FY 2021 SNAP PROCESS AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (PTIG)

MAY 2021
THIS WEBINAR IS BEING RECORDED

Presented by PTIG Team, SNAP Program Design Branch

Webinar Agenda

- PTIG Basics
- Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Funding Priority Areas
- Review Criteria
- Application Submission
- Questions

Purpose

Develop and implement projects that improve the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes

Eligible Entities

- 53 State agencies that administer SNAP
- State or local governments
- Agencies providing health or welfare services
- Public health or educational entities
- Private non-profit entities

Note: Entities that received a PTIG award in FY20 are ineligible to apply.

Award Information

- Up to $5 million in FY 2021
- Grants awarded through competitive process
- No cost sharing or matching required
- Anticipated number of awards: 6 to 11
- Anticipated funding per award: $20,000 – $2,000,000
- Grant project period: September 30, 2021, through September 30, 2024

Funding Restrictions

- No pre-award cost
- New projects only
- No waiving SNAP regulations
- Funds for SNAP's share of project costs only
- No more than 25% of grant funds are for outreach activities

Key Dates

- Application due: June 22, 2021, by 11:59pm EST

- Grant awards announced: by September 30, 2021

- Project Periods: September 30, 2021 through September 30, 2024

RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION (REI)

Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI)

- In alignment with USDA priorities, a new required section on racial equity and inclusion was added.
- Requires applicants to submit proposals that outline and analyze the project's impact on racial equity and inclusion.
  - Not required that all proposals have a significant impact in this area.
  - Up to 3 bonus points awarded for projects that do effect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion.

REI Questions and Examples

□ The RFA includes guiding questions, such as:

- What forms of diversity do you think strengthen the quality of the proposal? Why?
- How do you propose to draw upon diverse perspectives in the community or field that the proposed work will serve?

□ Example projects include:

- Reduce barriers to entry for vulnerable populations.
- Proposals from organizations that work directly with and are comprised of members from the community they serve.
- Identify a specific strategy to increase equity in the SNAP application process.

FY 2021
FUNDING PRIORITY AREAS

FY 2021 PTIG Priorities

1. Increase the use of human-centered design in SNAP applications and notices

2. Improve preparedness for public health emergency and pandemic response by strengthening virtual and disaster response operations

3. Improve SNAP customer service responsiveness and effectiveness

Priority One:
Increase the use of human-centered design in SNAP applications and notices

☐ Projects that design applications and notices to better meet the needs of SNAP applicants.

Examples:

▫ Improve applications and make them easier to understand, shorter, plain language, more user friendly

▫ User testing to improve clarity and accuracy for applications and notices

Note: About - 18F Methods

Priority Two:

Improve preparedness for public health emergency and pandemic response by strengthening virtual and disaster response operations

□ Projects that improve day-to-day SNAP operations and increase adaptability and responsiveness of SNAP processes.

Examples:

- ◻ Improvements to telephonic interview and signature capabilities
- ◻ Development and/or enhancement of virtual call centers
- ◻ Modernization of verification processing to include online capabilities
- ◻ Staff training for disaster and pandemic response

Priority Three:

Improve SNAP customer service responsiveness and effectiveness

- ☐ Projects that improve SNAP customer service response and effectiveness

Examples:
  - ▪ Strengthening partnerships with community partners
  - ▪ Collaborating with stakeholders in user testing or focus groups
  - ▪ Engaging in business process improvement efforts that enhance the client experience

Public-Private Partnerships

- FNS is interested in projects that take advantage of existing, or create new, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).
- Definition of PPPs for the purpose of PTIGs
  - Leverage expertise from outside the public sector to strengthen services to increase access for SNAP clients or test new technologies that benefit both public and private partners.
  - While project proposals that rely on contractors or consultants to fulfill services are acceptable, they are not considered PPPs.

Bonus Points – Racial Equity and Inclusion

- Up to 3 points available (beyond a possible 100) for proposals that demonstrate an ability to effect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion.
- Applicants can demonstrate meaningful impact by:
  - Conducting analysis of systemic barriers to SNAP access for underserved or marginalized communities served by the project
  - Incorporating specific measures into project design to reduce systemic barriers from a structural standpoint

Bonus Points – 1) Data-driven proposals and 2) collaboration with previous grantee

- Up to 3 points available (beyond a possible 100) for proposals that are particularly data-driven, such as
  - Plan to incorporate user experience testing
  - Conduct surveys, interviews, or other data collection pre-proposal to demonstrate project need
- Up to 3 points available (beyond a possible 100) for proposals that collaborate with a previous PTIG grantee to
  - Learn best practices and lessons learns
  - Identify helpful tools and develop a project plan

Recap:
Purpose, Priorities, & Deadline

Purpose:

❑ Develop and implement projects that improve the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes

Priorities:

1. Increase the use of human-centered design in SNAP applications and notices

2. Improve preparedness for public health emergency and pandemic response by strengthening virtual and disaster response operations

3. Improve SNAP customer service responsiveness and effectiveness

Due Date:

❑ Application must be submitted to www.Grants.gov by **June 22, 2021**, by 11:59pm EST

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technical Evaluation Criteria

Review Criteria

- Racial Equity and Inclusion

- Project Design (35 points)

- Organizational Experience, Staff Capability and Management (15 points)

- Evaluation (20 points)

- Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency (30 points)

- Presentation

- Bonus points: up to 9 points for racial equity and inclusion, data driven, and collaborative proposals

Note: Review criteria is based on application content as outlined in the RFA. For more information, please see the RFA posted on grants.gov.

Review Criteria:
Racial Equity and Inclusion

- Requires applicants to submit proposals that outline and analyze the project's impact on racial equity and inclusion.
  - Not required that all proposals have a significant impact in this area.
  - Up to 3 bonus points awarded for projects that do effect a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion.

Review Criteria:
Racial Equity and Inclusion Example

- **Bad** Example
  - Proposal includes statistics on how marginalized people are affected but does not include analysis on how the Project will reduce systematic barriers to SNAP access for underserved or marginalized communities.
  - Proposal focuses one group (e.g., LEP communities) but does show how the full scope of the Project and its impact on other marginalized communities.

- **Good** Example
  - Proposal includes well-researched data that speaks to structural inequities and provides an in-depth analysis on the Project's impact, outcomes.
  - The grantee partners with community organizations that are well-positioned to reach people with particularly significant barriers to accessing support

Review Criteria:
Applied Example

- To better understand the review criteria, this section includes an example project.

- DO NOT copy this project verbatim for your State; however, innovative well researched projects of this type are welcome to enter the grant competition.

- **Example Project:** create a worker dashboard to better monitor SNAP applications.

Review Criteria:
Project Design

- The proposal clearly defines the problem, the solution, and provides evidence that the proposed project will solve the problem.

- The Project Design section should include:
  - Problem Analysis
  - Impact
  - Implementation
  - Sustainability
  - Letters of Commitment or Endorsement

Review Criteria:
Project Design Example

- Bad Example
  - Proposal identifies what will be created (worker dashboard), but does not include evidence of why it is needed
  - Effort is not made to show how dashboard will be implemented
  - Letters of commitment/endorsement are perfunctory and template-based

- Good Example
  - Proposal lays out how dashboard will improve application processing timeliness for project area/State, including measurable and attainable quantifiable goals in problem/solution format
  - Full project timeline is included showing sufficient time is allotted for each activity
  - Letters of commitment/endorsement are personalized and show the foundation of a good, strong partnership

Special Instructions:
Letters of Commitment

A **Letter of Commitment** is required if the grant proposal is from a State agency working in partnership with another organization(s).

The letter(s) of commitment must describe:

- The organization's role in the project, and
- The amount of time the partner organization intends to commit to the project and an attestation that it will cooperate with the grant applicant in implementing the project.

Special Instructions:
Letter of Endorsement

A **Letter of Endorsement** is required if an applicant is not partnering with a State agency.

The State agency's letter of endorsement must:

- Explain that the State agency is aware of the projected impact on its eligibility system and is supportive of the project
- Acknowledge whether the project creates any additional work for the State agency and identify the State agency's capacity to address this work
- Describe how the project will support the State's current or planned technology and/or business process improvement efforts and priorities

Review Criteria:
Organizational Experience, Staff Capability and Management

- Proposal describes a plan for effective and consistent oversight by qualified project managers

- Includes organizational chart for the project

- Internal communications plan is included, and external plan is included if necessary

- Resumes and proposed project job descriptions for all involved employees

- Identifies key project staff and outlines the amount of time they will commit to the project

Review Criteria:

Organizational Experience, Staff Capability and Management Example

- ## Bad Example
  - A list of employees that will work on the project is provided, without specific roles for each
  - No staff resumes or job descriptions are included
  - Communications plan just mentions that they will do regular check-ins; no other internal communication is mentioned

- ## Good Example
  - Proposal clearly identifies all parties to be involved, with a short project job description for each and percentage of their time that they will devote to the project
  - Communications plan includes which team members will meet, how often, and what topics will generally be discussed (partner feedback, draft reviews, etc.)

Review Criteria:
Evaluation

- All proposals must include a comprehensive evaluation process that is specific, data-driven, and measures whether the problem identified is addressed by the proposed project intervention and tracks activities and indicators using the Activities Tracker included in the RFA

- Evaluation will fall into two buckets this year

Review Criteria:
Evaluation continued

1. Activities Tracker

- Process measures
- Map proposed activities and indicators of success to the Program Objectives/priority area(s) you choose
- For example:
  - **Objective:** Priority Area 3, Improve Customer Service
  - **Proposed Activity:** Provide iPads to lobby staff
  - **Indicator 1:** 16 iPads purchased
  - **Indicator 2:** wireless connectivity added to 6 buildings

Objective <enter #>:	Must be one of the three objectives from pages 1-2 of the RFA
Proposed Activity 1:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	

2. Overall Success

- Outcome measures
- Outline how overall success will be measured at completion of the project
- For example:
  - Reduction in lobby wait times
  - Increase in completed tasks in lobby

Review Criteria:
Evaluation continued

Activities tracker is REQUIRED

Please use the format provided in the RFA

Review Criteria:
Evaluation Example

- ## Bad Example
  - Evaluation plan is one paragraph, discussing that at the completion of the dashboard creation, caseworkers will be surveyed for feedback

- ## Good Example
  - Evaluation plan is detailed, including pre- and post-dashboard launch surveys from caseworkers, measured targets for triaging applications for expedite and those that have been waiting the longest, and comparison of pre- and post- timeliness rates (including target goals as appropriate)
  - Evaluation plan includes use of in-house or contracted out evaluation consultant for most rigorous analysis. All efforts must be made to conduct successful evaluation in order to gauge success and ways in which project could have been improved

Review Criteria:

Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency

Budgets must include:

- All required budget forms
  - See page III of RFA, "Application Checklist"
- Line-item budget narrative, formatted in a table
  - How funds will be spent, by whom, and for what purpose?
  - Narrative should discuss how costs were determined and how they relate to project goals
  - Budget estimates should be justified
  - Full checklist in RFA of what to include (page III)

Review Criteria:

Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency *(continued)*

If applicable or desired, budgets may include:

- Approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement for indirect costs

- How costs are allocated among benefiting programs and demonstrate that this grant will only fund SNAP's share

- Tiered budgets and the corresponding narrative discussing different possible funding levels

- 501(c)(3) letter for non-profits

Review Criteria:
Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency *(continued)*

Contractual and Consultant Costs:

Applicants who wish to hire a consultant or contract work out must provide the following information:

- Consultant's name and description of service
- Itemized list of direct costs and fees
- Salaries with the number of personnel and position titles
- Specialized qualifications
- Number of estimated hours and hourly wage

Review Criteria:
Budget Appropriateness and Economic Efficiency Example

- ☐ Bad Example
  - ▣ Line-item budget narrative, formatted in a table, is non-descriptive
  - ▣ Items from budget checklist in RFA are missing from line-item budget narrative
  - ▣ Justification is not provided for cost estimates. Anticipated hours worked by staff seems random without explanation
- ☐ Good Example
  - ▣ Line-item budget narrative addresses reasoning for all consultants or employees involved, equipment and supply purchases, and explanation of how costs were estimated (industry standard, quotes from vendors, etc.)
  - ▣ Line-item budget narrative is clear, easy to understand, and includes all anticipated costs, and total aligns with the amount on the SF-424A
  - ▣ Travel costs are all inclusive and justification for travel is provided

Budget Checklist:
Things to Consider

- Does the project and budget meet the bona fide needs of the RFA?

- Is the budget summary included?
  - Does it agree with the calculations shown on the OMB budget form (SF-424A)?
  - Is the budget in line with the project description?

- Are budget figures consistent across displays and narratives?

- Did you use the Budget RFA Checklist found on pages III-V of the RFA?

Review Criteria:
Presentation

- Proposal is well written, well presented and void of grammatical errors

- Grant application should not exceed 25 pages (not including appendices and forms)

- Applications should include a cover sheet, table of contents, and executive summary at the beginning of proposal

  - Note: Executive Summary (pgs. 10-11) should not exceed one page

Reminder: Bonus Points

- Up to 9 points available (beyond a possible 100) for proposals that
  - Demonstrate a meaningful impact on racial equity and inclusion (3 pts.)
  - Are particularly data-driven (3 pts.)
  - Demonstrate a plan to collaborate with a previous PTIG grantee (3 pts.)

APPLICATION SUBMISSION & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pre-Application Requirements

- Applicants must have a current Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

- To register in the System for Award Management (SAM), the applicant's DUNS number, Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name are required.

- Verification takes at least 48 hours after registration is submitted to SAM.

- Applicants must have a valid SAM registration no less than 3 days prior to the application due date.

- Registration process for Grants.gov generally takes between 3-5 business days.

Detailed instructions begin on page 6 of the Request for Applications

Special Characters **Not** Supported

- Follow the guidance provided in the grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages
- Limit file attachment names
- Do not use any special characters in naming the attachments
  - Special characters example: &,–,*,.,%,/,#,’, -

Required Forms

All Applicants:

- SF-424 Family

    1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

    2. Budget Information and Instruction Form (SF-424A)

    3. Assurance for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

- SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities)

- AD-1047

Forms can be found at:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html

Required Forms

State Agencies:

- AD-1052

Non-State Agency Applicants:

- AD-1049

- AD-3030: "All corporations, including nonprofit corporations are required to complete the attached representation regarding felony convictions and tax delinquency."

Forms can be found at:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html

Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

- Responses to this questionnaire are used to assist Food and Nutrition Service Agency's (FNS) in evaluation of your accounting system to ensure the adequate, appropriate, and transparent use of Federal funds.

- Complete the questionnaire on pages 27 – 29 of the RFA and submit with your application package

Grants.gov Help

Grants.gov Help Desk

Contact the grants.gov help desk with any __submission__ issues.

- ☐ 1-800-518-4726
- ☐ Support@grants.gov

Reporting Requirements

- Example FNS-908 form located in the appendix of the RFA for your reference
- Training on the form will be provided to grantees after the PTIG grants are awarded
- Progress AND Financial reports due on a quarterly basis

SNAP Homepage

Scroll to Spotlights, Select PTIG

I am a... 👤 **Applicant/Recipient** 🛒 **Retailer** 👥 **State/Local Agency** 🚜 **Farmer/Producer**

Spotlights

COVID-19 Resources for Individuals and Families

In addition to our work to ensure that children and low-income Americans maintain access to food, FNS nutrition education programs have consumer resources to help individuals and families during this exceptional time.

USDA Opens Grants Application, Enhances SNAP Customer Service

FNS announced today that $5 million in competitive grants are being made available to improve access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and improve program quality and efficiency.

Process and Technology Improvement Grants Program

SNAP Eligibility

What is FNS Doing to Fight SNAP Fraud?

FNS Launches the Online Purchasing Pilot

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)

Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)

DHS Letter - Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility

Select Grant Applicant Resources, Click on FY 2021 RFA Link

FY2021 PTIG Landing Page

An official website of the United States Government. Here's how you know ∨

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COVID-19   CONTACT US   REPORT FRAUD   ASK USDA   USDA.GOV

HOME   DATA & RESEARCH   GRANTS   NEWSROOM   RESOURCES   OUR AGENCY   PROGRAMS

HOME

Open (Posted) Date
2021-04-23

Grants Publish Date
2021-04-23

Funding Opportunity #
USDA-FNS-SNAP-PTIG-FY2021

FY 2021 SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants

Purpose

This grant competition supports efforts by state agencies and their community-based and faith-based partners to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes. The FY 2021 RFA is available on Grants.gov. A two-page infographic on the history of the grant competition from 2013 to 2019 can be found here.

Critical Dates for FY 2020 Process and Technology Improvement Grants (PTIG)

April 23, 2021	Request For Application posted on Grants.gov
May 6, 2021, 3 pm EST	Register for Informational Webinar #1
May 14, 2021, 2 pm EST	Register for Informational Webinar #2
June 22, 2021	Applications due to Grants.gov
September 2021	PTIGs awarded

Quick Reference Links

- For information regarding previous PTIG Grantees and Project Summaries – FY 2020 PTIG website

- Questions regarding the RFA: Anna Arrowsmith, Grants Officer – Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov

- To submit your completed application: www.Grants.gov by June 22, 2021, 11:59pm EST

QUESTIONS ?

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