



United States
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The logo for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), featuring the letters "NIFA" in a large, white, serif font. The letters are set against a background of a stylized, orange and yellow landscape with rolling hills and a sun or moon in the sky.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Competitive Grants Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 14, 2024

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$36,300,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-FINI-010594

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.331

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) 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, May 14, 2024 [Ref to Part I, C of this RFA]
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)

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 (RFA) 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. Please use the following subject line: Response to The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program RFA.

WHAT'S NEW FOR FY 2024?

1. Clarifies in [Part I.D.](#) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Policy that the EBT card number may not be used in whole or in part to track SNAP participant engagement with the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program, removes the limitation of project outreach to census tracts where more than 12% of the population receives SNAP benefits, and clarifies the use of innovation and technologies.
2. Clarifies in [Part I.D.](#) Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) Block Grants Policy.
3. Includes all SNAP and/or NAP requirements in the required Specific Program and Incentive Information section of the Project Narrative.
4. Clarifies required attendance of the Project Director (PD) at the PD meeting each year.
5. Clarifies that institutions of higher education that believe they 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.
6. 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 notice identifies the objectives for GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

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 grants in FY 2024 is approximately \$36,300,000.

NIFA requests applications for GusNIP for FY 2024 to support Nutrition Incentive Program projects. The Nutrition Incentive Program funds and evaluates projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands and the USDA Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) Block Grants for Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands by providing a financial incentive at the point of purchase.

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 1 hour with the GusNIP NTAE Center's Nutrition Incentive Hub for free group sessions, one-on-one support, and to review common mistakes.

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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, Assistance Listing 10.331, is aligned with the following:

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

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

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

Priority 3: Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program, Assistance Listing 10.331, brings together stakeholders from distinct parts of the food system to foster understanding of how they might leverage Federal nutrition assistance programs to improve food insecurity, nutrition, and health status of participating households.

Program History

Since 2011, community and organization-led nutrition programs have tested innovative techniques to incentivize the purchase of fruits and vegetables and increase their affordability and consumption among SNAP participants. The earliest iterations include the Hampden County, Massachusetts Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) and the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) national pilot program administered by NIFA and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). FINI Projects (1) maximized the funds for incentives; (2) used direct-to-consumer sales marketing; (3) demonstrated a track record of successful nutrition incentive programs; (4) provided local or regional fruits and vegetables; and (5) were located in underserved communities. Rigorous evaluation of both HIP and FINI found that these programs increased the purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables. For more on this history and to access the detailed HIP and FINI reports, please visit [A Look Back: Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program Increases Fruit and Vegetable Purchases, Leads to Launch of GusNIP](#).

Since it was established in the 2018 Farm Bill, the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) portfolio has provided over \$290 million in funding to nearly 230 projects. Gus Schumacher was a leader across agriculture and an advocate for all families having access to healthy, local food. The GusNIP portfolio includes three competitive grant programs, the Nutrition Incentive Program, Produce Prescription Program, and National Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers Program. The GusNIP comprehensive evaluation [Year 3 Impact Findings](#) continues to show exciting impacts. From September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022, Year 3 of GusNIP, grantees doubled the number of locations where SNAP and GusNIP program participants can receive fruit and vegetable incentives. Also during Year 3, participants redeemed more than \$41 million in fruit and vegetable incentives, which generated over \$85 million impacting farmers, boosting economic recovery, and aiding in the resiliency of local communities. Participating in a Nutrition Incentive Program project for 6 months or more is

associated with improved food security and increased fruit and vegetable consumption, compared to first time participants and those participating for less than 6 months.

Current Program

Currently, the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program aims to fund and evaluate projects intended to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by USDA SNAP participants in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands and the USDA NAP Block Grants participants in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands by providing incentives at the point of purchase. When the term “SNAP/NAP” is used it is inclusive of both USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the USDA Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) Block Grants. The terms ‘SNAP’, ‘NAP’, and ‘fruits and vegetables’ are defined in [Appendix III](#) of this document.

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program is designed to support growth through three incremental program areas. These program areas nurture eligible organizations to initiate pilot projects, then increase their capacity and scale to propose projects with greater reach, scope, and complexity to standard projects and large-scale projects. These investments support the sustainability vision of the GusNIP portfolio whereby Federal funds are leveraged to advance local capacity and over time other funding sources or business plans are secured for the projects to become self-sustaining.

The complete list of GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Priorities is available in the evaluation section [Part V.B.](#) of this RFA. NIFA encourages pursuing these priorities through application of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in collaboration and consultation with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples if consistent with the project 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, LGBTQIA+ communities, 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 Nutrition Incentive Program geographies, such as Alaska, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Connecticut, Delaware, Guam, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

All applications submitted in response to this RFA will be competitively peer reviewed and ranked in accordance with the evaluation criteria in [Part V.B.](#) Where proposals are found to be equally meritorious, based on peer review, selection for funding will be weighed in favor of proposals aligning with and advancing the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program purpose and priorities.

All GusNIP nutrition incentive project proposals must:

1. Include a letter of support from applicable SNAP Implementing Agency(ies) or NAP Territory Agency(ies) administering SNAP and NAP respectively;
2. Aim to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among SNAP/NAP participants by providing fruit and vegetable incentives at the point of purchase;
3. Track the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP participants;
4. Follow the policies, rules, and regulations of the respective food assistance program(s) their nutrition incentive project will partner with;
5. Ensure that the same terms and conditions apply to purchases made by SNAP/NAP participants with incentives provided under the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program as apply to purchases made by individuals who are not members of households receiving SNAP/NAP benefits as provided in [7 C.F.R. 278.2\(b\)](#);
6. Participate in the GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation, including required project data collection, and sharing of data with the NTAE.

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

Examples of Nutrition Incentive Program projects include, but are not limited to, innovative strategies to provide fruit and vegetable incentives and increase the redemption rate at the point of purchase at SNAP/NAP authorized retailers, including food stores, market stands, farmers markets, direct-marketing farmers (e.g., Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs)), marketing and consumer cooperatives, and other SNAP/NAP authorized retail firms.

The Nutrition Incentive Program will support three program area priorities as follows:

1. GusNIP Pilot Projects
2. GusNIP Standard Projects
3. GusNIP Large Scale Projects

1. GusNIP Pilot Projects (FPP)

Table 2: GusNIP Pilot Projects (FPP) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code	FPP
Program Code Name	GusNIP Pilot Projects (FPP)
ALN	10.331
Project Type	Pilot Project
Application Deadline	May 14, 2024
Grant Duration	12 months
Maximum Award Amount	\$100,000

GusNIP Pilot Projects (FPP) support new pilot projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP participants, by providing incentives at the point of purchase. These differ in their scale from the GusNIP Standard (FIP) and Large-Scale Projects (FLSP). Pilot

projects are for new entrants to the nutrition incentive field to enhance their portfolios and their abilities to create and sustain fruit and vegetable incentive projects. Amounts requested under FPP must be less than or equal to \$100,000. Evaluation criteria for reviewing pilot project proposals are different from those utilized for reviewing standard and large-scale proposals. FPPs must operate through authorized SNAP/NAP retailers and comply with all relevant SNAP/NAP regulations and operating requirements.

Priority for funding under the GusNIP Pilot Projects will be given to applicants who have not received grant funding in the past. This priority does not exclude previous grant recipients from being funded. FPP grant proposals will be evaluated based on community needs, objectives, activities, and outcomes that are in alignment with the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program’s primary purpose and priorities as described in [Part V.B](#). The expectations for pilot projects, however, will be commensurate with their size (e.g., smaller audiences, more limited geographic reach, less complex collaborative arrangements) and provide an opportunity for smaller or less experienced organizations to propose projects that have smaller budgets and less complex administration.

The terms ‘SNAP’, ‘NAP’, and ‘fruits and vegetables’ are defined in [Appendix III](#) of this document.

Project Evaluation. All projects must involve SNAP/NAP participants and a SNAP/NAP purchase. All FPPs must submit a project proposal that includes a self-assessment method of evaluating the success of the program in developing a viable project, such as a process evaluation or formative evaluation. Because GusNIP Pilot Projects are in the earliest stages of development, they are not required to submit a comprehensive program evaluation like the FIP and FSLP projects. FPPs are encouraged to work with the NTAE Center to include GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation core participant-level and firm-level metrics to be well positioned for future funding opportunities. FPP grantees will be required to provide their self-assessment data to the NTAE. Additional information is provided in [Part I.D](#) of this RFA.

2. GusNIP Standard Projects (FIP)

Table 3: GusNIP Standard Projects (FIP) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code	FIP
Program Code Name	GusNIP Standard Projects (FIP)
ALN	10.331
Project Type	Standard Project
Application Deadline	May 14, 2024
Grant Duration	Up to 48 months
Maximum Award Amount	\$500,000

GusNIP Standard Projects (FIP) support the development and evaluation of new and established tribal, county, district, multi-county, territory, or state-wide projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP participants by providing incentives at the point of purchase. These differ in their scale from GusNIP Large-Scale Projects (FLSP). Projects will test

strategies to inform future efforts. Amounts requested under FIP must be less than or equal to \$500,000. FIP grant proposals will be evaluated based on community needs, objectives, activities, and outcomes that are in alignment with the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program’s primary purpose and priorities as described in [Part V, B](#) of this RFA.

Organizations in this category are typically not new to implementing such programs. FIPs do not replace current programming and are required to enhance understanding of project components that contribute to increased purchase and/or consumption of fruits and vegetables and/or expand the breadth, scope, or reach of these programs. FIPs are not in the pilot stages of development and should have established relationships with necessary partners and collaborators. FIPs must operate through authorized SNAP/NAP retailers and comply with all relevant SNAP/NAP regulations and operating requirements. FIPs must use effective and efficient SNAP/NAP incentive redemption technologies. 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.

The terms ‘SNAP’, ‘NAP’, and ‘fruits and vegetables’ are defined in [Appendix III](#) of this document.

Project Evaluation. All FIPs must involve SNAP/NAP participants and a SNAP/NAP purchase. All FIP proposals must include an evaluation of whether the project met its goals and objectives. All FIP grantees will be required to participate in the GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation, collect core participant-level and firm-level metrics, cooperate with, and contribute core participant-level and firm-level data to the NTAE. Additional information is provided in [Part I, D](#) of this RFA.

3. GusNIP Large Scale Projects (FLSP)

Table 4: GusNIP Large Scale Projects (FLSP) Key Information

	Title	Description
Program Code		FLSP
Program Code Name		GusNIP Large Scale Projects (FLSP)
ALN		10.331
Project Type		Large Scale Project
Application Deadline		May 14, 2024
Grant Duration		Up to 48 months
Maximum Award Amount:		> \$500,000

GusNIP Large-Scale Projects (FLSP) are designed to create or support large-scale multi-county, territory, state-wide, Tribal Nation, and regional incentive programs that increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP participants by providing incentives at the point of purchase. Projects will test strategies to inform future efforts. Amounts requested under FLSP must be greater than \$500,000. FLSP proposals will be evaluated based on community needs, objectives, activities, and outcomes that are in alignment with the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program’s primary purpose and priorities as described in [Part V, B](#) of this RFA.

The terms ‘SNAP’, ‘NAP’, and ‘fruits and vegetables’ are defined in [Appendix III](#) of this document.

Organizations in this category are typically not new to implementing such programs. FLSPs do not replace current programming and are required to enhance understanding of project components that increase purchase and/or consumption of fruits and vegetables and/or expand the breadth, scope, or reach of these programs. FSLPs are not in the pilot stages of development and should have established relationships with necessary partners and collaborators. FLSPs must not only use effective and efficient incentive redemption technologies but test innovative outreach and promotion strategies to increase fruit and vegetable purchases and/or consumption. FSLPs must operate through authorized SNAP/NAP retailers and comply with all relevant SNAP/NAP regulations and operating requirements. The expectations for large-scale projects, however, will be commensurate with their size.

Project Evaluation. All FSLPs must involve SNAP/NAP participants and a SNAP/NAP purchase. All FSLP proposals must include an evaluation of whether the project met its goals and objectives. All FLSP grantees will be required to participate in the GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation, collect core participant-level and firm-level metrics, cooperate with, and contribute core participant-level and firm-level data to the NTAE. A higher level of rigor will be expected for the FLSP evaluations and sustainability plans.

D. Program Policy

This section deals with certain aspects of SNAP/NAP policies as they pertain to the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program (NI). This section also deals with policies regarding the participation of SNAP/NAP authorized retailers or firms (e.g., convenience stores, grocery stores, farmers markets, direct-marketing farmers) participating in NI projects. For SNAP, “Firm” is defined at [7 CFR 271.2](#). SNAP and NAP are distinct food assistance programs with their own program rules and regulations. Applications must follow the policies of the respective food assistance program(s) their nutrition incentive project will partner with. 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 encouragement that would increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP participants.

- a. Examples of allowable financial incentives include but are not limited to coupons or gift cards.
- b. Examples of unallowable incentives include, but are not limited to, giveaways of non-food items, such as appliances, cooking utensils, lottery or raffle tickets. Gift cards are unallowable for use as incentives if the gift card can be used for any non-SNAP/NAP item.

The cost of incentives and supplies, such as reinforcement items and educational extenders (e.g., cooking utensils to prepare fruits and vegetables for consumption), must be allowable under the applicable cost principles in [2 CFR part 200](#), Subpart E. Unallowable incentives may not be paid for with either Federal or matching funds.

2. Definition of Fruits and Vegetables.

The definition of fruits and vegetables for the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program includes 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). If any of these items are a listed ingredient, then that product is generally not considered a fruit or vegetable. SNAP/NAP eligible seeds and plants intended for cultivation and consumption (e.g., tomato seeds or tomato plants) and fresh herbs (e.g., fresh basil, thyme, or mint) are also considered fruits and vegetables. Applicants are encouraged to utilize a variety of locally and regionally produced fruits and vegetables, especially those culturally appropriate for the target audience.

Examples of fruit-based and vegetable-based products that do not qualify for the purposes of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program include [accessory food](#) and beverage items such as powdered, dried, or extracted herbs and spices, fruit punch (less than 100% fruit juice), honey, ketchup, and other condiments, as well as multiple ingredient food items that are not primarily composed of fruits and vegetables (such as pastries containing fruit, frozen pizza pies, burritos, or fry bread). For more information about accessory foods, please visit https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/Accessory_Foods_List.pdf. If you are uncertain as to whether a fruit or vegetable product qualifies for the purposes of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program, please check the ingredients panel. If sugars, fats, oils, or salts are present as a listed ingredient on the product's nutrition label, then that product is generally not considered a fruit or vegetable.

3. SNAP/NAP Eligible Foods.

SNAP Eligible Foods encompass almost any food or beverage item without restrictions on specific ingredients. Please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items> for more information about what foods may be purchased with SNAP benefits.

Eligible Foods for each NAP block grant differ from SNAP. Consult the respective NAP-administrating agency for the most up-to-date information. Administrating agencies for NAP block grant programs include:

The Administration for the Socio-Economic Development of the Family Department of Family Affairs in Puerto Rico, <https://servicios.adsef.pr.gov/views/programa/programaAsistenciaNutricional.aspx>;

The American Samoa Department of Human and Social Services in the Territory of American Samoa, <http://dhss.as/index.html>; and

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs in Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, <https://dcca.gov.mp/nap-nutrition-assistance-program/>.

4. Incentive Models.

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program allows incentives to be earned when a SNAP/NAP participant purchases fruits and vegetables, or a SNAP/NAP eligible food. The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program allows the use of incentives for qualifying fruits and vegetables, or a

SNAP/NAP eligible food. A purchase is required, thus a “no purchase required” mechanism and non-financial incentives are not allowable.

The three allowable incentive models are as follows:

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

A GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program project must incentivize the purchase of fruits and vegetables. See [Part I, D](#) of this RFA for the definition of Fruits and Vegetables.

GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program applicants may choose to only incentivize a narrower subset of the fruit or vegetable category (e.g., incentivize only fresh, local fruit, traditional subsistence fruits and vegetables, or wild edible and medicinal plants). For example, some applicants have chosen to incentivize the fruits and vegetables that appear on their State’s Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Approved Products List (APL). This is an acceptable subset of fruits and vegetables to incentivize. However, some States’ WIC APLs may exclude products that would otherwise be considered fruits and vegetables (e.g., white potatoes). Some GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program applicants have, nevertheless, opted to incentivize only fruits and vegetables that appear on their States’ WIC APLs as this simplifies implementation with their participating firms. GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program applicants that seek to incentivize only a narrower subset of the fruit or vegetable category must justify their approach in their proposal.

Applicants may not incentivize only specific brand names or product lines of fruits or vegetables, or only a specific subset of fruits or vegetables that are not considered by USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and NIFA to advance the spirit or purpose of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program.

Applicants may structure fruit and vegetable incentive models as two separate transactions, during the first transaction the SNAP/NAP participant earns the incentive and during the second transaction the SNAP/NAP participant redeems their incentive. Applicants also have the flexibility to structure the fruit and vegetable incentive model as a single transaction where earning and redemption both take place in one transaction and the SNAP/NAP participant experiences a discount.

5. SNAP/NAP Authorized Retailer (Firm) Requirements.

Sales Tax. In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 7517\(d\)\(2\)](#), each State shall ensure that no State or local tax is collected on a purchase of food using GusNIP grant incentives. Applicants must work with the State/Territory(s) to ensure that no State/Territory or local tax is collected on a purchase of

food with assistance provided under GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects. See also [Food and Nutrition Act of 2008](#) Section 4(a).

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 \(b\)](#)). Therefore, the value of GusNIP incentives cannot be considered as income, including under laws relating to taxation, welfare, and public assistance programs.

GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects 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 GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects to households receiving benefits under SNAP/NAP 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](#)).

Equal Treatment. Because the statutory language of the 2018 Farm Bill requires GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects to provide incentives specifically to SNAP/NAP participants, the equal treatment provision of [7 CFR § 278.2\(b\)](#) and [7 CFR § 274.7\(f\)](#) does not apply to GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program projects for the purpose of providing incentives under the grant. However, if a firm wishes to provide any other type of incentive, outside of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program scope, or some kind of special treatment to only SNAP participants, the firm must first request an equal treatment waiver from FNS. For more information, visit the [Incentive Waiver Guidance](#) web page, or seek assistance from the NTAE.

SNAP EBT Cards and NAP Paper Coupons. SNAP [Electronic Benefits Transfer](#) (EBT) cards, Puerto Rico NAP EBT cards, and American Samoa NAP and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands NAP numerically serialized paper coupons are issued by the individual State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agencies. Under Federal SNAP/NAP rules neither EBT cards nor NAP paper coupons may be altered in any way. Therefore, applicants and their partner firms may not place barcode, retailer logos, or reward program stickers on EBT cards or coupons. Such items could be interpreted as showing Federal, State, or Territory affiliation, preference or endorsement of certain goods, services, or retailers.

To improve and expand EBT recipient fraud prevention, no SNAP EBT number in whole or in part is permitted to be collected as a means of tracking Nutrition Incentive project participation of individuals or households.

EBT cards may contain both cash and SNAP benefit accounts; therefore an “EBT” transaction does not always signify a SNAP transaction.

Nutrition Incentive project proposals must clearly indicate how a partner firm will identify SNAP/NAP transactions for purposes of earning a fruit and vegetable incentive.

Refunds. Refund policies differ between SNAP and NAP Programs. Applicants must adhere to the refund policy issued by the individual State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agency.

Specific to SNAP, cash refunds are prohibited for any product purchased with SNAP benefits. Providing cash refunds for SNAP scrip (paper, tokens, or receipts) or items purchased with SNAP benefits is considered trafficking SNAP benefits. This is a serious violation of SNAP rules and can have lasting legal ramifications for any firm engaging in such practices. Refunds of SNAP scrip and purchases made with SNAP benefits must be returned to the SNAP household's EBT SNAP account through a refund transaction on the POS device.

SNAP and Puerto Rico NAP authorized firms should have the same refund policy for SNAP participants as they do for other customers except that cash refunds must never be provided for items purchased with SNAP/ Puerto Rico NAP benefits. Instead, SNAP/ Puerto Rico NAP refunds should be returned onto the customer's EBT card. Because a SNAP/ Puerto Rico NAP purchase is required in order to earn a nutrition incentive, proposals must describe how refunds for SNAP/ Puerto Rico NAP benefits used to earn incentives will be monitored so that SNAP/ Puerto Rico NAP customers are not able obtain a refund for the SNAP/ Puerto Rico NAP purchase but keep the incentives earned from that purchase.

Incentives must never be exchanged for cash or other non-qualifying items. Furthermore, the value of the incentives must never be returned onto the customer's EBT card.

Spoiled or undesired food products purchased with nutrition incentives may be exchanged for the equivalent food products or other eligible products of the same value at the firm's discretion and/or based on their return policies for all customers.

Specific to American Samoa NAP and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands NAP, there is no refund policy with paper coupons.

Farmers Market Scrips. Farmers Markets (FM) with one central [Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\)](#) point-of-sale (POS) terminal often utilize scrip (paper, tokens, or receipts) for the redemption of SNAP benefits. Under such a system, SNAP participants swipe their EBT cards at the FM's central EBT POS terminal for a declared amount and receive specially marked tokens which can only be spent on specified food at the FM's stalls and booths. If, after shopping, SNAP participants have unused scrips remaining, they must be able to return to the FM's central EBT POS terminal for a refund back to the SNAP participant's EBT SNAP account either the same or subsequent day. For more information visit [SNAP Scrip Systems](#).

Nutrition Incentive Program proposals using a FM scrip system must use a GusNIP fruit and vegetable incentive scrip distinct from scrip that can be used to purchase any SNAP eligible food, regardless of the incentive model selected. FM scrips may only be redeemed as intended at the FM; the value of unused scrips may not be returned onto the SNAP participant's EBT SNAP account. Unused scrip can never be exchanged for cash, other scrip, or other items. Proposals must describe the process by which unused scrip purchased with SNAP benefits to earn the GusNIP incentive scrip can be returned without allowing SNAP participants to be able to retain the incentives without making the required upfront SNAP purchase.

Ex: A SNAP participant purchases \$5 worth of tokens with SNAP benefits to receive \$5 (dollar for dollar) worth of GusNIP incentive tokens. Later the SNAP customer wants to return \$2 worth of the SNAP tokens but already spent all \$5 worth of the incentive tokens, which would result in the customer effectively only making a \$3 SNAP purchase, but still receiving \$5 worth of incentives.

Spoiled or undesired food products purchased with GusNIP incentives may be exchanged for the equivalent food products or other eligible products of the same value at the firm's discretion.

Specific to American Samoa NAP and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands NAP, there is no exchange of paper coupons for Farmers Market Scrip. Puerto Rico NAP participants can purchase fresh agricultural products at Family Market venues with NAP benefits through the EBT card.

SNAP benefits may not be converted to e-tokens or any other type of currency not specifically approved under the scrip demonstration waiver. That waiver is only for Farmers Markets and only for physical scrip/tokens, or receipts returned to the vendor after an EBT transaction. Any proposals using e-tokens or other electronic delivery method for the incentives should provide a detailed description of the process, including the type of equipment needed by both vendors and customers, refund processes specific to e-tokens, and information about the technology provider.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs). CSAs are an allowable business model for both non-profit and for-profit farmers markets and direct-marketing farmers. CSAs may not accept payment from SNAP/NAP participants more than 14 days before food delivery or pickup.

SNAP/NAP Firm Data Confidentiality. Under [7 CFR § 278.1\(q\)](#), certain forms of SNAP/NAP firm information are prohibited from disclosure. [Local and State SNAP Agencies](#) may not disclose such firm data to GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program applicants. The names and addresses of SNAP/NAP authorized firms are available to the public and can be obtained via the SNAP/NAP [Retailer Locator](#) map.

However, the FNS number for individual firms is not public information and is subject to restrictions in SNAP/NAP regulations at [7 CFR § 278.1\(q\)](#); therefore, it must be obtained directly from the firm. Likewise, SNAP/NAP redemption or transaction data at the individual firm-level is considered protected data and must be obtained directly from the firm. GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program applicants should work in close concert with their participating firm to obtain any such required information. Both the FNS number and individual firm transaction/redemption data, while necessary for data collection and evaluation purposes, are protected and must not be published in a public report. Only aggregated SNAP/NAP firm transaction/redemption data may be reported.

Whenever transmitting any confidential SNAP/NAP firm data to FNS or NIFA, this data must be password protected.

Allowable Participation of Firms in your Grant Project. It is required to partner with firms to conduct a nutrition incentive project. Types of SNAP/NAP firms include grocery stores,

convenience stores, farmers markets, and direct-marketing farmers (CSAs and farm stands). Before a firm can participate in a GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program project, the applicant/grantee organization must confirm the firm is authorized.

The names and addresses of SNAP authorized firms are available to the public and can be obtained via the SNAP [Retailer Locator](#) map. If the firm is on the map, that means the firm is authorized. The map is updated every two weeks. Once the applicant/grantee organization has confirmed that the firm is SNAP authorized, the grantee may move forward with the firm's participation. Information on the eligibility requirement and process for SNAP authorization can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply-to-accept>.

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

Specific to NAP, approved firms in the territories of American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are issued an Authorization Card by the NAP Retail and Redemption Officer. Firms in Puerto Rico are authorized through the Departamento de la Familia. A list of PAN certified firms can be found at: <https://serviciosonline.adsef.pr.gov/>

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

Updating SNAP Retailer Partners. On a monthly basis throughout the period of performance of the award, awarded grantees will be responsible for submitting a password protected list of new SNAP partner firms participating under the grantee's Nutrition Incentive Program project to FNS. The list must contain the following information for the participating SNAP firm:

1. Organization name,
2. Nutrition Incentive Program award number,
3. Firm FNS number,
4. Firm name,
5. Firm address, and
6. Approximate start/end dates for the firm's participation.

Specific instructions on how to provide this information to FNS will be provided to grantees upon award.

SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot. On April 18, 2019, FNS launched an Online Purchasing Pilot (OPP) to test the possibility of allowing retailers to accept SNAP benefits through online transactions. If an applicant wishes to offer GusNIP incentives through online purchases, their

partnering firm(s) must be participating in the SNAP OPP. Applicants who are interested in learning more should visit [SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot](#) or reach out to the NTAE for additional guidance.

GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program proposals involving **online purchasing must include** a detailed description of how the process will work from the perspective of the SNAP household and the retailer.

Online Ordering. Online ordering, which is different from online purchasing, involves a SNAP/NAP participant placing an order online or over the phone, but paying for the purchase at the time of pick-up or delivery. Retailers should never accept payment by obtaining a clients' EBT card number and PIN or coupon number over the phone. Additionally, SNAP/NAP benefits cannot be used to pay for delivery fees; retailers that charge delivery fees must accept delivery fee payments via another form of tender.

GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program proposals involving **online ordering, must include** a detailed description of how the process will work from the perspective of the SNAP/NAP household and the retailer.

NAP Puerto Rico offers Purchases Online. Through Purchases Online NAP Puerto Rico participants may select their groceries through approved food retailers' online sites, then complete the payment transaction at the retailer's store when they pick-up their food.

Grantee Noncompliance with Program Policy. Grantees and their participating firms are expected to comply with all of the policies and requirements laid out in this RFA document as well as any GusNIP or SNAP/NAP policies or requirements further clarified in Q&As, memoranda, or other relevant USDA documents (including all applicable provisions of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and SNAP regulations at [7 CFR 278](#)). 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 the NTAE, allowing unapproved firms to participate in a project, and/or incentivizing ineligible products, or exchanging incentives for cash.

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.

Partner Firm Training and Outreach Plan. GusNIP nutrition incentive projects succeed best when firm employees are well-trained and involved as stakeholders in the project. Grant proposals must include a detailed partner firm training plan, which describes how and when partner firms and their employees will be trained prior to implementing a nutrition incentive

project at a particular firm location. At a minimum, the training plan should ensure that firms and their employees understand: 1) the GusNIP incentive model issuance and redemption process; 2) the allowable foods; and 3) where SNAP/NAP participants should be directed to if they have questions.

Restricting nutrition incentive projects to specific groups. Applicants who wish to provide fruit and vegetable incentives to only a certain subset of SNAP/NAP participants must show that: 1) the specific group meets the selection criteria listed in the request for applications; 2) the proposal provides a strong, evidence-based justification for selecting the specific group for their intervention; 3) the method for recruiting participants does not raise privacy or ethical concerns; and 4) outreach efforts to the specific group alone would not be sufficient to ensure comparable or satisfactory participation of the specific group. The State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agency must provide a statement in their Letter of Support concurring with the applicant's proposal to limit incentives to the selected group and the method for recruiting participants.

6. Allowable Forms of Project Outreach and Promotion.

Participant Outreach. GusNIP nutrition incentive projects cannot succeed in reaching SNAP/NAP participants without some form of project promotion, outreach, or advertising. Grant proposals must include a detailed SNAP/NAP participant outreach plan. At a minimum, the plan should address how SNAP/NAP participants will be informed of: 1) the fruit and vegetable incentive project and how it works; 2) when and where the project will be implemented; 3) how they can participate in the project; 4) the allowable foods; and 5) where they can get additional information.

If the corresponding State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agency will be involved in this outreach plan, the required Letter of Support from the State/Territory must make mention of their involvement and the extent to which they will provide support.

Grantees may promote or advertise their nutrition incentive projects using Federal and/or match funds using any mass media (e.g., television, radio, billboards, and geographically focused online social media advertisements). Such mass media advertisement will only be allowable as described under [2 CFR 200.421](#). Regardless of format, promotional activities funded with Federal and/or match funds:

- a. Must present factual statements intended to inform, not to persuade or make an emotional appeal;
- b. May include locational information about firms (i.e., the address of firms participating in the grantee's project);
- c. May also specify that firms accept SNAP/NAP and EBT/NAP paper coupons (this includes appropriate logo use. More information regarding the use of the SNAP logo can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/logo-guidance>); and
- d. May include information describing the mechanics of the grantee's project (e.g., spend \$1 on fruits or vegetables and earn \$1 to spend on more fruits or vegetables).

Under no circumstances may grantees engage in any activities intended to persuade or recruit individuals to apply for SNAP/NAP benefits. The use of GusNIP Federal and/or match funds to

encourage or assist individuals in applying for or obtaining SNAP/NAP benefits is strictly prohibited.

State/Territory Flexibilities in Project Promotion. Only State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agencies are permitted to contact SNAP/NAP participants using the contact information State/Territory Agencies collect for SNAP/NAP participation. This is protected information and thus cannot be provided to applicants/grantees even under an MOU. State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agencies are strongly encouraged to assist GusNIP nutrition incentive program grantees in their area. State/Territory SNAP/NAP Agencies can help by promoting incentives to SNAP/NAP households. For example, GusNIP promotional material may inform SNAP/NAP recipients on how fruit and vegetable incentives work, the location of participating firms, and where to get additional information.

Examples of allowable promotional activities include:

1. Making nutrition incentive project promotional materials available at local SNAP/NAP offices;
2. Allowing promotional videos to be played at local SNAP/NAP offices; or
3. The State/Territory Agency sending grantees' promotional materials through direct mail to area SNAP/NAP participants.

State/Territory Letter of Support. Applicants must submit a Letter of Support from applicable SNAP/NAP State/Territory Agency as part of their grant application. This letter must explain the specific role of the agency, including any activities the agency is expected to conduct in support of the project such as identifying SNAP/NAP participants, and/or sending them any correspondence related to the project. The letter must also identify any State/Territory Agency systems, including EBT systems, required to implement the proposed project along with an acknowledgment of who will bear the costs associated with any activities or system changes if applicable.

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 1 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 application. 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 FIP and FLSP grantee project; a comparative analysis to integrate results across sites and approaches, attempting to answer the question of what works best (and when or where); and technical assistance to support consistent implementation of evaluation protocols used by grantees/researchers/evaluators.

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

- a. Supporting implementation of evaluation requirements;
- b. 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;
- c. Facilitating access to or providing documentation of project implementation, operations, costs, and outcomes; and
- d. Facilitating site visits and interviews with project staff, partners, and program participants if necessary.

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

To provide data for the core 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 firm-level and participant-level data sets, complete an outlet survey of firms, and provide these data to the NTAE center.

Table 5: Comprehensive GusNIP Program Evaluation Table

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

9. SNAP/NAP Policy Analyst

GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program grant applications 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.

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 \$36,300,000 in FY 2024. The 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.

In FY 2024, applicants may submit the following types of applications:

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 Identifier (Field 4a)* on the SF-424 (R&R) form (see [Appendix III](#)).

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-funded research must be protected at all times. This includes human subject's assurance statements that the project has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or determined exempt from review. Please review [IRB](#) requirements for the 2018 changes and updates. 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 Nutrition Incentive Program grant 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 apply for a GusNIP Nutrition Incentive 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 within Field 12, Other Attachments ([Part IV, B](#) of this RFA) of their application. 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.

2. Partners and Collaborators

Applicants for GusNIP 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; and/or partnering entities for the purposes of providing additional resources and strengthening historical failure in underserved communities.

Nutrition Incentive 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. When planning partnerships and collaborations, applicants may sub-award to organizations not eligible to apply directly to the Nutrition Incentive Program provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project, will complete and maintain active registration with [SAM](#), and are otherwise eligible to receive Federal Assistance awards. All organizations not eligible to receive a Federal award are listed in SAM with the Exclusion Type. [See SAM Exclusion Types](#). See [Part IV, C](#) of this RFA for the subaward funding restriction.

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](#) of this RFA) 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](#) of this RFA.). Include documents showing the applicant 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 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

Applicants **MUST** provide matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds awarded under the Nutrition Incentive Program ([7 U.S.C. 7517\(b\)\(1\)](#)) as amended. Matching funds, also known as the non-Federal share, must be documented for all project years at the time the application is submitted in the R&R Budget and SF-424 forms. Nutrition incentive program applications to the FPP, FIP, and FLSP program area priorities, may meet the match requirement through cash and/or in-kind contributions, including third-party in-kind contributions fairly evaluated, including facilities, equipment, or services.

Tribal agency applicants may use funds provided to the Indian Tribe or the Tribal agency through a Federal agency (including the Indian Health Service) or other Federal benefit to satisfy all or part of the non-federal share described if such use is otherwise consistent with the purpose of such funds. Examples may include funds provided through the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program, the 1994 Extension Program, or the 1994 Equity Program.

The non-Federal share of the funding may come from Tribal government, State government, Territory government, local government, or private sources. Federal money cannot be used to match except for Tribal agencies.

Matching contributions must also be verifiable from records, not already included as a contribution to any other Federal award, and be directly related to, necessary and reasonable to accomplish the project. Examples of qualifying matching contributions may include direct costs such as: rent for office space used exclusively for the funded project; lands where a farmers market is to be held; copying or postage costs; and staff time from an entity other than the applicant for job training or nutrition education. Note that if an applicant partners with a for-profit entity, the non-Federal share that is required to be provided by the applicant may not include the services of an employee of that for-profit entity, including salaries or expenses covered by that employer ([7 USC 7517 \(b\)\(1\)\(D\)\(ii\)](#)).

SNAP/NAP State/Territory Agencies pay for 50% of the administration of SNAP/NAP and the Federal government pays for the other 50%. This 50% State SNAP/NAP administration cost cannot be used as matching funds for a Nutrition Incentive Project.

Applicants must include in the budget justification attestation of non-profit status for partners and collaborators services, salaries, and expenses.

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 6** 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 6: 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-010594 , 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 7: 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 8** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 8: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the <u>NIFA Grants Application Guide</u>)
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. Applicants are encouraged to list separate individuals as the Project Director and Authorized Representative, and ensure information is included for both, including email, address, and phone number.

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

For GusNIP Pilot Project (FPP) program area priority applications:

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 Nutrition Incentive Program. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8.** Project Narrative (PN). **The PN for GusNIP Pilot Project (FPP) program area priority applications** may not exceed **10 pages**, 1.5 spaced including written text, figures, and tables with 1-inch margins. The font size for text and tables should be no smaller than 12 points, Times New Roman. We have established this maximum (10 pages) to 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 for GusNIP FPP must include all the following clearly defined sections:

- a. **Introduction to Community(ies) to be involved in the Project and the Benefit to the Community(ies).** Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food 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 food 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.

Justify the need for the pilot program by noting the SNAP/NAP participants or beneficiaries of the project, and the community/health needs and opportunities being addressed, and how they should all directly relate to project goals and the objectives. Describe how the community(ies) will benefit from a Nutrition Incentive 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 SNAP/NAP Implementing Agency listed, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. 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.

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.

Where possible, ensure that residents are involved in planning; in particular, describe how the communities being served (particularly the SNAP/NAP 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 input into key decision-making.

- c. **Project Goals, Intended Outcomes, and Relationship to GusNIP Nutrition Incentive 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 and how the pilot project will contribute to the purpose

and priorities of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program as described in [Part V. B.](#) of the RFA. Discuss the specific changes intended among SNAP/NAP participants, such as the numbers served, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (e.g., increased consumption of fruits and vegetables). NIFA also encourages applicants to propose projects that emphasize culturally sensitive food and/or food practices.

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.

- d. **Activities to Achieve the Goals.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated. 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.

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 SNAP/NAP participants involved in each step of the process. Most relevant is 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 fruit and vegetable incentive project, such as process evaluation or formative evaluation. This should include, but is not limited to monitoring process, challenges, and successes of developing, implementing, and operating a viable project. Because GusNIP Pilot Projects are in the earliest stages of development, they are not required to submit a comprehensive program evaluation like the FIP and FSLP projects.

Applicants should discuss any opportunities and challenges with the GusNIP Comprehensive Program Evaluation requirements described in [Part I. D.](#) of this RFA and how they will be addressed to meet requirements. Pilot project applicants are encouraged to work with the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers (NTAE) Center to include GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation core participant-level and firm-level metrics to be well positioned for future funding opportunities.

Proposals should also describe any previous process, outcome, and impact evaluation experience with SNAP/NAP participants or other related food programs. The proposal should demonstrate the capacity and willingness to comply with the evaluation requirements. FPP grantees will be required to provide their self-assessment data to the NTAE.

- f. **Non-supplantation.** Proposals must be for projects that will supplement, not replace, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available to support incentive program 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 incentive programs. 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.
- g. **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.
- h. **Specific Program and Incentive Information.** Include the following information as a discrete section of the narrative to clearly communicate how the project will operate through authorized SNAP/NAP retailers and comply with applicable SNAP/NAP regulations and operating requirements. Do not reference other sections or charts located elsewhere in the proposal. Projects that incorporate multiple firm types, or incentive models must describe each firm type and/or model with equal clarity. A reader should understand where and how SNAP/NAP participants will earn and redeem fruit and vegetable incentives; if and how firms will identify and track participation and incentive redemption; and what benefit and incentive processing technologies will be used to achieve success.
- i. Indicate if the proposed project is a new incentive program, or an enhancement, expansion, or modification of an existing program. If the project is an enhancement, expansion, or modification of an existing program, do not assume the SNAP/NAP Policy Analyst is familiar with previous work.
 - ii. Indicate if any special SNAP/NAP waivers have been requested and approved by FNS. Describe what the FNS waivers include. List the type and number of SNAP/NAP authorized firms involved (e.g., 5 small brick and mortar stores, 3 farmers' markets, 2 online outlets, 1 CSA). Include if firms will participate in online ordering and/or the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot. If an identified firm is not SNAP/NAP authorized, describe the plan and timeline to achieve authorization.
 - iii. Describe the months and seasonality of the fruit and vegetable incentive project calendar (e.g., at a seasonal farmers market that will operate from June 15 through October 15 or at grocery retail outlets that operate year-round).
 - iv. Describe the fruit and vegetable incentive model(s) for all firm types. Include:
 - a. The SNAP/NAP products eligible for purchase to earn the incentive (e.g., all SNAP-eligible items; all fruits and vegetables; or a subset or narrower group of items, such as fresh fruits and vegetables or state or regionally grown fruits

- and vegetables).
- b. The eligible products for purchase when redeeming an incentive (e.g., all SNAP-eligible items; all fruits and vegetables; or a subset or narrower group of items, such as only state or regionally fruits and vegetables or fresh fruits and vegetables).
- c. The ratio of SNAP/NAP purchase to earned fruit and vegetable incentive during a transaction (e.g., a 1:2 ratio. For every \$1 SNAP/NAP benefits purchase, \$2 fruit and vegetable incentive is earned).
- d. Any minimum or maximum value of fruit and vegetable incentive that can be earned or redeemed per day, per month, or per year.
- e. Any policies about fruit and vegetable incentive expiration.
- v. Describe the project's point-of-sale transaction(s) to include each of the following. Match each transaction method with its firm type where applicable.
 - a. SNAP/NAP customer identification method(s).
 - b. The POS device or technology solution(s) to identify eligible SNAP/NAP purchases and fruit and vegetable incentives.
 - c. When and how participants and firms will know the amount of fruit and vegetable incentives earned or redeemed.
 - d. The refund monitoring process for foods purchased with SNAP/NAP benefits and fruit and vegetable incentives.
- vi. Describe the financial instrument and incentive distribution method(s) used to redeem earned fruit and vegetable incentives (e.g., tokens, paper voucher or coupons, loyalty account, EBT cards, or CSA share). Match each distribution method with firm type where applicable. Include any plans to incorporate forms of electronic incentives or integrate incentives into the State's/Territory's EBT system. Explain how data will be secured. Describe the process, including the type of equipment needed by both vendors and customers, refund processes specific to the electronic delivery method for incentives, and information about the technology provider.
- vii. Address how SNAP/NAP participants will be informed of the fruit and vegetable incentive project, when and where the project will be implemented, how they can participate in the project, the allowable foods; and where they can get additional information. Include project promotion and outreach plan activities in this section describing the communication of the fruit and vegetable incentive model(s) and delivery method(s) to SNAP/NAP participants.
- viii. Describe plans to train partner firms in the fruit and vegetable incentive model(s) and delivery method(s). Include cashier training plan and activities in this section.
- ix. State whether individual SNAP/NAP participants or households will

- be tracked. If yes, include the method(s) that will be used to track SNAP/NAP individuals and how data will be secured (e.g., a store loyalty card issued, phone number, or other non-EBT # identifier).
- x. Indicate if nutrition education or other interventions will be combined with the fruit and vegetable incentive.
 - xi. Indicate if SNAP/NAP participants will participate in questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups. Briefly describe recruitment methods and whether their participation will be required to earn a fruit and vegetable incentive.
 - xii. Indicate if the project anticipates making any technical enhancements to the firms' POS system(s), EBT, or other systems. Provide a detailed description of any such proposed technical enhancements.

3. **Field 12**, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

For GusNIP Standard Project (FIP) and GusNIP Large Scale Project (FLSP) program area priority applications:

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 Nutrition Incentive Program. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8.** Project Narrative (PN). **The PN for GusNIP Standard Project (FIP) and GusNIP Large Scale Project (FLSP) program area priority applications may 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. We have established this maximum (15 pages) to 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 for GusNIP FIP and FLSP must include all the following clearly defined sections:

- a. **Introduction to the Community(ies) to be involved in the Project and the Benefit to the Community(ies).** Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food 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 food 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.

Note the SNAP/NAP participants 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 Nutrition Incentive 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 SNAP/NAP State/Territory Agency, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. 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.

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 SNAP/NAP 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 input into key decision-making.

- c. **Project Goals and Intended Outcomes.** 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 or actions (e.g., increased consumption of fruits and vegetables).

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.

- d. **Activities to Achieve the Goals.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated. 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.

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 SNAP/NAP participants involved in each step of the process. Most relevant is an explanation of why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application.

- e. **Relationship to GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Purpose and Priorities.** Concisely present how the proposed project and its intended outcomes will contribute to the purpose and priorities of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program as described in [Part I, B](#) of this RFA. Discuss the specific changes intended among SNAP/NAP participants or in the communities served (e.g., increased food access) that address the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program purpose and priorities.
- f. **Evaluation.** Describe the qualitative and/or quantitative method(s) of evaluating success developing a viable fruit and vegetable incentive project. The evaluation 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 increasing fruit and vegetable purchases among SNAP/NAP participants. 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, cooperating with, and contributing core data to the NTAE center. The core participant-level data collection is an annual cross-sectional survey.
- Applicants should discuss any opportunities and challenges with IRB review and the GusNIP Comprehensive Program Evaluation requirements described in [Part I, D](#) of this RFA and how they will be addressed to meet requirements. Proposals should also describe any previous process, outcome, and impact evaluation experience with SNAP/NAP participants or other related food programs. The proposal should demonstrate the capacity and willingness to comply with the evaluation requirements.
- g. **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 over time other funding sources or business plans will be secured for the project to 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 continue to serve community members versus how the historically underserved community will be changed and its capacity advanced.
- h. **Non-supplantation.** Proposals must be for projects that will supplement, not replace, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available to support incentive program 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 incentive programs. 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.
- i. **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.

- j. **Specific Program and Incentive Information.** Include the following information as a discrete section of the narrative to clearly communicate how the project will operate through authorized SNAP/NAP retailers and comply with applicable SNAP/NAP regulations and operating requirements. Do not reference other sections or charts located elsewhere in the proposal. Projects that incorporate multiple firm types, or incentive models must describe each firm type and/or model with equal clarity. A reader should understand where and how SNAP/NAP participants will earn and redeem fruit and vegetable incentives; if and how firms will identify and track participation and incentive redemption; and what benefit and incentive processing technologies will be used to achieve success.
- a. Indicate if the proposed project is a new incentive program, or an enhancement, expansion, or modification of an existing program. If the project is an enhancement, expansion, or modification of an existing program, do not assume the SNAP/NAP Policy Analyst is familiar with previous work.
 - b. Indicate if any special SNAP/NAP waivers have been requested and approved by FNS. Describe what the FNS waivers include.
 - c. List the type and number of SNAP/NAP authorized firms involved (e.g., 5 small brick and mortar stores, 3 farmers' markets, 2 online outlets, 1 CSA). Include if firms will participate in online ordering and/or the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot. If an identified firm is not SNAP/NAP authorized, describe the plan and timeline to achieve authorization.
 - d. Describe the months and seasonality of the fruit and vegetable incentive project calendar (e.g., at a seasonal farmers market that will operate from June 15 through October 15 or at grocery retail outlets that operate year-round).
 - e. Describe the fruit and vegetable incentive model(s) for all firm types. Include:
 1. The SNAP/NAP products eligible for purchase to earn the incentive (e.g., all SNAP-eligible items; all fruits and vegetables; or a subset or narrower group of items, such as fresh fruits and vegetables or state or regionally grown fruits and vegetables).
 2. The eligible products for purchase when redeeming an incentive (e.g., all SNAP-eligible items; all fruits and vegetables; or a subset or narrower group of items, such as only state or regionally grown fruits and vegetables or fresh fruits and vegetables).
 3. The ratio of SNAP/NAP purchase to earned fruit and vegetable incentive during a transaction (e.g., a 1:2 ratio. For every \$1 SNAP/NAP benefits purchase, \$2 fruit and vegetable incentive is earned).
 4. Any minimum or maximum value of fruit and vegetable incentive that can be earned or redeemed per day, per month, or per year.

5. Any policies about fruit and vegetable incentive expiration.
- f. Describe the project's point-of-sale transaction(s) to include each of the following. Match each transaction method with its firm type where applicable.
 1. SNAP/NAP customer identification method(s).
 2. The POS device or technology solution(s) to identify eligible SNAP/NAP purchases and fruit and vegetable incentives.
 3. When and how participants and firms will know the amount of fruit and vegetable incentives earned or redeemed.
 4. The refund monitoring process for foods purchased with SNAP/NAP benefits and fruit and vegetable incentives.
 - g. Describe the financial instrument and incentive distribution method(s) used to redeem earned fruit and vegetable incentives (e.g., tokens, paper voucher or coupons, loyalty account, EBT cards, or CSA share). Match each distribution method with firm type where applicable. Include any plans to incorporate forms of electronic incentives or integrate incentives into the State's/Territory's EBT system. Explain how data will be secured. Describe the process, including the type of equipment needed by both vendors and customers, refund processes specific to the electronic delivery method for incentives, and information about the technology provider.
 - h. Address how SNAP/NAP participants will be informed of the fruit and vegetable incentive project, when and where the project will be implemented, how they can participate in the project, the allowable foods; and where they can get additional information. Include project promotion and outreach plan activities in this section describing the communication of the fruit and vegetable incentive model(s) and delivery method(s) to SNAP/NAP participants.
 - i. Describe plans to train partner firms in the fruit and vegetable incentive model(s) and delivery method(s). Include cashier training plan and activities in this section.
 - j. State whether individual SNAP/NAP participants or households will be tracked. If yes, include the method(s) that will be used to track SNAP/NAP individuals and how data will be secured (e.g., a store loyalty card issued, phone number, or other non-EBT # identifier).
 - k. Indicate if nutrition education or other interventions will be combined with the fruit and vegetable incentive.
 - l. Indicate if SNAP/NAP participants will participate in questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups. Briefly describe recruitment methods and whether their participation will be required to earn a fruit and vegetable incentive.
 - m. Indicate if the project anticipates making any technical enhancements to the firms' POS system(s), EBT, or other systems. Provide a detailed description of any such proposed technical enhancements.

3. **Field 12**, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

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

- a. **Logic Model.** A logic model is required and is limited to one-page. Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ in the document header and save file as ‘LogicModel’.
- b. **Data Management Plan (DMP).** 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](#)). Title the attachment as ‘Data Management Plan’ in the document header and save file as ‘DataManagementPlan’. 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 in [Appendix I](#) of this RFA.
- c. **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 an endowment or financial 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.
- d. **Fiscal Agent Letter.** See [Part III, A](#) 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 documentations of the applicant organization’s non-profit status here.
- e. **Appendices to Project Narrative.** Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices’. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. **Appendices are limited to 7 pages.**
- f. **Key Organization Support.** Attach signed letters of support from the State/Territory SNAP/NAP agency and from the GusNIP NTAE Center. State/Territory SNAP/NAP agency letter(s) of support are required. State/Territory SNAP/NAP agency letter(s) must explain the specific role of the agency, including any activities the agency is expected to conduct in support of the project. The letter must also identify any State/Territory agency systems, including EBT systems, required to implement the proposed project along with an acknowledgment of who will bear the costs associated with any system changes if applicable. Letters of support from any other key organizations involved in the project acknowledging their support, contributions, commitment, and matching commitment documentation should be attached here. Title the single attachment ‘Key Organization Support’. Provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and decision-making. This section is limited to two (2) page letters of support from each key organization.

4. **Field 9, Bibliography and 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** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions for this field. All attachments must be in PDF format.

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 IDC, and Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.
3. **Fruit and Vegetable Incentives** – Total fruit and vegetable incentive dollars from both Federal and Non-Federal funds must be summarized in the Budget Justification with clear affirmation of which budget category or categories were used to calculate totals. For example, a project design may necessitate incentives are included in F.8 Other Direct Costs and F.5 Subawards/Contractual Costs, however, the Budget Justification should clearly describe that total fruit and vegetable incentives are a sum of F.8 and the portion of F.5 specified as incentive.

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

Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name and the program code. Accurate entry is critical. See **Program Area Name** and **Program Code** are provided in **Table 9**.

Table 9: Description of Program Area Names and Codes

Program Area Name	Program Code
GusNIP Pilot Projects	FPP
GusNIP Standard Projects	FIP
GusNIP Large Scale Projects	FLSP

[Note: Accurate entry of the program code is critical for proper and timely processing of an application.]

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](https://www.grants.gov) to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) to assist with this review. While you should use the checklist to check the application for completeness, 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. Business Plan
7. Letter of Support from SNAP/NAP State/Territory Agency
8. Verification Letter from GusNIP NTAE Center
9. Current and Pending Support
10. Conflict of Interest List
11. Budget
12. 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 V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Applications are due by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on May 14, 2024**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. If you have trouble submitting an application to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), you should FIRST contact the [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.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

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. 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 must calculate an IDC rate in order to request IDC. 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, please see National Institute of Food and Agriculture (usda.gov) for additional resources. 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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-200/subpart-400/section-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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-200/subpart-400/section-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.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

Sub-award Restriction

The applicant is expected to perform a substantive portion of the project and **no more than 33 percent** of Nutrition Incentive Program projects, 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 for FPP, FIP, FLSP, program areas. **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.)

Funding Period Limitation

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 subject to a potential funding period limitation.

Nutrition Education Programming

Grantees that receive GusNIP funds and receive funds or collaborate with other Federal and/or USDA supported nutrition education programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) or Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), should keep in mind that these funds may not be used to provide actual cash or other financial incentives. SNAP-Ed funds can be used for policy, systems, and environmental change interventions, such as working with firms on fruit and vegetable product placement, and social marketing in addition to educational efforts at venues such as Farmers Markets, Senior Centers,

or Child Care locations. Similarly, EFNEP funds can be used for educational efforts at venues serving children, young adults, and families with children with limited financial resources.

SNAP Policy

Below is a list of items and activities that may not be funded using grant funds (neither Federal, nor match funds)

- a. POS equipment necessary for redeeming SNAP/NAP benefits may not be purchased for retailers. Upgrades to retailers' existing equipment specifically for the purpose of enhancing the issuance and/or redemption of fruit and vegetable incentives is acceptable.
- b. Firm inventory or stocking fruits and vegetables for retailers.
- c. Issuing incentives via refund.
- d. Any alteration of the EBT Card/NAP paper coupons.

Other Submission Requirements

You should follow the submission requirements noted in **Part V** in the document entitled [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#). For information about the status of a submitted application, see **Part III** 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 as 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., changes in the scope of work, adherence to SNAP/NAP policy, 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.

I. Initial Screening Criteria:

To avoid any misunderstandings, applicants should be aware that applications that do not satisfy all the administrative 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 applicable SNAP/NAP State/Territory Agency(ies) in PDF.
5. The application must include a verification letter from the GusNIP NTAE Center in PDF.
6. The proposed budget must be within the dollar ceiling identified in the RFA.
7. The proposed project must demonstrate capacity and willingness to participate in the comprehensive program evaluation requirements with the NTAE Center.

If the applicant has received NIFA grants 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.

II. GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Purpose

The purpose of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program is to fund and evaluate projects intended to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by USDA SNAP participants in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands and the USDA NAP Block Grants participants in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands by providing incentives at the point of purchase.

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program is designed to support growth through three incremental program areas. These program areas nurture eligible organizations to initiate pilot projects, then increase their capacity and scale to propose projects with greater reach, scope, and complexity to standard projects and large-scale projects. These investments support the sustainability vision of the GusNIP portfolio whereby Federal funds are leveraged to advance local capacity and over time other funding sources or business plans are secured for the projects to become self-sustaining.

III. GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Priorities

As referenced [Part 1.B Purpose and Priorities](#), the complete list of GusNIP Nutrition Incentive program priorities are projects that address the following:

1. Serve underrepresented communities, such as tribal communities, communities of color, LGBTQIA+ communities, 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 Nutrition Incentive Program geographies, such as Alaska, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Connecticut, Delaware, Guam, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

All GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program priorities are given equal consideration and include:

1. Maximize the share of funds used for direct incentives to participants;
2. Use direct-to-consumer sales marketing;
3. Demonstrate a track record of designing and implementing successful nutrition incentive programs that connect SNAP/NAP participants and agricultural producers;
4. Provide locally or regionally produced and fresh fruits and vegetables, especially those culturally appropriate for the target audience;
5. Include a project design that provides incentives when fruits or vegetables are purchased using SNAP/NAP benefits and in which the incentives earned may be used only to purchase fruits or vegetables;
6. Have demonstrated the ability to provide services to underserved communities;
7. Include coordination with multiple stakeholders, such as farm organizations, nutrition education programs, cooperative extension services, public health departments, health providers, private and public health insurance agencies, cooperative grocers, grocery associations, and community-based and non-governmental organizations;
8. Offer supplemental services in high-need communities, including online ordering, transportation between home and store, and delivery services;
9. Include food retailers (firms) that are open (1) for extended hours and (2) most or all days of the year;
10. Test innovative or promising outreach and promotion strategies within the limits of SNAP/NAP policy that would contribute to our understanding of how best to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/NAP participants, to inform future efforts; and
11. Involve a diversity of types of firms (e.g., convenience stores, supermarkets, farmers markets).

IV. Program Area Evaluation Criteria:

NIFA will use the following evaluation criteria to review **GusNIP Pilot Project (FPP) program area priority applications** submitted in response to the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program RFA.

1. **Alignment with GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Priorities.** How well the project aligns with GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program priorities as described above.

2. **Advancing the Purpose of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program.** How well the proposed project advances GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program purpose as described above.
3. **Community Benefits.** The significance of the food and nutrition security issues that will be addressed by the proposed project, and an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs.
4. **Project Goals, Objectives, and Intended Outcomes.** The appropriateness of the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project and how these goals will be achieved throughout the project period.
5. **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, health equity, or nutrition incentive 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;
6. **Evaluation.** The strength of the proposed project's plans and capacity to undertake a self-assessment, 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;
7. **Timeline and Budget.** The timeline and budget for accomplishing project goals, objectives, and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

NIFA will use the following evaluation criteria to review **GusNIP Standard Project (FIP) and GusNIP Large Scale Project (FLSP) program area priority applications** submitted in response to The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program RFA. Expectations are commensurate with project size, budget, and complexity.

1. **Alignment with GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Priorities.** How well the project aligns with GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program priorities as described above.
2. **Advancing the Purpose of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program.** How well the proposed project advances GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program purpose as described above.
3. **Community Benefits.** The significance of the food and nutrition security issues that will be addressed by the proposed project, and an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs.

4. **Project Goals, Objectives, and Intended Outcomes.** The appropriateness of the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project and how these goals will be achieved throughout the project period.
5. **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, health equity, or nutrition incentive 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.
6. **Evaluation.** The strength of the proposed project's plans and 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.
7. **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 sustained independent of GusNIP funding, e.g., a market analysis, an endowment plan, financial management plan, or business plan.
8. **Timeline and Budget.** The timeline and budget for accomplishing project goals, objectives, and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

For all GusNIP program areas (i.e., FPP, FIP and FLSP), where proposals are found to be equally meritorious, based on peer review, selection for funding will be weighed in favor of proposals aligning with and advancing the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program purpose and priorities as described above including focus on any underrepresented geographies and/or underrepresented communities. All GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program priorities are given equal consideration. Additionally, all applications must adhere to SNAP/NAP policy. A Policy Analyst will review grant applications for adherence to SNAP/NAP program rules and regulations.

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](#).

Federal Financial Management Requirements. Grantees are expected to comply with applicable federal financial management requirements included in the award's terms and conditions and [2 CFR Part 200](#). Below is a list of major requirements. Failure to comply could trigger significant audit liability and require global reconstruction of the grantees accounting system.

Separation of Funds. To avoid commingling of funds, grantees must establish a unique account(s) in their accounting system to capture and accumulate funding and related costs of the grant, apart from other federal and non-federal grants, projects and cost centers.

Budget Categories. To reduce the risk of material budget fluctuations changing the grant's scope and of applying indirect cost rates to prohibited cost categories, grantees must establish unique object codes in their accounting system to capture and accumulate costs by budget category (e.g., salaries, fringe benefits, consultants, travel, participant support costs, and subcontracts).

Consistent Treatment of Costs. Grantees must treat costs consistently across all federal and nonfederal grants, projects, and cost centers. For example, grantees may not direct-charge federal grants for costs typically considered indirect in nature, unless done consistently. Examples of indirect costs include administrative salaries, rent, accounting fees, and utilities. In most cases, the cost to develop an accounting system adequate to justify direct charging of the aforementioned items outweighs the benefits. As a result, use of an indirect cost rate is the most effective mechanism to recover these costs and not violate federal financial requirements of consistency, allocability and allowability. Additional guidance on indirect cost calculations can be found at Indirect Costs.

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.

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

As described in [Part I. D. Program Policy](#), all Nutrition Incentive Program grantees will be required to provide monthly updates of participating SNAP authorized partner firms to FNS and to participate in the comprehensive evaluation and cooperate with the NTAE center by:

- a. Supporting implementation of evaluation requirements;
- b. 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;
- c. Facilitating access to or providing documentation of project implementation, operations, costs, and outcomes; and
- d. Facilitating site visits and interviews with project staff, partners, and program participants if necessary.

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. 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 and retailer advisors of changes to their PD, AR, and other primary grantee points of contact in a timely fashion.
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 (NPL)
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202-604-1985

Kristopher Grimes, PhD, – National Program Leader (NPL)
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

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Representative – AR

CFDA

Community Supported Agriculture – CSA

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Data Management Plan – DMP

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program – EFNEP

Food and Nutrition Service – FNS

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive – FINI

GusNIP Pilot Projects Program Code – FPP

GusNIP Projects Program Code – FLP

GusNIP Large-Scale Projects Program Code – FLSP

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program – GusNIP

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

National Program Leader – NPL

Nutrition Assistance Program Block Grants – NAP

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

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education – SNAP-Ed

United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children – WIC

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

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

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:

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 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](#) 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.

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.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Nutrition Assistance Program Block Grants (NAP):

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

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 Security:

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

Resubmitted Application:

A project application that was previously submitted to a 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 Nutrition Incentive Program Geography:

Every year NIFA determines the geographies that are underrepresented in the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program (NI) portfolio. This is a list of eligible geographies that have no active NI primary awardee organization within their borders.

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.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk.