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Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities

Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Applications (RFA)

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 10.574

Release Date: May 16, 2024

Application Due Date: 11:59 pm ET, July 16, 2024

Anticipated Award Date: August 2024

Letter of Intent (optional) Due Date: 11:59 pm ET, June 13, 2024

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Application Checklist

This Application Checklist provides applicants with a list of the required actions and documents that must be completed. However, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (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 (4) weeks** prior to submission:

- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number;
- Register the UEI number in the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
- Register in [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- Application format and narrative meet the requirements included in [Section 4.1: Content and Form of Application Submission](#). This includes page limits, priorities outlined in [Section 5.2: Evaluation Criteria](#), and all necessary attachments.

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

- All key staff proposed to be paid by this grant.
- The percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- Your organization's fringe benefit rate and amount, as well as the basis for the computation.
- The type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds.
- Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justification, and basis for lodging estimate.
- Types of equipment and supplies, justifications, and estimates, ensuring that the budget is in line with the project description.
- Information for all contracts and justification for any sole-source contracts
- Justification, description, and an itemized list of all consultant services.
- Indirect cost information (either a copy of a Federally 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 an applicant is requesting the de minimis rate or indirect costs are not required, please state this in the budget narrative.

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

- SF-424 – [Application for Federal Assistance](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – [Budget Information and Instruction Form](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424B – [Assurances for Non-Construction Programs](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-LLL – [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#)

Appendix C: [FNS-906 – Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire](#). This form is included as an Appendix in this RFA, as well as a fillable PDF under the “Related Documents” tab within the announcement on Grants.gov.

- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)

- Resumes of key staff
- Letters of Commitment from key staff and partners

Forms may be requested at grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/.

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1. Program Description and Objectives

1.1 Executive Summary

In 1995, the Team Nutrition initiative was established to support the nutritional health of school children of the United States through nutrition education and the use of Team Nutrition messages and materials. This information is based on the current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) published under Section 301 of the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 ([7 U.S.C. 5341](#)). Authorized under [Public Law 111–296](#) and Section 6(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, USDA makes grants for State agencies to support training and technical assistance for School Nutrition Professionals, nutrition education for students and their caregivers, and activities to build a healthy school nutrition environment to support training and technical assistance for School Nutrition Professionals, nutrition education for students and their caregivers, and activities to build a healthy school nutrition environment.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) is hereby providing up to \$9.6 million in Federal Funding for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities. The FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants will provide funding for State agencies to build capacity for future implementation of the *Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (Final Rule) and to address residual COVID-19 effects on staff retention in school meal programs. State agencies are in a unique position to support the professional development of School Nutrition Professionals and equip them with the skills they need to prepare and serve healthy and delicious meals that meet meal pattern requirements, are operationally feasible, and are produced in a way that respects cultural and religious food preferences and the environment.

1.2 Program Description

The USDA FNS administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) at the Federal level. The NSLP and SPB are federally assisted meal programs operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. These programs provide nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or no-cost meals to children each school day. School lunches and breakfasts provided through these programs (collectively referred to as “school meals”) must meet Federal nutrition requirements, which are based on the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (*Dietary Guidelines*). At the State level, the NSLP and SBP are administered by State agencies, which operate the Programs through agreements with school food authorities (SFAs). While USDA FNS establishes meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals, decisions about the specific foods to serve and how the foods are prepared are made by SFAs.

The [Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#) calls for increasing investments in school food programs by supporting schools’ efforts to continuously improve the nutritional quality of school meals, training School Nutrition Professionals, enabling more schools to cook meals from scratch, supporting kitchen infrastructure, and investing in the school nutrition workforce. Together, these tactics work to further improve the nutritional quality of school meals, enable the public to recognize that school meals are healthy, and ensure children are empowered to

eat healthy foods, which benefits all children and improves our nation's health and [nutrition security](#). The USDA FNS Team Nutrition initiative supports nutrition security efforts by providing grants and resources to support the USDA FNS Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

Team Nutrition Training Grants for State agencies that administer the NSLP are authorized under [Public Law 111-296](#), which amended Section 19 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. As authorized under Section 6(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, [42 USC 1755\(a\)\(3\)](#), USDA FNS provides Team Nutrition Training Grants to support training and technical assistance for School Nutrition Professionals, nutrition education for students and their caregivers, and activities to build a healthy school nutrition environment.

The FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities will help State agencies build capacity for future implementation of the *Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and address residual COVID-19 effects on staff retention in school meal programs. During school years (SY) 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated food insecurity, diet-related diseases, and health disparities. It also affected school meal service across the country. Schools experienced school foodservice labor shortages and staff turnover as well as supply chain disruptions. The COVID-19 public health emergency underscored the need to safeguard and continue to support healthy school environments; provide technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to School Nutrition Professionals; and to capture and share the institutional knowledge of School Nutrition Professionals.

The FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant activities will allow State agencies to provide technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals and help ensure they have the skills and knowledge to prepare and serve nutritious meals. The grant will also help School Nutrition Professionals pilot and implement coaching and mentoring programs and resources, and implement ways to capture and share the institutional, job specific knowledge of school nutrition directors, managers, and front-line staff. Ultimately, this will assist SFAs to:

- identify and apply ways to further improve the nutritional quality of school meals;
- meet meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals;
- implement scratch cooking techniques;
- improve forecasting, procurement, and menu planning for school meals, and;
- build a knowledgeable and skilled labor force.

To amplify the reach of the grant, USDA FNS will provide [10 bonus points](#) to those applicants that collaborate with another State agency administering the NSLP. Only one State agency needs to submit an application. The application should provide the name of the partnering State agency and include a plan that clearly shows how School Nutrition Professionals in both States are benefiting from the grant activities. This collaboration should expand the reach of this grant by providing technical assistance, coaching, and/or mentorship to School Nutrition Professionals in multiple States.

Other initiatives within USDA FNS support this grant and efforts to improve the nutritional quality of school meals. The [Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative \(HMI\)](#) will improve the nutritional quality of school meals through healthy meal summits, grants and sub-grants, and recognition awards. The FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants will complement and support the goals of HMI Recognition Award criteria by providing funding to States to help schools introduce and implement changes for future

award recognition. USDA FNS is currently accepting applications for HMI Recognition Awards to celebrate SFAs that have made significant improvements to the nutritional quality of their school meals. This includes providing innovative staff training and supporting the efforts of School Nutrition Professionals.

In alignment with the [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant takes a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all programming, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. To reflect this, [10 bonus points](#) will be awarded for applications that describe the project’s ability to affect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion by engaging in at least one of the following: (1) contract with businesses that meet the [definition](#) of a “small disadvantaged business”; and/or (2) collaborate with community organizations that work with persons who are historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

1.3 Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives

The goal of the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities is to provide funding for State agencies to build capacity for future implementation of the *Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and to address residual COVID-19 effects on staff retention in school meal programs.

To support success of grant activities, grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis to State agencies, subject to availability of Federal funds. Applicants will have the option of selecting **ONE (1) of TWO (2)** tracks:

1. Meal Pattern Modernization
2. Retention and Mentorship Opportunities

State agencies **may submit one (1) application specifying a single grant track. State agencies may not mix and match activities from the two different grant tracks.** State agencies that mix and match activities from the two different grant tracks will be deemed ineligible and removed from the competition. These grant tracks are intended to simplify and expedite the application process, while providing necessary flexibilities for State agencies to address the needs of their SFAs. State agencies are encouraged to read this RFA closely and choose the track that is best for their situation. States may not apply to more than one (1) track. State agencies that apply to more than one track will be deemed ineligible and removed from the competition.

Track 1 Description: Meal Pattern Modernization

#	OBJECTIVES
1.1	Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
1.2	Provide School Nutrition Professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with

	the Final Rule and to assist participating children with following healthy eating patterns that align with the recommendations set forth in the 2020-2025 <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> .
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Track 2 Description: Retention and Mentorship Opportunities

#	OBJECTIVES
2.1	Provide coaching and mentoring to school nutrition directors, managers, and/or front-line staff to assist them in meeting meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals. This can include (but is not limited to) topics related to implementing scratch cooking techniques, improving forecasting and procurement, and improving menu planning for school meals.
2.2	Develop systems and resources to capture and share the institutional knowledge of School Nutrition Professionals and others managing USDA Child Nutrition Programs.

1.4 Recommended Activities by Track

Below is a list of the sample activities that align with the provided objectives. As noted in [Section 4.1: Content and Form of Application Submission](#), within the “Activities/Performance Measures Tracker,” proposed activities should be clearly aligned to these objectives and their associated performance measures. Recommended references are provided after each activities list.

State agency applicants must include at least one (1) activity that supports **each** Team Nutrition Training Grant objective for the selected track in their **Project Work Plan (Attachment A)** in [Section 4.1 Content and Form of Application Submission](#). Examples of recommended activities are specified below, but applicants are free to propose others relevant to the specified objectives. Applicants must complete at least one activity per objective.

Please Note: If awarded, grantees will be required to report quarterly on progress towards activities aligned with the required objective(s) and must use the [FNS-908 Performance Progress Report \(Appendix E\)](#). Carefully considering proposed activities and performance measures will prepare grantees for their progress reporting requirements if awarded.

TRACK 1 Recommended Activities:

- A. Provide a program of training, resources, technical assistance, and incentives for SFAs to help them meet meal pattern requirements, improve the nutritional quality of school meals, and/or meet award criteria for the HMI Recognition Awards for SFAs. (objective 1.1)
- B. Implement training tools and resources on topics including, but not limited to, meal pattern training, culinary principles to reduce sodium, reducing added sugars, and other meal pattern changes. (objectives 1.1 and 1.2)
- C. Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals using in-person, virtual, or hybrid training sessions covering topics applicable to school meal pattern requirements. Serve as a liaison to community groups and organizations to ensure training is accessible to limited English proficiency audiences. (objectives 1.1 and 1.2)

- D. Coordinate training efforts among SFAs, collect and share best practices, and provide training follow-up support. (objective 1.1)
- E. Customize incentivized training approaches for School Nutrition Professionals (objective 1.1).
- F. Build upon previously developed culinary training programs, resources, and other activities related to school meals and menu development. (objectives 1.1 and 1.2)
- G. Provide sub-grants to SFAs to support menu changes needed to meet meal pattern requirements. Additional information about sub-grant requirements can be found in [Section 2.2 Sub-Grant Funding](#). (objective 1.2)
- H. Capture and document impacts and contributions to local school wellness policies (LWP). This can include professional development activities related to nutrition and wellness, procurement, forecasting, and planned menus that support marketing guidelines identified in the LWP. (objective 1.1)

TRACK 2 Recommended Activities:

- A. Coordinate mentoring/coaching efforts among SFAs, collect and share best practices, provide training follow-up support, and serve as a liaison to community groups and organizations to ensure training is accessible to limited English proficiency audiences. (objective 2.1)
- B. Standardize administrative or operational tasks related to school meal operations and monitoring using Standard Operating Procedures, workflows, and standardized work documents. (objective 2.2)
- C. Establish a mentorship program to serve as a guide to success for new and experienced, school nutrition directors, managers, and front-line staff. USDA FNS recommends a ratio of 1 mentor per 10 mentees. Examples of similar coaching and mentoring programs include the School Nutrition Strategies, Trainings, Action Plans, and Resources (STAR); and Enhanced School Nutrition Strategies, Trainings, Action Plans, and Resources (E-STAR) programs. (objective 2.1)
- D. Create incentivized coaching and mentoring approaches for School Nutrition Professionals (objective 2.1).
- E. Manage and aggregate network lists of stakeholders such as vendors, trainers, school nutrition State leaders, advocates, and others that can assist School Nutrition Professionals with sharing and applying institutional knowledge. (objective 2.2)
- F. Establish a repository to house all training materials, sessions, and tools for institutional knowledge access. (objective 2.2)
- G. Build upon previous projects as they relate to coaching and mentoring within the school food environment. (objective 2.1)
- H. Conduct formative research (e.g., focus groups, interviews, and surveys) to evaluate trainings to ensure the information is clear and understood as intended. (objective 2.2)
- I. Collect process evaluation data, best practices, and other feedback as applicable. (objective 2.2)
- J. Provide sub-grants to SFAs to support menu changes needed to meet meal pattern requirements. Additional information about sub-grant requirements can be found in [Section 2.2 Sub-Grant Funding](#). (objective 2.1)

Potential Resources for Track 1 and Track 2:

Training Reference Tools:

- [Institute of Child Nutrition’s Shaking It Up: Small Changes Lead to Big Flavors](#)
- [A Guide to Smart Snacks in School](#)
- [Best Practices for Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#)
- [Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Enhanced School Nutrition Strategies, Trainings, Action Plans, and Resources \(E-STAR\)](#)
- [Food Buying Guide Training Resources](#)
- [Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Menu Planner for School Meals](#)
- [Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast](#)
- [School Nutrition Strategies, Trainings, Action Plans, and Resources \(S.T.A.R.\)](#)
- [USDA Approved Nutrient Analysis Software](#)
- [USDA Recipe Standardization Process for School Nutrition Professionals \(ICN\)](#)
- [What You Can to Help Prevent Wasted Food](#)
- [Whole Grains Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#)

Organizations supporting School Nutrition Professionals: This is not an exhaustive list of agencies and organizations familiar with the CNP, nor does this list represent an endorsement of any one agency or organization.

- [Action for Healthy Kids](#)
- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#)
- [Centers for School & Community Partnerships](#)
- [Chef Ann Foundation](#)
- [FoodCorps](#)
- [Full Plate Full Potential](#)
- [Illinois Public Health Institute](#)
- [Institute of Child Nutrition](#)
- [Institute of Child Nutrition’s Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition](#)
- [School Nutrition Association](#)
- [Urban School Food Alliance](#)

2. Federal Award Information

2.1 Total Amount of Funding Expected to Award

During FY 2024, USDA FNS plans to award up to \$9.6 million in Federal funding for the Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities, subject to the availability of funds. State agencies may request up to \$800,000 each. The following information is intended to provide applicants with information to help make informed decisions about proposal submissions.

- **Total amount of funding expected to award approximately:** \$9,600,000
- **Anticipated number of awards:** 12
- **Minimum award amount (award floor):** \$250,000
- **Maximum award amount (award ceiling):** \$800,000

- **Anticipated award announcement date:** August 2024
- **Anticipated period of performance** (start and end date of the award): 3 year(s) – September 15, 2024, to September 30, 2027
- **Application due date:** July 16, 2024

Please Note: Grant awards are subject to availability of funding and/or appropriation of funds. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding. USDA FNS reserves the right to reduce, increase, or revise proposed budgets based on the availability of funds. USDA FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants this year or the subsequent fiscal year, should additional funds become available.

2.2 Sub-Grant Funding

Sub-grants are not a required part of the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant. However, the grantee may issue sub-grants to the following entities for purposes of meeting the objectives of the grant:

- SFAs
- Land-grant colleges and universities
- Tribal government-owned entity, arm, or instrumentality
- Native Hawaiian Organization as recognized by the Department of the Interior
- Other non-governmental entity including Tribal Colleges & Universities
- Non-profit organizations with expertise in culinary training, school meals service, or other relevant areas

Mandatory Oversight:

- All sub-grants must follow allowable costs as outlined in [2.6 Allowable Costs](#).
- Either the Project Director or Team Nutrition Coordinator must provide oversight of sub-grant recipients to ensure expenditures authorized are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
- State agencies must ensure all expenditures are consistent with all local, State, and Federal policies, regulations, and procedures.

All potential sub-grants must be discussed in the **Project Work Plan (Attachment A)** described in [Section 4.1: Content and Form of Application Submission](#).

2.3 Anticipated Start Dates and Period of Performance

The anticipated grant period of performance is **September 15, 2024, to September 30, 2027** (a 36-month period of performance).

Applicants should plan accordingly so that they can complete all grant activities including start-up, execution, and close-out activities (final financial and program reporting, accounting, etc.) within the period of performance.

2.4 Types of Federal Assistance

Funding for approved Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, upon receipt of an executive grant agreement between USDA FNS and the grantee. These awards are subject to the availability and apportionment of Federal funds. All Team Nutrition Grant Funds must be obligated, and all activities must be completed by **September 30, 2027**.

2.5 Use of Grant Funds

All requested costs must be allowable, allocable, necessary, and reasonable in accordance with the OMB Code of Federal Regulations Cost Principles as follows:

- [2 CFR Part 200](#): “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.”
- [2 CFR Part 400](#): “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.”

2.6 Allowable Costs

See [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](#) for a detailed description of all allowable and unallowable costs.

Food

Team Nutrition Training Grant funds may be used to pay for food only if the food is part of a culinary training or is purchased in small amounts for consideration for the school menu. Grant funds may not be used to purchase food to provide meals to training participants. Food purchases must be in accordance with the USDA’s [Buy American Provision](#). For more information, refer to the OMB Code of Federal Regulations Cost Principles [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [Part 400](#). See [Section 2.7 Unallowable Costs](#) for examples of when food may not be purchased with grant funds. Any food purchase, as well as any expenditures associated with food purchases, must be clearly identified within the submitted budget narrative.

Kitchen Supplies:

Team Nutrition Training Grant funds may be used to purchase kitchen supplies (less than \$5000) necessary for food storage, preparation, production, and display of food prepared for training purposes, including but not limited to:

- Food storage containers
- Pots
- Pans
- Mixing bowls
- Knives
- Utensils
- Tabletop cooking equipment

Demonstration Tools, Apparel, and Supplies

Team Nutrition Training Grant funds may be used to purchase food production, demonstration equipment, apparel, and supplies related to training including but not limited to:

- Mobile food carts (<\$5000.00)
- Demonstration tables (<\$5000.00)
- Aprons
- Gloves
- Hairnets

- Single-serving cups
- Bowls
- Paper towels

Training Incentives

Monetary awards (up to \$500 per School Nutrition Professional during the period of performance for the grant) to incentivize completion of training programs are an allowable cost. Applicant must explain how the incentive will be issued (rules, guidelines, recipient requirements, etc.) The total expenditure for training incentives should not exceed 5% of the total grant award.

Sub-Grants to SFAs

Under this grant, State agencies may award sub-grants to SFAs in support of meeting the [Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives](#). The State should:

- Provide oversight to sub-grant recipients to ensure that expenditures authorized under the sub-grants are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
- Ensure that all sub-grant expenditures are consistent with all local, State, and Federal policies, regulations, and procedures.
- Ensure that sub-grant expenditures do not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under similar circumstances and would qualify as a sound business practice.
- Ensure that sub-grant funds are only used for activities that are part of the objectives specified in the grant.
- Ensure that all sub-grant awards follow the OMB Code of Federal Regulations Cost Principles- [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [Part 400](#).

Professional Allowances

Memberships and professional activities are allowable expenses ([2 CFR Part 200.454](#)). Costs of institutional memberships in technical and professional organizations necessary to effectively implement activities as approved under this grant are allowable (e.g., Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, School Nutrition Association, Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior) during the grant period of performance. Costs of individual professional memberships in such organizations for personnel that work in school nutrition or dietetics are **not** allowable. Professional registration or license fees paid by individuals are unallowable costs because the fees would be considered personal expenses, not institutional expenses.

Personnel Costs and Benefits

Salaries and benefits of personnel involved in nutrition education and administrative support of activities under this grant are allowable expenses. All staff wages, salaries, and benefits must be computed on a reasonable hourly basis commensurate with duties being performed, or the Federal minimum hourly wages established by the United States Department of Labor. The wages and salaries shall be commensurate to the task an individual is performing under this grant, as opposed to reflecting other positions for which he/she is credentialed (e.g., if a physician is teaching a nutrition education lesson as a Nutrition Classroom Educator, pay will be commensurate with the activity of nutrition education in a classroom rather than that of a physician).

Staff Development and/or Substitute Pay

Team Nutrition Training Grant funds may be used to hire substitute school nutrition staff, in order that school nutrition staff may attend a training session or workshop. For accounting purposes, a record of who attended the training session, how long it lasted, and the purpose of the session is required.

Property Usage

Cost of leasing a space to rent to complete administrative, professional, or other nutrition training activities is an allowable expense in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200.465](#). This cost includes depreciation based on the building's original acquisition cost, and such building-related costs as maintenance and utilities; must not include costs of maintenance, utilities, etc. directly if they are already charged as indirect costs.

Technology/Software

Team Nutrition Training Grants may be used to purchase USDA approved nutrient analysis software, content learning management systems, premium subscriptions to design and visual communication platforms, productivity and communication software, and other software used to provide training as part of this grant. Procurement of hardware such as laptops and tablets that are used specifically for the purposes of the grant activities are also permitted. A one-time purchase of a Wi/Fi hotspot to support tablet/iPad function is allowable.

Procurement of technology may not exceed 10 percent of requested funds. Funds used to purchase high-resolution photography equipment shall not exceed \$2,000 total.

Travel

Team Nutrition Training Grant funds may be used for travel costs necessary for conducting grant activities. Applicants are required to budget for travel to FNS Headquarters for the annual grantee meeting. Travel expenses may also include:

- Travel reimbursement for State agency staff attending local and in-State trainings or meetings related to activities under this grant (reimbursement may only be paid for travel expenses in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations [41 CFR Part 301](#) and shall not exceed the lesser of State or Federal maximum per diem rates).
- Travel costs and stipends may be used as reimbursement for local travel and hotel costs for School Nutrition Professionals (school district staff) to attend grant-related trainings and activities.

Translation Services

Team Nutrition Training Grants may be used to purchase translation or accessibility services for all print, electronic, social media, and web-based communications. Ensure that translation service providers are qualified, experienced professionals who possess a high level of translation skill and proficiency in both English and the language of the target audience.

Translation services used should have at least **one** recognized language certification/qualification below:

- Translator Certification/Degree from an Accredited University or Institution

- American Translators Association (ATA) Certification
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Certification
- The Translators and Interpreters Guild Certification
- Defense Language Institute, State/Federal Courts
- Successful completion of the translation examination administered by the Office of Language Services, Translating Division of the U.S. Department of State

Allowable Cost for Sub-Grants

Funds may be used for food (only if it is part of a culinary training or purchased in small amounts for consideration for use on school menus), professional allowances, reinforcement materials, cookware, technology, travel, translation services, training, and other direct costs specifically to assist in meeting the key objectives specified.

Applicants must outline the guidance they will provide to sub-grant applicants for allowable/unallowable costs. All sub-grant budget line-items must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and [2 CFR Part 200](#).

Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Expenditure must not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under similar circumstances and would qualify as a sound business practice.

2.7 Unallowable Costs

Unallowable costs in the grant or sub-grants include:

Food

- Foods used to prepare a meal for which reimbursement will be provided under the FNS nutrition assistance programs, including the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).
- Food used as an incentive or prize for a nutrition training event.
- Foods provided directly to students and families to prepare and eat at home such as groceries or supplemental food.
- Meal sized portions or complete meal service.
- Meals or snacks used as refreshments during coalition meetings (e.g., LWP communities, SNAC meetings).
- Gift cards for use at a local farmer market
- Foods for activities outside the academic calendar (e.g., summer breakfast).
- Alcoholic beverages.

Marketing and Materials

- Advertising and public relations materials, except when incurred for social marketing campaigns as defined under the grant for the purposes of recruitment of staff, acquisition of material for the grant, or publishing the results or accomplishments of the grant. Costs incurred to publicize the organization, as opposed to Team Nutrition activities, are not allowable.

- Purchase or production of written or visual material for purposes of lobbying or influencing Federal, State, or local officials to pass or sign legislation or to influence the outcomes of an election, referendum, or initiative.
- Costs for any materials that have already been charged to another Federal or private program or source.
- Any material that endorses or promotes brand name products or retail stores.
- Manufacturer or store (cents off) coupons.

Equipment

- Large-scale, commercial foodservice equipment (>\$5,000)
- Medical equipment
- Physical activity equipment

Activities and Education

- Staff wellness activities outside the scope of this grant.
- Classes that are designed to provide case management or “life skills” training such as classes on English as a second language, parenting, child development, and crisis management.
- Nutrition education related to dietary needs of individuals, specific disease states, or altered physiological states.
- Food safety education, outside of education needed to prepare foods safely.
- Activities conducted in support of programs that are not the SBP or NSLP.

Entertainment

Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any associated costs are unallowable (mascot costumes, promotional items, etc.) unless there is a programmatic purpose and prior approval is granted by USDA FNS.

Summary

There is limited funding to accomplish Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities’ objectives. State agencies shall ensure the best use of the limited funding. A positive answer should always be sought to the following questions:

1. Is the cost applicable to my grant and the sub-grant’s objectives?
2. Is the cost allowable according to program cost principles?
3. Is the cost reasonable and appropriate?

A complete listing of selected items of costs is located at [2 CFR 200.420](#).

All costs proposed in the budget and detailed in the budget narrative must be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable. Refer to [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](#) for a detailed description of all allowable and unallowable costs.

3. Eligibility Information

3.1 Eligible Applicants

State agencies in the contiguous US, Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico (PR), Guam, or the US Virgin Islands (US VI) that administer the NSLP may apply in response to this solicitation. The goal of the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant is to support State agencies as they pilot and implement coaching and mentoring programs, resources, and opportunities to capture institutional, job specific knowledge for school nutrition directors, managers, and staff. Ultimately, this will assist SFAs in meeting meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals, and in implementing scratch cooking techniques and improved forecasting, procurement, and menu planning for school meals. Each State or collaborating States may submit only one (1) application.

3.1.1 Cost Sharing or Matching Considerations

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements for this grant program.

3.1.2 Other Eligibility Criteria

Suspended or debarred organizations are ineligible to submit applications in response to this grant solicitation.

3.2 Pre-Award Screening Requirements

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, prior to making a Federal Award, Federal Awarding Agencies, in accordance with [2 CFR Part 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:

- SAM.gov, the System for Award Management, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS.
- FAPIIS, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance.
- Existing entities can find their UEI by following the steps on the Federal Service Desk. New entities can get their UEI at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration.
- [FNS Risk Assessment Questionnaire \(Appendix C\)](#): Applicants must complete the Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (FNS-906) that allows FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, and history of performance, 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.

Please Note: In cases where an applicant is deemed nonresponsive for failing to submit required elements or documents associated with this RFA, they will be considered ineligible and removed from consideration.

3.3 Acknowledgement of USDA Support

As outlined in [2 CFR Part 415.2](#), grant recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA FNS 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 FNS support on any audiovisual which is produced with grant support, and which has a direct production cost of over \$5,000.

When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Grantees should follow the [USDA Visual Standards Guide](#) when using the USDA logo. Grantees should follow guidance provided by USDA FNS when using Team Nutrition image art.

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

4. Application and Submission Information

4.1 Content and Form of Application Submission

Eligible applicants interested in applying to this grant opportunity must adhere to the following application format.

- Include the completed grant application (**Project Work Plan: Attachment A**) for the selected grant track.
- The application should be formatted for printing on 8½" by 11" white paper with at least 1-inch margins on the top and bottom.
- All pages should be single-spaced in a readable 12-point font such as Times New Roman.
- Limit the narrative portion of the application to the page length specified in the application. Expansion beyond the page limits provided will result in elimination from the competition.
- Follow all application instructions regarding budget, timeline, resumes, etc.
- Complete the Content Summary section on the final page of the grant application.
- All pages, excluding form pages, must be numbered sequentially.

Submit completed application via Grants.gov. Files should be submitted as a Portable Document Format file (.PDF) through the [Grants.gov](#) workspace.

Special Instructions

- Applications not submitted via Grants.gov will not be considered.
- Late application submissions will not be considered in this competition. USDA 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.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, or certifications will not be considered.
- Applications missing written proposal or budget narrative will not be considered and deemed nonresponsive and removed from further consideration.

- USDA FNS reserves the right to request clarification on any application submitted in response to this solicitation.
- Letters of Commitment must be submitted with the application through Grants.gov. Letters submitted via email will not be considered.
- Applicants who apply to more than one (1) Grant track will be eliminated from the competition.
- If multiple application packages are submitted through Grants.gov by the same applicant for the same Grant Track in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the last application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.

Letter of Intent

Eligible applicants who intend to submit an application may submit a **Letter of Intent (Attachment C)** notice by **11:59 pm ET, June 13, 2024**. This notice does not obligate the applicant to submit an application but provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The applicant can send the Letter of Intent via e-mail to the USDA FNS Grant Officer, Anna Arrowsmith:

Anna Arrowsmith, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
Email: Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov

Letters of Intent are encouraged but **not** required to participate in the grant competition.

Project Work Plan (15 page maximum)

Applicants must complete the **Project Work Plan (Attachment A)** in its entirety for selected track. The Project Work plan should be included as an attachment to the application. The Project Work Plan contains the following sections:

- **Coversheet:** The cover page should include at minimum:
 - Applicant's name and mailing address
 - Primary contact's name, job title, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address
 - Grant Program Title
- **Table of Contents:** The Table of Contents must include all pages, appendices, and attachments. All pages of the application should be subsequently numbered, including the attachments. Exclude form pages.
- **Executive Summary:** The Executive Summary should briefly and clearly describe the proposed grant activities and anticipated outcomes. This section should describe any planned or existing partnerships with other entities committed to working with the applicant on proposed activities, summarize the applicant's capacity to complete the activities, and note any innovative or creative aspects of the proposed project.
- **Justification, Need, and Project Narrative:**
 - **Track 1: Meal Pattern Modernization:** Using needs assessment findings and data, justify how grant activities will advance the knowledge and culinary skills of School Nutrition Professionals and improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered

in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and align with the *Dietary Guidelines*, and the expected outcomes of this RFA. Demonstrate how the selected track and related grant activities will achieve the performance measures and outcomes.

- **Track 2: Retention and Mentorship Opportunities:** Using needs assessment findings and data justify how grant activities will improve the knowledge and culinary skills of School Nutrition Professionals. Describe how the coaching and mentoring activities will be used to help School Nutrition Professionals meet meal pattern requirements and capture institutional knowledge of school nutrition directors and others to maintain a skilled labor force. Demonstrate how the selected track and related grant activities will achieve the performance measures and outcomes.
- **Local School Wellness Policy and Environmental Efforts:** Describe how grant activities will contribute to the integrity of the NSLP or SBP. Describe how professional development activities and work-related tasks completed by School Nutrition Professionals contribute to the LWP.
- **Professional Standards:** Describe how grant activities will contribute toward the required professional standards for State and local School Nutrition Professionals. This includes addressing the four Key Areas of Professional Standards: Nutrition, Operations, Administration and Communications/Marketing.
- **Sustainability:** Describe how the project will continue beyond the period of performance (without additional USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant funds). Discuss the role of staff and partners in continuing the work started under this grant project.
- **Sub-grant administration and management:** Describe how your State agency will make sub-grants available and provide oversight. Discuss the type of activities to be funded through the sub-grants, the anticipated number of sub-grants, and their amounts.
- **Project Outcomes, Effectiveness, and Evaluation Plan:** The applicant describes a plan for evaluating all objectives and activities included in the activities and performance measures tracker.
 - The Performance Measures tracker outlines what grantees are expected to achieve by the end of the period of performance are based on Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives. Applicants must use the stated objectives, performance measures, and planned activities to complete the Activities and Performance Measures Tracker. Grantees may also propose additional short or mid-term outcomes they deem appropriate. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education Toolkit (SNAP-Ed) references several validated assessment tools, which may be useful for the purposes of measuring additional outcomes.

At a minimum, applicants must address how they plan to collect and compile **five (5)** of the following performance measures:

- Number of schools implementing FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant activities.
- Number of Directors, Managers, and front-line staff trained.
- Number of Directors, Managers, and front-line staff mentored.
- State-wide/locations reached (e.g., rural, urban, number of SFAs, number of schools).
- Number of staff mentored.
- Length and frequency of mentoring sessions.

- Topics discussed during mentoring and coaching sessions.
- Length and frequency of training sessions.
- Literacy levels or languages accommodated.
- Best practices and success stories identified.
- Number of students affected by grant activities.
- Number of new, expanded, or refreshed training resources.
- Number of staff reached through grant activities.
- Number of SFAs that apply for at least one (1) Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Award.

At a minimum, the evaluation plan must describe:

- How the applicant will collect data and use evaluation findings for continuous program quality improvement.
- How key program partners will participate in the performance measurement and evaluation processes.
- Available data sources, feasibility of collecting appropriate performance and evaluation data, and other relevant data (e.g., Performance Measures proposed by the applicant).
- The grantee will report on Performance Measures using the Activities and Performance Measures Tracker (see below).
- Additional Activities and Performance Measures can be added as needed.

Please Note: Performance Measures are defined as any metric the applicant anticipates tracking during the period of performance of the grant.

- **Activities/Performance Measure Tracker** Proposed Activities and Performance Measures must be connected to the objective for the chosen Grant Track in the format below. All proposed activities should have associated performance measures that directly relate to the objective. A minimum of **two (2)** activities must be added to support the application. The Activities and Performance Measures Tracker (**Attachment A1-Track 1 or A2-Track 2**) **should be included as part of the Project Work Plan.**

Proposed Activities and Performance Measures must be mapped to Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives (as described in [Section 1 – Program Description](#)) in the above format (note that additional activities/performance measures can be added as needed).

Example

Activities and Performance Measures Tracker	
Objective #1.1	Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #1.2	Provide School Nutrition Professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and to assist participating children with following healthy eating patterns that align with the recommendations set forth in the 2020-2025 <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> .
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Applicants should allocate appropriate resources to ensure they can carry out and track the activities outlined in their proposal.

Please Note: Performance Measures are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant. Common examples include Number of People Trained, Number of Trainings Offered, Number of Conference Presentations Delivered, and Number of Materials Created.

- **Project Timeline (Grant activities must start no earlier than September 15, 2024):** Using **Attachment B**, provide a timeline showing the dates for the key activities within the period of performance of this grant, including:
 - Hiring of Team Nutrition Coordinator and other staff.
 - Project planning and information gathering.
 - Implementation of key grant activities.
 - Data collection and evaluation activities.
 - Concurrent work related to other Team Nutrition Grants (if applicable).
- **Organizational Capacity, Project Management, Quality Assurance, and Key Personnel:** Describe your organizational capacity including your organization’s knowledge, skills, experience, and access to specific settings (SFAs, schools, and populations) to successfully implement the project activities and achieve the expected outcomes. Submit a staffing plan that identifies specific individuals who are involved in this grant and the amount of their time (in FTEs) that will be devoted to the grant. Outline plan and strategies for hiring/assigning a Team Nutrition Coordinator within the first **six (6) months** of the grant period of performance. Resumes and position descriptions should demonstrate the appropriate educational, technical, and experiential background for the proposed roles. Describe the organizational structure and role of the Project Director and Team Nutrition Coordinator as it relates to sub-grantee oversight and execution of grant activities.

This includes:

- **Project Director** [at least 0.25 FTE staff position, separate from the Team Nutrition Coordinator], who ensures the terms and conditions of the grant are met, including all reporting requirements. The Project Director must have experience managing grants or projects of similar size and scope. The Project Director is responsible for overseeing all

- grant activities, providing fiscal oversight, and exercising effective internal control of funds, including any awarded sub-grantee funds. See [Section 2.2: Sub-Grant Funding](#).
- **Team Nutrition Coordinator(s)** [1.0 FTE staff position, may be split between no more than 2 individuals, hired/assigned within the first six (6) months] to lead collaboration efforts, serve as a facilitator between school meals and other nutrition education efforts, and to work with SFAs, schools, and afterschool programs to implement activities under the grant. The Team Nutrition Coordinator must have knowledge of the USDA CNPs; their regulations and requirements; and experience planning, organizing, and leading professional development and/or adult learning activities. Experience building coalitions and community engagement among underserved communities is highly desired.

Both the Project Director and the Team Nutrition Coordinator(s) will be required to attend the following during the entirety of the grant period of performance:

- Virtual Orientation Meeting with USDA personnel at the beginning of the grant.
- Cohort FY 2024 quarterly collaboration calls.
- Annual grantee meetings hosted by USDA during the grant period of performance (one meeting per year). Meetings will take place at FNS Headquarters in Alexandria, VA or other location approved by USDA FNS administration.
- Quarterly meetings/conference calls with SFAs and/or schools, and partners implementing activities under the grant.

As an attachment to your application on Grants.gov, the following staffing information must be provided:

- Letter(s) of Commitment from the Project Director, Project Director's supervisor, and Team Nutrition Coordinator (if already identified).
- Details for each key project position (other than Project Director) that must be filled during the grant, including:
 - Position title.
 - A detailed position description with required qualifications, experience, skills, and knowledge.
 - An anticipated date of hire.
 - Contingency plan if the position is not filled in a timely manner or turns over during the period of performance.
- Current resumes for all staff to be funded through the grant, reflecting prior relevant experience and the appropriate education and technical background for their proposed role.
- Organizational chart that indicates chain of command.
- Description of any noted conflicts of interests, if applicable.

The State agency is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all grant activities, providing fiscal oversight, and exercising effective internal control of funds that are provided to subgrantees, as applicable. Applicants should provide a description of their approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget, and with quality results.

- **Budget Narrative:**

Provide an itemized budget formatted as a table, that corresponds with the proposed project narrative that describes the appropriate use of grant funds, including calculations for how all line-item expenses were derived. All budget line-item expenses must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and [2 CFR Part 200](#) and must align with the activities described in the Project Work Plan and Budget Narrative for this grant. Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project’s goals and objectives. All funding requests must be in whole dollars only. Budget categories in this table must match those listed on the SF-424A form. If the budget table is created in a spreadsheet, it must be formatted to fit on an 8.5 x 11-inch page, with a font no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman and saved as a PDF prior to submission.

As part of the table include a brief descriptive narrative that addresses every budget line-item expense. Briefly describe how the total amount for the line-item was determined and how expense supports the project goals. Ensure objectives and travel justifications are included in the narrative. Provide details and calculations of how the costs were derived, where necessary. The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget’s direct cost. The budget narrative must be in line with the proposed project description. If the budget includes indirect costs, the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Federal indirect cost rate agreement.

Indirect Cost Rate

A current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), negotiated with a cognizant Federal agency, should be used to charge indirect costs. If selected for award the approved rate must be submitted by the State agency. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a NICRA is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If the applicant does not have, and has never been approved for, a NICRA, they may charge up to 10% de minimis. In this instance, the applicant must 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. For questions related to the indirect cost rate, please work with the Grant Officer as noted in [Section 7](#) of this RFA. Please include as an appendix.

Please Note: Each organization is assigned to a single federal agency (by the Office of Management and Budget) that acts on behalf of all federal agencies in indirect cost rate negotiations and is referred to as the “cognizant agency.”

Letter(s) of Commitment (not to exceed 3, if applicable)

This does not include the Letters of Commitment from the Project Director, Project Director’s supervisor, and Team Nutrition Coordinator.

Provide Letter(s) of Commitment from other organization(s) who will partner with the applicant. Letter(s) should include:

- Organization name and address.
- Contact name, email, and telephone number.
- A description of the organization.
- Role and responsibility in achieving the proposed project objectives.

- Demonstrated experience or expertise with executing the assigned role/responsibility.

Letter(s) of Commitment should be written using standardized letter formatting and are not to exceed one (1) page each. Information provided beyond the page limit will not be considered. Applications that do not follow guidelines may be subject to a reduced score during review. These documents must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add attachments” button under SF-424 item #15 and submitted via Grants.gov. Letters submitted separately or outside the Grants.gov web portal will not be accepted. [See Attachment C-1](#) for a letter of commitment template.

Required Grant Application Forms

The required Grants.gov forms may be previewed at grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/. These forms are part of the Grants.gov Workspace application. Refer to the Application checklist for a list of all required grant forms.

- Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family
 - Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 - Budget Information and Instructions (SF-424A)
 - Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities)
 - Indicate on your form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “Not Applicable” in boxes required to be completed.

4.2 Submission Date

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) by 11:59 PM ET on July 16, 2024.

- Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov. Mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered application packages will not be accepted. For further instructions, see the “[Preparing for Electronic Application Submission through Grants.gov](#)” section below.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- USDA 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, USDA FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.
- Those applicants who fail to submit any required documents or forms will be deemed NONRESPONSIVE, and therefore will be INELIGIBLE to participate in the competition and removed from further consideration.

USDA FNS strongly encourages applicants to **begin the registration process at least four (4) weeks before the due date and to submit applications to Grants.gov at least one (1) 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. USDA FNS will not accept applications outside of Grants.gov. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications through Grants.gov should contact applicant

support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. This service is available 24/7.

4.3 Preparing for Electronic Application Submission Through Grants.gov

Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), and [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) in order to submit an application to FNS via Grants.gov as required. USDA 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

What is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)?

A 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. For more information, visit the [U.S. General Services Administration website](https://www.usa.gov).

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.

2. Register in the System for Award Management (SAM)

- SAM combines federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one (1) system. Visit SAM.gov for additional information.
- To register, you must have your organization's UEI, the organization's Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the last tax return). It may take up to 5 to 7 business days or more to register and/or complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of an entity record.
- All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25.
- FNS strongly encourages applicants to begin this process at least 3 weeks before the due date of the grant solicitation.

3. Create a Grants.gov Account

The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's UEI to complete this process. For more detailed instruction about creating a profile on Grants.gov, visit [grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration](https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration).

4. Authorize Grants.gov Roles:

After creating an account on Grants.gov, the E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) will receive an email notifying them of the registration and requesting that roles be assigned. The EBiz POC will need to go to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles. An approved Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must complete and submit the application online at Grants.gov. To learn more about the EBiz POC role and other profile roles, please visit [Manage Roles for Applicant](#).

5. Track Role Status:

To track your role request, please visit [Manage Roles for Applicant](#).

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.**

4.4 How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Applicants must 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 or RFA, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, visit grants.gov/applicants/applicant-training.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support (except Federal holidays) via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to contact Grants.gov support and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the Center with tracking your issue.

For programmatic and financial-related questions regarding this specific grant opportunity, please contact the Grant Officer noted in [Section 7 – Federal Awarding Agency Contacts](#) of this RFA.

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 or FAQ).

[Are there restrictions on file names for any attachments 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 (e.g., ! @ : & – * % / # ' -). 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 the [Grants.gov](#) portal due to incorrect naming conventions.

Additional information and applicant resources can be found at [Grants.gov/support](https://grants.gov/support).

4.5 Grants.gov Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submissions

All applications must be received by **11:59 PM ET** on the due date listed on the cover page, as detailed in [Section 4.2 – Submission Date](#). 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 Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (e.g., GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the

successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and a 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 acknowledgement 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 (support@grants.gov) reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

4.6 Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs will not be permitted for this the project.

5. Application Review Information

5.1 Review Criteria

USDA FNS will screen all applications to ensure they are eligible and in compliance with all Program regulations. USDA FNS will not approve any waivers from Program regulations for any projects submitted in response to this solicitation. Eligible applications are those that meet the following requirements:

- Submitted by eligible applicants ([see Section 3.1](#)).
- Meet all other eligibility requirements ([see Section 3](#)).
- Successfully submitted a complete application on or before the required deadline ([see Section 4.2](#)).

In order to remain as competitive as possible beyond the initial screening, USDA FNS recommends submitting a complete application that includes all required documentation in the format requested in the RFA.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate applications for this RFA. Each criterion has a maximum score as indicated in parentheses. Scores will be impacted if an application does not include all required information. The maximum score for all criteria is 100 points.

Applicants may receive up to 20 bonus points for the following:

Collaborating with Another State: USDA FNS will provide 10 bonus points to applicants that collaborate with another USDA State agency administering the NSLP. Only one State agency needs to

submit an application. The application should provide the name of the partnering State agency and include a plan that clearly shows how School Nutrition Professionals in both States are benefiting from the grant activities.

Racial Equity: Additionally, USDA FNS will provide 10 bonus points to those applicants that describe the project's ability to affect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion by engaging in at least one of the following: (1) contract with businesses that meet the [definition](#) of a "small disadvantaged business"; and/or (2) collaborate with community organizations that work with persons who are historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

Evaluation of applications will be based on:

Evaluation Criteria 1: Justification, Need, and Project Narrative (25 points)

Applicant clearly identifies the need for the project and includes relevant data describing how the need was identified. Applicant describes the overall project and how the project activities achieve the required objectives. Applicant emphasizes how the project will meet the following (based on the track selected):

Track 1: Meal Pattern Modernization

- Applicant describes how they will provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
- Applicant describes how they will provide School Nutrition Professionals with the skills and knowledge to improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and align with the *Dietary Guidelines* and the expected reach of these efforts.
- Applicant describes how the project incorporates input from the target audience being served in the design and delivery of the project.
- Applicant clearly indicates how the project meets the required objectives and explains how it connects to the need of the target audience.
- All activities mentioned in the narrative section are reflected in the Project Work Plan section.
- All activities are associated with grant objectives and assigned to a lead or staff member.
- Applicant presents a realistic timeline that demonstrates the ability to complete all project activities within the period of performance.

OR

Track 2: Retention and Mentorship Opportunities

- Applicant describes how they will provide coaching and mentoring to School Nutrition Professionals to meet meal pattern requirements, improve culinary skills and use of scratch cooking techniques, develop procurement and forecasting skills, and integrate related menu planning tasks for school meals.
- Applicant describes how they will develop systems and resources to capture and share institutional knowledge and culinary skills of School Nutrition Professionals to maintain a skilled labor force.

- Applicant describes how the project incorporates input from the target audience being served in the design and delivery of the project.
- Applicant clearly indicates how the project meets the required objectives and explains how it connects to the need of the target audience.
- All activities mentioned in the narrative section are reflected in the Project Work Plan section.
- All activities are associated with grant objectives and assigned to a lead or staff member.
- Applicant presents a realistic timeline that demonstrates the ability to complete all project activities with the period of performance.

Evaluation Criteria 2: Professional Standards (10 points)

- Applicant describes activities that will contribute toward the general and annual professional standards requirements of state and local School Nutrition Professionals.
- Applicant describes which key areas planned activities will address: Nutrition, Operations, Administration, and/or Communications/Marketing.
- Applicant describes how they will meet record keeping requirements.

Evaluation Criteria 3: Sustainability (10 points)

- Applicant clearly describes how the program will continue beyond the grant period of performance including future roles of staff and/or partners to continue key activities without this grant funding.
- Applicant identifies key activities that ensure the sustainability of the program past the grant period of performance. Determine if these activities require additional sources of funding and discusses what those sources of funding (e.g., other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization’s long-term budget) would be.
- Develop a sustainability plan that includes a variety of strategies to ensure long-term viability:
 - discusses the role of partners and staff in continuing to provide technical assistance, coaching, training, and/or mentoring to School Nutrition Professionals to maintain a knowledgeable and skilled labor force past the grant period of performance.
 - The sustainability plan describes how the applicant will continue to train School Nutrition Professionals on the importance of maintaining the nutrition quality of meals and meeting meal pattern requirements.

Evaluation Criteria 4: Project Outcomes, Effectiveness, and Evaluation (15 points)

- Applicant describes a plan for collecting and reporting best-practices and success stories.
- If awarding sub-grants, applicant describes the purpose of the sub-grants, and their process for developing the sub-grant application, describing allowable and unallowable costs, evaluating applications, choosing awardees, transferring the funds, maintaining oversight of the funds, providing technical assistance to the grantees, collecting data, and reporting on sub-grantee progress to USDA FNS.
- Applicant provides activities/performance measures that demonstrate their ability to evaluate project implementation and outcomes.
- Evaluation plan is linked to proposed objectives, activities, and timeline.

- Applicant describes a plan for collecting and reporting on necessary data.
- Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating activities are clearly outlined (e.g., contractors, designating a current staff member).

Evaluation Criteria 5: Organizational Capacity, Project Management, Quality Assurance, and Key Personnel (30 points)

- Applicant describes a management approach (staffing, procurement of contractors, quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) that demonstrates that they have the capacity to manage and execute the proposed project.
- Applicant describes a plan for coordination, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.
- Applicant provides a detailed description of the actions that will be taken to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget, and with quality results.
- Applicant discusses how they will provide the oversight necessary to ensure high-quality deliverables are provided on time and within budget.
- Applicant demonstrates effective internal controls to ensure funds are used only for project purposes, with an accounting record and audit trail (for themselves, and for sub-grantees if applicable) and describes how they will complete quarterly financial reporting for USDA FNS.
- Applicant designates a qualified Project Director at no less than 0.25 FTE.
- Applicant designates a qualified Team Nutrition Coordinator(s) at no less than 1.00 FTE.
- Applicant includes resumes of relevant key staff and the qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflects the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one (1) page in length, which includes required knowledge, skills, and education has been included in the application in lieu of a resume. No more than three resumes should be submitted.
- The level of staff allocation is appropriate for program execution and program evaluation.
- Applicant describes a plan for addressing staff turnover while still completing project requirements in the designated time frame.
- Roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly outlined.

Evaluation Criteria 6: Budget Narrative (10 points)

- Applicant demonstrates that all costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's objectives.
- Applicant clearly describes how costs within the budget categories were derived.
- Applicant identifies linkages between expenditures and specific activities/tasks within their proposal narrative.
- Applicant provides documentation within the budget and budget narrative of all implementation and operational costs that are necessary to accomplish the objectives of this project.
- Includes NICRA, if applicable.

- The proposed budget is consistent with [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](#) and [Part 400 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Total Points Available: 100 (with bonus points 120)

Bonus Points

- **Racial Equity (10 points):** USDA FNS will provide 10 bonus points to those applicants that describe the project’s ability to affect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion by engaging in at least one of the following: (1) contract with businesses that meet the definition of a “small disadvantaged business”; and/or (2) collaborate with community organizations that work with persons who are historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.
- **Collaboration with another USDA State Agency (10 points):** FNS will provide 10 bonus points to those applicants that collaborate with another USDA State agency administering the NSLP to amplify the reach of this grant by providing technical assistance, coaching, and/or mentorship to School Nutrition Professionals outside of their local area (e.g., another, state, region, or territory).

5.3 Review and Selection Process

Following the initial screening process USDA FNS will assemble a panel(s) of USDA FNS Staff to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The panel(s) will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components and order the applications from highest to lowest score. The panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring. The selecting official reserves the right to accept the panel’s recommendation or to select an application for funding out of order to meet Agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, or project diversity. USDA FNS reserves the right to reduce, increase, or revise proposed budgets based on the availability of funds or other Agency priorities. USDA FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants during FY 2024 or the subsequent fiscal year, should additional funds become available.

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

5.4 Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Date

The anticipated award and announcement date is August 2024.

6. Federal Award Administration Information

6.1 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 USDA 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 USDA FNS' signed award document (FNS-529). Only the recognized USDA FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA FNS to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

6.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

6.2.1 Confidentiality of an Application

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of USDA 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.

6.2.1.1 Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information

Personally identifiable Information (PII) is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual (OMB Circular A-130, Managing Information as a Strategic Resource).

Applicants submitting applications in response to this RFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the USDA FNS. All federal and non-federal employees (e.g., contractors, affiliates, or partners) working for or on behalf of FNS are required to acknowledge understanding of their responsibilities and accountability for using and protecting PII in accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy [e.g., the Privacy Act of 1974; OMB Memorandum, M-17-12, Preparing for and Responding to a Breach of Personally Identifiable Information; OMB Circular A-130, Managing Information as a Strategic Resource (this is a non-exhaustive list of requirements in this area)].

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, regulations, and policies. By submitting a grant application, applicants agree to take all necessary steps to protect PII, including the following: (1) ensuring that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained or otherwise associated with USDA FNS funded grants is securely transmitted; (2) ensuring that PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, and that PII and other sensitive data is not submitted via email; (3) data is transmitted via USDA FNS approved file sharing services or encrypted mobile media storage devices; and (4) ensuring that PII is encrypted and password protected both in transit and at rest.

6.2.2 Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process

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

6.2.3 Administrative Regulations

6.2.3.1 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.

6.2.3.2 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.

6.2.3.3 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 12689, "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 SAM at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

6.2.3.4 Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Requirement for SAM. Unless you are exempted from this requirement under [2 CFR 25.110](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-25/subpart-1/section-25.110), you as the recipient must maintain current information in the SAM. This includes information on your immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all of your predecessors that have been awarded a Federal contract or Federal financial assistance within the last three years, if applicable, until you submit the final financial report required under this Federal award or receive the final payment, whichever is later. This requires that you review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your information or another Federal award term.

Requirement for UEI: If you are authorized to make sub-awards under this Federal award, you:

- Must notify potential sub-recipients that no entity (see definition in paragraph C of this award term) may receive a sub-award from you until the entity has provided its UEI to you.
- May not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its UEI to you. Sub-recipients are not required to obtain an active SAM registration but must obtain a UEI.

6.2.3.5 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 \$30,000 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 UEI prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

6.2.3.6 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.

6.2.3.7 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 Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

For additional information on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process, please contact the FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at FOIA@usda.gov.

6.2.3.8 USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political

beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

6.2.3.9 Privacy Policy

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

6.2.4 Code of Federal Regulations and Other Government Requirements

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following [regulations 2 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Subtitle A, Chapter II](#). Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

6.2.4.1 Government-wide Regulations

- [2 CFR Part 25](#): “Universal Identifier and System for Award Management”
- [2 CFR Part 170](#): “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- [2 CFR Part 175](#): “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- [2 CFR Part 180](#): “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- [2 CFR Part 200](#): “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- [2 CFR Part 400](#): USDA’s implementing regulation of 2 CFR Part 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- [2 CFR Part 415](#): USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- [2 CFR Part 416](#): USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- [2 CFR Part 417](#): USDA “Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- [2 CFR Part 418](#): USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- [2 CFR Part 421](#): USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- [41 U.S.C. Section 22](#) “Interest of Member of Congress”

- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

General Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) of USDA FNS grant awards may be obtained electronically in advance of an award. For a copy of T&Cs, please contact the Grant Officer Anna Arrowsmith at:
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov

6.3 Reporting Requirements

The frequency of reporting is quarterly.

6.3.1 Financial Reports

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 (Federal Financial Report) into the USDA FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain login.gov and USDA e-Authentication, verify their identity, and submit an FNS-674 form, which will be provided by the Grant Officer to access FPRS. A final Financial Status report is due 120 days after the termination date of the grant award. For additional information on FPRS, visit fprs.fns.usda.gov.

6.3.2 Performance Progress Report (PPR)

Grantees will be required to submit quarterly progress reports to USDA FNS 30 calendar days following the end of each reporting period, using the FNS-908 PPR form that will be sent to grantees at the time of award or orientation. The reports should cover the preceding period of activity. A final report identifying the accomplishments and results of the project will be due 120 days after the end date of the award.

Grantees must also participate in quarterly collaboration calls to discuss progress with USDA FNS.

6.3.3 Final Reports

Within 120 days after the end of the grant period, Grantees will be required to submit a final report to USDA FNS. The purpose of the final report is to summarize all information and data collected over the entire period of performance of the grant.

To promote transparency of grant-funded work, FNS reserves the right to publish Grantees’ Final Reports on the USDA FNS website and/or the [Child Nutrition Sharing Site](#) (CNSS).

Each Grantee must submit all final deliverables formatted to be 508-compliant to the CNSS prior to submitting the final report to USDA FNS. All deliverables also should be placed in Microsoft Teams. Deliverables include all grant-developed materials, photos with accompanying releases, and success stories.

Please note: The FNS-908 PPR form specific to this opportunity will be sent to grantees at the time of award or the initial orientation. Use of the FNS-908 PPR form for progress reports is required. Previous grantees that have not submitted reports timely will be evaluated as high risk. All activities reported on the FNS-908 must align with the required objective(s) from the “[Grant Objectives](#)” Section above.

6.3.4 Final Deliverables

The grantee must electronically submit or transfer a set of final grant materials formatted to be 508-compliant (e.g., training curricula, images) as part of their final report. Grantees should submit the following final deliverables, but are not limited to:

- Success stories.
- Best practices, barriers, and challenges in providing training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals.
- All illustrations, graphics, fonts, or other files for professional printing, social media and web posting in JPEG, PDF and/or TIFF format.
- A minimum of five high-resolution (300 pixels per inch, minimum) photographs of grant projects in action and accompanying signed photo releases. Ensure use of all USDA logos, graphics have USDA approval and in accordance with the USDA Style Guide.

7. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

7.1 Contacts

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

Anna Arrowsmith, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov

8. Other Information

8.1 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 a written format.

Appendix A: Definitions

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans is the cornerstone of Federal nutrition policy and nutrition education activities, providing food-based recommendations to promote health, help prevent diet-related disease, and meet nutrient needs. The United States Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Agriculture jointly publish the Dietary Guidelines every 5 years.

Effectiveness: The extent to which pre-established objectives are attained because of program activity, as indicated by achievement of performance measures.

Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative (HMI): USDA's Food and Nutrition Service initiative charged with improving the nutritional quality of school meals through food systems transformation, school food authority recognition and technical assistance, the generation and sharing of innovative ideas and tested practices, and grants.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): Federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to children each school day.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA): A document published to reflect an estimate of indirect cost rate negotiated between the Federal Government and a Grantee/Contractor's organization which reflects the indirect costs (facilities and administrative costs) and fringe benefit expenses incurred by the organization.

Nutrition Security: The consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent (and if needed, treat) disease, particularly among racial/ethnic minority populations, populations living under the Federal poverty line, and rural and remote populations.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB): OMB serves the President of the United States in overseeing the implementation of his or her vision across the Executive Branch. OMB's mission is to assist the President in meeting policy, budget, management, and regulatory objectives and to fulfill the agency's statutory responsibilities.

Portable Document Format (PDF): A versatile file format created by Adobe that provides a reliable way to present and exchange documents regardless of the software, hardware, or operating systems being used by anyone who views the document.

System for Award Management (SAM): SAM is the official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry (CCR), Federal Agency Registration (FedReg), Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and Excluded Parties List System (EPLS).

School Breakfast Program (SBP): Federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free breakfasts to children each school day. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service administers the SBP

at the Federal level. State education agencies administer the SBP at the state level, and local school food authorities operate the program in schools.

School Food Authority (SFA): The governing body which is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate Federal school meal programs therein or is otherwise approved by USDA Food and Nutrition Service to operate Federal school meal programs.

School Meal: A meal that qualifies for reimbursement with Federal funds because it has met USDA menu requirements and nutrition standards for school meal programs (e.g., National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, collectively referred to as the Program).

School Nutrition Professionals: State directors of school nutrition programs, state director of distributing agencies, school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff.

Seamless Summer Option (SSO): The SSO through the NSLP or SBP allows Program operators to continue the same meal service rules and claiming procedures used during the regular school year during the summer.

Small Disadvantaged Business: A small business that meets the criteria set by the [Code of Federal Regulations](#). The firm must be 51% or more owned and controlled by one or more disadvantaged persons.

Socially Disadvantaged: Individuals who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control.

State Agency: For the purpose of this cooperative agreement, State agencies are responsible for the administration of the CNP. State agencies are a link between the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and local Program operators, ensuring the Programs are managed according to Federal requirements. State agencies facilitate communication between the Program operators and USDA FNS, guaranteeing the success of the Programs. To see a list of State agencies, go to [FNS Contacts | Food and Nutrition Service usda.gov](#)).

Sub-Grant: An award of financial assistance in the form of money made under a grant by a grantee to an eligible sub-grantee.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): SFSP is a federally funded, state-administered program. USDA reimburses program operators who serve no-cost, healthy meals and snacks to children and teens. Meals are served at summer sites in low-income communities, where sponsors often also offer enrichment activities, or — in approved rural communities facing access issues — may be provided via grab-n-go or delivery.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): A 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov.

Appendix B: RFA Budget Narrative and Budget Checklist

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this Budget Table/Budget Narrative template (available in Excel format along with RFA on Grants.gov).

Suggested Budget/Budget Narrative Template			
1. PERSONNEL	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION (explain need for cost and how cost aligns with the project narrative)
<i>Ex. John Smith, Graphic Designer</i>	$\$80,000/\text{year} \times 25\% \text{FTE} \times 2 \text{ years}$	$\$40,000$	<i>John will provide graphic design for an informational website, social media, training slides, and printed resources and nutrition education materials. John will devote 25% FTE to this project for the entire period of performance.</i>
1a. Name, Title			
1b. Name, Title			
Personnel Total			
2. FRINGE BENEFITS	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION (explain need for cost and how cost aligns with the project narrative)
<i>Ex. Personnel 1a</i>	$\$40,000 \times 25\% \text{ fringe}$	$\$10,000$	<i>Fringe benefits for all full-time employees include health insurance, annual and sick leave,</i>
2a. Personnel 1a			
2b. Personnel 1b			
Fringe Total			
3. TRAVEL	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION (explain need for cost and how cost aligns with the project narrative)
3a. Air-Bus-Rail (incl. from XX to XX, company)			
3b. Checked Bag Fees			
3c. Travel Agent (incl. company name, service provided)			

3d. Mileage (incl. from XX to XX)			
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3e. Airport Parking (incl. name of airport and type of parking - daily, long term, etc.)			
3f. Ground Transportation and Tolls (incl. from XX to XX, method of transportation)			
3g. Lodging (incl. name, location of hotel)			
3h. Per Diem (M&IE) - Full Days			
3i. Per Diem (M&IE) - First and Last Days			
Travel Total			
4. SUPPLIES	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION (explain need for cost and how cost aligns with the project narrative)
4a. Computers			
4b. Wi/Fi Hot Spot			
4c. Cookware (add additional rows for different types of cookware)			
4d. Food Storage Containers (add additional rows for different types of containers)			
4e. Measuring and Serving Utensils (add additional rows for different types of utensils)			
4f. Office and Meeting Supplies (add additional rows for different types of supplies)			
4g. Training Supplies (add additional rows for different types of supplies)			

4h. Taste Testing/Student Engagement Supplies (add additional rows for different types of supplies)			
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4i. Software or Fees for Web-based Applications (add additional rows for different types of software)			
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4j. Nutrition Education Reinforcement Materials (add additional rows for different types of materials)			
--	--	--	--

Supplies Total			
-----------------------	--	--	--

5. CONTRACTUAL	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION (explain need for cost and how cost aligns with the project narrative)
-----------------------	--	--------------	--

5a. Contractor (incl. name of contractor/company, area of expertise)			
--	--	--	--

5b. Contractor (incl. name of contractor/company, area of expertise)			
--	--	--	--

Contractual Total			
--------------------------	--	--	--

6. OTHER	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION (explain need for cost and how cost aligns with the project narrative)
-----------------	--	--------------	--

6a. Sub-Grants			
----------------	--	--	--

6b. Stipends			
--------------	--	--	--

6c. Publication and Printing (incl. item(s) to be printed)			
--	--	--	--

6d. Postage, Shipping/Handling (incl. item(s) to be shipped)			
--	--	--	--

6e. Meeting/Training Space Rental (incl. name, location of rental space, dates)			
---	--	--	--

6f. Conference Registration Fees (incl. name, location, date of conference)			
6g. Membership Dues (incl. name of organization, dates of membership)			

6h. Booth/Exhibit Fees (incl. name, location, date of conference)			
6i. Advertising and Public Relations (add additional rows for different types of marketing and promotional costs)			
Other Total			
7. TOTAL CHARGES	CALCULATION (see Instructions tab)	TOTAL	
7a. Total Direct Charges			
7b. Total Indirect Charges (10% de minimus or amount indicated on NICRA)			
7c. TOTAL CHARGES (7a. + 7b.)			

Suggested Budget/Budget Narrative Template Instructions

Instructions: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this template to prepare their Budget Table and Budget Narrative.

Must be formatted to fit on an 8.5 x 11-inch page, with a font no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman. Print the Excel file to PDF to ensure that Grants.gov does not alter the formatting.

Categories 1-7 correspond to those required on the SF-424A. The budget table must include calculations for how all line-item expenses were derived (see below for additional guidance). Calculations should be included in Column B on the Budget Template tab.

Category (from Column A on Budget Template tab)	Budget Line Item	Recommended Calculation Method (use in Column B on Budget Template Tab)
1. Personnel		(annual salary x %FTE x # years) <u>or</u> (hourly wage x # of hours per year x # years)
2. Fringe Benefits		total salary from Line 1 above per person x fringe % rate
3. Travel	3a. Air-Bus-Rail	fare (including tax and fees) x # people
	3b. Checked Bag Fees	fee per bag x # bags per person x # people
	3c. Travel Agent	describe fee and cost basis (if applicable)
	3d. Mileage	cost/mile x # miles x # people
	3e. Airport Parking	cost/day x # days x # people
	3f. Ground Transportation and Tolls	cost/day x # days x # people
	3g. Lodging	room rate (including taxes and fees) x # days x # of people
	3h. Per Diem (M&IE) - Full Days	amount/day x # days x # people
	3i. Per Diem (M&IE) - First and Last Days	amount/day x # days x # people
4. Supplies	4a. Computers	cost/item x # items
	4b. Wi/Fi Hot Spot	cost/item
	4c. Cookware	cost/item x # items
	4d. Food Storage Containers	cost/item x # items
	4e. Measuring and Serving Utensils	cost/item x # items
	4f. Office and Meeting Supplies	cost/item x # items
	4g. Training Supplies	cost/item x # items

	4h. Taste Testing/Student Engagement Supplies	cost/item x # items
	4i. Software or Fees for Web-based Applications	cost/item x # items
	4j. Nutrition Education Reinforcement Materials	cost/item x # items
5. Contractual		cost/hour x # hours/year x # years
6. Other	6a. Sub-Grants	amount/sub-grant x # sub-grants
	6b. Stipends	registration fee/person x # people + (substitute pay/day x # days x # people) <u>or</u> (replacement pay/day x # days x # people)
	6c. Publication and Printing	printing cost/page x # items printed
	7d. Postage, Shipping/Handling	shipping cost/item x # items shipped
	6e. Meeting/Training Space Rental (incl. name, location of rental space, dates)	cost/day x # days
	6f. Conference Registration Fees (incl. name, location, date of conference)	registration fee x # people
	6g. Membership Dues (incl. name of organization, dates of membership)	membership dues x # years
	6h. Booth/Exhibit Fees (incl. name, location, date of conference)	booth/exhibit cost x # conferences
	6i. Advertising and Public Relations	cost/item x # items
7. Total Charges	7a. Total Direct Charges	combined total from each budget category
	7b. Total Indirect Charges	direct charges x indirect cost rate (10% de minimus or amount included on NICRA)
	7c. Total Charges	direct charges + indirect charges

NOTE: The Budget Table 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.

FOR GRANT APPLICANT USE ONLY. DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM WITH THE APPLICATION.

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.

Please 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
Personnel		
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)?		
Fringe Benefits		
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?		
Travel		
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.		
Equipment		
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?		

ITEM	YES	NO
Supplies		
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?		
Contractual: (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.		
Other		
<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>		
Indirect Costs		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a cognizant Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application.		

ITEM	YES	NO
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 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which the NFE may use indefinitely as a Federally negotiated rate.		

Appendix C: FNS-906 Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

This form is required. Please submit this questionnaire along with your applicant package.

PURPOSE

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

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Legal Organization Name: _____

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		Yes	No
Requirement			
1. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years? <i>(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.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or an “Adverse Opinion”?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Material Weakness” disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Significant Deficiency” disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hyperlink (if available):			
Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:			

Appendix E: FNS-908 Performance Progress Report (PPR)

FOR REFERENCE ONLY.

Validate Form	Submit by Email	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Food and Nutrition Service	OMB Number: 0584-0512 Expiration Date: 7/31/2025																																																																																				
PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT			Management Settings																																																																																				
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<p>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.</p>																																																																																							
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Program Management Information

1. Progress Summary

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):

2. Personnel Information

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

c. If yes, please describe the changes in key personnel, including the individual leaving/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):

3. Projected Amendments (Cost and No-Cost)

a. Number of amendments projected this upcoming quarter?

b. Do the projected amendment(s) require FNS approval? Yes 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):

4. Expenditures/Purchases:

a. Were there any significant expenditures or purchases, including any contracts entered during this reporting period? Yes No

b. If so, please describe (Max 2000 Characters):

5. Deviations (Changes this quarter outside of the agreed upon budget, timeline, or scope):

a. Have there been any deviations? Yes No b. Type: Budget Timeline Scope Other

c. Describe any deviation(s), including a justification and impacts to budget/timeline (Max 2000 characters):

d. Please describe proposed activities to mitigate the impact of the deviation(s) (Max 2000 characters):

Program Management Information (Continued)

6. Upcoming Activities and Anticipated Changes

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

b. Do you anticipate any changes in your project timeline, activities or cost? Yes No

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

7. Final Reporting Summary (Final Reporting Period Only)

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

b. 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? Yes No

d. If no to answer 7c, briefly describe why the budget was insufficient for meeting the project goals (Max 2000 Characters):

8. Additional Comments (Max 2000 Characters)

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
+							
		Indicator Description	Indicator Type	Target	Actual (Cumulative)	Comments	
	1						

Attachment A Project Work Plan

FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities

Project Work Plan (Attachment A)

ALN: #10.574

State Agency: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Child Nutrition Director: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Grant Project Director: _____

Job Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Team Nutrition Coordinator (s) (if known): _____

Job Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Please note: Additional information outside the scope of each independent section will not be considered.

The complete application package must be uploaded on Grants.gov **on or before July 16, 2024, no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Time.** Applications received after the deadline date and/or time will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. FNS will not consider any additions or revisions to applications once they are received. Only one application is allowed.

FNS will not accept emailed, mailed, or hand-delivered applications.

A. Content Summary

Include all pages, appendices, and attachments. All pages of the application should be sequentially numbered, including the attachments. Exclude form pages.

Grant Application Component	Application Section/Page Number or File Name (if placed on Grants.gov)	Applicant Comments
Executive Summary		
Justification, Need, and Project Narrative: Track 1 or Track 2		
Local Wellness Policy and Environmental Efforts		
Professional Standards		
Sustainability		
Sub-grant Administration and Management (if applicable)		
Project Outcomes, Effectiveness, and Evaluation (including Activities and Performance Measures Tracker)		
Project Timeline		
Organizational Capacity, Project Management, Quality Assurance, and Key Personnel Project Director Resume Project Director Position Description Team Nutrition Coordinator(s) Resume Team Nutrition Coordinator Position Description		
Bonus Points 1) Racial Equity 2) Collaboration with a State Agency		
Budget Narrative		

B. Executive Summary

Summary to clearly describe activities selected, scope and other key elements of project proposed.

C. Project Proposal (maximum total 15 pages)

Justification, Need, and Project Narrative: Track 1 or Track 2

The project narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing and how it will achieve the objectives included in the RFA. Must include Activities and Performance Measure tracker (Attachment D). **Please check the box** that corresponds to the Track you have selected to apply for. The Project Work Plan includes the following sections:

Track 1: Meal Pattern Modernization: Using needs assessment findings and data, justify how grant activities will advance the knowledge and culinary skills of School Nutrition Professionals and improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the expected outcomes of this RFA. Demonstrate how the selected track and related grant activities will achieve the performance measures and outcomes.

Track 2: Retention and Mentorship Opportunities: Using needs assessment findings and data justify how grant activities will improve the knowledge and culinary skills of School Nutrition Professionals. Describe how the coaching and mentoring activities will be used to help School Nutrition Professionals meet meal pattern requirements and capture institutional knowledge of school nutrition directors and others to maintain a skilled labor force. Demonstrate how the selected track and related grant activities will achieve the performance measures and outcomes.

Local School Wellness Policy and Environmental Efforts:

Describe how grant activities will contribute to the integrity of the NSLP or SBP. Describe how professional development activities and work-related tasks completed by School Nutrition Professionals contribute to the local wellness policy.

Professional Standards:

Describe how grant activities that will contribute toward the required professional standards for State and local School Nutrition Professionals. This includes addressing the four Key Areas of Professional Standards: Nutrition, Operations, Administration and Communications/Marketing.

Sustainability

Describe how the project will continue beyond the period of performance (without additional USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant funds). Discuss the role of staff and partners in continuing the work started under this grant project.

Sub-grant administration and management

Describe how your State agency will make sub-grants available and provide oversight. Discuss the type of activities to be funded through the sub-grants, the anticipated number of sub-grants, and their amounts.

Project Outcomes, Effectiveness, and Evaluation Plan:

Describes a plan for evaluating all objectives and activities included in the activities and performance measures tracker.

The Performance Measures grantees are expected to achieve by the end of the period of performance are based on Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives. Applicants must use the stated objectives, performance measures, and planned activities to complete the Activities and Performance Measures Tracker. Grantees may also propose additional short or mid-term outcomes they deem appropriate.

At a minimum, applicants must address how they plan to collect and compile **five (5)** of the following performance measures:

- Number of schools implementing FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant activities.
- Number of Directors, Managers, and front-line staff to be trained.
- Number of Directors, Managers, and front-line staff to be mentored.
- State-wide/locations reached (e.g. urban, rural, number of SFA's. number of schools).
- Number of staff mentored.
- Length and frequency of mentoring sessions.
- Topics discussed during mentoring and coaching.
- Length and frequency of training sessions.
- Literacy levels or languages accommodated.
- Best practices and success stories identified.
- Number of students affected by grant activities.
- Number of new, expanded, or refreshed training resources.
- Number of staff reached through grant activities.
- Number of SFAs that apply for at least one (1) Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Award.

At a minimum, the evaluation plan must describe:

- How the applicant will collect data and use evaluation findings for continuous program quality improvement.
- How key program partners will participate in the performance measurement and evaluation processes.
- Available data sources, feasibility of collecting appropriate performance and evaluation data, and other relevant data (e.g., Performance Measures proposed by the applicant).
- The grantee will report on Performance Measures using the Activities and Performance Measures Tracker (see below). All objectives, Table #1: Objectives, Activities, and Performance Measures
- Additional Activities and Performance Measures can be added as needed.

Please Note: Performance Measures are defined as any metric the applicant anticipates tracking during the period of performance of the grant.

Activities/Performance Measures Tracker

Proposed Activities and Performance Measures must be connected to the objective for the chosen Grant Track in the format below. All activities should have performance measures associated with it as part of the proposal that relate back to the objective. **Three (3) to five (5)** activities and performance must be added to support the application.

Performance Measures are defined as any metric anticipated to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant. The Activities and Performance Measures Tracker should be included as part of the Project Work Plan (**Project Work Plan Attachment A**).

Example

Activities and Performance Measures Tracker (Example)	
Objective	Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
Activity	Provide a series of 2-day culinary workshops.
Indicator(s)	Number of staff trained.
Activity	
Indicator(s)	
Activity	
Indicator(s)	

Applicants should allocate appropriate resources to ensure they can carry out and track the activities outlined in their proposal. Proposed Activities and Performance Measures must be mapped to Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives (as described in Section 1 – Program Description) in the above format (note that additional Activities/Performance Measures can be added as needed).

Please Note: Performance Measures are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant. Common examples include Number of People Trained, Number of Trainings Offered, Number of Conferences Delivered, and Number of Materials Created.

Project Timelines– Use Attachment B

(Grant activities must start no earlier than September 15, 2024): Using **Attachment B**, provide a timeline showing the dates for the key activities within the period of performance of this grant, including:

- Hiring of Team Nutrition Coordinator and other staff.
- Project planning and information gathering.
- Implementation of key grant activities.
- Data collection and evaluation activities.
- Concurrent work related to other Team Nutrition Grants (if applicable).

Organizational Capacity, Project Management, Quality Assurance, and Key Personnel (include resumes/position descriptions)

Describe your organizational capacity including your organization's knowledge, skills, experience, and access to specific settings (SFAs, schools, and populations) to successfully implement the project activities and achieve the expected outcomes. Submit a staffing plan that identifies specific individuals who are involved in this grant and the amount of their time that will be devoted to the grant. Outline plan and strategies for hiring/assigning a Team Nutrition Coordinator within the first **six (6) months** of the grant period of performance. Resumes and position descriptions should demonstrate the appropriate educational, technical, and experiential background for the proposed roles. Describe the organizational structure and role of the Project Director and Team Nutrition Coordinator as it relates to sub-grantee oversight and execution of grant activities.

This Includes:

- **Project Director** [at least 0.25 FTE staff position, separate from the Team Nutrition Coordinator], who ensures the terms and conditions of the grant are met, including all reporting requirements.
 - Project Director must have experience managing grants or projects of similar size and scope.
 - The Project Director is responsible for overseeing all grant activities, providing fiscal oversight, and exercising effective internal control of funds, including any awarded sub-grantee funds. See [Section 2.3: Sub-Grant Funding](#).
 - The resume should describe the qualifications of the Project Director. The Project Director's resume must demonstrate the appropriate educational, technical, and experiential background for the proposed role.
- **Team Nutrition Coordinator(s)** [1.0 FTE staff position, may be split between no more than 2 individuals, hired/assigned within the first six (6) months] to lead collaboration efforts, serve as a facilitator between school meals and other nutrition education efforts, and to work with SFAs to implement activities under the grant.
 - The Team Nutrition Coordinator(s) must have knowledge of the CNPs, its regulations and requirements, and experience planning, organization, and leading professional development and/or adult education activities.
 - Experience building coalitions and community engagement among underserved communities is highly desired.
 - The resume should describe the qualifications of the Team Nutrition Coordinator. The Team Nutrition Coordinator's resume must demonstrate the appropriate educational, technical, and experiential background for the proposed role.

As an attachment to your application on Grants.gov, the following staffing information must be provided:

- Letter(s) of Commitment from the Project Director, Project Director's supervisor, and Team Nutrition Coordinator (if already identified).
- Details for each key project position (other than Project Director) that must be filled during the grant, including:
 - Position title.
 - A detailed position description with required qualifications, experience, skills, and knowledge.
 - An anticipated date of hire.
 - Contingency plan if the position is not filled in a timely manner or turns over during the period of performance.
- Current resumes for all staff to be funded through the grant, reflecting prior relevant experience and the appropriate education and technical background for their proposed role.
- Organizational chart that indicates chain of command.
- Description of any noted conflicts of interests, if applicable.

Budget Narrative:

Provide an itemized budget formatted as a table, that corresponds with the proposed project narrative that describes the appropriate use of grant funds, including calculations for how all line-item expenses were derived. All budget line-item expenses must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and [2 CFR Part 200](#) and must align with the activities described in the Project Work Plan and Budget Narrative for this grant. Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. All funding requests must be in whole dollars only. Budget categories in this table must match those listed on the SF-424A form. If the budget table is created in a spreadsheet, it must be formatted to fit on an 8.5 x 11-inch page, with a font no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman and saved as a PDF prior to submission.

As part of the table include a brief descriptive narrative that addresses every budget line-item expense. Briefly describe how the total amount for the line-item was determined and how expense supports the project goals. Ensure objectives and travel justifications are included in the narrative. Provide details and calculations of how the costs were derived, where necessary. The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget's direct cost. The budget narrative must be in line with the proposed project description. If the budget includes indirect costs, the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Federal indirect cost rate agreement.

Add this section as an attachment on Grants.gov.

Bonus Points

- **Racial Equity (10 points):** FNS will provide 10 bonus points to those applicants that describe the project's ability to affect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion by engaging in at least one of the following: (1) contract with businesses that meet the [definition](#) of a "small disadvantaged business"; and/or (2) collaborate with community organizations that work with persons who are historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.
- **Collaboration with another USDA State Agency (10 points):** FNS will provide 10 bonus points to those applicants that collaborate with another USDA State Agency administering the NSLP to amplify the reach of this grant by providing technical assistance, coaching, and/or mentorship to School Nutrition Professionals outside of their local area (e.g., another, state, region, or territory).

Attachment C Letter of Intent

Letter of Intent FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities

If you intend to apply for the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities, please complete the section below and return this form by **11:59 pm ET, June 13, 2024**. This intent does not obligate a State agency in any way but will provide useful information to us as we prepare for the review and selection process. The intent may be emailed. Letters of Intent are encouraged but not required to participate in the grant competition. Thank you for your interest.

Please submit your Letter of Intent to:

Anna Arrowsmith, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov

FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and
Mentorship Opportunities
Intent to Submit an Application

State Agency: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Contact Name and Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Attachment C-1 Template: Letter of Commitment

Applicants must adhere to the three-letter limit. The three-letter limit does not include the Letters of Commitment from the Project Director, Project Director's supervisor, and Team Nutrition Coordinator.

{Place on Official Letterhead}

{Date}

{organization or individual name}

{organization street address}

{organization city, State, ZIP}

To Anna Arrowsmith, Specialist, Grants Management Operations Branch:

The {organization or individual name} provides this letter to indicate {our or my} commitment to serve as {indicate key personnel title, role in the grant activities, staff support, stakeholder etc.} for {applicant's name} in their project, {"Project Title"}.

{Provide information about the organization or individual, including the nature of the commitment.}

{Identify the specific task or duties the organization or individual will complete.}

Sincerely,

{Signature}

{Name of Director, CEO, etc.}

{Contact information}

Attachment D Activities and Performance Measures

A1: Track 1 Activities and Performance Measures Tracker

The Performance Measures grantees are expected to achieve by the end of the period of performance are based upon Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives in Section 1.3. At a minimum, applicants must collect and compile **five** of the performance measures from Section 4.1: Content and Form of Application Submission. Please use the space below to map out selected Activities and Performance Measures.

Activities and Performance Measures Tracker	
Objective #1	Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #2	Provide School Nutrition Professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and to assist participating children with following healthy eating patterns that align with the recommendations set forth in the 2020-2025 <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> .
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #1	Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #2	Provide School Nutrition Professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and to assist participating children with following healthy eating patterns that align with the recommendations set forth in the 2020-2025 <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> .
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Activities and Performance Measures Tracker	
Objective #1	Provide training and technical assistance to School Nutrition Professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #2	Provide School Nutrition Professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks offered in school settings to be consistent with the Final Rule and to assist participating children with following healthy eating patterns that align with the recommendations set forth in the 2020-2025 <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> .
Activities	
Performance Measures	

A2: Track 2 Activities and Performance Measures Tracker

The Performance Measures grantees are expected to achieve by the end of the period of performance are based upon Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives in [Section 1.3 Team Nutrition Training Grant Objectives](#). At a minimum, applicants must collect and compile **five** of the performance measures from [Section 4.1: Content and Form of Application Submission](#). Please use the space below to map out selected activities and Performance Measures.

Activities and Performance Measures Tracker	
Objective #1	Provide coaching and mentoring to school nutrition directors, managers, and front-line staff to assist them in meeting meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals. Also guide them in implementing scratch cooking techniques, as well as in forecasting, procurement, and menu planning for school meals.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #2	Develop systems and resources to capture the institutional knowledge of the school nutrition directors and others managing USDA Child Nutrition Programs.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #1	Provide coaching and mentoring to school nutrition directors, managers, and front-line staff to assist them in meeting meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals. Also guide them in implementing scratch cooking techniques, as well as in forecasting, procurement, and menu planning for school meals.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #2	Develop systems and resources to capture the institutional knowledge of the school nutrition directors and others managing USDA Child Nutrition Programs.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Activities and Performance Measures Tracker	
Objective #1	Provide coaching and mentoring to school nutrition directors, managers, and front-line staff to assist them in meeting meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications for school meals. Also guide them in implementing scratch cooking techniques, as well as in forecasting, procurement, and menu planning for school meals.
Activities	
Performance Measures	

Objective #2	Develop systems and resources to capture the institutional knowledge of the school nutrition directors and others managing USDA Child Nutrition Programs.
Activities	
Performance Measures	