

RFA EH-25-011 Questions and Answers

1. I was looking at the grant that is available and was reaching out to see if I could get additional information?

More information about the grant opportunity can be found [here](#) on grants.gov under the opportunity number RFA-EH-25-011. The full announcement can be found under section “Related Documents” which provides additional guidance for applying and navigating the application process. Application submissions can be accessed by pressing the red buttons to apply and/or subscribe for updates and research application portal.

2. What are the long-term goals of the EHS-Net program? How does the CDC envision the program evolving over time?

The long-term goals of the EHS-Net program are to understand the policies and practices in restaurants that lead to foodborne illness and identify modifications and interventions to reduce foodborne illnesses from restaurants (NOFO pages 10-11). The program is expected to evolve as we use findings from previous and current studies, which will help inform future actions and research activities in this field (e.g., recently we studied an intervention that was borne out of previously-learned data to test if it would have changed practices to reduce foodborne illness).

3. It's listed as retail food establishments (RFE), is this to say all establishments in our jurisdiction that sell food with a food license or specifically an RFE vs an FSO (a food service operation)?

While there are many acronyms to describe retail food establishments, the purpose of the NOFO is to primarily address full-service restaurants (NOFO page 5), though in the past we have done some research in grocery stores as well).

4. We have always submitted our EHS-Net grants through eRA Commons, but according to the RFA it looks like we could submit through GrantSolutions instead. Is this okay, and are there any potential pitfalls that I am not thinking of?

Grant applications are accepted through electronic submission to eRA Commons ASSIST or grants.gov, and not through GrantSolutions. However, only ASSIST provides validation of all requirements prior to submission and prevents errors through the application process. We recommend that applicants view their applications in ASSIST after submission to ensure accurate and successful submission through Grants.gov. Please see **Step V: Submit Your Application > Application submission and deadlines > Submission methods** starting on page 40 of the NOFO for more details on how to apply.

5. Do we submit the plan for all 5 years or just for year 1?

The research plan should cover the period of performance of 5 years. An annual performance report will serve as the yearly continuation application. Please see the links provided in **Step III: Prepare Your Application > Application contents and format** on page 24 for more information.

6. [For currently funded recipients]: Should we consider the EHS-Net 25-011 application for the new 5-year cycle a “Renewal and Revision Application” and therefore we need to do a Progress Report as part of the application?

You should NOT consider the EHS-Net EH-25-011 a continuation of funds and would not need to submit a progress report with the application. The EH-25-011 applications will be considered a completely separate application from any ongoing funded efforts.

7. Is there a minimum number of research projects and outbreak investigations that applicants need to propose?

Applicants should propose to develop and conduct at least 1 individual site retail food safety project that addresses your agency’s needs; manage, analyze, and interpret data from these projects; and disseminate findings from these projects. Please see **Step I: Review the Opportunity > Program description > Approach** starting on page 12 of the NOFO for more information. Applicants should also plan to conduct environmental assessments during foodborne outbreak investigations in retail establishments. Applicants should report outbreak environmental assessment data to CDC’s National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS). The number of outbreak investigations will vary per jurisdiction.

8. Do all sites have to do site specific projects or is completing training and environmental assessments sufficient?

Conducting at least one an individual site project is required for this research Notice of Funding Opportunity. Please see **Step I: Review the Opportunity > Approach > Objectives and outcomes** on page 12 for more information regarding these objectives. Environmental assessments are also required for all relevant outbreak investigations and should be reported to NEARS.

9. Do publications in the MMWR about foodborne illness outbreaks count for the peer reviewed journal article requirement?

Please see the [NIH National Library of Medicine guidelines](#) in **Step I: Review the Opportunity > Eligibility > Other required responsiveness factors** on page 8 to determine whether your publication of interest falls within the definition of peer-reviewed publication.

10. What are the rules related to a PI being funded by another CDC grant but working in-kind for EHS-Net? Do we need to provide our funding information on our biosketch? What are rules related to being funded by other grants?

Please see **Step III: Prepare Your Application > Other attachments form > Duplication of efforts** starting on page 27 of the NOFO for more information on how to document related funding/overlapping projects. Since in-kind contributions are meant to complement, not supplant, the grant recipient's award, the documentation of such support is up to the applicant. A percentage of time or effort will suffice for the purposes of determining how such support will contribute to the expected success of the proposed research. It is important for all applicants to make clear that the amount of effort listed for all staff will be sufficient to perform the staff members' roles in the proposed research activities.

11. Is the chief epidemiologist considered "key personnel"? If they are in-kind, do they need to be listed as "key personnel"? What is the definition of key personnel?

Key personnel are defined as individuals who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of the project, whether or not salaries are requested. The application section for senior/key personnel and other significant contributors usually includes the Principal Investigator(s), other investigators, and anyone else who may be essential to the performance of the research activities proposed. The PD/PI(s) are always considered senior/key personnel. The PD/PI(s) should designate other personnel as senior/key if they contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they request salaries or compensation.

Please see [NIH's How to Apply: Application Guide](#) to determine where your personnel fit in regards to this designation. Additionally, they can be listed as in-kind for the budget if they are not going to be requesting a percentage salary.

12. Where in the submission packet should the Governmental Authority statement be? In the "Other" section? Along with the Organizational Capacity document? What gets uploaded into "Other" versus another mechanism?

Please see the checklists and links (titled "Research Instructions" and "How to Apply: Application Guide") provided in **Step III: Prepare Your Application > Application contents and format** on page 24 of the NOFO to determine the appropriate format regarding sections of your application.

13. Can documentation of "Epidemiology Support" be in the form of a Letter of Support?

Yes, this can be a letter of support or memorandum of understanding – please see **Step I: Review the Opportunity > Organizational capacity > Collaborations and partnerships** starting on page 15 for more information related to appropriate documentation of working with external partners. Here, it states, "documentation of collaboration(s) must be illustrated by letters of support, memoranda of understanding or agreement, or interagency plans that detail the nature and extent of the involvement from the performing organization and outside entities. You must submit documentation

of all partnerships and collaborations with the application and include the documentation in the appendix.” Additionally, please see **Step III: Prepare Your Application > PHS 398 Research Plan form > Other research plan section** on page 26 of the NOFO for more information regarding formatting.

14. Can we use the "Other" section to upload supporting documentation for our proposal, like a list of references to accompany the strategy? It sounds like we should not create an appendix document for this sort of thing.

Please see **Step III: Prepare Your Application > PHS 398 Research Plan form > Appendix** on page 27 of the NOFO for more information. As a reminder, we allow only limited appendix materials – please follow all instructions for the appendix in the [Research Instructions](#). “Other” sections may or may not be reviewed by peer reviewers – if it is important information that you would like to be reviewed, we encourage you to place it in the relevant sections for your proposal (however, we also advise you to be aware of section page limits).

15. Should we submit a timeline and if yes, would it be for next 12 months or 5 years? And where can we upload a timeline as an attachment?

For more information related to forming a budget/budget timeline, please see **Step III: Prepare Your Application > Budget form** on page 27 for appropriate guidance. The budget should be structured in 12-month budget periods for over the 5-year period.

For more information related to preparing your application/research plan in general, please see **Step III: Prepare Your Application** starting on page 24 of the NOFO. We have provided an application components checklist for you to ensure that all parts of the application have been completed. To prepare your application, you may use grants.gov Workspace, eRA ASSIST, or a different system that interfaces with grants.gov.

16. Should the budget be for 5 years, or for 1?

The budget should be structured in 12-month budget periods for over the 5-year period. To develop your budget, please see [CDC’s Budget Preparation Guidelines](#). Additional links/information can be found in **Step III: Prepare Your Application > Application contents and format > Budget form** on page 27 of the NOFO.

We do acknowledge that it may be challenging to anticipate budget costs in future years – awardees will have the opportunity to adjust and assess their budget years through the noncompeting continuation process that occurs annually throughout the duration of the award. Although the financial plans of the HHS/CDC CIO(s) provide support for this program, awards pursuant to this funding opportunity depend upon the availability of funds, evidence of satisfactory progress by the recipient (as documented in required reports) and the determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the Federal government.

17. What are typical award amounts?

Please see **Step I: Review the Opportunity > Funding details** on page 6 for more information. The maximum funding amount per applicant per budget period is \$200,000. We hope to fund up to 10 awards subject to availability of funds.

18. Where should we direct our letter of intent to?

Letters of intent should be sent to Aisha Wilkes at NCIPC-Peer-Review@cdc.gov.

19. When can we expect the award recipients to be notified?

We expect notice of awards to be issued by August 29, 2025. Please see **Key dates** on page 5 of the NOFO for more information.

20. Will there be a non-research version of this funding opportunity?

We cannot speak to future opportunities; however, if you are interested in staying up to date on related funding announcements, please consider subscribing to our ERPO newsletter to receive updates on grants as they become available/active annually.

- Visit [CDC News & Updates | CDC](#)
- Search for the topic “Funding”
- Select “Injury Center Funding Announcements” to subscribe. This website will include retail food safety related announcements.

21. How can an NGO from West Africa win such a grant since we need such grants or which link can we get such grants related for Africa NGOs? Are there any plans to establish or strengthen partnerships with international organizations or agencies to address global food safety challenges in Sierra Leone?

Unfortunately, this opportunity is not currently available for international organizations, and we are unable to speak to eligibility regarding any future opportunities. We encourage you to review grants on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) to see if there are any opportunities that align with your work. More specific information to determine eligibility and relevance can be found when selecting each grant opportunity number.

22. Is there a way to look up previous RFAs and know what projects were considered/funded? Is there a way to know if they were considered research?

We recommend you search [NIH Reporter](#) for specific projects that were funded under specific RFAs. Research projects would specifically indicate research in their title or description. Please also see the EHS-Net website for current and previously funded EHS-Net research projects:
<https://www.cdc.gov/restaurant-food-safety/php/practices/research-partners.html>