



## **Equitable Access in Child Nutrition Programs: FAQ Resource**

*Updated September 27, 2023*

### **General**

1. **Is WIC included in the scope of this project?**
  - No, WIC is not included in this project.
2. **If someone missed an opportunity for funding, do you offer partnership opportunities?**
  - There will not be an opportunity for formal partnerships/funding after the October 3 deadline unless an organization is working with an awarded subgrantee.
3. **Is Summer EBT considered a priority program?**
  - Yes.
4. **With the end of our state's fiscal year and the start of the school year, it may be challenging for our department of education to apply or contribute to a proposal by Oct 3. Is there an opportunity to extend the deadline by two weeks?**
  - No. Only proposals that are submitted by October 3 will be considered for funding.
5. **I would like to know if this grant is offered annually, and/or if this grant will come around next year to apply for?**
  - This is a one-time subgrant opportunity.
6. **Can you please confirm that applicants need only be registered in SAM.gov in the "Financial Assistance Awards Only" category, or must applicants be registered as in the "All Awards" category?**
  - Applicants should choose the "Financial Assistance Awards Only" category.

### **Grant Award**

7. **Will we receive funding upfront if we receive an award, or is this grant going to be reimbursed after costs are provided to FRAC?**
  - Funds will be awarded up front, not reimbursed.

### **Technical Assistance**

8. **Is the project team available to provide feedback on an applicant's proposal before submission?**

- We will not be able to provide feedback on an Applicant's specific proposal. Any questions that are not answered in this FAQ document or in the RFP may be submitted to [EACN@frac.org](mailto:EACN@frac.org).

## **Letter of Intent**

### **9. What does the Letter of Intent consist of?**

- [https://webportalapp.com/webform/frac\\_eacn-letter-of-intent](https://webportalapp.com/webform/frac_eacn-letter-of-intent). Name of Organization; Organization Type; Primary Contact Information (Name/Title/Email Address/Phone Number); Do you intend to apply; Project Program Focus; Project Description.

### **10. What are you using the Letter of Intent for?**

- The purpose of the Letter of Intent is to help us prepare for the review process and to ensure that we have sufficient coverage of all of the Child Nutrition programs. All information from the Letters of Intent are kept confidential among Project Team staff. The submission of a Letter of Intent is not factored into the scoring of any proposals. Applicants may still submit a full proposal if they did not submit a Letter of Intent.

### **11. Is there a digital version of the Letter of Intent so multiple people in our association can provide input?**

- [https://webportalapp.com/webform/frac\\_eacn-letter-of-intent](https://webportalapp.com/webform/frac_eacn-letter-of-intent)

### **12. Is there a limit on words or characters in the LOI? What is the recommended length for the LOI?**

- There is no limit but we encourage brevity.

### **13. If the Letter of Intent is optional, should we still submit the LOI? If we submit the LOI, do we wait for a response/answer to go ahead and apply?**

- It is not required to submit the LOI to apply for the grant. And if you do submit the LOI, you do not need to wait for an answer to apply – you can immediately proceed with creating your profile and beginning your application on Wizehive via this link: [https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/frac\\_eacn](https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/frac_eacn)

### **14. If your project is multi-state, how do you respond to the geographic area question in the application?**

- To select multiple options or to deselect an option, press and hold "Command/Control" and click the choice(s) you wish to select or deselect. You must press and hold "Command/Control" and click on the option(s) of your choosing to select more than one. If your geographic area is a Tribal Nation, select only that option.

## **Eligibility**

### **15. If I run a nutrition program outside of the United States, is my organization eligible?**

- This specific project focuses on the USDA FNS federally funded Child Nutrition Programs that operate in US States, US territories, and on tribal lands. Therefore, research focused in non-US countries/areas that are not eligible to participate in these programs would not be considered.

### **16. I operate a small afterschool program nonprofit. Can we apply?**

- Yes, nonprofits are eligible to apply for this subgrant opportunity.

**17. Does an organization need to be a 501(c)(3) in order to be eligible or is any type of not-for-profit eligible?**

- Not-for-profits do not need to be a 501c3 but must be able to meet the financial risk requirements similar to 501c3 nonprofits.

**18. Is it permissible for an institution to submit multiple, distinct proposals led by different researchers from different departments at a single institution?**

- Institutions can submit different proposals but since we define a university as a singular applicant (as departments are not separate organizations), they can only receive one grant.

### **Application Questions**

**19. Can you submit an application and be listed as a partner on a second proposal?**

- This project will fund a given organization or agency through only one subgrant; funding cannot be received through multiple subgrants. However, organizations or agencies may appear as partners (i.e., participating in the subgrant project but not receiving funding) on multiple applications.

**20. Do you need a biosketch/other financials from contractors too?**

- The project team only needs biosketches from key project staff members and financials from the applicant organization.

**21. With project staff, is there a distinction between project manager and project investigator? Can they be listed as the same person?**

- A project manager is the person in charge of ensuring that deliverables are met on time and within budget, while a project investigator is the lead researcher. However, these may be the same person.

**22. In the context of different campuses in a statewide university system, would each campus be considered a different organization?**

- Unless these campuses are legally distinct from each other, no. The university would be considered as one applicant.

**23. Are there page limits to the workplan and budget justification uploads?**

- No.

**24. If our project requires data from another agency (e.g., state agency), is it expected that the agency providing the data will have provided a letter of support for inclusion in the application package?**

- A letter of support is encouraged but not required.

**25. How many resumes can we include? The RFP says a maximum of 5, but the application portal appears as if it would allow the upload of 10 or more resumes.**

- A maximum of 5 key project personnel, but applicants are free to upload more from non-essential project personnel. The key project personnel should be made clear in the applicant's budget and budget narrative.

**26. There is only one place in the application portal to upload Letters of Support. Should we use that to upload required letters of support from project partners AND the optional letters of support from other organizations/individuals demonstrating the applicant's commitment to equitable access and collaboration with communities?**

- Yes. You can upload more than 15, if necessary, by combining letters of support and attaching the combined PDF file where it says, "*Letters of Support from Partners Upload 15+ (if more than 15, please combine letters into one PDF file here).*"

**27. The RFP indicates that we will need to submit our Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number from SAM.gov, however there is no place to upload that in the application. Do we need to provide that information in the application somewhere? We do have that information included in our Profile.**

- We will account for your UEI in your organizational profile.

### **Financials**

**28. If the applicant does not have a recent audited financial statement, will this count against them in the selection process?**

- If audited financials are not uploaded, an explanation must be provided. We will take the explanation into consideration.

### **Budget/Grant Funds**

**29. Do we have to budget for travel to in-person meetings?**

- Budgeting for travel is not required but if in-person meetings and events are components of your project, then please budget for them.

**30. Could you further clarify the F&A rates for this grant?**

- If an applicant has established a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with a cognizant federal agency, indirect costs may be budgeted in accordance with the applicant's NICRA. If an applicant does not have a federally approved NICRA, it may elect to use the de minimis rate of 10 percent over Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. A detailed explanation of how to calculate indirect costs for your budget request is included in the budget template (which will be in the application).

**31. Should the total budget be for two years/full performance period? Or, should the total be for one year to be renewed for year 2?**

- The total budget should be for the full performance period. The grant period for this project is 24 months.

**32. What are the expectations if not all grant dollars are spent within the two years of the grant lifetime?**

- The FRAC EA-CN team will work with subgrantees to ensure that funding is spent down over the course of their subgrants. Any funds that the subgrantee does not spend by the end of the approved project period shall be returned to FRAC.

**33. Some federal regrants require us to indicate if our employees select a certain health plan and how many of their family members are included in their health plan and other benefits. Will that be required for the budget/reporting?**

- We will not require expenditure reporting down to that level of detail. Subgrantees will be required to provide backup documentation of direct expenses, including staff time allocated to the grant, but not of fringe rate or indirect rate details.

**34. Is IDC included in the total \$250,000 maximum budget, or is IDC in addition to the \$250,000 allowed to be requested in the proposal?**

- The Indirect Cost is included in the total 250,000 maximum budget.

### **Staffing/Contractors**

**35. If awarded, is subcontracting allowable?**

- Yes, the EACN subgrant funding can be used to hire staff needed to carry out the proposed project. Budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, and approved meeting, conference, and training travel expenses (whether in-person or virtual).
- For a full list of allowable program expenses, see RFA Section 5-D.

**36. Considering awards will be announced in early November and the grant begins on Nov. 6, is there a 3-6 month ramp-up time allowed for onboarding staff?**

- Yes. We do expect a ramp-up time for onboarding staff, signing MOUs, etc. This onramp time should be reflected/justified in the proposed workplans. We also expect on-ramp activities to include steps to deepen community-engagement strategies.

**37. What circumstances would clearly justify a "bona fide need" to work with a subcontractor or consultant?**

- A bonafide need includes the applicant organization not having the in-house expertise or capacity.

**38. Would it be permitted if a state agency or nonprofit with limited capacity would like a consultant to conduct much of the work of this research in partnership with the agency? Are there requirements on what percentage of the total project cost can go toward subcontractors or consultants? How will the use of subcontractors and consultants affect project scoring?**

- Yes, this is permitted. No requirements with regard to percentage, minimum or maximum. The use of subcontractors and consultants will not affect project scoring; however, the contractor should advance the project's goals for research and equity if they have a larger role.

**39. Are there grant flow-through requirements that applicants should be aware of if using subcontractors or consultants?**

- Any subcontractors, consultants, or project partners receiving funds from this grant are expected to adhere to the same standards in the subgrantee's subaward agreement.

**40. My organization is a for-profit company. If we are a subcontractor to an eligible non-profit prime, can we charge a fee for our services? In other words, can we make profit? Or, on the contrary, do grant conditions pass on to subcontractors, meaning subcontractors cannot make profit?**

- A non-profit prime applicant may include a for-profit subcontractor in their project and budget if they require external goods or services. The prime applicant will either need to make an open solicitation for proposals from firms that provide those goods or services, or they will need to provide a sole-source justification for their selection of a firm through a noncompetitive process. In either case, the cost of what is needed from a firm to deliver the goods or services required for the project is an eligible expense.

**Project Design**

**41. Will it matter if your community is potentially broadly applicable across the country or is it acceptable if it is more applicable to your unique community?**

- **Similar question:** Is there a preference between projects that focus on the school district, state, or national level? If a project is on a school district or

**state level, is there a preference for projects that have national implications?**

- While project findings do not have to be applicable across the country, we will prioritize projects that have findings that are applicable to larger geographic areas or other communities beyond the study population. Examples include other school districts in a state that may have to comply with similar program structures, other populations with a similar cultural background, or other local / state agencies / researchers who would benefit from a measurement or data collection procedure that is developed, etc.

**42. Can you clarify if projects can focus on both disparities and benefits of a program? Does it primarily need to be disparities?**

- All projects should have a focus on equity. While we welcome new evidence of the benefits of the child nutrition programs, this is not the primary goal of this funding opportunity. All projects should help us understand/improve equitable access to the CN programs. Projects can cover benefits if they also focus on equity.
- For example, a project that seeks to understand the benefits of universal school meals should focus on the impact among underserved populations. In comparison, a project that investigates the benefits of universal school meals among the general student population with a sub analysis on underserved populations will not be as competitive of a proposal.

**43. On an invention for a multilingual population, what would be an adequate sample size?**

- This is applicable to any research project, not limited to those focused on multilingual populations: there is no one simple rule for determining sample size. The number of people in your study sample should be appropriate for the analytical methods you are using (e.g., qualitative or quantitative methods) and how large of an impact or effect size you hope to find (e.g., in a quantitative study, the smaller of a change you expect to find, the larger your sample size will have to be). Your targeted sample size and explanation of your analytical approach should reflect your familiarity with your proposed methods.

**44. If IRB approval is required, will FRAC provide access to an IRB or should applicants build it into their budgets and proposals?**

- Applicants should build it into their budgets and proposals, but FRAC can help subgrantees with the process of submitting their project for IRB approval.

**Project Preference/Consideration**

**45. Would applications with research in states without universal free meals get priority over states with universal free meals (i.e., CA)?**

- No. The project team aims to select projects that ensure program balance, geographical representation, and project diversity. A state's specific involvement with programs/policies would not result in prioritization.

**46. Is there a preference for projects addressing multiple nutrition programs?**

- No, there is no preference for projects addressing multiple nutrition programs.

**47. Will there be geographic considerations in funding decisions, and, if so, do you have a breakdown of potential awards by region?**

- The project team aims to select projects that ensure program balance, geographical representation, and project diversity. However, there is no formal breakdown of potential awards by region.

### **Literature Review/Listening Sessions**

#### **48. Are the findings/raw data from the literature review and listening sessions going to be made available to research teams?**

- A summary of findings is included in Appendix A (pg. 24) of the RFP, but the raw data will not be made available at this time. More detailed findings will be included in this project's final report.

### **Definitions**

#### **49. Do you have a working stance for "high quality foods"?**

- The project team does not have a specific definition or way of thinking related to high-quality foods. The Project Team identified this as one of the priority research topics, which can be found in Appendix A (pg. 26 of the RFP) under School Meals > Priority Area A > Bullet point #3.