



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

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The logo for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), featuring the letters "NIFA" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a background of a stylized landscape with rolling hills in shades of orange and yellow, and a dark silhouette of a tree or plant on the right side.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Produce Prescription Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2024

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Applicable

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 28, 2024

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$5,280,800

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-FINI-010373

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.331

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) Portfolio 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 Time, February 28, 2024,
Letter of Intent:	Not Applicable
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). The 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 [\(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 - Produce Prescription Program RFA.

WHAT'S NEW FOR FY 2024?

1. Clarifies required attendance of the Project Director at a PD meeting each year.
2. Further clarifies that total funding requested under PPR must be less than or equal to \$500,000.
3. Clarifies that institutions of higher education that are local, county, tribal, territory, or state government agencies must provide documentation in support of eligibility as a governmental agency in Field 12 of the grant application. Documentation must clearly identify that the university or Cooperative Extension is designated as an entity within the governmental agency structure, such as the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Public Health, etc.
4. Further clarifies that applicants and their project partner organizations must ensure that no State, Territory, or local tax is collected when produce prescriptions are redeemed. This must be documented in the grant application in the project narrative and/or letter of support from the appropriate partner organization(s).
5. For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA calendar](#) for dates, event registration, and link. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2024. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

This notice identifies the objectives for GusNIP Produce Prescription Program projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

The amount available for grants in fiscal year FY 2024 is approximately \$5,280,800. Additional projects submitted under this RFA will be considered should additional funding become available beyond the approximated amounts listed above.

NIFA requests applications for the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program for FY2024 to support projects that aim to demonstrate and evaluate the impact of prescribing fresh fruits and vegetables on (1) the improvement of dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; (2) the reduction of individual and household food insecurity; and (3) the reduction in healthcare use and associated costs.

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center's (GusNIP NTAE Center's) Nutrition Incentive Hub provides free one-on-one support, group sessions, as well as templates, checklists, webinars, and other resources, to all applicants. These resources are available at <https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/resources> and the GusNIP NTAE technical assistance team may be reached at ta@nutritionincentivehub.org. When preparing an application, all applicants are required to have a consultation session of approximately one hour with the GusNIP NTAE Center's Nutrition Incentive Hub for free group sessions, one-on-one support and to review common mistakes.

This notice identifies the objectives for GusNIP Produce Prescription Program projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a GusNIP Produce Prescription Program grant.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 7517\(c\)](#), the Secretary is authorized to administer The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) Produce Prescription Program. 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 - Produce Prescription Program, Assistance Listing 10.331, is aligned with the following:

[USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026](#) goals:

1. Strategic Goal 4 Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans.

[USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026](#) priorities:

1. Priority 3: Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health. The program prevents or minimizes the impact of diet-related chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and certain cancers) through the food system, prioritizing inclusion, personalized food choices, data transparency, understanding, and impact.

The program presents the opportunity to bring together stakeholders from distinct parts of the food and healthcare systems and to foster understanding of how prescribing fresh fruits and vegetables might improve the nutrition and health status of participating households. In addition to providing educational opportunities relating to nutrition to participants, the primary goals and objectives of the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program are to demonstrate and evaluate the impact of projects on:

1. the improvement of dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables;
2. the reduction of individual and household food insecurity; and
3. the reduction in healthcare use and associated costs.

All GusNIP produce prescription project proposals must:

1. include a letter of support from one or more healthcare partners;
2. prescribe fresh fruits and vegetables to eligible individuals;

And at least one of the following:

1. provide financial or non-financial incentives for eligible individuals to purchase or procure fresh fruits and vegetables;
2. provide educational resources on nutrition to eligible individuals; and/or
3. establish additional accessible locations for eligible individuals to procure fresh fruits and vegetables.

In carrying out a project using a produce prescription grant, an eligible entity shall partner with one or more healthcare partners. Healthcare Partners are defined in [Part III.A.2](#). Full application requirements for the Produce Prescription Program can be found in [Part I.C](#) Program Area

Description. Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the [Part IV. B](#) of this RFA.

NIFA encourages pursuing these priorities through Traditional Ecological Knowledge in collaboration and consultation with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples on projects 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 will prioritize the following types of projects for award in accordance with the program area evaluation criteria in [Sec. V.B](#): (1) serve underrepresented communities, such as tribal communities, communities of color, LGBTQIA+, individuals with disabilities, Veterans, rural and remote communities, insular areas, or communities with residents predominantly living under the Federal poverty line and/or (2) serve underrepresented GusNIP Produce Prescription Program geographies, such as Alabama, American Samoa, Arizona, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Delaware, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Additional requirements on expected performance goals, indicators and targets may be required as a condition of award.

For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA calendar](#) for dates, event registration, and link. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

C. Program Area Description

The Produce Prescription Program will only support standard grants of up to \$500,000 total budget and a duration of up to three (3) years.

Table 2: Produce Prescription (PPR) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	PPR
Program Code Name:	Produce Prescription (PPR)
ALN:	10.331
Project Type:	Standard Projects
Application Deadline	5:00 P.M. Eastern, February 28, 2024
Grant Duration:	Up to 3 years
Anticipated # of Awards:	11
Maximum Award Amount:	\$500,000

Produce Prescription Standard Projects (PPR) support the development and evaluation of tribal, county, district, multi-county, territory, or state-wide projects that prescribe fresh fruits and vegetables to eligible individuals; and at least one of the following 1) provide financial or non-financial incentives for eligible individuals to purchase or procure fresh fruits and vegetables; 2)

provide educational resources on nutrition to eligible individuals; and/or 3) establish additional accessible locations for eligible individuals to procure fresh fruits and vegetables.

Individuals are eligible to participate in a PPR project if they are eligible for the following: (1) benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 ([7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.](#)); or (2) medical assistance under a State plan or a waiver of such a plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act ([42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.](#)) and enrolled under such plan or waiver; and (3) a member of a low-income household that suffers from, or is at risk of developing, a diet-related health condition.

Amounts requested under PPR must be less than or equal to \$500,000 total budget. The expectations for standard projects, however, will be commensurate with their size, and provide an opportunity for smaller or less experienced organizations to propose projects that have smaller budgets and less complex administration. PPR grant proposals will be evaluated based on community needs, objectives, activities, and outcomes that are in alignment with the Produce Prescription Program's primary purpose and priorities as described in [Part I. B.](#)

Applicants must identify one or more healthcare partners with which the applicant is partnering. Applicant organizations that meet the definition of eligible entity (see [Part III. A. 1](#)) and Healthcare Partner (see [Part III A. 2](#)) may fulfill both roles in the grant application. The required letter of support from a Healthcare Partner must be provided in the grant application and specify the role in implementing and evaluating the project. Applicants must also include a description of the methods by which they will:

1. Screen and verify eligibility for individuals to participate in a produce prescription project. This may be a one- or two-part verification process.
2. Implement an effective produce prescription project, including the role of each healthcare partner in implementing the project, such as screening and referring potential participants, verifying potential participants are eligible individuals who may participate in a produce prescription project, tracking health outcomes, and/or reporting healthcare utilization and healthcare costs.
3. Evaluate individuals participating in a produce prescription project with respect to the impact of the project participation on (1) the improvement of dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; (2) the reduction of individual and household food insecurity; and (3) the reduction in healthcare use and associated costs.
4. Provide educational opportunities relating to nutrition to eligible individuals participating in a produce prescription program.
5. Inform eligible individuals of the availability of produce prescription program, including locations at which produce prescriptions may be redeemed.
6. Describe any additional non-profit or emergency feeding organizations that shall be involved in the project and the role of each in implementing and evaluating an effective PPR project.
7. Include a letter of support as documentation of a partnership agreement to evaluate the effectiveness of the produce prescription project in reducing healthcare use and associated costs. Appropriate partners include State Medicaid Agency, hospital, hospital, or clinic operated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, federally qualified health center, or healthcare provider group.
8. 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) evaluation report;
and

9. Attest that your organization agrees to share information and core data with the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers (NTAE).

D. Program Policy

This section deals with certain aspects of GusNIP policy as it pertains to the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program. Questions regarding the policies discussed below may be directed to sm.fn.GusNIP@usda.gov.

1. Definition of Incentive.

The term “incentive” means any financial or non-financial encouragement for eligible individuals to purchase or procure fresh fruits and vegetables.

- a. Examples of allowable financial incentives include prescriptions redeemable for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- b. Examples of unallowable incentives include, but are not limited to, giveaways of alcohol, tobacco, firearms, and lottery tickets.

The cost of incentives must be allowable under the applicable cost principles in [2 CFR part 200, Subpart E](#).

2. Treatment of Incentives

The value of any benefit provided to a participant will be treated as supplemental nutrition benefits under section 8(b) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 ([7 U.S.C. 2017 \(b\)](#)).

Each State/Territory must ensure that no State, Territory, or local tax is collected on a purchase of food with assistance provided under Produce Prescription grants.

Produce Prescription Program grants cannot be used to carry out any project that limits the use of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 ([7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.](#)) or any other Federal nutrition law.

Assistance provided under Produce Prescription Program grants to households receiving benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program must not:

- a. be considered part of the supplemental nutrition benefits of the household; or
- b. be used in the collection or disposition of claims under section 13 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 ([7 U.S.C. 2022](#)).

3. Definition of fresh fruits and vegetables

The definition of fresh fruits and vegetables includes any variety of fresh whole or cut fruits and vegetables without added sugars, fats or oils, and salt (i.e., sodium).

4. Grantee Noncompliance with Program Policy

Grantees and their participating firms are expected to comply with all policies and requirements laid out in this RFA document as well as any GusNIP policies or requirements

further clarified in Q&As, memoranda, or other relevant USDA documents. The NTAE technical assistance team, program advisors, and reporting advisers are available to guide applicants and grantees in addition to NIFA program staff and grants management staff to avoid instances of noncompliance. Grantees will be notified in writing of instances of noncompliance and will face serious repercussions for repeated instances of noncompliance.

Examples of such noncompliance include, but are not limited to, failure to provide required evaluation data to Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE), incentivizing ineligible products, or exchanging produce prescriptions for cash.

5. Considering a History of Noncompliance during Application Evaluation

A history of noncompliance with GusNIP or any other USDA grant policies and requirements will be considered during the grant application evaluation process as detailed in [Part V. B: Evaluation Criteria](#).

6. Allowable Forms of Project Outreach and Promotion

Grantees may promote or advertise their produce prescription projects using Federal funds using any mass media (e.g., television, radio, billboards, and geographically targeted online social media advertisements). Such mass media advertisement will only be allowable as described under [2 CFR 200.421](#).

7. Required Consultation with the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (GusNIP NTAE Center).

All applicants are required to have a consultation session of approximately one hour with the GusNIP NTAE Center for free one-on-one support or group sessions to review common mistakes. To document completion of this consultation, all applicants must upload the verification letter from the GusNIP NTAE Center to Field 12 of their proposal. See [Part IV. B](#) for more information.

8. Required Comprehensive GusNIP Program Evaluation and Evaluation Reporting.

The 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 PPR 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 PPR 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.

PPR 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. At a minimum, this dataset will include participant-level and firm-level metrics as well as an evaluation of the impact of a grantee's project on healthcare use and associated costs. For additional information on the core program data set for firm-level and participant-level metrics, visit the [GusNIP Application Resources](#) page. See [Part IV.B.2.](#) of this RFA for details regarding project evaluation. To provide the participant-level metrics, pre- and post-surveys are required to be collected from a subsample of project participants for each active grant year of a grantee's project. The sample size for participant-level data collection is powered to be able to detect a ¼ cup change in fruit and vegetable consumption using the 10-item fruit and vegetable intake Dietary Screener Questionnaire (DSQ). Typically, the sample size ranges from 100 to 130 participants completing pre- and post-surveys. Post-award, the NTAE will work with each grantee on an individual basis to determine the sample size and sampling plan.

To provide data for the firm-level metrics, 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 centers.

1. All GusNIP PPR grant applications with a project design that involves SNAP/NAP transactions must submit a SNAP/NAP Implementing Agency letter of support, work through SNAP/NAP authorized firms, and follow the SNAP/NAP firm MOU process.

All GusNIP PPR projects with a design that involves SNAP or NAP transactions will be reviewed by a USDA, Food and Nutrition Service SNAP/NAP Policy Analyst for adherence to SNAP/NAP program rules and regulations. Final award determination is subject to Food and Nutrition Service approval of a grant application's adherence to SNAP/NAP program rules and regulations. More information about SNAP/NAP policy as it relates to GusNIP can be found on the [GusNIP Frequently Asked Questions page](#), specifically the SNAP/NAP Frequently Asked Questions.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2024. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

The amount available for NIFA to support this program is approximately \$5,280,800 in FY 2024. Should additional funding become available beyond the approximated amounts listed above, projects submitted under this RFA and not recommended for the initial round of funding will be considered.

The funding mechanism for the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program funds will be awarded through grants. 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 FY2024 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 response 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.

NIFA recognizes that data sharing may be complicated or limited, in some cases, by organizational policies; local and tribal Institutional Review Board (IRB) rules; and local, tribal, state, and Federal laws and regulations. The rights and privacy of individuals who participate in NIFA-sponsored research must be protected at all times. This includes annual human subject's assurance statements that the project has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or determined exempt from review.

Thus, data intended for broader use should be free of identifiers that would permit linkages to individual research participants and variables that could lead to deductive disclosure of the identity of individual subjects.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program must meet all eligibility requirements outlined in [7 U.S.C. 7517](#) and as 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.

1. Eligible Entity

Eligibility to receive a Produce Prescription Program grant is limited to governmental 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 governmental agency. Documentation must clearly identify that the university or Cooperative Extension is designated as an entity within the governmental structure, such as the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Public Health, etc. Veterans' Health Administration and various components of its healthcare system, such as hospitals or clinics are eligible governmental agencies.

2. Partners and Collaborators

The required healthcare partner(s) may include (1) a hospital, (2) Federally qualified health center, (3) hospital or clinic operated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or (4) a healthcare provider group. Applicants must include a statement specifying the eligibility of the healthcare partner(s) under one of the four categories.

Organizations that meet the definitions of eligible entity and healthcare partner may fulfill both roles in the grant application. The required letter of support from a healthcare partner must be provided in the grant application and specify the role in implementing and evaluating the project. If the lead applicant will also be the healthcare partner, the letter of support from a healthcare partner is still required. The purpose of the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program is to bring 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 prescribed fresh fruits and vegetables.

Applicants for Produce Prescription Program grants 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; Tribal health centers, public health departments, pharmacies, school nurses, or private and public health insurance agencies and/or partnering entities for the purposes of providing additional resources and strengthening historical failure in underserved communities.

Produce Prescription Program applicants may partner with or make subgrants to, public, private, nonprofit, or for-profit entities, including an emergency feeding organization; an agricultural cooperative; a producer network or association; a community health organization; a public benefit corporation; an economic development corporation; a farmers market; a community-supported agriculture program; a buying club; retail food store participating in SNAP/NAP; and a Tribal, State, Territory, or local agency.

Only the applicant must meet the requirements specified above for grant eligibility. Project partners and collaborators need not meet the eligibility requirements. When planning collaborations, award recipients may sub-award to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project. See [Part IV.C](#) Funding Restrictions of this RFA.

3. **Fiscal Agent**

If a non-profit organization cannot accept Federal funds directly, a letter must be included in the application stating that in the event the application results in an award, the award funds must be administered through a fiscal agent organization on their behalf. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by an authorized representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter must include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. This letter is to be included as an attachment to **Field 12**, Other Attachments ([Part IV.B.3.c.](#)) of the application. In the event an application is recommended for funding, NIFA will request that both the applicant institution/organization and the fiscal agent organization submit complete management information (see [Part V. D](#)). Include documents showing the organization's non-profit status when responding to this request.

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 organization 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 **Produce Prescription Program** has **NO** matching requirements. 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 3** 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-010373 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 iPortal 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 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the NIFA Grants 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 [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

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

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants 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 Produce Prescription Program. Basic project components should be included in the PS, such as the number of participants to be served; produce prescription amount and duration; and the educational opportunity/ies related to nutrition. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8. Project Narrative (PN).** The PN 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. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Organizing your proposal, clearly labeling each section, and sequencing them as indicated below will help reviewers find the information to evaluate your proposal. Applications exceeding these limits may be administratively declined without review. The PN must include all the following:
 - a. Introduction to Community(ies) to be involved in the Project and the Benefit to the Community(ies);
 - b. Personnel and Resources of the Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project;
 - c. Project Goals, Intended Outcomes, and Relationship to GusNIP Produce Prescription Program Purpose and Priorities;
 - d. Activities to Achieve the Goals;

- e. Evaluation;
- f. Sustainability;
- g. non-supplantation;
- h. (If applicable) Response to Previous Review.

- a. **Introduction to the Community(ies) involved in the Project and the Benefit to the Community(ies).** Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local food and healthcare economy or food and healthcare system, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community(ies) to be served. Beyond a recitation of statistics, applications should describe local capabilities and assets, such as those identified in a community needs assessment, and the involvement of historically underserved communities in the context of project activities and operations, such as human centered design or community advisory board.

Address how the project team will verify participants in the produce prescription program according to eligibility and the primary health issues of the audience to be served, and how these relate to project goals and objectives. Note the eligible individuals or beneficiaries of the project and the community/health needs and opportunities being addressed should directly relate to project goals and the objectives. Describe how the community(ies) will benefit from a Produce Prescription project.

- b. **Personnel and Resources of the Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.** List the organizations and communities to be involved in carrying out the proposed project. Include a summary description of the relevant previous work and experience of each community group, organization, or healthcare entity, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. For 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.

The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership should reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project activities or similar types of activities. Specify the degree to which paid, and volunteer staff will be utilized. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard.

To the extent practicable, ensure that residents are involved in planning; in particular, describe how the communities being served (particularly the participants, residents, and organizations) have been or will be involved in planning the project and will be engaged in its implementation and evaluation processes. Please reference planning activities, assessments, meetings, or other activities that demonstrate community and healthcare entity input into key decision-making.

- c. **Project Goals, Intended Outcomes, and Relationship to GusNIP Produce Prescription Program Purpose and Priorities.** Concisely present the goals, associated objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the needs identified in the introduction, such as the numbers served, anticipated knowledge gains, change in action or change in condition (e.g., behavior change, improved HbA1c, BP, etc.). Educational opportunity/ies related to nutrition; such as nutrition counselling or nutrition education curriculum/intervention and their evidence-base should be described in this section. Applicants need to describe the range of fresh fruits and vegetables to be offered to project participants as well as how the project team will ensure no tax is collected on the fresh fruit and vegetable prescription. Applicants must clearly present the rationale for the amount and duration of the produce prescription. NIFA recognizes that food supply and food system disruptions may hinder the ability to access fresh fruits and vegetables. If the community involved in the proposed project continues to face such disruptions as a result of the public health emergency include a thorough description and justification. NIFA also encourages applicants to propose projects that emphasize culturally sensitive food and/or food practices. If this impacts the range of fresh fruits and vegetables that will be prescribed, or the educational opportunity/ies related to nutrition, provide a thorough description and justification.

Outcomes should describe specific changes in knowledge, action, or condition that will occur because of the project and that will constitute “success” for the initiative. Outcomes should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

Concisely present how the proposed project and its intended outcomes will address the primary goals of the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program as described in [Part I. B](#) of the RFA. Discuss the specific changes in knowledge, action, or condition.

- d. **Activities to Achieve the Goals.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and cover items 1-9 described in [Part I.C](#). Discuss how the proposed project outcomes will be realized by providing a systematic description of how the most important steps or milestones will be accomplished. Particular attention should be given to existing technical capabilities and any technical solutions that must be developed for project goals and intended outcomes to be achieved.

In addition to these descriptions, it is recommended that a table be provided with implementation details for these activities, including: (a) specific steps and achievements in planning, implementing, and evaluating; (b) timetables for milestones; and, as relevant, (c) expected numbers of participants involved in each step of the process. Most relevant is that the description of all required items includes an explanation of why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application.

- e. **Evaluation.** Describe the method(s) of evaluating success developing a viable produce prescription project. Clearly describe the metrics that will be used to evaluate the impact of the proposed project on (1) the improvement of dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; (2) the reduction of individual and household food insecurity; and (3) the reduction in healthcare use (e.g., hospital admissions, emergency

room (ER)/emergency department (ED) visits, regular office visits, urgent care visits, etc.) and associated costs. The description of evaluation methods must include (1) a process assessment that documents the process, challenges, and success of implementation and operations and (2) an outcome assessment that documents the project's effectiveness in (a) improving dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; (b) reducing individual and household food insecurity; and (c) reducing healthcare use and associated costs among eligible participants. A menu of potential healthcare utilization and healthcare cost metrics can be found via the [GusNIP Produce Prescription request for applications resource page](#). Outcome assessment requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) review. Project process assessment results must be provided to the NTAE center annually. At a minimum, the outcome assessment must include collecting core firm-level and participant-level metrics, measures of healthcare use and associated costs, cooperating with, and contributing core data to the NTAE center. The core participant-level data collection is an annual pre- and post-survey. The sample size for participant-level data collection is powered to be able to detect a ¼ cup change in fruit and vegetable consumption using the 10-item fruit and vegetable intake Dietary Screener Questionnaire (DSQ). Typically, the sample size ranges from 100 to 130 participants completing pre- and post-surveys. Beyond the minimum evaluation requirements, applicants are encouraged to design evaluation plans that advance our understanding of the most effective dosage, duration, and complementary supports (e.g., nutrition education) of produce prescription projects.

Applicants should discuss any opportunities and challenges with IRB review and the GusNIP Comprehensive Program Evaluation requirements described in [Part I.D.8](#) of the RFA and how they will be addressed to meet the minimum evaluation requirements. Proposals should also describe any previous process, outcome, and impact evaluation experience with the participants to be served or other related food programs. The proposal should demonstrate the capacity and willingness to comply with the evaluation requirements.

- f. **Sustainability.** Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period, discuss how an infusion of Federal funds will advance local capacity-building and achieve sustainability. Projects may identify actual or potential funding sources for continuation of the project. Applicants should differentiate between how the basic elements of the project will be continued versus how the historically underserved community will be changed and its capacity advanced.
- g. **Non-supplantation.** Proposals must be for projects that will supplement, not replace, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for expenditure on produce prescription project activities. Applications must be for 1) new projects, 2) expanding existing projects, or 3) enhancing existing projects. They may not be used to replace State/Territory or local funds that would, in the absence of Federal aid, be available or forthcoming for produce prescription projects. In the case of applications that will expand or enhance existing projects, this section must clearly describe lessons learned, what can be improved, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into the current application to ensure an effective and successful project.

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

3. Field 9, Bibliography & References Cited. Provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Project Narrative. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Include only bibliographic citations. Applicants should be careful to follow scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the application. To attach Bibliography and References Cited, click “Add Attachment”. Bibliography and References are not part of the Project Narrative page limitation. See **Part V Section 120** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions for this field. All attachments must be in PDF format.

4. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V Section 120** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions for this field. All attachments must be in PDF format.

The following required application documents must be uploaded as separate files to **Field 12**.

1. **Logic Model.** Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ in the document header and save file as ‘LogicModel’. It is recommended that this section be no more than one-page. See [Logic Model Planning Process](#).
2. **Business Plan.** Title the attachment as ‘Business Plan’ in the document header and save file as ‘BusinessPlan’. The Business Plan should provide evidence, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a management business plan, to demonstrate how sustainability of the project will be achieved. Business plan outlines or any other documentation of evidence for sustainability should be no more than five pages.
3. **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](#)). If you need help in preparing a data management plan or have questions about what constitutes a data management plan for this role (including questions about data privacy, etc.), please contact the NIFA program contacts listed at the end of this RFA.
4. **Fiscal Agent Letter.** See [Part III.A.3](#) of this RFA. If it is necessary to include a fiscal agent letter, then title the attachment as ‘Fiscal Agent’ in the document header and save file as ‘FiscalAgent’. Include documents showing the applicant’s non-profit status here.
5. **Key Organization Support.** Attach signed letter(s) of support from healthcare partner(s) and the GusNIP NTAE Center. Healthcare partner(s) letter(s) must explain the role of the organization including any activities the organization is expected to conduct in support of the project. Letters of support from any other key organizations involved in the project,

acknowledging their support, contributions, and commitment should be attached here. In cases where a partner organization will ensure that no tax is collected on produce prescriptions, attestation should be included in the partner's letter of support. A limited number of additional support letters – such as those from farmers or partner organizations, where appropriate, are encouraged to provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and future decision-making. This section is limited to two (2) page letters of support from each key organization.

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants 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 [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)).

R&R Budget. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. Field D. Domestic Travel. During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend a PD meeting each year. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss their projects, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.
2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV, C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.
3. Produce Prescription Dollars - Total fresh fruit and vegetable prescription dollars must be summarized in the Budget Justification with clear affirmation of which budget category or categories were used to calculate the total. For example, a project design may necessitate produce prescriptions are included in F.8 Other Direct Costs and F.5 Subawards/Contractual Costs, however, the Budget Justification should clearly describe that total fresh fruit and vegetable prescriptions are a sum of F.8 and the portion of F.5 specified as produce prescriptions.

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. **Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying.** Enter the program name “**Produce Prescription Program**” and the program code “**PPR**”. Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Submission Dates and Times

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. Refer to the NIFA Grants.gov [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) to assist with this review. The application should be checked for the following required item(s). The list includes:

1. Project Summary/Abstract
2. Project Narrative
3. Bibliography & References Cited
4. Logic Model
5. Data Management Plan

6. Letter of Support from Healthcare Partner
7. Letter of Support from GusNIP NTAE Center
8. Current and Pending Support
9. Conflict of Interest List
10. Budget
11. Budget Justification

This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight items that may be overlooked. Instructions for submitting an application are included in **Part IV** of the NIFA Grants.gov. [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

Applications are due by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on February 28, 2024, for FY2024 applications**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should **FIRST** contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems.

Keep a record of any such correspondence. See [Part IV. A](#) of this RFA for Grants.gov contact information. We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within **30 days** of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in [Part VII](#) of this RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs

Indirect Costs (IDC) – See below for funding restrictions regarding IDC, and **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.

Applicants may request full indirect costs, on total grant funds. To do so, the applicant must use the current negotiated indirect cost 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 indirect cost rate agreement from the cognizant agency to recover indirect 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 does not have a negotiated rate and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant may request an IDC rate. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process and need only to calculate a rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package 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.

See [NIFA Indirect Costs](#) for information including additional resources and [NIFA Indirect Cost Guidance Chart](#).

Sub-award Restriction

The applicant is expected to perform a substantive portion of the project, and no more than 33 percent of the project 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 33% 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). NIFA pre-approval from the National Program Leader should be uploaded to Field 12 of the grant application in PDF. 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.)

Funding Period

Produce prescription program awards are funded for a 3-year performance period. The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to sub-awards made under awards.

Other Submission Requirements

Please follow the submission requirements noted in **Part IV** in the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) For information about the status of a submitted application, see **Part VI** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

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, gender representation, and an equitable age distribution.
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 a governmental agency or a non-profit organization.
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 bibliography in PDF.
4. The application must include a letter of support from a relevant healthcare partner in PDF.
5. The application must include a letter of support from the GusNIP NTAE Center in PDF.
6. The proposed budget must not exceed \$500,000 identified in Table 2 of the RFA.
7. The proposed project must demonstrate capacity and willingness to participate in the comprehensive program evaluation requirements with the NTAE centers.

If the applicant has received USDA grant awards in the past, then the history of compliance with grant requirements will also be considered. These include NIFA reporting requirements, such as annual REEport technical reports, REEport financial reports, and SF-425 Federal Financial Reports.

If an application includes a project design that involves a SNAP/NAP transaction, then a SNAP/NAP Policy Analyst will review grant applications for adherence to SNAP/NAP program rules and regulations.

Program Area Evaluation Criteria:

NIFA will use the following evaluation criteria to review applications submitted in response to the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program RFA.

- a. **Focus on Underrepresented Geographies and/or Underrepresented Communities.** Identify the proposed project focus on any underrepresented geographies and/or underrepresented communities and state what percentage of the project budget will be allocated to serving these group(s);
- b. **Ability to Serve Underrepresented Geographies and/or Underrepresented Communities.** Provide evidence of the ability to serve the needs of the identified audience, e.g., involvement of partner(s) with expertise and a strong track record of having previously done so.
- c. **Community Benefits.** The significance of the food and nutrition security and diet-related health condition(s) that will be addressed by the proposed project, and an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs.
- d. **Project Goals, Objectives, and Intended Outcomes.** The amount and duration of the produce prescription is justified. The educational opportunity/ies on nutrition to be provided is/are justified. The appropriateness of the goals, objectives, and outcomes of

the project and how these goals will be achieved throughout the project period.

- e. **Qualifications of the Organizations Involved in the Project.** The relevance of the experience of the organizations that are involved in the proposed project including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing, or the extent to which these organizations demonstrate the capacity to contribute to the overall project. The applicant organization demonstrates a history of, commitment to, and/or direct involvement in food and nutrition security, diet-related disease prevention, health equity, or produce prescription projects in historically underserved communities or in communities characterized with residents predominantly living under the Federal poverty line. 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.
- f. **Evaluation.** Applicant clearly describes the metrics that will be used to evaluate the impact of the proposed project on (1) the improvement of dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; (2) the reduction of individual and household food insecurity; and (3) the reduction in healthcare use (e.g., hospital admissions, emergency room (ER)/emergency department (ED) visits, regular office visits, urgent care visits, etc.) and associated costs. Capacity to undertake a self-assessment, collect the minimum core data set, cooperate with, and participate in the GusNIP Comprehensive Evaluation, share project results in high quality community food security work that emphasizes food security, nutritional quality, environmental stewardship, and economic and social equity. The strength of the proposed project's evaluation plan consistent with the state of the science and likelihood to further the produce prescription field.
- g. **Sustainability.** Demonstrate the potential for long-term program sustainability addressing future financial support as well as capacity to conduct project activities. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that the project is likely to become self-sustaining, e.g., a market analysis or the outlines of a business plan.
- h. **Timeline and Budget:** The timeline and budget for accomplishing project goals, objectives, and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

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 Federal Assistance 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 required).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award. All grantees are required to inform NIFA regarding any changes in their grant project's primary point(s) of contact. At the very least this means that grantees must request prior approval from Program and Administrative points of contact of any change to their Project Directors (PD) and Authorized Representatives (AR) prior to the change. Grantees are also strongly encouraged to inform their GusNIP NTAE program advisors of changes to their PD, AR, and other primary grantee points of contact in a timely fashion. The Program and Administrative points of contact are listed in box 14 of grantees Notice of Award. As necessary, NIFA will provide updates to Program and Administrative points of contacts to all grantees.
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, [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense. ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
6. 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;
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
8. 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](#).

D. Limited English Proficiency

NIFA offers language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, free of charge. If you need interpretation or translation services, please visit NIFA Language Access Services or contact Lois Tuttle, Equal Opportunity Specialist, at Lois.Tuttle@usda.gov or (443) 386-9488.

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

Mallory M. Koenings, PhD, RDN
National Program Leader
Mallory.Koenings@usda.gov
202-604-1985

Kristopher Grimes, PhD
National Program Leader
kristopher.grimes@usda.gov
502-343-9259

NIFA and FNS GusNIP Team
Sm.fn.GusNIP@usda.gov

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
U.S. Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – AFRI

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Representative – AR

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA

Coordinated Agricultural Project – CAP

Data Management Plan – DMP

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive – FINI

Food and Nutrition Service – FNS

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Grant Program – GusNIP

Nutrition Assistance Program – NAP

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center – NTAE

Produce Prescription program code – PPR

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP

United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#), and [7 CFR 3430 Subpart P Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program](#) for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program. If a conflict exists between the two regulations, the program-specific Administrative Provision is overriding.

Definitions

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:

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- 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, and economic and 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 PPR program area any variety of fresh whole or cut fruits and vegetables.

Healthcare Provider Group:

An organized group of 5 or more persons or places licensed to give health care.

Incentives:

Any financial or non-financial encouragement for eligible individuals to purchase or procure fresh fruits and vegetables See [Part I. D.](#) of this RFA 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.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program.

Non-profit Organization:

A Non-profit corporation is 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 U.S.C 2028](#)).

Nutrition Security:

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

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.

Resubmitted Application:

A project application that was previously submitted to the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program, but the application was not funded.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

The supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 ([7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.](#)). The SNAP program operates in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Virgin Islands.

Underrepresented GusNIP Produce Prescription Program Geography:

Every year NIFA determines the geographies that are underrepresented in the GusNIP Produce Prescription Program (PPR) portfolio. This is a list of eligible geographies that have no active PPR awards.

Value Chain:

Adding value to a product, including production, marketing, and the provision of after-sales service, and incorporating fair pricing to farms. It also 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.