

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

OFFICE OF POLICY SUPPORT (OPS) &

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS (CN Programs):

USDA MOBILE TECHNOLOGY FOR CHILD NUTRITION INNOVATION LABORATORY

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

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CACFP: Child and Adult Care Food Program

CN: Child Nutrition

FNS: Food and Nutrition Service

FFVP: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

NSLP: The National School Lunch Program

OPS: Office of Policy Support

SFA: School Food Authority

SFSP: Summer Food Service Program

SBP: The School Breakfast Program

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers several Child Nutrition programs that provide healthy food to children including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). Administered by State agencies, each of these programs helps to fight hunger and obesity by reimbursing organizations such as schools, child care centers, and after-school programs for providing healthy meals to children.¹

This is an announcement of the availability of funds for one new cooperative agreement for FY 2017-2020 with a public or private **Academic or Research Institution**. The USDA anticipates awarding up to \$1.5 million in grant funding to support the creation of a Mobile Technology for Child Nutrition Research Innovation Laboratory. This “lab” will support the development, testing and implementation of innovative mobile technology-based solutions to improve services, effectiveness, participation, and customer satisfaction in the Child Nutrition (CN) programs through subgrants. Subgrantees may include partnerships between State and local programs, researchers, and small businesses that are well-positioned to develop and test the effectiveness of novel mobile applications for consideration and eventual use by FNS and State agencies. FNS has a particular interest in mobile technology solutions that integrate behavioral economic approaches in their design.² Mobile applications developed under this grant should support the activities of those who administer Child Nutrition programs and/or improve service delivery for program participants.

The legislative authority for this grant announcement is Section 6 [42 U.S.C. 1755] (a)(3) of the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 Section 17 (g) (5) as amended and Section 1472 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, 7 U.S.C. 3318, codified at 7 CFR 2.19(a)(3)(x) in January 2009. 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.

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,

¹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/child-nutrition-programs>

² Behavioral economic approaches may be defined as “any aspect of choice architecture that alters people’s behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives” (p. 6). Thaler, R.H. and Sunstein, C.R. *Nudge*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009.

- Describe how applications will be reviewed and selected, and
- Describe the terms and conditions to which grantees must adhere, including how the funds can be used.

With this RFA, FNS intends to select one institution/organization (i.e. Accredited University or Research Institution) to establish the USDA “Mobile Technology for Child Nutrition Innovation Laboratory.” The role of the Lab will be to develop and administer multiple subgrants to support the design, development, and testing of mobile applications for use by CN program participants, including operators of the program at the State or local level, as well as parents and children. The Lab will evaluate the impacts of the applications on relevant program experiences and operations. The Grantee will also widely disseminate the resulting tools (mobile applications) and information on tested strategies and evaluation findings.

Cell phone applications and related mobile technology offer the possibility to improve services, effectiveness, participation, and customer satisfaction in the Child Nutrition Programs. The goals of this grant are to foster innovation in mobile technology solutions in order to increase access to and participation in Child Nutrition programs, improve participant satisfaction (at both the program operator and consumer levels), and offer innovative and accessible options for training and nutrition education. Projects funded through subgrants will likely involve State or local agencies and potentially other entities to develop and test the effectiveness of such applications for consideration by FNS and State agencies. Potential mobile applications may include new tactics or elaborate on current ones: dynamic SFSP site locators, school meal information (e.g., menu choices or nutritional content), advance meal ordering for parents and students, training and reinforcing messages for meal providers on issues such as food safety, or even applications that focus on foodservice and delivery. We expect that many of these strategies will integrate the principles of behavioral economics in their presentation of choices.

Background

FNS Child Nutrition Programs

The Child Nutrition Programs covered by this RFA include the following:

National School Lunch Program³(NSLP)

Established in 1946 under the National School Lunch Program Act, the NSLP is a federally assisted meal program operating in over 100,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions⁴. The program provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day, with about 30 million children served each day. Children from families with income at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible to participate for free meals, while those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. For schools with high rates of poverty, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows for the provision of free

³ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

⁴ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>

breakfast and lunch to all students, eliminating the burden of collecting household applications to determine eligibility.⁵

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

Started as a pilot program in 1966, and made permanent in 1975, the SBP is a federally assisted meal program that operates in more than 89,000 schools and institutions.⁶ School breakfast operates in a similar fashion as the NSLP, and has the same eligibility guidelines. It must meet meal pattern requirements, which are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.⁷ Local school food authorities decide on the specificities of the meal components.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The CACFP serves nutritious meals and snacks to more than 3.3 million eligible children and 120,000 adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers, or who participate in afterschool care programs or reside in emergency shelters.⁸ The program is administered by USDA through grants to States. The program is administered in most States by the State educational agency. CACFP is authorized by section 17 of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1766), while program regulations are issued under 7 CFR part 226.⁹

Summer Food Service Program¹⁰ (SFSP)

The SFSP is a federally funded, state-administered program that ensures that low-income children and teens have access to nutrition assistance during the summer months when school is not in session. State agencies administer the program and communicate with USDA, while sponsors enter into agreements with State agencies to run the program. SFSP sites can be located at a variety of settings, including schools, parks, community centers, health clinics, hospitals, churches, apartment complexes and migrant centers. Open sites that provide free meals to any child operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty level. In 2016, USDA planned to serve 200 million free meals to children 18 years and under.¹¹

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program¹² (FFVP)

The FFVP is a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools during the school day in order to improve children's overall diet and create healthier eating habits to impact their present and future health. The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 established the FFVP as a permanent, nationwide program. FFVP is usually administered by the State education agency, which operates the program through agreements with school

⁵ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>

⁶ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sbp/SBPfactsheet.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sbp/SBPfactsheet.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

⁹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/why-cacfp-important>

¹⁰ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSP-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program>

¹² <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FFVPFactSheet.pdf>

food authorities (SFA).

Evidence of the Potential for Mobile Technology in Child Nutrition Settings

Mobile technologies, like smartphones,¹³ are increasingly commonplace, even among low-income populations. The Pew Research Center continually tracks trends in mobile technology and reports that, in 2015, 98% of adults at various income levels in the US owned a cell phone and 68% of adults owned smartphones.¹⁴ The rate of ownership of smartphones among low income adults is lower, at about 52% for those earning less than \$30,000 a year (though 86% own cell phones). However, younger and lower income adults are also more likely to be “smartphone dependent,” meaning they have limited alternatives beyond their mobile device to access the internet.¹⁵ Approximately 13% of Americans with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 per year are dependent, while only 1% of Americans from households earning \$75,000 or more depend on their smartphone to a similar degree.¹⁶

Recent studies have explored the effectiveness of using mobile applications (apps) to deliver nutrition education and other health-related information to support behavior change. Even as early as 2009, studies showed that text message-based interventions for weight loss were more effective than paper-based.¹⁷ Another showed that a fully-automated internet and mobile phone-based motivation and action system can increase and maintain a certain level of physical activity in healthy adults.¹⁸ A study of low-income women found that mobile apps were appealing in reaching, engaging, and providing nutrition promotion messages; in particular, participants found the portability and the ease of use of these devices “helpful” in receiving on-the-go information on meal planning, shopping and consumption.¹⁹ In a similar effort, the “Connecting Health and Technology” project is testing the use of mobile technology with young adults to improve self-assessments of dietary intake, deliver tailored dietary feedback and use text messages to promote changes in food consumption.²⁰

At the student level, multiple studies have examined health behavior changes through the use of applications, often through meal orders. A recent publication showed that when elementary school students preordered school meals, they doubled their selection of healthy entrees.²¹ Specific to the NSLP, a nudge towards healthy options resulted in a statistically significant positive effect in addition to the positive effect of preordering.²² Other studies used mobile technology to collect dietary information from adolescents,²³

¹³ While mobile technologies can also refer to e-readers, Chromebooks, tablets, and the like, mobile technologies are specifically referring to smartphones throughout this document.

¹⁴ <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/29/technology-device-ownership-2015/>

¹⁵ <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/us-smartphone-use-in-2015/>

¹⁶ <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/chapter-one-a-portrait-of-smartphone-ownership/>

¹⁷ Patrick, K., Raab, F., Adams, M. A., Dillon, L., Zabinski, M., Rock, C. L., Griswold, W. G., Norman, G. J. (2009). A Text Message-Based Intervention for Weight Loss: Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 11(1):e1.

¹⁸ Hurling, R., Catt, M., Boni, M. D., Fairley, B. W., Hurst, T., Murray, P., Richardson, A., Sodhi, J. S. (2007). Using internet and mobile phone technology to deliver an automated physical activity program: randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 9(2).

¹⁹ Ball K, Mouchacca J, & Jackson M. (2014). The feasibility and appeal of mobile 'apps' for supporting healthy food purchasing and consumption among socioeconomically disadvantaged women: a pilot study. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*. Aug; 25(2):79-82.

²⁰ Kerr, Deborah A., et al. (2012). Connecting Health and Technology (CHAT): protocol of a randomized controlled trial to improve nutrition behaviours using mobile devices and tailored text messaging in young adults. *BMC Public Health*, 12.1 (477): 2-10.

²¹ Hanks, A. S., Just, D. R., & Wansink, B. (2013). Preordering school lunch encourages better food choices by children. *Jama Pediatrics*, 167(7):673-4.

²² Miller, G. F., Gupta, S., Kropp, J. D., Grogan, K. A., & Mathews, A. (2016). The effects of pre-ordering and behavioral nudges on National School Lunch Program participants' food item selection. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 55, 4-16.

recognize the need for more professional development,²⁴ and even to attempt to determine when mobile health applications might not work.²⁵

Yet, the use of mobile technology in child nutrition does not need to be student or parent-specific; food service professionals are incorporating new technologies into their kitchens and offices. Distributors of school food are increasingly using technology for efficiency in their operations, leading to fewer sales staff, web-based automatic ordering, and improved warehouse organization.²⁶ However, there is little peer-reviewed literature to date that evaluates those technologies in the school foodservice or distributor setting.

Current Use of Mobile Technologies in FNS Child Nutrition Programs

FNS sees great potential in using mobile technologies to improve how program operators and participants interact with the Child Nutrition programs. There are a number of web-based technologies that can be accessed on mobile devices currently in use to support FNS Child Nutrition Programs, but they are not mobile device-specific applications. These tools predominately provide mapping data and navigation services to support summer meal programs.²⁷ For example, the *Summer Meal Site Finder* allows users to enter their address or zip code to locate nearby sites offering free meals for children.²⁸ With the *Area Eligibility Mapper*, SFSP Sponsors and potential sites can check their area eligibility based on Census data.²⁹

Additionally, an online searchable USDA Food Buying Guide³⁰ database is being developed to allow for easier searching, navigation, and display of content to help school nutrition professionals and their purchasing agents purchase the right amount and the appropriate types of food for their programs and to determine the specific contribution of each food towards the meal pattern requirements. In addition, web-based menu-planning training modules are being developed to provide school nutrition professionals with menu planning guidance that allows schools to put the Dietary Guidelines for Americans into practice in school meals programs. Both resources will be made available on USDA's Team Nutrition website.³¹ However, these websites and applications have not yet proven that they are able to improve program access and participation, nor improve participant satisfaction, as they have not been analyzed in that capacity.

An area with clear potential is to use mobile technology to streamline program application and certification processes. FNS recently completed a user-experience technology competition for the development of an electronic application for the NSLP. Similarly, the New York City Department of Education created a mobile application for NSLP, allowing students not only to preorder their meals, but also provide feedback

²³ Six, B. L., Schap, T. E., Zhu, F. M., Mariappan, A., Bosch, M., Delp, E. J., Ebert, D. S., Kerr, D.A., Boushey, C. J. (January 01, 2010). Evidence-based development of a mobile telephone food record. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 110, 1, 74-9.

Boushey, C. J., Kerr, D. A., Wright, J., Lutes, K. D., Ebert, D. S., & Delp, E. J. (2009). Use of technology in children's dietary assessment. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 63, 50-7.

²⁴ Pegrum, M., Oakley, G., & Faulkner, R. (2013). Schools Going Mobile: A Study of the Adoption of Mobile Handheld Technologies in Western Australian Independent Schools. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 29, 1, 66-81.

²⁵ Hingle, M., & Patrick, H. (2016). There Are Thousands of Apps for That: Navigating Mobile Technology for Nutrition Education and Behavior. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 48, 3, 213.

²⁶ Maras, E. (2014). Food Service Charges Forward. *Food Logistics*, 14-22. Additionally, purveyors of food, like US Foods, also have created mobile and tablet applications: <https://www.usfoods.com/your-business/mobile-apps.html>

²⁷ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/mapping-tools-summer-meal-programs>

²⁸ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>

²⁹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/areaeligibility>

³⁰ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

³¹ Team Nutrition is an initiative of USDA's FNS that aims to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.

to foodservice directors and staff and check eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price meals. Private organizations have seen the market opportunity in school food apps and market themselves to schools to get their menus online and in the hands of students, not only for school-year meals but for summer foodservice as well. Presently, FNS has released a Request for Applications for its Child Nutrition Technology Innovation Grant (CFDA #10.541), which proposes solutions to improve program accountability and efficiencies at the State and local levels. The grants are targeted to the State agencies administering the Child Nutrition Programs and will allow for the creation and improvement of automated systems for the transfer of operational data between diverse systems and agencies.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

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 compared to a grant, and they provide less direction of project activities than a contract. The roles and responsibilities of both the Grantee and FNS will be stated in the terms and conditions of the cooperative agreement.

FNS's involvement in this cooperative agreement will include, but is not limited to, reviewing and providing feedback on proposed deliverables and other sources of dissemination of best practices learned from these implementation and research efforts, such as proposed publications and proposed presentation materials.

Funding

The grant will be awarded on a competitive basis, subject to the availability of Federal funds. Approximately \$1.5 million is available for funding this new Cooperative Agreement. We will accept one application package per applicant. The grantee will be responsible for awarding at least 51% of their awarded amount as subgrants to design, develop, and test mobile technologies. The grantee will also evaluate the subgrantees' project goals on the desired outcomes, as indicated below.

Award Period and Project Timeline

FNS plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the selected Grantee by August 1, 2017. The Grantee will be allowed to use the funds consistent with its application plans. Applicants may apply for funds for three years with the award period end date no later than September 30, 2020.

Cooperative Agreement Project Goals

The goals of the grantee are to: create a Mobile Technology for Child Nutrition Research Innovation Laboratory, foster innovation via a competition that will support mobile technology-based solutions in the USDA Child Nutrition programs, and subsequently achieve the goals of the subgrantees.

The goals of the subgrantees are to create mobile technology solutions that will satisfy at least one of the following:

1. Increase access to Child Nutrition programs
2. Increase participation in Child Nutrition programs
3. Increase efficiency in Child Nutrition programs
4. Improve participant satisfaction (at both the program operator and consumer levels) with Child Nutrition programs.

FNS is particularly interested in funding innovative approaches to increase access, participation, and efficiency and improve satisfaction with Child Nutrition programs that are sustainable without the need for new, ongoing funding. Examples of some of the approaches that may be explored include, but are not limited to:

- a. Mapping services to locate or plan for program sites, like CACFP or TEFAP, or to alert participants about site closures
- b. Information regarding Child Nutrition program events/activities in their community, including dates and times of summer meal and nutrition education activities
- c. Ability to apply and check eligibility status for participation in programs such as SFSP, NSLP and SBP, or CACFP
- d. Advance ordering of reimbursable meals from school menus, with calorie/nutrient/allergen information (and the prevention of ordering non-reimbursable meals by students certified for free or reduced price benefits)
- e. Tracking meal selection/choices for students and the ability to display real-time selections on a digital display or monitor to encourage school meal program participation, with the option to privately/publicly rate or provide feedback on menu items
- f. Interactive virtual “lunch rooms” for children to motivate healthy food selection and preferences or enhance parent/caregiver nutrition knowledge and increase awareness of school meals programs and cafeteria activities; incorporate interactive gaming and other emerging digital forms to increase student engagement and interest; include formative assessments as a product feature, providing instant and ongoing feedback to school nutrition managers and staff
- g. Personalized and adaptive training, technical assistance, and/or nutrition education resources for school meal staff and food service directors on: food safety and handling, healthy recipes, Dietary Guidelines compliance, up-to-date information on Nutrition Standards and meal patterns, tips for engaging students in conversations regarding healthy food consumption
- h. Ability to collect and synthesize student feedback and recommendations during taste-tests of new or existing menu items
- i. Interactive training platforms or portals for improved efficiency among food service personnel at SFAs, CACFP sponsors, or SFSP sites to provide safe and nutritious meals to children and increase program integrity.

FNS does not anticipate any expansion of CN program authorities or new funds to adopt, implement, and monitor interventions to increase access and participation in programs, resulting in few changes in the programs of analysis.

Target Population

The target groups for the mobile applications are broad and can range from program operators (e.g., School Food Service Directors, SFSP site directors, CACFP Sponsors, or site managers) to consumers (e.g. students who eat school meals, parents of children in CACFP Centers). The goals of the subgrants can be achieved in various ways, using different types of mobile applications, kinds of data, and by various populations, depending on the application design.

Grantee (Recipient) Responsibilities

The Grantee (Recipient) shall work cooperatively with FNS to create and manage a competition to fund projects to design, develop, test and implement mobile technology solutions by subgrantees. The grantee should have experience in managing a grant program, as well as a competition for its subgrantees.

Each funded subgrant should develop a mobile application that addresses at least one of the cooperative agreement's overall goals. The Grantee will monitor subgrantees' progress.

At a minimum, grantee responsibilities are as follows:

1. **Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP).** The RFP will describe the opportunity, explain eligibility for the sub-awards, and establish evaluation criteria for award.

At a minimum, each subgrantee must use the funds to:

- a. Conduct an environmental scan of available technologies in this space;
- b. Describe in detail the mobile application (app) the subgrantee will create, including the need or gap it is serving, and how it is innovative, as well as the design process;
- c. Describe how the technology will achieve at least one of the project's stated goals of increasing access and participation in Child Nutrition programs and improving participant satisfaction (program operator and consumer level);
- d. Explain the theoretical framework behind the proposed strategy of achieving the goals, such as the principles of Behavioral Economics or other Health Behavior change theories
- e. Provide a polished prototype of the expected app;
- f. Describe the app's target population/user group(s);
- g. Describe their team, including the Child Nutrition partner that would help with testing and implementation, as well as provide letters of commitment to demonstrate project collaboration from each partner;
- h. Develop and implement a strategic plan that clearly describes the development, testing, and implementation timeline;
- i. Provide an impact evaluation plan that describes the key metrics to be measured and the potential impact;
- j. Develop the application and test its implementation;
- k. Plan to share the findings/results at a workshop at FNS.

2. **Manage a competitive selection process for subgrants.** For each subgrantee application, the

Grantee will provide to FNS, at least: 1) the name, title, affiliation, and brief biographical background of the Principal Investigator; 2) location of subgrantee and population served by the project (if applicable); 3) requested award amount; 4) the subgrantees' proposed timeline and proposed approach.

At a minimum, the competition will include:

- a. Established scoring/judging criteria for evaluating subgrantees' proposals and selecting awardees on a competitive basis.
- b. A required consideration of State and regional diversity when selecting subgrantees.
- c. Subgrantee teams composed of partners who bring together expertise in the CN programs and programming/application development to best develop applications that will fill gaps in the CN programs.
- d. Subgrantee teams that include at least one state or local CN partner that can help with testing and implementation of the mobile technology.

Prior to selecting subgrantees, the Grantee will provide to FNS all proposals submitted by applicants, a summary evaluation of the proposals with recommendations for selection, and will discuss the proposals with FNS. Following selection of subgrant recipients, the Grantee will submit updated summaries of the selected projects for publication on FNS's website.

3. Sponsor and coordinate two workshops/conferences in the Washington, DC area and one webinar.

Specifically:

- a. The cooperative agreement application shall provide a preliminary list that will describe the expected audience for the workshops/conferences, which shall include subgrantees. To the extent possible, FNS prefers for all proposed attendees to attend the two workshops/conferences in person.
- b. The Grantee shall prepare and submit to FNS for publishing on the OPS and/or Child Nutrition Programs web page(s) a summary of each workshop/conference within two months of the event.
- c. The first workshop/conference (i.e., the orientation) shall be held within 60 Days after announcing the subgrantees' awards. Its purpose will be to facilitate exchange of information and ideas among the subgrantees, share project descriptions with FNS, and allow FNS to provide input on potential ways to refine the subgrantees' projects.
- d. The webinar shall be held within twenty-four weeks after the subgrants have been awarded. Its primary purpose is to demonstrate to FNS a beta-version of the applications proposed by subgrantees, get FNS' feedback, and plan for deployment.
- e. The second workshop shall be held before the end of the grant period and will be focused on presentations of project findings and the Grantee's overall evaluation of subgrantees' efforts. By this date, the subgrantees will provide FNS access to the applications and white papers that describe their respective study results. The Innovation Laboratory and presenting subgrantees will provide FNS subgrantees' presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slideshows, handouts, and related materials) after the conference.

4. **Conduct an evaluation of the subgrantees' activities.** The cooperative agreement application shall provide a proposed evaluation plan that the Applicant will carry out across subgrantees. Once the subgrantees are awarded, the Grantee will update the proposed evaluation plan so as to provide detailed information to the subgrantees at the first workshop. This revised evaluation plan will be sent to FNS for review within 45 days of subgrantee awards to reflect the specific activities to be funded. The final evaluation plan will incorporate FNS feedback and will be due to FNS within 30 days of the first workshop.

At a minimum, the Grantee shall develop and implement an evaluation that assesses the subgrantees' activities, including technologies and:

- a. Provides a detailed summary of the approaches taken by each subgrantee;
 - b. Evaluates subgrantee impacts on intended CN programs outcomes as described in this RFA, including: 1) increasing the reach of the program; 2) increasing access to the range of services and interventions offered by the programs covered in this RFA; 3) increasing participation rates among the target audiences for such technology and ultimately overall participation in CN programs.
5. **Disseminate findings broadly among the academic community and State and local school food authorities.**

At a minimum, FNS requires the submission of the following reports:

- a. annual reports;
- b. a final report to be publicly released via the FNS web page;³²
- c. a stand-alone summary report which provides a non-technical, graphically-appealing overview of the entirety of the competition process and outcomes, to make the key findings and activities of the grant and subgrantees more accessible to non-technical audiences; and
- d. at least one submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Subgrantees are encouraged to present results of their work at professional conferences.

The Innovation Laboratory and subgrantees are also encouraged to participate in academic and professional conferences, committees, working groups, and communities where participant research regarding federal school food programs is discussed.

For internal use and informational purposes, the Grantee shall provide FNS with an electronic copy of all manuscripts and other dissemination materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides) resulting from this grant and its subgrants at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published. The Grantee will also provide FNS with the rights to the mobile technology application as well as any data.

³² The full details of the report are explained in the Final Deliverables section.

Grantee Application Requirements

The following are program specific requirements:

1. All applications must clearly articulate their plan to administer and evaluate the subgrantee awards in order to increase reach, access, participation, and improve efficiency and satisfaction with CN programs in children, parents and practitioners.
2. Applications must contain specific details of subgrant review and award plans, including evaluation criteria and a timeline (see Applicant Format for more information).
3. All applications must include a well-defined evaluation plan that addresses examples of key outcomes and how they will be measured, data collection, and data analysis. This plan should incorporate details on the theoretical models underpinning program evaluation strategies. At a minimum, evaluation plans must specify what kinds of data might be collected for evaluation, when and how it will be collected, and key components of data analysis. The plan must address how external factors potentially affecting program participation and/or mobile application dissemination will be accounted for during analysis.
4. In addition to addressing the reporting requirements described above, the application shall describe 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.
5. 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.
6. Applications are encouraged to include subject matter experts to review study and evaluation materials throughout the award period. To the extent possible, applicants should seek input from Child Nutrition staff members at partner agencies when crafting their applications or other evaluation materials, as well as expertise in grant management and experience with technology solutions to CN policy problems.

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.

Responsibilities

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

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

1. Reviewing and approving the final RFP for the subgrantee competition issued by the cooperative agreement recipient.
2. Providing comments on and having ongoing conversations with the Grantee regarding their plans to meet this RFA's requirements.

3. Providing comments on a Grantee-provided summary of all applications for the competitive subgrants.
4. Reviewing a Grantee-provided list of all awardees of the competition (including subgrant title, dollar amount of the subgrant, and contact information for the principal investigators, brief narrative description, project time frame and expected products).
5. Approving the date and time of the two workshops/conferences.
6. Approving the agendas for the two workshops/conferences.
7. Approving the date and time for the webinar.
8. Approving Grantee-provided dissemination plans.
9. Receiving a courtesy copy of all Grantee-produced publications (e.g. final report, peer-reviewed publication upon submission) resulting from this cooperative agreement.
10. Receiving rights and access to the mobile applications and any respective data.
11. Providing written review and feedback on Grantee and subgrantee deliverables, including the development of the app(s).

Grantee. The Grantee is the Public or Private Research or Academic Institution that will be selected competitively based on the merits of its application to operate the project. The Grantee has overall responsibility for planning, implementation, and operations of the project.

The Grantee will be required to demonstrate a thorough understanding of FNS Child Nutrition programs and the applications of: 1) technology-based solutions to school meal participation and access issues, including foodservice challenges and 2) integration of health behavior frameworks, including behavioral economics to support nutrition and behavior change in various populations, while its subgrantees should have previous experience creating and testing interactive mobile applications (e.g., user experience, programming, design).

The Grantee shall:

1. Select or hire appropriately credentialed personnel to manage and operate the project (at a minimum, as described in the Staffing Plan).
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 parties to FNS;
 - b. coordinating site visits to participating partners for FNS if requested;
 - c. fulfilling obligations to subgrantees and FNS.
4. Keep FNS informed on critical junctures and checkpoints after award of cooperative agreement, including management plan, budget plan, training plans, and design and implementation plans that are submitted in preliminary form in the application.
5. Meet specific obligations and approval points as specified in this cooperative agreement.
6. Submit timely progress reports, financial reports and annual reports throughout the award period, and submit a final progress report and a final financial report.
7. Attend progress meetings via teleconference as needed.

8. Account for project funds separately from other federal funds and establish financial and management reporting and controls to assure that 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 the analyses.
10. Carry out all activities necessary to fulfill the items as described in the “Purpose of Agreement” section.
11. Coordinate subgrantees’ attendance and participation in the two workshops/conferences and a webinar at FNS headquarters to share project descriptions and findings.
12. Coordinate other grant-related activities among the subgrantees and researchers.
13. Monitor subgrants to ensure that subgrantees’ activities align with their proposals.
14. Complete a final report and non-technical summary report.
15. Produce a descriptive summary and synthesis of each application and any related efforts (such as a meta-analysis on the results) and widely disseminate this information.
16. For internal use and informational purposes, ensure Grantee and subgrantees provide FNS with an electronic copy of any and all manuscript submissions resulting from their subgrants at the time of submission for publication and in final form when published.

Kick-Off and Close-Out Meetings

The Cooperative Agreement Principal Investigator, at least, shall attend a kick-off, in-person meeting at FNS headquarters to meet FNS staff, and to discuss the subgrant process and evaluation design within one month from date of award. The Grantee shall also attend a web-based close-out meeting near the conclusion of the project to present findings and exchange information on lessons learned. The Grantee shall provide a formal presentation to FNS at that time.

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 should contact the FNS Grants and Program Officer immediately. 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.

Quarterly Progress Reports

Quarterly progress reports and quarterly financial reports must be submitted to FNS. As outlined in 2 CFR 200.327 and 200.328 quarterly progress reports must provide a description of the activities

conducted during the reporting period, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget, deviations from the proposed plan, difficulties encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, and major planned activities for the next quarter. The Grantee is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the other partners and subgrantees to complete this report. These reports are due within 30 days after the end of each Federal quarter.

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 approximately 10-page annual report for FNS and submit study plans for the grant to FNS, as well as information on any subgrants for publishing on the FNS website (e.g., names and details on the subgrantee awards, links to mobile applications). The annual report will provide information on the Center's operations and budget as well a detailed explanation of what tasks have been started and completed throughout the year, including but not limited to the information in the quarterly reports. It should also include updates on all subgrants.

Final Deliverables

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 of approximately 25 pages that integrates all the information learned from the project and its subgrants in an acceptable format for FNS to publish on their website; this report will include an executive summary of the purpose, approach and objectives, major activities; introduction and background, description of the competition and outcomes, among other items. The Grantee will also deliver: a summary report (6-10 pages) that provides a non-technical, graphically-appealing overview of the study; a two-page descriptive summary of each app's use, features, benefits to the target audience, including graphics; and finally, the Grantee will submit at least one peer-reviewed journal article for publication based on research using grant funds. The final report shall be submitted electronically in two forms: a microcomputer word processing format agreeable to FNS (currently Microsoft Word 2010 for Windows) and a PDF version that is 508 compliant. All materials that will be published on FNS's website must be 508 compliant.

FNS recognizes that the journal article (i.e., a manuscript reporting the results of the evaluation of subgrantee projects) will not likely be published by the end of the grant period, but a submitted draft is required. The Grantee shall also plan, convene, and actively participate in the Orientation Workshop after receipt of the grant award, as a component of the development and dissemination process. Grant funding may be used to cover travel expenses and other expenses associated with these conferences. The in-person conferences shall be held at FNS headquarters or another location in the Washington, DC metropolitan area agreeable to FNS. All subgrantees are encouraged to attend and actively participate in both workshops/conferences when possible. The Recipient shall prepare and publish a summary of these conferences within 2 months of each event.

The final deliverables will also include access to and rights for USDA to use and/or sponsor the mobile applications, as well as any de-identified data that has been collected, by the end of the grant period.

Data Rights

The Government has unlimited rights to all programs/documents/materials produced under this contract. All documents and materials, to include the source codes of any software, produced under this contract shall be Government owned and are the property of the Government with all rights and privileges of ownership/copyright belonging exclusively to the Government. These documents and materials may not be used or sold by the contractor without written permission from the Grants Officer. All materials supplied to the Government shall be the sole property of the Government and may not be used for any other purpose. This right does not abrogate any other Government rights.

Duplication or disclosure of the data and other information to which the Offeror may have access as a result of this contract is prohibited by Public Law.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

These are requirements for the selected recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, not any potential subgrantees.

1. Eligible applicants for the cooperative agreement
 - Eligible entities include colleges and universities only, both for profit and non-profit. This Request for Applications (RFA) is open to all Accredited Colleges/Universities, and Private or Public Research Institutions.
2. Cost sharing or matching considerations
 - Cost sharing or matching for this RFA is not required.
3. Other eligibility criteria
 - Suspended or debarred organizations are ineligible to submit applications in response to this grant solicitation.
 - Eligible applicants may only submit one proposal in response to this 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 at the end of this document 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 an additional oversight requirements or special conditions be placed on an award should an award be made. Decisions regarding additional oversight requirements will take into consideration the total number of risks identified.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to request application package

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

Kimberly Shields
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail: Kimberly.Shields@fns.usda.gov

2. Content and form of application submission (form and format of application submissions)

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following applicant format. All pages should be single-spaced on 8 ½ x 11 white paper, in 12 point font with one-inch margins. The project description with relevant information should be captured on no more than 30 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.

Special Instructions:

- An optional Letter of Intent may be submitted but is not required. However, the Letter of Intent will aid FNS in preparation for the application review process. Letters of Intent are due to FNS by May 3, 2017.

- Late application submission will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, certification will not be considered.
- Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov portal will not be considered.
- If multiple application packages are submitted through the grants.gov web portal by the same applicant in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.
- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next or subsequent fiscal years should additional funds be made available.
- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funds.
- At least 51% of funding must be designated for subgrant awards.
- Cost sharing or matching for this RFA is not required. Applicants that commit matching resources, including in-kind resources, to the project will receive extra points in the scoring of proposals.

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 numbers. This table should direct the reader to the pages for all sections of the proposal.

Application Project Summary

The one-page application should clearly describe the proposed project activities and anticipated outcomes that would result if the proposal is funded. The project summary is not intended for the general reader. It may contain technical language comprehensible by persons in disciplines relating to researcher-initiated projects for the topic of the application. The project summary shall be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and shall focus on the overall project goal(s), supporting objective(s), and plans to accomplish project goal(s). The importance of a concise, informative program summary cannot be overemphasized.

Project Narrative

The project narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing and how it will meet the requirements of this RFA. In no more than 30 pages, it should address how it will fulfill the RFA program

scope and objectives, as well as the specificities of the creation of the Innovation Laboratory, management plan, budget and staffing needs, and subgrantee competition, and expected results and/or benefits upon grant completion. The proposed project methodology should include specific methodology or technology needs and requirements, complete procedures, timetables, subgrantee monitoring/oversight, and the organization's project staffing.

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

- **Introduction:** Provide background information on the proposed evaluation team's experience administering similar grants and plans for requiring awarded projects to enhance CN program services through technologies.
- **Approach and Program Plan**
A 3-year program plan should be included that discusses what would be provided to facilitate a competition for new and innovative mobile applications on the CN programs. The plan should demonstrate the applicant's grasp of what is needed to successfully create and manage the Innovation Lab, as well as manage the subgrantees that design the mobile applications. The applicant should have policy and research experience in behavioral economics and food choice analyses, an understanding of current and future studies to advance policy knowledge and improved outcomes in various aspects of the CN programs. The applicant should also have experience in conducting a grant competition.
- **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 September 1, 2017. Please include:
 1. A description of how the institution will announce the availability and objectives of the competition for subgrants (RFP development).
 2. A description of how the applicant will structure the competitive process for awarding subgrants.
 3. Provide a table with anticipated timeframes for subgrantee RFP posting, subgrantee proposal due date, subgrantee start dates, webinar and workshop/conference timeframes with FNS approval, and all other deliverables and events.

For example:

	Date	Months from Grant Award	Additional Information
Subgrantee RFP posting			
Subgrants proposals due			
Total dollar amount for subgrants			
Dollar range for individual subgrants (minimum and			\$ _____ minimum

maximum, if these will be specified in the RFP)			\$ _____ maximum Or __ Not applicable
Anticipated number (count) of subgrants			_____ subgrants
Subgrant start dates			
Webinar			
Workshop/conference			
Workshop/conference			

- **Evaluation:** Evaluating the subgrantees' project design and the impacts of their applications on CN programs given the goals and priority areas described in this RFA, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, and assessing your project's overall impact, will be critical. Please describe your evaluation and analysis plans in detail. Please include the following: the rationale behind the idea proposed, how it meets this RFA's requirements; a clear description of how progress will be measured, including the establishment of a baseline, change over time, and comparison to other work will be established. Additionally, discuss any previous experience, if any, performing multi-faceted evaluations and analyses.
- **Dissemination:** Describe your plans for disseminating findings from this grant. At a minimum, FNS requires at least one submission to a peer-reviewed journal, annual reports, one final report, one non-technical summary report, and descriptive summaries for each application (all to be published on the FNS web page) to be completed. Describe specific plans to make project findings accessible to others at various levels: program participants, communities, practitioners, and policy officials. FNS also requires participation in two workshops/conferences at FNS HQ as specified in this RFA. FNS also seeks to widely disseminate the successful mobile technology applications developed under this agreement and is open to innovative strategies for doing so.
- **Management Plan (Project Management, Staffing, & Quality Assurance):** 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. 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, as well as the means to provide quality assurance. Note any relevant experience in managing similar activities. Additionally, identify community partners that will participate in the Mobile Technology for Child Nutrition Research Innovation Laboratory and specific expected contributions. Provide a clear description of how funds will be administered and distributed.
- **Past Performance:** Please provide a clear description of previous experience and performance in grant management, subgrantee competitions, and partnerships across fields. The description of past performance should contain at least 2 relevant projects within the past five years of grants, contracts, or task orders for work of the same or similar to the requirements specified in the PWS.

Appendices

The following types of information must be included in the Appendices. Additionally, appendices may include supporting documentation that addresses the applicant's capacity to carry out the proposed project such as Letter(s) of Commitment from partnering institutions/subcontractors.

Resumes or Curriculum Vitae

To assist reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, the proposal shall also include a resume or curriculum vitae with a publication list of the Principal Investigator and key personnel who expect to work on the project.

Citations

All references cited shall be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and shall conform to an accepted journal format.

Application Budget Narrative

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the duration of the program, which is not to exceed 3 years. Funding levels accepted are up to \$1.5 million inclusive of indirect costs where applicable.

Applicants shall provide a detailed explanation for all funds requested. 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 non-profit universities must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The budget narrative should also describe how any matching or additional funds the Grantee might receive will be used.

To assist reviewers in determining whether the budget and staffing are adequate and appropriate, the narrative shall be brief but include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine the role and level of involvement of assigned staff. The budget narrative shall briefly describe how funds will be spent, including specifics on travel, equipment, and personnel, with specification of whether the funds being spent are requested as part of this Grant or will be provided by external sources. For example – Travel of \$15,000 will be based on 3 employees X 5 trips X avg. \$1,000 per trip. Budget shall include costs of travel to the workshop/conferences required.

Indirect Cost Rate Schedule

Applicants must indicate that indirect costs are included within the budget and budget narratives.

Institutions with a negotiated and approved Indirect Cost Rate higher than 49% shall not be considered. The applicant is encouraged to consider dedicating less of budget needs to indirect costs,

while allowing a larger percentage of the applicant's budget to support the identified expenditures associated with the proposed budget's direct costs. Applications will be partially scored on discounts on indirect costs.

Current and Pending Support

In order to document the time availability of the key personnel proposed to work on a Grant, the proposal must list any other current public or private research support (including in-house support) to the Principal Investigator or co-investigators. Explain how support for the proposed staff salary is allocated across this and other projects.

Analogous information must be provided for any pending proposals, including this proposal, that are now being considered by, or that will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Note that this proposal must be listed as "*Pending.*"

Recipients shall also include a brief statement of research objectives or project summaries for all projects listed in Current and Pending Support. Concurrent submission of identical or similar proposals to other possible sponsors will not prejudice proposal review or evaluation. However, a proposal that duplicates or overlaps substantially with a proposal already reviewed and funded (or that will be funded) by FNS will not be funded under this program.

For each of the key personnel, the following information shall be included under the heading "Current and Pending Support," and record information for active and pending projects in separate sections showing:

- Person's name,
- Title of project,
- Supporting agency,
- Total funding amount,
- Effective and expiration dates, and
- Percentage of time committed for each year over the duration of this project.

All current research to which the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and other senior personnel have committed a portion of their time must be listed, whether or not salary for the person involved is included in the budgets of the various projects. Narrative shall be included to clarify availability for each person in any instance where the active and pending projects suggest that time availability for work on this grant might be insufficient.

Required Grant Application Forms

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants. They are located at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>:

Related Forms: R&R Family

(A) Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
 3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 4. Representations Regarding Felony Convictions and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (AD-3030)
- AD-3030

SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities): Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “Not Applicable.”

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 an additional oversight requirements or special conditions be placed on an award should an award be made. Decisions regarding additional oversight requirements will take into consideration the total number of risks identified.

1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?

Yes_____ No_____

2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?

Yes_____ No_____

3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?

Yes_____ No_____

4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?

Yes_____ No_____

5. Is there a separation of duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?

Yes_____ No_____

6. Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?

Yes_____ No_____

7. Does your organization have a property/inventory management system in place to track the location and value of equipment purchased under the award?

Yes_____ No_____

8. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years?

Yes_____ No_____

9. If the answer to question number 8 is yes, was this report issued under the Single Audit requirement? If no, a hyperlink or copy of the report will be required.

Yes_____ No_____

10. If answer to question 8 is yes, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or “Adverse Opinion”?

Yes_____ No_____

11. If answer to question 8 is yes, is there a material weakness disclosed?

Yes_____ No_____

12. If answer to question 8 is yes, is there a significant deficiency disclosed?

Yes_____ No_____

LETTER OF INTENT

The eligible applicant that intends to submit an application should submit a Letter of Intent notice by **May 3, 2017**. 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. The applicant can send the letter via the mail or e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

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

Electronic Submission: The complete application must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on **(June 5, 2017)**. Applications received after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. USDA will not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications.

Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and System for Award Management (SAM): 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. 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/>).

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 you can 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 EST. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number. **Obtaining a DUNS number may take several days to obtain.**

System for Award Management (SAM)

What is SAM?

The System for Award Management (SAM) is combining 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/sam/transcript/SAM_User_Guide_v1.9.pdf

Below is some additional information that should assist the applicant through this process:

SAM Registration: For applicant organizations that were previously registered in the CCR, relevant applicant information is already in SAM; set up a SAM account as necessary to update any information. To register in SAM, the applicant's DUNS number, Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the applicant's last tax return) are all required. SAM verifies all information submitted by the applicant using several systems. This verification may take at least **3-5 days** business days after your registration is submitted to SAM. Applicants must have a valid SAM registration no later than 3 days prior to the application due date of this solicitation. **Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete and active should contact SAM at:** <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>.

SAM Presentation/Training

GSA has created a presentation of a SAM training. To view the presentation, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmHcKCchaiY>

This will be extremely useful for SAM users that are:

- Registering at SAM for the first time
- Setting up user permissions from CCR into the SAM registration (called migrating)
- Updating / renewing CCR record in SAM

PLEASE BE AWARE: In some instances the process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require **5-7 days or more**. We strongly encourage grantees to begin the process at least **3 weeks before** grant the due date of the grant solicitation.

Grants.gov Registration: In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations as well as register on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process can be accessed at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Generally, the registration process takes between **3-5 business days**.

If you are a new user, please ensure that your organization's Point-of-Contact (POC) has designated you as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). **If you are not designated as an AOR, you will be unable to submit your application package through the Grants.gov web portal.**

Allow your entity ample time to complete the necessary steps, for the submission of your grant application package, on grants.gov. Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted.

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. Additionally, 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>.

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application must be uploaded on www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (**June 5, 2017**). 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. 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**

For a list of State agency contacts, please visit the Office of Management website at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/

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

IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Evaluation of Grant Application Criteria

1. Review Criteria

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure that they contain the required documents and information, including but not limited to: all supporting documentation, the narrative proposal, and Agreement to Cooperate with FNS. 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 or does not address the solicitation criteria, FNS will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

2. 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 following selection criteria and weights 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.

Scoring for Grant Applications

1. Overall Approach (45 points)

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

- The project goals and objectives, which must coincide with the Cooperative Agreement's focus areas and goals and objectives as described in this RFA;
- How well the Applicant's proposal demonstrates a high likelihood of success based on previous experience;
- The included timeline for successfully implementing, operating, and concluding the project is realistic and clear (the timeline includes a project activity chart showing key activities and their due dates);
- The proposal narrative, which must clearly describe the applicant's proposed project; and,
- The implementation and evaluation plans, which must demonstrate understanding of FNS requirements, along with the capacity and commitment to fulfill those requirements in a high-quality manner.

2. Staffing Plan (15 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;
- The documentation demonstrating that the key personnel have the necessary and relevant education, skills, and experience for their proposed roles on the project;
- Whether the Staffing Plan provides sufficient documentation that the time commitment of key personnel appears to be appropriate for their project roles; 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).

3. Management Plan (25 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;
- 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;
- Inclusion of a plan for managing personnel associated with the project and for addressing any contingencies such as loss of key personnel; and,
- Whether the Management Plan shows potential for strong interrelationships, teamwork, and cooperation between the Grantee and partners, including sub-grantees.

4. Budget (15 points)

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

- A budget narrative describing how costs within the Budget categories were derived and links between expenditures and specific activities/tasks;
- Whether consideration within the Budget of all necessary implementation and operational costs (for example, applicants proposing to hold stakeholder discussions must specify how they will use grant funds for hosting, facilitation, and follow-up of stakeholder engagement strategies); and,
- Whether costs are reasonable (the total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project, including if applicable, the use of matching funds or cost sharing available).

Total Possible Points = 100

3. Review and Selection Process

Following the initial screening process, FNS will assemble a peer panel group to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The peer 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 peer 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 rank 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 this and subsequent fiscal years 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.

V. 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.

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.

The Offeror may have to access proprietary information and shall be required to sign non-disclosure and conflict of interest statements. The preliminary and final deliverables and all associated working papers, and other material deemed relevant by the agency that have been generated by the Offeror are the property of the U.S. Government and cannot be reproduced, or retained by the Offeror. When no longer required, this information, data, and/or equipment will be returned to Government control. All documents and information pertaining to network vulnerabilities, security policy, operational procedures or related functions shall be maintained under absolute accountability and relinquished to the COR upon completion of the contract.

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). 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 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 Jennifer Weatherly, FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at FOIA@fns.usda.gov.

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:

Kimberly Shields
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
Email: Kimberly.Shields@fns.usda.gov

3. Reporting

FINANCIAL REPORTING

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425, Financial Status Report data 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. More detailed instructions for reporting will be included in the FNS Federal financial assistance award package. For more information on FPRS, please visit <https://fprs.fns.usda.gov/>

PROGRESS REPORTING

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. The award document will indicate the reporting schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. The recipient may be required to submit performance/progress reports to FNS using SF-PPR, Periodic Progress Report. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

Quarterly progress reports and quarterly financial reports must be submitted to FNS. The Grantee is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the other partners to complete this report. Both the financial status report and the progress report are due within 30 days after the end of each Federal quarter.

FINAL REPORT

A final report (approximately 25 pages in length) will be due within 90 days after the close of the project (unless otherwise noted and justified in the application). The final report will be composed of a short Executive Summary and should integrate all the information learned from the project and its subgrants in an acceptable format for FNS to publish on their website, as well as the following:

- Description of the project including a rationale for the creation, operation, and management of the Innovation Laboratory and its competition design and expected outcomes;
- Evaluation of subgrantees and results, challenges encountered and solutions;
- Major accomplishments, including the significance of any findings;
- Difficulties encountered and solutions developed to resolve said difficulties;
- Costs of implementing and operating lab and competition;
- Discussion of lessons learned; and,
- Recommendations for future policy considerations.

As part of final reporting, all materials, innovative tools, and technical resources developed by the subgrantees must be submitted to FNS.

VI. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Kimberly Shields

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

VII. OTHER INFORMATION

Debriefing Requests

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of submitted proposals. This information may be useful when preparing future grant proposals. Additional information on debriefing requests will be forwarded to non-selected applicants.

RFA APPLICATION CHECKLIST

All proposals submitted under this RFA must contain the applicable elements as described in this announcement. The application must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov, by midnight on [add the deadline date]. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to submission.

- ✓ Read the RFA carefully, usually more than once.
- ✓ Have you obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered the number in the System for Award Management (SAM)?
- ✓ Have you verified that your SAM is active?
- ✓ Have you registered your entity in grants.gov and are you authorized as a user in grants.gov to submit on behalf of your agency?
- ✓ Have you prepared and submitted the appropriate forms as shown under the Required Grant Applicant Forms section of this RFA?
- ✓ Have you included the RFA CFDA #10.538 on your application?
- ✓ Have you included your contact information: telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address?
- ✓ Have you addressed, met, and considered any program specific requirements or restrictions?
- ✓ Is the project's proposal clearly stated?
 - Does it comply with any format requirements?
 - Does it comply with the page limitation?
 - Most importantly does it directly relate to the RFA's objectives and priorities?
 - Don't assume that reviewers know anything about your organization and its work.
- ✓ Have one or more persons read your proposal that did not participate in its writing and ensure that it was clear to them?
- ✓ Does the proposed project and budget meet the bona fide needs of the RFA?
- ✓ Is the budget summary included?
 - Does it agree with the calculations shown on the OMB budget form?
 - Is the budget in line with the project description?
- ✓ Be sure to submit a timely application into www.Grants.gov in order to meet the RFA application deadline.
- ✓ FNS reserves the right to request additional information not clearly addressed in the initial application.

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.

	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.		

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?	☐	☐

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: