

FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development (Cohort B) Request for Application Questions and Answers

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) held an [Informational Webinar](#) on January 26, 2021, to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development Request for Applications (RFA). Answers to questions received during and following those webinars are provided below. Similar questions have been combined into one question and answer.

The following topics are addressed in this document:

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| • General | Q&A #1-13 | Pages 1-3 |
| • Personnel/Staffing | Q&A #14-19 | Pages 3-4 |
| • Programming | Q&A #20-31 | Pages 4-6 |
| • Recipe Standardization | Q&A #32-39 | Pages 6-8 |

General

1. Can a non-profit child care agency apply for this grant?

Only State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) that did not receive a FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development Cohort A grant are eligible to apply.

2. Does this Cohort B grant opportunity apply to SFAs that serve breakfast and lunch during the Summer Food Service Program?

State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and did not receive a FY 2021 Cohort A grant, are eligible to apply for the FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development, Cohort B. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to build State capacity and sustainable infrastructure to develop, standardize, prepare, test, and menu recipes for the School Meal Programs. Page 15 of the RFA explains the School Meal Service Phase and requires that the prepared recipe must be served as a part of a reimbursable school meal during one meal service in at least one school site. School nutrition staff should provide input regarding the practicality of the recipe as part of ongoing school meal service operations.

3. Are we able to select any of the crops our State produces, or must we focus on the crops most commonly associated with our State?

Please select from the variety of local agricultural products in your State, per the definition of local agricultural product in the RFA in Appendix A, on page 35. Applicants should also reference the “Value of Recipe Standardization” scoring criteria on page 27 of the RFA. FNS is interested in increasing the variety of standardized recipes reflected in the Institute of Child Nutrition’s Recipe Box.

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- 4. Do the standardized recipes need to be developed for a specific grade grouping? Or should we have recipes that pertain to the tastes of all grade groupings?**
Please reference page 13 of the RFA, and indicate for which grade group(s) the recipes will be developed.
- 5. How can we check if our State is applying for this grant so that we know if we have an opportunity to apply for a sub-award if they choose that option?**
FNS encourages interested School Food Authorities to contact the State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP). State agency contact information is available at:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts?f%5B0%5D=program%3A39>.
- 6. Are there any best practices or lessons learned from Cohort A that can be shared?**
The FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development Cohort A is a 23 month grant spanning from November 1, 2020 – September 30, 2022. It is too soon in the period of performance to have best practices or lessons learned.
- 7. On page 23, the RFA states that the Budget and Budget Narrative has a maximum of seven pages. Can you clarify if that is 7 pages for both the budget and budget narrative combined?**
Yes. The line item budget and budget narrative can be a maximum of seven pages. Please note that the required SF-424A budget form on Grants.gov is not counted toward the page limit.
- 8. How many State agencies will be awarded this grant?**
FNS anticipates awarding up to 16 Team Nutrition Training Grants for School Meal Recipe Development to State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP).
- 9. Can each individual district apply or is it just the State that can apply?**
State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and did not receive a FY 2021 Cohort A grant are eligible to apply for the FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development Cohort B opportunity. Individual school districts are not eligible to apply. FNS encourages interested school districts to contact their State agency. As part of their grant application, States may propose sub-grants for School Food Authorities as part of their grant activities.
- 10. You said that sub-grant applications CAN be included with the proposal appendices. Is it required to develop the application and include, or can we just detail what our application process would look like in our proposal?**
The Project Management and Quality Assurance scoring criteria, on page 28 of the RFA, explains that the application must clearly describe the sub-grant process and include detailed information on the recruitment, application, criteria and selection process; timing and amount of sub-grants; reporting and accountability; and oversight. Applicants are welcome to include the specific sub-grant applications in the appendices of the proposal; however, it is not required.

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- 11. Please explain USDA’s intention regarding roles of the State agency, SFAs, contracted chefs, and students. (It sounds like the recipe development process would be well-suited to be owned by SFAs, but the RFA stresses State agency staff training regarding recipe standardization.)**

A key objective of this grant is to build State agency capacity and a sustainable infrastructure to develop and evaluate standardized recipes in accordance with USDA guidance. The approach for developing recipes outlined in this RFA allows the State agency applicant to propose staffing, and roles and responsibilities, to meet the key grant objectives.

- 12. When will there be a RFA issued for a CACFP grant?**

In Fiscal Year 2018, FNS Awarded \$3.7 million to 38 State agencies to support meal service training in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Up to \$100,000 was awarded to each State that applied. These meal service training grants are assisting State agencies in providing job skills training for CACFP operators on ways to plan, prepare, and serve nutritious foods.

Personnel/Staffing

- 13. Is it required for the Project Director to attend the one-day recipe standardization training?**

Yes, the purpose of the FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development is to build State capacity and sustainable infrastructure to develop, standardize, prepare, test, and menu recipes for the School Meal Programs. To support this, key personnel involved in the recipe standardization process must attend the one-day training at the Institute of Child Nutrition. Project Directors should be among the key personnel attending the training. All associated costs for the Project Director and other key personnel to attend a one-day recipe standardization training at the Institute of Child Nutrition in Oxford, Mississippi are allowable. A maximum of 4 key personnel are allowed to attend, which includes the Project Director.

- 14. How can an applicant describe key personnel if they will be identified after the grant period starts, specifically school nutrition staff developing recipes?**

Pages 22-23 of the RFA detail the information that must be provided for key personnel positions that will be filled during the grant period. This includes: the position title; a detailed position description with required qualifications, skills, and knowledge; a description of specific roles and duties on the project, referencing the project narrative, the anticipated date of hire, and a contingency plan if the position(s) is not filled in a timely manner.

- 15. For what positions should letters of commitment be provided in the application?**

A letter of commitment should be included for the Project Director, the Project Director’s Supervisor, and any other identified key personnel. More information can be found on page 21 of RFA.

- 16. Can the Project Director role be split between two individuals?**

If an applicant chooses to have two Project Directors, one of the positions must be at least .25 FTE with the applicant State agency. The Project Director(s) should be clearly identified by name as well as the associated FTE planned to work on the grant.

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17. Who is required to submit a resume?

Resumes are required to be submitted for the Project Director and key personnel, as described on page 23 of the RFA.

18. Does the Project Director have to be a State agency employee?

Yes. Applicants are required to have a Project Director at the State agency at a minimum of .25 full-time equivalent (FTE) for this grant, commensurate with the scope of the proposed standardized recipe development and training activities. The Project Director is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all grant activities; providing fiscal oversight; and exercising effective internal control of funds that are provided to a sub-contractor or sub-grantee. The State agency is responsible for overseeing and coordinating grant activities; providing fiscal oversight; and exercising effective internal control of funds that are provided to a sub-contractor or sub-grant recipients, including the appropriate use of Allowable Costs in accordance with OMB Code of Federal Regulations Cost Principles.

Programming

19. Must a State have an established Farm to School Program to receive this Team Nutrition Training Grant?

No. It is not a requirement that a State have an established Farm to School Program to receive this Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development. Part of the scoring criteria of this Team Nutrition Training Grant is to coordinate and complement, but not duplicate, any existing Farm to School efforts.

20. Can you provide more details about what you are looking for in terms of evaluation of nutrition education activities?

As stated on Page 17 of the RFA, FNS expects States to propose how they will evaluate the effect of the specific nutrition education activities on student knowledge and willingness to try the new recipes that feature local agricultural products.

21. What is the definition of local agricultural product in terms of proximity to the school (i.e. mileage)?

The definition of “local agricultural products” can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters, seasonality, and/or other factors. Local procurement options differ greatly across communities depending on district and school size; proximity to agricultural areas; growing season; and demographics. A State may determine a specific mileage proximity for their local agricultural products, however USDA will leave that to the State’s discretion.

USDA expects that State agencies will have varying definitions of “local agricultural products” that align with their particular needs and goals. The intent of schools utilizing local agricultural products in their standardized recipes is to serve more locally produced foods in school cafeterias, improve student nutrition, provide nutrition education opportunities, and support local and regional farmers, ranchers, and fishers. Local agricultural products can be meats, seafood, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, dairy foods, or legumes.

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22. Do you know when the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) one-day recipe standardization training will be held?

FNS anticipates that the one-day Recipe Standardization Training at the Institute of Child Nutrition will occur in February of 2022.

23. What will be covered in the Recipe Standardization Training at ICN in February, 2022?

Topics for the ICN Recipe Standardization Training will include:

- The USDA Recipe Standardization Process
- Benefits of utilizing a standardized recipe
- Components of a standardized recipe
- How to read and use a standardized recipe
- How to utilize USDA's Food Buying Guide and the Recipe Analysis Workbook

24. Can States that have a Farm to School Grant apply for this Team Nutrition Training Grant?

Yes. State agencies (that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP)) that have a current Farm to School Grant are eligible to apply for this Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development. Activities proposed under this RFA should complement and must not duplicate Farm to School activities in the State. If a State receives funding from both grant programs, funds must not be commingled.

25. Why can these Team Nutrition Training Grant funds not be used to purchase gardening supplies like seeds, soil etc. for educational purposes?

The focus of this Team Nutrition Training Grant is to develop, standardize, prepare, test, and menu recipes for the School Meal Programs. While nutrition education for students on local agricultural products featured in the new school meal recipes will be included in grant activities, gardening supplies are not an allowable cost of this grant and must be supported by other funds.

26. Since October is Farm to School Month, would FNS ever consider extending the period of performance to October 31, 2023?

The grant period of performance (page 8 of the RFA) is from September 1, 2021 through September 30, 2023 (25 months). Thus, the grant would be in place for Farm to School month in years 2021 and 2022. As a reminder, any proposed grant activities should complement, not duplicate Farm to School activities. Keep in mind the purpose of the FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development Cohort B, is to build State capacity and sustainable infrastructure to develop, standardize, prepare, test, and menu recipes for the School Meal Programs.

27. If school nutrition staff need to attend a grant related required training, can we include substitute pay within the budget for them to attend that training?

Page 10 of the RFA states that Team Nutrition Training Grant funds may be used to hire substitute school nutrition staff in order for school nutrition staff to attend a training session or workshop. Substitute costs should be included in the proposed grant budget.

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28. Will Team Nutrition provide grant recipients with a 508 compliant template for the standardized recipe and the success stories?

FNS will provide grantees with templates for the standardized recipes and success stories. Once grantees add the specified content (text and images) to the templates, the grantee must ensure the accessibility (508-compliance) of the final recipe file and meet the requirements listed on page 15 of the RFA. Costs associated with ensuring the final set of electronic grant materials are 508-compliant should be included in the proposed grant budget.

29. Can you explain the food purchases that are allowable vs. sub-grant food purchases? If a school is testing the recipes, could they only use 20% of funds to test the recipes?

Page 9 of the RFA details the allowable costs and limits for food purchases. For each sub-grant, the food expenditures may not exceed 20 percent of the sub-grant funds awarded. For the State grant as a whole, the total expenditure for food purchases may not exceed 10 percent of the total State grant award.

30. Can a State with an active Fiscal Year 2017 or 2019 Team Nutrition Training Grant apply for this grant?

All State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and were not awarded a FY 2021 Cohort A grant are eligible to apply for the FY 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development Cohort B. Grant funds from other USDA grants, must be kept separate, so that no comingling of funds occur.

Recipe Standardization

31. Will specific recipes will need to be identified in the proposal?

Yes. The general recipe focus will need to be identified in the proposal. For example, a local agricultural product for the State is bison and represents cultural or regional food preparation practices and customs. The State can document a need for the recipes. The applicant would propose the number of bison recipes and type (side or entrée) to be developed and standardized. Then, if awarded a grant, the State agency would start the standardization process, in which the first step would be specific recipe identification that involves soliciting recipe and menu ideas from the school community.

32. How is a local ingredient used as a “main ingredient” defined?

For the purposes of this RFA, a main ingredient is defined as one of the top four ingredients in the recipe (by weight or volume). The local agricultural product must provide a creditable amount of a food component in the School Meal Programs. Please note that spices and seasonings are not considered a main ingredient.

33. Can we select local agricultural products if there are already many USDA recipes that feature this product? The recipe would not be the same as USDA, but would include commonly found ingredients. For example, USDA has many recipes featuring potatoes. However, potatoes are a common crop in our state. Would we be able to solicit recipes using potatoes in ways different from USDA recipes?

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Applicants are encouraged to reference the “Value of Recipe Standardization” scoring criteria on page 27 of the RFA. Applications should demonstrate that a need for the recipes is well supported by formative research (e.g., student surveys) or previous evaluation activities.

Applications should also show that recipes to be developed utilize local agricultural products not currently featured in USDA Standardized Recipes for Schools (<https://theicn.org/cnr/recipes-for-schools/>) and/or represent cultural or regional food preparation practices and customs for that food product, that are not currently represented in USDA Standardized Recipes for Schools.

34. Our State is interested in also standardizing recipes for quantities of 25 in addition to 50 and 100. Since we have many small rural programs, smaller quantities would be valuable to our State. Is this allowable under this grant?

Yes. In addition to the requirements on page 14 of the RFA to standardize recipes for quantities of 50 and 100, it is allowable to also standardize recipes for quantities of 25 for use in the School Meal Programs, to meet the needs of your State.

35. I understand that a minimum of three standardized recipes shall be developed for this grant. Is it allowable for recipes to feature the same local agricultural product with different preparations and flavor profiles?

Yes. Utilizing the same local agricultural product for all three recipes is allowed. Applicants should demonstrate that a need for the recipe(s) is well supported by formative research (e.g. student surveys) or previous evaluation activities and should also reference the “Value of Recipe Standardization” scoring criteria on page 28 of the RFA.

36. If a recipe is prepared for purposes of recipe development, standardization, or training can that recipe then be consumed by training participants or recipe development staff?

Yes. This food may be consumed as part of training activities or donated. USDA encourages grantees to donate uneaten, wholesome food to appropriate nonprofit institutions provided this practice is not prohibited by State or local laws or regulations. Grantees should work with the school district (if applicable), local health department, and local hunger relief organization(s) to see what food donation options are available.

37. According to the RFA, the Recipes are required to undergo testing three times. Do these tests have to be in three different kitchens?

No. The testing should take place three times in the same kitchen. Refer to “Appendix A- Standardize Recipe Definition on page 35 of the RFA: a standardized recipe is one that consistently produces the same results and yields when following the same procedure and using the same type of equipment, quantity and quality of ingredients.

38. In the presentation, there was a mention of underserved products that we can consider for recipe development. I would greatly appreciate any information that you have regarding the underserved products.

FNS intends to share the recipes States develop under this grant on the FNS [Team Nutrition Website](#) and the Institute of Child Nutrition’s available resource center known as the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#). These recipes will be available to all States and we are looking to Grantees

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to help us increase the variety of standardized recipes available for schools. Please review the Child Nutrition Recipe Box index of recipes through the hyperlink above to identify underserved agricultural ingredients and recipes your State may be able to offer. Some areas we pointed out in the Informational Webinar where recipes are currently underrepresented in our Child Nutrition Recipe Box include:

- Bean, pea, and lentil recipes (not in soups)
- Seafood recipes
- Breakfast recipes (with dark-green/red/orange vegetables)
- Recipes reflecting different cultures
- Trending favorites:
 - Sandwiches
 - Smoothies
 - Tacos
- Recipes that travel well, such as for delivered and Grab n' Go meals, classroom meals, and field trips