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WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project

Round 1 Subgrants Request for Application

WIC State Agency Briefing: WIC CIAO Evaluation and Letter of Support (LOS)

March 7, 2023

This document provides WIC State agencies with information on the WIC CIAO evaluation for subgrantees, as well as on the Letter of Support (LOS) that State agencies must sign in order for a subgrant project to be considered for funding.

If your specific concerns are not addressed in this document, please reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org.

WIC Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization Evaluation

FNS will be conducting a series of data collections to support an evaluation of [WIC outreach, innovation, and modernization](#) projects funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2), which include WIC CIAO. Per WIC regulations at [7 CFR 246.26\(k\)](#), State and local WIC agencies and contractors must cooperate in studies and evaluations conducted by or on behalf of FNS, related to programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 ([42 U.S.C. 1786](#)). Data collections will include MIS data, as well as surveys, focus groups, etc. FNS will provide more information on this effort in the coming months.

FNS will, to the extent possible, make data from this overarching evaluation effort available to partners that are conducting additional, project-specific evaluations, such as the WIC CIAO Project Team. This will reduce the burden on WIC State agencies so that they do not have to provide the same or similar data to multiple entities.

WIC CIAO Evaluation

The WIC CIAO Project Team will conduct the WIC CIAO evaluation. The WIC CIAO Project Team has extensive experience working with WIC State and local agencies to conduct evaluations. The team includes staff from each of the following organizations:

- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
- UnidosUS
- Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF)
- Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN)

To thoroughly evaluate WIC CIAO, the WIC CIAO Project Team will conduct two types of evaluations: evaluations of individual subgrant projects and an overall evaluation of the WIC CIAO project. FNS and the WIC CIAO Project Team have developed an evaluation approach that intends to reduce State agency burden.

The WIC CIAO evaluation process will work as follows:

- Through FNS data collections (see above), FNS expects to obtain and be able to provide to the WIC CIAO Project Team most of the administrative/MIS data needed to conduct the WIC CIAO evaluations.
- If necessary, the WIC CIAO Project Team will work collaboratively with State agencies to identify and obtain, if possible, other types of aggregated and de-identified administrative/MIS data needed for the evaluation of individual subgrant projects.
- The WIC CIAO Project Team will not request from State agencies any personally identifiable information (PII) and will not use State-provided data to contact any WIC participant.
- State agencies are not expected to share data with any subgrantee. WIC CIAO data will flow from a State agency to the WIC CIAO Project Team, or through FNS, if necessary.
- Some subgrantees may conduct primary data collection as a part of their project evaluations. If so, the WIC CIAO Project Team will assist with the development of primary data collection tools. State agencies will not be expected to provide technical assistance.

WIC CIAO Letter of Support (LOS)

All WIC CIAO subgrant applications must be submitted with a [LOS from a WIC State agency](#). The LOS is not an endorsement of the organization or the proposed project. Rather, the LOS indicates to the WIC CIAO Project Team that the WIC State agency is willing to participate in evaluation efforts if the project is funded (to the degree noted above). WIC State agencies should be aware that:

- State agencies have the discretion to determine which projects they are willing to support by signing an LOS.

- While State agencies may require applicants to provide their proposal with their LOS request, we recommend instead requesting a summary of the proposal.
- Although some applicants may be new to the WIC space, State agencies are not expected to provide technical assistance on the WIC Program or on the subgrant evaluation. Technical assistance will be provided by the WIC CIAO Project Team to ensure that new entrants to WIC outreach are well-equipped to do the work included in their proposals.

WIC CIAO Application Selection Process

Each application will undergo an extensive review by the WIC CIAO Review Team (i.e., the WIC CIAO Project Team and Advisory Board members who have a diversity of lived and professional expertise related to WIC and community-level outreach).

It is unknown how many subgrants will be awarded per State agency for this or future rounds of funding. Through our review process, we will seek to have geographical representation, project diversity, and a variety of applicant organizations. This is also intended to ensure that no State agency is inequitably affected by the WIC CIAO subgrants.