

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant for Meal Pattern Modernization
and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) held an Informational Webinar on Thursday, May 30, 2024 to discuss the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and Mentorship Opportunities Request for Applications (RFA). Answers to questions received before, during, and following the webinar are provided below. Similar questions have been combined into one question and answer.

Please refer to the [request for applications](#) (RFA) for more detailed information or watch the recorded Informational Webinar.

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General

- 1. Q: If our agency has received a Team Nutrition Training Grant in the past, can we still apply?**

A: Yes, if your agency is the State agency that currently administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), you are eligible to apply.

- 2. Q: 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?**

A: 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/nslp/program-contacts>.

- 3. Q: How many State agencies will be awarded this grant?**

A: FNS anticipates awarding up to twelve (12) grants under the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant for Meal Pattern Modernization and Retention and

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

4. Q: In our grant proposal can we include activities for both grant tracks?

A: No, State agencies may submit one (1) application specifying a single grant track. State agencies may not mix and match activities from the two different grant tracks. State agencies that mix and match activities from the two different grant tracks will be deemed ineligible and removed from the competition.

5. Q: If we are aware of training reference tools or organizations that support School Nutrition Professionals outside of those listed in the RFA, can we use them?

A: Yes, the lists of training reference tools and organizations supporting School Nutrition Professionals provided in the RFA are not exhaustive lists nor do these lists represent an endorsement of any one resource, agency, or organization.

6. Q: Can you clarify the difference between track 1: Meal Pattern Modernization and track 2: Retention and Mentorship Opportunities?

A: Track 1: Meal Pattern Modernization, is focused on implementing meal pattern changes related to the *Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Specifically, planning, preparing, and serving meals that align with the new guidelines. Track 2: Retention and Mentorship Opportunities, is focused on training and creating a sustainable workforce which includes improving culinary skills and knowledge of the child nutrition programs and other broader topics related to workforce development in school foodservice.

7. Q: Would USDA consider allowing one person from a funded state, either the Project Director or the Team Nutrition Coordinator, to attend the required in person meeting for 3 years?

A: We recognize that travel cost will vary for grantees depending on where they are located. However, per the RFA it is required that both the Project Director and the Team Nutrition Coordinator(s) attend the virtual orientation meeting, the annual meeting (whether it is in-person or virtual), and all collaboration calls during the entirety of the grant period of performance.

8. Q: In reviewing the Healthy Meal Incentive Recognition Award program, we noticed that it ends June 2025. That's only one year of this grant. Does USDA plan on introducing a new/replacement program that focuses on school food

improvement after the HMI award program ends; or will they extend that program?

A: At this time, we do not know what program funding will be available in the future to support the Child Nutrition Programs.

- 9. What is definition of a “community organization” that works with persons who are historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?**

A: For the purposes of this grant, a community organization is any organization whose primary goal is to improve a community’s social health, well-being, and overall functioning. The organization does not have to be a community organization already affiliated with a school or school district. Examples of community organizations include, but are not limited to, 501(c)(3)'s, partnerships, cooperatives, educational institutions, and workforce development programs.

- 10. Q: Can you provide examples of activities which would count towards collaboration with another USDA state agency?**

A: Per the RFA, applicants can receive up to 10 bonus points for Collaboration with another USDA State Agency. To meet this criterion, an applicant must show that they are amplifying the reach of this grant by providing technical assistance, coaching, and/or mentorship opportunities to School Nutrition Professionals both inside and outside of their state. For example, two (2) State agencies that administer the NSLP work together to submit a grant application and the activities outlined in the application benefit School Nutrition Professionals in both states (in this scenario, only one of the State agencies will submit an application). Or, one State agency submits a proposal that extends participation in training activities to School Nutrition Professionals in surrounding states.

- 11. Q: For the State agency collaboration, would we need to partner on all the grant activities, or could we partner on just one activity?**

A: State agency collaboration can be as little or significant based on the objectives of the grant. No minimum number of grant activities collaboration is required.

Eligibility

- 12. Q: I am a school foodservice director administering the National School Lunch Program at ABC School in XYZ school district. I would like to apply for the Team Nutrition Training Grant. Are we eligible to apply?**

A: Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators are not eligible to apply for the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grants directly. If you would like to participate, we encourage you to contact your State Agency that administers the USDA Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) to see how you can be involved.

13. Q: What is a State agency?

A: While there are many State agencies within each state, we are referring to the specific agencies that administer the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For the FY 2024 grant, only the State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in a given state is eligible to apply. In most states, that is the State Department of Education, but for a small number of states, it could be the State Departments of Agriculture or Health. If you are unsure if you are a State agency, or if you want to know who your State agency is, please visit the FNS website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/program-contacts>, and click your state for the agency name and contact information.

14. Q: If a State agency does not have a Registered Dietitian (RD) on staff, are they ineligible to apply?

A: No, the absence of a RD on staff does not preclude eligibility. As stated in the RFA, funding may be used for staffing.

15. Q: Can a State with an active FY 2021, 2022, or 2023 Team Nutrition Training Grant apply for the grant?

A: Yes, State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to apply. As a reminder, Team Nutrition Training Grant funds for other USDA grants must be kept separate from FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant funds, so that no co-mingling of funds occur.

16. Q: When will there be a Request for Applications issued for a CACFP grant?

A: No further Requests for Applications for Team Nutrition Training Grants are planned for FY 2024. Should this change, an announcement will be released to announce the availability of funds.

17. Q: Is this grant sustainable? Will it continue to be offered annually?

A: The FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant is intended to fund activities during the grant period of performance stated in the RFA. Follow-on grants to maintain these grant activities are not planned. The availability of future Team Nutrition

Training Grants is subject to the availability of funds. The focus of Team Nutrition Training Grants can change from year to year, based upon Agency priorities.

18. Q. Can rural school districts that operate the NSLP and SBP apply for the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant?

A: School districts are not State agencies and are not eligible to apply for the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant. FNS encourages interested School Food Authorities to contact their State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). You can find your State agency contact on our web site here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-contacts>.

Personnel and Staffing

19. Q: Can either the Project Director or Team Nutrition Coordinator positions be filled internally? Is it allowable to hire externally?

A: Yes, the Project Director and Team Nutrition Coordinator positions can be filled either with internal or external candidates. Funding for staffing is an allowable expense as part of the FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant. As a reminder, Team Nutrition Training Grant funds for other USDA grants must be kept separate from FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant funds, so that no co-mingling of funds occur.

20. Q: Is it allowable to have 1.5 full-time equivalents (FTE) on the project in addition to the Project Director?

A: Yes, the Project Director and Team Nutrition Coordinator must be at least 0.25 FTE and 1.0 FTE respectively. Any additional FTEs outside of the total allotted 1.25 FTEs must include a justification of need.

21. Q: Can the Project Director position be split between two people?

A: No, the Project Director position must be filled by one (1) person at 0.25 FTE.

22. Q: Can the Team Nutrition Coordinator position be split between two people?

A: Yes, the Team Nutrition Coordinator position can be split between no more than two (2) individuals, hired or assigned. If hired, the position must be filled within six (6) months of grant award.

23. Q: If a State agency is going to sub-grant to an approved entity such as a land grant university, can the Team Nutrition Coordinator be at the sub-grant level?

A: No, the Team Nutrition Coordinator must be hired and retained separately and independently and cannot be hired and managed as part of a sub-grant. Team Nutrition Training Grant funds for other USDA grants must be kept separate from FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant funds, so that no co-mingling of funds occur.

24. Q: Does the Team Nutrition Coordinator need to be a Registered Dietitian (RD)?

A: No, the Team Nutrition Coordinator does not have to hold the RD credential. The person(s) filling this position should have, at a minimum, experience planning, organizing and leading professional development and/or adult learning efforts. Refer to the RFA for more information.

25. Q: Under Section 2.3 - Sub-grant Funding, it states that the grantee may issue sub-grants to the following entities for purposes of meeting the objectives under this grant: SFAs, Land-grant colleges, and universities, etc. If applying as a State agency, are we allowed to provide sub-grants to SFAs to meet grant objectives?

A: Yes, as a State agency you may award sub-grants to SFAs to meet grant objectives. As a reminder, grantees must follow allowable costs as outlined in Section 2.7.1: Allowable Costs for Sub-grants. Grantees must have oversight of all sub-grant recipients by either Project Director or Team Nutrition Coordinator, to ensure that expenditures authorized are allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Grantees must ensure that all expenditures are consistent with all local, State, and Federal policies, regulations, and procedures.

26. Q: What qualifies as appropriate educational, technical, and experiential background for the Nutrition Coordinator Position? 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?

A: The Project Coordinator's resume should demonstrate work experience that demonstrates knowledge of the USDA CNPs; their regulations and requirements; and experience planning, organizing, and leading professional development and/or adult learning activities. Experience building coalitions and community engagement among underserved communities is highly desired. 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.

27. Q: Who is required to submit a resume?

A: Resumes and Position Descriptions are required to be submitted for the Project Director and Project Coordinator. Per the RFA, current resumes are required for all staff to be funded through the grant, reflecting prior relevant experience and the appropriate education and technical background for their proposed role. Additionally, if a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one (1) page in length, which includes required knowledge, skills, and education must be included in the application in lieu of a resume.

28. Q: If the TN Coordinator position is shared by two individuals, are both expected to attend meetings?

A: Yes, both persons filling the TN Coordinator position are expected to attend all meeting as stated in the RFA.

29. Q. Can the 1.0 FTE Team Nutrition Coordinator position be filled by a contractor/consultant?

A: Yes, the 1.0 FTE Team Nutrition Coordinator position can be filled by a contractor or consultant.

Budget

30. Q: Should we budget for three (3) in-person trips for annual meetings that will take place at FNS Headquarters in Alexandria, VA?

A: Yes, please include in your budget table and narrative the cost for three in-person trips. Over the course of the 3-year grant period of performance, the Project Director and Team Nutrition Coordinator(s) will be required to attend three (3), in-person annual meetings hosted by USDA at FNS Headquarters in Alexandria, VA. Please note, meetings may be held virtually due to extenuating circumstances.

31. Q: Is the RD credentialing renewal fee allowable as it's a requirement to maintain RD status but for an individual rather than an institutional professional membership?

A: No, the cost of professional registration or license fees paid by individuals to maintain credentials are not allowable costs because the fees are considered personal expenses, not institutional expenses. Also, the costs of individual professional memberships in such organizations for personnel that work in school nutrition or dietetics are not allowable.

32. Q: Do you have guidance on how to budget for the annual meeting, such as the number of days the meeting will be?

A: Depending on the size of the cohort, annual meetings tend to range from 1-2, full days at FNS Headquarters in Alexandria, VA.

Administrative

33. Q: When trying to submit my application, the “Apply” button on grants.gov is greyed out. What should I do?

A: There could be a chance that your [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) profile may not have been set up completely. For further assistance, please reach out to the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) help desk. You can reach them via the “Support” tab on the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) home page.

34. Q: Are success stories required quarterly or semi-annual?

A: While the PPR is required quarterly, we encourage you to submit success stories as frequently as they come. The success stories are very important for us.