

Summer 2011 SFSP Home Delivery and Food Backpacks Demonstration Projects: Request for Application (RFA) Questions and Answers

Food Backpacks

- 1. Regarding Menus: Please clarify if the SFSP meal patterns must be followed in that the 3 components for breakfast and 5 food items for lunch must be provided. Is there any flexibility in the meal pattern? For example, can there be an appropriate substitute for milk (yogurt)?**

The SFSP meal patterns should be followed or a nutritionally-balanced, healthful alternative should be proposed. In addition, health and safety concerns will need to be addressed to ensure that food items provided in the backpacks will not make the children ill.

- 2. Is there a format for the Sponsor Budgets or do they just submit their own format?**

The RFA provides a template for the budget proposal section (see page 19 for Food Backpacks proposals and page 23 for Home Delivery proposals). All anticipated costs associated with the project, including operational and administrative costs, should be listed and described in sufficient detail to determine the proposed budget is necessary and reasonable for project implementation.

- 3. Since there will be separate funds for the demonstration projects, will there be a system for separating costs because the meals will be prepared from the same site as the regular SFSP site?**

The sponsor will need to establish an appropriate record keeping and cost allocation system to ensure that SFSP funds are not used to support grant funded activities.

- 4. If you have an open SFSP site can you take the backpack meals to the community or area where the children live (i.e. Apartment Complexes)?**

No. The purpose of the Food Backpack demonstration is to test providing the children that attend the regular SFSP site with meals on the days the site is closed. This means that in order to ensure that all of the children at the SFSP site, and only those children, receive food backpacks, they must be distributed to the children while they are in attendance at the SFSP meal site.

- 5. Is it one (1) backpack for each family or each child?**

It is one backpack per child that attends the SFSP site, not per family.

- 6. As a sponsor with a 4 day program, are we providing food for the other 3 days through the backpack program?**

Yes. Sponsors may provide meals for any of the days that the SFSP site is not in operation. Please note that sponsors may provide children with meals for up to four days through one backpack.

- 7. For the backpack program, each child would receive a backpack with two meals (lunches) if this is the only meal served at the congregate meal site and the site is only closed on the weekends, correct?**

Yes, only the meals that the SFSP site regularly provides to children may be provided in the backpacks, and then those meal/snack numbers are multiplied by the number of consecutive days that the site is not in operation.

- 8. Will the meals provided in the backpacks be reimbursed just like the regular congregate meals served at the site (i.e. meal counts of each of these backpacks would need to be maintained)?**

No. All costs for this demonstration project, including food, will come from the Summer Demonstration Project funds. Therefore, reimbursements for participation in the Food Backpacks demonstration will not be based on the meal times rate as it is in the traditional SFSP. Instead, sponsors must include the anticipated food costs in their proposed budgets. Reimbursements will be paid monthly as allowable and approved costs are incurred, similar to other grant projects. The State agency will work with the approved sponsors to establish claiming and reimbursement processes.

Both Demonstrations:

- 1. Are School Food Authorities that operated using the Seamless Summer Option in 2010 eligible to submit a proposal?**

Yes. School food authorities must have successfully operated either SFSP or the Seamless Summer Option in 2010 in order to be eligible for the backpack demonstration. For this demonstration, they must also participate in SFSP in 2011. There is no previous participation requirement for the meal delivery demonstration.

- 2. Do parents need to give consent to receive food for both the Home Delivery and Food Backpacks demonstrations? Do parents have to give consent to participate in the evaluation for both?**

Parental consent is required for any type of participation in the Home Delivery demonstration, including receiving food. However, only parental notification, not consent, is required for children to receive food backpacks. For example, a flyer could be provided with the food backpacks to notify them about the program.

Parental consent is, however, required for participation in the evaluation component of both demonstration projects. However, parents do not have to give consent to the

evaluation portion of the project in order to receive the food. Parents will have two opportunities to consent pertaining to the evaluations—the first is when they are asked at the beginning of the demonstration if they are willing to release their contact information to the demonstration evaluator contractor. The second opportunity will be when the contractor contacts them at a later time after they have received the food about participating in the evaluation and the family will need to give consent to this at that time (but may say no).

- 3. Will some emphasis on ensuring good quality for the food (whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables etc.) increase a proposal's competitiveness? Additionally, will the securing of in-kind or financial matches with other partners increase the competitiveness of a proposal?**

Neither one of these is a specific criterion contained in the RFA. However, both of these may affect the potential outcomes and success of the demonstration projects, which will be evaluated under the quality of the overall proposal.

- 4. Will there be any additional State agency monitoring requirements? For example, if a sponsor is chosen for the backpack demonstration project and they are not scheduled for an administrative review that year, will the State agency need to review that sponsor?**

Yes. How the State agency reviews demonstration project participating sponsors will differ from their normal reviews in the traditional SFSP. The State should factor how it will monitor and review demonstration project participating sponsors into their own proposals, including the costs that will be incurred by conducting these additional reviews.

- 5. I struggle with these home delivery and backpack ideas. The congregate sites have only recently been able to let a child leave with a small portion of the meal because we want to make sure the meals go only to the children, yet this home delivery would have no controls or assurances to be sure only children get the meal. What's the philosophy behind this change?**

These demonstration projects are being implemented to address the gap in participation between NSLP and SFSP, and the resulting increase in children's food insecurity over the summer. This means that the methods utilized for these demonstrations may be at odds with certain program requirements for SFSP. The biggest example of this in the demonstration projects is testing methods that do not require adherence to the congregate feeding requirement in SFSP. While we acknowledge that this prevents us from guaranteeing that the child is the one that consumes the food, the evaluation component of these demonstration projects will be looking at the impact these methods have had on the food security of the child.

- 6. For the data requirement for State agencies to provide site level data pertaining to meals served, costs, and daily attendance (on page 10, item b iii of the RFA), does**

this need to be collected from all sponsors regardless of their participation in the demonstration project?

No. Site level data will only need to be collected for participating sponsors and sites.

7. Should the sponsor proposal be typed into the prototype proposal that is found online or presented in a narrative form?

Either format is fine, but proposals should include all of the information captured by the prototype if a narrative proposal is submitted.

8. What steps does the State take if a sponsor is approved to participate, but after the first summer on the demonstrate project, the sponsor fails to appropriately operate their program or decides not to operate in the second year?

We will be evaluating lessons from all aspects of implementation, including the problems sponsors encounter. We expect that the selected sponsors will closely monitor their expenditures and stay in close communication with the State agency throughout the project. We hope that the State agency and sponsors will try to address any funding or other issues as they occur and not wait until the end of the summer when the sponsor may feel their only option is to drop out. If the problems are insurmountable, sponsors will not be required to participate in the second year.