

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)

Frequently Asked Questions

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Eligibility Questions

1. May a non-profit organization apply to be a reporting and evaluation center?

See Part III, A of the RFA for more information on eligibility requirements. NIFA is not accepting cooperative agreement applications for Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers program area in 2021.

2. Can a university/university extension apply as the primary applicant for GusNIP?

Institutions of Higher Education and state cooperative extension services are eligible to apply for cooperative agreements in the Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Centers program area. However, applications are not invited for this program area in 2021.

Eligible entities for GusNIP nutrition incentive grants and produce prescription grants are limited to government agencies and non-profit organizations. Collaborating with institutions of higher education and other partners is encouraged.

The definition of a non-profit organization in [2 CFR 200.70](#) as follows:

Nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including Institution of Higher Education, that:

- (1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
- (2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- (3) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

3. How does NIFA want health care providers to verify that a patient is enrolled in Medicaid for PPR eligibility?

The applicant and their partners are responsible for screening and verifying eligibility for members for participation in a produce prescription project. Individuals can participate in a produce prescription project if they are eligible for the following: (1) Benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et seq.); or (2) medical assistance under a State plan or a waiver of such a plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 USC 1392 et seq.) and enrolled under such plan or waiver; and (3) a member of a low-income household that suffers from, or is at risk of developing, a diet-related health condition.

One way to verify that a patient enrolled in Medicaid is eligible to participate in a produce prescription project is proof of enrollment in the Medicaid medical assistance plan via Proof of Insurance and the patient is a member of a low-income household that suffers from, or is at risk of developing, a diet-related health condition.

Program Policy Questions

1. Do grocery stores participating in GusNIP/PPR programs have to source a percentage of produce locally or regionally?

No, providing locally and regionally produced fruits and vegetables is one of the GusNIP priorities, but it is not required.

2. Do farmers markets have to be open 40 hours a week to participate in GusNIP/PPR programs?

No, farmers markets do not have to have extended hours. GusNIP priorities include involving firms with extended hours and days of operations, but it is not required.

3. Do GusNIP programs have to have a produce-for-produce design? Meaning that a SNAP shopper must buy produce to earn an incentive benefit to buy produce?

The financial incentive model for nutrition incentive grants is as follows. *GusNIP qualifying F/V for GusNIP qualifying F/V*: SNAP households purchase GusNIP qualifying fruits or vegetables using their SNAP benefits and then these households receive incentives that are redeemable only for the purchase of GusNIP qualifying fruits or vegetables.

Incentive models that require no purchase with SNAP benefits are not allowable under GusNIP nutrition incentive grants. SNAP households must spend SNAP benefits in order to earn incentives under GusNIP. Nutrition incentive grants require spending SNAP benefits to earn incentives.

However, produce prescription grants may use a no purchase required model.

4. What information must be included in an MOU with a participating SNAP retail firm?

See Part I, D of the RFA for more information on program policy (<https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/rfa/FY21-GusNIP-MOD-RFA-508.pdf>).

5. Does the FNS July 2018 notice regarding retailer approval still apply? (<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/FINI-Equal-Treatment-Reporting-Notice.pdf>)

No. The process for allowable participation of firms in GusNIP grant projects is outlined in the Part I, D of the RFA. Before a firm can participate in a GusNIP grant project, the following steps must occur in this order (this process may take 60 calendar days):

- i. If the firm is not already SNAP authorized, the firm applies for and obtains SNAP Authorization;
 - ii. The grantee and firm sign a MOU;
 - iii. The firm submits the signed MOU to Sm.fn.GusNIP@usda.gov;
 - iv. The grantee submits to FNS the firm's information (i.e., FNS, firm name, firm address); and,
 - v. FNS responds within 30 calendar days to approve or deny the participation of the firm.
6. May an organization apply to coordinate reporting and evaluation functions and subcontract with other groups to perform training and technical assistance functions?

Yes, partnerships and collaborations are encouraged. When planning collaborations award recipients may sub-award to organizations including organizations not eligible to apply, provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project.

7. Are incentives for evaluation allowed (e.g., farmers market consumers completing surveys)? If so, should that be included in the evaluation budget, or the grantees budget?

Incentives for completing surveys are not an allowable cost.

Program Area Questions

1. Must State SNAP agencies sign off on any GusNIP grant application?

Nutrition incentive grant applications must include SNAP State Agency letter of support as part of their application.

Produce prescription grant applications must include documentation of a partnership agreement with a relevant State Medicaid agency, hospital, hospital or clinic operated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Federally qualified health center, healthcare provider group, Tribal health center, public health departments or private and public health insurance agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of the produce prescription project in reducing healthcare use and associated costs and may submit a SNAP State Agency letter of support if they involve SNAP-authorized firms in their project design. Additionally, if PPR projects will work with SNAP firms then the MOU process must be followed.

2. Who is the GusNIP NTAE Center? Is there more than one?

The GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE) Center is led by the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition. In partnership with Fair Food Network, they created the Nutrition Incentive Hub, a coalition of partners including the Farmer's Market Coalition, National Grocers Association Foundation, Michigan Farmers Market Association, and Ecology Center. The Nutrition Incentive Hub is a coalition of partners that supports nutrition incentive and produce prescription projects. Currently there is only one GusNIP NTAE Center.

3. Do midsized PPR and GusNIP grant projects need to test new technologies?

No, but it is expected that they will take advantage of available technology and some may participate in the testing/piloting of new systems.

4. Do PPR grant projects need to serve all residents in an entire county?

No, a pilot project in one healthcare facility is eligible. Applicants should request a budget and project period commensurate with the proposed project.

5. Must participants in PPR grant projects be receiving SNAP or eligible for SNAP?

Being eligible for SNAP is one part of determining eligibility to participate in a produce prescription project. It is not the only criterion for eligibility, and it is not required. Individuals can participate in the Produce Prescription Grant program if they are eligible for the following: (1) benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.); or (2) medical assistance under a State plan or a waiver of such a plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) and enrolled under such plan or waiver; and (3) a member of a low-income household that suffers from, or is at risk of developing, a diet-related health condition.

To be eligible to participate in a produce prescription project the individual may either meet items (1) and (3) or items (2) and (3) above.

Fund Matching Questions

1. Is it allowable to use a pro-rated amount for office space as a form of qualifying match?

Yes. Rental costs may be pro-rated and the portion of use charged to the award, either under the Federal funds or matching, if that is the normal procedure for that organization. The Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part [200.403](#) states that all costs should be accorded consistent treatment. Therefore, if other funding is provided the organization, or they participate in other projects which use their facility, those projects should also be charged their fair share of the rent. If the organization receives funding from other sources for projects, and those projects are not charged rent fees, then this grant project should not be charged. They should be sure to document how the pro-ration was determined, and to keep records accordingly for audit purposes. Please refer to the Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part [200.465](#) for specific information on rental costs.

2. Exactly what match verification is to be included with a GusNIP grant application?

While you should obtain matching commitment letters from each of your third parties which explain the dollar amount of the match, the period of time the matching will be provided, and how it can/will be spent on the project, these do not need to be included in the application. It is recommended to include a letter of support for in-kind contributors, to document that they are committing to specific GusNIP-related activities during the grant period. It is recommended to have letters of support from any statewide/regional organizations or prominent key partners with an active role in the project.

You must keep matching commitment letters on file for audit purposes. You should include in the application a listing of matching sources to include the name of the organization, the dollar amount of the matching, and provide a budget breakout on how these funds will be spent.

3. Should match verification be submitted as appendix to the application?

No, it should be provided with the budget information.

Application Questions

1. If my organization submits a nutrition incentive grant and a produce prescription grant will the second application be considered a duplicate submission?

No, submissions of different grant types to different GusNIP program area priorities that are distinct will not be disqualified as duplicate submissions. Applicants are encouraged to think critically about their organization's capacity to complete the work proposed.

2. Are Medicaid, Medicare, and VA health plans the only ones that qualify as State health plans?

State-run health plans (e.g. Medicaid, Medicare, Children's Health Insurance Program, and Veterans Affairs) qualify participants as eligible for PPR programs.

3. Is there a template partnership agreement for State Medicaid Agency?

No.

4. Do indirect costs count within the <20% admin costs?

No, indirect costs are separate from the administration and management costs referenced in the RFA.

5. Do the 5 pages in the project narrative for charts and tables have to be at the end or can they be woven throughout?

Tables and figures may be woven throughout the project narrative. Regardless of where they are located within the narrative the limit of 5 pages and requirement that the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Time New Roman still apply.

6. Are the 3 pages for activities to achieve the project goals included in the 5 pages of tables?

Yes. The recommendation to include a table of no more than three pages with implementation details for activities to achieve the goals of the project counts toward the 5 pages of tables and figures within the project narrative.

7. What is the difference between the tables and figures in project narrative compared to the appendix?

Information required in the project narrative must be included in the project narrative. The appendices are for additional information directly relevant to evaluating the proposed project, including appendices prescribed in the RFA, such as logic model, sustainability plan, data management plan, etc.

8. Should the names, addresses, and FNS numbers of all participating firms/retailers be included in the application and counted towards the 15-page limit?

In the case of large, region, and national projects with a high number of participating sites and retail firms, the Specific Program Incentive Information, items 12-14 may be provided in an appendix; this will not count towards the 15-page limit and please do not make the font size any smaller than 10.

9. Should projects document the new budget category requirements within the Budget Justification document, or is there another place?

Anything to do with the budget information should be provided in the Budget and Budget Justification section.

10. Based on the information from the RFA, this sounds to us like we can submit our indirect cost rate that we have calculated from audits (but is not a federally negotiated rate yet), and if awarded we will go through the process of submitting the indirect rate package for review. Does this sound accurate?

You may estimate what you think your indirect cost rate is and the amount and put that on the budget pending negotiation. However, please note, it may take six to nine months to negotiate a rate if NIFA is your cognizant negotiating agency. The funds for the indirect costs will not be released for payment until the rate has been approved.

11. Can there be a sub-award within a sub-award structure? (i.e. if X organization is the primary, and Y organization is a sub-award, can they sub-award portions for MIFMA and other TA partners?)

Yes.

12. Is there any subaward restriction?

The RFA Funding Restrictions require no more than 33% of the budget be sub-awarded without prior NIFA approval from the National Program Leader.

Project and Grant Types Questions

1. Will the cooperative agreement(s) for NTAE be rebid every year?

No.

2. Should applicants for NTAE include proposed plans for years beyond FY 2020 based on potential continued funding?

These are 4-year projects. The GusNIP grant program is not accepting applications for Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation and Information Centers (NTAE) cooperative agreements in 2021. Applications will be invited again in FY2023.

COVID-19 Response Questions

1. Does NIFA have COVID-19 resource?

USDA NIFA provided a [NIFA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources for Partners](#) and [NIFA Coronavirus FAQs](#).

2. Can program participants earn incentives on qualifying purchases made with Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) or Disaster-SNAP (D-SNAP) benefits?

Yes, households can earn GusNIP incentives when they make qualifying purchases using P-EBT or D-SNAP benefits.

USDA FNS released COVID-19 FAQ document addresses questions around [State Guidance on Coronavirus Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) and [Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(D-SNAP\)](#).

3. Can a GusNIP grantee re-allocate fruit and vegetable incentives from one site to another site to better assist particularly food insecure populations who are being affected by COVID-19?

Yes, this would be considered a program change and should be reported to USDA, NIFA as required. Recipients should follow CDC guidelines to reduce potential of COVID-19 transmission to any vulnerable populations.

4. How does the emergency funding impact my current GusNIP award?

There are no changes to the expectations for current grant projects.

5. How does the emergency funding impact the 2021 GusNIP RFA?

As described in the 2021 GusNIP RFA, the RFA was published prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY2021 and contained the approximate level of funding for this program. Enactment of the appropriations act may increase the amount available for grants in FY2021.

For additional questions, please see contact information in the RFA.