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DATE: November 28, 2018  
  
MEMO CODE: SP-05-2019  
  
SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2019 Child Nutrition Technology Innovation  
Grant (TIG) Request for Applications (RFA)  
All Regions  
  
TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions  
  
State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is pleased to announce the release of the Request for Applications (RFA) for Child Nutrition Technology Innovation Grants (CN TIG). Funds will be available on a competitive basis to State agencies administering the Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) (i.e., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program). FNS has up to \$15 million available to fund State agencies that administer the CNPs to propose innovative technology solutions that improve program accountability and efficiencies at both the State and local levels.

### **Background and Authority**

The 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 115-141) authorized funding to be used for grants to States for the purpose of developing or improving current automated information systems used to operate and manage the CNPs. Approximately \$15 million is available in fiscal year (FY) 2019 to be used for grants under this funding. FNS is offering two types of CN TIGs: Planning Grants and Implementation Grants. States may apply for *either* a Planning Grant *or* an Implementation Grant, as described within this RFA, but *not both* under this solicitation.

### **Purpose of CN TIGs**

This grant opportunity is intended to encourage State agencies that administer the CNPs to propose innovative technology solutions that improve program accountability and efficiencies at both the State and local levels. Currently, State agencies administering the CNPs maintain automated systems at the State level that rely on operational data from the local levels including, but not limited to, program applications, eligibility certifications (including direct certification), verification (including direct certification), meal counting and claiming, menu planning, program monitoring, and program reporting. The CN TIGs can be used to bridge gaps in automation.

For example, the funds could be used to create virtual statewide systems where the State agency either: 1) provides Local Education Agency /site access to software modules related to specific program operations within their larger State-level integrated systems; or 2) works with LEAs to develop interfaces to connect them with the State system in such a way that they perform seamlessly without duplicating effort, yet remain in separate systems.

In developing the CN TIG applications for FY 2019, State agencies should focus on one or more of the following methods to develop uniform systems that could provide automation between State and local levels:

- Web-based software;
- Uniform interfaces between diverse systems;
- Technology equipment and/or software; and/or
- Other innovative business automation solutions to improve program operation efficiencies, accountability, monitoring and overall program integrity at the State and local levels.

### **Types of Grants Offered**

The FY 2019 CN TIG award process involved two types of awards:

- CN Technology Innovation Planning Grants for awards up to **\$100,000** with grant periods of up to **one year**; and
- CN Technology Innovation Implementation Grants for awards up to **\$2,000,000** with grant periods of **one to three** years.

State agencies may apply for either type of grant (i.e., Planning or Implementation), **but not both** in a given RFA solicitation. **Only one grant application will be accepted from a State agency in response to this solicitation.**

### **Who Can Apply**

Eligible applicants include all State agencies that administer CNPs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. In this instance, the term State agency means 1) the State educational agency; or 2) any other agency of the State which has been designated by the Governor or other appropriate executive or legislative authority of the State and approved by USDA to administer the above-mentioned programs. Only one grant application (planning or implementation) will be accepted from a State agency in response to this solicitation. However, in instances where there are two agencies within a State who operate FNS CNPs, such as in the case where the public and private agencies are different, separate applications are acceptable.

### **Application Process (Electronic Submission)**

Applicants may obtain the RFA package by downloading the application from the Grants.gov website at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following applicant format:

- “8 ½ by 11” page size on white paper with at least 1 inch margins on the top and bottom;
- All pages single spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font size (smaller font may be used in tables, charts and graphs as long as they are clearly readable);
- The project description with relevant information (not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter of commitment(s), endorsement letter(s), budget narrative(s), appendices, and required forms) should be captured on no more than:
  - **10-page** maximum length for CN Technology Innovation Planning Grant narrative response to **Appendix B**;
  - **35-page** maximum length for CN Technology Innovation Implementation Grant narrative response to **Appendix C**; and
  - All pages, excluding the form pages, must be sequentially numbered.

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Grants.gov website at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 5, 2019**.

Applications received by any other means or after this date and time will not be considered.

Grants.gov website will send a confirmation notice to the applicant to confirm that the application has been accepted by the system. We strongly recommend that State agencies submit their online application two weeks before the application deadline to avoid unanticipated problems. All questions regarding the RFA and electronic submission should be referred to FNS Grant Officer Carla Garcia. If you require immediate technical assistance as it pertains to Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov helpline at 1-800-518-4726 or email the help desk at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

### **Informational Webinar**

Within approximately four weeks of this RFA’s publication, FNS will conduct a webinar with all State agencies and FNS regional offices to review the RFA and State and address questions regarding the application process. Notification of the webinar date, time, and call-in information will be communicated to State agencies via the FNS Regional offices and the CND PartnerWeb.

State and Regional Directors  
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If you have questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact Grant Officer Carla Garcia via email at [carla.garcia@fns.usda.gov](mailto:carla.garcia@fns.usda.gov). We look forward to receiving your applications for funding.

Sincerely,

**Original Signed**

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Mark Porter  
Acting Director  
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division

**Original Signed**

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Sarah E. Smith-Holmes  
Director  
Program Monitoring and  
Operational Support Division