

Questions and Answers about the *Federal Register* notice, [Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Self-Determination Demonstration Project: Solicitation of Proposals for Additional Tribal Organizations To Participate \(87 FR 63023\)](#)

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Table of Contents

General Questions about FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project- Round 2.....	2
Questions about Available Funding.....	3
Questions about Eligibility of Tribal Organizations.....	3
Questions about Agricultural Commodity Criteria.....	4

General Questions about FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project- Round 2

1. Could you provide more information about the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project – Round 2 funding opportunity?

On October 18, 2022, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published a *Federal Register* notice at 87 FR 63023, titled [*Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Self-Determination Demonstration Project: Solicitation of Proposals for Additional Tribal Organizations To Participate*](#). Please see Sections I, II, and III of that *Federal Register* notice for background information about the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project, and the open opportunity to participate in the demonstration project. Section IV of the [*Federal Register notice*](#) outlines the eligibility and criteria for participation; Section V of the *Federal Register* notice outlines the review and selection process that FNS will follow to review and select proposals for funding; and Section VI includes a proposal template that can be used by applicants. Additional information about the demonstration project is also available on the FNS webpage, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpi/self-determination>.

On Thursday, November 10, 2022, FNS held a webinar about the open opportunity to participate in the demonstration project. This webinar included an overview of the demonstration project and a detailed walk-through of requirements outlined in the recently published [*Federal Register notice*](#). A recording of the webinar is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpi/demonstration-project-how-apply-round-2-funds>.

2. Where can I find the Round 2 proposal template? [New Question]

The template is available within the [*Federal Register notice*](#) (at the bottom of the notice and also as a downloadable “Supporting/Related material” on the right hand side of the page). If you are unable to locate the proposal template, please reach out to FDPIR-RC@usda.gov, or your FNS Regional Office.

3. Will there be another opportunity for ITOS to submit a proposal for this next year?

The FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project is dependent on available funding. At this time, USDA FNS has approximately \$3.0 million to continue to support and/or expand the demonstration project. In consultation with Tribal leadership, FNS has decided to use this amount to solicit new proposals to participate in the demonstration project and award self-determination contracts to eligible Tribal Organizations that are not currently participating. Additional opportunities to participate will be dependent upon available funding and future decisions made in consultation with Tribal leaders.

Questions about Available Funding

4. What are the levels of funding for the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project?

To date, FNS has received \$9.0 million to support the demonstration project. Approximately \$6.0 million of this funding has been committed to existing activities, leaving \$3.0 million for additional contract awards at this time. Please see Section III of the [Federal Register notice](#) for additional information.

Please also note that budget proposals/narratives associated with individual Tribal Organizations' proposals may not exceed \$1.5 million, including contract support costs. Please see Section IV.A.5 of the [Federal Register notice](#) for more information.

5. Is the \$1.5 million budget limit applied per year or per a determined number of years?

Proposals submitted in response to the [Federal Register notice](#) must include a budget proposal and narrative with all associated costs that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out proposed contract activities. Proposed contract activities should be planned to take place within the period of performance outlined in the notice, which will be 3-years in length and is estimated to be June 2023 through May 2026. The budget proposal/narrative associated with these proposed activities may not exceed \$1.5 million total over the course of the period of performance. Please see Section IV.A.5 of the [Federal Register notice](#) for more information.

6. What is a reasonable number of years of extension an awardee should expect, if awarded?

Extensions will be dependent on available funding and be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Questions about Eligibility of Tribal Organization

7. Is the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project contingent on the administration of FDPIR?

The demonstration project is only available to Tribal organizations that administer FDPIR. Tribal Organizations must administer FDPIR at the time a proposal is due, either under a direct agreement with FNS or under an agreement with a State agency, whichever is applicable. Please see Section IV.A of the [Federal Register notice](#) for additional information.

Questions about Agricultural Commodity Criteria

8. Can you clarify #2 of the "Agricultural Commodity Criteria" section of the *Federal Register* notice? Specifically, what is required for foods items to be supplanted? Is there an example to follow?

FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project funds are intended for FDPIR Tribal Organizations to purchase foods for the FDPIR food packages distributed to their Tribal members. These purchased foods must supplant, i.e., replace, foods currently offered in the FDPIR food packages. For example, a Tribal Organization may propose to supplant the frozen blueberries in the FDPIR food package with a berry traditional to its culture. Section IV.B. of the [Federal Register notice](#) outlines the information a Tribal Organization must provide in its proposal about supplanted and proposed foods. This information includes:

- Identification of the current FDPIR food(s) the Tribal Organization intends to supplant (*i.e.*, replace) in the food package. All foods currently offered by USDA for the FDPIR program, including foods offered intermittently (*e.g.*, traditional foods, bonus foods), are eligible to be supplanted if proposed by the Tribal Organization. Please reference [FNS Handbook 501, Exhibit O: Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Monthly Distribution Guide Rates by Household Size \(Distribution Rates\)](#) for a list of currently available foods in the food package.
- A description of the food(s) proposed for purchase and inclusion in the Tribal Organization's FDPIR program. In its description, the Tribal Organization must provide all the items listed in Section IV.B.2 of the [Federal Register notice](#).
- Letter(s) of Support from the vendor(s) which will supply the proposed food(s). The Letter(s) should certify that vendor(s) sells food(s) commercially and that the proposed food(s) is a product grown, processed, and otherwise prepared for sale or distribution in the United States. For purposes of the demonstration project, "commercially available" means that the food(s) is presently being sold through commercial channels to the public by the vendor(s) from which the Tribal Organization is proposing to procure the food(s).

In submitting a proposal for participation in the demonstration project, while not required, FNS encourages applicants to utilize the proposal template located in Section VI of the [Federal Register notice](#), to ensure that all required elements of a proposal are included.

9. How many months does a vendor need to supply the proposed foods?

All self-determination contracts awarded through the [Federal Register notice](#) will be structured with a period of performance of 36 months with the possibility of early completion or extension. As outlined in Section IV.B.2. of the [Federal Register notice](#), the estimated period of performance for contracts awarded through the notice is June 2023 through May 2026, but is subject to change. As per Section IV.B.2 of the [Federal Register notice](#), Tribal Organizations must outline in their proposal, the estimated number of months that they would distribute each proposed Tribally-procured food(s) and must include an estimated timeline

for distributing those foods within the 36 month period of performance. **A minimum of twelve (12) unique months of food distribution is required.**

This means that—to meet the minimum requirement—a Tribal Organization could propose to distribute one food for 12 months, or could propose to rotate distribution of a number of foods for a total of 12 unique months (e.g., distribute one food for 6 months and a different food for another 6 non-overlapping months). For each proposed food(s), FNS encourages a minimum of at least three consecutive months of distribution for individual foods, but will consider proposals for distribution of individual foods for less than three months as long as the minimum requirement for 12 unique months of distribution is met. FNS encourages Tribal Organizations to submit proposals that exceed the minimum distribution requirements if at all possible.

10. Are we able to offer the proposed food(s) for only a few months within a year?

Yes, non-consecutive distribution of Tribally-procured food(s) is allowable. In other words, a Tribal Organization is able to distribute Tribally-procured foods for several months within a year, and not distribute those Tribally-procured foods during other months within that same year. That said, Tribal Organizations must outline in their proposal, the estimated number of months that they would distribute each proposed Tribally-procured food(s) and must include an estimated timeline for distributing those foods within a 36 month period of performance. **A minimum of twelve (12) unique months of food distribution is required** within the 36-month period of performance; and the estimated period of performance for the contracts is June 2023 through May 2026. See Section IV.B.2. of the [Federal Register notice](#) for additional information.

11. If we plan to provide the proposed food(s) for only a few months per year, do we still need to take a food item out of the food package during those months?

Yes, all Tribally-procured foods must supplant, not supplement, existing foods in the FDPIR food package. See Section IV.B.1. of the [Federal Register notice](#).

12. What should we do if supply of a proposed food is limited?

If supply of a proposed food is limited, please note that non-consecutive distribution of proposed food(s) is allowable. In other words, a Tribal Organization is able to distribute proposed foods for several months within a year, and not distribute those foods during other months within that same year. For each proposed food(s), FNS encourages a minimum of at least three consecutive months of distribution, but will consider proposals for distribution of individual foods for less than three months as long as the minimum requirement for 12 unique months of distribution is met.

13. Must the price of proposed food(s) be within a certain, USDA-set price range?

No. There are no specific food price requirements outlined in the [Federal Register notice](#). Section IV.A.5 of the [Federal Register notice](#) outlines that Tribal Organizations must

provide a budget proposal and narrative with all associated costs that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out proposed contract activities. The budget proposal, including all contract support costs (CSC), may not exceed \$1.5 million.

14. If the price per unit of the proposed food is more than what a USDA vendor charges would USDA provide the funding for the full amount, or would the Tribe have to pay the difference?

Section IV.A.5 of the [Federal Register notice](#) outlines that Tribal Organization must provide a budget proposal and narrative with all associated costs that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out proposed contract activities. The budget proposal, including all contract support costs (CSC), may not exceed \$1.5 million.

Within that budget proposal and narrative, Tribal Organizations should include any costs to purchase the proposed food(s). The full cost of the proposed food(s) should be included, and that cost may differ from the price of USDA-provided foods. Please keep food cost inflation in mind in preparing a budget. To assist Tribal Organizations with estimating food cost inflation, FNS has provided suggested inflationary amounts in the [Federal Register notice](#). Please see Section IV.A.5.

15. Must involved vendors be located within a certain distance of an FDPIR warehouse?

No. There is no requirement in the [Federal Register notice](#) that a vendor be a certain distance from an FDPIR warehouse.

16. Does each proposed food need to be sourced from only one vendor, or can I work with multiple vendors to provide a proposed food?

There is no requirement in the [Federal Register notice](#) that Tribal Organizations work with only one vendor to supply a proposed food.

17. If we work with multiple vendors to purchase a proposed food, would we be awarded multiple self-determination contracts?

USDA will award one self-determination contract to each Tribal Organization selected to participate in the demonstration project. Those Tribal Organizations will then be responsible for signing any necessary contracts with vendor(s) who will supply the proposed food(s) outlined in the Tribal Organizations' proposals. There are no requirements in the [Federal Register notice](#) about how Tribal Organizations structure their vendor contracts.

18. Can we purchase the foods from any vendor in our area or does it need to be food produced by our Tribe?

There is no requirement in the [Federal Register notice](#) that dictates that you must only work with vendors within your Tribe.

19. Are we able to switch vendors after award, if we are selected to participate in the demonstration project?

If selected to participate in the demonstration project and awarded a self-determination contract, Tribal Organizations will be able to make adjustments to vendors as needed.

20. Do involved vendors need to have any specific licenses in order to participate in the demonstration project?

The [Federal Register notice](#) does not require involved vendor(s) to have any specific licenses in order to participate in the project. Section IV.B.3. of the [Federal Register notice](#) only outlines that in a proposal, a Tribal Organization must include Letter(s) of Support from any vendor(s) which will supply the food(s). The Letter(s) should certify that vendor(s) sells food(s) commercially and that the proposed food(s) is a product grown, processed, and otherwise prepared for sale or distribution in the United States. For purposes of the demonstration project, “commercially available” means that the food(s) is presently being sold through commercial channels to the public.