



Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Park Office  
Center

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria  
VA 22302

DATE: November 28, 2018

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SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2019 Administrative Review and Training (ART)  
Grant RFA

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is pleased to announce the release of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 request for applications (RFA) to invite State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to apply for FY 2019 Administrative Review and Training (ART) Grants. FNS has up to \$8.5 million available to fund grants to State agencies to support oversight and training efforts to reduce administrative errors and improve school meal program accountability. This announcement describes the FY 2019 ART Grant process.

### **Background and Authority**

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265) amended Section 7 of the Child Nutrition Act to provide funding for States to be used for administrative reviews and training of local educational agencies (LEAs). The funding is intended for program improvement activities focused on LEAs which have demonstrated a high level of, or a high risk for, administrative error. To assist State agencies in achieving program improvements, the USDA FNS has up to \$8.5 million available in FY 2019 to fund ART Grants.

### **Purpose of ART Grants**

The purpose of this grant funding is to decrease administrative errors in those LEAs and schools identified by State agencies as having operational errors or where errors are likely to arise. For FY 2019, State agencies should focus on one or more of the following areas in developing their ART Grant applications:

- **Developing a State-level web-based application for free and reduced price school meals, for use by local educational agencies within the State (10 bonus points).** Such applications should include integrity features at least comparable to those in USDA's web-based prototype, though inclusion of additional features and innovations is strongly encouraged. Alternatively, States may also receive a bonus for projects aimed at strengthening the integrity features of an existing State web-based application. Refer to page 29 of the RFA for further details;

- Training of LEA administrative personnel in application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming procedures. Training may include web-based training sessions;
- Modifications that may be necessary to update processes and systems to comply with revisions to the new Administrative Review process first implemented in school year 2013-2014; and
- Technology improvements which demonstrate an ability to address administrative errors and improve program integrity through the use of targeted monitoring and increased training in error-prone LEAs. States choosing this option must clearly demonstrate how the proposed technology can be used to implement State-level activities, specifically review and training activities associated with error prone LEAs. For example, proposals may include the following:
  - Development of data analysis tools to monitor application, certification (including direct certification), verification (including direct verification), meal counting and meal claiming procedures for error-prone school districts;
  - Training methods utilizing web-based technology; or
  - Other innovative State-level automated solutions to identify and reduce administrative errors in error-prone school districts.

### **Types of Grants Offered**

FNS is offering two types of ART Grants:

1. Planning grants for up to **\$150,000**, intended for State agencies that administer the NSLP and SBP that know they need to improve and address program administrative errors, or the risk of these errors, in LEAs and schools within their State, but may need to conduct additional research to identify the most effective way of doing so to ensure that a chosen approach is actually the most effective approach and decreases program administrative errors. Grants will be awarded for a period of up to one year.
2. Implementation grants up to **\$3,000,000**, intended for State agencies that administer the NSLP and SBP that know what they need to do to improve their State's administrative training and oversight processes to reduce administrative errors in the school meals programs, but lack the resources to implement those changes. Grants will be awarded for periods of one to three years.

### **Who Can Apply**

State agencies that administer the NSLP and SBP may apply for the ART Grant funding. The attached Request for Application (RFA) and application materials outline the requirements to which a State must adhere in order to be considered for funding. State agencies may apply for either type of grant, Planning or Implementation, but not for both.

Only one grant application will be accepted from a State agency in response to this solicitation. FNS will consider and evaluate all proposals using the criteria described in the RFA and award funds for both Planning and Implementation grant types on a competitive basis.

### **Application Process (Electronic Submission)**

To apply for this funding opportunity, applicants may download the grant application forms (SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL) from the Grants.gov website at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Also, these required application forms and the RFA, with appendices, may be downloaded from the FNS grants website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/grants> or the FNS Child Nutrition Programs' PartnerWeb at <https://www.partnerweb.usda.gov>. The RFA appendices include templates for completing the narrative proposal for the application process: ***Appendix B*** for Planning grant proposals and ***Appendix C*** for Implementation grant proposals. **The narrative templates are attached to the RFA and available in Microsoft Word format on the FNS grants website and on PartnerWeb.** The Word versions are provided for convenience so that applicants can type directly into the template format to complete the application narratives.

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Grants.gov website at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 5, 2019**; Applications received by any other means or after this date and time will not be considered. The Grants.gov website will send a confirmation notice to the applicant to confirm that the application has been accepted by the system. Upon receipt of the notice, the applicant must then send an email to notify the FNS Grant Officer Dawn Addison at [dawn.addison@fns.usda.gov](mailto:dawn.addison@fns.usda.gov) that they have received a confirmation notice from Grants.gov that the application was received.

We strongly recommend that State agencies submit the online application at least one week before the application deadline in case there are problems with the website. All questions regarding the RFA and electronic submission should be referred to FNS Grant Officer Dawn Addison. If you require immediate technical assistance as it pertains to Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov helpline at 1-800-518-4726 or email the help desk at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

**Informational Webinar**

Within approximately three weeks of this RFA's publication, FNS will conduct a webinar with all State agencies and FNS regional offices to review the RFA and address questions regarding the application process. Notification of the webinar date, time, and call-in information will be communicated to State agencies via the FNS Regional offices and the CND PartnerWeb.

If you have questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact Grant Officer Dawn Addison via email at [dawn.addison@fns.usda.gov](mailto:dawn.addison@fns.usda.gov). We look forward to receiving your applications for funding.

Sincerely,

**Original Signed**

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Mark Porter  
Acting Director  
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division

**Original Signed**

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Sarah E. Smith-Holmes  
Director  
Program Monitoring and Operational  
Support Division