REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
OUTREACH GRANTS

CFDA #10.551

Letter of Intent (Optional) Due Date: January 6, 2006

Application Due Date: April 3, 2006

Food Stamps Make America Stronger.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has at least $1 million, contingent upon availability, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, for an outreach grant competition. The purpose of the grant is to implement and study effective strategies to inform and educate potentially eligible low income people not currently participating in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) about the nutrition benefits of the program, eligibility rules, and how to apply, so that they can make an informed decision about participation in the program.

BACKGROUND

The FSP is the cornerstone of the nation's nutrition safety net. It is the largest of the USDA's 15 domestic nutrition assistance programs. The FSP provides crucial support to needy households to buy the food they need for good health, and helps low income people make the transition from welfare to work and become self-sufficient. Participants in the FSP are provided a monthly allotment of benefits via an electronic benefits card, similar to a bank card, which is used to purchase food at authorized retail stores. Communities benefit from the economic impact of food stamp redemption in local stores. Every dollar of new food stamp benefits generates $1.84 in additional community spending. FNS manages the FSP at the Federal level. Each State administers the FSP according to the rules and regulations set forth by FNS.

Participation in the FSP among people who are eligible for food stamp benefits fluctuates according to changes in policy and the economy. In March 1994, participation reached an all time high of 28 million people nationwide. By July 2000, participation dropped to a low of 16.9 million people. Average participation for fiscal year 2004 was 23.8 million people per month. According to the most recent available data, the participation rate among those eligible for the program was 56 percent in fiscal year 2003.

There are many reasons why eligible people do not participate in the FSP. These include unawareness of eligibility, confusion about program rules and requirements, a complex application process, and stigma. FNS conducts many national outreach activities to help raise awareness among potentially eligible low income people of the nutrition benefits of the program and how to apply. These efforts include radio advertisements, a national toll free number, distribution of free outreach materials via an online ordering system, a web based pre-screening tool in English and Spanish, and a Food Stamp Outreach Coalition. FNS has awarded outreach grants for several years as part of the national outreach effort. This grant competition continues that practice.

AUTHORIZATION

These grants will be awarded under authority provided by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, Section 17(a)(1), 7 U.S.C. 2026(a)(1). This section allows the Secretary of Agriculture to award grants to undertake research that will improve the effectiveness of the FSP in delivering nutrition-related benefits.

FUNDING

At least $1 million is available in FY 2006 for grant awards under this program, contingent upon availability. The maximum grant award amount is $75,000. Selected Grantees will be allowed to use the grant funds for the duration of the project period according to the start and end dates noted in the grant agreement, not to exceed two years.

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Grantees will be selected on a competitive basis, based on an objective review of their proposals according to the technical evaluation criteria outlined in this request for applications (RFA). FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in future fiscal years.

Funds will be provided to applicants chosen for award through USDA's Grant Award/Letter of Credit process utilizing an electronic payment method. If the option to use the Letter of Credit payment process is not viable for any applicant chosen for award, payment will be made via an advance/reimbursement method also using an electronic funds transfer method.

The Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this competition is 10.551.

SECTION II: REQUIREMENTS

WHO MAY APPLY

Entities eligible to apply for this grant competition are:

- Public organizations
- Private, non-profit organizations (IRS and other documentation required)

Examples of eligible entities include, but are not limited to:

- Faith-based organizations;
- Community-based organizations;
- Food banks; and
- Public health clinics.

WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

State and local food stamp agencies are not eligible to apply for this grant award.

Recipients of FNS outreach grants under the "Food Stamp Program Research Grants to Improve Access Through the Use of New Technology and Partnerships" awarded in fiscal year 2001 and 2002, and recipients of FNS Outreach Grants awarded in fiscal years 2004 and 2005 may not apply or participate as sub-grantees to another applicant. (No outreach grants were awarded in fiscal year 2003.)

FNS is interested in obtaining innovative approaches from new partners in its effort to reach non-participating people. For this reason, FNS excludes entities that received FSP grants previously, since they already participate in FNS outreach efforts.

ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDING

Target Populations

Applicants will develop proposals to design and implement a community food stamp outreach and education program targeted to one or more of the following populations:

- Working poor;
- Seniors; or
- Immigrants.

Allowable Activities

The focus of these grants is to make sustainable investments in food stamp outreach and to build infrastructure at the local level for ongoing food stamp outreach efforts.   The allowable activities focus on "back to basics" outreach that will enable organizations to gain training and experience in food stamp issues. In this way, these organizations and the communities in which they work gain food stamp knowledge and experience that lasts beyond the grant period while also working towards increased program participation.

Examples of allowable activities include, but are not limited to:

- Participation in community events to promote the benefits of food stamps to potentially eligible people;
- Publicity to raise awareness of project activities or events;
- Distribution of educational and informational material at community sites to educate and inform potentially eligible people how to apply for food stamp benefits;
- Visits by outreach workers to or partnerships with food retailer sites, public housing locations, schools, employers of low wage workers, or places of worship to educate and inform potentially eligible people how to apply for food stamp benefits;
- Pre-screening and application assistance; and
- Addition of food stamp outreach to other existing outreach programs.

It should be noted that information about an individual's participation in the FSP (and other government programs) is protected. Please see Attachment VI (page 28 of this RFA) for technical information about privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Attachment IX (page 33 of this RFA) describes lessons learned from the evaluation of previous outreach grants. Applicants are advised to review these lessons learned as they develop their proposals and incorporate them where appropriate.

Unallowable Activities

The following activities are not allowed:

- Recruitment. Once a person has made a fully informed decision not to apply, the decision must be respected. The person must not be coerced or provided any "incentives" to change their mind.
- Provision of food and/or financial incentives to potentially eligible food stamp recipients.
- Development of new online food stamp eligibility pre-screening tools; and
- Use of outreach materials developed by the Grantee without companion use of outreach materials developed by the FNS list in Attachment IV (24 of this RFA). (That is, projects without use of FNS outreach materials in some way are not allowed.)

Funds cannot be used to pay for:

- Nutrition education activities;
- Staff time for other projects;
- Activities already supported by optional State plans for FSP outreach or nutrition education;
- Activities already supported by other FNS discretionary grants such as the FSP Participation Grants;
- New public service announcements; and
- Other FNS reimbursed FSP administrative activities.

The purpose of the grant is to encourage development and testing of outreach strategies to achieve increases in participation within the framework of existing laws and regulations. Therefore, no waivers of the Food Stamp Act or FSP regulations will be considered.

LETTERS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, COMMITMENT, AND ENDORSEMENT

Letters of Acknowledgement

All applicants are **required** to provide a letter of acknowledgement from the State or local food stamp offices. A template letter of acknowledgement with a State or local food stamp office is provided in Template II (page 17 of this RFA) for use by applicants. It is not required that applicants use this letter template and applicants will not lose points for not using the letter template. It is provided for the convenience of applicants.

FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received. Therefore, applicants must include a letter of acknowledgement from the State or local food stamp office in the complete application package submitted to be considered for funding.

Applications submitted without a signed letter of acknowledgement from a State or local food stamp office will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from consideration.

For a listing of State food stamp agencies contacts, visit
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/contact_info/state-contacts.htm.

For a map with links to contact information for local food stamp offices, visit
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/map.htm.

Letters of Commitment

If partners (retailers, employers, health clinics, schools, etc.) are involved in the project, a letter of commitment from each partner **must** be included.

Letters of Endorsement (optional)

At least one and no more than two letters of endorsement from organizations and/or members of the community familiar with your organization **may** be included.

"FOOD STAMPS MAKE AMERICA STRONGER" MATERIALS AND SLOGAN

Grantees are required to use "Food Stamps Make America Stronger" materials noted in Attachment IV (page 24 of this RFA), available for free from FNS. Grantees must use these outreach materials either alone or in conjunction with other materials. Grantees may adapt these existing "Food Stamps Make America Stronger" materials to meet local needs, such as inserting a State toll free number or a local phone number.

Grantees may develop their own materials specific to the grant project. However, Grantees must use FNS materials (listed in Attachment IV on page 24 of this RFA) in conjunction with materials they develop. All materials developed by the Grantee under the grant must feature the slogan "Food Stamps Make America Stronger." With prior approval from FNS, Grantees may customize the slogan by inserting the name of their State or community in place of "America" in the slogan.

Materials developed with funding from this grant must be submitted to FNS in electronic and in hard copies. It is strongly suggested that selected Grantees submit draft versions of any materials developed with grant funds for FNS review.

EVALUATION OF YOUR PROJECT

A self-evaluation is a required part of the Grantee project, however, the evaluation should focus on process measures as long as they relate to the stated goals and objectives of the project, rather than outcome measures which can be difficult to obtain in a small project of short duration.

Examples of suggested process measures include number of:

- Attendees at an event;
- Brochures distributed;
- People pre-screened;
- People potentially eligible and not eligible according to the pre-screening results;
- People who received application assistance;
- Applications submitted to the local office by the project; or
- People referred to the local food stamp office.

Qualitative analysis can also be a useful self evaluation tool. Grantees may also wish to conduct an assessment of lessons learned and collect advice to others who might want to undertake such a project as part of their self-evaluation plan.

RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

Grantees must operate a financial management system that provides accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial status of the projects.

Grantees are required to submit:

- Quarterly and Final Financial Status Reports (Standard Form 269A). Note that Standard Form 269A is attached for your convenience.
- Quarterly and Final Progress Reports (See Attachments VII and VIII on pages 30 and 31 of this RFA for Sample Formats);

Grantees are required to submit an electronic copy, along with one mailed original and one copy of each report. FNS will provide a reporting schedule and the addresses to which Grantees may send reports at the time of award.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All costs under the grant awards are subject to the provisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments; A-122, Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations; and A-21, Cost Principles for Institutions of Higher Education, as well as USDA regulations.

OMB Circulars can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/.

Information about implementing these circulars can be found at the following Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) citations:

- 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, Subparts A-E: Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);
- 7 CFR Part 3021, Subpart F: Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)
- 7 CFR Part 3018: New Restrictions on Lobbying; and
- 7 CFR Part 3019: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations.
- 7 CFR Part 3052: USDA Implementation of Audits of States and Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations

The Code of Federal Regulations can be found at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html.

SECTION III: APPLICATION FORMAT AND PROCESS

APPLICATION FORMAT

A checklist of the complete application format is provided on page 11 of this RFA. Please read the checklist carefully and use it to help you put together your application package.

A suggested technical proposal outline is provided in Template I (page 14 of this RFA). Template I is available electronically at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm to assist you in preparing your proposal.

It is strongly suggested that applicants structure their application according to the checklist and use the suggested proposal outline to assist technical reviewers in locating important information. The outline parallels the technical review criteria. However, applicants who opt not to use the suggested outline or format will not lose points simply for not using them.

PROPOSAL PAGE LIMIT

The technical proposal may not exceed 15 pages, excluding the table of contents, all attachments, all standard forms and other items noted in the checklist on page 11 of this RFA. Applicants are asked to use the Times New Roman font in 12 point for their applications.

FNS will not forward to the review panel any applications in which the technical proposal, excluding all attachments noted, exceeds the maximum proposal page limit of 15 pages.

It is strongly suggested that applicants number the pages of their technical proposal using page 1 as first page of the proposal (referred to as "executive summary" in the checklist) and numbering the pages consecutively through the end of the attachments.

Applicants are also strongly advised to include a table of contents. The table of contents is not included in the 15-page limit for the proposal.

LETTER OF INTENT

Interested applicants are encouraged to submit a letter of intent to apply for this grant program to:

> Suzanne Pastura, Grants Officer
> Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
> Grants Management Division
> FSP Outreach Grants
> 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 738
> Alexandria, VA 22302
> Fax: 703-605-0363
> Email: suzanne.pastura@fns.usda.gov

Letters of intent should be postmarked or received by email or fax no later than January 6, 2006.

The letter of intent does not obligate either FNS or the applicants in any way, but it provides useful information to FNS as the review process is planned.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Due Date

The completed application package must be received by FNS at or before 5:00 pm Eastern Time on April 3, 2006.   Applications must be either hand-delivered or mailed directly to FNS, or submitted electronically through www.grants.gov, in sufficient time to ensure timely receipt by the deadline.   **Late applications will not be considered.** Additions or revisions to applications already received will not be considered.

DUNS Number

Applicants for Federal Government awards are a required to have a DUNS number. To obtain a DUNS number if you do not have one already, contact Dun and Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711 or visit their website at https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions.html?cmid=EOE100537. There is no charge for a DUNS number. The DUNS number serves as a means of tracking and identifying applications for Federal assistance and is required to be included on all applications for Federal assistance, regardless of the method they are submitted. The DUNS number is also required to complete the additional steps to become a registered www.grants.gov user.

Submitting Your Application by Hand-Delivery or by Mail

It is **strongly suggested** that you submit your application by hand-delivery or by mailing it in sufficient time to ensure timely receipt by the deadline. If you opt to mail your application, it is strongly suggested that you use a mail delivery service that guarantees delivery and allows you to track delivery to FNS.

For mailed or delivered applications, one original and two copies must be submitted. The original must be ready for copying (i.e. single-sided, unstapled, unbound and on 8 ½ x 11 paper). Remember to include the required letters, including the letter of acknowledgement from the State or local food stamp office, and the letters of commitment from partners. **Such letters will not be considered if they are not included in the application and are sent separately.** (For application format, please refer to the Application Checklist on page 11 of this RFA.)

Mail or deliver your application to:

> Suzanne Pastura, Grants Officer
> Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
> Grants Management Division
> FSP Outreach Grants
> 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 738
> Alexandria, VA 22302

Remember that applications submitted without a signed letter of acknowledgement from a State or local food stamp office will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from consideration.

FNS will not accept faxed or e-mailed applications.

Submitting Your Application by www.grants.gov

www.grants.gov is a government-wide website designed for electronic submission of applications/proposals. Allow ample time to familiarize yourself with the system's requirements. You will need both a Data Universal Number (DUNS) and a Contract Registry Number (CCR) to access the system.

Please be aware that the www.grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices.   Be sure that you have confirmation that the application was **accepted.**

In addition, all applicants that opt to submit their application/proposal via www.grants.gov must send an email to Suzanne Pastura, Grants Officer, at suzanne.pastura@fns.usda.gov advising that the application was submitted through the www.grants.gov. This e-mail must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the application due date of April 3, 2006.

Remember to include the required letters, including the letter of acknowledgement from the State or local food stamp office, and the letters of commitment from partners. **Such letters will not be considered if they are not included in the application and are sent separately.** (For application format, please refer to the Application Checklist on page 11 of this RFA.)

<u>**Questions about this Solicitation**</u>

Any questions regarding this solicitation **must be directed to**:

> Suzanne Pastura
> Grants Officer
> Phone: 703-305-2867
> Fax: 703-605-0363
> Email: suzanne.pastura@fns.usda.gov

Frequently asked questions and answers about this solicitation will be posted on the FNS website as they accrue during the application period, to assist applicants as they write their proposals. Please visit http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm often during the application period to access these questions and answers. Please contact Ms. Pastura if you cannot access this website and need a hard copy of the questions and answers.

SECTION IV: REVIEW AND AWARD PROCESS

APPLICATION SCREENING, REVIEW AND SELECTION

The application screening, review, and selection process is as follows:

1. FNS will screen all applications received by the published deadline to ensure their completeness and conformity to the requirements of this announcement. Applications without the required letter from the State or local food stamp offices will be considered incomplete/non-responsive and **will not** be forwarded to the review panel for consideration. FNS **will not** forward to the panel any applications in which the technical proposal, excluding all attachments noted, exceeds the maximum proposal page limit of 15 pages.

2. Applications that meet the screening requirements will be referred to technical review panel composed of USDA staff, possibly other Federal agency staff and other individuals committed to furthering the goals of the FSP.

3. The panel will rank the applications assigned to them by score from highest to lowest.

4. The selection official will consider each panel's recommendations; however he or she may consider other USDA or FNS priorities such as geographic, demographic or socioeconomic diversity, and agency priorities in addition to the scores assigned by the technical review panels.

   The selection official may also determine that, based on their scores, few of the applications are of technical merit. In such a case, FNS may make fewer awards or smaller awards than expected or make no awards. In addition, FNS reserves the option to select one or more lower rated applications in order to achieve a diversity of target populations and regional representation.

5. Applicants will be notified of the funding decisions in writing.

6. Applicants selected to receive award must sign a grant agreement, which contains the terms and conditions of the grant.

DETERMINATION OF AWARD AMOUNTS

Applications selected and approved for funding with budgets that are realistic, and well justified and supported will likely be funded at the requested amounts. However, FNS reserves the right to fund applications:

- Out of rank order to achieve priorities identified earlier; or
- At lesser amounts if it judges that the project can be implemented with less funding; or
- At lesser amounts if Federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards.

(Note that the maximum grant award amount is $75,000.)

TECHNICAL REVIEW

The technical panel will evaluate each forwarded proposal according to how well it addressed each of the technical evaluation criteria below.

Technical Evaluation Criteria

1. **Need/Understanding**   **10 points**

   The need for the outreach project is clearly presented and documented by data, including appropriate food stamp participation data. Documented barriers illustrate the need for the project.

2. **Soundness of Program Design, Plan, and Evaluation**   **40 points**

The proposed plan (goals, objectives, time frames and action steps) is feasible, measurable and reasonable to meet the needs given the resources allotted.	10
The plan demonstrates a workable relationship with the State or local food stamp offices and other community partners with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.	10
The self-evaluation is well thought out, feasible, reasonable, and appropriately links the project goal with identified measures.	5
Privacy and confidentially will be appropriately protected.	5
The plan can be replicated by other organizations.	5
The project can be sustained once grant funding ends.	5

3. **Organizational Experience and Management Capabilities**   **20 points**

The organization is credible and capable and has the capacity to undertake the project as presented. The organization has appropriate past experience with similar projects.	10

The project director and other key staff are clearly identified and possess appropriate experience and qualifications as demonstrated by their resumes or biographical sketches.   5

Effective communication will exist among staff and partners as necessary to implement the project. An organizational chart clearly outlines the relationships and chain of command for the project.   5

4. Budget   27 points

A line item budget clearly demonstrates how the funds will be spent, by whom, and for what purpose.   10

The budget narrative clearly explains and fully justifies each cost and clearly demonstrates how the costs were determined.   10

The project is cost effective.   7

5. Presentation   3 points

The application is well presented, well organized, well written, free of major typographical and grammatical errors, and the font is Times New Roman, 12 point.

CHECKLIST: APPLICATION FORMAT

The suggested application format is included below in a checklist. Read the checklist carefully and use it to help you order the pages of, prepare and format your application to make sure you have included all required components before submitting it to FNS.

Standard Forms (required)	☐	SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance including:
		☐ Data Universal Number (DUNS)
		☐ Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number (CFDA #10.551)
	☐	SF 424A (Budget Summary)
	☐	SF 424B (Assurances – Non Construction Programs)
	☐	SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities). Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write "Not Applicable."
Optional Survey	☐	Optional Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants
Table of Contents	☐	Table of Contents for technical proposal and all attachments
Technical Proposal (15-page limit) **See also Template I, page 14 of this RFA.**	☐	**Executive Summary** (1 page suggested)
		☐ Name and Address of Organization
		☐ Name, Title, and Contact Information for Project Director
		☐ Target Population
		☐ Location of Project (County and/or City; and State)
		☐ Executive Summary. Provide a brief overview of your project, including the barriers you are trying to address, your goals, outreach strategy, and evaluation approach. (500 words suggested)
	☐	**Part 1: Need/Understanding** (1 page suggested)
		☐ The characteristics of the community and the population you intend to target. Use data, including food stamp participation data, when available. Attachment V (page 26 of this RFA) contains web resources that may help you locate data to demonstrate the need.
		☐ Barriers to food stamp participation faced by your target population to illustrate need for this project.
	☐	**Part 2: Soundness of Project Design, Plan, and Evaluation** (7 pages suggested, not including optional attachment as noted) Please see Attachment IX (page 33 of this RFA) for lessons learned from previous outreach grant projects.
		☐ Description of the overall project plan and how it meets the needs and addresses identified barriers.
		☐ Description of the roles and responsibilities of partners.
		☐ Description of the roles and responsibilities of the State and local food stamp office.
		☐ Measurable goals, objectives, action steps, and time lines. Explain the overall goals for the project and the objectives you will complete to reach those goals. You may use a narrative or a table format or both to display goals and objectives as well as action steps, and the timelines. A sample table is provided in Attachment I (page 19 of this RFA). If you choose to use a table, it may be an attachment. A template for a table is provided in Template III (page 18 of this

			RFA.)
		☐	Description of the evaluation approach that will be used to collect and analyze information to determine the results of the project.
		☐	Description of how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.
		☐	Description of how the project will be sustained both administratively and financially once the grant has ended.
		☐	Description of how the project can be replicated by other organizations in similar situations.
	☐	**Part 3: Organizational Experience and Management Capabilities** (3 pages suggested, not including the three noted attachments)	
		☐	Mission
		☐	Credibility, capability and capacity to manage the project
		☐	Past experience with similar projects
		☐	Names of project director and other key staff and a description of their roles and responsibilities. Note if the project will include use of volunteers and if so, how they will be trained.
		☐	Include as an Attachment: Resumes or brief biographical sketches for key staff showing their experience with similar projects and qualifications.
		☐	Include as an Attachment: Position descriptions for key staff yet to be hired.
		☐	Include as an Attachment: Organizational chart explaining the applicant's relationship to its partners and the State or local food stamp office, the chain of command, and how communications will occur between participating entities.
	☐	**Part 4: Budget** (3 pages suggested, not including the two noted attachments)	
		☐	Budget narrative that explains and justifies each cost and clearly explains how the amount for each line item was determined.
		☐	Explanation of how the project is cost effective. (Note that one way to measure this is to calculate a per person cost.)
		☐	Include as an Attachment: Line item budget. The line item budget is not the same as the SF 424A. The line item budget is a detailed breakdown of the information placed in the SF 424A. (Note that one way to display your line item budget is with a chart with a column for each proposed year of the project, as well as the total cost for the life of the project. You may include columns for contributions from non-Federal sources, if applicable. A sample line item budget is presented in Attachment II, page 21 of this RFA.)
		☐	Include as an Attachment: If indirect costs are a part of the budget, a copy of the negotiated and approved indirect cost rate agreement between the applicant and the applicant's cognizant agency must be provided.
Attachments (not included in 15-page limit)	☐	**Letter of Acknowledgement from the State or local food stamp office is required**. You may use Template II (page 17 of this RFA) to assist you or the State or local office in developing this letter. The letter must be on the letterhead of the State or local food stamp office and signed by an authorized official. The letter should include a brief description of the role (if any) the State or local food stamp office will play in the project, as well as a description of the following commitments if they are applicable to your project: amount of time to be dedicated; cooperation with project implementation; and cooperation with the	

	☐	evaluation activities.
	☐	**Letter of Commitment from Partners** such as other community or faith-based organizations, health clinics, employers, retailers, or housing authority, if any, that will play a major role in the project must be included. The letters must be on letterhead and signed by an authorized official. The letter should include a brief description of the role the partner will play in the project, as well as a description of the following commitments if they are applicable to your project: amount of time to be dedicated; cooperation with project implementation; and cooperation with the evaluation activities.
	☐	**Letter of Endorsement** (optional, minimum of one, maximum of two) from organizations and/or members of the community familiar with your organization may be included.
	☐	**Attachments noted above under "Technical Proposal":**
	☐	Project Plan Table (optional)
	☐	Resumes or Biographical Sketches
	☐	Position Descriptions
	☐	Organizational Chart
	☐	Line Item Budget
	☐	Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
	☐	**Non-profit organizations** are required to submit:
	☐	Copy of the IRS Determination Letter, form 501(c)(3), or proof of application for exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
	☐	List of the Board of Directors
	☐	Most recent audit of your organization's financial records. (If your organization has not had an audit, a financial statement signed by the Treasurer of the Board will suffice.)
Proper Format	☐	White paper
	☐	Ready for copying (black and white, single sided, unstapled, unbound, on 8 ½ by 11 paper.)
	☐	Technical proposal is no more than 15 pages in length (excluding attachments as noted.)
	☐	Signature of your authorized representative.
	☐	No slides, tapes, brochures, pamphlets, or other such items.
	☐	Font is Times New Roman, 12 point.
Correct Number of Copies	☐	An original application with an original signature of the authorized representative and two copies.

TEMPLATE I: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL OUTLINE

Note to Applicants: It is FNS' goal to simplify the application process as much as practicable to assist grant applicants. To that end, the following pages contain a blank outline of the suggested proposal format. Use this outline to insert your own information to complete certain sections of the proposal. This application format is not required, although using it will assist reviewers in locating important information. You will not lose points for not using this template.

To aid you in completing your 15-page proposal, FNS provides an electronic copy of this template in Word at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm. To use it, right click on the document, select "Save Target As", browse to the directory you want to use, and save the document to your computer. Then simply input the information for your proposal under the headings for each section as you would with any Word document. Refer to the application instructions carefully so that no required elements are left out of your application narrative. Do not exceed the 15-page proposal limit (excluding attachments noted herein and on the checklist on page 11 of this RFA.)

Note that the complete application requires elements in addition to the technical proposal. Please refer to the checklist on page 11 of this RFA for the complete application format.

Executive Summary (1 page suggested)

Name and Address of Organization:

Name of Project Director:

Title of Project Director:

Phone Number of Project Director:

Email for Project Director:

Target Population(s):

Location of Project (City and/or County; and State):

Executive Summary (overview of the problem including barriers, goals, outreach strategy, and evaluation approach; suggested length is 500 words):

Part 1: Need/Understanding (1 page suggested)

Characteristics of community (provide supporting data):

Characteristics of target population (provide supporting data):

Barriers to food stamp participation:

Part 2: Soundness of Program Design, Plan, and Evaluation (7 pages suggested, not including optional attachment)

Overall project plan and how it meets the need:

Roles and responsibilities of partners:

Roles and responsibilities of State or local food stamp agencies:

Goals, objectives, timeline and action steps (if you use a table, it may be an attachment):

Evaluation approach:

Protection of confidentiality and privacy:

Sustainability:

Replicability:

Part 3: Organizational Experience and Management Capacity (3 pages suggested, not including three attachments as noted)

Mission:

Credibility, capability, capacity:

Past experience:

Names of project director and key staff and description of roles and responsibilities:

Training plan for staff and volunteers (if any):

Resumes or brief biographical sketches for key personnel (include as an attachment):

Position descriptions for vacancies to be filled (include as an attachment):

Organizational chart showing chain of command and lines of communication (include as an attachment):

Part 4: Budget (3 pages suggested, not including two attachments as noted)

Budget narrative:

Cost effectiveness:

Line item budget (include as an attachment):

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable, include as attachment):

Attachments

Letter of Acknowledgement from State or local Food Stamp Office (required)

Letters of Commitment from Partners (required if partners play a role in the project)

Letter(s) of Endorsement (optional)

Project Plan Table (optional)

Organizational Chart

Resumes or Biographical Sketches

Position Descriptions   16

Line Item Budget

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Non-profits only: IRS Determination Letter, List of Board of Directors, and most recent audit of your organization's financial records. (If your organization has not had an audit, a financial statement signed by the Treasurer of the Board will suffice.)

TEMPLATE II: LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM STATE OR LOCAL FOOD STAMP OFFICE

Note to Applicants: To aid you in completing your proposal, FNS provides an electronic copy of this template in Word at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm. Use of this template is not required. You will not lose points for not using this template.

To use the electronic template, right click on the document, select "Save Target As", browse to the directory you want to use, and save the document to your computer. Then simply input the information for your letter as you would with any Word document.

(On letterhead of State or local Food Stamp Office)

<Date>

<Name of Project Director>
<Title>
<Name of Applicant Organization>
<Address of Applicant Organization>
<City>, <State> <Zip>

Dear *<Name of Project Director>,*

Thank you for the information about your outreach grant proposal to be submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. There are *<estimate how many>* people in our community who may be eligible for these important benefits but are not participating in the Food Stamp Program.

<Provide a few basic sentences describing the State or local office role.>

We recognize that participation in the Food Stamp Program supplements the food budget for eligible low income people enabling them to eat healthier and also provides an economic stimulus to our community via the redemption of food stamp benefits in our local stores. We hope your outreach effort can serve to educate and inform potentially eligible low-income community members about food stamp benefits, help them make an informed decision about participation, and encourage them to apply for benefits if they choose to do so. When potential clients are well informed, it helps our staff conduct the certification process more efficiently.

We wish you success with your proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me or *<designated staff person>* at *<phone number or email address>* should you need further assistance.

Sincerely,

<Signature of Authorized Representative>
<Name and Title of Authorized Representative>

TEMPLATE III: PROJECT PLAN TABLE

Note to Applicants: To aid you in completing your proposal, FNS provides this template of a project plan table. Use of this template is not required. You will not lose points simply for not using this template. An electronic copy of this template in Word is available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm.To use the electronic template, right click on the document, select "Save Target As", browse to the directory you want to use, and save the document to your computer. Then simply input the information for your table as you would with any Word document. Add additional rows as needed.

Goal 1:					
Objective 1.1:					
Action Steps	**Responsible Person**	**Time Frame**		**Data Elements**	**Evaluation Method**
		Start	**End**		
1.1.1					
1.1.2					

Goal 1:					
Objective 1.2:					
Action Steps	**Responsible Person**	**Time Frame**		**Data Elements**	**Evaluation Method**
		Start	**End**		
1.2.1					
1.2.2					

Goal 2:					
Objective 1.1:					
Action Steps	**Responsible Person**	**Time Frame**		**Data Elements**	**Evaluation Method**
		Start	**End**		
2.1.1					
2.1.2					

ATTACHMENT I: SAMPLE PROJECT PLAN TABLE

Note to Applicants: The following is a basic example of how to present a project plan using a table. Your plan will be more detailed and more comprehensive. This example is presented to give you basic guidelines and a sample format. A plan may have more than one goal. Each goal may have several objectives.

Goal 1: Manage a pre-screening and application assistance project to increase the number of eligible people participating in the Food Stamp Program in River County through a partnership with River County Interfaith Coalition.					
Objective 1.1: Use the FNS pre-screening tool to pre-screen 100 people per month throughout the grant project period at the job-training site on Main Street.					
Action Steps	**Responsible Person**	**Time Frame**		**Data Elements**	**Evaluation Method**
		Start	**End**		
1.1.1 Purchase computer equipment, software and Internet service.	Nancy Fletcher, Outreach Director	4/1/06	4/15/06	N/A	Items purchased on time. Items meet specifications for pre-screening project.
1.1.2 Obtain FSP informational materials such as posters, brochures, etc.	Nancy Fletcher, Outreach Director	4/1/06	4/15/06	N/A	Materials obtained on time. Materials are appropriate for target audience of working poor.
1.1.3 Set up Food Stamp Information Desk at job training site.	Nancy Fletcher, Outreach Director	4/1/06	4/15/06	N/A	Desk is set up on time.
1.1.4 Install computer and Internet service at Information Desk.	Nancy Fletcher, Outreach Director	4/16/06	4/18/06	N/A	Installation occurs properly and on time. Security and inventory control for equipment is provided.
1.1.5 Train job training assistants to use FNS pre-screening tool.	Nancy Fletcher, Outreach Director	4/18/06	4/18/06	N/A	Training occurs on time. Assistants can use tool and answer basic questions.

1.1.6 Create and use log sheets to track use of pre-screening tool.	Nancy Fletcher, Outreach Director	4/1/06	4/15/06	Number of people pre-screened. Number of people estimated to be eligible. Number of people estimated ineligible.	Log sheet is created on time. Assistants know how to use log sheets correctly. Log sheets meet data collection needs for project self-evaluation while maintaining confidentiality.
1.1.7 Pre-screen job training site participants for food stamps.	Betsy Curtis, Outreach Assistant	4/19/06	Ongoing	As above in #6.	Log sheet is used to track data elements on a monthly basis.

Goal 1: Manage a pre-screening and application assistance project to increase the number of eligible people participating in the Food Stamp Program in River County through a partnership with River County Interfaith Coalition.					
Objective 1.2: Assist 100 percent of persons estimated to be eligible for food stamps through pre-screening to apply for benefits if they so choose.					
Action Steps	**Responsible Person**	**Time Frame**		**Data Elements**	**Evaluation Method**
		Start	**End**		
1.2.1					
1.2.2					

Applicant would complete another table for this objective as above.

ATTACHMENT II: SAMPLE LINE ITEM BUDGET

Note to Applicants: The following is a basic example of one way to set up a line item budget for a one year project. For a two year project, an option is set up a similar table to display the second year budget; and a third table to show the total for both years. Your line item budget may be organized differently. It may include different line items according to the nature of your project or it may not include non-Federal resources. This example is presented to give you basic guidelines and a sample format. You will not lose points for not using this format. Remember also that your line item budget must be accompanied by a budget narrative which explains and justifies each cost and clearly explains how the amount for each line was determined. Your line item budget may be an attachment to your proposal and is not part of the 15-page limit.

SAMPLE LINE ITEM BUDGET

Name of Organization: River County Interfaith Coalition

Grant Period: June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2007

				Year 1					
	Federal				**Non-Federal**				**Total**
I. Personnel	**Base Salary**	**% Time**	**Fringe 20 %**	**Total**	**Base Salary**	**% Time**	**Fringe 20 %**	**Total**	
Fletcher, Project Director	$60,000	0.5	$12,000	$42,000	$65,000	0.1	$13,000	$19,500	$61,500
Curtis, Outreach Assistant	$40,000	0.2	$8,000	$16,000	$40,000	0.1	$8,000	$12,000	$28,000
Subtotal				**$58,000**				**$31,500**	**$89,500**
II. Other Direct Costs									
Copying				$500				$100	$600
Telephone				$300				$100	$400
Computers				$1,500					
Postage				$750				$25	$775
Supplies				$500				$25	$525
Subtotal				**$3,550**				**$250**	**$2,300**
III. Travel	**Cost per Trip**	**# Trips**	**Total**		**Cost per Trip**	**# Trips**	**Total**		
Local Travel	$25	24	$600		$25	12	$300		$900
Long Distance Travel	$300	2	$600		$300	1	$300		$900
Subtotal			**$1,200**				**$600**		**$1,800**
IV. Contractual									
Acme Design and Print				$4,000					
Subtotal				**$4,000**				**$0**	**$0**
Total, Personnel and Direct Costs				**$66,750**				**$32,100**	**$98,850**
V. Indirect Costs 12 %				**$8,010**					**$8,010**
Total				**$74,760**				**$32,100**	**$101,610**

ATTACHMENT III: TIPS FOR PROPOSAL WRITERS

GENERAL TIPS

The following tips are provided as a courtesy to grant applicants. The use or inclusion of any or all of these suggestions does not guarantee selection to receive a grant award.

Getting Started:

1. Read the RFA carefully, more than once. Take notes.
2. Follow the RFA instructions. Be sure that your plan will meet the needs of FNS.
3. Manage your time wisely in order to meet the grant application deadline.
4. Ensure that your organization's leadership is supportive of the grant application and all that an award will entail.
5. If the grant process seems burdensome, consider partnering with a local organization so you can focus on service delivery while they lead grant administration matters.
6. Allow sufficient time to get letters back from the State or local offices and partners.
7. Check the FNS website for frequently asked questions and answers.

Writing Your Proposal:

1. Use the suggested format (see Template I (page 14 of this RFA) for a "fill in" outline and the checklist on page 11) or structure your proposal according to the technical review criteria.
2. Include all required components of the application.
3. Edit your application for spelling, content, and grammatical errors. Provide a polished product that will reflect well on your organization.
4. Write your proposal so that someone who knows nothing about your organization or the proposed project can understand your ideas.
5. Carefully address each of the technical evaluation criteria listed on pages 9 and 10. These criteria will be used by the technical evaluation panel to score your application.
6. Stay within the 15-page limit.
7. Include page numbers
8. Include a table of contents.
9. Write out all acronyms and abbreviations on first use.
10. Don't use jargon.
11. Keep your goals realistic.
12. Cite research that supports your goals.
13. Ask several people who weren't involved in writing the proposal to read it and give you suggestions for improving it.
14. Check the FNS website for frequently asked questions and answers.

Preparing Your Budget:

1. Be reasonable with your funding request and ensure that it adequately matches the scope of work proposed.
2. Make sure the cost elements listed in the budget match the technical proposal activities.
3. Use spreadsheets for extensive computations to ensure accuracy of calculations. Make sure that the numbers add up correctly and are consistent across displays in both the narrative and spreadsheet.
4. Make sure your budget corresponds to your goals and objectives.

5. Make sure you demonstrate that the proposed expenditures are necessary to carry out project activities.
6. Make sure it is very clear to reviewers how budget figures were developed. They should have to do no more than a few simple calculations to see where the numbers came from. (For example: 2 trips x $300 each = $600 long distance travel.)
7. Check the FNS website for frequently asked questions and answers.

Submitting Your Proposal:

1. Meet the application deadline. Your application must be **received** by FNS by the due date. If applying via www.grants.gov, you must have a confirmation that your application was successfully uploaded before the deadline.
2. File in an appropriate manner.
3. Make sure documents requiring a signature are signed and dated.
4. Make sure all required forms are included and signed by an authorized representative.
5. Include the required letter of acknowledgement from the State or local food stamp office and letters of commitment from partners.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

This request for applications is all-inclusive and should answer your questions. However, some other federal government agencies have developed technical assistance resources for grant writing. The following websites are provided for general information only. **Not all of the information on the following websites will be relevant to this request for applications.** The use or inclusion of any or all of the suggestions does not guarantee selection to receive a grant award.

White House Office of Faith and Community-Based Initiatives
- Developing Quality Grant Proposals (PowerPoint) http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/quality_proposal.pdf

- Guidance to Faith and Community-based Organizations on Partnering with the Federal Government http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance/index.html

United States Department of Education
- How to Write a Quality Grant Proposal (Video Web Cast) http://www.connectlive.com/events/edproposals/

United States Department of Health and Human Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Training and Technical Assistance Resources http://162.99.3.50/FBCI/fbci.aspx

United States Department of Labor (DOL)
- Online Video Workshop on DOL Grant Applications and Grants Management http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/grantsapply.htm#calls

Grants.Gov
- Resources Page http://grants.gov/Resources

ATTACHMENT IV: FREE FSP OUTREACH MATERIALS FROM FNS

Title	Description	How to Obtain
Questions and Answers about the Food Stamp Program	Basic brochure about FSP benefits, this resource highlights eligibility requirements, and how to apply. Available in English and Spanish.	View and download at: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/Translations/English/313Brochure-03.pdf Order free copies at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm. Document number FNS-313.
Informational Food Stamp Program Resources Translated into 35 Languages	Five informational documents in 35 languages. "I Speak" document also available which allows an applicant to indicate what language they speak so accommodations can be made.	View and download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm
10 Steps to Help You Fill Your Grocery Bag Through the Food Stamp Program	Low literacy flyer outlines ten steps to follow to apply for food stamp benefits. Available in English and Spanish.	View and download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/10steps.pdf
Food Stamp Application Envelope	Helps potential recipients compile all of the necessary materials to apply for benefits. Features a verification documents checklist	Order free copies at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm. Document number FSP-02 (comes with FSP-01 "10 Steps to Help You Fill Your Grocery Bag Through the Food Stamp Program.")
Food Stamps Make America Stronger Posters	Colorful posters directing people to the national toll-free FSP information line and featuring diverse audiences. Some available in Spanish.	View and download at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/info.htm. Order free copies at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm. Document number FNS-333 (Crowd); FNS-335 (Girl); FNS-351 (Girl – in Spanish); FNS-337 (Senior Man); FNS-339 (Woman/Girl); FNS-341 (Black Male); FNS-343 (Senior Woman – in Spanish); FNS-345 (Hispanic Male – in Spanish); FNS-347 (Woman in Wheelchair); FNS-349 (Veteran).
Food Stamps Make America Stronger Flyers	Similar to the posters, these flyers feature diverse audiences. Some available in Spanish.	View and download at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/info.htm. Order free copies at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm. Document number FNS-334 (Crowd); FNS-336 (Girl); FNS-352 (Girl – in Spanish); FNS-338 (Senior Man); FNS-340 (Woman/Girl); FNS-342 (Black Male); FNS-344 (Senior Woman – in Spanish); FNS-346 (Hispanic Male – in Spanish); FNS-348 (Woman in Wheelchair); andFNS-350 (Veteran).

Food Stamps Make America Stronger Bookmark	Vibrant in color, bookmark promotes the FSP online prescreening tool and national toll free information line in English on one side and Spanish on the other.	View and download at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/general.htm. Order free copies at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm. Document number FSP-16.
Food Stamps Can Help You Now Flyer	Features basic information about the immigrant eligibility restorations as a result of the 2002 Farm Bill and includes the national toll free number. Available in English and Spanish.	Download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/FSPinsertoutline.pdf (English) or www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/FSPinsertSPoutline.pdf (Spanish)
Common Food Stamp Myths Concerning Elderly Households Flyer	Features ten common myths about food stamp benefits and the elderly and refutes them with simple facts about the FSP.	Download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/Translations/English/10mythsp1.pdf
Food Stamp Program Photo Library	Photographs for use in communicating FSP outreach messages. FNS requests that these pictures be used only for promotion, informational and educational purposes of a non-profit nature.	Download at http://grande.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp_album.php Order free print quality files by contacting FNS.
Food Stamp Program Public Service Announcements (PSAs):	Audio files and scripts for radio PSAs can be used as is or customized for local areas.	Download at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/radio/radio.htm

ATTACHMENT V: FSP WEB RESOURCES

Topic	Address	Description
Main FSP Web Page	www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/	General information about the FSP.
History of the FSP	www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/rules/Legislation/history.htm	Brief history of the FSP from 1939 to the present.
USDA Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives	www.usda.gov/fbci/index.html	Information about USDA's initiatives for faith-based and community organizations.
HealthierUS	www.healthierus.gov	Central point of credible, accurate information to help people lead healthier lives.
Summaries of Previously Awarded Grant Projects	http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/grants.htm	Brief descriptions of outreach grant projects that received awards in fiscal years 2004 and 2005.
Main Food Stamp Outreach Web Page	www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm	Starting point for information about food stamp outreach.
Food Stamp Outreach Coalition	www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/about.htm	Group of national anti-hunger advocacy groups, and others interested in promoting the health and nutrition benefits of the FSP.
FNS Pre-screening Tool (Step 1)	www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov	Simple, low literacy online pre-screening tool enables users to input information privately and find out if they might be eligible for food stamp benefits and how much they might receive.
Food Stamp Applications and Local Office Locators	www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/map.htm	Features a United States map. Click on a State to find links to downloadable food stamp applications, local food stamp office locators, and a list of outreach providers.
Food Stamp Program Participation Data	www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm	Features data and studies about participation in the FSP and the characteristics of households receiving food stamp benefits. Also includes evaluation reports for past FNS outreach grant programs from 1993-1994 (see "Food Stamp Client Enrollment Assistance Demonstration Projects: Final Evaluation Report, July 1999") and 2001 (see "Research Grants to Improve Food Stamp Program Access Through Partnerships and Technology: 2001 Program Evaluation Summary – September 2004), and 2002 (See "Evaluation of Food Stamp Research Grants to

		Improve Access through the Use of New Technology and Partnerships".
Economic Impact of Food Stamp Benefits	www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/researchers/ers_reports.htm www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr26/fanrr26-6/ www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/GeneralEconomy/linkages.htm	Links to studies about the economic benefits of food stamps. Includes research conducted for USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), which is USDA's main source of economic information and research.
Impact of Food Assistance on Nutrition and Health	www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19%2D3/	A comprehensive review that compiles and synthesizes published research about the impact of domestic food assistance programs on participants' nutrition and health outcomes. There are several volumes to the report.
United States Census Bureau	www.census.gov	Data on income and poverty levels, including data by county and State.

ATTACHMENT VI: TECHNICAL GUIDANCE ON CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS

Confidential information, for purposes of this grant, refers to information or data of a personal nature about an individual, or information or data submitted by or pertaining to an institution or organization. Confidential information must not be disclosed without prior written consent of the individual, institution or organization, unless other Federal, State or local laws apply. Safeguards are required to limit the use or disclosure of personal information obtained from applicant households to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the FSP.

Whenever the Grantee is uncertain about the proper handling of material under the grant, or whether the material in question is confidential information, the Grantee should obtain a written determination from the FNS Grants Officer.

Project management must be aware of and apply principles of respect for confidentiality of personal information, and ensure that project staff are aware of and acknowledge their responsibilities. Employee and volunteer staff's access to confidential information indicates a level of trust bestowed upon them by the project management and project participants. Project staff needs to be held responsible for their actions, and be aware of and acknowledge their responsibilities**.**

Staff need guidance in determining the sensitivity of the information to which they have access and to protect the information they are processing from access by, or disclosure to unauthorized personnel. Procedures need to be developed to properly control, label, store, and destroy information. Policies should also be established for security incidents and compromises, and potential threats and vulnerabilities to be immediately reported. A sample employee/volunteer confidentiality agreement follows.

Sample Employee/Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

You are participating as an employee <or a volunteer> in a project to inform and educate potentially eligible low-income people about the benefits to participating in the Food Stamp Program (FSP). This project includes collecting confidential information about individuals to help them decide if they are eligible and help them apply to receive food stamp benefits. An important part of the project is respecting participants' privacy, and treating personal information that they voluntarily provide as confidential. Confidential information must not be disclosed without prior written consent of the individual, and disclosure is limited to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the FSP.

In signing this agreement, you acknowledge your responsibilities to:

- Maintain privacy of personal information;
- Ensure that all sensitive data, whether processed manually or with computers, receives the same degree of protection;
- Follow procedures to log-off and secure information, not allowing it to be left unattended;
- Protect information from theft, fraud, misuse, loss, unauthorized access or modification;
- Access or attempt to access only the data or resources specifically authorized;
- Protect against unauthorized disclosure or use, and protect information from casual inspection or unauthorized retrieval; and
- Report promptly to the supervisor any violations or breaches of security, or unusual processing results or observed irregularities with sensitive data.

Any questions about your responsibilities should be discussed with your supervisor.

To be completed by the employee/volunteer:

I, _____, have read and understand my responsibilities to protect confidential information and will perform my duties accordingly.

_____ _____
Signature   Date

To be completed by the employee's/volunteer's supervisor:

I, _____, certify that _____ has been provided with the responsibilities to protect confidential information, I have discussed the responsibilities with him/her, and have answered or obtained answers to his/her questions.

_____ _____
Signature   Date

Informed Consent

If your evaluation involves methods such as surveys or interviews (versus methods such as observations), you must respect the participant's right to informed consent. It is extremely important that the project participants are aware of the evaluation, and cooperate voluntarily. Grantee staff must explain the evaluation activities and what will be required of the participants as part of the evaluation effort. Grantee staff must be clear that participants' names will not be used and that information they provide will not be linked to them. Participants must have the right to refuse to give any personal information or to answer questions. If they choose to participate, they must be allowed their rights to confidentiality and privacy.

The participants must sign an informed consent document, which documents that they understand their role in the evaluation, know what is expected of them, agree or disagree to participate, and understand that they have the right to refuse to give any information. A sample informed consent document appears below. Grantees may revise the form for low literacy or translate it into other languages, depending on the population being served by the project.

Sample Informed Consent Document

We would like you to participate in the evaluation of <project name>. Your participation is important to us and will help us assess the effectiveness of the project. As a participant in the project we will ask you to *<complete a questionnaire/answer questions in an interview/other task>*.

We will keep all of your answers confidential. Your name will never be included in any reports and none of your answers will be linked to you in any way. The information you provide will be combined with information from everyone else participating in the study.

You do not have to participate in the evaluation. Even if you agree to participate now, you may stop participating at any time or refuse to answer any question. Refusing to be part of the evaluation will not affect your participation or the services you receive from the project.

If you have any questions about the study, you may call *<name and phone contact>*.

By signing below, I confirm that this form has been explained to me and that I understand it.

Please check one: ____ I agree to participate.   ____ I do not agree to participate.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

ATTACHMENT VII: QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

Note: This report format is designed not only to inform FNS of the progress of your grant but also to help you track data and information for your self-evaluation. Report positive, negative and inconclusive results. This helps FNS learn what does or doesn't work and to try to identify the reasons. Although results may be inconclusive, the processes used may be worthy of study. The more details provided about the project, the more useful the self-evaluation is to FNS and to you.

Grant Number:
Report Submission Date:
Reporting Period:

Grant Recipient (name and address):

Project Director (name, phone number, e-mail address):

Target Population (circle one and elaborate with brief narrative explanation):
> Working Poor
> Seniors
> Immigrants

Progress This Reporting Period (include training of staff and volunteers; turnover in staff and how it impacts the project):

Significant Achievements/Accomplishments This Reporting Period:

Case Examples of Individual or Family Success Stories This Reporting Period (How did you help one individual or family transform their lives through your outreach effort? Is someone who was once in need now receiving food stamp benefits that helps them eat healthier? You may change names, use pseudonyms, or use first names only, etc., to protect privacy and confidentiality. You may provide several stories if you wish.):

Difficulties/Challenges Encountered and Resolutions Taken or Planned:

Adjustments/Deviations from Project Plan:

Planned Activities Next Reporting Period:

Lessons Learned:

Evaluation Findings to Date (results, types of data/information collected, how collected, how analyzed, limitations and cautions on its use, interpretations and conclusions):

Signature of Authorized Official _____ **Date** _____

ATTACHMENT VIII: FINAL PROGRESS REPORT (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

Note: This report format is designed not only to inform FNS of the progress of your grant but also to help you track data and information for your self-evaluation. Report positive, negative and inconclusive results. This helps FNS learn what does or doesn't work and to try to identify the reasons. Although results may be inconclusive, the processes used may be worthy of study. The more details provided about the project, the more useful the self-evaluation is for FNS and you.

Grant Number:
Report Submission Date:
Project Start/End Dates:

Grant Recipient (name and address):

Project Director (name, phone number, e-mail address):

Organizational Description (include how the organization's structure, type, size, location, etc., impacted the implementation of the project):

Target Population (circle one, and discuss the extent of the organization's involvement with the target population before the project, and how these links affected the results of the project):
> Working Poor
> Elderly
> Immigrants

Summary of Project:

Staffing/Budget Information (include paid/volunteer staff and grant/other funding and in-kind contributions):

Overall Goal:

Barriers to Participation (discuss how issues regarding non-participation were identified, addressed, overcome/reduced):

Final Summary Progress Report of the Project from Start to Finish:

Major Achievements/Accomplishments (include training of staff and volunteers; turnover in staff and how that impacted the project):

Case Examples of Individual or Family Success Stories (How did you help one individual or family transform their life through your outreach effort? Is someone who was once in need now receiving food stamp benefits that helps them eat healthier? You may use pseudonyms, change names, or first names only, etc. to protect privacy and confidentiality. You may provide several stories if you wish.):

Lessons Learned:

Major Difficulties/Challenges and Solutions Developed (include issues that may have affected the project outcome, such as changes in: staffing, collaborative arrangements, target population/participant characteristics, etc.):

Evaluation Methodology and Findings (results, types of data/information collected, how collected, how analyzed, limitations and cautions on its use, interpretations and conclusions):

Conclusions (whether project participants demonstrated changes in awareness, knowledge, attitude, behavior, and if these changes are likely the result of the project's interventions):

Recommendations for Replication by Other Organizations (include discussion of what changes you would make or what you would do differently):

Sustainability Plan (strategy to continue the project after FNS grant funding ends):

Other Comments (include feedback from project staff, volunteers, food stamp office contacts, project clients, etc.):

Signature of Authorized Official _____ **Date** _____

ATTACHMENT IX: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE FY02 OUTREACH GRANTS

The following lessons learned are from the evaluation of the FNS outreach grants awarded in fiscal year 2002. Applicants should review the lessons learned and incorporate them into their proposals as appropriate. For more information about the national evaluation of the fiscal year 2002 grants, please see the full report, *Evaluation of Food Stamp Research Grants to Improve Access through the Use of New Technology and Partnerships* at http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm

1. ***Staffing:*** Staffing characteristics are central to an organization's ability to conduct outreach. Dynamic leaders to motivate staff, and develop strong partnerships and a dedicated network of volunteers are often needed. Additionally, projects that target immigrant and limited English speaking populations need culturally compatible outreach workers who can relate to the unique concerns of these populations.

2. ***Use of Volunteers:*** Volunteers can be an especially important source of labor for outreach activities, but they must be used effectively. Volunteers should only be asked to do activities that match their skill and comfort level in working with sensitive financial information and new technologies (if used). All volunteers must be trained to generally understand the FSP. Those asked to do prescreening and provide application assistance must understand policies and procedures in more depth. Software and Internet-based assistance require extensive volunteer training.

3. ***Training:*** Training activities must be specific to the outreach strategy utilized, especially if a large network of partners and/or volunteers is used. Sufficient time for training must be allowed throughout the length of the project.

4. ***Partnerships.*** Partners with longstanding roots in the community and established relationships with the target populations can be the most helpful. Partner organizations must buy in to the outreach activities, particularly at the management level. Specifically, partners need to understand the project and be willing to commit staff to it. Partners must clearly understand their role throughout the outreach activity. Partners must understand the FSP or be willing to learn about it (and changing policies).

5. ***Partnerships with Food Stamp Offices.*** A proactive approach to involve the FSP office in outreach activities may be needed. In fostering these relationships, it is important to involve both FSP management, as well as front-line staff. These communications are especially important at project start-up to ensure that the FSP office has a full understanding of the project. It is helpful to have a specific point person at the FSP office to handle cases referred by the grantee project. It is often useful to involve food stamp office staff in project planning and monitoring to ensure cooperation and knowledge of the project's progress.

6. ***Venue:*** Outreach locations should provide clients with some measure of privacy. Potential clients may resist *intensive* outreach in very public spaces where they fear a friend or neighbor could see them. This does not eliminate information dissemination in public locations, but it could limit the type of pre-screening and application assistance that can be provided there. In addition, outreach will be less effective if volunteers and staff present to the same audiences at each event.

7. ***Information Dissemination:*** While there is no single approach to information dissemination that works well in all cases, some approaches to information dissemination work better than others. Specific flyers with eligibility information, such as maximum income levels and potential benefit amounts, can be more effective than general flyers about the benefits of the

FSP. Television and, to a lesser extent, radio ads may be more effective than billboards in conveying information about the FSP. Finally, while broad information dissemination can be effective in generating publicity at several sites, personal interactions may be more effective in communicating the benefits of FSP participation. Grantees with a large network of partners and volunteers can rely more heavily on personal interactions than those without such networks.

8. ***Prescreening:*** Multiple pre-screening formats may be required to fit the diverse needs of partners, volunteers and clients. Paper or "stand alone" pre-screeners for portable computers may be needed (as opposed to those requiring connection to the Internet) depending on the hardware at the site and clients' comfort with new technologies.

9. ***Application Assistance:*** Application assistance must be appropriate for the target populations. Even when completed application forms are sent electronically to the food stamp office, follow-up with appointments and verification requirements may be required.

More intensive assistance, including multiple follow-up calls and interactions, may be required for especially hard-to-reach populations. For example, elderly clients may require outreach to their family members. Non-English-speaking populations require translators. Eligible rural clients may especially benefit from Internet-based applications, but eventually may also need transportation to a food stamp office many miles away. The working poor will need additional assistance if the local food stamp office is only open during regular business hours.