The Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
Global Programs

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Research on School Meals Projects in Africa

NOTE: If you are going to apply for this funding opportunity and have not obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or are not currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), please take immediate action to obtain a DUNS Number, if applicable, and then to register immediately in SAM at www.sam.gov. It may take 4 weeks or more after you submit your SAM registration before your registration is active in SAM. Detailed information regarding DUNS and SAM is also provided in Section D of this NOFO, subsection, Content and Form of Application Submission.

In addition to obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM, you must also obtain Level 2 eAuthentication to apply for this funding opportunity in ezFedGrants. You must submit an online form requesting access. Normally you will receive an email within 24 hours of your submission, if your request is approved. After this occurs, you will need to schedule an appointment with an LRA. Once you meet with the LRA, your Level 2 eAuthentication should be granted within 2 to 3 days after that meeting. See Section D of this NOFO for detailed information.

A. Program Description

1. Background

The United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS) and the United States Agency for International Development Africa Bureau (USAID/AFR) have partnered to bring this opportunity to fruition. It is anticipated that the findings of this collaborative research activity will inform future design and implementation of USDA McGovern Dole and USAID/AFR agriculture, food security, agriculture, resilience, nutrition and education activities.

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole) program was authorized in 2002 with current appropriations of approximately $200 million annually. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service and is named in honor of Ambassador and former Senator George McGovern and former Senator Robert Dole for their tireless efforts to encourage a global commitment to school feeding and child nutrition.

The McGovern–Dole program helps support education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children. It provides for donations of U.S. agricultural commodities, locally and or regionally procured agricultural commodities, as well as financial and technical assistance, for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education.

The key objectives of the McGovern-Dole program are to reduce hunger and improve literacy and primary education, especially for girls. By providing school meals, teacher training, and related support, McGovern-Dole projects help boost school enrollment and academic performance. At the same time, nutrition programs are offered for pregnant and lactating women, infants, and pre-school children to sustain and improve their health and learning capacity before they enter school.

In the 2014 Farm Bill, USDA was authorized to implement a new program, the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) Program. The program was officially launched in 2016 awarding three programs that year and three more programs each subsequent year up to 2019. To date, USDA has funded 12 separate LRP programs in 12 countries with a total funding amount of $35 million. Each year the funding allocations increased for the LRP program and in 2018 the Farm Bill announced that USDA's McGovern-Dole program would allow local and regional purchase under the McGovern-Dole program, no longer as a separate program anymore. This allowed for all projects that applied in FY2020 to have a local and regional component to the program to encourage local, regional and national ownership of school feeding, and build the capacity of small holder farmers using schools as a guaranteed market outlet. The research questions below are derived from the McGovern-Dole School Meals Learning Agenda. Developed in 2016, the Learning Agenda is intended to identify gaps in the knowledge base within the school meals literature that USDA believes should be addressed as a matter of priority.

2. <u>Scope</u>

The awardee will conduct independent research that will contribute to improving the understanding of three broad research questions in the McGovern-Dole Learning Agenda and accompanying sub-questions. This research will incorporate existing data and the collection of primary data as feasible and appropriate. The corresponding report will analyze and compare different school feeding partnerships, food sourcing models for school meals, and educational outcomes. This study will enhance USDA's and USAID's understanding of the factors that contribute to school feeding sustainability post-project. This original research is anticipated to help inform future project funding, design, implementation, and evaluation.

I. <u>Research Question 1</u>

Question: What kinds of partnerships with the private sector and/or host country governments are the most effective at ensuring program sustainability? Among successful partnerships, who are the key players and what are their roles? In what contexts do private sector and/or government partnerships work best and which contexts may be more challenging?

a. Interpretation of question and relevant context and importance for McGovern-Dole program

The McGovern-Dole program views partnerships with both the private sector and the host country government at the local, regional and national level as an integral aspect to building sustainability in the countries where we work that are attempting to transition from USG support to full ownership by the host country government. Partnerships with both the private sector and the host country government play not only a key role in the longevity of the activities that are implemented under a McGovern-Dole project, but they are also an indication of the government's and private sector's goals and priorities within the country itself.

Answering this question in countries where McGovern-Dole is operating can help to lay a roadmap for ensuring that our partners are engaging with the appropriate stakeholders, to build sustainability, and help identify future partners who could engage in collaboration to continue the longevity of school feeding and its complementary activities.

b. Suggested countries of focus and why

Below are initial suggestions of McGovern-Dole projects and countries in Africa that are relevant to the research question, with some context provided. USDA expects the applicant to refine the criteria for project/country selection in partnership with USDA and USAID, taking into account agency priorities and geographic diversity, and to apply the criteria and propose a feasible number of projects/countries to study during the inception phase of the evaluation.

- Kenya - In June of 2018, under the ongoing McGovern-Dole project 1,074 schools feeding approximately 358,000 students were handed over to the Government of Kenya (GOK) under the National School Feeding Plan. This full graduation in the targeted counties of Baringo, Garissa, Mandera, Turkana, Wajir and West Pokot occurred only after significant donor support and successful partnerships with the GOK and its Ministry of Education.

- Rwanda – Under the National School Meals program in Rwanda, maize is purchased from small holder farmers by a company who produces fortified maize meal, which is in turn sold back to the Government of Rwanda to be used for school meals. This is a unique, yet functional way to involve private companies and small holder farmers to build sustainability in school feeding.

- Senegal – When challenges emerged around importing fortified oil, local communities around the McGovern-Dole schools organized to donate the required amount of oil needed to complement the school ration. This approach demonstrates that partnerships can be at the local level, which is of interest to USDA to explore future of communities and their involvement for school feeding.

- Burkina Faso - In this project, the government provides meals for ~3 months of the year, the local school community provides meals for another ~3 months, and the McGovern-Dole projects provides meals for the remaining ~3 months of the 9-month school year. This unusual model and the significant investment by both the government and the community make this a case of interest and how the partnerships within this model are sustainable.

- Sierra Leone – In this project the Government of Sierra Leone's (GoSL) Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) has successfully implemented a National School Feeding Law and worked to develop a School Graduation Checklist to assess sustainability readiness. Working with well-developed School Management Committees, this project intends to graduate 309 schools in the Mongo, Sulima, Neya, Nieni, Dembelia, Sinkunia, Diang and Wara Bafodia chiefdoms representing a significant success.

- Tanzania - In the current McGovern-Dole and corresponding Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) projects, the Government of Tanzania (GOT) has worked with the implementer and local communities to establish school gardens in 16 schools that produced more than 370 kilograms (kg) of diverse and nutritious vegetables feeding more than 14,000 students in 16 primary schools. Additionally, using those lessons learned from the FY 2017 LRP, the GOT's Ministry of Education developed a School Graduation Readiness Tool and intends to graduate 231 schools feeding 235,197 students in the targeted Mara Region.

c. Data collection/design considerations

The applicant should propose an evaluation design based on the research questions and sub-questions and reflecting known limitations. The proposed design should result in conclusions that can be used to inform improvements in the McGovern-Dole program and are also more broadly applicable to the school feeding community.
The evaluation should conduct a desk review of existing project data, relevant secondary data sources, and the extant literature relevant to the research question and sub-questions. Primary data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, is desired to strengthen the applicability of any findings, but applicants should propose what is feasible given the COVID-19 pandemic and the time constraint. While partnerships associated with McGovern-Dole projects should be included, the evaluation should incorporate evidence from other successful school feeding public-private partnerships in the focus countries. While interaction with local participants, beneficiaries, collaborators, and governments is expected, this evaluation is *not* expected to include experimentation or trials on human subjects.

USDA will make all available data related to McGovern-Dole projects available to the recipient. This will include, but is not limited to, semi-annual performance data, evaluation reports and accompanying datasets, and financial reports. The quality and amount of secondary data available for each project is likely to vary.
USDA is particularly interested in answers to the following questions, along with such others that the recipient may propose:

- Do partnerships need to be formalized (e.g. memorandum of understanding, written agreement, contract, etc.) to be successful?
- What are the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful partnerships?

- What factors affect the willingness of PVOs to partner with the private sector and/or host government, and vice versa?
- How is the effort needed to sustain a partnership post-project different between the private sector and host country?
- Are these results context/culture specific or are they generalizable?
- How are partnerships started or formed? Are partnerships organically made, or are they forced?

USDA should be provided with at least 30 days to review a draft of the final report for comment; more than one iteration may be necessary before the final document is accepted. The team is expected to present the final report to USDA staff in Washington, DC.

The findings, analysis, or portions thereof, may be presented to other professional audiences (including conferences, journal articles, publications, etc.), although costs of doing so generally may not be charged to this award. USDA requests that the recipient notify it of such presentation or publication for tracking purposes.

II. Research Question 2

Question: How do the impacts of local procurement models and other community and nationally sourced models compare with those that rely on international food sources related to farm productivity enhancement (including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability), employment, and agricultural markets?

a. Interpretation of question and relevant context and importance for McGovern-Dole program

Understanding the difference between local, regional and nationally sourced models for school feeding in comparison to those that rely on internationally sources or in-kind food is essential for guiding the McGovern-Dole program in future years of programming with the new local and regional procurement component, and for identifying what is the most cost effective model, what could be the most efficient model, and who might tend to profit from these models. Additionally, it is crucial to understand how these models enhance farm productivity, employment and market access. McGovern-Dole needs a better understanding of how these circumstances and the various modalities could better maximize sustainability and crucial cost-efficiency.

Additionally, the McGovern-Dole program wishes to know under what conditions are the impacts of locally procured foods the same or better than internationally sourced foods? What are the variety of different various modalities being used to source food and provide meals (ie, fully locally sourced, fully internationally provided, local foods added seasonally or year-round, imported foods added seasonally or year-round, local meals provided temporarily due to disruption/ disaster, etc.)? What factors influence the choice of modality and what are the long-term impacts of each modality?

b. Suggested countries of focus and why.

Below are initial suggestions of McGovern-Dole projects and countries in Africa that are relevant to the research question, with some context provided. USDA expects the applicant to refine the criteria for project/country selection in partnership with USDA and USAID, taking into account agency priorities and geographic diversity, and to apply the criteria and propose a feasible number of projects/countries to study during the inception phase of the evaluation.

- Kenya - Kenya implements its own national school meals program that utilizes a home-grown school meal program (HGSMP) feeding modality. In the ongoing McGovern-Dole project and corresponding LRP the GOK promotes a diverse school meals menu based on locally produced, nutritious, and drought-tolerant crops, including sorghum, millet, and cowpeas. Under the FY 2017 LRP the implementer purchased 288 metric tons (MT) of local sorghum and 76.81 MT of cowpeas for school meals serving as a model for GOK's HGSMP.

- Rwanda – Rwanda has several modalities for school feeding, ranging from a 1 cup of milk a day, to a daily meal that is using a combination of commodities under the McGovern-Dole Program combined with locally sourced beans and maize meal. Where the commodities for each meal come from varies, however all these models are of interest to USDA to understand all the impacts.

- Mali - In this project, the government provides meals for ~3 months of the year, the local school community provides meals for another ~1 month, and the McGovern-Dole projects provides meals for the remaining ~5 months of the 9-month school year. This unusual model and the significant investment by both the gov't and the community make this a case of interest.

- Burkina Faso - In this project, the government provides meals for ~3 months of the year, the local school community provides meals for another ~3 months, and the McGovern-Dole projects provides meals for the remaining ~3 months of the 9-month school year. This unusual model and the significant investment by both the gov't and the community make this a case of interest.

- Benin – Under a recently ended LRP project in Benin, the implementing partner showcased how 4 different commodities can be sourced locally to create a mid-day meal. While under the McGovern-Dole program, all commodities were imported. Comparing these models and the benefits they have to the local community is of interest to USDA.

c. Data collection/design considerations

The applicant should propose an evaluation design based on the research questions and sub-questions and reflecting known limitations. The proposed design should result in conclusions that can be used to inform improvements in the McGovern-Dole program and are also more broadly applicable to the school feeding community. The evaluation should conduct a desk review of existing project data, relevant secondary data sources, and the extant literature relevant to the research question and sub-questions. Primary data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, is desired to strengthen the applicability of any findings, but applicants should propose what is feasible given the pandemic and the time constraint. While food sourcing modalities associated with McGovern-Dole projects should be included, the evaluation should incorporate evidence from other successful food sourcing modalities in the countries. While interaction with local participants, beneficiaries, collaborators, and governments is expected, this evaluation is *not* expected to include experimentation or trials on human subjects.

USDA will make all available non-proprietary data related to McGovern-Dole projects available to the recipient. This will include, but is not limited to, semi-annual performance data, evaluation reports and accompanying datasets, and financial reports. The quality and amount of secondary data available for each project is likely to vary.
USDA is particularly interested in answers to the following questions, along with such others that the recipient may propose:

- Under what conditions are the impacts of locally procured foods the same or better than international foods?
- What are the variety of different modalities being used to source food and provide meals (i.e., fully locally sourced, fully internationally provided, local foods added seasonally or year-round, imported foods added seasonally or year-round, local meals provided temporarily due to disruption/ disaster, etc.)? And what are the benefits and drawbacks of the different modalities?
- What factors influence the choice of modality and the long-term impacts of each modality?

USDA should be provided with at least 30 days to review a draft of the final report for comment; more than one iteration may be necessary before the final document is accepted. The team is expected to present the final report to USDA staff in Washington, DC.
The findings, analysis, or portions thereof, may be presented to other professional audiences (including conferences, journal articles, publications, etc.), although costs of doing so generally may not be charged to this award. USDA requests that the recipient notify it of such presentation or publication for tracking purposes.

III. Research Question 3

How do school meal interventions and the nutritional aspects of these meals in pre-schools and primary schools influence educational outcomes in students?

a. Interpretation of question and relevant context and importance for the McGovern-Dole program and USAID

The McGovern-Dole program and USAID Africa Bureau Education are seeking to better understand how school meal interventions and the nutritional aspects of these meals in pre-schools and primary schools influence educational outcomes in students in select countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, increased attendance, attentiveness, improved health and nutritional aspects, and possibly links to a decrease in stunting.

Through this research question, the McGovern-Dole program and USAID would want to understand what is in the pre-school meals (ages 2-6) and what would constitute nutrients for brain development and to prevent stunting. At USAID, the nutrition and health teams would like to better coordinate with education and others working on early childhood interventions to develop education programs that focus on stimulation and play, and which provide important nutritional aspects for brain development. The McGovern-Dole program and USAID would also like to understand the best ways to measure these educational outcomes in future school feeding programs.

While McGovern-Dole projects have historically focused on providing school meals to primary schools, working in cooperation with host-country governments and national school feeding strategies, there is an upward trend in projects targeting pre-schools for school meals, in addition to primary schools. A stronger understanding on the relative impacts of adding school meal interventions in pre-schools on educational outcomes would be used to inform future McGovern-Dole program design and targeting of preschool students.

b. Suggested countries of focus and why

Below are initial suggestions of McGovern-Dole projects and countries in Africa that are relevant to the research question, with some context provided. USDA expects the applicant to refine the criteria for project/ country selection in partnership with USDA and USAID, and to apply the criteria and propose a feasible number of projects/ countries to study during the inception phase of the evaluation.

- Senegal - Senegal hosts a project in the St. Louis Region providing school meals for 45,600 primary and preschool students in 270 schools of which 66 are preprimary schools for children ages 2-6. The 66 preprimary schools are benefiting from all McGovern-Dole activities (school feeding, deworming, construction/rehab of classrooms & latrines, etc.) with the exception the literacy activities which only target grades 4-6. There are also two preschools with a community farm.

- Burkina Faso – Burkina Faso hosts a project in the Center North Region providing an estimated 335,027 preschool and primary school students in approximately 793 schools with a nutritious midday school meal. Of these schools 793 are primary school and 59 are preschools. While the preschools do not receive some activities such as promoting literacy, training on positive nutrition, health and hygiene practices they do receive school feeding, pedagogical trainings to monitors, training of preschool management committees, pedagogical equipment and monitoring.

c. Data collection/ design considerations

The applicant should propose an evaluation design based on the research questions and sub-questions and reflecting known limitations. The proposed design should result in conclusions that can be used to inform improvements in the McGovern-Dole program and are also more broadly applicable to the school feeding community. The evaluation should conduct a desk review of existing project data, relevant secondary data sources, and the extant literature relevant to the research question and sub-questions. Primary data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, is desired to strengthen the applicability of any findings, but applicants should propose what is feasible given the pandemic and the time constraint. While school feeding projects associated with McGovern-Dole projects should be included, the evaluation should incorporate evidence from other successful school feeding projects in the countries. While interaction with local participants, beneficiaries, collaborators, and governments is expected, this evaluation is *not* expected to include experimentation or trials on human subjects.

USDA will make all available data related to McGovern-Dole projects available to the recipient. This will include, but is not limited to, semi-annual performance data, evaluation reports and accompanying datasets, and financial reports. The quality and amount of secondary data available for each project is likely to vary.
USDA should be provided with at least 30 days to review a draft of the final report for comment; more than one iteration may be necessary before the final document is accepted.
The team is expected to present the final report to USDA staff in Washington, DC.
The findings, analysis, or portions thereof, may be presented to other professional audiences (including conferences, journal articles, publications, etc.), although costs of doing so generally may not be charged to this award. USDA requests that the recipient notify it of such presentation or publication for tracking purposes.

3. Expected Timeline

Below is the estimated timeline for this project.

Item	**Estimated Completion Date**
Inception Report, including: • Selection of Country Justification • Primary Data Collection Tools	3/15/21
Draft Report and Datasets	7/30/21
Final Report and Datasets	8/30/21
Presentation of Findings w/slide deck	9/20/21 to 9/24/21

Issued By
Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Programs, Agricultural Economic Development Division

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number and Title
10.960 Technical Agricultural Assistance

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title
Research on School Meals Projects in Africa

NOFO Number
USDA-FAS-10960-0700-10.-21-0006

Authorizing Authority for Program
National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, PL 95-113, as amended, 7 USC § 3319a

Appropriation Authority for Program
Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 (PL 116-159)

Announcement Type
New

B. <u>Federal Award Information</u>

Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions

Available Funding for the NOFO: $700,000

Projected Number of Awards: 1

Period of Performance: 7.5 months

Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s): February 15, 2021

Projected Period of Performance End Date(s): September 30, 2021
Extensions may be allowable, please see Section H. Additional Information to see how to requests one should the need arise.

Anticipated Award Date: February 15, 2021

Cost Share or Match requirements: A cost match or cost share is not required.

Funding Instrument:
Cost-Reimbursable Agreement. Note that indirect costs, by law, cannot exceed 10% of direct costs under this agreement instrument. FAS has no authority to waive this ceiling.

Subawards are allowable under the agreement if included in the original application.

C. <u>Eligibility Information</u>

Eligible Applicants
State cooperative institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States.

Eligibility Criteria
All applicants must have an active registration in the SAM database at www.sam.gov – pending or expired registrants are not eligible. This requirement must be met by the closing date of the

announcement and will not be waived. Please contact the program officer listed if you have questions about this requirement.

Maintenance of Effort (MOE)
MOE is not allowable.

Cost Share or Match requirements: A cost match or cost share is not required.

D. Application and Submission Information

Address to Request Application Package
This NOFO represents the full application information. For additional information or questions, please contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G.

Key Dates and Times

Date Posted to ezFedGrants & Grants.gov: [November 19, 2020]

Application Start Date: [November 23, 2020]

Open Call-in: December 10, 2020 at 1pm EST via Microsoft Teams. (If hyperlink does not work, reach out to the points of contact listed under Section G to receive a calendar invitation.

Application Submission Deadline: [January 15, 2021] 11:59:59 PM EST
Applications not received by this deadline will not be considered.

Anticipated Funding Selection Date: [February 1, 2021]

Content and Form of Application Submission
Institutions must be able to host multiple groups over the period of performance and should submit a proposal following the guidelines below:

Required forms and certifications, including:

- Standard Form 424, signed by the applicant
- An application containing a description of the proposed project. This description should be no more than thirteen (13) pages and include the following sections and abide by described page limits:
  - Introduction:
    Provide a one-paragraph summary of the proposed research activities
  - Technical Approach for Research and Learning Activities (10 pages maximum)
    This section should explain how the applicant would approach answering the research questions described, the initial suggestions on countries that will be researched, the proposed methodology for collecting data. The application should include a realistic preliminary timetable for conducting background research, data

collection, analysis, and learning activities.

- Learning Dissemination Plan (1 page maximum)
  Describes how evidence generated from the research and learning activities will be shared with USDA, practitioners, research and policy experts, and the public at large.

- Organizational Capacity and Staffing (2 pages maximum)
  Information on an applicant's organizational capacity and staffing are required. Applicants should propose an overall staffing plan that demonstrates sound technical expertise and experiences required to meet the qualifications listed above, while avoiding excessive staffing. FAS may request changes to the final staffing plan during award negotiation or agreement implementation as necessary.

- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, when warranted.
- Standard Form 424A. This should be accompanied by a detailed budget worksheet and a detailed budget narrative (NOTE: A budget narrative must be provided). All line items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations. Definitions of cost items are listed below.

  a. **Personnel**: Costs of employee salaries and wages. For each staff person, provide the name (if known), title, time commitment to the project as a percentage of a full-time equivalent (FTE), annual salary, and grant funded salary. Do not include the costs of consultants, subgrants, or contractors. Consultants, subgrants, and contractors are to be included under "Contractual."

  b. **Fringe Benefits**: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate. Provide the method used to calculate the proposed rate amount. If a fringe benefit has been negotiated with, or approved by, a cognizant federal agency, **attach a copy of the negotiated fringe benefit agreement**. If no rate agreement exists, provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, taxes, etc. Identify the base for allocating these fringe benefit expenses. (Attach the agreement to the application package.)

  c. **Travel**: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization (do not include costs of sub-contractor or consultant travel). For each proposed trip, provide the purpose, number of travelers, travel origin and destination, number of days, and a breakdown of costs for airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals. The basis for the airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals must be provided, such as past trips, current quotations, Federal Travel Regulations, etc.

d. **Equipment**: Equipment is **not** an allowable expenditure for this award. Any article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for financial statement purposes, or (b) $5000.
NOTE: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, calibration and maintenance services, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.

e. **Supplies**: Supplies are tangible personal property other than that included in the equipment category if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information which supports the amount requested. A computing device is a supply.

f. **Contractual**: Costs of all contracts for services and goods and subawards that further the work of the project. Do not put sub-contractors, sub-awardees, and/or sub-grantees that do not perform work to further the project. This includes the types of sub-contractors, sub-awardees, and/or sub-grantees that work for the Prime awardee exclusively, (i.e., landscapers, trash collectors, etc.) These costs belong under other cost categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, other, etc.

Include third party evaluation contracts (if applicable) and contracts with secondary recipient organizations. Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Identify proposed sub-contractor work and the cost of each sub-contractor. Provide a detailed budget for each sub-contractor that is expected to perform work estimated to be $25,000 or more, or 50% of the total work effort, whichever is less.

- Identify each planned subcontractor and its total proposed budget. Each subcontractor's budget and supporting detail should be included as part of the applicant's budget narrative.
- Provide the following information for each planned subcontract: a brief description of the work to be subcontracted; the number of quotes solicited and received, if applicable; the cost or price analysis performed by the applicant; names and addresses of the subcontractors tentatively selected and the basis for their selection; e.g., unique

capabilities (for sole source subcontracts), low bidder, delivery schedule, technical competence; type of contract and estimated cost and fee or profit; and, affiliation with the applicant, if any.

- All required flow down provisions in the award must be included in any subcontract.
- In this section also include subgrantees. Provide information for each planned subgrant. Identify each planned subawardee and its total proposed budget. Include a brief description of the work to be performed.

g. <u>Other Direct Costs</u>: Any other items proposed as direct costs that do not fall under the budget categories listed above. Provide an itemized list with costs and state the basis for each proposed item.

h. <u>Indirect Costs</u>: This will be a cost reimbursable agreement issued under 7 USC § 3319a. By statute, indirect cost rates for cost reimbursable agreements cannot exceed 10% of the total direct costs. If indirect costs are included in the budget, include in the budget narrative a description of how the indirect costs were calculated. Include the following information:

- Indirect cost percentages used;
- Indirect cost base;
- How the indirect cost base was calculated;
- How the indirect cost was calculated.

The SF-424 and SF-424A can be completed within the ezFedGrants platform. However, the other required forms must be downloaded from the Forms sections on Grants.gov or will be sent to you upon request to the program officer(s) named in Section G.

Please be aware that OMB Memorandum 18-24: Strategies to Reduce Grant Recipient Reporting Burden has been approved. Various required forms needed to apply for Federal Financial Assistance no longer need to be completed individually at time of application. They are covered in the Financial Assistance Certifications Report.

Effective January 1, 2020, the Financial Assistance Certifications are a common set of certifications and representations required by Federal statutes or regulations in accordance with the grants guidance under Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200.208 Certifications and Representations). Those non-Federal entities who intend to apply for, or are already recipients of Federal grants or agreements, must read and agree to the corresponding certifications and representations. Registrants who reply yes to the questions are required to keep these certifications and representations current, accurate, and complete as part of their entity registration.

FAS will verify in SAM.gov that the proper forms are completed, and if they have not been, you will be contacted and directed to do so. Your award will not be issued until the proper forms are completed within the SAM.gov portal.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:

(i) Be registered in SAM (https://www.sam.gov) before submitting its application;

(ii) Provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and

(iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

FAS is using ezFedGrants, which is an electronic grants management system. Applicant(s) with electronic access are required to submit their applications electronically through the ezFedGrants portal.

Before you can apply, you must have a DUNS number, be registered in SAM, and have access to the ezFedGrants website at https://grants.fms.usda.gov

Applicants are encouraged to register early. The registration process can take approximately four weeks to be completed. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines.

DUNS number. Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found at the following website: http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html
The DUNS number must be included in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the Standard Forms (SF)-424 forms submitted as part of this application.

System for Award Management. In addition to having a DUNS number, applicants applying electronically through ezFedGrants must register with SAM. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here:

www.sam.gov

Failure to register with SAM will result in your application being rejected during the submissions process.

ezFedGrants System Access and Electronic Signature

Level 2 eAuthentication. The next step in the registration process is to obtain a Level 2 eAuthentication account that will allow access to the ezFedGrants system. Instructions for getting a Level 2 eAuthentication account can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov or by reviewing the ezFedGrants Job Aids at https://nfc.usda.gov/FSS/ClientServices/ezFedGrants/index.php.

If you experience any issues with self-registration or have eAuthentication-related questions, please contact the eAuthenticationHelpDesk for assistance:
By email to eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov

Requesting a role in ezFedGrants. After obtaining eAuthentication, users will need a role in the system. Descriptions of the roles available and instructions on how to request a role can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov or by reviewing the ezFedGrants Job Aids at https://nfc.usda.gov/FSS/ClientServices/ezFedGrants/index.php.

Electronic Signature. Applications submitted through ezFedGrants constitute a submission as electronically signed applications. When you submit the application through ezFedGrants, the name of your Signatory Official on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application.

If you experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions please email the Helpdesk at ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award.

Intergovernmental Review
An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicant(s) must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the State's process under Executive Order 12372 (https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html) Name and addresses of the SPOCs are maintained at the Office of Management and Budget's home page at:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf

Funding Restrictions
Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400, or the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Compensation for personal services (whether classified as personnel, contractual services, or any other form) may not exceed the pro-rated equivalent of Step III of the Executive Schedule. For calendar year 2019, this is $176,900 per year; $680.38 per day;

or $85.05 per hour. Non-monetized fringe benefits are generally excluded from this ceiling, however, a federally-negotiated fringe benefits rate agreement may be required if fringe benefits appear to be unusually high.

FAS agreement funds may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Agreement funds and non-monetary support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

These funds cannot be used for construction purposes, general purpose acquisitions (no particular scientific, technical, or programmatic purpose), equipment exceeding $5,000 per item, entertainment, capital improvements, thank you gifts, or other expenses not directly related to the project.

This will be a cost reimbursable agreement issued under 7 U.S.C. 3319a. Award recipient's indirect costs for cost reimbursable agreements are limited to 10% of direct costs.

Management and Administration (M&A) Costs:
M&A costs are not allowable.

Indirect Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs.
Indirect F&A costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. By statute, indirect costs for cost reimbursable agreements cannot exceed 10% of direct costs.

Other Submission Requirements
All applications must be submitted electronically as indicated above.

E. Application Review Information

Application Evaluation Criteria
Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by 31 U.S.C. 3321 and 41 U.S.C. 2313 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore application evaluation criteria may include the following risk based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

Review and Selection Process
In all cases, the Program Manager will conduct an initial responsiveness review of all applications submitted to determine if the submission is complete and followed the rules outlined in this announcement. This review will ensure the following: 1) the application was submitted on time as specified in this announcement (See Section D. Application and Submission Information), 2) the applicant is eligible (see Section C. Eligibility Information), 3) all the required forms and documents are submitted timely as outlined (See Section D. Application and Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission) and the 4) the organization can achieved the stated outcomes. If an applicant is determined to be ineligible (see Section C. Eligibility Information) or an application is determined to be non-responsive, FAS will notify the applicant.

In addition,
i. Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold as defined by 48 CFR § 2.101, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS).
ii. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.
iii. The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

All responsive and eligible applications will be reviewed as described below:

1. FAS will assemble reviewers which may include both federal and non-federal reviewers to review the eligible applications. Reviews of submitted applications will be conducted either on site or by remote review.
2. Technical reviewers will review each eligible application against the evaluation criteria. The reviewers will ensure that the organization is capable of delivering the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative. The reviewers will assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified above. Evaluation Criteria: the evaluation criteria must be directly related to key aspects of the project. The criteria must be measurable with an associated point range. It is a best practice, but not required, that the entire review criteria score range should be out of 100. From the scoring process, a recommendation list or letter will be composed and sent to the selecting official.
3. An application may be selected for a post-review quality control and possible rescoring if it received significantly diverging scores and comments from reviewers.
4. The second part of the application review process includes an internal review panel consisting of FAS staff, and the selecting official reviewing the recommendation list

which will display the highest ranked applications. From this list this internal review panel will make final funding recommendations. The internal review panel may take applications out of rank order in consideration of strategic program priorities, such as:

   a. Geographic distribution
   b. Incorporation of minority-serving institutions

5. FAS will perform an additional review of the applicant organizations which may include a teleconference with or site visit to up to the top three applicant organizations' offices which come within 10 points of the top score. This review will include reviewing audit reports, publicly available materials and/or government databases, or conducting additional reviews of its key personnel and may have a bearing on award outcome. FAS may request additional materials from the applicant as part of this review, including:
   - The summary letter from the applicant's most recent audit report, and
   - Documentation of previous grant award completion that includes the name of the grantor, amount awarded, and whether the grant recipient sufficiently completed the requirements of the grant award (e.g., a final close-out report, certification of grant award completion, etc.)
6. After the technical review and before making final funding decisions, FAS may contact the highest-ranking applicants to seek clarification and to negotiate technical and programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a sub-awardee, FAS may request to speak with all parties included in the application to ensure sufficient planning and coordination has taken place prior to making an award.

Factor 1: Technical Approach (50 points)

i. The applicant's proposal describes a realistic, effective and sound approach, including a description of methods that is of high quality and analytical rigor for achieving the project's requirements.
ii. The applicant's proposal contains specific deliverables and proposed timeline.
iii. The applicant's proposal includes all of the sections in the statement of work.
iv. The applicant's proposal describes how evidence generated from the research and learning activities will be shared with USDA, practitioners, research and policy experts, and the public at large.

Factor 3: Experience and Expertise (30 points)

i. The applicant's proposal contains evidence of experience in designing and implementing evaluations or research for school feeding and/or agricultural programs in the context of developing countries.
ii. The applicant's proposal contains evidence of experience working in African countries.
iii. The applicant's proposal contains a staffing plan that identifies how the proposed activities will be staffed, including the role of key personnel and subawardees (if any). It is not strictly necessary to identify individuals, other than the principal investigator and other key personnel, by name.

Factor 3: Cost effectiveness (20 points)

The agency will consider the “value for money” in its evaluation of the application. This factor does not consider the cost alone, but rather the cost relative to the value for the work to be performed. Note that the agency’s available funding may not exceed the amount shown in part B.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest
Technical and cost proposals submitted under this funding opportunity will be protected from unauthorized disclosure in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. FAS may use one or more support contractors in the logistical processing of proposals. However, funding recommendations and final award decisions are solely the responsibility of FAS personnel.

FAS screens all technical reviewers for potential conflicts of interest. To determine possible conflicts of interest, FAS requires potential reviewers to complete and sign conflicts of interest and nondisclosure forms. FAS will keep the names of submitting institutions and individuals as well as the substance of the applications confidential except to reviewers and FAS staff involved in the award process. FAS will destroy any unsuccessful applications after three years following the funding decision.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Notice of Award
Notice of award will be given to the institution via email. This email is not an authorization to begin performance. The notice of Federal award, signed by the Deputy Administrator of Global Programs, is the authorizing document through electronic means. It should also indicate if there are any pass-through obligations that successful applicants are required to meet upon receiving award funds, including specific timeline requirements.

Administrative Policy Requirements
All successful domestic applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, which are available online at:

https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp

The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually-agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award the Recipient should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

Post Award Performance Expectations

Nontechnical expectations of performance for this agreement include at least monthly check-in meetings with stakeholders at USDA and USAID and timely communication of data collection or research challenges.

Federal Financial Reporting Requirements
The Federal Financial Reporting Form (FFR), as known as the SF-425, must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the reporting period, with a final report submitted within 90 days of the end of the agreement. The required form is available online at:
https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149786

Program Performance Reporting Requirements
Performance Progress Reporting must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the reporting period, with a final report submitted within 90 days of the end of the agreement, and should include details the activities undertaken and progress made.

Monitoring
FAS through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. During site visits, FAS will review grant recipients' files related to the grant-funded program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, grant recipients must permit FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review grant-related records and to interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to their grant program.

Close Out Reporting Requirements
Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

If applicable, an inventory of all construction projects that used funds from this program has to be reported using the Real Property Status Report (Standard Form SF 429) available at:

https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149866

Acceptance of final reports by the agency constitutes a closeout of the award with no further notice or obligation to either party. This acceptance will indicate the period of performance has expired, and any remaining funds will be deobligated. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted, as described in 2 CFR 200.333

The recipient is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down or reimbursed but remain as unliquidated on recipient financial records.

G. Awarding Agency Contact Information

Contact and Resource Information

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Note: Mail service to USDA offices is currently suspended, therefore, USDA recommends questions be addressed by phone or email.

Inquiries will be returned within 24 working hours (3 business days). All questions must be received no later than 16 working hours (2 working days) prior to submission deadline, except the point of contact will confirm receipt of proposals upon request

H. Additional Information

1. Extensions

Extensions to this program are allowed. Applicants may request an extension in order to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period. Requests for extensions are subject to approval by FAS, and approval should not be expected.

2. Prior Approval of Pre-Award Costs

The Recipient shall not request reimbursement, incur costs or obligate funds for any purpose pertaining to the operation of the project, program, or activities prior to the approved Budget Period/Performance Period.

3. Budget Revisions

a. Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed ten percent of the total budget approved in this Award require prior written approval.

b. The Recipient shall obtain prior written approval for any budget revision that would result in the need for additional resources/funds.

c. The Recipient is not authorized at any time to transfer amounts budgeted for direct costs to the indirect costs line item or vice versa, without prior written approval.

4. Post-award program income

In the event program income becomes available to the recipient post-award, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the FAS Program Manager to explain how that development occurred, as part of their request for guidance and/or approval. The Program Manager will review approval requests for program income on a case-by-case basis; approval is not automatic. Consistent with the policy and processes outlined in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, pertinent guidance and options, as determined by the type of recipient and circumstances involved, may be approved by the Grant Officer. If approval is granted, an award modification will be issued with an explanatory note in the remarks section of the face page concerning guidance and/or options pertaining to the recipient's approved request. All instances of program income shall be listed in the progress and financial reports.