

FNS Fiscal Year 2011 Application for Direct Certification Planning Grants

Checklist for Developing a Direct Certification 2nd Round Planning Grant Proposal

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) and DOCUMENTS:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/grants.htm>

DUE DATE: Hard copy applications for Second-Round Planning Grants must be received by FNS no later than **February 28, 2011**; or submitted electronically via www.grants.gov no later than 11:59PM (Eastern Time) on February 28, 2011.

If mailing hard copy, send to:

Dawn Washington
Grant Officer
Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

Phone: 703-305-2450

FUNDING LIMIT: \$75,000

FORMAT RESTRICTIONS (font, no. of pages, etc.): No Restrictions except two-page maximum on #2 and #3 below.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION PACKAGE

A. Proposal Narrative

- 1. Contact Information:** Provide the name, address, phone number, and e-mail address for the NSLP agency staff person(s) responsible for the application.
- 2. Description of System: (two-page maximum)** Provide a brief description of how your State's direct certification system operates. The description must be sufficient to provide a *basic* understanding of that system. At a minimum, you must answer the following questions:
 - Which entities are involved in your direct certification process? What are their roles? Examples include the NSLP agency, SNAP agencies, LEAs, individual schools, and TANF agencies.
 - What data sources are used to conduct direct certification (i.e., data-matching)? Examples include SNAP data, school enrollment data, and TANF data.
 - How often is direct certification conducted? Examples include annually, semi-annually, quarterly, monthly, and weekly. If direct certification is conducted less frequently than quarterly, you must indicate the (approximate) date(s) it is conducted.
 - How does the direct certification system work? For example, if your State uses an automated system to identify matches, you must describe the data fields used to identify those matches and indicate whether flexible/probabilistic matching (i.e., matches that are probable but not exact) is used and, if so, how it works. Other examples of information you should provide include descriptions of where/how matches are identified (i.e., at the State or local level), and indication of whether *ad hoc* certifications are used (and, if so,

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in what circumstances), and a description of how data matches are communicated to the LEAs and/or schools.

3. Proposed Grant Activities: (two-page maximum)

Provide a brief description of how you propose to use grant funds to (A) identify the reasons for your State's low direct certification rate *and* (B) determine the most effective way(s) to improve that rate (two-page maximum). Your description must be sufficient to provide a *specific* understanding of your proposed grant activities, and *must* include a gap analysis that compares current capabilities with future needs. (See *Direct Certification Q & A, Question #2* at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Grants/FY10certgrant_rfa-qa.pdf for further explanation of brief gap analysis). Examples of potential grant activities include, *but are not limited to*:

- Conducting an internal analysis of your direct certification system. Such an analysis might cover a variety of topics, such as Information Technology (IT) capabilities and deficiencies, policies and procedures governing direct certification, staffing levels and needs, and inter-agency operations and cooperation; *and/or*
- Hiring a contractor, consultant, or university to conduct such an analysis.

4. Timeline: Your proposed schedule for carrying out the Planning Grant activities. At minimum, your timeline must identify significant project milestones, indicate when those milestones will be met, and indicate when the grant activities will be completed. However, please note that Planning Grants *must* be completed no later than 210 days after the Planning Grant Award Date.

5. Quantity and Appropriateness of Staff Committed: Description of staff resources you will assign to manage the grant. At minimum, you must:

- Identify the employees you will assign to manage the grant. However, if such employees are not currently on your staff, indicate whether you have the resources to hire them and (if so) when you intend to do so.
- For current employees, describe relevant qualifications and experience, and projected roles and responsibilities. For employees not currently on your staff, describe the qualifications and/or experience you will use to identify potential hires.
- Include a discussion or plan on how activities will be fulfilled should key staff leave or be removed.
- Indicate what percentage of each employee's time will be spent managing the grant; and
- Indicate the total cost of these staffing levels.

6. Budget: Proposed budget describing *appropriate* use of Planning Grant funds and justifying costs. Please use the Budget Template provided in **Appendix D** of the RFA to be sure all costs are included. If you are using a sole-source (no competition) contract for consultants to complete any of the project work, provide sufficient information to support approval of a sole-source contract.

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Please see **APPENDIX A: OMB CIRCULAR A-87 (2 CFR 225)** to review OMB Circular A-87, which addresses allowable costs; and **APPENDIX B: POTENTIAL USES OF GRANT FUNDS** to review an FNS document that provides additional information regarding allowable, suggested, and potential uses of grant funds.

- 7. Commitment:** Include a certification statement that, within 210 days of the Planning Grant Award Date, you will (A) complete all Planning Grant activities *and* (B) submit a timely, complete, and substantive application for an Implementation Grant, *unless* your Planning Grant activities reveal that an Implementation Grant is unnecessary.

B. Required Forms: The SF forms are located at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/grants.htm>

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424a, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424b, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Include a copy of your State agency's signed Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency, if indirect costs are included in budget