

**Request for Application (RFA) State Agency Model (SAM) Project**

**Phase I**  
**Request Due Date: June 14th, 2004**

## I. Background

WIC is expected to request approximately \$30 million per fiscal year over the 5-year period between FY 2004 and 2008 for State agency information systems, for a total of \$150 million. Projects supported by this additional funding will be monitored by the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to ensure that State agency information systems continue to be designed, developed, and deployed in a cost-effective and technically sound manner.

The designated funding for State agency information systems is intended to promote the development of model WIC systems by consortia (referred to as State Agency Models (SAM)). It also includes the transfer of these models to other WIC State agencies in order to eliminate duplication and streamline the procurement process. The model systems will be transferred “as is” with out modification (unless a written justification for modifications is approved by FNS). This process supports the agency’s goal to improve the stewardship of federal funds by replacing State agency legacy systems to increase the efficiency, capability, and consistency for tracking program expenditures, infant formula rebates, program income and other financial aspects of the Program. The modernization of WIC systems will also improve the efficiency of program administration by streamlining clinic operations, and reducing the incidence of WIC Program fraud through development and enhancement of fraud detection systems.

OMB has specifically stated the information systems developed under SAM should use modern web technology (HTML/HTTP). The overall objective is for all systems to be based on a common technology and have the ability to integrate all systems through a common interface. Modern web technologies utilize components such as, but not limited to: Windows 2000 or newer, UNIX, recent versions of off-the-shelf software (COTS) such as Cognos BI Tools and Crystal Reports, program languages/tools such as Microsoft .Net, Java, JSP, XML, ColdFusion, CGI and recent releases of databases such as SQL Server 2000 or Oracle8i/9i. An open system architecture is the desired goal and can best be met through solutions which promote platform independence.

It is important to note that promoting the development of web-based systems does not exclude the use of other approaches. We do not expect each State agency to have every office/clinic using the web-based system. In many cases, facilities located in urban settings will utilize the web while individual remote sites may need to rely on a decentralized application. In such a scenario, the State agency should conduct a feasibility study of the use of technologies such as satellite or wireless connectivity to maximize the facilities able to use the web-based system and a cost-benefit analysis should be used to determine whether the use of these technologies or maintaining a decentralized system is more cost-effective.

In addition, a SAM consortium may determine that developing a web-based system is not feasible in at least one member State because very few or no offices/clinics

will be able to utilize such a system. In such a case, the consortium will need to submit a highly detailed written justification of what course of action the consortium wishes to take. The justification will need to be forwarded to FNS for review before a final decision will be made as to the appropriate course of action.

## **II. Who is eligible for these grants?**

Any WIC State agency is eligible to apply for inclusion in the SAM project. The information obtained through this application will be used to identify which State agencies are interested in SAM, to evaluate State agencies and their information systems against pre-defined criteria, and to select consortia. The pre-defined criteria are listed below under “How will Phase I of my SAM package be evaluated”. State agencies will be selected by evaluating the various criteria and assigning weighted values of 1-5 for each criteria. If available, funds will be provided to each consortium and/or State agency (as appropriate) upon the submission, review, and approval of a completed Planning Advanced Planning Document (PAPD) (if there are significant planning activities) and an Implementation Advanced Planning Document (IAPD) as well as additional grant application forms.

In addition, each fiscal year, interested State agencies will have the opportunity to notify FNS of their interest in adopting one of the completed SAM model systems using SAM funds. State agencies do not have to have been a member of a model system consortium in order to adopt one of the model systems.

## **III. How much is available for the grants?**

The amount of funding available for all five years is uncertain and contingent upon final Congressional appropriations. Funding will be provided for all costs associated with both project planning and implementation of WIC systems.

## **IV. What are the requirements for grantees?**

Each consortium will prepare Independent Verification and Validation, Risk Mitigation and Analysis, Quality Assurance Plan, and a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and submit them to FNS for review. These documents will be prepared one time during the planning phase of their model system, but should be updated to remain current with any major project changes. Each consortium will also conduct ongoing earned-value analysis and provide the information on a quarterly basis to FNS as part of the status/progress report. Advanced Planning Document Updates (APDU), whether Planning or Implementation, will be submitted on an annual or as needed basis in accordance with FNS Handbook 901. Guidance on preparation of these documents will be provided by FNS with contractor assistance.

Independent Verification and Validation Plan. This document will include the scope of the project plan, testing evaluation, testing schedule, testing characteristics, and test description.

Risk Mitigation and Analysis Plan. This document will provide examples of the various types of risks (i.e. financial, technical, operational, schedule, legal/contractual, and organizational risks) to include how each of these risks will be analyzed, plausible ways of mitigating each risk, and how the risk analyses should be reported. The document should also provide guidance on the frequency with which project risks should be evaluated.

Quality Assurance Plan. This document will contain a schedule of tasks and responsibilities, required system documentation, methodology for conducting system reviews and audits, problem reporting and corrective action, tools used for configuration management and project controls (change requests, etc.), and training for the various needs of the project.

Work Breakdown Structure. This document will describe how to define activities in manageable tasks, each of which has a specified deliverable and specified start/end dates. Each activity should also include a resource (level-of-effort) estimate.

Earned-Value Management. The document will include a list of all critical path milestones, the budgeted percentage of work performed for each critical path milestone, planned critical path milestone start and completion dates, planned expenditures for each critical path milestone, the total investment budget, the budgeted dollars for work performed for each critical path milestone, and the planned investment start and end dates.

Additional Reporting Requirements. All major contractor deliverables, including functional requirements and detailed system design documents will be submitted to FNS for review. FNS may request other deliverables at any time at its discretion. Quarterly status reports will be submitted to FNS and will include project progress, milestones completed or behind schedule, issues identified through a risk mitigation plan, earned-value management summaries, testing issues, and any additional information of which FNS should be aware. Conference calls will be held biweekly or as determined by FNS.

An SF-269A (Short Form) Financial Status Report must be completed periodically. The submission schedule will be provided after Phase I (see below) is completed.

**V. What is the grant application process?**

The grant application process for the SAM project is comprised of two phases. Phase I will be used to identify consortia and their member State agencies. Phase II will be used to evaluate budgets, schedules, and systems proposed by each selected

consortium and to approve cooperative agreements. Phase I application will be due June 14th, 2004. Once consortia have been identified, Phase II will begin. FNS will prepare a grant agreement for each consortium. Initial funds will be provided to prepare planning documents such as PAPD (if necessary) and IAPD. Phase II documents will be due in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, fiscal year 2005 (tentative), although this may be revised after Phase I submissions are assessed. After Phase II documents have been approved, funds will be added to the existing grant agreement. FNS reserves the right to release funds incrementally based on the completion of deliverables/milestones.

### **What do I have to include in Phase I of my SAM package?**

Your Phase I submission must include a narrative that provides detailed information on each of the following items:

- Integration of WIC Management Information System (MIS) with other State agency systems (including acceptability by the State agency of a modular approach and XML for data transfer or required co-development with other systems);
- Availability of technical and personnel resources to provide both project oversight and participation in system design (including dedicated personnel with appropriate technical and management experience);
- Specific sections of State regulations or guidance that would limit the flexibility of WIC system requirements and technology, design and development (including specified technology such as Oracle, UNIX, Java, .Net);
- Past experience working on multi-State agency systems;
- Desire to work with other State agencies to reach a consensus on a model system; and
- Detailed description of your current system (including system architecture and FReD core functions) and State agency-wide infrastructure (including LAN, WAN, internet connectivity)
- Ability under State agency regulations/policies to handle funding for other states in the consortium.

Your SAM package should also include your interest level and role in SAM. Possible roles include lead State or member State of a consortium. Refer to the attached draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for a list of responsibilities for each of these roles. The Phase I narrative should not exceed 8 pages.

Your Phase I submission must also include **SF-424**, Application for Federal Assistance.

### **How will Phase I of my SAM package be evaluated?**

All SAM packages that meet the deadline for submission will be screened for completeness and conformity to the requirements mentioned in this letter. FNS staff members will be selected to determine the technical merits of each package based on the following criteria:

- Independence or integration of WIC systems with Department of Health or other systems.
- Availability of WIC IT Staff
- Business process adaptation flexibility
- Technical flexibility in selecting and adopting new technologies
- Past participation in multi-State consortia
- Number of Functional Requirements Document for a Model WIC Information System (FReD) core functions implemented
- Age of and technology used in existing WIC systems
- Subject Matter Expert (SME) and project oversight capability
- Level of network/internet and overall technical infrastructure

**VI. How do I submit SAM package documentation?**

Phase I of your SAM package must be received by FNS on or before 5:00 p.m. **June 14th, 2004** (tentative). It is your responsibility to meet this by delivering the SAM package, by mailing it sufficiently in advance of the deadline to ensure its timely receipt, or by submitting it electronically at <http://www.grants.gov> (refer to cover letter). If you choose to submit your package via mail, we strongly suggest you send your SAM package by a mail delivery service that guarantees delivery and you track its delivery to FNS. Late submissions will not be considered. We will not consider additions or revisions to SAM packages once they are received.

You must submit an original and two copies of your SAM package. The original must bear the original signature of your authorized representative. The original must be ready for copying, i.e., single-sided, unstapled, unbound, and on 8 ½ “ by 11” paper. Your original and copies must be on white paper. We reserve the right to reject any packages which exceed 8 pages in length, **excluding all required** attachments and certifications. **FNS will not accept request packages sent by fax or e-mail.** Your SAM package must be delivered or mailed to:

Lisa Johnson, Grant Officer  
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA  
Grants Management Division  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 738  
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

Contact Lisa Johnson at **(703) 305-2848** or via e-mail at **[Lisa.Johnson@fns.usda.gov](mailto:Lisa.Johnson@fns.usda.gov)** with any questions about the SAM package. We will

respond by telephone to questions seeking clarification, whether technical in nature or relating to the submission procedures.

The SAM package will be subject to compliance with Federal and Agency regulations and guidelines. It will be reviewed with these factors in mind. The final decision to award is at the discretion of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) selecting officials. Selecting officials will consider FNS staff recommendations and all other pertinent information before deciding which requests to fund. FNS reserves the right to fund requests based on recommendations made by FNS staff and agency priorities. Issuance of this letter does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. A final award cannot be made until SAM packages have been approved and funds have been appropriated and allocated by Congress and committed through the internal FNS process.

## **VII. What are the terms and conditions of the grant?**

In addition to the requirements described above, applicants must agree to comply with USDA regulations and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars listed below. Copies of these documents are available online or from FNS upon request.

- 7 CFR Part 3015: “Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations;”
- 7 CFR Part 3016: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments” (Reference OMB Circular A-102 Common Rule);
- 7 CFR Part 3017: Subparts A-E, “Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);”
- 7 CFR Part 3017: Subpart F, “Government-wide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace (Grants);” and,
- 7 CFR Part 3018: “New Restrictions on Lobbying.”
- 7CFR Part 3052: Auditors of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations

## **VIII. What happens after the review?**

After the Phase I review is completed, **selected** State agencies will be notified. Each selected consortium will submit one budget for a project planning contractor to prepare the Phase II documents. When the budget is approved, the grant funds will be awarded to the selected consortia. If the selecting officials determine that some or all of the SAM packages lack technical merit, the Agency may decide to award no grants, or less than the total amount of funds set aside for this purpose.

We expect to complete the review of Phase I no later than July 28th, 2004.

**Phase II**

**Request Due Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, fiscal year 2005 (tentative)**

**State agencies will be contacted if they are selected from the Phase I process. State agencies should not submit Phase II documents until they have been notified.**

## **I What do I have to include in Phase II of my SAM package?**

**State agencies selected after the Phase I consortia evaluation process will submit the necessary documentation for Phase II.** Each consortium will submit one set of Phase II documents. These documents include the following items:

- **PAPD**, Planning Advanced Planning Document (FNS Handbook 901).
- **IAPD**, Implementation Advance Planning Document (FNS Handbook 901).
- **SF-424**, Application for Federal Assistance.
- **SF-424A and SF-424B**. SF-424A, Budget information for Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

Budget estimates must show how all the grant money (initial grant as well as any additional funding) will be spent. Approved grant funds must be obligated and expended in accordance with the amounts indicated on SF-424A, and must reflect any adjustments made in the grant approval notification. All funds must be obligated by the end of the grant period.

- **Form AD-1047**, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions.
- **Form AD-1049**, Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative I – For Grantees Other Than Individuals.
- **Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Copies of the forms listed above will be available from FNS upon request.

## **II. How will Phase II of my SAM package be evaluated?**

The PAPD (if necessary) and IAPD will be evaluated using the Advance Planning Document (APD) process. In addition, the SF-424 documents will be reviewed for consistency and thoroughness. The budgets will be reviewed to determine the reasonableness and allowability of the cost elements.

## **III. How do I submit SAM package documentation?**

Phase II of your SAM package must be received in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, fiscal year 2005 (date to be determined). It is your responsibility to meet this by delivering the SAM package, by mailing it sufficiently in advance of the deadline to ensure its

timely receipt, or by submitting it electronically at <http://www.grants.gov> (refer to cover letter). If you choose to submit your package via mail, we strongly suggest you send your SAM package by a mail delivery service that guarantees delivery and you track its delivery to FNS. Late submissions will not be considered. We will not consider additions or revisions to SAM packages once they are received.

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- 7 CFR Part 3016: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments” (Reference OMB Circular A-102 Common Rule);
- 7 CFR Part 3017: Subparts A-E, “Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);”
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- 7CFR Part 3052: Auditors of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations

**V. What happens after the review?**

After the Phase II review processes, the grant funds will be awarded to the selected consortia. If the selecting officials determine that some or all of the SAM packages lack technical merit, the Agency may decide to award no grants, or less than the total amount of funds set aside for this purpose.

We expect to complete the review of Phase II no later than 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, fiscal year 2005 (date to be determined). FNS will notify those grantees selected to receive SAM grant funding for system development funding after the Phase II review process.