

FY 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant For School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention Request for Applications Questions and Answers

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) held an [Informational Webinar](#) on February 8, 2022, to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention Request for Applications (RFA). Answers to questions received during and following the webinar are provided below. Similar questions have been combined into one question and answer.

The following topics are addressed in this document:

General	Q&A #1-10	Pages 1-3
Personnel & Staffing	Q&A #11-17	Pages 4-5
Programming	Q&A #18-28	Pages 6-8

General

- 1. Several questions were received from various entities and individuals asking if they were eligible to apply for the grant.**

Only State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) may apply to this solicitation. Refer to page 19 of the RFA.

- 2. Can a non-profit child care agency, home day care, or Head Start apply for this grant?**

No. Only State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program are eligible to apply for the FY 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention. Refer to page 19 of the RFA.

- 3. Can each individual district apply or is it just the State that can apply?**

Individual school districts are not eligible to apply. Only State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to apply for the FY 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention. FNS encourages interested school districts to contact their State agency. States will be providing sub-grants for School Food Authorities as part of their grant activities. Refer to page 19 of the RFA.

- 4. Can a State with an active Fiscal Year 2019 or 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant apply for this grant?**

All State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to apply for the FY 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention. Grant funds for other USDA grants must be kept separate, so that no commingling of funds occur.

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

Yes. State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that have a current Farm to School Grant are eligible to apply for this Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Professional Readiness and Retention. Activities proposed under this RFA should complement and must not duplicate Farm to School activities in the State. If a State receives funding from both grant programs, funds must not be commingled. Refer to page 19 of the RFA.

6. If our agency has received a Team Nutrition Training Grant in the past, can we still apply?

Yes, if your agency is the State agency that currently administers the National School Lunch Program. Refer to page 19 of the RFA.

7. How can we find out if our State will be applying so that we have an opportunity to apply for a sub-award if they choose to do so?

FNS encourages interested School Food Authorities to contact their State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). State agency contact information is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts?f%5B0%5D=program%3A39>.

8. How many State agencies will be awarded this grant?

FNS anticipates awarding up to six (6) grants under FY 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention.

FNS reserves the right to make greater or fewer grant awards based upon funding availability, the quality of applications received, or other Agency priorities. Refer to page 15 of the RFA.

9. When will there be a Request for Applications issued for a CACFP grant?

No further Request for Applications for Team Nutrition Training Grants are planned for Fiscal Year 2022.

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10. Is this grant sustainable? Will it continue to be offered annually?

The Team Nutrition Training Grant is intended to fund activities during the grant period. Follow-on grants to maintain these grant activities are not planned. The availability of future Team Nutrition Training Grants are subject to the availability of funds. The focus of Team Nutrition Training Grants can change from year to year, based upon Agency priorities.

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Personnel & Staffing

11. The RFA requires a Project Coordinator for each of the tracks. Does the Project Coordinator need to be a State agency employee?

No. The State may enter into a cooperative agreement or contract for the Project Coordinator position. However, the State agency must ensure continuity and oversight of the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator must meet the qualifications specified in the RFA. Refer to page 5 of the RFA for Track 1; page 6 for Track 2; and page 7 for Track 3.

12. Is the 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Project Coordinator position required to be 1 person, or can it be split between 2 or more persons?

The Project Coordinator position needs to be filled by one person and cannot be split by two or more persons. Refer to page 5 of the RFA for Track 1; page 6 for Track 2; and page 7 for Track 3.

13. Does the State agency Project Director position have to be a State agency employee, or can it be contracted out?

The Project Director position needs to be a State agency employee. Refer to page 8 of the RFA.

14. For Track 1, could the Project Coordinator be filled by a State agency consultant that is a Registered Dietitian that has experience working at the local level, in a school setting?

See question 11 above.

15. What qualifies as school food service experience? Does providing monitoring and oversight to School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)/School Breakfast Program (SBP) qualify as school food service experience (thinking State agency staff)? Or are you looking for individuals who have experience working in a school nutrition program, such as a school nutrition director, manager, or staff?

The Project Coordinator's resume should demonstrate work experience related to the planning and serving of school meals as part of the National School Lunch Program. The Project Coordinator plays a critical role in providing technical assistance and resources to School Nutrition Professionals in the State to support the implementation of grant activities. As such, the person fulfilling this role needs to have subject matter expertise and familiarity with the school nutrition environment.

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16. Who is required to submit a resume?

Resumes and Position Descriptions are required to be submitted for the Project Director and Project Coordinator. Refer to page 10, 21, 27, and Appendix A of the RFA.

17. For Track 1, can the mentors be retired school food service directors?

Yes.

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Programming

18. Do you recommend that applications include letters of support from partners?

Letters of support are not required as part of the new simplified application process for this grant opportunity.

19. What percentage of the total grant award can be sub-grants to SFAs?

The State agency applicant should propose and justify the number and amount of sub-grants. Overall, the proposal and budget must demonstrate that all activities required under the Grant Track will be completed. Grantees should ensure that sub-grant expenditures do not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under similar circumstances and would qualify as a sound business practice. Sub-grant funds may only be used for activities specified in the RFA.

20. Per Appendix D: Urban/Rural Classification instructions (page 43 of the RFA), when we did a test search for a school, the “Locale” and the Locale classification code are not displayed. We received an error message near the bottom of the page which states “NOTE: SY 2020-2021 geographical data are not available currently”. I noticed the example on page 43 shows the 2017-2018 school year near the top left of the page. What school year should we be searching for? How do you select/change the school year?

On Page 43 of the RFA Appendix D, click on the “search site” link under the first bullet and that will provide you with SY 2020-2021 data.

21. How do we determine a schools’ level of free/reduced since we need to target schools with at least 40% free/reduced? Do we use the last claims of SY 2019-2020 when schools collected that data pre-COVID?

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, many SFAs did not utilize Free and Reduced-Price (F&RP) applications. The State agency has discretion to use either:

- a. F&RP certification data from SY 2019-2020;
- b. F&RP certification data from a more recent school year, if available; or
- c. Direct certification data from SY 2021-2022, used to calculate a proxy F&RP rate based on the Community Eligibility Provision identified student percentage (ISP) calculation if F&RP data is not available.

For the purpose of the grant application, FNS is looking to see that State are ensuring underserved communities are reached with grant activities.

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22. We are having trouble with finding the locale data from Appendix D- Urban/Rural Classification Instructions (Page 43 of RFA)?

The geographic data is currently not available on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) site. We do expect it to be available in the next few weeks by using the NCES link provided on page 43 of the RFA. However, until then, NCES has shared the following resources:

- a. The [Public School Geocode](#) file provides locale assignments.
- b. The [Locale Lookup tool](#) provides ad hoc lookup of schools, districts, addresses, etc.
- c. The [Public School web service](#) (in K12 Schools on the Open Data page) provides easy access if you're in a GIS environment.

23. Related to evaluation (page 12 of the RFA), it asks to collect and report on race/ethnicity of mentors and mentees. Is this an optional "fill in the blank" for the mentors and mentees to self-report upon participation in the program? Are there any legal aspects we need to know about asking this question?

FNS is interested in how well grant activities reach underserved populations. Ethnicity/race data should be collected using OMB's standard two question format with an option of "decline to state." All collection materials must outline that the data is being collected voluntarily and choosing not to disclose will not impact their ability to be a mentor or mentee. Grantees should not use third party visual observation or question a person's reported information. The details will be discussed at the orientation webinar for grantees.

24. Can in other areas, such as Meal Counting and Claiming be included in the grant, in addition to training that improves the nutritional content of school meals?

Training under Track 2 must relate to the school meal pattern requirements. Training staff how to recognize and count a reimbursable meal is related to the meal pattern and may be provided under this grant.

25. For Track 1: Coaching and Mentoring, could the training grant be used to target SFAs with new Child Nutrition Program directors?

Under this grant opportunity, State agencies may target the coaching and mentoring program to School Nutrition Directors that were recently hired by the School Food Authority. Refer to pages 5 and 6 of the RFA.

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- 26. Does the payment to incentivize the School Food Service Director to complete training go to them personally (to the person and not the school district), or is the payment meant to be spent within their school meal program and in accordance with the allowed costs?**

The monetary incentive (up to \$500) is intended for the school nutrition staff, who complete the training program (40 hours of training for the School Nutrition Director) within six months of implementation of the States' training program. Refer to page 5 of the RFA.

- 27. If Track 2 is chosen, can part of the training be provided by peer mentors and count as on the job training, such as one on one individualized training that follows the mentorship model, but is housed under "training program"?**

If a State agency wishes to implement a peer mentoring program for School Nutrition Managers or Directors, then the State should apply under Track 1. Track 2 is to support the development and implementation of an incentivized training program in which managers and directors receive at least 40 hours of training and front-line staff receive 8 hours of structured training on meal pattern requirements. If desired, part of the training provided through the training program may include on-on-one "hands-on" training sessions provided by a qualified trainer. General job-shadowing should not be counted toward the completion of the incentivized training program.

- 28. For Track 2, are School Nutrition Directors/Managers participating in the Meal Pattern Training Program required to receive 40 hours of training? Or is that the number of total hours that must be offered by the State agency? For example, could the Meal Pattern Training Program consist of 20 training hours and the State agency offers it twice throughout the grant period?**

The State agency would need to offer 40 hours of meal pattern training that is not duplicative for their school nutrition directors/managers. In other words, each director/manager would attend 40 hours of training. Refer to page 6 of the RFA.