publications, reports, et cetera.	
Documentation of the time commitment of key personnel is appropriate, complete, and sufficient for the project roles.	
Demonstration that partners, if any, have appropriate experience and commitment to effectively fulfill their proposed roles within the time and financial constraints of the project (note: letters of commitment are required from established partners in the application and serve as evidence of these commitments).	
Plan describes how project will be managed by a multi-disciplinary, inclusive, and diverse team of personnel that reflect the diversity of communities served by WIC.	
<b>Budget</b>	<b>10 Points</b>
Total funding amount requested in the budget and corresponding narrative is appropriate for the scope of the project. Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.	
Budget considers all operational costs that are necessary to accomplish the objectives of the project. Budget includes a line item description for allowable costs and shows how each line item supports the project goals.	
Budget calculations and documentation are complete and clearly show how budget components were developed and costs were estimated.	
Budget specifically describes how the Grantee will allocate its awarded amount to: carry out a competition to award a minimum of twenty-five subgrants to WIC agencies and their partners to implement outreach and conduct communications testing, provide technical assistance to subgrant recipients, and evaluate outcomes.	
<b>Management</b>	<b>15 Points</b>
Communication planning demonstrates an approach for disseminating all information and resources to key WIC stakeholders.	

Plan articulates how the applicant will provide the oversight necessary to ensure high-quality subgrant project monitoring, technical assistance to stakeholders, and deliverables to keep the project on time and within budget.	
Presented project timeline is practical and presented milestones and deadlines are realistic and achievable.	
Plan demonstrates effective internal controls of funds provided to WIC agencies and community partners ensuring funds are used only for relevant project purposes and includes planning for an accounting record and audit trail.	
Plan includes managing personnel associated with the project and addresses any contingencies, such as a loss of key personnel.	
Plan shows potential for strong interrelationships, teamwork, and cooperation between the Grantee and stakeholders, including collaborating with WIC agencies and community partners.	
<b>Subgrant Competition and Collaboration</b>	<b>20 Points</b>
Plan details experience collaborating with program stakeholders.	
Proposed platform and technology Grantee will use to communicate and execute the competitive RFA process for subgrantees is adequate. Grantee recognizes FNS reserves the right to approve the platform/technology to be used.	
Proposed administration plan for executing the competitive RFA process is clearly demonstrated. Plan includes form-based application development and an approach to engaging community organizations and other nonprofits that do not usually work with WIC.	
Proposed approach to collaboratively designing projects and evaluations with subgrantees demonstrates familiarity with common challenges specific to WIC outreach. Proposed approach also includes preliminary planning of model project opportunities.	
Proposed approach outlines the criteria to be used to select subgrantee applicants. In order to promote a more equitable distribution of funds, criteria must include special considerations or premium points for those State and local agencies which are underserved. Grantee recognizes FNS reserves the right to make the final decision on subgrantee selection.	
Timeline for delivery of project milestones and deliverables is reasonable.	
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	<b>20 Points</b>
Previous experience providing technical assistance to public, service-providing State or local agencies or similar organizations is described and documented. Demonstrated capacity to provide high-quality technical assistance.	
Proposed technical assistance approach supports subgrantees in assessing and planning community outreach and related testing.	
Familiarity with WIC benefits, services, regulations, eligibility, and enrollment and retention challenges are demonstrated as is experience with WIC or similar public health programs.	
Clear articulation of applicant's plan to communicate the RFA requirements and potential areas of community outreach, innovation, and testing to interested stakeholders through multiple webinars and individual technical assistance before, during, and after award.	
<b>Implementation and Evaluation</b>	<b>15 Points</b>
Previous experience in designing and conducting rigorous and scalable program evaluations.	
Plan includes relevant hypotheses or research questions, evaluation strategy and design, logic models, metrics and testing strategies, and details how key performance indicators (KPIs) will be developed and monitored, including reporting to FNS.	

Plan accounts for creation of draft and final evaluation summary reports.	
Plan describes willingness to collaborate with FNS or FNS-sponsored contractors.	
Plan accounts for transformation of evaluation findings into implementation support and resource development.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 Points</b>

### 3. Review and Selection Process

Following the initial screening process, FNS will assemble a panel group to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The panel will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components and array the applications from highest to lowest score. The panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring. For both Grantee and subgrantee selections, the Selecting Official at FNS reserves the right to accept the panel’s recommendation or to select an application for funding out of order to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, or project diversity. FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available.

**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.

## 6. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 1. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICE

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions, any contact from a FNS Grants or Program Officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless approved and stated on FNS’s signed award document (FNS-529). Only the recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award’s approved budget.

### 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

#### Confidentiality of an Application

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of FNS transactions, available to the public upon specific request. 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 not be 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 Food and Nutrition Service. 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 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; and (3) Data transmitted via approved file sharing services (WatchDox, ShareFile, etc.), CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted.

### **Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process**

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

### **Administrative Regulations**

#### **Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions**

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

#### **Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions**

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

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

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, "Debarment and Suspension," codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for

participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

#### Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a UEI number. To request a UEI, visit [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

The grant recipient must also register its UEI number in SAM.gov. If you were registered in the CCR, your company's information should be in SAM and you will need to set up a SAM account. To register in SAM you will need your entity's UEI and your entity's Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (as it appears on your last tax return). Registration should take **3-5 days**. If you do not receive confirmation that your SAM registration is complete, please contact SAM.gov 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 Part 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) is designed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from SAM.gov, and suspension and debarment information from the SAM. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

#### Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

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



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

FNS will forward a Business Submitter Notice to the requested applicant's point of contact. Applicants will need to review requested materials and submit and submit any recommendations within 10 days from the date of FNS notification. FNS will redact PII.

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

#### Privacy Policy

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service does not collect any personal identifiable information without explicit consent. To view the Agency's Privacy Policy, visit: <https://www.usda.gov/privacy-policy>.

#### **Code of Federal Regulations and Other Government Requirements**

This cooperative agreement 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

1. 2 CFR Part 25: "Universal Identifier and System for Award Management"
2. 2 CFR Part 170: "Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information"
3. 2 CFR Part 175: "Award Term for Trafficking in Persons"
4. 2 CFR Part 180: "OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)"
5. 2 CFR Part 200: "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"
6. 2 CFR Part 400: USDA's implementing regulation of 2 CFR Part 200 "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"
7. 2 CFR Part 415: USDA "General Program Administrative Regulations"
8. 2 CFR Part 416: USDA "General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"
9. 2 CFR Part 417: USDA "Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension"
10. 2 CFR Part 418 USDA "New Restrictions on Lobbying"
11. 2 CFR Part 421: USDA "Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)"
12. 7 CFR Part 16: "Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations"
13. 41 U.S.C. Section 22 "Interest of Member of Congress"
14. 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 (T&Cs) of FNS grant awards may be obtained electronically in advance of an award. For a copy of T&Cs, please contact the Grant Officer noted in the [Agency Contacts](#) (Section VII) of this RFA.

### 3. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

#### Financial Reports

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 (Financial Status Report) 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. For additional information on FPRS, visit: [www.fprs.usda.gov](http://www.fprs.usda.gov).

#### Performance Progress Report (PPR)

Grantees will be required to submit progress reports to FNS 30 days following the end of each quarterly period, using the FNS-908 PPR form that will be sent to grantees at the time of award. The reports should cover the preceding period of activity and must align with objectives laid out in this RFA. A final report identifying the accomplishments and results of the project will be due 120 days after the end date of the award. For reference, sample of the PPR form can be found in the Appendix.

**Please note:** the FNS-908 PPR form specific to this opportunity will be sent to grantees at the time of award. Use of the FNS-908 PPR form for progress reports is required.

### 7. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

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

Patrice Williams  
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS  
1320 Braddock Place, Suite 620  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
E-mail:

### 8. OTHER INFORMATION

#### 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. FNS reserves the right to provide this debriefing orally or in written format.

### APPENDIX

#### Grant Program Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire

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

## ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Legal Organization Name:

UEI 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.	<b>Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years? (If the answer is “Yes” and this report was issued under the Single Audit Act please note this in the box below marked “Additional Information” and if not issued under the “Single Audit Act”, please attach a copy or provide a link to the audit report in the Hyperlink space below).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<b>If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or an “Adverse Opinion”?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<b>If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Material Weakness” disclosed?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<b>If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Significant Deficiency” disclosed?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hyperlink (if available):</b>			
<b>Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:</b>			

### APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Name of Authorized Representative:

Phone Number:

Email:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## RFA Budget Narrative Checklist – For Applicant Use Only

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

NOTE: The budget and budget narrative, as well as forms SF-424 and SF-424A, must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fide need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed. All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

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

ITEM	YES	NO
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		
<b>Contractual:</b> (FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and associated costs after the contract is awarded.)		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all Sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		
<b>Other</b>		
<p>Consultant Services –</p> <p>Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget? The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant’s name and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), number of estimated hours and hourly wages per hour, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.</p>		
<p>For all other line items listed under the “Other” heading –</p> <p>List all items to be covered within “Other” along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.</p>		
<b>Indirect Costs</b>		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application.		
2 CFR 200 allows any non-Federal entity (NFE) that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate to charge a de Minimis rate of <b>10%</b> of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which the NFE may use indefinitely as a Federally-negotiated rate.		

## FNS-908 Performance Progress Report (PPR) – For Reference Only

The following pages contain screenshots of the PPR form that grantees are required to use for progress and final reports submitted to FNS. Upon award, a PPR form (Adobe PDF), customized for the specific FNS program, will be included in award packages.

Print

Submit by Email

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Food and Nutrition Service

OMB Number: 0584-0512  
Expiration Date: 7/31/2022

### PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT

Management Settings

**Recommended File Name:** FNS908\_{Organization Name}\_{Type of Report}\_{Reporting Fiscal Year}\_{Period}\_{Original Revision}.pdf  
*Copy value then paste in Save As dialog when saving*

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 Service, 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.

<b>1. Recipient Organization</b>		<b>2. Program Information:</b>	
a. Organization Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		Program Area: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	
b. Street Address: <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		Federal Fiscal Year of Award: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	
City: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/> State: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/> Zip: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>		Program: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	
<b>3. Primary POC:</b>		4. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN): <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	
a. First Name: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	Last Name: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	b. Title: <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	
c. Telephone (Area Code & Number): <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>		<b>5. Type of Report (Select One):</b>	
d. Email Address: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Quarterly <input type="radio"/> Semi-Annual <input type="radio"/> Final	
6. Federal Grant Agreement Number: <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		Reporting Fiscal Year: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/> Period: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	
7. Additional POC (Optional)			
a. First Name: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>		b. Title: <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	
Last Name: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>		d. Email Address: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	
c. Telephone (Area Code & Number): <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>			
<b>8. Report Submitted By:</b>		<b>9. Certification</b>	
a. First Name: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	Last Name: <input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I certify by checking this box that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this report is correct and complete for performance of activities set forth in the award documents.	
b. Title: <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>			
10. Date Report Submitted: <input style="width: 30%;" type="text"/>			

Form FNS-908  
Version Number: 1.3 06-20

SBU

Electronic Form Version Designed in Adobe AEM 6.4 Version

FNS-908 Performance Progress Report (PPR) – For Reference Only (Continued)

Program Management Information	
<b>1. Progress Summary</b> Provide summary of progress this reporting period, highlighting your greatest achievements and challenges to date in this reporting period. For challenges, how did you resolve or overcome them? (Max 2000 characters): <div style="border: 1px solid red; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
<b>2. Personnel Information</b> a. Number of FTEs: <input type="text"/> b. Were there any changes in key personnel? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No c. If yes, please describe the changes in key personnel, including the individual leaving/joining the project as well as the name and contact information (email address, phone number, and name of organization) of the individual. 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): <div style="border: 1px solid lightblue; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div>	
<b>3. Projected Amendments (Cost and No-Cost)</b> a. Number of amendments projected this upcoming quarter? <input type="text"/> b. Do the projected amendment(s) require FNS approval? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No c. Please describe the type of amendment(s) projected and justification for each. Note: This information does not serve as a formal request to approve amendments. This request must be forwarded to the Grants Officer in a separate request (Max 2000 characters): <div style="border: 1px solid lightblue; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div>	
<b>4. Expenditures/Purchases:</b> a. Were there any significant expenditures or purchases, including any contracts entered during this reporting period? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No b. If so, please describe (Max 2000 Characters): <div style="border: 1px solid lightblue; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div>	
<b>5. Deviations (Changes this quarter outside of the agreed upon budget, timeline, or scope):</b> a. Have there been any deviations? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No b. Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Timeline <input type="checkbox"/> Scope <input type="checkbox"/> Other c. Describe any deviation(s), including a justification and impacts to budget/timeline (Max 2000 characters): <div style="border: 1px solid lightblue; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> d. Please describe proposed activities to mitigate the impact of the deviation(s) (Max 2000 characters): <div style="border: 1px solid lightblue; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div>	



FNS-908 Performance Progress Report (PPR) – For Reference Only (Continued)

Program Management Information (Continued)	
<b>6. Upcoming Activities and Anticipated Changes</b>	
a. Please describe activities planned for next quarter (Max 2000 Characters):	
b. Do you anticipate any changes in your project timeline, activities or cost? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
c. If yes, please explain the anticipated changes (Max 2000 Characters):	
<b>7. Final Reporting Summary (Final Reporting Period Only)</b>	
a. Are all goals and objectives completed at this time? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
b. If no to answer 7a, briefly describe the goals and objectives that were not completed and why they were not completed (Max 2000 Characters):	
c. Was the project budget sufficient for meeting the project goals? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
d. If no to answer 7c, briefly describe why the budget was insufficient for meeting the project goals (Max 2000 Characters):	
<b>8. Additional Comments (Max 2000 Characters)</b>	

**Instructions:** Complete this section by adding all Activities and Indicators as listed on your submitted proposal for each listed objective. For each reporting period, update these Activities/ Indicators with the most up to date information. **Note:** Objectives will be added by FNS and should not be altered. Additionally, note that indicator values vary by Indicator Type selected.

Program Activities								
Objective 1								
-	1	Activity	Type	Anticipated Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Optional		
+						Location	Beneficiaries/ Audience	Topic (if training)
		Indicator Description	Indicator Type	Target	Actual (Cumulative)	Comments		
-	1							
+								
Add Objective		Remove Objective						