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Applicant Conference

Nutrition Incentive Program Project

RFA #HHS0014534

July 28, 2024, at 10:30 AM CT

Nutrition Incentive Program Project
RFA No. HHS0014534



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Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Procurement Activities
3. Executive Summary of Program
4. Available Funding
5. Grant Term
6. Eligible Activities
7. Program Requirements
8. Grant Funding Prohibitions
9. Closing Comments

Introductions

Speakers

- **John Norton**, Grants Specialist
Sole Point of Contact for RFA
Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Procurement
and Contracting Services (PCS)
- **Jessica Newcomb**, NIP Program Specialist
- **Cecelia Arvallo**, NIP Contract Manager
- **Naomi Houston**, NIP Financial Analyst



Procurement Roles

Procurement Team

- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) is responsible for all procurement and solicitation activities.
- Access and Eligibility Services (AES) is responsible for contract management activities throughout the life of the Grant Agreements including, contract development, execution, and monitoring.
- AES is responsible for project scope, requirements, performance, results, and monitoring.



Schedule of Events

Deadline for Submitting Questions

July 2, 2024, by 5:00 PM

Any questions arising prior to the question deadline must be submitted in writing to John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov



Tentative Date Answers to Questions Posted

Estimated: July 11, 2024



Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Applications

July 25, 2024, by 10:30 AM



Anticipated Grant Agreements Start Date

January 2025

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Solicitation Access

HHSC will post all official communication regarding this RFA on the following website, including the notice of award:

- The HHS Grants website is located at <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/pcs/rfa.cfm>

HHSC reserves the right to cancel this RFA, or to make no award if it determines such action is in the best interest of the State.

HHSC may, in its discretion, reject any and all applications or portions thereof.



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Sole Point of Contact

- All communications relating to this RFA must be directed in writing to John Norton, Sole Point of Contact at John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov.
- All communications between applicants and HHSC staff members, or any other HHS staff members, concerning this RFA are **strictly prohibited**.
- Failure to comply with these requirements may result in application disqualification.



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Executive Summary of Program

The purpose of this Solicitation is to provide funding opportunities for NIP Projects. NIPs are designed to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by low-income households participating in the SNAP by providing an Incentive for the purchase of fruits and vegetables at the point of purchase to a household buying food with SNAP benefits. NIPs improve access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for Texas families, create more business for Texas farmers and Retailers, and boost local economies.



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Available Funding

The total amount of State funding available for the NIP Project grant is \$6,000,000 for the Project Period.

Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for the amount of grant funding they can responsibly expend during the Project Period to avoid lapsed funding at the end of the grant term.

Successful Applications may not be funded to the full extent of Applicant's Requested Budget (Project Budget) in order to ensure grant funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities and Projects.



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Grant Term

The Project Period is from the effective date of the Grant Agreement, date of Grant Agreement execution (anticipated January 2025), through August 31, 2025. No renewals or extensions.

All Grant funds must be expended by August 31, 2025.



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Eligible Applicants and Service Areas

Eligible Population

The eligible population to be served under this RFA consists of individuals who receive SNAP benefits.

Eligible Service Areas

The service areas eligible for NIP Project funding under this RFA are:

- A. Any county in the State of Texas; and
- B. Awarded Grantee must currently be implementing a NIP in at least two (2) counties in the State.



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Eligible Activities

This Grant Project will fund activities and costs as allowed.

A. Incentive Models

- This procurement will fund three (3) Incentive Models or expansions of a NIP Project.

B. Incentive Models Transactions

- Applicants may structure fruit and vegetable Incentive models according to two (2) Incentive Models Transactions.

C. NIP Project Activities

- Grant funding may be used for six (6) NIP Project Activities.



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Eligible Activities (continued)

Incentive Models

Applicants must propose or propose to expand one of the following allowable Incentive models:

- A. Fruits and vegetables for fruits and vegetables: SNAP participants purchase fruits or vegetables using their SNAP benefits and then receive Incentives that are redeemable only for the purchase of fruits or vegetables
- B. Any SNAP eligible food for fruits and vegetables: SNAP participants purchase any SNAP eligible food using their SNAP benefits and then receive Incentives that are redeemable only for the purchase of fruits or vegetables.
- C. Fruits and vegetables for any SNAP eligible food: SNAP participants purchase fruits or vegetables using their SNAP benefits and then receive Incentives that are redeemable for the purchase of any SNAP eligible food.



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Eligible Activities (continued)

Incentive Models Transactions

Applicants may structure fruit and vegetable Incentive models as one of the following:

- A. As a single transaction where earning and redemption both take place in one transaction and the SNAP participant experiences a discount; or
- B. Two separate transactions. During the first transaction the SNAP participant earns the Incentive; and during the second transaction the SNAP participant redeems their Incentive.



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Eligible Activities (continued)

NIP Project Activities

Grant funding may be used for the following activities for the awarded NIP Projects:

- A. Staffing, oversight, and overall management of the Project;
- B. Expanding services to increase more farmers markets/grocery stores across Texas;
- C. Expanding Incentives offered by the Retailer;
- D. Increasing the daily limit of Incentives, especially at Retailers with \$5 limits;
- E. Additional Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Equipment;
- F. Self-evaluation & Impact Reporting using shared data systems and coordinated case management



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Program Requirements

To meet the goals and objectives of the NIP Project, Applicants must demonstrate their ability to fulfill the requirements within this RFA and in Exhibit D, Required Services, Exhibit E, Deliverables, and Exhibit F, Key Performance Requirements as outlined in Sections 2.6 through 2.9 of the RFA.



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Grant Funding Prohibitions

Grant funds may not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:

- A. Any use of grant funds to replace (supplant) funds that have been Budgeted for the same purpose through non-grant sources;
- B. Inherently religious activities such as prayer, worship, religious instruction, or proselytization;
- C. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. § 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly;
- D. Any portion of the salary of, or any other compensation for, an elected or appointed government official;
- E. Vehicles for general agency use; to be allowable, vehicles must have a specific use related to Project objectives or activities;



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Grant Funding Prohibitions (continued)

Grant funds may not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:

- F. Entertainment, amusement, or social activities and any associated costs including, but not limited to, admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity or sporting event unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the Project's purpose;
- G. Costs of promotional items, and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs;
- H. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem associated with grant-related travel, where pre-approved for working events, or where such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the Project's purpose;
- I. Membership dues for individuals;
- J. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the grant Project;



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Grant Funding Prohibitions (continued)

Grant funds may not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:

- K. Any activities related to fundraising;
- L. Equipment and other capital expenditures such as capital improvements, property losses and expenses, real estate purchases, mortgage payments, remodeling, the acquisition or construction of facilities, or other items that are unallowable pursuant to 2 CFR 200.439;
- M. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law; and
- N. Other unallowable costs as listed under TxGMS, Appendix 7, Selected Items of Cost Supplement Chart and/or 2 CFR 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles, General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, where applicable.



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Submission of Forms

Applicants must complete and submit Forms A through F in accordance with the RFA, Article XIII, Submission Checklist.



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Application Screening and Evaluation

A three-step selection process will be used:

1. Application screening to determine whether the Applicant meets the minimum requirements of this RFA;
2. Evaluation based upon Section 9.4, Evaluation Criteria; and
3. Final Selection is based upon State priorities and other relevant factors, as outlined in Section 10.1, Final Selection.



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Specific Selection Criteria

All eligible applications will be evaluated based upon:

- A. Narrative, Personnel, and Organization;
- B. Project Work Plan and Performance Requirements;
- C. Management Requirements;
- D. Program Requirements; and
- E. Proposed Budget and Justification (Cost Effectiveness).



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Submission of Exhibits

Applicants must complete and submit the Exhibits in accordance with the RFA, Article XIII, Submission Checklist.



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Delivery for Submission Option

Applicant must correctly deliver Solicitation Responses by the method below:

- **Submission Option #1:** Applicant shall submit the application through the HHS Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures identified in Exhibit N, HHS Online Bid Room Instructions.
- **Submission Option #2 with USB Drives:** Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives to the correct mailing address, which is dependent upon mailing method identified in this section (see mailing address options in the RFA, Section 8.3, Required Submission Method).



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Questions and Answers

All questions **must** be submitted in writing to the Sole Point of Contact using the formatting below from the RFA, Section 7.3, RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification:

- A. RFA number;
- B. Section or Paragraph number from this Solicitation;
- C. Page Number of this Solicitation;
- D. Exhibit or other Attachment and Section or Paragraph number from the Exhibit or other Attachment;
- E. Page number of the Exhibit;
- F. Language, Topic, Section Heading being Questioned; and
- G. Question;

Submit via email to: John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov by **5:00 PM on July 2, 2024.**



Question Deadline

- Questions are due by **5:00 PM on Tuesday, July 2, 2024.**
- Questions received after this deadline cannot be responded to.
- An addendum will be posted to the HHS Grants Website with the answers to questions **on or after July 11, 2024.**



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Closing Comments

- Applicants are responsible for meeting the RFA requirements, including any addendums.
- All Addendums must be signed and submitted with the original application.
- Applicants must check the HHS Grants website frequently for any addendums that may have been added to this solicitation.



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HHS Grants Website

The link is: <https://resources.hhs.texas.gov/rfa/hhs0014534>



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Thank you!

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