Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

MICHAEL P. HEIN
Commissioner

BARBARA C. GUINN
Executive Deputy Commissioner

General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	21 TA/DC029 Upstate and New York City
Date:	May 19, 2021
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors
From:	Alison Maura, Director of Temporary Assistance and HEAP Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	FFY 2021 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Process and Technology Improvement Grants
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	OTDA SNAP Liaison, SNAP Bureau, (518) 473-1469
Attachment:	[Attachment 1 – USDA SNAP FFY 2021 Process and Technology Improvement Grants](#)

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 for Process and Technology Improvement grants 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) and at FY 2021 Process and Technology Improvement Grants (PTIGs), USDA is seeking diverse proposals that would make the entire process easier and more efficient for applicants and participants.

This year, the USDA is particularly interested in funding projects that advance racial equity and inclusion and/or serve underserved populations such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; elderly persons; Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Districts are strongly encouraged to apply. Grant proposals should focus on improving the client's experience. Specifically, the USDA FNS, is interested in initiatives that:

- Improve SNAP customer service responsiveness and effectiveness.
    - e.g., projects that modernize call centers, increase effective community partnerships, or support collaborative stakeholder efforts for business process improvement.

- Improve preparedness for public health emergency and pandemic response by strengthening virtual and disaster response operations.
    - e.g., projects that improve telephone interview capabilities, modernize verification processing (document imaging, scanning, and indexing software and equipment) or public health emergency, disaster and pandemic response training for staff.

- Increase effective partnerships with community partners to improve customer service responsiveness and effectiveness and collaborate with stakeholders in user testing, focus groups, business process improvement efforts, or other methods to determine ways to improve SNAP customer service.

Please note on page 18 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 4, 2021.

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 visit: 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 PM (EST) on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. 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: http://www.federalgrantswire.com/writing-a-federal-grant-proposal.html. To learn more about finding and applying for other federal grant opportunities, please go to: www.grants.gov.