

DATE: May 21, 2018

TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, TA and SNAP Directors

FROM: Jeffrey Gaskell, Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Employment and Income Support Programs

SUBJECT: FFY 2018 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Process and
Technology Improvement Grants

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: SNAP Bureau at: (518) 473-1469

The purpose of this GIS is to inform Social Services Districts (districts) that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a grant competition to support efforts by State agencies (which includes local districts in locally-administered states like New York) and their community-based and faith-based partners to develop and implement:

- Simple SNAP application and eligibility determination systems, or
- Measures to improve access to SNAP benefits by eligible applicants

As indicated in the attached Request for Applications (RFA), USDA is seeking diverse proposals that would make the entire process easier and more efficient for applicants and participants.

This year, USDA is particularly interested in funding projects that focus on improved customer service, increased efficiencies in case management, and system improvements.

Local districts are strongly encouraged to apply. Grant proposals should focus on improving the quality and efficiency of operations and processes within the SNAP office. Specifically, the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), is interested in initiatives that use new technologies or examine office processes that improve the client's experience. For example, such proposals could include projects that provide straightforward information about case status in easy-to-access, customer-friendly ways, decreasing customer wait time through a more efficient call center, a way of scheduling or rescheduling interviews quickly, or a better check-in system, as well as additional methods to reduce application processing time. FNS is interested in funding projects that use technology to make it easier for caseworkers to process cases, assist clients, increase program integrity and reduce churn. For example, such proposals could include projects that help clients remember and meet deadlines, conduct Business Process Reengineering (BPR), or other improvements to the application, verification, recertification, and reporting processes that reduce cost or administrative burden and improve outcomes for SNAP households. FNS is also interested in funding projects that improve eligibility systems. For example, such proposals could include monitoring timeliness via system enhancements or a dashboard.

Please note on page 11 of the RFA that all applications will require a “letter of endorsement,” from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Requests for letters of endorsement should be submitted to OTDA, along with a synopsis of your district’s grant proposal, no later than close of business on **Friday, June 8, 2018**.

If your district is considering development of a proposal for a Process and Technology Improvement Grant, we recommend that you discuss your proposal first with the OTDA before requesting a letter of support and before committing resources to the development of a proposal so that we can discuss the scope of the State’s Integrated Eligibility System (IES) program which is now underway as it pertains to any such proposal. Knowing what technology, equipment and business process re-engineering are within the scope of the IES program before developing a grant will help to ensure that whatever technology, equipment or business process re-engineering investment a district pursues will not be duplicative of efforts within the scope of IES and will be able to be integrated into IES. If your district would like to have a conference call to discuss a grant proposal, please contact your district’s SNAP Bureau liaison at: (518) 473-1469 to arrange a conference call.

To request a letter of support, please go to this link: <https://otda.ny.gov/legal/letter-request/> and follow the procedures as directed.

Applications for the grants are due to the USDA-FNS no later than 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on **Monday, June 25, 2018**. Applications **MUST** be submitted electronically to the USDA-FNS through www.grants.gov.

Several NYS districts have been awarded grants in the past. To review SNAP grant applications from counties previously awarded grant monies, please contact your OTDA SNAP liaison. Additional assistance in grant writing may be found at the following websites:

- <http://www.federalgrantswire.com/writing-a-federal-grant-proposal.html>
- <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/local-wellness-policy-resources/grantsfundingopportunities/resources-write-grants>

To learn more about finding and applying for other federal grant opportunities, please go to: www.grants.gov.

Attachment

OMB BURDEN STATEMENT: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0512. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average **50** hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Fiscal Year 2018 Process and Technology Improvement Grants

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.580

DATES:

RFA Release Date: April 23, 2018

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), June 25, 2018

Award Date: By September 30, 2018

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

For information on Workspace application process, visit:
<https://grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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

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

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

The RFA discusses these requirements in Section II “Federal Award Information” on page 2.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- Your application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section V “Application and Submission Information”.
 - The application should be less than 25 pages, excluding the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter of commitment(s), endorsement letter(s), appendices, and required forms.
 - The application includes both a line-item budget and a budget narrative.
 - Line-item budget and other budget references in the applications must be consistent with the SF-424A form.
- Application should meet priority requirements outlined in Section I “Program Description”, and all necessary attachments.

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

- Cost Allocation
 - If other programs will benefit from this project, the costs supported by the grant will only fund the SNAP aspects of the project
- Personnel
 - Proposal includes all key employees paid for by the grant
 - Proposal identifies employees by name, position and title
 - Proposal reflects employees' current yearly salary as a percentage of time to be devoted to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)
 - Fringe Benefits: the budget includes fringe benefit amount along with type of benefit and basis for computation
- Travel
 - Expenses are itemized and explained in the budget narrative. For example origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip.
 - Attendee objectives and travel justifications are included in the budget narrative
 - Basis for lodging estimates are identified in the budget narrative
- Equipment
 - Equipment costs are justified in the budget narrative
 - Types of equipment, unit costs and number of items are listed in the budget narrative, along with basis for cost per item

- Supplies
 - o Types of supplies, unit costs, and number of items are listed in the budget narrative, along with basis for cost per item
- Contractual and Consultant Costs
 - o The need for a contractor has been identified in the proposal and the cost is justified in the budget narrative
 - o Applicants that are required to issue a bid have provided a narrative explaining the requirement and provided a reasonable estimate for contractual and consultant costs
- Indirect cost information
 - o Either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or if no agreement exists, the basis of the indirect costs requested. If none requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.
- Other
 - o Any other costs associated with this project are itemized, explained and reasonable

As part of the application, applicants must certify:

- Grant funds will be used for a new project and will not be used for ongoing costs to carry out existing project
- No more than 25% of the required grant funds support outreach activities

The RFA discusses these requirements in Section II “Federal Award Information” on page 2.

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

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

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

- AD-3030 – [Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov, if applicable)
- All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- Letter(s) of Commitment
- Letter(s) of Endorsement

The IRS determination letter, the letter of commitment, and the letter of endorsement are all discussed in Section V “Application and Submission Information” on page 8.

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

Section 11(t) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, Grants for Simple Application and Eligibility Determination Systems and Improved Access to Benefits, authorizes the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to annually award up to \$5 million in grants to State agencies*; public health or educational entities; or private nonprofit entities, such as community-based or faith-based organizations, food banks, or other emergency feeding organizations. Grants authorized by Section 11(t), known as Process and Technology Improvement Grants, allow applicants to “develop and implement simple Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program application and eligibility determination systems; or measures to improve access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits by eligible households.”

*Throughout this Request for Applications (RFA), the term “State agencies” refers to the agencies of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam that administer SNAP.

THIS SOLICITATION IS CONTINGENT UPON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

PURPOSE

Process and Technology Improvement Grants support efforts by State agencies and their community-based and faith-based partners to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) operations and processes.

Fiscal Year 2018 Priorities

This grant competition specifically encourages applicants to respond to the following priority areas:

1. Improve Customer Service

Proposals targeted towards customer service will implement projects that improve the client’s experience. For example, such proposals could include projects that provide straightforward information about case status in easy-to-access, customer-friendly ways, decreasing customer wait time (in-person or on the phone) through a more efficient call center, a way of scheduling or rescheduling interviews quickly, or a better check-in system, as well as additional methods to reduce application processing time. Specific projects may include increasing or improving call center functionality, accepting telephonic signatures, creating mobile apps, or enhancing or clarifying certification materials.

2. Increase Efficiencies in Case Management

Proposals targeted towards improving case management will make it easier for caseworkers to process cases, assist clients, increase program integrity and reduce churn. For example, such proposals could include projects that help clients remember and meet

deadlines (e.g. text message reminders or efforts that streamline verification submissions), conduct Business Process Reengineering (BPR), or other improvements to the application, verification, recertification, and reporting processes that reduce cost or administrative burden and improve outcomes for SNAP households.

3. **Systems Improvements**

Proposals targeted towards this priority area aim to improve eligibility systems. For example, such proposals could include increasing eligibility system functionality (i.e. directly connecting an online application submission system to the eligibility system, including integrated digitization of files that allows for the submission of verification documents electronically and links them to existing (electronic) client casefiles). Proposals might also focus on improving reporting and tracking functionality of eligibility systems, including creating worker dashboards and building additional reporting capability; monitoring timeliness via system enhancements or a dashboard; using existing integrated eligibility systems to better identify eligible recipients who are applying for or enrolled in multiple assistance programs (*note: this grant would only fund the SNAP portion*); or other tangible improvements to eligibility systems.

The examples above are suggestions and FNS welcomes other projects that support these priorities. FNS also highly encourages applicants to propose *innovative* ideas to solve both common and unique problems.

Proposals supporting any of the priority areas above will undoubtedly affect one or more aspects of the SNAP certification process. Proposals must identify how one or more of the following SNAP processes will be improved as a result of the proposed project:

- SNAP Application Intake
- SNAP Application Screening
- Interview
- Verification
- Notices
- Client Reporting
- Recertification
- Client Complaint
- Fair Hearing

Projects that serve traditionally underserved populations such as elderly, disabled, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) households, rural communities, veterans, homeless, or populations residing in economically depressed geographic areas are especially encouraged.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

FUNDING AND DURATION

Process and Technology Improvement Grants are contingent on the availability of funding. FNS may allocate up to \$5 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 for these grants. Submitting a grant proposal does not guarantee funding. 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.

FNS will award the grants through a competitive process and will notify selected grantees of the grant award no later than September 30, 2018. Grantees may use the grant funds for the duration

of the project period, which is expected to be September 30, 2018, through September 30, 2021. FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and costs after the award of the grantee's contract.

Funding per Award

Generally, FNS awards between 6-11 grants annually. The amount of each award is dependent on the availability of funding and the number of awards granted. FNS anticipates that funding per award will likely range from \$20,000 to \$2,000,000.

Type of Award

FNS will award Process and Technology Improvement Grants in the form of a Federal grant. FNS will provide funding for approved grants through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement.

Procurement Contracts

Grantees may use grants funds to procure contracts for good or services.

Allowable Uses of Funds

- Funds from this RFA are for new projects.
- If the activities funded under this grant are part of a larger eligibility system project with total projected costs exceeding \$6 million, an Advance Planning Document (APD) must be submitted and approved prior to the expenditure of these grant funds. Guidance on the APD process is available at www.fns.usda.gov/apd/.
- Process and Technology Improvement Grant funded projects may benefit other governmental programs; however, grant funds must only support SNAP's share of the project costs.

Restrictions on Funding Use

- Process and Technology Improvement Grant funds cannot be used for the ongoing cost of carrying out an existing project.
- Projects predicated on waiving SNAP regulations are not allowable. However, if during the grant application period, a State agency determines a waiver is needed, the State may apply for the waiver, though FNS cannot guarantee the waiver will be approved.
- Projects may not be devoted toward outreach activities. The drafting or printing of informational materials, pure application assistance, screening/pre-qualifying applicants, or other similar activities cannot be funded by Process and Technology Improvement Grants.
- Pre-award costs will not be awarded for this grant project.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Eligible Applicants

The entities eligible to receive grants under this competition are:

- The 53 State agencies that administer SNAP¹;
- State or local governments¹;
- Agencies providing health or welfare services²;
- Public health or educational entities²; and
- Private nonprofit entities² such as community-based or faith-based organizations, food banks, or other emergency feeding organizations.

Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching required for this grant.

Number of Applications and Partnership Criteria

As noted above, nongovernmental entities may apply for this grant, either individually with consent from the State agency or in partnership with the State agency.

For the purposes of this grant competition, State agencies may submit more than one application each, or enter into more than one partnership. However, if the State submits more than one application, the State must make explicit in each application its relationship to any others. State agencies that submit more than one application should carefully consider the allocation of time stated in each application. State agencies with more than one partner organization may also consider submitting a single application designed to make sub-grants to the partner organizations. Proposals forwarded by any given State agency should request funding for distinct, non-overlapping activities.

FNS has designed this grant competition to allow State agencies to work in concert with nongovernmental entities that wish to apply for this grant through the “Letters of Commitment or Endorsement,” discussed on page 14.

¹ State agencies and State and local governments should have the necessary approvals of State officials (such as councils or legislatures) of funding prior to submitting the application. Applicants should also acknowledge in their application that all necessary approvals for funding have been obtained.

² Nonprofit organizations are required to submit a copy of the IRS Determination Letter, form 501(c)(3) or proof of application for exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, a list of their Board of Directors if applicable, and their most recent audited financial statements signed by the Treasurer or the Treasurer of the board. Educational entities are also required to submit their most recent financial statements signed by the Treasurer or Treasurer of the board. Applications submitted without these will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from consideration. All corporations, including nonprofit corporations are required to complete the attached representation regarding felony convictions and tax delinquency.

IV. GRANT FORMS AND REQUIREMENTS

PRE-APPLICATION 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 FNS imposing special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed. The Federal repository systems FNS will review include:

1. Dun and Bradstreet is a system where applicants establish a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, which the Federal government uses 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;
2. The System for Award Management (SAM), the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry (CCR)/FedReg, Online Representations and Certifications (ORCA), and Excluded Parties List System (EPLS);
3. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) is a database that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, AD-3030, Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (if applicable).

Some of this information may take days or weeks to complete. Please plan accordingly as applications must be completely submitted in Grants.gov before the application deadline.

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

Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) Number

In order to submit an application via www.grants.gov, applicants must have a DUNS number and registered in both the new SAM and on www.grants.gov.

Obtaining and Registering a DUNS Number

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/>). If your organization does not have a DUNS number 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.

System for Award Management (SAM)

The System for Award Management (SAM) combines the Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. 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. For additional information regarding SAM see the following link:

https://www.acquisition.gov/SAM_Guides/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.pdf

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:

<https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/fsdlogin.do>.

The General Services Administration created a SAM training. To view the presentation, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmHcKCchaiY>. This training 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

Grants.gov Registration

In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations as well as register on www.grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process can be accessed at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.

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.

Generally, the registration process takes between 3-5 business days. The Grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. For tools and tips regarding Grants.gov, please visit:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html>. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

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

Authorize Grants.gov Roles

After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying them of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the

appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-4-aor-authorization.html>

Track Role Status

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

Electronic Signature

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

How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

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

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Create a Workspace

Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

Complete a Workspace

Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

- a) **Adobe Reader:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader. NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.
- b) **Mandatory Fields in Forms:** In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

- c) Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

Submit a Workspace

An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

Track a Workspace

After successfully submitting a workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (i.e. GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

Applicant Support

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

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

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Online Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on June 25, 2018. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

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

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

Grants.gov File Name Procedures

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

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. 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 Grants.gov portal due to incorrect naming conventions.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity may be subject to the requirements of EO 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” This Executive Order was issued with the desire to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on State and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The Order allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function.

If you are located within a State that does not have a Special Point of Contact SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency.

Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

Applicants must also respond to the Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire, which is included in Appendix A, 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.

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

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

CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

The Process and Technology Improvement Grant applications should adhere to the formats and requirements listed in this section.

Additionally, the review committee will evaluate proposals against the criteria below. The project narrative sections include a point value to indicate the importance of each section; however, reviewers will be evaluating proposals based on all sections regardless of whether point values are provided. FNS has provided a checklist at the beginning of this document to assist applicants in meeting the necessary requirements.

Cover Sheet

The cover page should include the following:

1. Applicant's name and mailing address;
2. Project title;
3. Project summary, a one–two sentence description of project; and
4. Primary contact's name, job title, phone number and e-mail address.

Table of Contents

Proposals must include a Table of Contents that mirrors the outline included in this section of the RFA and include relevant topic page numbers.

Executive Summary

The executive summary must include the following:

1. The specific problem that prompted the applicant to submit a Process and Technology Improvement Grant application;
2. How exactly the project proposed in this grant application solves the problem identified;
3. Identify the State agency and/or eligible entities involved in the project;
4. Amount of funding requested;
5. Which priority area(s) the proposal addresses;
6. Which SNAP processes will be improved by the project; and
7. If the State or applicant has received an FNS grant in the last 3 years.

Project Narrative

The project narrative clearly articulates what project the applicant is proposing, how the project will address the specific problem identified by the applicant, and the project's expected results

and/or benefits. The proposed project methodology should describe the project design, address program specific methodology needs, procedures, timetables, monitoring/oversight, and the organization's project staffing.

The project's narrative should include the following four sections, in the order presented below:

1. Project Design
2. Organizational Experience, Staff Capability and Management
3. Evaluation
4. Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency

1. Project Design (35 points)

Problem Analysis

- The proposal clearly defines the problem.
- The proposal clearly defines the solution and provides evidence or compelling justification that the proposed project will solve or ameliorate the identified problem.

Impact

- The proposal clearly quantifies the proposed project's direct effect on the SNAP certification process and provides measurable evidence that the proposed changes will benefit the applicant/recipient or caseworkers. For example, proposals may demonstrate impact by measuring time savings or cost savings, enumerating benefit(s) applicants or participants may experience while going through the application or certification process, the percentage of the caseload that is expected to benefit, or the size of positive impact on a specific population, such as elderly applicants. The proposal should also include a description of how the project integrates with and supports the State's current or planned process improvement and/or technology initiatives.

Implementation

- The proposal clearly articulates how the applicant will implement this project.
- The proposal includes a project timeline that outlines proposed tasks and demonstrates that sufficient time is allotted for each activity.

Sustainability

- The proposal shows that the State has a plan for sustaining the project after the grant period of performance ends.

Letters of Commitment or Endorsement

- The application includes letters of commitment or endorsement that clearly outline either the State agency's endorsement or partnership with other entities by following the guidelines found on page 14 of this RFA.

2. Organizational Experience, Staff Capability and Management (10 points)

Oversight

- The proposal describes a plan for effective and consistent oversight by qualified project managers that will be implemented throughout the project.

- The proposal includes an organizational chart for the project.

Communication

- The proposal includes an internal communication plan.
- If applicable, the proposal provides a communication plan for communicating externally with partner organizations.

Staff

- The proposal identifies the project director or manager and other key staff.
- The proposal includes resumes and proposed project job descriptions that demonstrate that staff have the appropriate technical and experiential backgrounds to implement the project.
- If staff are hired for this project, the proposal includes job descriptions for these positions.
- Applicants should address their contingency or back-up plans in the event of key staff departures.

Time Commitment

- The proposal identifies key staff and outlines the amount of time key staff will devote to the project.
- If applicable, the proposal identifies the amount of time key staff will spend managing partnering organizations.

3. Evaluation (20 points)

Evaluation

- The proposal includes a comprehensive evaluation process that is specific, data-driven and measures whether the problem identified is addressed by the proposed project intervention.
- The proposed evaluation plan details who will measure the goals of the project.
- The proposed evaluation plan details what criteria will be evaluated and how the applicant will evaluate the criteria.
- The proposed evaluation plan details at what intervals during the grant period of performance the evaluation will be conducted.

4. Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency (30 points)

Applications must include the required budget forms outlined in Section IV “Grant Forms and Requirements” on page 5, a budget narrative, and line-item budget to receive the full point value for this criterion. A well-written budget narrative aligns with the line-item budget, justifies the proposed project expenditures, and assists reviewers during the proposal review process.

Budget

The proposal includes:

- A line-item budget. A checklist is included at the beginning of this document to provide additional guidance on what should be included in the line-item budget.

- A budget narrative that articulates how funds will be spent, by whom and for what purpose. The budget narrative should align with the itemized budget and provide enough detail for reviewers to easily understand how costs were determined and how they relate to the goals and objectives of the project. Budget estimates should be adequately justified based on current industry costs/standards or estimates from vendor, when possible. The information on costs should be obtained from applicable organizations or from online sources.
- If indirect costs are shown as a budgetary expense for the project, a copy of the approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) must be provided with the application.
- If applicable, the budget must show how the costs are allocated among the benefiting programs and demonstrate that this grant is only going to fund SNAP's share of project costs.
- If desired, a tiered budget and narrative that describes adjustments the applicant would make if it were awarded different level(s) of funding (only the primary budget will be analyzed against this criterion).
- All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- The proposed budget should mirror the requested amounts that are listed in the submitted SF-424A.
- All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

Efficiency

- The proposal must demonstrate that the anticipated results are commensurate with the cost of the project.

Contractual and Consultant Costs

- Proposals that include hiring a consultant or contractor must provide the following information.
 - Consultants name and description of service;
 - Itemized list of all direct costs and fees;
 - The number of personnel including the position titles;
 - Specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the salary;
 - Number of estimated hours times hourly wage for each staff member; and
 - All expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.
- Applicants who are required to issue a bid should include a narrative explaining the requirement and provide a reasonable estimate of Contractual and Consultant Costs.

5. Presentation (5 points)

FNS strongly suggests that applications closely adhere to the application format described below. The agency cannot guarantee that improperly formatted proposals will be considered. Please be as clear and concise as possible. The beginning of this solicitation and appendix B include a checklist and tips to ensure your proposal is complete and properly formatted.

Size, Font, and Page Limit

- All pages are single-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point font.
- The grant application is no more than 25 pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter(s) of commitment, endorsement letter(s), appendices, and required forms.
- All pages, excluding the form pages, are numbered.
- The proposal is well-presented, well-written and void of grammatical errors.

LETTERS OF COMMITMENT OR ENDORSEMENT

State agencies submitting an application on their own do not require letters of endorsement or commitment. If a State agency submits an application in partnership with other organization(s), the State must provide a Letter of Commitment from the proposed partner.

FNS also welcomes grant proposals from entities other than a State agency; however, such applicants must demonstrate that the State agency strongly endorses and/or is involved in the proposed project through a Letter of Endorsement.

Letters of endorsement from the State are also required when local or county governments submit an application.

Unless the applicant is a State agency submitting an application on its own, a letter of commitment or letter of endorsement must be included in the application package to be considered for funding. Such letters may be addressed to the FNS Grants Officer. Applications that require a letter of commitment or a letter of endorsement, which fail to provide one, will not be considered. Please refer to the letters descriptions below for additional information.

Letters of Commitment

A Letter of Commitment is required if the grant proposal is from a State agency working in partnership with another organization(s). The State agency applying must submit a letter(s) of commitment from its partners. The letter(s) of commitment must describe:

- The organization's role in the project;
- The amount of time the partner organization intends to commit to the project and an attestation that it will cooperate with the grant applicant in implementing the project; and
- The letter must be on the respective organization's letterhead and signed by an authorizing individual.

Letters of Endorsement

A Letter of Endorsement is required if an applicant is an entity other than a State agency and is not directly partnering with a State agency on the project. The State agency's letter of endorsement must:

- Explain that the State agency is aware of the project and its projected impact on the State's eligibility system;
- Acknowledge whether the project creates any additional work for the State agency and identify the State capacity to address the additional work;
- Express support for the proposed project;

- Describe how the proposed project will support the State agency’s current or planned technology and/or business process improvement efforts and priorities; and
- The letter must be on the respective State agency’s letterhead and signed by an authorizing official.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

All applications must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time, on June 25, 2018. USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications. FNS will deem applications received after the deadline as ineligible and will not review late applications. FNS will not consider any additions or revisions to an application after it is submitted. Additionally, FNS will not review incomplete applications.

Please allow sufficient time to complete your application package and ensure the package is uploaded through the www.grants.gov web portal. If the same applicant in response to this solicitation submits multiple application packages through the Grants.gov web portal, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.

USDA strongly encourages applicants to begin the process at least 4 weeks before the due date and to submit applications to Grants.gov at least 1 week before the deadline to allow time to troubleshoot any issues, should they arise. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.grants.gov should contact the Grants.gov Support Center at 1-800-518-4726 or via e-mail at support@Grants.gov.

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

FNS will screen all applications that meet the published deadline for submission to ensure that they contain the required documents and information. If an application does not include all appropriate information, FNS will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation. All complete applications will be reviewed competitively and scored against the criteria listed in Section V “Application and Submission Information” on page 10.

FNS will assemble a review panel to review and determine the technical merits of each application. One or more review panels may be comprised of United States Department of Agriculture staff, other Federal agency staff, and other individuals committed to furthering the goals of SNAP. The review panel will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components. The review panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring.

The selecting official will consider the panel recommendations. In general, awards will be granted based on rank order. However, the selecting official and FNS reserves the right to fund out of rank order and award grants to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical

representation, bolster program innovation, or project diversity. If the panel review indicates that FNS has received few or no technically acceptable proposals, the selecting official may determine that FNS will make no awards, or commit less than the \$5 million set aside for this purpose.

As mentioned above, FNS is interested in funding projects that address priority areas specified in Section I “Program Description” on page 1 of this RFA. However, FNS reserves the right to award grants to several such entities, or not to award any grants to such entities if it does not receive acceptable applications.

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.

VII. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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. Grant funds cannot be used for pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date.

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, FNS to the expenditure of funds related to an award’s approved budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Confidentiality of an Application

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

Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information

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

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

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

Conflict Of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process

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

Administrative Regulations

Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions

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

Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under

any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

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

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, “Debarment and Suspension,” codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

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

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

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

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

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

Primary grantees, including State agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates \$25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first-tier sub-grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting System (FSRS). In order to access FSRS, a current CCR 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 CCR database, and suspension and debarment information from the EPLS. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

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

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

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

For additional information on the Freedom of Information (FOIA) process, please contact Jennifer Weatherly, FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at FOIA@fns.usda.gov.

Privacy Act Policy

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

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

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

Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: "Universal Identifier and 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:

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

Acknowledge USDA support

As outlined in 2 CFR 415.2, grant recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any publications written or published with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity. Recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any audiovisual which is produced with grant support and which has a direct production cost of over \$5,000.

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

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

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. For additional information on FPRS, 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 grant terms and conditions will indicate the reporting schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

Quarterly Progress Reports—Quarterly progress reports must be submitted to FNS. These progress reports must provide a description of the activities conducted during the reporting period, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget information, deviations from the proposed plan, difficulties encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, and major planned activities for the next quarter.

These reports are due 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter. More detailed specifications for the quarterly progress report content and submission will be included in the agreement. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

Final Report— A report of up to 25 pages must be submitted within 90 days of the expiration of the grant period. This report will be composed of a short Executive Summary and the following:

- A project description including a concise summary of the major accomplishments, the difficulties encountered, and the solutions developed to resolve the difficulties; and
- A discussion of the project results and lessons learned.

Copies of any deliverables, media or publicity releases/articles and links to materials on websites also should be included or papers resulting from the grant should be attached to the final report. All products should include an acknowledgement of the source of funding. The Federal awarding agency reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes, the copyright in any work developed under a grant, sub-grant, or contract under a grant or sub-grant or any rights of copyright to which a grantee, sub-grantee, or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

VIII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding this solicitation, 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
Alexandria, VA 22301
E-mail: Kimberly.Shields@fns.usda.gov

APPENDIX A: 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 Food and Nutrition Service Agency's (FNS) uses the responses to this questionnaire to evaluate the applicant's 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 the applicant organization from receiving an award. This form applies to FNS' competitive and noncompetitive grant programs. Please return this questionnaire with the application package.

Organization Information

Legal Organization Name: _____

D-U-Ns Number: _____

Financial Stability and Quality of Management Systems

	Yes	No
1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does your organization separate the duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does your organization have a property /inventory management system in place to track location and value of equipment purchased under the award?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Qualified Opinion” or an “Adverse Opinion”?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Material Weakness” disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Significant Deficiency” disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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: _____	Date: _____
Name: _____	
Phone: _____	
Email: _____	

APPENDIX B: TIPS FOR PROPOSAL WRITERS

The Project Design section is the applicant's opportunity to convince reviewers that the proposed project meets the selection criteria. Below are general recommendations to help applicants present their project in a way the reviewers will find most compelling and persuasive.

- Read the RFA.
- Ensure the application includes all required information.
- The executive summary should address which of the FY 2018 Priorities the project aims to achieve and which part of the SNAP certification process will be improved by the project.
- Avoid circular reasoning. The problem addressed by the proposed project should not be defined as the lack of the solution proposed in the application.
- Format the application to match the outline proposed in Section V "Application and Submission Information" on page 10.
 - Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order presented in the Section V.
 - Use headings to differentiate narrative sections by criterion.
- Make sure budget figures are consistent across the required forms, budgets and narratives.
- Address how ongoing costs will be covered after the grant period ends.
- Ensure the project has a strong quantitatively based evaluation plan that will use data to show that the project is resolving the problem identified.
- Be clear and succinct. Reviewers are not interested in jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. They are interested in learning precisely what you intend to do, and how your project responds to the selection criteria.
- Explain how. Avoid simply stating that the criteria will be met. Explicitly describe how the proposed project will meet the criteria.
- Avoid making assumptions. Do not assume the reviewers know anything about you, your partner organizations, or the proposed project.
- Avoid overuse of acronyms and be sure to define any acronyms in the application.