



**Food and Nutrition Service**  
**Fiscal Year 2010**  
**Request for Applications for Direct Certification Grants**  
**Questions and Answers**  
*Revised 10/25/2010*

FNS has provided the following answers to questions submitted by potential Direct Certification grant applicants to clarify instructions in the grant application process. This list will be updated throughout the application period as questions are submitted.

1. **QUESTION:** On page 11 of the Application for Funding, the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point under “Description of the System” asks applicants to identify whether *ad hoc* certifications are used. We are not sure what an ad hoc certification would be—can you define it for us?

**ANSWER:** “Ad hoc certifications” refers to data matches/certifications that are run on demand for a specific case or purpose outside the normal cycle. For example, you may decide to run a certification match on the spot to see if any new individuals have been added since the normally scheduled match.

2. **QUESTION:** On page 12 of the Application for Funding, the directions under “Proposed Grant Activities” state: “Your description must be sufficient to provide a specific understanding of your proposed grant activities, and must include a gap analysis that compares current capabilities with future needs.” We assume that this means that our proposal must assure that as a part of our grant activities we are planning to engage in a gap analysis, but not that the gap analysis must be completed prior to applying for the Planning Grant. Please confirm.

**ANSWER:** When writing the description of the proposed grant activities for the Planning grant, the State should include a comparison between the operation of their current direct certification system (see “Description of System” section on page 11 of the RFA) versus the operation and outcomes that are needed to meet their direct certification rate improvement goals for this project. This is a high level gap analysis to

1 The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.



identify briefly where you are now with where you want to be at the end of your implementation project. The analysis activities that you carry out during your Planning grant period may then include an intensive system analysis to determine what it will take to get you to where you want to be and the most efficient way to get there (can you upgrade your current system, do you need to develop a new automated process, etc.). For example, the high level gap analysis described in your planning grant application could include such items as:

- **Where you are now** -- Your automated process only matches school enrollment records with SNAP records for your largest public school districts.

**Where you want to be** -- Your automated process matches school enrollment records with SNAP and TANF records for 100% of your state's public school districts.

- **Where you are now** -- Your automated matching process only finds *exact* matches against the child's first name, last name, date of birth and social security number. Thus you are missing matches where a child's name is spelled wrong or a number is transposed in the date of birth or social security number.

**Where you want to be** -- Your automated matching process identifies and reports partial or close matches where it is likely that the children are the same.

In summary, there may be two types of analyses: 1) a brief high level gap analysis to compare the current system operations/outcomes with needed system operations/outcomes, which should be described in the planning grant application; and 2) a more intensive and comprehensive technical analysis as an activity during the planning grant period to determine the most efficient approach to get to where you want to be (as described in #1). This analysis, in turn, would be the basis for *selecting the best technology solutions, developing your implementation project plan, and developing the implementation grant application* (including the Appendix E guidance template in the RFA).

3. **QUESTION:** It appears that the proposal response format used in Appendix E is only for Implementation grants and the core information we need to respond for the Planning grant is on pages 11-12. Is that correct?

**ANSWER:** Yes, that is correct.



4. **QUESTION:** Please explain what information and forms must be included in the application for a Planning Grant and an Implementation Grant. The table of contents for the Application for Funding shows a list of attachments which are not included in the announcement. Are there templates for the attachments listed (cover page, project description, State Agency project activity and timeline, and budget narrative)?

**ANSWER:** The list of attachments at the bottom of the Application for Funding Table of Contents originally was intended to be a list of documentation for State Agencies to attach to their grant applications. Please disregard the attachment list on the Table of Contents and use the table below to determine what forms and documentation are required for each type of grant application. For further descriptions of the narrative information, refer to the Application for Funding for Direct Certification Grants, Section IV-Selection Criteria, pages 11-13. Also, please note that links to the SF forms are posted with the grant announcement at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/grants.htm>.

Required Documents for Grant Applications	Required for Planning Grant Applications?	Required for Implementation Grant Applications?
1. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance	Yes	Yes
2. SF-424a, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs	Yes	Yes
3. SF-424b, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Yes	Yes
4. SF-LLL-A, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Yes	Yes
5. Contact Information - Name, address, phone number, and email address for the NSLP agency staff person(s) responsible for the application	Yes	Yes
6. Appendix E - Provide all information requested in the Direct	No	Yes



Required Documents for Grant Applications	Required for Planning Grant Applications?	Required for Implementation Grant Applications?
Certification Grants Program Proposal Response Guidance		
<b>NOTE: Appendix E is not required for Planning Grant applications. However, Planning Grant applications must include project narratives providing all information in items 7-12 below.</b>		
7. Description of System - Describe how your State's direct certification system operates	Yes	Included in Appendix E
8. Proposed Grant Activities - Describe how you propose to use grant funds	Yes	Included in Appendix E
9. Timeline - State Agency's schedule for carrying out grant activities	Yes	Included in Appendix E
10. Quantity and Appropriateness of Staff Committed - description of staff resources assigned to manage grant activities.	Yes	Included in Appendix E
11. Budget - Proposed budget describing appropriate use of grant funds and justifying costs.	Yes Use "Appendix D: Planning Grant Budget Template" to ensure that all costs are included	Included in Appendix E
12. Commitment statement concerning activities within 210 days of Planning Grant award	Yes	No