



USDA WIC Telehealth Innovations Project

Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications

Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.528

This project will be awarded as a **Cooperative Agreement**.

Dates:

Release Date: May 30, 2019

Letter of Intent Due Date: 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), June 25, 2019

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), July 29, 2019

Anticipated Award Date: September 19, 2019

Anticipated Project Start Date: September 30, 2019

OMB BURDEN STATEMENT: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0512. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 45 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

NOTE: Information italicized should be addressed/completed by the Program area. Information in black should not be changed. If additional information is required it may be added.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

On December 31, 2017, Grants.gov officially retired the legacy .PDF application package as a method to apply for a Federal grant. This changed the way many Grants.gov users completed and submitted their grant applications.

For information on Workspace application process, visit:

<https://grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

Application Checklist

This application checklist provides a list of the required documents; however, FNS expects that applicants will read the entire RFA prior to the submission of their application.

In order to apply, **at least four weeks** prior to submission, you must have:

- ☐ Obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
- ☐ Registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
- ☐ Registered in grants.gov.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- ☐ Your application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section IV “Application and Submission Information,” including page limits, priorities outlined in Section II, and all necessary attachments.

When **preparing your budget**, ensure the following information is included:

- ☐ All key staff who are paid by this grant.
- ☐ The percentage of time the project director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents.
- ☐ Your organization’s fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation.
- ☐ The type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds.
- ☐ Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justifications and basis for lodging estimates.
- ☐ Types of equipment and supplies, justifications, and estimates, ensuring that the budget is in line with the project description.
- ☐ Information for all contracts, subawards, and justification for any sole-source contracts.
- ☐ Justification, description and itemized list of all consultant services.
- ☐ Indirect cost information (either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or if no agreement exists, the basis of the indirect costs requested). If none requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.

When **submitting** your application, ensure you have submitted the following:

- ☐ SF-424 – [Application for Federal Assistance](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- ☐ SF-424A – [Budget Information and Instruction Form](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- ☐ SF-424B – [Assurances for Non-Construction Programs](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- ☐ SF-LLL - [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#).
- ☐ FNS-906 - Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (in Appendix X)
- ☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)

When applicable, application packages are required to include the following documents:

- ☐ AD-3030 – [Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov).
-

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES	5
II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION	11
III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	22
IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	24
V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	33
VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	36
VII. FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACTS	41
VIII. OTHER INFORMATION	41
ATTACHMENT I: PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORT FORM	47

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Program Description

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), is a Federal nutrition assistance program that serves low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to five years old who are at nutrition risk. WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition education including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and other social services to participants in all 50 states, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth Islands of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This is an announcement of the availability of funds for one new cooperative agreement for FY 2019-2024 with a public or private academic research institution. In this funding cycle, the USDA anticipates awarding up to \$8,500,000 in grant funding to support the implementation and evaluation of telehealth services in WIC. The majority of these funds, \$5,000,000, shall be awarded as sub-grants through a competitive process to WIC State Agencies¹ for the purpose of implementing telehealth innovations that supplement the nutrition education and breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic. The recipient of this cooperative agreement, referred to in this document as the Grantee, will carry out the competitive award process to select sub-grantees, design and conduct evaluations of each sub-grantee's telehealth innovation project, and produce reports and publications to disseminate the findings.

Legislative Authority

The legislative authority for this grant announcement is contained in the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 Section 17 (g) (5)² as amended. Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary of Agriculture may award competitive grants and cooperative agreements for the support of research projects to further USDA food and nutrition assistance programs. Further, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6) specifically authorizes the allocation of \$5,000,000 for telehealth competitive grants to supplement the nutrition education and breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic, and to decrease barriers to access to WIC services, particularly in rural communities, and other populations facing barriers to accessing support. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) defines telehealth as “the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support and promote clinical healthcare, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health

¹ Since collaboration among local WIC agencies can enhance the delivery of WIC services, it is strongly recommended that State agencies solicit input from local WIC agencies when developing a proposal for a sub-grant project. Local WIC agencies may also work with their State agencies to develop innovative proposal ideas for sub-grant projects. Regardless of the approach, State agencies are responsible to lead all proposals and partnerships. In coordination with their State, local agencies may manage a project within their jurisdiction.

² http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Legislation/CNA_1966_12-13-10.pdf

administration.” Technologies include video conferencing, the internet, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless communications³.

Purpose

The purposes of this Request for Applications (RFA) are to:

- Provide background information and context related to the goals of this funding opportunity;
- Describe the type of cooperative agreement available;
- Describe which entities are eligible to apply for grant funds;
- Solicit funding applications from eligible entities;
- Describe the requirements for submitting a successful application;
- Describe how applications will be reviewed and selected; and,
- Describe the terms and conditions to which Grantees must adhere.

This RFA intends to select one accredited college or university to support and evaluate the implementation of telehealth innovations by competitively selected sub-grantees (i.e., WIC State agencies). Sub-grants awarded to State agencies will fund the implementation of relevant telehealth technologies that show promise for effectively supporting WIC nutrition education and breastfeeding support. These efforts shall be designed to improve customer service and address barriers to access while ensuring WIC participant privacy. The Grantee will design and carry out evaluations of the implemented strategies/solutions. Evaluations shall provide a robust assessment of the implementation process, costs, and impacts on WIC participants as well as WIC program offices and staff. Outcome measures may include, but are not limited to, participant satisfaction, infant feeding practices, dietary habits, and participant retention in WIC. The evaluation results will be summarized in State-level and summary reports.

Background

Established in 1974, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and other social services to participants at no charge. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk.⁴

WIC Participants

³ <https://www.healthit.gov/topic/health-it-initiatives/telemedicine-and-telehealth>

⁴ Food and Nutrition Service (2014). “Nutrition Program Facts: WIC – The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.” United States Department of Agriculture. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/WIC-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

In April 2016, according to the WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Report (WIC PC 2016), 53.3% of WIC participants⁵ were children (ages 1 to 4), and infants and women accounted for 23.3% and 23.4% of participants, respectively. Women participants were categorized as pregnant (9.1%), postpartum (6.5%), or breastfeeding (7.8%). Most (85%) pregnant women receiving WIC were between 18 and 34 years of age. Among all WIC participants in WIC PC 2016 58.6% were identified as White only, 20.8% as Black or African American only, 10.3% as American Indian or Alaska Native only, and 4.4% as either Asian only or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. In 2016, 41.8% of WIC participants were reported as Hispanic/Latino.

Program Services at WIC Locations

Ninety WIC State Agencies (SAs) comprising 50 States, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs), American Samoa, District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands administer the program through approximately 1,900 local agencies (LAs) and 10,000 clinics.⁶ Program benefits including nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care, social services, and other community providers are provided at the numerous LAs and clinics across the country. Almost three quarters of service sites are located in health departments, health clinics or health centers, with fewer located in non-profit organizations (13%), social service agencies (7%) or hospitals (6%).⁷ Approximately 26 percent of WIC sites are located in rural areas (FNS, unpublished data).

Nutrition Education

As part of its mission to improve the health of nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children, WIC provides nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support, for its participants. Nutrition education is one of the core benefits of the WIC Program. Federal WIC regulations require that nutrition education inform participants about the connection between nutrition and health and assist participants in making positive changes in dietary and physical activity habits. The content of nutrition education must be relevant to the participant's individual assessed needs, identified nutrition risks, household conditions, food preferences, and should include information on breastfeeding promotion and support and the use of WIC foods as part of a healthy lifestyle. WIC nutrition assessment, including goal-setting, lays the foundation for individualized nutrition education and care plans, referrals and food package tailoring that help meet the needs of WIC participants and the goals of the WIC program. Two nutrition education

⁵ Thorn, B., Kline, N., Tadler, C., Budge, E., Wilcox-Cook, E., Michaels, J., Mendelson, M., Patlan, K. L., & Tran, V. (2018). WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2016. Prepared by Insight and Abt Associates Under Contract No. AG-3198-B-15-0004. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Project Officer: Dr. Anthony Panzera. Available online at: www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis

⁶ Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture (no date). "The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children: About WIC –WIC At A Glance." Retrieved 5/7/19 from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/about-wic-wic-glance>.

⁷ USDA, FNS, Office of Research and Analysis, *National Survey of WIC Participants II Volumes I –IV*, by Gary Huang, Daniel M. Geller et al., ICF Macro. Project Officers: Karen Castellanos-Brown and Sheku Kamara, FNS, Alexandria, VA: 2012. Download full reports at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/>.

contacts must be offered to all adult WIC participants, and to the parents/caretakers of WIC infants and children, during each 6-month WIC certification period, or at a quarterly rate to participants certified for a period in excess of 6 months.

Finding ways to deliver effective nutrition education and achieve the nutrition education goals of WIC are critical for the continued success of the Program and supports the ongoing process of Revitalizing Quality Nutrition Services (RQNS) in WIC. WIC State agencies are responsible for creating a nutrition service plan, which is responsive to the needs of their participants and identifies goals, objectives and resources in the areas of nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion and support. State Agencies coordinate with local agencies in the development of the local agency nutrition services plan and encourage local agencies to share components of their plan with WIC partners, including other public and private organizations. State WIC Programs may vary in the materials and methods they use to provide nutrition education to WIC participants, but all materials must be consistent with the current federal *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Examples of nutrition education methods provided by WIC include individual and group sessions, food demonstrations, videos, take-home activities, and web-based education.

To assist WIC State and local agencies in the design of their nutrition education services, USDA FNS issued research-based guidance on how to provide effective nutrition education contacts/interventions in WIC. The guidance⁸ identifies six key elements for effective nutrition education in WIC: 1) review of WIC nutrition assessment; 2) selection of appropriate messages; 3) selection of counseling methods/teaching strategies; 4) selection of delivery medium; 5) selection of informational/ environmental reinforcements; and 6) selection of appropriate follow-up. For effective nutrition education, defined as leading participants towards positive behavior change, to occur, all six elements should be a part of each nutrition intervention with WIC participants.

Over the past few years, interest in and use of telehealth in clinical settings has grown. Many geographic WIC State agencies now offer online nutrition education or texting-based services. Findings from the WIC Nutrition Education Study⁹ showed that technology-based nutrition education is more common in urban areas. According to a review of Fiscal Year 2014 WIC State Plans, 65% of State Plans for geographic States had policies including online and internet-based education, whereas only 18% of the ITOs and territories with State Plans submitted included these type of policies. Larger sites and the Southwest region were also found to make greater use of technology-based nutrition education. Offsite technology-based nutrition education (e.g. on-line) was the type most commonly reported and was typically used as a form of secondary nutrition education or to reinforce nutrition education received at the clinic. Telephone

⁸ <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/wic-nutrition-education-guidance>

⁹Cates, S., Capogrossi, K., Eicheldinger, C., et al., RTI International, and Sallack, L., and K. Deehy, Altarum Institute. (2016). *WIC Nutrition Education Study: Phase I Report*. Prepared under Contract No. AG-3198-D-12-0082. Project Officer: Karen Castellanos-Brown. Alexandria, VA: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/wic-studies>.

counseling, video conferencing and on-site technology based nutrition education (e.g. kiosk-based) was rarely used. Also, more than half of local agencies reported that less than 10% of the participants they serve receive technology-based nutrition education. However, rigorous and sufficiently powered evaluations to estimate the impact of these practices on outcomes of interest are lacking.

Telehealth Services in WIC

There is a developing, but limited, evidence base documenting the benefits and challenges associated with telehealth in the WIC population. Studies of telehealth services for breastfeeding support find that some participants find it more convenient and comfortable to receive breastfeeding support from the comfort of their own homes^{10,11}. Additionally, these services allow mothers to receive timely assistance (within minutes or hours) rather than having to wait for an appointment. This timely support can make the difference for a mother choosing whether or not to continue breastfeeding. One study suggested that virtual support may be more effective because it allows mothers to gain the confidence to independently problem-solve¹³.

Some studies found cost savings associated with telehealth services relative to in-person services, potentially allowing more mothers to be served more frequently with the same resources^{10,12,13}. Similarly, nutrition education offered online or through video conferencing provides another option for participants that may face challenges getting to the WIC clinic. Despite the growing interest in and availability of telehealth technologies, there remain a number of challenges associated with its implementation. A critical challenge is lack of internet connectivity, which can be a particular problem in rural areas. Issues related to establishing secure and private internet connections also pose confidentiality risks to WIC participants. The use of internet-based services also poses risks to the confidentiality of participants' identity and personal information.

Summary

While there is limited evidence to establish the benefits of telehealth services for breastfeeding and nutrition education, the interventions tested thus far demonstrate the potential of these approaches. Current research on WIC telehealth interventions suggests they have the potential to

¹⁰ Uscher-Pines, L., Mehrotra, A., & Bogen, D. L. (2017). The emergence and promise of telelactation. *American journal of obstetrics and gynecology*, 217(2), 176-178.

¹¹ California WIC Association. (2018). TeleWIC: Keeping Up with the Times. Retrieved March 25, 2019 from http://www.calwic.org/storage/documents/reports/2018/WIC_VideoConferencing_Brief_fnl_pages.pdf

¹² Langabeer, J. R., Champagne-Langabeer, T., Alqusairi, D., Kim, J., Jackson, A., Persse, D., & Gonzalez, M. (2017). Cost-benefit analysis of telehealth in pre-hospital care. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*, 23(8), 747-751.

¹³ Levin, K., Madsen, J. R., Petersen, I., Wanscher, C. E., & Hangaard, J. (2013). Telemedicine diabetes consultations are cost-effective, and effects on essential diabetes treatment parameters are similar to conventional treatment: 7-year results from the Svendborg Telemedicine Diabetes Project. *Journal of Diabetes Science and Technology*, 7(3), 588-595.

positively impact participant satisfaction^{14,15}, knowledge attainment^{16,17}, and adoption of healthy behaviors by WIC participants^{16, 17,18,19,20}, but this evidence is limited and many questions remain. Further research on telehealth interventions for the WIC population would serve to provide the WIC program with better evidence for informed recommendations. For example, adequately powered randomized controlled trials or other rigorous study designs are needed to determine the effectiveness of telehealth services for nutrition education, including breastfeeding support, and the impact of their use on dietary habits, infant feeding practices, including breastfeeding rates, participant satisfaction and retention, and addressing identified nutrition risks. Rigorous studies investigating the effectiveness of telehealth technologies in addressing barriers to accessing nutrition education that meets the needs of WIC participants in rural areas or other communities are also needed. This Cooperative Agreement provides an opportunity to address these evidence gaps while supporting broader implementation of innovative approaches to meet the needs of WIC participants.

Key Objectives

The present solicitation supports the WIC Program through building the evidence base for the effective use of telehealth in supplementing WIC services related to nutrition education and breastfeeding support and addressing barriers to participant access of these services.

Below is a list of the Program objectives, to which proposed activities should be clearly aligned in the Activities/Indicators Tracker under Section II:

#	Objectives
1.	<i>To competitively select State Agencies to implement promising and well-designed telehealth innovations that supplement the WIC nutrition education including breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic, while decreasing barriers to access among WIC participants.</i>

¹⁴ Au L. E., Whaley, S. E., Gurzo, K., Meza, M., & Ritchie, L. D. (2016). If you build it they will come: Satisfaction of WIC participants with online and traditional in-person nutrition education. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 48, 336-342.

¹⁵ Unpublished Report. (2017). FY 2014 Arizona WIC SPG Final Report.

¹⁶ Au, L. E., Whaley, S. E., Gurzo, K., Meza, M., & Rosen, N. J., & Ritchie, L. D. (2017). Evaluation of online and in-person nutrition education related to salt knowledge and behaviors among Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Participants. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 117(9), 1384-1395.

¹⁷ Au, L. E., Whaley, S., Rosen, N. J., Meza, M., & Ritchie, L. D. (2016). Online and in-person nutrition education improves breakfast knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors: A randomized trial of participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 116(3), 490-500.

¹⁸ Bensley, R., Anderson, J., Brusk, J., Mercer, N., & Rivas J. (2011). Impact of Internet vs traditional Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children nutrition education on fruit and vegetable intake. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 111, 749-755.

¹⁹ Gilmore, L. A., Klempel, M. C., Martin, C. K., Myers, C. A., Burton, J. H., Sutton, E. F., & Redman, L. M. (2017). Personalized mobile health intervention for health and weight loss in postpartum women receiving women, infants, and children benefit: A randomized controlled pilot study. *Journal of Women's Health*, 26(7), 719-727.

²⁰ Martinez-Brockman, J. L., Harari, N., & Perez-Escamilla, R. (2017). Lactation Advice Through Texting Can Help (LATCH): An Analysis of Intensity of Engagement via Two-Way Text Messaging. *The FASEB Journal*, 31(1_supplement), 650-618.

	Develop an award competition (RFP) with clear selection criteria
	Disseminate and promote award opportunity, offering guidance to potential applicants
	Evaluate the applications received and recommend selections
	Fund the WIC State Agencies selected
2.	<i>To rigorously evaluate the interventions implemented by sub-grantees, including a process evaluation and cost estimate.</i>
	Develop a basic research model to evaluate telehealth innovations
	Support the sub-grantee in implementing their intervention in line with the study design
	Secure IRB approvals
	Develop or identify validated instruments and other methods of data collection
	Track the implementation process of telehealth innovation by each State Agency sub-grantee, including use of resources and associated costs
	Carry out data collection to inform evaluation
	Analyze data collected
3.	<i>To disseminate findings to inform the WIC Program at the Federal, State, and local level, and contribute to the evidence base related to telehealth.</i>
	Produce State-specific reports
	Produce a Final report that includes all study instruments
	Produce publications and conduct presentations
4.	<i>To coordinate meetings that provide meaningful opportunities for information-sharing and project coordination.</i>
	Conduct an orientation meeting (in person with FNS)
	Conduct a closeout meeting (in person with FNS)
	Lead a Post-Award meeting (webinar with sub-grantees)
	Lead a Post-Implementation meeting (webinar with sub-grantees)
	Conduct other convenings as proposed

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Funding

The grant is a one-time funding opportunity that will be awarded on a competitive basis, subject to the availability of federal funds. Approximately \$8.5 million is available for funding this opportunity, \$5 million of which shall be awarded through a competitive, sub-grant process to WIC State agencies. The sub-grant funds (not to exceed \$5 million) can be used to support a variety of telehealth interventions, including but not limited to the use of telehealth tools provided by WIC staff as well as clinical services and technologies provided by third-party vendors. FNS will accept one application package per applicant. The Grantee will be responsible for utilizing their awarded amount (1) to carry out a competition to award sub-grants to WIC State agencies to use telehealth technologies to supplement the nutrition education and breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic, and to decrease barriers to access to WIC

services, particularly in rural communities, (2) to evaluate the interventions, and (3) disseminate findings. This grant award is contingent upon the availability of Federal funding.

Cooperative Agreement

This grant will be awarded in the form of a cooperative agreement. This agreement is a legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the Federal government and the Grantee.

Cooperative agreements will allow more involvement and collaboration by FNS in the project.

Purpose of Cooperative Agreement

- 1) The Grantee (Recipient) shall work cooperatively with FNS to: **Develop and manage a competitive sub-grant award process to WIC State agencies (SAs) to design and implement telehealth innovations expected to supplement the nutrition education and breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic.** The goal of these sub-grants is to decrease barriers to accessing WIC services, particularly in rural communities. *The Grantee shall propose and justify a specific focus for the sub-grants that fits within the scope described in Priority Areas.* While FNS anticipates at least 5 sub-grants to WIC State agencies of approximately \$1,000,000 each, applicants shall propose the target number and scale of sub-grants. The Grantee will award, monitor, and evaluate the sub-grantee's intervention with the cooperation of the sub-grantee.
 - a) **The Grantee will develop and execute a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process.** The RFP will describe the opportunity, explain eligibility for the sub-grants, and establish evaluation criteria for the award. The Applicant to this RFA shall describe and justify their approach for managing the competitive RFP sub-grant award process they plan to administer, their evaluation criteria to evaluate and rank SA proposals, their plans for promoting the opportunity among SAs, and their plans for managing and collaborating with sub-grantees upon award.

The Applicant to this RFA shall ensure the competitive sub-grant RFP clearly articulates eligibility criteria. To be eligible for a sub-grant, applicants must be a WIC State agency. Since collaboration among local WIC agencies can enhance the delivery of WIC services, it is strongly recommended that State agencies solicit input from local WIC agencies when developing a proposal for a sub-grant project. Local WIC agencies may also work with their State agencies to develop innovative proposal ideas for sub-grant projects. Regardless of the approach, State agencies are responsible to lead all proposals and partnerships. In coordination with their State, local agencies may manage a project within their jurisdiction.

At a minimum, each sub-grantee (WIC State agency) must use the funds to (1) implement an existing telehealth intervention that supplements the nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic and decreases barriers to access to WIC nutrition education or breastfeeding support for participants; OR design and implement a telehealth tool that supplements and is within the scope of the nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic and decreases barriers to access to WIC nutrition education or breastfeeding support for participants. (The qualified professionals offering support through the telehealth tool may be WIC staff); and (2) cooperate with the Grantee to support the evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness. State and regional diversity should be considered when evaluating and ranking sub-grantee State agencies to ensure that sub-grant activities serve diverse participant populations, particularly those in rural communities and other areas where access is a barrier. Additionally, special consideration shall be made for proposals to use open source software and technology, and/or develop systems that can be easily tailored and adopted by other State agencies at little or no cost.

- b) The RFP shall require that, at a minimum, proposals include the following:
- A concise description of the telehealth innovation to be implemented or developed and how it fits into the project's overall objectives as presented to FNS; A description of the populations served by the sub-grantee applicant, including how the proposed intervention addresses barriers to access and reflects the social and cultural environment relevant to the populations served;
 - A description of how the tool will facilitate the ability of WIC staff to increase access to nutrition education and breastfeeding support for WIC participants.
 - A description of how the solution will be used to deliver only allowable WIC services by qualified professionals;
 - A description regarding the sustainability of the innovation beyond the grant period, should the effort be successful;
 - Documentation of procedures and protocols used to ensure the privacy and safety of WIC participants when interacting via the proposed technology e.g., a secure platform that meets federal and state HIPAA requirements and Federal WIC requirements;
 - A description articulating whether the sub-grantee is able to implement the intervention in a randomized fashion or with comparison and treatment groups;
 - A commitment to providing the Grantee with the data needed to evaluate the intervention as implemented, and supporting the Grantee in data collection efforts;
 - Documentation of procedures used to maintain the quality and integrity of all data and analyses; and,

- Demonstrated compliance with Federal Program Regulations for all proposed strategies/solutions.²¹
- c) **The Grantee will submit to FNS summaries of all proposals submitted by those applying for sub-grants and discuss the top proposals with FNS.** At a minimum, the summaries shall include the name of each State agency and their point-of-contact for the project, award amount, a brief description of the proposed intervention and timeline, a scoring synopsis, and recommendations for selection. FNS will make final selection decisions for the sub-grants.
- d) **After sub-grantees are selected, the Grantee will submit updated summaries of selected sub-grantee projects for publication on FNS's website and host a web-based Post-Competition Project Meeting.** The Grantee will coordinate a web-based Post-Competition Meeting whereby the sub-grantees present the projects they will implement. FNS will provide feedback during this meeting and through subsequent communications.
- 2) **Evaluate the sub-grantee interventions.** The Grantee will execute a rigorous evaluation of implemented strategies/solutions that documents impact on relevant outcomes (e.g. dietary and feeding behaviors, breastfeeding outcomes, etc.) as well as participant retention and satisfaction. Other measures shall be included in the evaluation to capture relevant proximal outcomes and process metrics; all included process variables and outcomes must be clearly specified to support standard measures. The Grantee will conduct a thorough process evaluation to describe how the intervention was implemented, including measures of reach, dose (if applicable), ease of use, and satisfaction. The process evaluation will also document the resources associated with implementation, cost-efficiency, challenges encountered and how they were addressed, and whether the intervention was implemented as intended and in accordance with WIC program guidance. Estimates of the cost to sustain the intervention beyond the grant period shall also be developed.
- a) **Work collaboratively with sub-grantee recipients to support implementing the intervention in a way that supports rigorous evaluation.** The Grantee shall submit an evaluation plan to FNS for review and approval that details the evaluation design, data collection methods, and analytical approach for each intervention within three months of awarding sub-grants. The evaluation plan will outline the study design, key outcome measures with operational definitions clearly stated, and a timeline outlining specific implementation and evaluation milestones.
- b) **Secure institutional review board (IRB) approval as needed to carry out evaluation-related data collection activities.**

²¹ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/wic/WICRegulations-7CFR246.pdf>

- c) **Use (or develop) validated instruments and sound methodological and statistical methods to conduct the evaluation.** Where possible, standard measures shall be used across interventions.
 - d) **Provide sub-grantees with technical assistance, as needed, for evaluation-related activities they must carry out, and provide sub-grantees with evaluation results to inform practices and reporting.**
- 3) **Disseminate findings broadly among the WIC research (academic) and WIC practitioner communities.** At a minimum, FNS requires submission of the following reports: annual reports; quarterly progress reports using FNS 906: PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORT FORM (see Attachment 1); subgrantee-specific final reports; a final summary report to be publicly released in coordination with FNS; and at least one submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The State-specific reports will provide a plain language account of the implemented innovation, the facilitators and barriers to its implementation, evaluation results, and any recommendations for sustained implementation and/or adoption by other State Agencies. The final summary report shall describe the supported sub-grantee projects, the approach to evaluation including methodology and any guiding theories or frameworks, results of the implemented evaluation, and a discussion of strengths, limitations, and possible next steps in research and dissemination. This report will include an executive summary. In addition, the Grantee shall plan to present research findings at academic and professional conferences and the Grantee shall plan to participate in committees, working groups, communities, and forums where WIC participant research and maternal, child, infant, and family health services are discussed.
- a) For internal use and informational purposes, the Grantee shall provide FNS with an electronic copy of all manuscripts and other dissemination materials (for example, outreach materials and documents, Power point slides, demonstration and operational versions of applications) resulting from this grant and sub-grant activity at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.
 - b) FNS requires the Grantee to host periodic meetings with sub-grantees to discuss any issues related to project implementation and evaluation, especially issues related to data collection. FNS also requires the Grantee to host web-based Roundtable Sessions to convene periodic discussions with other researchers on the topic of innovations in WIC-related telehealth, especially among other State and local WIC agencies and with other programs that also serve low-income women, infant, and child populations.
 - c) The Grantee will host a web-based **Post-Implementation Project Meeting** whereby the Grantee and its sub-grantees will present on their projects and summarize initial findings from their work.
 - d) All reports and manuscripts generated by efforts funded through this Cooperative Agreement must be reviewed by FNS before general distribution or submission to peer review for publication in scientific journals. Reports to be published by FNS on the USDA webpage require FNS review and clearance. Manuscripts that include the

FNS point-of-contact as a co-author (where appropriate based on authorship guidelines) must be reviewed and cleared by FNS before submission to peer-review for scientific journals.

4) Sponsor and coordinate meetings with FNS:

Two in-person meetings will take place at FNS headquarters in Alexandria, VA: An Orientation meeting at the beginning of the cooperative agreement period and a Closeout session at the project's completion.

- a) The Orientation Meeting shall be held within 45 days after award. Personnel will present information on the chosen focus area for the competitive RFP process and possible intervention strategies with FNS. The Grantee will also present an updated administration plan for the competitive RFP process. FNS staff will provide input during the presentation and subsequently on any materials generated for the meeting via email. Additionally, potential evaluation strategies will be presented.
- b) The Closeout Session shall be held toward the end of the grant period and will include presentations of project findings, successes achieved through grant-funded efforts, problems encountered with implementation, and other lessons learned from completing this project. Grantee researchers will provide FNS the presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slideshows) after the conference. Any required administrative grant closeout procedures, if needed, may be completed at this time. The Final Financial report and Final Progress report will be due 90 days after the grants period of performance end date.

Two additional meetings, hosted by the Grantee, will provide opportunities for the selected sub-grantees to share information with FNS:

- c) The Post-Competition Project Meeting shall be held within 90 days of awarding the sub-grants. This meeting will provide an opportunity for sub-grantees to share their project plans with other sub-grantees and FNS, and receive feedback before implementation.
- d) The Post-Implementation Project Meeting shall be held 3-6 months prior to the end of sub-grant period and will provide an opportunity for sub-grantees to share their experiences with implementing their intervention along with preliminary lessons learned.

PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

The recipient will adhere to all procurement standards, including those listed below, if applicable, as found in 2 CFR 200.318 through 2 CFR 200.326. When procuring property and services under a Federal award, a State must follow the same policies and procedures used for procurements from its non-Federal funds. State recipients will comply with 2 CFR 200.322.

- 1) **Sub-recipient compliance:** The Recipient (Selected Applicant) will ensure that sub-recipients are in compliance with applicable Federal administrative requirements and cost

principles. No funds shall be provided to an eligible collaborator or contractor before such an agreement is signed by all parties.

- 2) **Competition:** All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with 2 CFR 200.319.
- 3) **Suspension/Debarment:** The Recipient agrees to ensure that all sub-recipients are neither excluded nor disqualified under the Suspension and Debarment rules found at 2 CFR Parts 180 and 417 by doing any one of the following:
 - a. Checking the System for Awards Management (SAM) to determine if the applicant or grantee has been debarred or suspended. This information can be found at www.sam.gov.
 - b. Collecting a certification that the entity is neither excluded nor disqualified. Because a Federal certification form is no longer available, the Grantee or sub-Grantee electing this must devise its own.
 - c. Including a clause to this effect in the sub-recipient agreement and in any procurement contract expected to equal or exceed \$25,000, awarded by the Recipient or a sub-recipient within any agreements.
- 4) **USDA/FNS acknowledgement:** Unless otherwise advised by the Agency, the Recipient will acknowledge the support of USDA FNS whenever publicizing the work under this grant. To this end, the Grantee must include in any publication resulting from work performed under this grant an acknowledgment in substantially the form set below:

“This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.”

Priority Areas

FNS is particularly interested in telehealth innovations including replicable interactive tools, technical, or other practical solutions that provide effective breastfeeding counseling and/or nutrition education to WIC participants. FNS expects the sub-grants to fund a variety of telehealth interventions, including interventions that would address common barriers found in rural settings. At least one sub-grant shall be awarded in each of the two priority areas. The two priorities for sub-grantee projects are to:

- Implement an existing telehealth solution to ensure timely access to nutritional or breastfeeding support for WIC participants by qualified professionals. Qualified professionals include registered dietitians (RD) and/or breastfeeding experts (i.e. IBCLC) who meet State staffing requirements and can provide expertise in complex nutrition and breastfeeding topics that are in accordance with WIC guidance and within program scope. Contacts made through this solution should integrate with and supplement (not

duplicate) WIC services by addressing challenges identified through the participants' nutrition and/or breastfeeding assessment (e.g. high-risk) or barriers to access.

- Develop an online (mobile-friendly) resource or tool to provide nutritional or breastfeeding support to WIC participants that is within the scope of the nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic. The support is provided by qualified professionals, including registered dietitians (RD) and/or breastfeeding experts (i.e. IBCLC) who meet State staffing requirements and can provide expertise in complex nutrition and breastfeeding topics that are in accordance with WIC guidance and within program scope. The qualified professionals providing support may be WIC staff. Contacts made through the resource or tool integrate with and supplement (not duplicate) WIC services by addressing challenges identified through the participants' nutrition and/or breastfeeding assessment (e.g. high-risk) or barriers to access. The resource or tool may: 1) Provide nutrition education content relevant to identified nutrition risk(s) and common participant concerns; 2) Incorporate evidence-based strategies to maximize participant engagement or impact on participant nutrition behaviors; 3) Reflect evidence-based best practices for the delivery and reinforcement of nutrition messages; and 4) Provide features to enable WIC staff to analyze assessments and monitor use of the tool and its impact on participant dietary habits and/or health to support continual improvement.

Examples of approaches that may be explored **include but are not limited to:**

- Platforms that use referrals and assessments from a WIC Competent Professional Authority to connect participants with appropriate follow-up counseling on complex nutrition and/or breastfeeding problems with qualified professionals. Any counseling contacts would be well documented, and information would be provided timely to WIC staff to enable follow-up.
- Development and implementation of a tool to supplement services provided by WIC staff with tailored, up-to-date, and effective counseling to WIC participants that is within the scope of the nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic. Features may include nutrition information on common topics of interest, suggested prompts, talking points, or take-away messages to facilitate productive and meaningful discussions with participants, and strategies that improve the ability of WIC staff to engage participants and reflect participant-centered nutrition education practices, including goal setting. The tool may also facilitate tailoring information to the nutritional and/or breastfeeding needs of participant, care plan development, and appropriate follow-up.

Award Period and Project Timeline

FNS plans to announce the selected Grantee by September 30, 2019 and enter into the Cooperative Agreement with the Grantee by September 30, 2019. The Grantee will be allowed to

use the funds consistent with its application plans. The period of performance for this Cooperative Agreement is **four years** and nine months with an end date no later than June 30, 2024.

Program Specific Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate the following program specific requirements in their proposals:

1. Experience with and/or capacity for designing, implementing, and coordinating a competitive RFP process that solicits proposals from WIC State agencies. All applications must clearly articulate an administration plan for awarding competitive sub-grants to WIC State agencies;
2. Experience conducting high-quality evaluations in partnership with WIC or similar public health agencies, as evidenced by reports, publications, and/or other materials (while an evaluation plan is not required in the proposal to this RFA, the Grantee will be required to submit a formal evaluation plan to FNS once competitive sub-grants are awarded);
3. Knowledge about telehealth technologies and their effective use in public health or related venues, including familiarity with currently available telehealth tools and the evidence base on their effectiveness;
4. Experience with and/or capacity for providing high-quality, evaluation-based technical assistance to WIC and other public health agencies and to community practitioners;
5. A dissemination plan that presents broad dissemination strategies as well as projects that clearly stipulate how products of research could be used with SA partners across geographies;
6. Description of the expected set of final deliverables that will be submitted and/or published by the Grantee during and at the end of the Cooperative Agreement. All reports or products generated by efforts funded through this Cooperative Agreement are subject to review by FNS before publication. This includes review of manuscripts (with inclusion of the FNS point-of-contact as a co-author where appropriate based on authorship guidelines) before submission to peer-review for scientific journals, communications materials meant for general and WIC audiences about the research, and other items;
7. All applications must address how the findings will be disseminated to stakeholders (policy officials, state and local agencies and their staff) and the academic community, and dissemination plans must meet the requirements as specified later in this RFA.
8. Inclusion of subject matter experts on WIC nutrition education and breastfeeding support. In addition, a panel of subject matter experts should be consulted in the design of evaluation strategies, any data collection instruments, engagement or recruitment materials, and the like.
9. All applications must provide a clear timeline for carrying out all proposed activities and demonstrate evidence of planning to meet other Grant requirements as specified in this RFA.

FNS. To the extent practicable, FNS is available to provide technical consultation to the Grantee as needed. FNS will comment on major project aspects and issues in advance of their implementation in a manner and timeframe agreed upon between the Grantee and FNS.

At FNS's discretion, FNS involvement with the Grantee may include:

1. Providing comments on and having ongoing conversations with the Grantee regarding their plans to meet this RFA's requirements;
2. Reviewing administration, dissemination, and evaluation (once designed) plans associated with implementing the selected telehealth innovations at WIC agencies funded by this cooperative agreement;
3. Approving the date and time of the in-person conferences;
4. Approving the agendas for the in-person conferences;
5. Reviewing and co-authoring manuscripts;
6. Receiving a courtesy copy of all Grantee-produced documents (e.g. Final report, peer-reviewed publication upon submission) resulting from this cooperative agreement.

Grantee. The Grantee is the public or private accredited college or university that will be selected competitively based on the merits of its application to operate the project. The Grantee has overall responsibility for administering the competitive RFP award system, coordinating project implementations, evaluating project success, providing evaluation-related technical assistance, and reporting.

The Grantee shall:

1. Select or hire appropriately credentialed personnel to manage and operate project components;
2. Delegate responsibilities to their staff or other partners as appropriate;
3. Conduct appropriate training and provide necessary support for staff and other partners to successfully handle project responsibilities. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. providing data on participating WIC agencies and organizations to FNS;
 - b. coordinating site visits to participating sites for FNS if requested; and,
 - c. fulfilling obligations to FNS;
4. Keep FNS informed on critical junctures and checkpoints after award of cooperative agreement, including management plan, budget, administration plan, dissemination plan that are submitted in preliminary form in the application, as well as evaluation plans once developed after award of sub-grants and the management and staffing plans discussed later in this RFA;
5. Meet specific obligations and approval points as specified by the cooperative agreement;
6. Submit timely progress reports, financial reports and annual reports throughout the award period, and submit a final progress report and final financial report;

7. Attend progress meetings via teleconference as needed;
8. Account for project funds separately from federal food and nutrition assistance administrative funds and establish financial and managerial reporting and controls to assure project funds are not commingled or used inappropriately. A separate and distinct audit trail must be established and maintained for the expenditure of project funds that clearly demonstrates that they are used solely for project purposes;
9. Provide FNS with any data files created and used to generate reports, presentations, and publications resulting from this grant. Such data shall be accompanied with analytic code, output files, and codebooks and other applicable documentation sufficient for FNS to replicate analyses;
10. Carry out all activities necessary to fulfill the items as described in the “Purpose of Cooperative Agreement” section;
11. Coordinate other grant-related dissemination activities;
12. For internal use and informational purposes, provide FNS with an electronic copy of all manuscripts resulting from this work at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published;
13. Require and collect the documentation of a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registration in System for Award Management (SAM) for all subgrantee applicants. These are federal requirements for participating in projects funded by US government funds.
14. Ensure you include the requirement of a signed subaward agreement with all subaward organizations (signed by the sub awardees authorized official).

Quarterly Conference Calls

Quarterly conference calls shall provide an overview of the activities conducted during the previous quarter, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget, deviations from the proposed plan, difficulties encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, assistance needed from FNS on technical issues, and major planned activities for the next quarter. Should a major issue arise between calls, the Grantee shall contact the FNS Grants and Program Officers immediately. During key stages in the project, Conference Calls with FNS shall occur monthly; i.e. at the start of the agreement, leading up to the release of the RFP and selecting sub-grantees, etc. The Grantee shall provide FNS with an agenda **3 business days** prior to each call. The Grantee shall also prepare minutes for each call and distribute to FNS no later than **5 business days** after the call.

Interim Deliverables

Once awarded, the Grantee will provide quarterly progress reports and financial reports to identified FNS contact persons. The Grantee will also produce an **annual report** (not to exceed 10 pages) to FNS for publishing on the FNS website. Annual reports will include a description of

the focus area, the implemented projects by sub-grantees, and status of implementation and evaluation for that year and, in subsequent years, since the last annual reporting.

Final Deliverable(s)

The project description shall address how the findings will be disseminated to program stakeholders and the academic community. At a minimum, the Grantee shall prepare and deliver to FNS one final report integrating all the information learned from all work funded by this project in an acceptable format for FNS to publish on their website, and submit at least one peer-reviewed journal article for publication based on research using grant funds. All materials that will be published on FNS's website **must be 508-compliant**. Please see <http://www.section508.gov/> for more information. FNS recognizes that the journal article may not be published by the end of the grant period, but a submitted draft is required.

FNS reserves the right to utilize, disseminate, or share any deliverables produced with funding under this grant project in accordance with 2 CFR part 200 (including, but not limited to, tools developed by sub-grantees using grant funds).

Allowable Costs

Among other costs, budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings.

Equipment and Supplies: Expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more) and supplies are allowable expenses

Software and Licensing: Software and licensing costs shall be specified for all years of the project.

Food Expenses: No more than 10 percent of the grant funds may be used for necessary food purchases in the grant budget. Food purchases must be necessary for the purpose of the grant and should be limited to educational purposes, including: sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test run of a new product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds.

Travel: Among travel costs budgeted, grantees must include travel costs for at least two people from their team to attend 4 one day in-person conferences at FNS.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible applicants

Eligible entities include public and private accredited colleges and universities. This Request for Application (RFA) is open to all Accredited Colleges/Universities.

2. Cost sharing or matching considerations

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements. Any matching or cost sharing (as detailed in 200.306) offered is at the discretion of the Applicant. Any cost sharing or matching may be presented in a percentage amount.

3. Other eligibility criteria

FNS will accept only one application from each Applicant. Suspended or debarred organizations are ineligible to submit applications in response to this grant solicitation.

4. Pre-application Screening Requirements

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, Federal Awarding Agencies, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.400, are required, prior to making a Federal award, to review information available through various OMB-designated repositories for eligibility qualification or financial integrity, and to have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive Federal awards. The evaluation of the information obtained from the designated repository systems and the risk assessment may result in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency (FNS) imposing special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed. The Federal repository systems FNS will review include:

- 1) SAM, the *System for Award Management*, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS;
- 2) FAPIIS, the *Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System*, is a database that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
- 3) Dun and Bradstreet, the system where applicants establish a DUNS number which is used by the Federal government to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems. The Federal government requires that all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals other than sole proprietors have a DUNS number.
- 4) U.S. Department of Agriculture, AD-3030, *Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants*.

Applicants must also respond to the **pre-application assessment** questions below to allow FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, and history of performance, reports and findings from audits. A questionnaire containing these questions has been provided to facilitate the process. Applicants must answer all the pre-application questions. While answering "yes" may be an indicator of risk, the consideration and evaluation of these questions is only an indicator of potential risk and may or may not result in additional oversight requirements or special conditions being placed on an award should an award be made. Decisions regarding additional oversight requirements will take into consideration the total number of risks identified.

5. **Acknowledge USDA support:** As outlined in 2 CFR 415.2, grant recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any publications

written or published with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity. Recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any audiovisual which is produced with grant support and which has a direct production cost of over \$5,000.

- When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Grantees are asked to follow the [USDA Visual Standards Guide](#) when using the USDA logo.

Grant recipients *may* be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to request application package

Ex. Applicants may request paper copy of this solicitation and required forms by contacting the FNS Grants Officer at:

Carla Garcia, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail *Carla Garcia @usda.gov*

2. Content and form of application submission

Eligible applicants interested in applying to this program shall adhere to the following applicant format. The proposed project plan should be typed on 8 ½" X 11" white paper with at least 1 inch margins on the top and bottom. All pages shall be single-spaced, in 12 point font. The project description with relevant information shall be captured on no more than 25 pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter of commitment(s), endorsement letter(s), budget narrative(s), appendices, and required forms. All pages, excluding the form pages, must be numbered.

Cover Sheet

The cover page should include, at a minimum:

- Applicant's name and mailing address
- Primary contact's name, job title, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address
- Grant program title and subprogram title (if applicable)

Table of Contents

Include relevant topic page number

Application Project Summary

The application summary should clearly describe the proposed project goals, activities and anticipated outcomes that would result if the proposal is funded.

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing for the competitive RFP process, how it will solicit, evaluate, and select proposals submitted by WIC State agencies. The Project Narrative will also discuss the Applicant's experience evaluating public health interventions at WIC clinics and/or other programs as well as experience evaluating the implementation of novel technological solutions in these or similar settings and provide a detailed description of the proposed approach for evaluating the sub-grantee's intervention. The project narrative should also indicate plans for disseminating work. The management plan should describe administrative procedures, staffing, quality assurance, and other activities as described below.

In preparing your Project Narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

- Introduction: Provide information on the proposed team's experience performing research and evaluation of technology-driven interventions tested within related public health programs. Please note any successes, lessons learned, or challenges from previous research and evaluation efforts. Describe and justify any specific focus area that extends the Priority Areas described in this RFA.
- Background: The Background section will demonstrate understanding of current published literature regarding telehealth technology applications to public health, available technologies, and the potential benefits and risks to implementing these technologies to support WIC participants for breastfeeding counseling and/or nutrition education.
- Objectives, Activities and Timeline: Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically discuss what you hope to accomplish, include specific activities you will perform to accomplish the project objectives as stated in the **Purpose of Cooperative Agreement** section, and include deadlines. All objectives should lead to a clearly stated goal relevant to this RFA. Your project timeline should start on the anticipated project start date of September 30, 2019 and end 57 months later. For planning purposes, use the date of award as planned and include dates for important project milestones and deadlines and include dates for items described in the *Purpose of Cooperative Agreement* and *Program Specific Requirements* section.
- RFP Administration Plan: Describe the team's plan to administer a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process that includes an overview of the procedures for developing the solicitation, promoting the solicitation among SAs, and evaluation criteria for received proposals. Planned items that will be included in the solicitation beyond those stated in section 1 of the *Purpose of Cooperative Agreement* section of this RFA should be explained. The Applicant should also describe plans to manage and collaborate with sub-grant awardees.

- **Evaluation Plan:** A key component of this work, once awarded, is evaluating the telehealth innovation projects implemented by WIC State agencies. The application should demonstrate the Applicant's abilities in evaluating similar technologically-complex interventions and projects by providing details of 2 to 3 relevant evaluation projects previously performed. The narrative shall articulate clear research questions and related hypotheses and outcome measures. The narrative shall describe how each evaluation component (at a minimum: impact, process, and cost) will be conducted and the anticipated data required from sub-grantees. The Grantee's evaluation plan shall include specification of a rigorous evaluation design to be implemented in selected WIC State agencies, sample size estimations and minimum sample size requirements, specification of the proposed data collection methods including the availability of validated information collection instruments such as quantitative surveys, qualitative interview and focus group question guides, and plans for analysis of evaluation data.
- **Dissemination Plan:** Describe your plans for disseminating findings from this grant. Describe specific plans to make project findings accessible to others at various levels: program participants, communities, practitioners, and policy officials. Indicate possible opportunities to present at conferences, participate in working groups, host roundtable discussions, and present webinars. Provide examples of peer-reviewed journals to which the team expects to submit manuscripts.
- **Management Plan:** Provide a clear description of the activities to be undertaken to manage the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget, and with quality results. Describe Grantee's organizational structure and identify the staff and/or contractors who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience, and a level of effort specified for specific staff proposed. Note any relevant experience in managing similar activities. Explain contingency plans for staff turnover. Describe how quality assurance, recordkeeping, and accounting activities will be executed. Provide a clear description of how funds will be administered and distributed to sub-awardees.

Reports & Products Review

All reports or products generated by efforts funded through this Cooperative Agreement are subject to review by FNS before publication. This includes review of manuscripts (with inclusion of the FNS point-of-contact as a co-author where appropriate based on authorship guidelines) before submission to peer-review for scientific journals, communications materials meant for general and WIC audiences about the research, and other items. Project timelines should factor in review of reports and products by FNS, with 3 weeks for items 30 pages or less, and 6 weeks for items greater than 30 pages in length.

Activities/Indicators Tracker

Proposed Activities and indicators measuring success must be mapped to Program Objectives (as described in Section I – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION) in the below format (note that additional Activities/Indicators can be added as needed). Note: Indicators are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant.

Objectives	Indicator
------------	-----------

1.	<i>To competitively select State Agencies to implement promising and well-designed telehealth innovations that supplement the WIC nutrition education including breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic, while decreasing barriers to access among WIC participants.</i>	
Activity	Develop an award competition (RFP) with clear selection criteria	Progress ²²
	Disseminate and promote award opportunity, offering guidance to potential applicants	Progress
	Evaluate the applications received and recommend selections	Progress
	Fund the WIC State Agencies selected	Progress
2.	<i>To rigorously evaluate the interventions implemented by sub-grantees, including a process evaluation and cost estimate.</i>	
	Develop a basic research model to evaluate telehealth innovations.	Progress
	Support the sub-grantee in implementing their intervention in line with the study design	Progress
	Secure IRB approvals	Progress
	Develop or identify validated instruments and other methods of data collection	Progress
	Track the implementation process of telehealth innovation by each State Agency sub-grantee, including use of resources and associated costs	Progress
	Carry out data collection to inform evaluation	Progress
	Analyze data collected	Progress
3.	<i>To disseminate findings to inform the WIC Program at the Federal, State, and local level, and contribute to the evidence base related to telehealth.</i>	
	State-specific reports	Progress
	Final report	Progress
	Publications and presentations	Progress
4.	<i>To coordinate meetings that provide meaningful opportunities for information-sharing and project coordination.</i>	
	Orientation meeting (in person with FNS)	Progress
	Closeout meeting (in person with FNS)	Progress
	Post-Award meeting (webinar with sub-grantees)	Progress
	Post-Implementation meeting (webinar with sub-grantees)	Progress
	Other convenings as proposed	Progress

Application Budget Narrative

The budget narrative should correspond with the proposed project narrative and application budget. The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget's direct cost. If the budget includes indirect costs, the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Federal indirect cost rate agreement. All applicants with non-profit status must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

²² The progress indicator would be coded as "no activity"; "in progress"; "complete"

Indirect Cost Rate: If available, the current **indirect cost rate**, negotiated with a Federal negotiating agency, should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. USDA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be stated in the budget narrative.

Required Grant Application Forms

Please refer to the Application Checklist on page 3 for a list of required grant forms.

Electronic Submission Details

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team noted in Section VII: **FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**.

In order to submit an application, you must:

1. Obtain a **DUNS** number
 - In order to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization does not have one, or if you are unsure of your organization's number, contact Dun and Bradstreet via the internet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm ET. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number.
 - **It may take 2-3 business days to obtain a DUNS number.**
2. Register in the System for Award Management (**SAM**)
 - SAM combines Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. For additional information regarding SAM, see the following link:
<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>
 - Must have organization's DUNS, entity's Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on last tax return). **It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM, however** in some instances the SAM process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require **5-7 days or more**.
 - All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25.
 - We strongly encourage applicants to begin the process **at least 3 weeks** before the due date of the grant solicitation.
3. Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step in the registration process is to create an

account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-3-username-password.html>

4. **Authorize Grants.gov Roles:** After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying them of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-4-aor-authorization.html>

5. **Track Role Status:** To track your role request, refer to:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-5-track-aor-status.html>

Electronic Signature: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as an AOR; **this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), you can create individual instances of a workspace.

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

- 1) *Create a Workspace:* Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

- 2) *Complete a Workspace:* Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
 - a. *Adobe Reader:* If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.
NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>
 - b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.
 - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First:* The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) *Submit a Workspace:* An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
- 4) *Track a Workspace:* After successfully submitting a workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the Center with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

4. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

a. *Online Submission.* All applications must be received by 11:59PM Eastern time on **July 29, 2019**. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their

application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When the Food and Nutrition Service successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by the Food and Nutrition Service.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Additional Information on Grants.gov and the Registration Process:

NOTICE: Special Characters not Supported

All applicants **MUST** follow grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided in the grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application package?

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &, -, *, %, /, #, -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached_File.pdf) in naming the attachments. **Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected. FNS will not accept any application rejected from www.grants.gov portal due to incorrect naming conventions.**

In order to submit an application via grants.gov, applicants must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered in both the new Systems for Award Management (SAM) and on grants.gov. The applicant is strongly advised to allow ample time to initiate the grants.gov application submission process. All applicants must have SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a federal award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25. Please visit the following websites to obtain additional information on how to obtain a DUNS number (www.dnb.com) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; you need to be sure that you have confirmation that the application was accepted. For tools and tips regarding www.grants.gov, please visit: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html>.

Additional information and applicant resources is available at:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

3. Submission Dates and Times

LETTER OF INTENT

The eligible applicant that intends to submit an application should submit a Letter of Intent notice by **June 25, 2019**. This notice does not obligate the applicant to submit an application but provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The notice should include the potential applicant's name and address, organization's name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the primary point of contact (for confirmation from FNS please send via e-mail). The applicant can send the letter via the mail or e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

Carla Garcia
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: *Carla.Garcia@usda.gov*

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application must be uploaded on www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time **on July 29, 2019**. Applications received after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. FNS will not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received through the grants.gov web portal. FNS will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications.

Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grants.gov Support Center at **Local Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726 or via e-mail at support@Grants.gov**

4. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs will not be awarded for this grant project.

5. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grants.gov Support Center at **Local Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726** or via e-mail at support@Grants.gov.

Additional submission information and instructions is available at:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/grantors/grantor-standard-language.html>

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review Criteria

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure the applicants are eligible entities and are in compliance with all program regulations. FNS will not approve any waivers from Program regulations for any projects submitted in response to this solicitation. FNS will also pre-screen all applications to ensure that they contain the required documents and information, including but not limited to the project and budget narratives and all supporting documentation. Complete applications will need to be submitted by eligible applicants, meet all other eligibility requirements stated in this RFA, submitted on or before the required deadlines, and be in the required format. If an application does not include all appropriate information, FNS will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications for this RFA. All applicants will be notified whether their proposal has been accepted for an award by FNS. The Project Narrative should demonstrate expert knowledge of WIC, issues related to retention, and the landscape of potential solutions and strategies to overcome barriers to retention. This knowledge will be demonstrated through citing peer-reviewed literature on these subjects as well as local, state, or national reports of analysis or interventions and referencing prior work done in this area by the Applicant. The recipient of the award will also have an understanding of the services provided at local WIC sites, the relationship between the Program and its vendors, and participant experiences in vendor and clinic environments, which also should be clearly demonstrated in the application.

Scoring for Grant Applications

1. Overall Approach (50 points)

Evaluation of a grant application's Overall Approach will be based on:

Sub-Grant Competition (20 points)

- Proposed focus area for sub-grant competition and justification;
- Proposed administration plan for executing the competitive RFP process, including but not limited to proposed approach to provide special consideration to proposals that use open source software and technology, and/or develop systems that can be easily tailored and adopted by other State agencies at little or no cost.

Sub-Grant Evaluation (20 points)

- Relevant evaluation experience, skills in designing and carrying out program evaluations, experience collaborating with program practitioners;
- Proposed approach to designing evaluations of sub-grantee interventions that demonstrates familiarity with common challenges specific to WIC;
- Proposed evaluation design including specification of main research questions, hypothesis, and outcome measures of interest, approach to data collection, sample size specifications and associated justification, and analysis plans.

Dissemination Plan (5 points)

- Proposed approach to disseminating insights and findings from funded work as well as sharing resources with the WIC Program.

Timeline (5 points)

- A reasonable and clearly described timeline for meeting project milestones and providing deliverables.

2. Management Plan (15 Points)

Criteria by which a grant application's Management Plan will be evaluated include:

- Degree to which the Management Plan articulates how the applicant will provide the oversight necessary to ensure high-quality products, services, or outcomes and to keep the funded projects on time and within budget;
- Practicality of the presented project timeline and whether presented milestones and deadlines are realistic and achievable;
- Whether the Management Plan demonstrates effective internal controls of funds that are provided to partners and local agencies that ensure funds are used only for project purposes, with an accounting record and audit trail;
- Plan for managing personnel associated with the project and for addressing any contingencies such as loss of key personnel.

3. Staffing (20 Points)

Criteria by which a grant application's staffing plan will be evaluated include:

- Identification and description of the roles and responsibilities of key personnel and other partners and staff involved in the proposed project;
- Documentation of key personnel's necessary and relevant education, skills, and experience for their proposed roles on the project, and evidence that staff have expertise in WIC, evaluation, and similar interventions. Documentation includes relevant publications, prior funded activities, and presentations; Resumes of proposed key personnel are provided as appendices.
- Whether proposed staffing provides sufficient and complete documentation that

the time commitment of key personnel appears to be appropriate for their project roles and feasible given other responsibilities; and,

- Demonstration that partners, if any, have appropriate experience and commitment to effectively fulfill their proposed roles within the time and financial constraints of the project (note: letters of commitment are required from established partners in the application and serve as evidence of these commitments).

4. Budget (15 points)

Criteria by which a grant application's budget will be evaluated include:

- The total funding amount requested on the budget and budget narrative is appropriate for the scope of the project;
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives;
- The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals; and
- Budget calculations and documentation is complete and shows clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- A budget narrative describing how costs within the budget categories were derived and links between expenditures and specific activities/tasks;
- Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) –(shown on the budget)

Total Possible Points = 100

2. Review and Selection Process

Following the initial screening process, FNS will assemble a panel group to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The panel will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components and array the applications from highest to lowest score. The panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring. The selecting official reserves the right to accept the panel's recommendation or to select an application for funding out of order to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, or project diversity. FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available.

NOTE: If a discrepancy exists between the total funding request (submitted on SF-424, SF-424A, and budget or budget narrative) within the application package in response to this solicitation, FNS will only consider and evaluate the estimated funding request contained on SF-424.

VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions; any contact from a FNS grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless approved and stated on FNS' signed award document.

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Only the recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

CONFIDENTIALITY OF AN APPLICATION

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of FNS transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. Any application that does not result in an award will be not released to the public. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) SP 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable information, April 2010).

Applicants submitting applications in response to this RFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. All federal and non-federal employees (e.g., contractors, affiliates, or partners) working for or on behalf of FNS are required to acknowledge understanding of their responsibilities and accountability for using and protecting FNS PII in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974; Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-06-15, *Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information*; M-06-16, *Protection of Sensitive Agency Information*; M-07-16, *Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information*; and the NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-122, *Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information*.

By submitting an application in response to this RFA, applicants are assuring that all data exchanges conducted throughout the application submission and pre-award process (and during

the performance of the grant, if awarded) will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable Federal laws. By submitting a grant application, applicants agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality, including the following: (1) ensuring that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained or otherwise associated with UDSA FNS funded grants is securely transmitted. Transmission of applications through Grants.gov is secure; (2) ensuring that PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, and that PII and other sensitive data is not submitted via email; and (3) Data transmitted via approved file sharing services (WatchDox, ShareFile, etc.), CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The agency requires all panel reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process. Names of applicants, including States and tribal governments, submitting an application will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

Debarment and Suspension 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, “Debarment and Suspension,” codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded

from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number. To request a DUNS number visit: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

The grant recipient must also register its DUNS number in the new Systems for Award Management (SAM). If you were registered in the CCR, your company's information is already in SAM and you will just need to set up a SAM account. To register in SAM you will need your entity's DUNS and your entity's Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (as it appears on your last tax return). Registration should take **3-5 days**. If you do not receive confirmation that your SAM registration is complete, please contact SAM at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>.

FNS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with the requirements described in 2 CFR 25 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM registration with current information.

Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information 2 CFR Part 170

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Public Law 109–282), as amended by Section 6202 of Public Law 110–252 requires primary Grantees of Federal grants and cooperative agreements to report information on sub-grantee obligations and executive compensation. FFATA promotes open government by enhancing the Federal Government's accountability for its stewardship of public resources. This is accomplished by making Government information, particularly information on Federal spending, accessible to the general public.

Primary Grantees, including State agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates \$25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first- tier sub-grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting System (FSRS): <https://www.fsrs.gov/index>. In order to access FSRS a current **SAM registration is required**. *A primary Grantee and first-tier sub-grantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives.* Every primary and first-tier Grantee must obtain a DUNS number prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417

Section 872 of this Act requires the development and maintenance of a Federal Government information system that contains specific information on the integrity and performance of covered Federal agency contractors and Grantees. The Federal Awardee Performance and

Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) was developed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from the SAM database, and suspension and debarment information from the SAM. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

The Freedom of Information ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, provides individuals with a right to access records in the possession of the Federal Government. The Government may withhold information pursuant to the nine exemptions and the three exclusions contained in the Act.

Application packages submitted in response to this grant solicitation may be subject to FOIA by requests by interested parties. In response to these requests, FNS will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including departmental regulations.

FNS will forward a Business Submitter Notice to the requested applicant's point-of-contact. Applicants will need to review requested materials and submit any recommendations within 10 days from the date of FNS notification. FNS will redact Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

For additional information on the Freedom of Information (FOIA) process, please contact Jaime Garret, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Freedom of Information Act office at: FOIA@fns.usda.gov.

Privacy Policy

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service does not collect any personal identifiable information without explicit consent. To view the Agency's Privacy Policy, visit: www.fns.usda.gov/privacy-policy.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II. Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: "Universal Identifier and System for Award Management"
- 2 CFR Part 170: "Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information"
- 2 CFR Part 175: "Award Term for Trafficking in Persons"
- 2 CFR Part 180: "OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)"

- 2 CFR Part 200: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA’s implementing regulation of 2 CFR Part 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA “Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 2 CFR Part 418 USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

General Terms and Conditions of the award may be obtained electronically. Please contact the Grants Officer at:

Carla Garcia

Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail Carla.Garcia@usda.gov

3. Reporting

FINANCIAL REPORTING

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 (Financial Status Report) into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. For additional information on FPRS, visit: www.fprs.fns.usda.gov.

PROGRESS REPORTING

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. Approved Applicants shall refer to the Terms and Conditions for reporting requirements, the reporting schedule, and the FNS Progress Report Template that is strongly encouraged to be used when submitting Progress Reports to FNS.

VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact the Grants Officer at:

Carla Garcia

Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division

U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS

3101 Park Center Drive Room 740

Alexandria, VA 22301

E-mail Carla.Garcia@usda.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Debriefing Requests

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to receive the strengths and weaknesses of their submitted proposals. This information may be useful when preparing future grant proposals. Additional information on debriefing requests will be forwarded to non-selected applicants. The Food and Nutrition Service reserves the right to provide this debriefing orally or in written format.

RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST

This checklist will assist you in completing the budget narrative portion of the application. Please review the checklist to ensure the items below are addressed in the budget narrative.

NOTE: The budget and budget narrative, as well as forms SF-424 and SF-424A must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fide need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed. All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

	YES	NO
Personnel		
Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading?		
Are employees of the applicant's organization identified by name and position title?		
Did you reflect percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)?		
Fringe Benefits		
Did you include your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation?		
Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds?		
Travel		
Are travel expenses itemized? For example origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip.		
Are the Attendee Objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative?		
Is the basis for the lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example include excerpt from travel regulations.		
Equipment		

Is the need for the equipment justified in the narrative?		
Are the types of equipment, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased listed in the budget?		
Is the basis for the cost per item or other basis of computation stated in the budget?		
Supplies		
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		
Contractual: (FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and associated costs after the contract is awarded.)		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all Sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		
Other		
Consultant Services. – Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget. The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant's name and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), Number of estimated hours X hourly wages, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.		
For all other line items listed under the "Other" heading. - List all items to be covered under this heading along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.		

Indirect Costs		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application.		
If no negotiated agreement exists, the basis and the details of the indirect costs to be requested should also be reflected in the budget. (Rate & Base, should be identified)		

FOR GRANT APPLICANT USE ONLY. DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM WITH THE APPLICATION

Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

PURPOSE

Recipients of Federal funds must maintain adequate accounting systems that meet the criteria outlined in 2 CFR §200.302 [Standards for Financial and Program Management](#). The responses to this questionnaire are used to assist in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency's (FNS) evaluation of your accounting system to ensure the adequate, appropriate, and transparent use of Federal funds. Failure to comply with the criteria outlined in the regulations above may preclude your organization from receiving an award. This form applies to FNS' competitive and noncompetitive grant programs. Please return this questionnaire with your application package to us.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Legal Organization Name:

D-U-Ns Number:

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Requirement	Yes	No
1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?	☐	☐
2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?	☐	☐
3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?	☐	☐
4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?	☐	☐

5. Does your organization separate the duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?	☐	☐
6. Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?	☐	☐
7. Does your organization have a property /inventory management system in place to track location and value of equipment purchased under the award?	☐	☐

AUDIT REPORTS AND FINDINGS

Requirement	Yes	No		
1. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years? <i>(If the answer is "Yes" and this report was issued under the Single Audit Act please note this in the box below marked "Additional Information" and if not issued under the "Single Audit Act", please attach a copy or provide a link to the audit report in the Hyperlink space below).</i>	☐	☐		
2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Qualified Opinion" or an "Adverse Opinion"?	☐	☐		
3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Material Weakness" disclosed?	☐	☐		
4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Significant Deficiency" disclosed?	☐	☐		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Hyperlink (if available):</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Hyperlink (if available):	
Hyperlink (if available):				
Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:				

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Authorized Representative's Signature and Date
Name:
Phone:
Email:

ATTACHMENT 1

FNS 906: PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORT FORM

Print

Submit by Email

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food and Nutrition ServiceOMB Control Number: 0584-0512
Expiration Date: xx/xx/xxxx

PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT

The public burden statement: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0512. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Policy Support, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302, ATTN: PRA (0584 - 0512). Do not return the completed form to this address.

1. Recipient Organization		2. Grant Federal Fiscal Year & Quarter: Federal Fiscal Year and Quarter should reflect the time this Progress Report is submitted	
a. Organization Name:		a. Federal Fiscal Year: b. Federal Quarter:	
b. Street Address:		3. Program Information:	
City: State: Zip:		Program Area:	
4. Primary POC:		Program:	
a. First Name:	Last Name:	Tag:	
b. Title:		5. Recipient Account Number (FAIN):	
c. Telephone (Area Code & Number):		6. Type of Report (Select One):	
d. Email Address:		☐ Final ☐ Quarterly ☐ Reporting Period:	
7. Federal Grant Agreement Number:		☐ Semi-Annual	
8. Additional POC (Optional)			
a. First Name:		b. Title:	
Last Name:			
c. Telephone (Area Code & Number):		d. Email Address:	
9. Report Submitted By:			
a. First Name:		b. Title:	
Last Name:			
11. Date Report Submitted:		10. Certification	
		☐ I certify by checking this box that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this report is correct and complete for performance of activities set forth in the award documents.	

Program Management Information
1. Progress Summary Provide summary of progress this reporting period, highlighting your greatest achievements and challenges to date in this reporting period. For challenges, how did you resolve or overcome them? (Max 2000 characters):
2. Personnel Information a. Number of FTEs: b. Were there any changes in key personnel? ☐ Yes ☐ No c. If yes, please describe the changes in key personnel, including the individual leaving/joining the project as well as the name and contact information (email address, phone number, and name of organization) of the individual. Note: This information does not serve as a formal request to approve the change in key personnel. This request must be forwarded to the Grants Officer in a separate request (Max 2000 Characters):
3. Projected Amendments (Cost and No-Cost) a. Number of amendments projected this upcoming quarter? b. Do the projected amendment(s) require FNS approval? ☐ Yes ☐ No c. Please describe the type of amendment(s) projected and justification for each. Note: This information does not serve as a formal request to approve amendments. This request must be forwarded to the Grants Officer in a separate request (Max 2000 characters):
4. Expenditures/Purchases: a. Were there any significant expenditures or purchases, including any contracts entered during this reporting period? ☐ Yes ☐ No b. If so, please describe (Max 2000 Characters):
5. Deviations (Changes this quarter outside of the agreed upon scope, timeline, or budget): a. Have there been any deviations? ☐ Yes ☐ No b. Type: v c. Describe any deviation(s), including a justification and impacts to budget/timeline (Max 2000 characters): d. Please describe proposed activities to mitigate the impact of the deviation(s) (Max 2000 characters):

Program Management Information (Continued)
6. Upcoming Activities and Anticipated Changes a. Please describe activities planned for next quarter (Max 2000 Characters): b. Do you anticipate any changes in your project timeline, activities or cost? ☐ Yes ☐ No c. If yes, please explain the anticipated changes (Max 2000 Characters):
7. Final Reporting Summary (Final Reporting Period Only) a. Are all goals and objectives completed at this time? ☐ Yes ☐ No b. Briefly describe the goals and objectives that were not completed and why they were not completed (Max 2000 Characters): c. Was the project budget sufficient for meeting the project goals? ☐ Yes ☐ No d. If no to answer 7c, briefly describe why the budget was insufficient for meeting the project goals (Max 2000 Characters):
8. Additional Comments

Program Activities								
Objective 1 :								
	Activity	Type	Anticipated Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Optional			
					Location	Beneficiaries/Audience	Topic (if training)	
1								

Add Activity

Remove Activity

Add Objective

Remove Objective

Outcome Indicators					
Objective 1 :					
Activity 1					
Indicator Description	Indicator Type				
		Target	Actual (Cumulative)	Comments	

Add Indicator

Remove Indicator

Add Activity

Remove Activity