



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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## General Information System (GIS) Message

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### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	20 TA/DC031 Upstate and New York City
<b>Date:</b>	April 20, 2020
<b>To:</b>	Subscribers
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors
<b>From:</b>	Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Subject:</b>	FFY 2020 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Process and Technology Improvement Grants
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Immediately
<b>Contact Information:</b>	OTDA SNAP Liaison, SNAP Bureau, (518) 473-1469
<b>Attachment:</b>	<a href="#">USDA SNAP FFY 2020 Process and Technology Improvement Grants</a>

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### Section 2

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 plans to:

- Improve customer service, or
- Improve the application and interview process

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 projects in any of the priority areas that take advantage of existing or create new public-private partnerships to increase food security in a cost-efficient and accountable manner. USDA FNS will be hosting webinars on April 28th and May 7th to provide further details about the application process. Any district interested in applying for a grant is highly encouraged to register to attend. To register, follow the links below:

- April 28th webinar registration: <https://usda-fns.webex.com/usda-fns/onstage/g.php?MTID=e0ec4e08ff08d4092ccccee27848eb2f2>
- May 7th webinar registration: <https://usda-fns.webex.com/usda-fns/onstage/g.php?MTID=eb0d136f4b6935245d95e91fcaa638e09>

Districts are strongly encouraged to apply. Grant proposals should focus on improving the client's experience. Specifically, the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), is interested in initiatives that increase customer service and modernize or improve call centers, client hotlines, and/or local lobby management. For example, such proposals could include projects that implement or improve existing Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, increasing effective partnerships with community partners to improve customer service responsiveness and effectiveness, and engaging stakeholders in user testing, focus groups, or other methods to determine ways to improve SNAP customer service. FNS is interested in funding projects that improve preparedness for public health emergency and pandemic response. For example, such proposals could include projects that make improvements to telephone interview capabilities, modernization of verification processing such as document imaging, scanning, and categorization software and equipment, or staff training for public health emergency and pandemic response.

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, May 29th, 2020.

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 15, 2020. Applications MUST be submitted electronically to the USDA-FNS through [www.grants.gov](http://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-policyresources/grantsfundingopportunities/resources-write-grants>

To learn more about finding and applying for other federal grant opportunities, please go to: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).