

# Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)

## Frequently Asked Questions April 2022

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### Eligibility Questions

1. Can a university/university extension apply as the primary applicant for the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program?

Eligibility to apply for a GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program grant is limited to government agencies and non-profit organizations.

Institutions of higher education that are local, county, tribal, territory, or state government agencies must provide documentation in support of eligibility as a government agency. Please upload this documentation in Field 12.

The definition of a non-profit organization in [2 CFR 200](#) as follows:

Nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including Institution of Higher Education, that:

- (1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
- (2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and

(3) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

## Program Policy Questions

1. Do grocery stores participating in GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects have to source a percentage of produce locally or regionally?

No, providing locally and regionally produced fruits and vegetables is one of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program priorities, but it is not required.

2. Do farmers markets have to be open 40 hours a week to participate in GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects?

No, farmers markets do not have to have extended hours. GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program priorities include involving firms with extended hours and days of operations, but it is not required.

3. Do GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program project proposals have to have a produce-for-produce design? Meaning that a SNAP/NAP shopper must buy produce to earn an incentive benefit to buy produce?

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program allows incentives to be earned when a SNAP/NAP participant purchases fruits and vegetables, or a SNAP/NAP eligible food. The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program allows the use of incentives for fruits and vegetables, or a SNAP/NAP eligible food. A purchase is required, thus a “no purchase required” mechanism and non-financial incentives are not allowable.

The three allowable incentive models are as follows:

- a. Fruits and vegetables for fruits and vegetables: SNAP/NAP participants purchase fruits or vegetables using their SNAP/NAP benefits and then receive incentives that are redeemable only for the purchase of fruits or vegetables.
- b. Any SNAP/NAP eligible food for fruits and vegetables: SNAP/NAP participants purchase any SNAP/NAP eligible food using their SNAP/NAP benefits and then receive incentives that are redeemable only for the purchase of fruits or vegetables.
- c. Fruits and vegetables for any SNAP/NAP eligible food: SNAP/NAP participants purchase fruits or vegetables using their SNAP/NAP benefits and then receive incentives that are redeemable for the purchase of any SNAP/NAP eligible food.

A GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program project must incentivize the purchase of fruits and vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables are defined as any variety of fresh, canned, dried, or frozen whole or cut fruits and vegetables without added sugars, fats, or oils, and salt (i.e., sodium).

4. How do I know if the retailer I want to partner with is SNAP/NAP authorized?

It is required to partner with firms to conduct a nutrition incentive project. Types of SNAP/NAP firms include grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers markets, and direct-marketing farmers (CSAs and farm stands). Before a firm can participate in a GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program project, the applicant/grantee organization must confirm the firm is authorized. The names and addresses of SNAP/NAP authorized firms are available to the public and can be obtained via the SNAP/NAP [Retailer Locator](#) map or the [GusNIP Incentive Locator](#) map. If the firm is on the map, that means the firm is authorized. The map is updated every two weeks. Once the applicant/grantee organization has confirmed that the firm is SNAP/NAP authorized, the grantee may move forward with the firm's participation. Information on the eligibility requirement and process for SNAP/NAP authorization can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply-to-accept>

**For any question regarding the status of a firm's SNAP/NAP authorization, the firm's owner should contact the SNAP/NAP Retailer Service Center at 1-877-823-4369.**

5. What information must be included in an MOU with a participating SNAP/NAP authorized retailer (firm)?

Before a firm can participate in a GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program project, the applicant/grantee organization and the partner firm must execute a signed MOU. The MOU provides grantees with a means to ensure that partner firms understand their role and responsibilities and to hold firms accountable for following GusNIP policy and SNAP/NAP rules and regulations. If the grantee is working with a chain of centrally owned and operated firms, then one MOU that includes all relevant information on every participating firm location will be sufficient. The applicant/grantee organization should keep the original MOU in their records and be able to present it in the event of an audit. The Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE) is available to provide applicants/grantees with assistance in developing the terms and conditions of the MOU.

MOU Resource - <https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/fx1a45yw/gusnip-firm-mou-template-2019.docx>

Grantees are required to have a Data Use Agreement or a MOU with each firm or sub-grantee that guarantees each firm will provide information required for the core program data set and to complete an outlet survey of firms to be conducted by the NTAE center.

6. Are incentives for evaluation allowed (e.g., farmers market consumers completing surveys)? If so, should that be included in the evaluation budget, or the grantees budget?

Proposed projects cannot provide cash or cash value items to incentivize the behavior of potential participants. Participants can, however, be reimbursed for their time and effort if they independently choose to complete an evaluation survey. Applicants may include

compensation of participant time and effort under participant support costs, other direct costs, or the evaluation budget depending on who will administer the reimbursement.

7. Who are participant surveys directed towards?

Surveys are intended for any participant. However, the sample size is intended to be yearly.

## Program Area Questions

1. Must State SNAP agencies sign off on any GusNIP grant application?

All nutrition incentive grant applications must include at least one letter of support from applicable SNAP State Agency(ies) and/or NAP Territory Agency(ies). This letter must explain the specific role of the agency, including any activities the agency is expected to conduct in support of the project such as identifying SNAP/NAP participants, and/or sending them any correspondence related to the project. The letter must also identify any State/Territory Agency systems, including EBT systems, required to implement the proposed project along with an acknowledgment of who will bear the costs associated with any activities or system changes if applicable.

2. Is there technical assistance provided before and/or after the grant is awarded?

The Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE) provides support at no charge to both potential applicants and grantees for nutrition incentive projects. The GusNIP (NTAE) is led by the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition. In partnership with Fair Food Network, they created the Nutrition Incentive Hub, a coalition of partners including the Farmer's Market Coalition, National Grocers Association Foundation, Michigan Farmers Market Association, and Ecology Center. The Nutrition Incentive Hub coalition of partners support nutrition incentive projects.

The GusNIP NTAE's Nutrition Incentive Hub provides free one-on-one support - including templates, checklists, webinars, and other resources -- to all GusNIP grantees and applicants. Applicants are highly encouraged to take advantage of these technical assistance resources and services. Please visit the resource page at:

<https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/resources>.

The Nutrition Incentive Hub also offers several resources specifically developed to assist with the Request for Applications (RFA). These resources can be found here:

<https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/resources-and-support/resources/gusnip-request-for-applications/2021-rfa-resources>

For specific questions related to proposal development or implementation, the technical assistance team may be reached at: [ta@nutritionincentivehub.org](mailto:ta@nutritionincentivehub.org).

For specific questions related to reporting and evaluation, please contact [evaluation@nutritionincentivehub.org](mailto:evaluation@nutritionincentivehub.org).

3. Who is the GusNIP NTAE Center? Is there more than one?

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE Center) is led by the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition. In partnership with Fair Food Network, they created the Nutrition Incentive Hub, a coalition of partners including the Farmer's Market Coalition, National Grocers Association Foundation, Michigan Farmers Market Association, and Ecology Center. The Nutrition Incentive Hub coalition of partners support nutrition incentive projects. Currently there is only one GusNIP NTAE Center.

The GusNIP NTAE's Nutrition Incentive Hub provides free one-on-one support - including templates, checklists, webinars, and other resources -- to all GusNIP grantees and applicants. Applicants are highly encouraged to take advantage of these technical assistance resources and services. Please visit the resource page at:

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4. What information needs to be included in a letter of support?

See [question #1](#) in this section for State/Territory SNAP/NAP agency letter(s) of support. Letters of support from any other key organizations involved in the project acknowledging their support, contributions, commitment, and matching commitment documentation should be attached here. Title the single attachment 'Key Organization Support'. Provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and decision-making. This section is limited to two (2) page letters of support from each key organization.

5. Do GusNIP standard projects (FIP) need to test new technologies?

No, GusNIP Large Scale Project (FLSP) proposals must test new technologies to increase fruit and vegetable purchases. Nutrition incentive GusNIP Standard Project (FIP) proposals must use available effective and efficient SNAP/NAP benefit redemption technologies. FIP proposals may include testing new technologies, but it is not required.

## Fund Matching Questions

1. Is it allowable to use a pro-rated amount for office space as a form of qualifying match for nutrition incentive grants?

Yes. Rental costs may be pro-rated and the portion of use charged to the award, either under the Federal funds or matching, if that is the normal procedure for that organization. The Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part [200.403](#) states that all costs should be accorded consistent treatment. Therefore, if other funding is provided the organization, or they participate in other projects which use their facility, those projects should also be charged their fair share of the rent. If the organization receives funding from other sources for projects, and those projects are not charged rent fees, then this grant project should not be charged. They should be sure to document how the pro-ration was determined, and to keep records accordingly for audit purposes. Please refer to the Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part [200.465](#) for specific information on rental costs.

2. Exactly what match verification is to be included with a GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program grant application?

While you should obtain matching commitment letters from each of your third parties which explain the dollar amount of the match, the period of time the matching will be provided, and how it can/will be spent on the project, these do not need to be included in the application. You must keep these on file for audit purposes. You should include in the application a listing of matching sources to include the name of the organization, the dollar amount of the matching, and provide a budget breakout on how these funds will be spent.

Applicants are instructed to include a list of matching sources that includes the identification of entities providing match and the total dollar amount being pledged. The applicant should also provide a breakdown of matching by budget categories (via the SF424 R&R Fed/Non-Fed budget or the budget justification as appropriate) and a justification for such costs (via the budget justification).

Although you should obtain matching commitment letters from each of your third parties to be available upon audit, individual matching support letters are not required as part of the award process. The documentation standards for grantees in meeting matching requirements is not reduced; match requirement must still be met per the standards of 2 CFR Part [200.306](#).

3. Can Federal funds be used as match?

Understanding the legislative authority and applicable use of the proposed Federal funds is crucial. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.306(b)(5), any matching funds including cash and third-party in-kind contributions must not be paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such programs can be applied to matching or cost

sharing requirements of other Federal programs. Should an authority allow funds to be used as match, please provide evidence of allowability in the budget justification.

An example of allowable Federal fund as match includes funds from the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, Pub. L. No. 93-638. When considering tribal Trust and/or fee lands as an in-kind match, applicants are advised to check with BIA, when applicable, for the specific land use for program purposes in case special conditions apply to that land.

## Application Questions

1. Can organizations submit more than one application?

Yes, the same organization may submit a Produce Prescription Program proposal and a Nutrition Incentive Program proposal. Applicants are encouraged to think critically about their organization's capacity to complete the work proposed.

2. When is the estimated start date for funded applicants?

The start date of the grant must be no later than September 30, 2022.

3. Do the 5 pages in the project narrative for charts and tables have to be at the end or can they be woven throughout?

Charts and tables are included in the project narrative.

For GusNIP Pilot Project (FPP) proposals the project narrative may not exceed 10 pages, 1.5 spaced including written text, figures, and tables with 1-inch margins. The font size for text and tables should be no smaller than 12 points, Times New Roman. There is no limit to the number of pages an applicant may dedicate to figures, tables, or charts within the overall 10-page limit. Figures, tables, or charts may be woven throughout the narrative, it is not required for them to be at the end of the narrative following the text. We have established this maximum (10 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applications exceeding these limits may be administratively declined without review.

For GusNIP Standard Project (FIP) and GusNIP Large Scale Project (FLSP) proposals the project narrative must not exceed 15-pages, 1.5 spaced including written text, figures, and tables with 1-inch margins. The font size for text and tables should be no smaller than 12 points, Times New Roman. There is no limit to the number of pages an applicant may dedicate to figures, tables, or charts within the overall 15-page limit. Figures, tables, or charts may be woven throughout the narrative, it is not required for them to be at the end of the narrative following the text. We have established this maximum (15 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applications exceeding this limit may be administratively declined without review.

4. There used to be a recommendation that a table of activities to achieve the project goals be no more than 3 pages. Is this recommended for the 2022 RFA?

In 2022, it is recommended to include a table with implementation details in the Activities to Achieve the Goals section of the project narrative. A recommended length has been removed. Applicants may determine the length appropriate to best communicate their proposed project.

5. What is the difference between the tables and figures in project narrative compared to the appendix?

Information required in the project narrative must be included in the project narrative. The appendices to the project narrative are where applicants may provide Specific Program Incentive Information, items 12-14. Appendices are limited to 7 pages and should be uploaded to Field 12.

6. Should the names, addresses, and FNS numbers of all participating firms/retailers be included in the application and counted towards the project narrative page limit?

Applicants may provide Specific Program Incentive Information, items 12-14 in an appendix. This will not count towards the project narrative page limit. Appendices are limited to 7 pages and please do not make the font size any smaller than 10 points.

7. Based on the information from the RFA, this sounds to us like we can submit our indirect cost rate that we have calculated from audits (but is not a federally negotiated rate yet), and if awarded we will go through the process of submitting the indirect rate package for review. Does this sound accurate?

You may estimate what you think your indirect cost rate is and the amount and put that on the budget pending negotiation. However, please note, it may take six to nine months to negotiate a rate if NIFA is your cognizant negotiating agency. The funds for the indirect costs will not be released for payment until the rate has been approved.

8. Is there any subaward restriction?

The RFA Sub-award Restrictions require no more than 33% of the budget be sub-awarded without prior NIFA approval from the National Program Leader.

## Project Type Questions

1. What are some expected outcomes for FIP grants?

All FIPs must involve SNAP/NAP participants. All FIP proposals must include an evaluation of whether the project met its goals and objectives. All FIP grantees will be required to participate in the GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation, collect core participant-level and firm-level metrics, cooperate with, and contribute core participant-level and firm-level data to the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers (NTAE).

The required Comprehensive GusNIP Program Evaluation is based on a cluster evaluation model that builds on the collaboration and coordination of individual project assessments and an overall program evaluation. It consists of four components: a process analysis to describe project implementation and support future replication of successful approaches, an outcome analysis to assess the effectiveness of each FIP and FLSP grantee project, a comparative analysis to integrate results across sites and approaches, attempting to answer the question of what works best (and when or where), and technical assistance to support consistent implementation of evaluation protocols used by grantees/researchers/evaluators.

All FPP, FIP, and FLSP grantees will be required to cooperate with the NTAE center by:

1. Supporting implementation of evaluation requirements;
2. Meeting periodically with staff from NIFA, FNS, the NTAE centers, and other GusNIP grantees to review project plans, evaluation objectives and methods, data collection and reporting requirements, and analysis and reporting of results;
3. Facilitating access to or providing documentation of project implementation, operations, costs, and outcomes; and
4. Facilitating site visits and interviews with project staff, partners, and program participants if necessary.

FIP and FLSP grantees will be required to periodically provide the NTAE centers a core program data set to ensure common program tracking and enable meaningful comparisons across all projects. A defined number of cross-sectional (i.e., single time point) surveys are required to be collected from this subsample for each active grant year of a grantee's project. The NTAE will work with each grantee on an individual basis to determine the sample size and sampling plan. For additional information on the core program data set firm-level and participant-level metrics, visit the GusNIP Application Resources page.

Grantees are required to have a Data Use Agreement or a MOU with each firm or sub-grantee that guarantees each firm will provide information required for the core program data set and to complete an outlet survey of firms to be conducted by the NTAE center.

**Comprehensive GusNIP Program Evaluation Table**

<b>PROGRAM AREA CODE</b>	<b>PROJECT EVALUATION</b>	<b>COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION</b>
FPP	Process evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Required to participate</li> <li>2. Participation includes conducting a project self-assessment and providing self-assessment data to the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, &amp; Information Center (NTAE)</li> </ol>
FIP	Process & outcome evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Required to participate</li> <li>2. Collect minimum core data set</li> <li>3. Collaborate with the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE)</li> <li>4. Contribute minimum core data set to the NTAE</li> </ol>
FLSP	Process & outcome evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Required to participate</li> <li>2. Collect minimum core data set</li> <li>3. Collaborate with the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE)</li> <li>4. Contribute minimum core data set to the NTAE</li> </ol>

**For additional questions, please see contact information in the RFA.**