



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2023

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 4, 2023

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$7,000,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD \$7,000,000 Per Year
RANGE:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-FINI-009751

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.331

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The GusNIP NTAE is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.331.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, May 4, 2023 <i>[Ref to Part I § C of this RFA]</i>
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice <i>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)</i>

Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the GusNIP NTAE RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program competitive grant programs are authorized under 7 U.S.C. 7517, for fiscal years 2019 through 2023 with mandatory growth in annual funding from \$45 million to \$56 million to be appropriated over 5 years. The 2018 Farm Bill allows the Secretary to provide funding opportunities to conduct and evaluate projects providing incentives to income-eligible consumers to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables and prescriptions for fresh fruits and vegetables. By bringing together stakeholders from various parts of the food and healthcare systems, GusNIP projects help foster understanding to improve the health and nutrition status of participating households, facilitate growth in underrepresented communities and geographies, as well as collect and aggregate data to identify and improve best practices on a broad scale.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) requests applications for Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers Cooperative Agreements. NTAE Centers offer training, technical assistance, evaluation, and informational support services to potential applicants, nutrition incentive projects, produce prescription projects, and to GusNIP as a whole. NTAE Centers develop and provide services related to grants under the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) Nutrition Incentive Program (NI) and Produce Prescription Program (PPR), including offering incentive program training and technical assistance to applicants and grantees to the extent practicable.

This notice identifies the objectives for GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers (NTAE) projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 7517](#), the Secretary is authorized to administer The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). This authority is delegated to the Director of NIFA through the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE) (see [79 FR 44101 \(July 30, 2014\)](#)).

B. Purpose and Priorities

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers (NTAE), Assistance Listing 10.331, is aligned with the USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 Strategic Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans found at (<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-fy-2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf>). NTAE Cooperative Agreements in partnership with NIFA offer training, technical assistance, evaluation, and informational support services to potential applicants, nutrition incentive projects, produce prescription projects, and to GusNIP as a whole. NTAE Centers develop and provide services throughout the life of grant projects under the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) Nutrition Incentive Program (NI) and Produce Prescription Program (PPR), including offering incentive program training and technical assistance to applicants and grantees to the extent practicable. These services include but are not limited to USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and USDA Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) policy, incentive technology, Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), capacity building, project launch, implementation, data collection, reporting, evaluation, and close-out.

NIFA encourages pursuing these priorities through traditional ecological knowledge if consistent with the above goals and priorities. Furthermore, NIFA also encourages applicants to highlight proposed project plans that emphasize food and nutrition security, nutritional quality, environmental stewardship (e.g., food loss and waste, climate), culturally sensitive food and/or food practices, and economic and social equity.

Additionally, NIFA encourages projects that address the following: (1) serve underrepresented communities, such as tribal communities, communities of color, LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities, Veterans, rural and remote communities, insular areas, or communities with residents predominantly living under the Federal poverty line; (2) serve underrepresented geographies. Underrepresented geographies for the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program are Alaska, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Connecticut, Delaware, Guam, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands, Vermont, and Wyoming. Underrepresented geographies for the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program are Alabama, American Samoa, Arizona, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Delaware, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Global Engagement. NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners may be necessary to attain the agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promote global competence of our nation's future agricultural workforce, and promote safe and nutritious food security in a growing world. Therefore, although application to this RFA is limited to eligible U.S. institutions, applicants may collaborate with international partners, to include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the U.S.

For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA calendar](#) for dates, event registration, and link.

Table 2: Program Key Information

	Title	Description
Program Code:	NTAE	
Program Code Name:	Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers	
ALN:	10.331	
Application Deadline	May 4, 2023	
Grant Duration:	48 Months	
Anticipated # of Awards:	1	
Maximum Annual Award Amount:	\$7,000,000	
Maximum Total Award Amount:	\$28,000,000	

C. Program Area Description

The total authorized funding support for NTAE Center(s) is \$7 million for each fiscal year. NTAE Center(s) must be capable of providing services related to grants for GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program (NI) and Produce Prescription Program (PPR), including offering incentive program training and technical assistance, evaluation, and informational support services to applicants and grantees to the extent practicable.

Program training and technical assistance should include the following key components, but are not limited to these approaches:

- a) building capacity, promoting program growth and sustainability in States, U.S. Territories, and Tribal Nations with low participation;
- b) collecting and providing information on best practices for nutrition incentive and produce prescription projects, such as communications, signage, record-keeping, incentive instruments, incentive dosages, development and integration of point-of-sale systems, and reporting;
- c) disseminating information and assisting with collaboration among grantee projects, applicable State/U.S. Territory SNAP/NAP implementing agencies, Tribal, U.S. Territory, and local government agencies, nutrition education programs, and healthcare providers;
- d) coordinating communication between the NTAE Center, grantees, applicants, State/U.S. Territory SNAP/NAP implementing agencies, Tribal, U.S. Territory, and local government agencies, nutrition education programs, healthcare providers, and evaluators/researchers;

e) ensuring training is culturally competent and centered on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) principles;

Program evaluation and informational support services are encouraged to include the following components, but are not limited to using these approaches:

- a) working with awardees to ensure seamless data deposition of core data metrics (e.g., receiving and maintaining), data quality and completeness, including conducting independent analysis of the data. All data generated by the NTAE must be made publicly available and conform with best practices for data safety and accessibility. Data must be transferrable at the end of the project period, without interruption to users, and include coding mechanisms.
- b) compiling project data from grantees and providing additional statistical expertise to evaluate project performance that complements individual project evaluation teams;
- c) maintain and continually improve design of the instrument(s) and the mechanism for reporting for core firm-level and participant-level data sets consistent with the state of the science for food and nutrition security, chronic disease management and prevention, health care usage and associated costs, as well as advancements in the fields of nutrition incentive and produce prescription practitioners. Consultation to the extent practicable with farmers, grocers, health professionals, health care and insurance providers, researchers, Tribes, incentive program managers, and employees of the USDA is essential.
- d) working with grantees on protections for human subjects and the proposed protections from research risk relating to their participation, which includes working with Tribes;
- e) working with grantees on intellectual property protections for Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge,
- f) ensuring data surveying is culturally competent and centered on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) principles;
- g) receiving, maintaining, and transitioning via a warm hand-off a publicly accessible on-line site that makes annual nutrition incentive program and produce prescription program impact findings, reports, and information available in an anonymized format that protects confidential, personal, and other sensitive data without interruption in services; and
- h) generating an annual report to Congress on grantees' project outcomes, including the results of the project and the amount of grant funds used for the project.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for GusNIP NTAE in FY2023 is approximately \$7,000,000. The funds will be awarded through cooperative agreement(s). Cooperative agreements will be with one or more organizations with expertise in developing outcome-based reporting, at least one of which has expertise in the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and at least one of which as expertise in the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Application for FY2023 is limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include the respond to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

C. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the GusNIP NTAE must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Organizations eligible to apply to the GusNIP NTAE program include: (i) nongovernmental organizations; (ii) state cooperative extension services; (iii) regional food systems centers; (iv) Federal, State, or Tribal agencies; (v) Institutions of higher education (as defined in section **101 (a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20) U.S.C. 1001 (a)**): or (vi) other appropriate entities as determined by the Secretary. Applicants are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, non-profit, or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities and tribal colleges and universities) and/or other appropriate professionals; community-based organizations; Tribal Nations and local government entities; and/or partnering entities for the purposes of providing additional resources and strengthening historical failure in underserved communities.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions are not allowed. NIFA will accept the last application received and disqualify previously submitted applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions meeting the application deadline. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required - The NTAE has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 5** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. The NIFA Grants Application Guide is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements).
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-FINI-009751 , search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 4: Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortalgrantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. Applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA's review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 7** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the Application Guide)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	N/A

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s). See **Part V** of the **Application Guide**.

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the **Application Guide**.

1. Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the GusNIP *Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers (NTAE)*. See **Part V** of the Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates.
2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed 15 pages, *1.5 spaced* pages of written text, figures, and tables with 1-inch margins. The font size for text should be no smaller than 12 points, Times New Roman (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all the following clearly defined sections:
 - a. Introduction;
 - b. Objectives and Outcomes;
 - c. Approach;
 - d. Personnel and Resources;
 - e. (if applicable) Response to previous review.

a) **Introduction.** The introduction must include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed NTAE Center. Show evidence of broad expert consultations with direct experience

implementing Nutrition Incentive Projects and Produce Prescription Projects in the development and continual improvement of the training, technical assistance, evaluation, and informational support services. Cite relevant previous accomplishments related to the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program as well as past accomplishments of similar center work.

b) **Objective and Outcomes.** Concisely present the goals, associated objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the NTAE Center in relation to potential applicants, grantees, broad experts and practitioners related to the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program. Discuss the community(ies) to be served at the local, regional, national, food system and/or healthcare system levels. Describe the demographics, economic, and geographic characteristics of the community(ies) to be served. For each, clearly identify the GusNIP competitive grant program(s) to be served.

c) **Approach.** Describe the activities proposed to achieve each objective and explain the approaches being applied to document and evaluate each objective. Specifically, this section must include: (a) a description of the activities proposed for each objective; (b) timetable for milestones by objective and project year including major outputs and associated outcomes; (c) discussion of how potential applicants, grantees, broad experts and practitioners related to the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program will be involved; (d) transferability of data at the end of the project period, without interruption to users; and (e) characteristics of the training and technical assistance resources and evaluation and information support services as described in Part I.C. that will be developed and utilized, address adaptation for geographic, linguistic, and cultural appropriateness of resources related to the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program. If capacity building mini-grants will be a proposed activity, describe the process for these proposed subawards including eligible applicants, key infrastructure and partnership building activities to be supported, application process, and reporting process. When describing and discussing firm-level and participant-level core data sets do so in the context of the current [GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program core metrics](#) and/or [GusNIP Produce Prescription Program core metrics](#).

d) **Personnel and Resources.** Describe in detail the relevant experience and qualifications of the project team serving GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program audiences or other similar audiences. The ability to provide training and technical assistance as described in Part I.C. for GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program audiences must be addressed. For SNAP/NAP and historically underserved communities, it is very important to have partner(s) who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences, are members of the community(ies) the project serves, and that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project. Proposals should demonstrate community linkages and coalitions as appropriate. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed center, and their impacts. The information may include: the years and locations of prior activities; number of training and technical assistance activities provided along with evaluation activities carried out; the success rate of the training and technical assistance provided and the types of evaluation outcomes and impacts.

(e) **Response to previous review (if applicable).** The requirement only applies to Resubmitted Applications as described in Part II, B of the RFA. The response to previous review must not exceed one-page, 1.5 spaced with 1-inch margins. The font size should be no smaller than 12 points, Times New Roman. This does not count towards the page limit for the Project Narrative.

3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the Application Guide.

The following application content must be uploaded as separate files to Field 12.

- a. Data management plan (DMP);
- b. Logic model;
- c. Management plan;

Data Management Plan. Title the attachment as ‘Data Management Plan’ in the document header and save file as ‘DataManagementPlan’. A Data Management Plan (DMP) of no more than two pages is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V § B](#) of this RFA, [NIFA’s Data Management Plan](#)).

Logic Model. A logic model of no more than two pages is required. Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ in the document header and save file as ‘LogicModel’. Include the elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project before writing your application. This information must be formatted into a logic model chart.

Management Plan. Title the attachment as ‘Management Plan’ and save file as ‘Management Plan’. A Management Plan of no more than three pages is required for this program. The plan is to be clearly articulated and include an organizational chart, administrative timeline, and a description of how the project will be governed, as well as a strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, roles and functions, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Strong partnerships with complementary organizations with shared leadership and vision are essential to the success of GusNIP as a whole. The management plan must also include an advisory group of stakeholders, partners, and professionals to assess and evaluate the quality, expected measurable outcomes, and potential impacts for the proposed NTAE Center. Please include rationale for their role, and how they will function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the project. The plan must demonstrate how partners and stakeholders contribute to project assessment on an annual basis. An applicant’s failure to provide the requested information in the Management Plan may preclude NIFA from making an award.

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

R&R Personal Data. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#)).

R&R Budget. See **Part V** of the **Application Guide**.

1. Match – If an applicant concludes that the matching requirements described under [Part III § B](#) of this RFA is not applicable to them; the applicant must include an explanation of their conclusion in the *budget justification*. NIFA will consider this justification when determining final matching requirements or if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements. Grants that require matching funds as specified under [Part III § B](#) of this RFA must list in their *budget justification* the matching sources, the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match, and the total pledged amount. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) and [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.”](#)
2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV § C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V** of the **Application Guide** for additional information

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the **Application Guide**.

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name (Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers) and the program code (*NTAE*) Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the Application Guide.

C. Funding Restrictions

Fully negotiated rate. Applicants must use the current negotiated Indirect Cost (IDC) rate established by its cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds). If awarded, the applicant will be required to produce a negotiated IDC rate agreement from the cognizant agency in order to recover IDC. If unable to obtain a negotiated rate from its cognizant agency, the applicant is not permitted indirect cost reimbursement. Rather, the applicant may only be reimbursed for allowable direct costs. Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

If the applicant wants full IDC, but does not have a negotiated rate, and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant must calculate an IDC rate in order to request IDC (see [Sample IDC calculations](#)). Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process. Applicants need only to calculate an IDC rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package in order to obtain a negotiated rate.

Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the De Minimis rate ([2 CFR 200.414](#)). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de Minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total indirect costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described above and in [2 CFR 200.403](#), costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If

elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time.

Please see [NIFA Indirect Cost Information](#) for additional guidance.

Sub-award Restriction

The applicant is expected to perform a substantive portion of the project and no more than 50 percent of NTAE Cooperative Agreements, as determined by budget expenditures, may be sub-awarded. NIFA will allow applicants to indicate in their proposal if they intend to sub-award more than 50% of the total award. This deviation will require NIFA pre-approval. If pre-approval is desired, contact the National Program Leader that oversees this program (see Agency Contact). Projects may divide their budget allocations between partners as it fits their work plan. (For additional knowledge or expertise that is not available within the applicant organization, funds for expert consultation may be included in the “All Other Direct Costs” section of the proposed budget.)

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

Scientific Peer Review Process:

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. the level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. the need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. the need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. the need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. the need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, and gender representation and an equitable age distribution; and
6. the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

Conflicts of interest. NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

B. Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate this RFA.

Initial Screening Criteria:

To avoid any misunderstandings, applicants should be aware that applications that do not satisfy all the screening criteria are at risk of being returned to the proposing entity without review.

Returned applications may not be resubmitted (with or without revision) under this solicitation.

The initial screening criteria are the following:

1. The applicant must be an eligible entity as described in this RFA.
2. The application must meet the Application Content and Format requirements as described in this RFA. This includes page length requirements all required forms and all files in PDF.
3. The application must include a Data Management Plan in PDF.
4. The application must include a Logic Model in PDF.
5. The application must include a Management Plan in PDF.

If the applicant has received USDA grant awards in the past, then the history of compliance with grant requirements will also be considered.

Program Area Evaluation Criteria:

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate this RFA listed in descending order of importance:

1. Relevancy- Explanation and documentation that the proposed project aims, in partnership with NIFA, to offer training, technical assistance, evaluation, and informational support services to potential applicants, nutrition incentive projects, produce prescription projects, and to GusNIP as a whole. The project activities are designed to improve and sustain the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program and/or GusNIP Produce Prescription Program. In addition, the relevancy will be evaluated by the description of the identified audiences, inclusion of the intended audiences in the conceptualization, development, and evaluation of the training and technical assistance resources and evaluation and information support services, and the methods for evaluating success and documenting potential impact.
2. Technical Merit- (a) Activities, objectives, outcomes, and potential impact is clear and achievable within the project period as well as adequate to fulfil the purpose and priorities of the GusNIP NTAE Center(s); (b) approach is technologically, geographically, linguistically, and culturally suitable and feasible; (c) innovation and originality; (d) evaluation plan for the GusNIP NTAE Center(s) outcomes is adequate, appropriate, measurable, and achievable.
3. Qualifications of Project Team, Partners, and Collaborators, and Project Management- Participating organizations and key personnel sufficiently represent potential applicants, grantees, broad experts and practitioners, and demonstrate substantial and effective collaborations or partnerships necessary to fulfil the purpose and priorities of the GusNIP NTAE Center(s). Proposal demonstrated the experience and competence of participating organizations and key personnel in serving the needs of the identified audiences. Project Management Plan and Data Management Plan involve stakeholders in the project design, development, implementation, data sharing, and reporting; and clearly articulate a plan to accomplish the project objectives, such as sufficient time allocated to accomplish each objective, clearly defined project roles and relationships among the key personnel and

collaborators plan for decision-making, and plan for project administration and data-sharing. Proposed project also employs an equitable and appropriate decision-making and oversight process. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflects the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community and a demonstrated dedication to serving residents living under the Federal poverty line will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard. Professional salaries are in balance with compensation given to residents for their participation in the initiative. Proposed budget aligns with the project narrative.

C. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

D. Application Disposition

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E](#).

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

Delegation of fiscal responsibility. Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

Changes in Budget or Project Plans. In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project.
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency,
5. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

C. Regulatory Information

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0039](#).

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

NIFA and FNS GusNIP Team

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202-604-1985

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Pascale.Jean@usda.gov

202-853-0135

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this RFA, please email awards@usda.gov

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

United States Department of Agriculture

2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Community Food Assessment:

A collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, to inform change actions to make the community more food secure.

Community Supported Agriculture:

CSA ventures require participants to pay an annual or seasonal subscription fee, in advance, for a set amount of food (share) that the business expects to produce that year/season; CSA shares are typically made available or delivered during regular intervals (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) during the active (harvest) season; CSAs primarily sell local produce (at minimum the majority, more than 50%, of their sales come from local produce) where local produce is defined as agricultural products, particularly fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as meat, fish, dairy, and/or grains grown, gathered, or hunted either within the State where the CSA is headquartered or within 100 miles of the CSA's headquarters (so long as the point of origin is still within the States or territories of the United States of America); a CSA is NOT considered a store type but simply a way of doing business; CSAs can be conducted by SNAP/NAP- authorized agricultural producers or co-ops.

Emergency Feeding Organization:

A public or nonprofit organization that administers activities and projects (including the activities and projects of a charitable institution, a food bank, a food pantry, a hunger relief center, a soup kitchen, or a similar public or private nonprofit eligible recipient agency) providing nutrition assistance to relieve situations of emergency and distress through the provision of food to needy persons, including low-income and unemployed persons. (See 7 U.S.C. 7501)

Exemplary practices:

High quality community food security work that emphasizes food security, nutritional quality, environmental stewardship, & economic & social equity.

Expert reviewers:

Individuals selected from among those recognized as uniquely qualified by training and experience in their respective fields to give expert advice on the merit of grant applications in such fields who evaluate eligible proposals submitted to this program in their respective area(s) of expertise.

Food security:

Access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times.

Fruits and Vegetables:

For the purposes of the incentives provided under FPP, FIP, FLSP program areas (i.e. as used in Section 4208) 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).

Incentives:

Any financial inducements that would increase the purchase and consumption of eligible fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP clients. See Part I.D. for details.

Logic Model:

A systematic and visual way to present and share an understanding of the relationships among resources available to operate a program and includes planned activities and

anticipated results; and the presentation of the resources, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Opportunity Zone:

An economically distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as opportunity zones if they have been nominated for that designation by the state and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via his delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service.

Outcomes:

The changes in the wellbeing of individuals that can be attributed to a particular project, program, or policy, or that a program hopes to achieve over time. They indicate a measurable change in participant knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. For the purposes of this document, ‘impact’ and ‘outcome’ are used interchangeably.

Process Evaluation:

Examining program activities in terms of (1) the age, sex, race, occupation, or other demographic variables of the target population; (2) the program’s organization, funding, and staffing; and (3) its location and timing. Process evaluation focuses on program activities rather than outcomes.

Non-profit Organization:

A special type of corporation that has been organized to meet specific tax-exempt purposes. To qualify for Non-profit status, your corporation must be formed to benefit: (1) the public, (2) a specific group of individuals, or (3) the membership of the Nonprofit.

Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP):

The programs for nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico and American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (7 USC 2028).

Nutrition Security:

Having consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

Established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (PL 88-525), SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of income eligible individuals and families and is administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and currently operates in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Virgin Islands.

Value Chain:

Adding value to a product, including production, marketing, and the provision of after-sales service, and incorporating fair pricing to farms. Involves keeping the final pricing to customers within competitive range. Value chain development, therefore, is a process of building relationships between supplier and buyer that are reciprocal and win-win; instead of always striving to buy at lowest cost.

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

Definitions

Continuation Award:

An award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public.

Matching:

The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Renewal Application:

A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.

Resubmitted Application:

A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.

Resubmitted Renewal Application:

A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.