



United States
Department of
Agriculture

JUL 06 2010

Dear State Directors:

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

This letter is to inform you of funding available to State agencies (SAs) that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to implement provisions related to certification of student eligibility to receive free and reduced price meal benefits in school nutrition (SN) programs. Section 749(h) of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-80) provides \$22 million that the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) must issue as grants to State agencies that administer the NSLP and have the lowest rates of children directly certified for free meals, for the purpose of improving those rates. State agencies may use grant funds, in accordance with FNS requirements, to pay costs associated with improving their direct certification rates.

The purpose of this *Request For Applications* (RFA) is to:

- Describe which entities are eligible to apply for grant funds;
- Describe the types of grants available;
- Solicit applications from eligible entities;
- Describe the requirements for submitting a successful application;
- Describe how applications will be reviewed and selected (or denied); and
- Describe the terms and conditions that grantees must adhere to.

In connection with these awards, FNS is offering two types of grants: Planning Grants, which will be awarded in two rounds (i.e., First-Round Planning Grants and Second-Round Planning Grants); and Implementation Grants, which will be awarded on a rolling, quarterly basis. For more detailed information regarding deadlines and timelines, please see the CRITICAL DATES section of the RFA. Eligible State agencies may only apply for and hold one type of grant at a time. To determine if a State agency is eligible to apply, see the WHO MAY APPLY section of the RFA.

Planning Grants are intended for NSLP Agencies that know they need to improve their State's direct certification system, but may need to conduct additional *research* to identify the most effective way of doing so and/or *planning* to ensure that a chosen approach is actually the most effective approach. Implementation Grants are intended for NSLP Agencies that know *what* they need to do to improve their State's direct certification systems, but lack the resources to implement those changes.

FNS is soliciting proposals from SAs for funding to aid in planning and implementation grants as described in the attached Request for Application. The enclosed application materials outline the requirements to which a State must adhere in order to be considered for funding. FNS will consider and evaluate all proposals using the criteria described in the RFA and select those that have a comprehensive and executable approach.

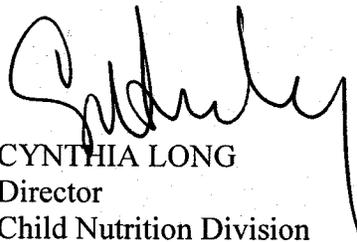
Enclosed for your review and use are the following:

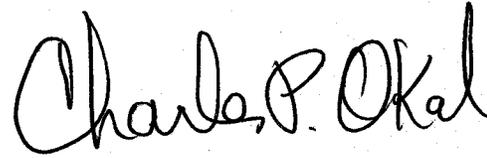
- Request for Application;
- Applicable attachments;
- Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- Form SF-424A, Budget Information;
- Form SF-424B, Assurances-Non Construction Programs, and
- Certification/Disclosure Requirements Related to Lobbying.

As grant application due dates vary depending on the nature of the proposal, applicants are directed to read Section V, CRITICAL DATES, very carefully. Applications must be mailed directly to FNS at the address noted in the RFA or submitted electronically by accessing www.grants.gov. Applications submitted via email or fax **will not** be accepted. If you choose to mail the application, we strongly suggest using a mail delivery service that guarantees delivery and allows you to track delivery to FNS. If you opt to submit the application via the www.grants.gov website, there are a number of steps in the registration process that will be required before the application may be submitted electronically. (See the attached Request for Applications). Please be aware that in order to use the grants.gov system, the user will need to register online and obtain both a Data Universal Number (DUNS) and a Contract Registry Number. Thus, it is very important that users of the grants.gov system familiarize themselves with the requirements for system use. When using the grants.gov portal to apply, we strongly recommend that you submit the online application at least two weeks prior to the application due date in case there are problems with the government-wide website and you want to submit your application via a mail delivery service.

If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Washington of the Grants Management Division via email at Dawn.Washington@fns.usda.gov or by telephone at (703) 305-2848. We look forward to receiving your application for funding to implement certification and verification procedures.

Sincerely,


CYNTHIA LONG
Director
Child Nutrition Division


LAEL J. LUBING
Director
Grants Management Division

Enclosures