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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Farmers' Market SNAP Support Grants

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: TBD

DATES:
RFA Release Date: May 5, 2015

Application Submission Date: June 18, 2015 (11:59 p.m. Eastern Time)

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2015

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) announces, through this Request for Applications, the availability of $3.3 million in competitive grant funds, to be awarded through the Farmers' Market SNAP Support Grants (FMSSG) in fiscal year (FY) 2015. As approved by Congress in the President's FY 2014 budget request for FNS *(The Food and Nutrition Service: 2014, Explanatory Notes)*, these funds are intended to support "the participation of farmers' markets in SNAP by providing equipment and support grants to new markets and those currently participating in the program." The goals of the FMSSG program are to increase SNAP accessibility and participation at farmers' markets, and support the establishment, expansion, and promotion of SNAP/Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) services at farmers' markets. This is a new program, which may continue in subsequent years.

Grant funds must be used to conduct tasks that are necessary for SNAP to operate at farmers' markets, and to increase the number and effectiveness of farmers' market participation in SNAP. As such, eligible grant uses include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Salaries and benefits for time spent on SNAP activities, including:
  - Operating SNAP-EBT machines at market(s);
  - Completing SNAP accounting and reporting tasks for market(s);
  - Creating/operating systems (such as scrip, accounting, record-keeping) necessary to make SNAP operational at market(s); and
  - Training and technical assistance to farmers' market volunteers, vendors, and employees on SNAP.
- Creating SNAP outreach and educational materials and performing outreach to current SNAP participants to inform them they may use their SNAP benefits at farmers' markets; outreach must be conducted in accordance with the Farm Bill prohibitions on recruiting, advertising, and collaboration with foreign governments.
- Miscellaneous equipment, other than SNAP-EBT equipment -- such as scrip, wifi hotspots, accounting software, etc. – necessary for SNAP-EBT equipment to operate at farmers' markets.

FNS seeks to maximize the number of both SNAP participants and farmers that will benefit through the FMSSG program. Accordingly, projects that provide benefits at a regional-, State-, county- or city-wide scale will receive additional points during the evaluation process. Such projects may involve partnerships, which themselves may include sub-grants from a parent organization (such as a non-profit organization, farmers' market association, etc.) to farmers' markets, provided the lead entity demonstrates strong capacity to recruit, train, support, and monitor sub-grantees. Projects involving a single farmers' market will also be eligible to receive grants. FNS may divide applications into two or more groups – based on applications submitted by individual organizations or partnerships, scope of proposed projects, and/or other similar criteria – so that similar applications may be compared against each other.

Generally, the criteria for evaluating grant applications include:

- Does the proposed project address an existing problem/deficiency?
- Is the plan for addressing that problem/deficiency adequate?
- Is the proposed budget appropriate and does it correlate to the goals of the project?
- Are the intended impacts of the project appropriate, reasonable, attainable, and measurable?

Indicators of a successful project include, but are not limited to: increased amount of SNAP redemptions, increased number of SNAP transactions, increased number of farmers serving SNAP participants, and the development or improvement of stakeholder partnerships or networks (which are important to foment the long-term sustainability of the markets). Please see **V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION; b. Evaluation Factors and Criteria** for complete evaluation criteria.

The minimum FY2015 FMSSG award per grant is $15,000 and the maximum is $250,000. FNS anticipates awarding approximately 25 grants; however, more or fewer awards may be made at the Agency's discretion, based on the quality of applications submitted. This is a current fiscal year funding opportunity (not a modification of a prior year). An applicant may submit or participate in no more than one grant application in a grant-funding year. FMSSG funding will be available for use on or about September 1, 2015. Matching funds are not required.

This announcement identifies the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the information applicants must provide to submit a fully responsive application for the FMSSG program.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

a. Fund Availability and Type of Federal Assistance

The amount of $3.3 million is available to fund successful FMSSG applications in Fiscal Year 2015. A Grant Agreement to formalize the roles, duties, and responsibilities of the grantor and grantee, with funding to be awarded on or about September 1, 2015.

b. Award Limits

The minimum award per grant is $15,000 and the maximum is $250,000. Matching funds are not required. FNS anticipates that the majority of the funds will be awarded to large-scale, regional-, State-, county-, or city-wide projects that leverage resources; however, small entities are encouraged to apply.

c. Grant Period Duration

FMSSG funds will be awarded for projects with a minimum duration of 13 months and a maximum of 36 months. However, FNS will determine the grant performance period. This period must begin no earlier than September 1, 2015 and end no later than September 30, 2018.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

a. Eligible applicants

All applicants shall be domestic entities and shall be owned, operated, and located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands. Examples of eligible entities include, but are not limited to:

- **Farmers' markets:** Two or more farmer-producers who sell their products directly to the public at a fixed location.
- **Farmers' market associations:** An organization comprised of, or representing, one or more farmers' markets.
- **Nonprofit entities:** Any organization or institution with IRS 501(c) status or accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the net earnings benefit any private shareholder or individual.
- **State and local government:** Any unit of government, including a State, county, borough, municipality, city, town, township, parish, local public authority, special district, school district, intrastate district, council of governments, or other instrumentalities of local government.
- **Public benefit corporations:** A corporation organized to construct or operate a public improvement, the profits of which benefit a State(s) or to the people thereof.
- **Economic development corporations:** An organization whose mission is the improvement, maintenance, development and/or marketing or promotion of a specific geographic area.
- **Regional farmers' market authorities:** An entity that establishes and enforces regional, State, or county policies and jurisdiction over State, regional, or county farmers' markets.
- **Tribal governments:** A governing body or a governmental agency of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602)) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Each eligible applicant may only submit ONE application in response to this grant solicitation. Suspended or debarred organizations are ineligible to submit applications in response to this grant solicitation. Farmers' markets receiving grant funds or benefits through the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP) may not also receive benefits through FMSSG.

b. Cost sharing or matching considerations

Cost sharing and matching are not required to apply for FMSSG funds, However, FNS supports collaboration between individual farmers' markets, and local, State, or regional partnerships that leverage assets in order to most effectively reach FMSSG goals. Collaboration may include sub-grants and in-kind contributions of resources by partner organizations. In-kind contributions may include donations of services, equipment, meeting

space, or other resources to be used specifically for the proposed project. The value of these in-kind contributions should be calculated and noted both in the Project Narrative and the Budget Narrative. Commitments of in-kind contributions and/or cost-sharing should be demonstrated through letters of commitment and included in the application package.

c. Eligible grant uses

Grant funds must be used to conduct tasks that are necessary for SNAP to operate at farmers' markets, and to increase the amount and effectiveness of farmers' market participation in SNAP. All costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allowable, and allocable to attaining the project goals and objectives. As such, eligible grant uses include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Salaries and benefits for time spent on SNAP activities, including:
  - Operating SNAP-EBT machines at market(s);
  - Completing SNAP accounting and reporting tasks for market(s);
  - Creating/operating systems (such as scrip, accounting, record-keeping) necessary to make SNAP operational at market(s); and
  - Training and technical assistance to farmers' market volunteers, vendors, and employees on SNAP.
- Creating SNAP outreach and educational materials and performing outreach to current SNAP participants to inform them they may use their SNAP benefits at farmers' markets; outreach must be conducted in accordance with statutory prohibitions on recruiting, advertising, and collaboration with foreign governments (7 U.S.C. § 2027(g).
- Miscellaneous equipment, other than SNAP-EBT equipment -- such as scrip, wifi hotspots, accounting software, etc. – necessary for SNAP-EBT equipment to operate at farmers' markets.

Uses that are NOT eligible include:

- General overhead costs of running a farmers' market.
- Activities not directly related to operation of SNAP at farmers' markets.
- Activities benefiting only one agricultural producer or individual.
- Activities that depend upon a critical component not in place at the time of application submission.
- Activities that depend upon the completion of another project or the receipt of another grant.
- Duplicate activities funded by another organization or Federal grant program.
- Food-related incentives, including bonuses, coupons, and vouchers.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

a. Address to request application package

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

Gregory Walton, Chief
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail *Greg.walton@fns.usda.gov*

- Electronic Application Submission
  The complete application must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on June 18, 2015. Applications received after the deadline 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. Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov web portal will not be considered (i.e., USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications). Please allow sufficient time to submit your application package.

Special Instructions:

- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the current or future fiscal years, should additional funds be made available.
- Grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funding.
- FMSSG requires applicants to include SNAP participation data for the region, State, counties, city, or other locality where the primary project activity would occur. Such data can be obtained following the instructions in **V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION; b. Evaluation Factors and Criteria.**

b. Required Grant Application Forms

All applicants must complete the following forms, which are located at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp: The following required OMB forms can be obtained at: https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormsMenu?source=agency

Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family

- Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
- Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- AD-3030 (only required for corporations)
- AD-3031 (only required for corporations)
- 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."

c. Suggested Grant Application Forms

When applying for this grant, FNS strongly encourages the use of the following forms, which are located in the application package on Grants.gov and at the end of this RFA.

- **FNS-10-545A (Project Narrative)**
- **FNS-10-545B (Budget Summary)**

d. Content of Grant Application

All FMSSG proposals must be submitted via Grants.gov. Required and suggested application forms, along with step-by-step instructions for their completion, are available online at http://www.fns.usda.gov/ebt/learn-about-snap-benefits-farmers-markets.

FNS strongly encourages applicants to adhere to the following application format. The proposed project plan should be typed on 8 ½" X 11" white paper, with at least one-inch margins on the top and bottom, using **FNS-10-545A**. All pages should be single-spaced, printed only on one-side, in 12 point font. The project description, including all relevant information, should be no longer than 10 pages, not including the cover sheet, key personnel qualifications, letters of commitment, project implementation addresses, charts created using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) website, and required forms.

Applications will include the following:

Cover Sheet (template can be found in FNS-10-545A)
The cover sheet includes the following information:

- Project Title;
- Applicant's name, primary contact, mailing address, e-mail address, phone number, and fax number;
- Primary contact's name, job title, mailing address, e-mail address, phone number, and fax number (if available);
- Grant program title (Farmers' Market SNAP Support Grants);
- Executive Summary One double-spaced page or less, which clearly describes the project, including the current situation (justifying the need for the project), expected outcomes, and a timeframe for completing all activities.

Project Narrative (template can be found in FNS-10-545A)
FNS strongly encourages applicants to use FNS-10-545A when preparing their Project Narrative. Even if they choose not to do so, Project Narratives must include the following information:

- **Requested FMSSG Funding and Matching Funding**. Indicate the dollar amount (use whole dollar amounts) requested from the FMSSG program. Do not include funding or in-kind work from other sources in the "Requested FMSSG Funding" section. Include such funding sources in the "Partnerships and Donations" section, as applicable.

- **Entity Type**. Indicate the entity type of the applicant/organization.
- **Background Statement.** Describe the current conditions that justify the need for the proposed project, explain how the project will improve those conditions, and indicate whether (and why) the conditions are likely or unlikely to improve without the proposed project. Include SNAP participation number and percentages for localities that will be served by this project, per five-year rolling average data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS, available at http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t#5yrpopup). You may attach copies of charts generated using ACS, which will not count towards your 10-page total. Include any other relevant existing baseline data.
- **Goals/Purposes of the Project**. Clearly and concisely state the goal(s) of the project. Number and list each goal (i.e., Goal #1, Goal #2). After the list, briefly state how each goal addresses FMSSG's mission.
- **Approach.** Provide a workplan that clearly describes each project activity, plan for completing each activity, the personnel and non-personnel resources (i.e., facilities, equipment, etc.) that will be used to conduct activities, and timelines for completion. The workplan should also indicate how monitoring oversight will be conducted and whether/how project activities will continue after grant funds are expended.
- **Impact.** Describe how project activities will further project goals (i.e., how the activities will fix or improve the situation that justifies the need for the project), and how impacts will be monitored and evaluated while the project is in progress and after it is concluded. Baseline data (aside from ACS data mentioned above) should be provided, if available. Target goals for both quantitative and qualitative metrics should be clearly described.
- **Partnerships and Donations.** List any other current and pending public or private support (matching funds, partnerships, donations of volunteer time or in-kind donations, etc.) for the proposed project. Make sure to indicate personnel identified in the narrative who have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for persons involved is included in the budget.

Budget Documents

Applicants must submit a Budget Summary that itemizes, line-by-line, each proposed Budget Item. Applicants must also submit a Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must justify and support the *bona fide* needs of the project costs, and must correspond with the Budget Summary. In other words, each proposed Budget Item included in the Budget Summary must be described and justified in the Budget Narrative.

Proposed Budget Items must correlate to the purpose/goals of the project; and must be reasonable, necessary, allocatable (i.e., treated consistently with other costs for the same purpose and circumstance), and allowable for the proposed work. Proposed funding for all Budget Items must be based on actual cost estimates (i.e., based on a price analysis/ comparison, vendor quote, cost per unit, staff time, etc.). FNS strongly encourages applicants to use form FNS-10-545B when preparing their Budget Summary and for additional guidance on preparing their Budget Narrative.

Neither the Budget Summary nor the Budget Narrative count toward the **Project Narrative's 10 - page limit**.

The Budget Summary must include the following Budget Categories, and the Budget Narrative must provide justification for each Budget Item proposed under those categories. If an applicant does not propose a Budget Item under a particular Budget Category, indicate "None" in the "Itemization" column and "$0" in the "Requested Budget" column.

Personnel and Contractual

In the Budget Summary, list each employee and contractor's name, title, and the general categories of services the person will provide (e.g., project manager, EBT manager, etc.).

In the Budget Narrative, describe each individual's duties and how those duties correlate to the purpose/goals of the project. If a position is not currently filled, describe the job, including a list of duties. Show annual/hourly rates and estimated number of hours to be spent on the project by each project participant. For all salaries, include the number of hours, rate per hour, and the (actual) months of performance. For contractors, indicate if the expense represents a flat fee for services or an hourly rate.

Equipment

In the Budget Summary, list each proposed purchase of equipment, its cost, and use. *Equipment* means any tangible, nonexpendable, personal property, including exempt property charged directly to the grant having: (1) a useful life of more than 1 year, and (2) an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit (2 CFR 200.313).

In the Budget Narrative, provide the basis of the cost estimate (i.e., price analyses, vendor quotes) for each piece of equipment and its correlation to the purpose/goals of the project to justify your need for the equipment to be purchased.

Supplies

In the Budget Summary, list each proposed supply expenditure separately, its cost, and use. *Supplies* means any tangible personal property other than equipment (as defined above), excluding debt instruments and inventions (2 CFR 200.314).

In the Budget Narrative, provide the basis of the cost estimate (i.e., price analyses, vendor quotes) for each supply item being requested and its correlation to the purpose/goals of the project to justify your need for the supplies to be purchased.

Other

In the Budget Summary, provide an itemized list of projected expenditures, their cost and use. *Other items* mean any item not fitting into the personnel, contractual, equipment, and supplies categories explained above. Service fees, such as those charged by merchant service providers, should be listed as 'Other' with an explanation.

In the Budget Narrative, provide the basis of the cost estimate (e.g. price analysis, vendor quotes) for each item being requested and its correlation to the purpose/goals of the project to justify your need.

Supplemental Documents

Letters and/or other evidence of commitment from partners and resource providers should establish the fact that critical resources and infrastructure required to initiate and implement the project are in place at the time of proposal submission. The proposed project must not be dependent on completion of another project or the receipt of another grant. For any new market applying for FMSSG funds, land, structures, and partnerships must be in place and committed prior to submitting an application to FMSSG. All supporting documents must be submitted with the Grants.gov application. Ensure the documents identify the applicant and exact project title name. Required supplemental documents include:

- **Key Personnel Qualifications:** Brief description(s) of experience and qualifications, or résumés, of those leading or conducting project activities. These qualifications should reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar activities.
- **Letters of Commitment**: Letters from partners and contractors, including, in the case of organizations applying on behalf of farmers' markets, letters from the markets that will partner in the proposed project. Letters should establish that critical support and services required to implement the project are in place at the time of proposal submission. Commitment letters should be on organization letterhead and signed by a person authorized to make the commitment. Emails are not acceptable evidence of commitment. All letters of commitment should be combined into one PDF attachment.

e. Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) Number

In order to submit an application via Grants.gov, applicants must obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register in both the new System for Award Management (SAM) and on Grants.gov. Applicants are 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/).

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.

f. System for Award Management (SAM)

The System for Award Management (SAM) is the official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry (CCR)/Federal Agency Registration (FedReg), Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and System for Award Management (SAM). There is no fee to register for this site.

For additional information regarding SAM, see the following link: https://www.acquisition.gov/SAM_Guides/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.pdf

Below is some additional information that should assist applicants 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 takes at least **48 hours** 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:** www.sam.gov.

Please begin your registrations early and allow sufficient time to submit your application package.

SAM Presentation/Training
The General Services Administration, the system owner, 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 SAM (called migrating)
- Updating/renewing CCR record in SAM

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

g. Grants.gov Registration
In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations above and registered on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process can be accessed at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html. Generally, the registration process takes approximately **3 business days**. Please note you will not be able to upload a proposal into Grants.gov until you complete registrations in both SAM and Grants.gov. The approved SAM registration information takes up to 48 hours to be uploaded to Grants.gov. Allow your entity ample time to complete the necessary steps for submission of your grant application package on Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of these notices to confirm the application was accepted.

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

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

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &,–,*,%,/,#', -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached_File.pdf) in naming the attachments."

Please note: If these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected by Grants.gov. FNS will not accept any application rejected from Grants.gov due to incorrect naming conventions.

Submission Dates and Times
Applications must be uploaded on Grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time, June 18, 2015. Applications received after this deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be reviewed. 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 via Grants.gov should contact the grants officer listed above for further instructions.

Funding Restrictions
Allowable cost should be necessary, reasonable, allocatable, and allowable under Federal Cost Principles and in agreement with the purposes of FMSSG. All costs should relate to the budget, and tie directly to project activities and impact. Costs should be associated with quantitative and qualitative metrics as proposed in the project narrative.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

a. Review and Selection Process

FNS will pre-screen applications to ensure they contain all required information. Applications that do not include complete copies of forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF LLL, and (in the case of corporations, regardless of whether they are for-profit or non-profit) AD-3030, will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further consideration. Applications that do not include all required information, as described in this RFA, **FNS-10-545A**, and **FNS-10-545B** will have points deducted during the evaluation process.

Following the initial screening process, FNS may divide applications into two or more groups – based on whether they are submitted by individual organizations or partnerships, scope of proposed projects, and/or similar characteristics – so that similar applications may be compared against each other.

FNS will assemble panels to review and score each application based on technical merits. FNS will seek panel members with diverse expertise, representing farmers' markets; producers; non-profit groups; Federal, State, and local government employees; university employees; as well as independent researchers, for-profit groups, and others with knowledge of Federal nutrition programs, community health education, and/or farmers' market activities.

The panels will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the evaluation criteria described in this RFA. The panels will recommend the highest scoring applications for grant awards. The Selecting Official reserves the right to award a grant based solely on scoring, but may also consider agency priorities, program balance, available funding, geographical representation, or project diversity. FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year, should additional funds be made available.

When considering whether to award a grant, FNS may request that proposed Project Narratives and/or Budgets documents be revised. FNS will contact applicants to negotiate these revisions. Alternatively, applicants may choose not to revise their project proposal.

b. Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications for FMSSG funds.

- ***Goals/Purpose*** (12 points)
  The proposal meets the general goals of the FMSSG, as outlined in Section I of this RFA, generally. Specifically, the proposal describes conditions that justify the need for the project, and indicate whether (and why) the conditions are likely or unlikely to improve without the proposed project.

- ***Approach*** (40 points)
  Workplan: The workplan is well-written, clearly explains each project activity, plan for completing each activity, timeline for completion, and indicates how monitoring/ oversight will be carried out.
  Personnel: Project personnel demonstrate appropriate qualifications, knowledge, and experience necessary to successfully conduct, manage, and monitor project activities. Staff time is appropriately budgeted, with volunteer capacity demonstrated, if applicable.
  Resources: Non-personnel resources (i.e., land, building, equipment, supplies, etc.) are sufficient and adequate to successfully complete each project activity.

Sustainability: The workplan describes how project activities will continue after grant funds are expended. Future revenue models, fundraising plans, or other long-term funding strategies are described.
Partnerships: If applicable, the workplan demonstrates collaboration with partners and engagement with appropriate stakeholders. Partnerships are documented with letters of support/commitment that make clear each partner's role (i.e., contribution of staff, volunteer, financial, or other in-kind resources; assistance with promotion, training, or other activities; etc.).

- ***Budget*** (20 points)
  Budget items are necessary, allowable, reasonable, allocatable, clearly described, and clearly correlate with project goals and activities.

- ***Impact*** (20 points)
  The proposal clearly describes how project activities will further project goals (i.e., how the activities will fix or improve the situation that justifies the need for the project), and how impacts will be monitored and evaluated while in progress, and evaluated upon conclusion. Baseline data (when available) and target goals for both quantitative and qualitative metrics are clearly described. Metrics may include, but not be limited to, the following:
  SNAP Redemptions
  - Increase in dollar value of SNAP transactions (per day, week, month, year, etc.)
  - Increase in number of SNAP transactions
  - Increase in number of farmers' markets redeeming SNAP benefits
  - Increase in number of farmer-producers redeeming SNAP benefits
  - Increase in number of SNAP participants redeeming benefits at farmers' markets.

  Training
  - Number of market staff trained
  - Number of farmer-producers trained

  Public Accessibility & Outreach
  - Number and type of SNAP outreach marketing materials disseminated
    Number and attendance for educational, informational, and outreach events hosted

- ***SNAP Priority areas*** (30 points)
  The extent to which project activities would occur in localities with high SNAP participation, as measured by:
  - Number of people in targeted localities (i.e., region, State, county, city, neighborhoods, etc.) that participate in SNAP, per five-year rolling average data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS, available at http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t#5yrpopup).
  - Percentage of people in targeted localities that participate in SNAP, per five-year rolling average ACS data.

c. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Awards will be announced on or about September 1, 2015.

VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

a. Federal Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions, any contact from an FNS grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No costs incurred prior to the effective start date of a grant 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 signature of an FNS authorized official can bind the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

b. 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. The original copy of an 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.

Administrative Regulations

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 in System of Award Management (SAM).

Universal Identifier and System of Award Management 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 System for Award Management (SAM). If you were registered in the Central Contract Registry (CCR), your entity'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 approximately **3 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, including suspension and debarment information. 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.

Code of Federal Regulations and other Government Requirements

Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: "Universal Identifier and Central Locator Contractor Registration"
- 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 "Implementation of OMB Guidance on 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:

Gregory Walton, Branch Chief
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: *greg.walton@fns.usda.gov*

c. Reporting

1. 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. A final Financial Status Report is required by no later than 90 days after the termination date of the grant project. 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 grant award package.

2. 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.

In order to make reporting efficient and consistent, grantees will use an online account to set up profiles with baseline information and submit progress reports through the Farmers Market Coalition portal at www.fmctoolbox.org as required in the FMSSG General Award Terms and Conditions.

Progress reports will be submitted by grantees using an online portal through which awardees will set up accounts and grantee profiles. Baseline data will be entered at the start of each award project, and grantees will submit progress reports into this database on a six month basis. Proposed budgets must reflect time allocated to reporting metrics.

For grants involving the re-granting of funds to individual markets, please note that ALL participating markets are expected to establish and maintain reporting accounts, using the same reporting timeframe as the lead grantee. Recipients are required to submit 6-month interim performance reports after the award's anniversary date, as provided by FMSSG, until a Final Performance Report is required. Final performance reporting requirements are due within 90 days following the grant ending date.

Metrics expected for baseline and progress reporting will depend upon project objectives, and may include, but not be limited to:

SNAP Redemptions

- Increase in dollar value of SNAP transactions (per day, week, month, year, etc.)
- Increase in number of SNAP transactions
- Increase in number of farmers' markets redeeming SNAP benefits
- Increase in number of farmer-producers redeeming SNAP benefits
- Increase in number of SNAP participants redeeming benefits at farmers' markets.

Training

- Number of market staff trained
- Number of farmer-producers trained

Public Accessibility & Outreach

- Number and type of SNAP outreach marketing materials disseminated
- Number and attendance for educational, informational, and outreach events hosted

Guidance on the reporting of metrics will be provided to grantees at the beginning of the grant period.

VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

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

Gregory Walton, Branch Chief
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: *greg.walton@fns.usda.gov*

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

a. Letter of Intent

Entities that intend to submit an application for FMSSG funding must submit a Letter of Intent by May 18, 2015. This letter does not obligate the potential applicant to submit an application, but provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. In addition to indicating the potential applicant's intention to apply for FMSSG funding, the letter should include the potential applicant's name and address, and telephone number and e-mail address for the primary point of contact. The applicant can send the letter via regular mail or e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

Gregory Walton, Branch Chief
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: *greg.walton@fns.usda.gov*

b. 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.

c. Projects that Include U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Place Based Initiatives

Proposals with projects that include interventions in communities that have been designated USDA Place Based Initiatives may receive priority consideration. The USDA Place Based Initiatives include but are not limited to:

StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity (SF). StrikeForce aims to create self-sustaining, long-term economic development in persistent poverty rural communities by increasing investment through intensive outreach and stronger partnership with community leaders, businesses, and foundations. StrikeForce seeks to improve food security by increasing access to safe and nutritious foods.

Promise Zones (PZ). Promise Zones are part of the President's plan where the Federal government partners with and invests in selected high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities. Promise Zones leverage Federal resources to build up existing local capacity to create jobs, increase economic security, leverage private investment, expand educational opportunities, increase access to quality affordable housing, reduce violent crime and improve public safety.

White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2). As part of the President's priority to strengthen the middle class, create jobs, and build ladders of opportunity, SC2 seeks to increase cooperation between community organizations, local leadership, and the federal government. SC2 pairs on the ground Federal inter-agency teams with the Mayor and city leadership to support the community's vision for economic development. These SC2 Teams offer technical assistance and expertise to help leverage existing Federal resources to grow local capacity and stimulate economic growth in distressed areas.

Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities works to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution.

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2). KYF2 strengthens the connection between farmers and consumers to better meet critical goals, including reinvigorating rural economies, promoting job growth, and increasing healthy and local food access in America. Through KYF2, USDA integrates programs and policies that stimulate food- and agriculturally-based community economic development, foster new opportunities for farmers and ranchers, and cultivate healthy eating habits and educated consumers.

IX. 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 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on June 18, 2015. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to submission.

- ✓ 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 registration 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 included the RFA CFDA number [TBD] on your application?
- ✓ Have you provided a cover sheet, including all required information?
- ✓ Have you included your Project Narrative?
- ✓ Does the Project Narrative comply with format requirements and page limitations?
- ✓ Does the Project Narrative directly address this RFA's objectives and priorities?
- ✓ Is the Budget Summary included?
- ✓ Is the Budget Narrative included?
- ✓ Does the Budget Summary include only *bona fide* project costs?
- ✓ Does the Budget Narrative include appropriate descriptions of all budget items included in the Budget Summary?