

Questions and Answers about the Request for Applications (RFA) for Round 2 of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Reach and Resiliency Grant Initiative

Last Updated: February 17, 2023. New questions added since the last update on February 2nd are identified in **red**.

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General

1. Where can I find the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template?

The TEFAP Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template can be found in Appendix A of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) and is also available in editable, Word-document format within Grants.gov (look under “Related Documents”).

2. Are the Round 2 webinar recordings available?

Two recorded webinars about the grant opportunity are available to assist TEFAP State agencies and their partners with submitting an application for funding:

- The [How to Apply for Round 2 Grant Funding](#) webinar, intended for State agencies, includes an overview of the grant initiative and a detailed walk-through of requirements outlined in the [Round 2 - Request for Applications \(RFA\)](#).
- The [Overview of Round 2 Grant Opportunity](#) webinar is intended for TEFAP eligible recipient agencies (ERAs) and other state/local organizations interested in the grant opportunity. It provides an overview of the grant initiative and a brief description of the criteria for applying to Round 2 funding as outlined in the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#).

3. Where can I find project summaries from Round 1 projects?

TEFAP Reach and Resiliency – Round 1 project summaries can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/reach-resiliency-grant-round-one-awards>.

4. How is “underserved” defined for purposes of the grant?

Underserved areas are defined in the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) as "areas where TEFAP foods are not easily accessible to eligible populations, as determined by the TEFAP State agency."

5. How is low-income defined for purposes of the grant?

The [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) does not define “low-income” and State agencies have discretion to determine a definition of low-income that makes the most sense for their State/Territory. Numerous Federal definitions of “low-income” exist; and often low-income areas are defined to be census tracts where the median income does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income. However, there are many other definitions of “low-income” that could be employed. For example, State agencies may want to utilize a definition that aligns with the TEFAP income eligibility guidelines within the State/Territory. Note that State agencies will be required to describe how “low-income” was defined in the context of their Round 2 project. See Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) and Question #4 in Section 4 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template.

6. What is The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and how can I become involved as a food distribution organization?

[The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#) is a federal nutrition assistance program that helps supplement the diets of low-income individuals by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, USDA purchases a variety of nutritious, domestically sourced and produced food, known as USDA Foods, and makes them available to State distributing agencies. State agencies provide the food to local agencies that they have selected, usually food banks, which in turn distribute the food to local organizations, such as soup kitchens and food pantries, that directly serve the public. USDA also provides administrative funding to TEFAP State agencies to support the costs associated with storage and distribution of the foods, which must, in part be passed down to emergency feeding organizations such as food banks.

Additional resources are currently being made available to TEFAP State agencies through the [TEFAP Reach and Resiliency grant initiative](#), for expanding TEFAP’s reach into remote, rural, tribal, and/or low-income areas that are underserved by current program operations. If you are interested in distributing TEFAP foods in partnership with a TEFAP State agency and/or becoming involved in a Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 project, you should contact your TEFAP State agency for more information. Contact information for all TEFAP State agencies is available on the following FNS webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map>.

7. How is “emergency” defined for purposes of the grant?

The term "emergency" in the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) is only related to mentions of [The Emergency Food Assistance Program](#) - a federal nutrition assistance program that helps supplement the diets of low-income individuals by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. USDA provides 100% American-grown USDA Foods and administrative funds to State agencies to operate TEFAP. TEFAP State agencies are the only eligible entities to apply for the open grant opportunity.

8. How much funding is available to each State agency in Round 2?

The [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) outlines that each TEFAP State agency is eligible to apply for an amount of funding up to the maximum amount outlined for their State/Territory in the Maximum Eligible Funding Worksheet (Appendix B of the Request for Applications). Maximum eligible funding amounts as outlined in Appendix B were established utilizing the TEFAP funding formula at [7 CFR 251.3\(h\)](#), with a base funding amount incorporated for all State agencies, and an incentive amount incorporated for those State agencies that did not receive Reach and Resiliency – Round 1 funds. No minimum funding amount is established, and State agencies can choose to apply for less grant funding than their maximum eligible funding amount.

Please also note that although State agencies may not request more funding than that allocated to them in the Maximum Eligible Funding Worksheet, they may indicate in their application an interest in funds beyond their maximum eligible funding amount, should funding be available. Please see Sections 1 and 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#), and Questions #3 and #4 in Section 6 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template. Once all State agency applications are received and processed, FNS will determine if additional funding is available and will request additional information from those State agencies that indicated an interest in the additional funds, to determine final award amounts.

9. How should a State agency indicate interest in additional funds past the amount available to their State/Territory in the Maximum Eligible Funding Worksheet (Appendix B)?

Although State agencies may not request more funding than that allocated to them in the Maximum Eligible Funding Worksheet, they may indicate in their application an interest in funds beyond their maximum eligible funding amount, should funding be available. State agencies may report interest in additional funds in their responses to Questions #3 and #4 in Section 6 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template. Please see Sections 1 and 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) for more information.

10. How will grant funds be provided to grantees and sub grantees, if awarded?

FNS utilizes the letter of credit process to provide funding to grantees. State agencies that receive a Round 2 award will have access to all grant funds once the Automated System for Awards Payment (ASAP) registration for the award is complete. Funds are provided in advance of need and grantees can withdraw these funds from ASAP as needed for planned expenses or for further provision to sub grantees. FNS does not encourage the full award to be drawn from ASAP at one time, rather funding is drawn for expenditures as the project progresses.

11. Does submitting a Letter of Intent have any impact on receiving Round 2 funding?

No. Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) requests that State agencies interested in applying to the Round 2 opportunity submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to FNS Grants Officer, Dawn Addison (dawn.addison@usda.gov) by January 4, 2023. This LOI provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The LOI is not a required submission to apply for grant funding and does not obligate an applicant to submit an application for funding.

12. Where can I find contact information for my TEFAP State agency?

Contact information for all TEFAP State agencies is available on the following FNS webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map>.

13. I am an individual in need of food assistance. Can I apply to the grant to receive assistance?

The TEFAP Reach and Resiliency grant is not available to individuals, but USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers a number of Federal nutrition assistance programs that you may be eligible for, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Please click the following link to learn more about SNAP and how you can apply for benefits in your State/Territory: [SNAP State Directory of Resources | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

If you are in immediate need of food assistance, your local food bank or pantry may also be able to assist. The following link <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank> will help you to locate a food bank or pantry near to your current location. You may also call the USDA National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM ET, to speak with a representative who will help you to find food resources near you.

[Eligibility](#)

14. Are State agencies that did not apply for Round 1 funding, eligible to apply for and receive Round 2 funding?

Yes. All TEFAP State agencies are eligible to apply for Round 2 funding regardless of whether they applied for Round 1 funding. There is an incentive amount incorporated into the Maximum Eligible Funding Worksheet to encourage participation of State agencies that did not receive Reach and Resiliency – Round 1 funds. See Section 1 or Appendix B of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) for more information.

15. Are local agencies or non-TEFAP State agencies eligible to directly apply for the Round 2 grant?

No. Section 3 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) outlines that State agencies that administer TEFAP, as defined at [7 CFR 251.3\(i\)](#), are the only entities eligible to apply for TEFAP Reach and Resiliency - Round 2 grant funding. That said, program stakeholders (including but not limited to recipients of TEFAP food, current TEFAP organizations, new and/or future partner TEFAP organizations, Tribes and Tribal organizations, other community organizations involved in food security and/or emergency feeding, and local and/or State governmental agencies) will be important partners to TEFAP State agencies in implementation of Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 projects.

FNS encourages TEFAP State agencies to work collaboratively with program stakeholders as feasible to develop an application package for the grant. Stakeholders interested in partnering on a Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 project plan should reach out to their applicable TEFAP State agency contact to determine if the State agency will apply for the grant and to understand if/how they could be involved with the State agency's submitted project plan. Contact information for all TEFAP State agencies is available on the following FNS webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map>.

16. How does Reach and Resiliency and the expansion of TEFAP relate to the [Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations \(FDPIR\)](#)? May FDPIR administering agencies apply to the grant directly?

FDPIR administering agencies are not eligible to apply for TEFAP Reach and Resiliency - Round 2 funding directly – please see “*Are local agencies or non-TEFAP State agencies eligible to directly apply for the Round 2 grant?*” and Section 3 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#). That said, FDPIR administering agencies may be important partners in implementation of a TEFAP – Reach and Resiliency project; and many Round 1 projects are focused on expansion of TEFAP in Tribal areas.

FNS encourages FDPIR administering agencies interested in the grant opportunity to reach out to their applicable TEFAP State agency contact to determine if the State agency will apply for the grant and to understand if/how they could be involved with the State agency's submitted project plan. Contact information for all TEFAP State agencies is available on the following FNS webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map>. Contact information for all FDPIR administering agencies is available on the same webpage, if TEFAP State agencies contacts are looking to proactively collaborate with FDPIRs.

[Allowable uses of grant funds](#)

17. Can a Round 2 project be used to extend or complement a Round 1 project?

Yes. Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#), outlines that TEFAP State agencies can use Round 2 projects as a complement or expansion of Round 1

projects. The State agency must provide a description and update on implementation of the planned Round 1 project in their submitted Round 2 project narrative, along with an explanation of how the proposed Round 2 project plan will expand or complement the Round 1 project. See Question #3 in Section 4 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template.

18. Can sub grants be awarded with Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 funds?

Yes. In their submitted applications, State agencies may outline a process to provide grant funds to local organizations through a sub grant process. See Sections 2 and 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) and Question #9 in Section 4 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template.

19. Are sub grantees that received Round 1 sub grant funding eligible to receive Round 2 sub grant funding as well?

The [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) does not include any guidance about whether Round 1 sub grantees can or cannot receive Round 2 sub grant funding. Thus, State agencies have the discretion to include Round 1 sub grantees in a Round 2 project plan if they so choose. Please refer to Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) for more information about how to include planned sub grants in a Round 2 application package.

20. Can a sub grantee further distribute grant funds? For example – could a TEFAP eligible recipient agency furth sub grant Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 funds to a distribution site to purchase equipment necessary for expanding reach?

The [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) does not specifically disallow this. However, if purchases for third party subgrantees will be fairly straight forward, FNS encourages State agencies to hold grant funds at the grantee (State agency) or sub grantee (in this example, the eligible recipient agency) level for tracking purposes. The grantee (State agency) is ultimately responsible for overseeing grant funds and submitting an equipment and property report.

21. Can a State agency’s project focus on some but not all areas within a State/Territory, or work with only a portion of TEFAP eligible recipient agencies within the State/Territory?

Yes. Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 grant funds are intended to target remote, rural, Tribal, and/or low-income areas that are underserved by current program operations. TEFAP State agencies may partner with any necessary stakeholders to meet this aim and are not required to partner with all stakeholders within their State/Territory. Stakeholders in the context of a Reach and Resiliency project include but are not limited to eligible recipients of TEFAP food, current TEFAP organizations, new and/or future partner TEFAP organizations, Tribes and Tribal organizations, other community organizations

involved in food security and/or emergency feeding, and local and/or State governmental agencies.

22. Can TEFAP eligible recipient agencies or local agencies collaborate with each other on a Round 2 project, such as a multi-county study?

Yes. Multiple organizations can receive sub grants for similar or coordinated activities, such as a multi-county study of underserved areas, provided the process for awarding the subgrants is outlined in detail in the project plan. See Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) and Question #9 in Section 4 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template.

23. Since grantees will not be able to purchase foods with grant funds, will grantees be given additional TEFAP food to support program expansion into underserved areas?

USDA will not be distributing additional USDA Foods to TEFAP Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 grantees above what is provided to all TEFAP State agencies. In addition to regularly provided entitlement and bonus foods, USDA is providing almost [\\$1 billion](#) in supplemental resources to TEFAP in FY 2023 through funds provided by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. FNS encourages TEFAP State agencies to think about how to work with currently participating organizations and/or new partner organizations, to reach underserved populations with available resources or when new resources become available. State agencies may also be interested in food purchasing opportunities through the [Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program](#) (LFPA), an Agricultural Marketing Service initiative that is separate and apart from FNS' TEFAP Reach and Resiliency grant initiative.

24. Can grant funds be used to purchase food?

No. Section 2 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) outlines that the purchase of food is not an allowable cost of the grant.

25. Can eligible recipient agencies funded through a Reach and Resiliency project provide non-TEFAP food as well, as long as the project helps us increase TEFAP distribution within identified areas?

Yes. Reach and Resiliency projects are intended to expand TEFAP's reach into remote, rural, Tribal, and/or low-income areas that are underserved by current program operations. TEFAP regulations direct TEFAP State agencies and eligible recipient agencies to maximize the use of foods secured from other sources ([7 CFR 251.10\(g\)](#)) and allow eligible recipient agencies to incorporate such foods into their distribution of TEFAP foods ([7 CFR 251.4\(i\)](#)).

26. Is it considered a "new building" if it is expansion of a currently used building?

Section 2 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) outlines that building and warehouse renovations necessary for reaching underserved areas or populations, are allowable costs of the grant; but the purchase of land or buildings and/or the construction of new buildings, is not allowable. In general, expansion of a currently used building is not considered to be a new building.

27. How is equipment defined for purposes of the grant?

Equipment is non-expendable, tangible personal property with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more with a useful life of more than one year. Equipment is an allowable expense of the grant at the State agency and local level. FNS encourages State agencies to submit estimates, statement of work and quotes as attachments to the budget narrative to support expenses over \$15,000. See Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) and Question #1 in Section 6 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template.

28. Is leasing an allowable expense of the grant (e.g., leasing a box truck)?

Yes, leasing is an allowable expense. If proposing leasing costs, you would include the leasing cost in the proposed budget and provide detail about the lease (cost and length) in the budget narrative.

29. Can a staff member who was hired with Round 1 funds continue their employment for another year as a part of the Round 2 project?

Yes, an employee hired with Reach and Resiliency - Round 1 funding can continue to be compensated with Round 2 funding if awarded, so long as that employee continues to be directly involved in organizing, managing, or conducting activities outlined in the proposed TEFAP Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 project plan. However, please note that the Round 2 grant will be a separate award from the Round 1 grant so expenses for Round 1 and Round 2 would need to be separately tracked. In the above example, the State agency would need to ensure that the FY23 grant expenses aren't paid out of the FY22 grant award and vice versa.

30. Could a staff member who was hired with Round 1 funds and whose employment would continue with Round 2 funds, be paid more during the Round 2 period? For example, a driver hired with Round 1 funds - could their pay increase in Round 2?

There is no requirement in the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) that compensation stay equal for employees paid with both Round 1 funds and Round 2 funds. However, please note that the Round 2 grant will be a separate award from the Round 1 grant so expenses for Round 1 and Round 2 would need to be separately tracked. In the above example, the State agency would need to ensure that the FY23 grant expenses aren't paid out of the FY22 grant award and vice versa.

Application elements

31. The Round 2 RFA requests that Round 1 grantees provide interim results from Round 1 projects, and it appears that applications will be evaluated based on this. How should we handle the fact that we won't have any results by the date of the Round 2 application?

Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) and Question #3 in Section 4 of the Reach and Resiliency – Round 2 Grant Application Template, asks applicants to provide an update on implementation of Round 1 activities in their submitted project narrative, if applicable. FNS encourage applicants to explain any extenuating circumstances that may be affecting Round 1 implementation in their submitted update. This explanation will be taken into consideration in reviewing applications for Round 2 funding.

32. What data did State agencies use in Round 1 to determine whether areas were underserved?

State agencies used a variety of different data sources, including Census data, Feeding America data, and State-generated data, to determine whether an area was underserved for purposes of the Round 1 grant opportunity. Data sources were also overlaid in some cases - for example, some State agencies overlaid maps of remote areas with locations of existing TEFAP eligible recipient agencies, to determine if eligible recipient agencies were reasonably available to those who lived in remote areas. We'd encourage TEFAP State agency staff to contact colleagues in different States/Territories to learn more about data sources and strategies used in Round 1. Contact information for all TEFAP State agencies is available on the following FNS webpage:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map>.

33. If a State agency has no lobbying activities to register, how should the *SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities* form be filled out?

If the State agency has no lobbying activities to register, complete box 4 of the form and put “N/A” in box 5. Complete box 11.

Budget

34. How should third party sub grantee budgets be accounted for in the State agency's submitted budget?

Section 4 of the [Round 2 - Request for Applications](#) provides guidance on submission of planned sub grantee budgets. Generally, if the State agency is planning to award sub grant funding, then the total of the sub grant funding must be listed under the “Other” budget category on the SF-424A and in the budget narrative. If sub grantees have already been identified, the application should include a completed budget, budget narrative, or statement of work with project expenses for each sub grantee that can be uploaded as an attachment to the official budget narrative. The budget narrative attachments should be

named so that they are easily identifiable and must show how costs were calculated. If the State agency has not selected the sub grantees at the time of application for grant funding, the total planned amount of funding for sub grants must be listed under the “Other” budget category on the SF-424A. Additionally, the budget narrative should include the amount of grant funding that will be allocated to sub grants in total, the eligible entities for the sub grants, the allowable costs of the sub grants, and the estimated number of sub grant awards.

If a sub grantee will be making further third-party sub grants, submission of the sub grantee budget information outlined above will depend on how involved the third-party sub grantee’s budget is. If third party sub grants are intended for very specific purchases (e.g., the purchase of refrigeration equipment), the third-party sub grants should be included as a line item in the main sub grantee’s budget, and a *completed budget, budget narrative, or statement of work with project expenses* for the third-party sub grantee would likely not be necessary. However, if the third-party sub grants will involve multiple, varied costs, FNS suggests treating the third-party subgrantee as an additional sub-grantee in the application, and thus a *completed budget, budget narrative, or statement of work with project expenses* for the third-party subgrantee would need to be included as an attachment to the State agency’s or main sub grantee’s budget narrative, as outlined above. Please also note that if monitoring of the third-party subgrantee will be primarily done by the main sub grantee, this process should be outlined in the submitted project narrative.

35. If equipment (e.g., a refrigerator) costs less than \$5,000, should I list it in the “Materials/Supplies” budget category?

Yes. For purposes of the grant, equipment is defined as non-expendable, tangible personal property with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more with a useful life of more than one year. A refrigerator that costs less than \$5,000 does not meet that definition and should be listed in the “Materials/Supplies” budget category.

36. What if the State agency and/or a sub grantee/ contracted partner does not have a Fringe Benefit Rate Agreement (a requested element of the submitted budget narrative)?

If the State agency or sub grantee / contractor does not have a Fringe Benefit Rate Agreement, then the submitted budget narrative should include calculations to show how proposed fringe benefits were calculated, along with any associated justifications.