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THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE
FISCAL YEAR 2006
REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS AND
TRAINING FUNDS

States are required to use this solicitation to apply for Administrative Reviews and Training Funds, to be used to provide training and conduct additional administrative reviews of local educational agencies that have demonstrated a high level of or a high risk for administrative error.

APPLICATION DUE DATE: JANUARY 27, 2006
FUNDING IS EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED AROUND:
MARCH 2006

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - I. Application Cover Page; II. Project Description (Narrative Statement) and SFA Information, i.e., name, location, schools, etc.

Attachment B – State Agency Project Activity and Timeline

Checklist for the Application Package

Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Instructions

Form SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs with Instructions

Form SF-424B, Assurances - Non Construction Programs with Instructions

Certification/Disclosure Requirements Related to Lobbying with Instructions

Terms and Conditions of Award

REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS AND TRAINING FUNDS

PURPOSE

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, P.L. 108-265, authorizes FNS to award \$4,000,000 beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2005 and for each of the following fiscal years (FYs) through FY 2009, to State Agencies (SAs) for administrative reviews and training of selected local educational agencies. The term “selected local educational agencies” refers to educational agencies that have demonstrated a high level of, or a high risk for administrative error. Specifically the funds must be used for:

- Additional Administrative Reviews of local educational agencies that have demonstrated a high level of or a high risk for administrative error. These Administrative Reviews should be focused on those School Food Authorities (SFAs) where problems have been identified or are likely to occur.
- Training to local educational agencies and SFA administrative personnel to include training in application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming procedures.

The purpose of this funding is to decrease administrative errors in those SFAs and schools identified by their States as having problems or where problems are likely to arise. Funds authorized cannot be used to replace or augment funding allocated for existing review requirements. FNS will make every effort to award funding for the full amount requested by SAs that are chosen for award, but reserves the right to partially fund requests.

This solicitation seeks diverse proposals that identify local educational agencies that have had or are likely to experience administrative errors, and a list of reviews or training that would be conducted to address these errors. The proposals should include specific activities focused primarily on administrative reviews that would be carried out with the funds. The proposal can incorporate activities and training as long as it is directly related to the areas specified in the statute.

NOTE: FNS is interested in serving as many eligible recipients as possible with the limited funds available for this program. We encourage SAs applying for funds to structure their proposal in a way that maximizes the number of SFAs and educational agencies that may be reached.

DATES

Applications must be received **on or before 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, January 27, 2006. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered for funding.**

Funding is expected to be announced in March 2006.

ADDRESSES: Applications/Proposals for Administrative Reviews and Training Funds should be addressed to: **Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer, Grants Management Division, Room 738, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Contact Lisa Johnson at (703) 305-2848, or via e-mail at lisa.johnson@fns.usda.gov with any questions pertaining to these funds.

I. What are Administrative Reviews and Training Funds?

Background

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, authorizes FNS to award \$4,000,000 beginning in FY 2005 and for each of the following FYs through FY 2009, to State Agencies for administrative reviews and training of selected local educational agencies.

Purpose

The purpose of these funds is to improve program integrity and administrative accuracy by decreasing administrative errors in those local educational agencies, identified by States as having problems or where problems are likely to arise.

Authority

Public Law 108-265 authorizes funding for Administrative Reviews and Training Funds. To be eligible, SAs must identify SFAs or schools where they are experiencing or are likely to experience administrative errors.

II. Who May Apply?

Eligible applicants include all SAs that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). In this instance, the term SA means (a) the State educational agency; (b) any other agency of the State which has been designated by the Governor or other appropriate executive or legislative authority of the State and approved by the Department of Agriculture to administer the Program in schools. In order to be considered, an application/proposal should be submitted by the SAs in response to this solicitation.

III. Available Funds and Deadlines

A total of \$4,000,000 is available for Administrative Reviews and Training in FY 2006. Available funds will be awarded to SAs in the form of grants; however, the submission of a request for funds does not guarantee funding.

The same amount, \$4,000,000, will be available every FY through FY 2009. States that do not meet the requirements to apply for funds this FY can apply during any of the subsequent years when the application period is open. However, competition for funds made available in

subsequent years will require a new and separate proposal. States may reapply for funding during any or all of the years funding is available. Funds will be awarded to SAs based on the number of educational agencies that have demonstrated a high level of or a high risk for administrative error as determined by the SAs. However, FNS may adjust the amounts requested in the application to ensure that funds are made available at appropriate levels.

The award period for the Administrative Reviews and Training funds received during FY 2006 will extend through September 30, 2008. Thus, all funds must be obligated by September 30, 2008. The SA shall make no further obligation of funds after September 30, 2008. SAs have 90 days to complete closeout activities and submit their final reports. Thus, all obligations must be liquidated by December 30, 2008, and reported on the final Financial Status Report, SF-269A. Any funds that are not liquidated by December 30, 2008, must be returned to FNS. The final reports are due to FNS no later than December 30, 2008. Please see section V for additional reporting requirements.

IV. Use of Funding and Conditions

In addition to the governing Uniform Administrative Requirements found at 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3016 and the related cost circulars, i.e., OMB Cost Circular A-87, Costs for State and Local Governments, and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations, SAs receiving funds must agree to the following provisions. These provisions will be a part of the agreement between FNS and the SA.

1. Funds authorized cannot be used to replace or augment funding allocated for existing review requirements.
2. Current expenditures of State and local funds for the review and training of local educational agencies shall not be diminished as a result of receipt of Administrative Reviews and Training funds.
3. Any SA that receives funding will report on how they intend to address any problems they have encountered.
4. Only eligible SAs may receive funds; that is, SAs that identify local educational agencies that have demonstrated a high level of or a high risk for administrative error.
5. Funds authorized cannot be used for reviews or training activities that are currently carried out using State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds.
6. Funds cannot be used to shift existing staff from their normal duties paid with SAE funds to address problem areas identified by the SA unless the staff that are reassigned to the Administrative Reviews and Training activities are replaced with additional staff in the positions that are vacant.
7. Funds cannot be used for local level expenses associated with administrative reviews or training activities.

8. Funds must be expended in accordance with the budget estimate submitted with the proposal, except with prior FNS approval or FNS revision. No more than ten percent of the funds budgeted by the SAs can be shifted from one cost category to another without prior approval from FNS. Such requests for revision must be submitted in writing to: Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer, Grants Management Division, Room 738, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.
9. FNS reserves a royalty-free copyright of any materials developed with Administrative Reviews and Training Funds. However, this does not necessarily imply any endorsement or approval of the material contents.
10. Funding for approved proposals will be provided through the Letter of Credit process in the same manner as other funds. However, SAs will be required to separately track and report these funds via a SF-269(A), Financial Status Report.

V. Reporting Requirements

All SAs receiving FY 2006 Administrative Reviews and Training funds are required to submit the following reports in accordance with the deadlines noted:

a) An annual Financial Status Report, SF-269A, on the use of funds provided. An original and two copies of this Report must be submitted 30 days after the close of each Federal fiscal year in accordance with 7 CFR 3016.41(b). A final report is required by December 30, 2008 (90 days after the end of the funding period). Submit the **original and one copy** of these reports to, Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer, Grants Management Division, Room 738, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302, and **one copy** to your FNS Regional Office Financial Management Director.

b) The Annual Progress Reports must include: a description of progress to date; major problems or delays encountered and how they will be resolved; additional detail on work planned for the upcoming year; and any other pertinent information including the number and names of local educational agencies that were reviewed or trained using the funds. The final progress report should be a project summary that includes lessons learned, future implications within the State, and transferability to other States. An **original and one copy** of the Annual Progress Reports must be submitted no later than December 30, 2006, December 30, 2007, and December 30, 2008, to Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer, Grants Management Division, Room 738, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302 with a **second copy** sent to a FNS Regional Office contact to be designated when the funds are awarded.

VI. How to Submit a Proposal for Funding

To be considered for funding, Applications/Proposals must be received by close of business (5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time) on January 27, 2006. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered for funding. In order to ensure timely receipt of applications by the deadline, applications can be delivered or mailed directly to FNS. Please mail or deliver one (1)

original and two (2) copies of your application to Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer, Grants Management Division, Food and Nutrition Service, Room 738, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. If you opt to mail your application, we strongly suggest using a mail delivery service that guarantees delivery and allows you to track delivery to FNS. As noted above, late applications will not be considered for funding. Also, emailed and faxed applications will not be accepted, and additions or revisions to applications already received will not be considered.

The original must bear the original signature of your authorized representative. The original must be ready for copying, i.e., single-sided, unstapled, unbound, single spaced and on 8 ½” by 11” paper in 12 point font. Your original and copies must be on white paper. We reserve the right to reject any application containing a narrative statement that is over 1 page in length (see explanation below in part VII). Thus, your complete proposal must consist of no more than a **1 page narrative statement for each problem identified/activity planned plus attachments that include information on the names of SFAs that will be reviewed or trained, and the number of schools within those SFAs, enrollment, etc.** (see description of narrative statement below).

FNS will permit applicants to receive and provide information electronically. Applicants may receive the RFA package by downloading the application from the FNS website, by contacting FNS and requesting a hard copy to be sent by mail, or by downloading the application from the www.grants.gov website. Additionally, applicants may apply for this opportunity directly through www.grants.gov. If applying through www.grants.gov, applicants must send an email to the FNS Grants Officer, advising that their proposal has been submitted through the www.grants.gov portal and that the applicants have received a confirmation notice from www.grants.gov that their application was accepted. This submission to the FNS Grants Officer must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on January 27, 2006. Further, please be aware that in order to use the grants.gov system, the user will need both a Data Universal Number (DUNS) and a Contract Registry Number. Thus, it is very important that users of the grants.gov system familiarize themselves with the requirements for system use. It is suggested that applicants visit the site sometime prior to attempting to submit an application electronically to review the instructions on how to obtain a DUNS assignment as well as a Contract Registry Number. While both numbers are required to submit the application electronically via grants.gov, the DUNS number is a requirement even if the application is submitted in hardcopy format. If your agency has not yet obtained a DUNS number, you will need to contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1-800-234-3867 to register for a number. There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number. The DUNS number will serve as a means of tracking and identifying applicants for Federal assistance and is required to be included on all applications for Federal assistance.

Contact Lisa Johnson at (703) 305-2848 or via e-mail at lisa.johnson@fns.usda.gov with any questions about the application. She will respond to questions seeking clarification, whether technical in nature or relating to the application procedures.

VII. What to include in the Application

Application/Proposals must include a SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, including a Data Universal Number (DUNS) (Effective October 1, 2003, all applicants of Federal Government Awards must include a DUNS number which can be obtained from the Dun and Bradstreet Group), a Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA number 10.579), an application cover page as described in Attachment A, section I., a Standard Form 424(A), Budget Summary, and all required assurances. In addition, the application package should include a proposal that responds to the criteria and includes all of the proposal components discussed herein. Thus, submitted proposals should describe in detail your plan to operate a project with the FY 2006 Administrative Reviews and Training funds. The proposal should contain a description of the activities in the plan and how you plan to achieve each goal and objective. All requests must include the names, locations and enrollments of SFAs that have been identified as having problems or where problems are likely to arise, and a description of the activities the SA will undertake to address the identified problems. This should be done using the narrative statement discussed below as well as the supplemental activity explanation sheets. Information provided to address the evaluation criteria must be sufficiently detailed in the narrative statement and activity sheets to demonstrate your ability to perform the proposed activities. In addition to the required Federal Application for Assistance forms, your proposal must address the following information and must be organized as follows:

1. Application Cover Page

The Application Cover Page requests evidence of the basic eligibility requirements and additional information which will be used to evaluate proposals. Please see Attachment A, section I., for the information to be included on the Application Cover Page.

2. Project Description (Narrative Statement)

As part of their proposal, SAs must submit a written statement identifying the problem(s) encountered in local educational agencies. The SA **must provide an explanation on how they identified the problem(s) and describe in detail the activities that would be performed to address each one of the problems.** Activities could include reviews, individual training sessions and workshops, among others. Each problem and activity must be described on no more than one page, single spaced, 12 point font (see page A-1). In addition, a list of affected SFAs, the priority in which they will be reviewed or trained, the number of schools within each SFA, and enrollment of the SFA and each school targeted for review or training should be provided as an attachment. Also, an estimated cost of performing these activities and the number of staff days that the State anticipates it will take to complete them must be included in the attachment page for each SFA listed (see page A-2 for suggested formatting).

3. Project Activity and Timeline

The proposal should include a chart of projected activities with a timeline showing key activities or tasks and their due dates. The timeline should provide adequate/realistic periods to complete the proposed activities/tasks. A sample project activity and timeline chart is provided as Attachment B.

4. Budget

A one page detailed budget summary for use of funds by the SA must be submitted as part of the application and must include amounts budgeted for each SFA targeted. The detailed budget is in addition to the SF-424(B) which is also required, and must include the amount of funds projected to be used for the different activities planned. **Please indicate the amount of funds that you are requesting by line-item in narrative form that aligns with the budget line-items. Each line item should be supported by a short narrative describing how the amount was justified.** Applicants are reminded that they are liable for any costs incurred over and above the amount awarded. FNS is under no obligation to provide additional funds in such situations.

FNS will carefully consider how funds will be used since the law requires that funds be distributed to SAs to assist them in reviewing the administrative practices and providing training to local educational agencies. **Approved funds must be obligated and expended in accordance with the amounts indicated on the approved budget, except with prior FNS approval.** No more than ten percent of the funds budgeted by the SA can be shifted from one cost category to another without prior FNS approval or FNS revision.

5. Record Keeping

In addition to the items listed above, include a brief description (**not to exceed 1 page**) of your record keeping system for maintaining separate records of funds received and records pertaining to other financial operations.

VIII. Evaluation Information

Panel Review

All applications that meet the deadline for submission will be screened for completeness and conformity to the requirements of this solicitation. If deemed fully responsive, the request will be considered for funding. Based on the responses to the criteria discussed below, a panel of FNS staff will determine the technical merit of each request and provide a numerical score.

Evaluation Criteria (All applications will be evaluated using the following criteria)

Identification and Description of the Problem (Narrative Statement) (25 Points)

The proposal clearly identifies the local educational agencies that present problems and describes each problem to be solved. It also provides evidence that the problems are worth solving. In addition, the SA should provide an explanation on how they identified these problems, how they plan to address them, and a cost estimate of carrying out the activity(ies) planned to address the problems. Also, the applicant's plan for project operation seems feasible and reflects a thorough understanding of the purpose of the funding. Project descriptions should detail each step necessary to improve program integrity and administrative accuracy, and all related activities and project implementation tasks should be clearly described, including the reasons for the decisions made for the activities in the plan, and how each goal and objective will be achieved.

Staffing (25 Points)

The roles and duties of all key staff (new and existing) are thoroughly and clearly explained including identification of the person or entity responsible for project oversight and completion. The proposal should describe how additional resources will be provided while maintaining existing staff. Also, the proposal should include an explanation of how duties covered by

existing staff will be funded. Please note that funds cannot be used to fund current staff whose salaries are paid with SAE funds, unless current staff is replaced with new staff.

Project Activity Timeline and Soundness of Program Design (25 Points)

The proposal includes a State level project activity chart with a timeline showing key activities or tasks and their due dates. The timeline provides adequate, realistic periods to start and complete the proposed activities/tasks (see sample at Attachment B).

Budget Appropriateness and Efficiency (25 Points)

A level of funding appropriate for the proposal is requested. The applicant's budget demonstrates a reasonable apportionment of funds. Standard Form 424A, Budget Information, and a 1 page detailed budget summary that clearly explains and justifies costs must be submitted with the application.

Additional Points (6 Points)

The proposal outlines a plan of intensive oversight to address problems identified by the SA. These extra points are based upon a greater emphasis on increased review activity in error prone SFAs.

Total possible points = 106

IX. Awards

Applications will be reviewed and scored by panel evaluators. The proposals will be ranked by score starting with the highest score. The panel will present their recommendations to the selecting official based on this ranking. Awards will be considered based on rank funding order until the total available funds are committed; however, the selection official reserves the right to fund out of rank order. The selecting official may consider other factors, such as past performance on FNS grants, geographic, demographic, or socioeconomic diversity, agency priorities, etc., in addition to the scores assigned by the technical review panel in making his/her final decision. FNS also reserves the right to fund successful applications at an amount less than requested if it is judged that the application can be implemented at a lower funding level or if federal funding is not sufficient to fund all successful applications fully.

We expect to complete the application review no later than March 2006, at which time FNS will notify applicants of funding decisions. FNS will provide funding for approved applications upon receipt of a properly executed agreement and subject to available funding.

ATTACHMENT A

FY 2006 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS AND TRAINING FUNDS

I. APPLICATION COVER PAGE

(Include a 1 page cover page to your application that includes the following information)

APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Applicant (State agency name and address):
2. Official Contact for Funding Proposal (name, title, phone number and email address):
3. Total amount of funds requested: \$_____
4. Any additional information that you feel will provide clarification and/or justification for your proposal:

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

(Every application must provide the following data.)

On a separate sheet of paper (not to exceed 1 page per problem identified and planned activity), provide a narrative description of the problem, how the SA identified the problem, and the activities the SA will use to address the problem (see page A-1 for an example of suggested formatting).

Following this narrative description, list local educational agencies prioritized in the order you will address them, and provide the following information for each SFA:

- a) Number of schools in each SFA and number of schools that will be targeted for administrative reviews or training
- b) Enrollment of each SFA and enrollment of targeted schools
- c) Number of staff days the SA anticipates spending on each SFA
- d) Amount budgeted for each SFA

(See page A-2 for an example of formatting to use to provide the required information)

A separate narrative and list must be submitted for **each type of problem/activity identified**.

Narrative Description (1 page per problem identified and planned activity) of: (a) the Problem, (b) how the SA identified the problem, and (c) the activity(ies) the SA will use to address the problem.

Checklist for the Application Package

The application package must include:

_____ The Application for Funding

- Cover Letter – A cover letter should be the first page of the application
- Proposal that responds to the criteria and includes all of the proposal components discussed herein;
- Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- Standard Form 424(A), Budget Information – Non Construction Programs;
- Standard Form 424(B), Assurances – Non Construction Programs;
- Anti-Lobbying Restrictions require that an applicant submit the required certification with each new submission of an application for funding.

_____ The Correct Number of Copies

- An original bearing the original signature of the authorized representative.
- Two copies of the original application.

_____ The Correct Format

- The original must be ready for copying, i.e., single-sided, unstapled, unbound, single spaced and on 8 ½ by 11 white paper;
- Font size must be 12 point;
- Margins must be at least one inch;
- Original and copies must be on white paper;
- The application and attachments cannot include videotapes, brochures, binders, folders, or sleeves.

Terms and Conditions of Award

For each project selected for funding, the applicant must sign a grant agreement which will contain the terms and conditions of the grant. Uniform administrative requirements for grants appear at 7 CFR 3015. Administrative requirements for grants to State and local governments appear at 7 CFR 3016. Subparts A-E “Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)” appear at 7 CFR 3017. Subparts F “Government-wide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace (Grants)” appear at 7 CFR 3021. All awards made in connection with this request for application will be subject to the following uniform administrative requirements and the related cost circulars as listed below.

- 7 CFR Part 3015: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements;
- 7 CFR Part 3016: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements for State and Local Governments;
- 7 CFR Part 3017: Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);
- 7 CFR Part 3021: Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)
- 7 CFR Part 3018: Restrictions on Lobbying
- OMB Cost Circular A-87, Costs for State and Local Governments
- 7 CFR Part 3052: “Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations

FNS will obtain assurance that applicants are neither suspended nor debarred prior to making an award. If chosen, the applicant must also agree to make a good faith effort, on a continuing basis, to (A) maintain a drug-free workplace (including taking specific actions described at 7 CFR Sec. 3021.200 through 3021.230); and (B) identify all workplace locations where work under Federal award will be performed (7CFR sec. 3021.200). Since Federal entities will no longer collect a paper certification, this may include the following:

- a) Notifying all sub-grantees and contractors of the Drug Free Workplace rules,
- b) Making conforming changes to your internal procedures, directives, training materials, etc., and
- c) Incorporating the new rules into your sub-grantee monitoring practices.

Applicants chosen for award will also be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules found at 7 CFR sec. 3017.300 by doing any **one** of the following:

- a) Checking the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) found at www.epls.gov.
- b) Collecting a certification that the entity is neither excluded nor disqualified. Since a Federal certification form is no longer available, the grantee or sub-grantee electing this method must devise its own, including a clause to this effect in the sub-grant agreement and in any procurement contract expected to equal or exceed \$25,000, awarded by the grantee or a sub-grantee under its grant or sub-grant.