



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

Cecile E. Young, Executive Commissioner

Request for Applications (RFA)

Grant for

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Outreach and Application Assistance

RFA No. HHS0015357

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

December 27, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time

Article I. Executive Summary, Definitions, and Statutory Authority	5
1.1 Executive Summary	5
1.2 Definitions and Acronyms	6
1.3 Authority	9
1.4 Standards.....	10
Article II. Scope of Grant Project	10
2.1 Purpose.....	10
2.2 Program Background	11
2.3 Eligible Population.....	12
2.4 Eligible Service Areas.....	12
2.5 Eligible Activities	12
2.6 Program Requirements.....	12
2.7 Deliverables	13
2.8 Performance Measures and Monitoring.....	13
2.9 Financial Status Reports (FSRs).....	13
2.10 Financial Management System.....	14
2.11 Final Billing Submission.....	15
2.12 Data Use Agreement.....	15
2.13 Limitations on Grants to Units of Local Government	15
Article III. Applicant Eligibility Requirements	16
3.1 Legal Authority to Apply.....	16
3.2 Application Screening Requirements	16
3.3 Grant Award Eligibility	17
3.4 Grants for Political Polling Prohibited.....	17
Article IV. Project Period and Grant Term	18
4.1 Project Period.....	18
4.2 Project Closeout	18
Article V. Grant Funding and Reimbursement Information	18
5.1 Grant Funding Source and Available Funding	18
5.2 No Guarantee of Reimbursement Amounts.....	19
5.3 Grant Funding Prohibitions.....	19
5.4 Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements.....	20

5.5	Payment Method	21
Article VI. Application Forms and Exhibits for Submission		22
6.1	Narrative Proposal	22
6.2	Expenditure Proposal	22
6.3	Indirect Costs	23
6.4	Administrative Applicant Information.....	24
Article VII. RFA Administrative Information and Inquiries.....		24
7.1	Schedule of Events.....	24
7.2	Sole Point of Contact	25
7.3	RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification.....	26
7.4	Ambiguity, Conflict, Discrepancy, Clarifications	27
7.5	Responses To Questions or Request for Clarifications.....	27
7.6	Changes, Amendment Or Modification To RFA.....	28
7.7	Exceptions.....	28
Article VIII. Application Organization and Submission Requirements.....		28
8.1	Application Receipt	28
8.2	Application Submission.....	29
8.3	Required Submission Method.....	29
8.4	Costs Incurred for Application.....	31
8.5	Application Composition.....	31
8.6	Application Organization.....	31
8.7	Application Withdrawals or Modifications	31
Article IX. Application Screening and Evaluation.....		32
9.1	Overview.....	32
9.2	Initial Compliance Screening of Applications	32
9.3	Questions or Requests for Clarification for Applications.....	33
9.4	Evaluation Criteria	33
9.5	Past Performance	33
9.6	Compliance for Participation in State Contracts.....	35
Article X. Award of Grant Agreement Process		36
10.1	Final Selection	36
10.2	Negotiations	37
10.3	Disclosure of Interested Parties	37

10.4 Execution and Announcement Of Grant Agreement(s)..... 38

Article XI. General Terms and Conditions 38

11.1 Grant Application Disclosure 38

11.2 Texas Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs)..... 39

Article XII. Application Confidential or Proprietary Information 39

12.1 Texas Public Information Act – Application Disclosure Requirements..... 39

12.2 Applicant Waiver – Intellectual Property 41

Article XIII. Submission Checklist..... 42

Article XIV. List of Exhibits and Forms Attached To RFA..... 44

Article I. Executive Summary, Definitions, and Statutory Authority

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the System Agency, is accepting Applications for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach Program.

The purpose of this program is to provide SNAP outreach and application assistance services to potentially eligible Texans across the state. The services will focus on educating low-income individuals and families about SNAP's eligibility requirements, application procedures, and available benefits. These outreach efforts aim to increase knowledge, understanding, and participation in SNAP to help reduce food insecurity, hunger, and poverty in Texas. Additionally, through educational initiatives, the program will aim to eliminate misconceptions about SNAP and provide accurate information, contributing to greater awareness and access to benefits among eligible populations. Together, these partnerships will support Texans in pursuing economic self-sufficiency and improved well-being.

Applicants must reference **Article II. Scope of Grant Project**, for further detailed information regarding the purpose, background, eligible population, eligible activities, and requirements.

Grant Name:	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach and Application assistance
RFA No.:	HHS0015357
Deadline for Submission of Applications:	December 27, 2024, by 10:30 a.m.
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	November 25, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.
Estimated Total Available Funding:	\$13,358,345.00
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	Multiple
Estimated Max Award Amount:	\$2,671,669.00 per State Fiscal Year.
Match, if any:	Match is not required, refer to Section 5.4, Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.

Anticipated Project Start Date:	October 1, 2025
Length of Project Period:	Five (5) years
Eligible Applicants:	Refer to Article III. Applicant Eligibility Requirements.

To be considered for screening, evaluation and award, Applicants must provide and submit all required information and documentation as set forth in **Article VIII. Application Organization and Submission Requirements** and **Article XIII. Submission Checklist** by the Deadline for Submission of Applications established in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. See **Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications**, for further details.

1.2 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Unless a different definition is specified, or the context clearly indicates otherwise, the definitions and acronyms given to a term below apply whenever the term appears in this RFA. All other terms have their ordinary and common meaning.

Refer to all exhibits to this RFA for additional definitions.

[“Accrual Basis Accounting Method”](#) means an accounting method where revenue or expenses are recorded when a transaction occurs versus when a payment is made or received. The method follows a matching principle, which says that revenues and expenses must be recognized in the same period.

[“Addendum”](#) means a written clarification or revision to this RFA, including exhibits, forms, and attachments, as issued and posted by HHSC to the HHS Grants RFA website.

[“Applicant”](#) means any person or legal entity that submits an Application in response to this RFA. The term includes the individual submitting the Application who is authorized to sign the Application on behalf of the Applicant and to bind the Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of the Application. May also be referred to in this RFA as [“Respondent.”](#)

[“Application”](#) means all documents the Respondent submits in response to this RFA, including all required forms and exhibits. May also be referred to in this RFA as [“Solicitation Response.”](#)

[“Budget”](#) means the financial plan for carrying out the Grant Project, as formalized in the Grant Agreement, including awarded funds and any proposed Match, submitted as part of

the Application in response to this RFA. An Applicant's requested Budget may differ from the System Agency-approved Budget executed in the final Grant Agreement.

“Business Day(s)” means Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. local time. Business day excludes Saturday, Sunday, and holidays designated by a federal or state agency.

“Calendar Day(s)” means each and every day shown on the calendar.

“CFR” means the Code of Federal Regulations which is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

“Client” means a member of the target population to be served under a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA.

“Communication Plan” means the plan that provides administrative oversight and support for Project discussions, ongoing and successful coordination between HHSC and the Grantee, and decision-making between HHSC and the Grantee to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Grant Agreement.

“Contract Monitoring Questionnaire” or “CMQ” means the questionnaire, which the Grantee provides to HHSC with detailed information regarding the Grantee's internal controls and general processes important to HHSC Contracting. HHSC uses the CMQ as part of the Contract risk evaluation process.

“Controlled Asset” is an item that has a useful life one year or more and valued \$500.00 to \$9,999,000.

“Cost Reimbursement” is a payment method based on an approved Budget and the expenses the Grantee has incurred and paid prior to submitting a request for reimbursement from HHSC.

“CPP” means the Community Partner Program administered by HHSC that builds bridges between HHSC and communities statewide to provide Texans with access to food, cash, and health care assistance. The Community Partner Program is made up of four (4) partner levels.

“Direct Cost” means those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective under the Grant Project responsive to this RFA or other internally or externally funded activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances must be treated consistently as either Direct Costs or Indirect Costs. Direct Costs include, but are not limited to, salaries, travel, Equipment, and supplies directly benefiting the grant-supported Project or activity.

“Equipment” pursuant to 2 CFR §200.1, means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by

the recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000. See the definitions of *capital assets*, *computing devices*, *general purpose equipment*, *information technology systems*, *special purpose equipment*, and *supplies* in 2 CFR §200.1.

[“Federal Tax ID Number”](#) means the number used to identify individuals, businesses, and other legal entities for tax purposes pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code (“IRC”) and specific tax laws that affect different types of legal entities.

[“Fiscal Year ”](#) means the Federal Fiscal Year that begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th of the following year.

[“General Office Supplies”](#) means consumable supplies that must be used by the Project staff in the fiscal year in which they are purchased (i.e., paper, notepads, pens, pencils, staplers, staples, tape, tape dispensers, etc.).

[“Grant Agreement”](#) or [“Contract”](#) means the agreement entered into by the System Agency and the Grantee as a result of this RFA, including the Signature Document and all attachments and amendments. ”

[“Grantee”](#) means the Party receiving funds under any Grant Agreement awarded under this RFA. May also be referred to as [“Subrecipient”](#) or [“Contractor.”](#)

[“Health and Human Services”](#) or [“HHS”](#) includes both the Health and Human Services Commission (“HHSC”) and the Department of State Health Services (“DSHS”).

[“HHSC”](#) means the Health and Human Services Commission.

[“Indirect Cost”](#) means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect Costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the Grant Project responsive to this RFA but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.

[“In-Kind Donation”](#) is the value of volunteer time or other non-billable goods or services. There is no cash transfer between parties.

[“Indirect Cost Rate”](#) is a device for determining in a reasonable manner the proportion of Indirect Costs each program must bear. It is the ratio (expressed as a percentage) of the Grantee’s Indirect Costs to a Direct Cost base.

[“KPRs”](#) means Key Performance Requirements. The KPRs will be used to measure the Grantee’s successful performance of services.

[“Match”](#) is the non-federal or non-state share of costs the Grantee is required to contribute to accomplish the purpose of the Grant Project. In-Kind Donations and contributions may not be used towards Match.

“Programmatic Supplies” means consumable supplies that must be used by the Project staff in the fiscal year in which they are purchased (i.e., brochures, allowable supplies for the implementation of required activities, allowable outreach reinforcements, etc.).

“Project” or “Grant Project” means the specific work and activities that are supported by the funds provided under the Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA.

“Project Period” is the initial period of time set forth in the Grant Agreement during which Grantees may perform approved grant-funded activities to be eligible for reimbursement or payment. Unless otherwise specified, the Project Period begins on the Grant Agreement effective date and ends on the Grant Agreement termination or expiration date, and represents the base Project Period, not including extensions or renewals. When referring to the base project period plus anticipated renewal or extension periods, “Grant Term” is used.

“Solicitation,” “Funding Announcement” or “Request for Applications (RFA)” means the document (including all exhibits, attachments, and published addenda), issued by the System Agency under which Applications for grant funds were requested, which is incorporated by reference in the Grant Agreement for all purposes in its entirety.

“SNAP” means Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

“State” means the State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including the System Agency and any other State agency, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

“System Agency” means HHSC or DSHS, as applicable, that will be a party to any Grant Agreement resulting from the RFA.

“TxGMS” means the Texas Grant Management Standards published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

“VPTS” means Vendor Performance Tracking System.

“Unique Entity Identifier” means the number assigned to entities by the System Award Management (SAM) used to identify organizations doing business with the federal government.

1.3 AUTHORITY

The System Agency is requesting Applications under Section 33.025 of the Texas Human Resources Code and Section 531.039 (Section 525.0101 effective April 1, 2025,) of the Texas Government Code. State funds for this Grant Project are authorized under the Texas General Appropriations Act, Article II, Health and Human Services Commission, and Texas Human Resources Code Section 33.025.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated state and federal funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. Federal funding for this Grant Project is authorized under Section 4 and Section 11(e) (1) (A) of The Food and

Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended and codified at [7 U.S. Code § 2013](#), [7 U.S. Code §2020\(e\)\(1\)\(A\)](#) and [7 U.S. Code § 2027](#).

Federal funding awarded to the System Agency is through the program(s) listed below:

Federal Grant Program:	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach
Federal Awarding Agency:	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
Funding Opportunity No:	258TX105S2514
Assistance Listing Number and Program Title:	6TX400105 SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) APPLICATION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

1.4 STANDARDS

Awards made as a result of this RFA are subject to all policies, terms, and conditions set forth in or included within this RFA as well as applicable statutes, requirements, and guidelines including, but not limited to applicable provisions of TxGMS and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200); 7 CFR 272; and 7 CFR 277.

Article II. Scope of Grant Project

2.1 PURPOSE

This funding opportunity invites grant Applications from state, local governments, and public or private non-profit 501(c)(3) community-based organizations to deliver outreach services and Application assistance to Texas residents who might qualify for SNAP.

This grant opportunity is made possible through the support of the United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). FNS provides state agencies administering SNAP with the opportunity to conduct outreach activities to low-income households about the availability, eligibility requirements, Application procedures, and benefits of SNAP.

The purpose of the SNAP Outreach Program is to empower Texas communities, raise awareness about SNAP, and provide assistance to potentially eligible individuals in

applying for benefits. The program's mission is to create opportunities to educate low-income households about SNAP's eligibility requirements, Application procedures, benefits, and available services. The program's vision is to establish a statewide network of community-based organizations that support Texans in pursuing economic and personal self-sufficiency.

Through this RFA, HHSC seeks qualified Applicants to provide comprehensive SNAP outreach and Application assistance services, along with a higher level of case management services to individuals and families across Texas. In doing so, HHSC aims to reduce food insecurity, raise awareness about SNAP benefits, and ensure more eligible Texans can access needed resources.

Additionally, partnerships formed through this RFA will assist in eliminating misconceptions about SNAP, disseminating accurate information, and improving participation among eligible populations. HHSC also advises on the use of self-service tools such as YourTexasBenefits.com, the Your Texas Benefits mobile app, electronic document submission, and electronic correspondence to assist individuals in applying for benefits.

2.2 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

HHSC administers SNAP to help mitigate food insecurity and improve the health and well-being of Texans. Texas faces significant challenges in addressing food insecurity, with 14.2 percent of individuals and households struggling to meet their food-related needs. Despite SNAP's critical role in alleviating food insecurity, only 75% of eligible Texans are currently enrolled, leading to increased healthcare costs and perpetuating disparities, particularly in rural areas such as Zavala County.

The SNAP Outreach Program is designed to address these challenges by intensifying efforts to increase SNAP participation rates and reduce food insecurity across the state. By partnering with community-based organizations through outreach and Application assistance efforts, HHSC aims to enhance awareness, reduce barriers to enrollment, and promote economic self-sufficiency for low-income households.

These partnerships, formed through the RFA process, are essential in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of SNAP outreach activities. HHSC manages SNAP outreach activities and funds, collaborating with other public and private organizations to coordinate these efforts. By aligning outreach initiatives with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) mission, the SNAP Outreach Program contributes to broader state and national efforts to combat hunger, improve health outcomes, and strengthen economic resilience.

References

UT Health Houston School of Public Health and Michael Dell & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. July 13, 2023. *SNAP Gap*. Houston: Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project.

Economic Research Service. 2020-2022. *State-level Prevalence of Food Insecurity*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2.3 ELIGIBLE POPULATION

The eligible population to be served under this RFA consists of low-income individuals and families who may be eligible for benefits but are not currently participating in SNAP.

2.4 ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREAS

The service areas eligible for Project funding under this RFA can include one of the seven (7) Regions covering the 254 counties in Texas (see [map of the Regions of Texas](#) for an illustration). See **Exhibit R, Funding by Region and Strategy & Regional Population** for the list of counties in each respective Region.

Grantees and their subrecipients must deliver SNAP Application assistance and education outreach services within all counties in the Region proposed in the Application, which must be one of the Regions identified in this Section. This focused strategy aims to facilitate Application assistance and support at a local community level. See **Exhibit R, Funding by Region and Strategy & Regional Population**.

2.5 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

This grant program may fund activities and costs as allowed by the laws, regulations, rules, and guidance governing fund use identified in the relevant sections of this RFA. Only grant-funded activities authorized under this RFA are eligible for reimbursement and payment under any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA.

Grantee must provide the services in accordance with the requirements detailed in **Exhibit D, SNAP Outreach Contract Requirements**.

2.6 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All Grant Projects must be implemented during each Project Period. Each Project Period will begin on October 1st and end on September 30th to align with each State Fiscal Year.

All activities funded under this RFA must meet the requirements detailed in **Exhibit D, SNAP Outreach Contract Requirements**.

2.7 DELIVERABLES

Grantee must complete and submit all deliverables as described in **Exhibit L, Deliverables** in the format and by the date specified by HHSC.

2.8 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND MONITORING

HHSC will look solely to the Grantee for the performance of all Grantee obligations and requirements in a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA. Grantee shall not be relieved of its obligations for any nonperformance by its subrecipients or subcontractors, if any.

Grant Agreement(s) awarded as a result of this RFA are subject to HHSC's performance monitoring activities throughout the duration of the Grant Project Period. This evaluation may include a reassessment of Project activities and services to determine whether they continue to be effective throughout the Grant Term.

Grantee must regularly collect and maintain data that measures the performance and effectiveness of activities under a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA in the manner, and within the timeframes specified in this RFA and resulting Grant Agreement, or as otherwise specified by HHSC. Grantee must submit the necessary information and documentation regarding all performance metrics, including reports and deliverables and will be expected to report on all Key Performance Requirements as outlined in **Exhibit K, Key Performance Requirements**, and **Exhibit L, Deliverables**.

If requested by HHSC, Grantee must report on the progress towards completion of the Grant Project and other relevant information as determined by HHSC during the Grant Project Period. To remain eligible for renewal funding, if any, Grantee must be able to demonstrate the scope of services provided and their impact, quality, and levels of performance against approved goals, and that Grantee's activities and services effectively address and achieve the Project's stated purpose.

2.9 FINANCIAL STATUS REPORTS (FSRs)

Except as otherwise provided, Grant Agreements with categorical Budgets, Grantee must submit quarterly FSRs to HHSC by the last Business Day of the month following the end of each calendar quarter for HHSC review and financial assessment. Through submission of an FSR, Grantee certifies that (1) any applicable invoices have been reviewed to ensure all grant-funded purchases of goods and services have been completed, performed or delivered in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement requirements; (2) all Grantee-performed services have been completed in compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement; (3) that the amount of the FSR added to all previous approved FSRs does not exceed the maximum liability of the Grant Award; and (4) all expenses shown on the FSR are allocable, allowable, actual, reasonable, and necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Grant Agreement.

2.10 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Grantee must have a financial management system in place to maintain internal controls, ensure proper management of federal and State funds, maximize non-federal resources, and maintain solvency.

A. Grantee's accounting and internal control systems must meet the following requirements:

1. The systems must be appropriate to the size of the organization.
2. The accounting system must consist of source documents, a chart of accounts, journals, ledgers, and routine financial reports.
3. The accounting system must be capable of producing expenditure reports, cost center analyses, Budget formats, and automated reports as required by, and without additional support from, HHSC.
4. The accounting system must include records that identify adequately the source and Application of funds for federally funded activities. These records must contain information on federal awards, authorizations, financial obligations, unobligated balances, assets, expenditures, income, and interest and be supported by source documentation.
5. The accounting system must maintain effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets. Ensure all funds and assets are adequately safeguarded and are solely used for authorized purposes.
6. The accounting system must include a comparison of expenditures with Budget amounts for each grant award. Written procedures to implement the requirements of this section.
7. The internal control system must safeguard the Grantee's assets, produce accurate accounting data, promote efficient operations, and ensure adherence to the Grantee's accounting policies and procedures.
8. The accounting system must have internal controls that clearly identify a division of responsibility among different employees for a sequence of related functions, clear establishment of each employee's responsibilities and duties, and use of standards such as procurement policies, proofs, checks, and other security measures.
9. The accounting system must meet the minimum standards for financial management systems in the [Regulations \(CFR\) 277.6 – Standards for Financial Management Systems](#) and [2 CFR Statue 200.302 – Financial Management](#).
10. The Grantee must use the Accrual Basis Accounting Method for all financial Deliverables. This includes invoices, expenditure reports, or any other financial documents or reports requested by HHSC. This requirement does not constitute a change to the Grantee's financial management system. Refer to [45 Subtitle A Chapter A Part 75 D Standards for Financial and Program Management State Statue 75.302](#).

2.11 FINAL BILLING SUBMISSION

Unless otherwise directed by HHSC, the Grantee shall submit a reimbursement or payment request as a final close-out invoice not later than 45 Calendar Days following the end of each Fiscal Year of the Grant Agreement. Reimbursement or payment requests received after the deadline may not be paid.

2.12 DATA USE AGREEMENT

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant agrees to be bound by the terms of **Exhibit G, HHS Data Use Agreement (DUA) Version 8.5**, or **G-2, Governmental Entity Version HHS Data Use Agreement v.8.5**, including but not limited to the terms and conditions regarding **Exhibit G-1, Texas HHS System-Data use Agreement- Attachment 2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI) Version 2.1**, attached to this RFA.

2.13 LIMITATIONS ON GRANTS TO UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pursuant to the Texas General Appropriations Act for the 2024-2025 Biennium, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session 2023, Article IX, Section 4.04, in each Grant Agreement with a unit of local government, grant funds appropriated under the General Appropriations Act will be expended subject to limitations and reporting requirements similar to those provided by:

- A. Parts 2, 3, and 5 of Article IX of the General Appropriations Act (except there is no requirement for increased salaries for local government employees);
- B. Sections 556.004, 556.005, and 556.006 of the Texas Government Code; and
- C. Sections 2113.012 and 2113.101 of the Texas Government Code.

In this section, “unit of local government” means:

- A. A council of governments, a regional planning commission, or a similar regional planning agency created under Chapter 391 of the Local Government Code;
- B. A local workforce development board; or
- C. A community center as defined by Section 534.001(b) of the Health and Safety Code.

Article III. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

3.1 LEGAL AUTHORITY TO APPLY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that it has legal authority to apply for the Grant Agreement that is the subject of this RFA and is eligible to receive awards. Further, Applicant certifies it will continue to maintain any required legal authority and eligibility throughout the entire duration of the grant term, if awarded. All requirements apply with equal force to the Applicant and, if the recipient of an award, Grantee and its Subrecipient or subcontractors, if any.

3.2 APPLICATION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered an Applicant eligible for evaluations, Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

An Application must appear realistic in terms of technical commitment, show technical competence, and indicate comprehension of the risk and complexity of a potential Grant Agreement.

- A. Applicant must submit a separate and complete Application for each Region the Applicant is proposing to serve by the Deadline for Submission of Applications in Section 7.1, Schedule of Events.
- B. Be a State or local government entity, or public or private non-profit 501c (3) community-based organization. State of Texas entities eligible to apply may include certain departments, agencies, or other governmental organizations operating at the state or regional level that provide services consistent with the goals of this RFA;
- D. Be in business for three (3) years, be financially solvent, and adequately capitalized;
- E. Be located and have a physical business address in the State of Texas;
- F. Propose to provide services in all counties within at least one Region; and
- G. Satisfy one of the following requirements:
 - 1. Be listed as a resource for services for the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network (TIRN) program (www.211Texas.org) or agree to be added as a resource for services in 2-1-1;
 - 2. Provide 2-3 professional references from local organizations familiar with the Applicant's services to the community; or
 - 3. Be one of the following types of organizations:
 - a. Head Start or Early Head Start programs listed on the National Head Start Website.

- b. Texas Independent School Districts listed on the Texas Education Agency Website.
- c. Texas Public Libraries listed on the Texas Public Libraries website.
- d. City or County Governments listed on the www.texas.gov website.
- e. Texas State agencies listed on the Texas State Library and Archives Commission website.
- f. Native American tribes listed on the National Congress of American Indians website.

3.3 GRANT AWARD ELIGIBILITY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that:

- A. Applicant and all of its identified subsidiaries intending to participate in the Grant Agreement are eligible to perform grant-funded activities, if awarded, and are not subject to suspension, debarment, or a similar ineligibility determined by any State or federal entity;
- B. Applicant is in good standing under the laws of Texas and has provided HHSC with any requested or required supporting documentation in connection with this certification;
- C. Applicant shall remain in good standing and eligible to conduct its business in Texas and shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Texas Secretary of State and the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts;
- D. Applicant is currently in good standing with all licensing, permitting, or regulatory bodies that regulate any or all aspects of Applicant's operations, if applicable; and
- E. Applicant is not delinquent in taxes owed to any taxing authority of the State of Texas as of the effective date of this Grant Agreement.

3.4 GRANTS FOR POLITICAL POLLING PROHIBITED

Pursuant to the General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 4.03, none of the funds appropriated by the General Appropriations Act may be granted to or expended by any entity which performs political polling. This prohibition does not apply to a poll conducted by an academic institution as part of the institution's academic mission that is not conducted for the benefit of a particular candidate or party. By submitting a response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that it is not ineligible for a Grant Agreement pursuant to this prohibition.

Article IV. Project Period and Grant Term

4.1 PROJECT PERIOD

The initial term of the Grant Agreement is **October 1, 2025**, through **September 30, 2028**. The initial term will include three Project Periods as follows:

First Project Period: **October 1, 2025**, through **September 30, 2026**;

Second Project Period: **October 1, 2026**, through **September 30, 2027**; and

Third Project Period: **October 1, 2027**, through **September 30, 2028**.

HHSC may, at its sole discretion, extend the term for one two-year renewal, not to exceed a five-year Grant Term.

4.2 PROJECT CLOSEOUT

System Agency will programmatically and financially close the grant award and end the Grant Agreement when System Agency determines Grantee has completed all applicable actions and work in accordance with Grant Agreement requirements. Grantee must submit all required financial, performance, and other reports as required in the Grant Agreement. The Project close-out date is 45 Calendar Days after the end of each Fiscal Year, unless otherwise noted in the original or amended Grant Agreement. Funds not obligated by Grantee by the end of each Grant Fiscal Year and not expended by the Project close-out date will revert to HHSC.

Article V. Grant Funding and Reimbursement Information

5.1 GRANT FUNDING SOURCE AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

This grant opportunity is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services. The total amount of funding available for the SNAP Outreach and Application Assistance Grant Program is **\$13,358,345.00** for the entire five-year Grant Term. The total amount of Federal funding is \$6,679,172.50 and state funding is \$6,679,172.50. It is HHSC's intent to make multiple awards to Applicants that successfully demonstrate the ability to conduct SNAP outreach activities in one or more of the seven Regions identified. See **Exhibit R, Funding by Region and Strategy & Regional Population.**

Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for grant funding they can responsibly expend during the Contract Period to avoid lapsed funding. Applicants may not request funds that exceed the funds available for each of the strategies within each of the seven (7)

Regions. Successful Applicants will only be awarded up to the amount available for each of the three (3) required strategies in this RFA.

Applicants must refer to **Exhibit R, Funding by Region and Strategy & Regional Population**, for the maximum available funding for each of the strategy within each of the seven (7) Texas Regions and the counties that must be served within each Region.

5.2 NO GUARANTEE OF REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS

There is no guarantee of total reimbursements to be paid to any Grantee under any grant agreement, if any, resulting from this RFA. Grantees must not expect to receive additional or continued funding under future RFA opportunities and must maintain sustainability plans in case of discontinued grant funding. Any additional funding or future funding may require submission of a new Application through a subsequent RFA.

Receipt of an Application in response to this RFA does not constitute an obligation or expectation of any award of a Grant Agreement or funding of a grant award at any level under this RFA.

5.3 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;
- F. Weapons, ammunition, tracked armored vehicles, weaponized vehicles, or explosives.
- G. 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 program's purpose;
- H. Costs of promotional items, and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs. For this Project, this does not exclude outreach reinforcements as defined in the

Exhibit O, SNAP State Outreach Plan Guidance;

- I. 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 program’s purpose;
- J. Membership dues for individuals;
- K. Professional registration or license fees paid by individuals are not allowable since the fees are considered personal expenses, not institutional expenses;
- L. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the Grant Project;
- M. Any activities related to fundraising;
- N. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law; and
- O. Other unallowable costs as listed under [TxGMS, Appendix 7](#), Selected Items of Cost Supplement Chart or 2 CFR 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles, General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, where applicable
- P. Additional Outreach activities not reimbursable can be found in **Exhibit O, SNAP State Outreach Plan Guidance.**

5.4 COST SHARING OR MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

This grant program does not require matching funds from Applicants. The federal match requirements for this award are met through the State of Texas' contribution of funding. However, Applicants may voluntarily include Cash Match in their proposed Budget to enhance their Application.

If Cash Match is included as part of the award, Grantee must spend the cash they hold on HHSC approved SNAP Outreach activities specifically in each Strategy for which Cash Match was proposed and then submit their invoices to HHSC to request reimbursement. HHSC will seek reimbursement for such expenditures from the Federal award and reimburse the Grantee under the terms of the award for allowable expenditures approved within the respective strategy in which Cash Match was proposed and expended.

If choosing to include Cash Match, Applicants must identify all Matching funds they will contribute to each proposed SNAP Outreach Strategy to provide services and conduct allowable activities in their Expenditure Proposals submitted with the RFA. This includes both anticipated Matching funds and funds being certified in the proposal. Matching funds may be provided through local philanthropic, private, or city or county funds, pooled or braided funds from collaborative partner organizations committed for the specific proposed strategy.

In-Kind Donations and contributions may not be used towards Match.

Cash Match is defined as the non-federal/non-State share of costs the Grantee will contribute to accomplish the purpose of the Grant Project, if applicable. Match must be

treated consistently with grant funds and used only for allowable and allocable purposes related to the Grant Project.

Expenses paid by Grantee's funds and claimed as Match must meet all the following criteria:

- A. Are documented and verifiable from the Grantee's records;
- B. Are not included as Match contributions for any other State or federal award (i.e., if the Grantee has already used the funds to Match another federal grant or State contract, they cannot also be applied to activities under this RFA);
- C. Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of Grant Project objectives (i.e., costs do not exceed what a prudent person would do under the circumstances at the time the decision was made to incur the cost);
- D. Are allowable according to [Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations Subpart E – Cost Principles \(§200.420 - .475\)](#);
- E. Are not paid by the state or federal government under another State or federal award, except where state or federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that State or federal funds made available for such program can be applied to Matching or cost sharing requirements of other state or federal programs;
- F. Are provided for in the approved Grant Project Budget;
- G. Are consistent with policies and procedures that apply to both federally financed and other activities of the organization; and
- H. Are incurred during the performance period of the award.

At the end of the Fiscal Year, potential Match reported in the Budget, but not actually provided as part of the Contract, will not count towards the Match requirement of the Grant Agreement.

Matching funds, if proposed, must be identified in the **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal** (see **Section 6.2, Expenditure Proposal**), including both anticipated Matching funds and funds being certified in the proposal.

5.5 PAYMENT METHOD

Grant Agreement(s) awarded under this RFA will be reimbursed based on a Cost Reimbursement basis for allowable costs incurred in performing the work under the Grant Agreement. Costs must be incurred, paid, and supported by adequate documentation (e.g., timesheets, vendor invoices, receipts, mileage travel logs, or reports with point-to-point mileage and required travel details, bank statements, and business credit card statements), prior to requesting reimbursement from HHSC. Project costs must be reasonable, allowable, and allocable Grant Project. Under the Cost Reimbursement payment method, HHSC reimburses the Grantee 100% of allowable costs (50% State General Revenue and 50% Federal) up to the total contract amount.

Article VI. Application Forms and Exhibits for Submission

Note: Applicants must refer to **Article XIII. Submission Checklist**, for the complete checklist of documents that must be submitted with an Application under this RFA.

6.1 NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

Applicants must provide a narrative overview using **Form C, Narrative Proposal** and **Form D, Financial Management & Administrative Questionnaire**, describing their proposed activities, processes, and methodologies to satisfy all objectives outlined in **Section II, Scope of Grant Project**. This includes the Applicant's approach to meeting the timeline and milestones for fulfilling the **Exhibit D, SNAP Outreach Contract Requirements**. Applicants must identify all tasks and project activities to be performed during the grant period and provide a Narrative Summary. See **Form C, Narrative Proposal**.

6.2 EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL

Attached **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal**, of this RFA is the template for submitting the requested Budget. Applicants must complete the required Expenditure Proposal to support their proposed project and in alignment with the requirements described in this RFA. Refer to **Exhibit E-1, Expenditure Proposal Instructions**.

Applicants must ensure that Project costs outlined in the requested Budget are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and developed in accordance with applicable State and federal grant requirements. Reasonable costs are those if, in nature and amount, they do not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. A cost is allocable to a particular cost objective if the cost is chargeable or assignable to such cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received. See 2 CFR Part 200.403 or TxGMS Cost Principles, Basic Considerations (pgs. 32-33), for additional information related to factors affecting allowability of costs.

Applicants must utilize the **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal** template provided to complete the Project Budget and identify all Budget line items and Match costs associated with the Project. Items must be broken out into separate line items within the appropriate Budget categories and include specific details to allow HHSC to determine if proposed costs are reasonable, allowable, and necessary for the successful performance of the Project. Applicants must enter all costs in the Budget tables and provide a detailed description and justification to support the need for the cost associated with the Project to show it is necessary and how the price calculation to show how the cost was established. Matching funds must also be identified in the Expenditure Proposal.

If selected for a grant award under this RFA, only HHSC-approved Budget items in the requested Budget may be considered eligible for reimbursement.

Submission of Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal, is mandatory. Applicants that fail to submit an Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal as set forth in this RFA with their Application will be disqualified.

6.3 INDIRECT COSTS

Applicants must have an approved indirect cost rate (“ICR”) or request the de minimis rate to recover indirect costs. All Applicants are required to complete and submit **Form E, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire**, with required supporting documentation. The questionnaire initiates the acknowledgment or approval of an ICR for use with the System Agency cost-reimbursable Contracts. Entities declining the use of indirect cost cannot recover indirect costs on any System Agency award or use unrecovered indirect costs as match.

HHS typically accepts the following approved ICRs:

- A. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; and
- B. State of Texas Approved Indirect Cost Rate

The System Agency, at its discretion, may request additional information to support any approved ICR agreement.

If the Applicant does not have an approved ICR agreement, the Applicant may be eligible for the ten percent (15%) de minimis rate or may request to negotiate an ICR with HHS.

If the Applicant does not have an approved ICR agreement, the Applicant may be eligible for the ten percent (15%) de minimis rate or may request to negotiate an ICR with HHS.

For Applicants requesting to negotiate an ICR with HHS, the ICR Proposal Package will be provided by the HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group to successful Grantees. The ICR Proposal Package must be completed and returned to the HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group no later than three (3) months post-award.

The HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate group will contact applicable Grantees after Grant Agreement execution to initiate and complete the ICR process. Grantees should respond within 30 Business Days, or the request will be cancelled, and indirect costs may be disallowed.

Once HHS acknowledges an existing rate or approves an ICR, the Grantee will receive one of the three indirect cost approval letters: ICR Acknowledgement Letter, ICR Acknowledgement Letter – 15% De Minimis, or the ICR Agreement Letter.

If an Indirect Cost Rate Letter is required but it is not issued at the time of Grant Agreement execution, the Grant Agreement will be amended to include the Indirect Cost Rate Letter after the ICR Letter is issued.

Approval or acceptance of an ICR will not result in an increase in the amount awarded or affect the agreed-upon service or performance levels throughout the life of the award.

6.4 ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICANT INFORMATION

Using **Forms A** through **B-2** attached to this RFA, Applicant must provide satisfactory evidence of its ability as an organization to manage and coordinate the types of activities described in this RFA. Applicant must complete and submit **Form A, Face Page-Applicant Information** with the supporting documentation to demonstrate that Applicant meets the criteria listed in **Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements**.

Litigation and contract History

Applicant must include in its Application a complete disclosure of any alleged or significant contractual or grant failures.

In addition, Applicant must disclose any civil or criminal litigation or investigation pending over the last five (5) years that involves Applicant or in which Applicant has been judged guilty or liable. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Applicant. See, **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, Version 2.4**. Applicant certifies it does not have any existing claims against or unresolved audit exceptions with the State of Texas or any agency of the State of Texas.

Application may be rejected based upon Applicant's prior history with the State of Texas or with any other party that demonstrates, without limitation, unsatisfactory performance, adversarial or contentious demeanor, or significant failure(s) to meet Contractual or grant obligations.

Article VII. RFA Administrative Information and Inquiries

7.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE/TIME
Funding Announcement Posting Date Posted to HHS Grants RFA and Texas eGrants websites	November 15, 2024
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification	November 25, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time

Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted	December 6, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submission of Applications NOTE: Applications must be <u>RECEIVED</u> by HHSC by this deadline if not changed by subsequent Addenda to be considered eligible.	December 27, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Notice of Award	July 2025
Anticipated Project Start Date	October 2025

Applicant must ensure their Applications are received by HHSC in accordance with the Deadline for Submission of Applications indicated in this Schedule of Events or as changed by subsequent Addenda posted to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants website.

All dates are tentative and HHSC reserves the right to change these dates at any time. At the sole discretion of HHSC, events listed in the Schedule of Events are subject to scheduling changes and cancellation. Scheduling changes or cancellation determinations made prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications will be published by posting an Addendum to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants website. After the Deadline for Submission of Applications, if there are delays that significantly impact the anticipated award date, HHSC, at its sole discretion, may post updates regarding the anticipated award date to the [Procurement Forecast](#) on the [HHS Procurement Opportunities](#) web page. Each Applicant is responsible for checking the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website, Texas eGrants website, and Procurement Forecast for updates.

7.2 SOLE POINT OF CONTACT

All requests, questions, or other communication about this RFA shall be made by email **only** to the Grant Specialist designated as HHSC's Sole Point of Contact listed below:

Name: Dedra Williams

Title: Grant Specialist, HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services

Address: Procurement and Contracting Services Building

1100 W 49th St. MC: 2020
Austin, TX 78756

Phone: 512-406-2412

Email: Dedra.Williams@hhs.texas.gov

Applicants shall not use this e-mail address for submission of an Application. Follow the instructions for submission as outlined in Article VIII. Application Organization and Submission Requirements.

However, if expressly directed in writing by the Sole Point of Contact, Applicant may communicate with another designated HHS representative, e.g., during grant negotiations as part of the normal grant review process, if any.

Prohibited Communications: Applicants and their representatives shall not contact other HHS personnel regarding this RFA.

This restriction (only communicating in writing by email with the Sole Point of Contact identified above) does not preclude discussions between Applicant and agency personnel to conduct business unrelated to this RFA.

Failure of an Applicant or its representatives to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of the Application.

7.3 RFA QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

Written questions and requests for clarification of this RFA are permitted if submitted by email to the Sole Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification established in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or as may be amended in Addenda, if any, posted to the HHS Grants RFA website and Texas eGrants website.

Applicants' names will be removed from questions in any responses released. All questions and requests for clarification must include the following information. Submissions that do not include this information may not be accepted:

- 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.

The following contact information must be included in the e-mail submitted with questions or requests for clarification:

- A. Name of individual submitting question or request for clarification;
- B. Organization name;
- C. Phone number; and
- D. E-mail address.

Questions or other written requests for clarification must be received by the Sole Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification set forth in this Section 7.1, Schedule of Events, or as may be amended in Addenda, if any, posted to the HHS Grants RFA website and Texas eGrants website.

HHSC may review and, at its sole discretion, may respond to questions or other written requests received after the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification.

7.4 AMBIGUITY, CONFLICT, DISCREPANCY, CLARIFICATIONS

Applicant must notify the Sole Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission or other error in the RFA in the manner and by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification. Each Applicant submits its Application at its own risk.

If Applicant fails to properly and timely notify the Sole Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission, or other error in the RFA, Applicant, whether awarded a Grant Agreement or not:

- A. Shall have waived any claim of error or ambiguity in the RFA and any resulting Grant Agreement;
- B. Shall not contest the interpretation by the HHSC of such provision(s); and
- C. Shall not be entitled to additional reimbursement, relief, or time by reason of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission, or other error or its later correction.

7.5 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS OR REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATIONS

Responses to questions or other written requests for clarification will be consolidated and HHSC will post responses in one or more Addenda on the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants website. Responses will not be provided individually to requestors.

HHSC reserves the right to amend answers previously posted at any time prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications. Amended answers will be posted on the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants website in a separate, new Addendum or Addenda. It is Applicant's responsibility to check the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants

website or contact the Sole Point of Contact for a copy of the Addendum with the amended answers.

7.6 CHANGES, AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION TO RFA

HHSC reserves the right to change, amend, modify or cancel this RFA. All changes, amendments and modifications or cancellation will be posted by Addendum on the [HHS Grants RFA website](#) and Texas eGrants website.

Each Applicant is responsible for periodically checking the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants website for any additional information about this RFA. Failure to check the posting website will in no way release any Applicant or Grantee from the requirements of posted Addenda or additional information. No HHS agency will be responsible or liable in any regard for the failure of any individual or entity to receive notification of any posting to the websites or for the failure of any Applicant or Grantee to stay informed of all postings to these websites. If the Applicant fails to monitor these websites for any changes or modifications to this RFA, such failure will not relieve the Applicant of its obligation to fulfill the requirements as posted.

7.7 EXCEPTIONS

Applicants are highly encouraged, in lieu of including exceptions in their Applications, to address all issues that might be advanced by way of exception by submitting an **Exhibit F, Exceptions Form** or questions or requests for clarification pursuant to **Section 7.3, RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification**.

No exception, nor any other term, condition, or provision in an Application that differs, varies from, or contradicts this RFA, will be considered to be part of any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA unless expressly made a part of the Grant Agreement in writing by HHSC.

Article VIII. Application Organization and Submission Requirements

8.1 APPLICATION RECEIPT

Applications must be received by HHSC by the Deadline for Submission of Applications specified in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. HHSC will date and time stamp all Applications upon receipt. Applications received after the Deadline for Submission of Applications may be ruled ineligible. Applicants must allow for adequate time for submission before the posted Deadline for Submission of Applications.

No HHS agency will be held responsible for any Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by HHSC. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure its Application is received by HHSC before the Deadline for Submission of Applications. No HHS agency will be responsible for any technical issues that result in late delivery, non-receipt of an Application, inappropriately identified documents, or other submission issue that may lead to disqualification.

Note: All Applications become the property of HHSC after submission and receipt and will not be returned to Applicant.

Applicants understand and acknowledge that issuance of this RFA or retention of Applications received in response to this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment to award Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA.

8.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

By submitting an Application in response to this Solicitation, Applicant represents and warrants that the individual submitting the Application and any related documents on behalf of the Applicant is authorized to do so and to binds the Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of an Application.

8.3 REQUIRED SUBMISSION METHOD

Applicants must submit a separate Application for each Region the Applicant is proposing to serve. Each Application must be complete and include all required documents identified in **Article XIII. Submission Checklist**. Incomplete Applications or Applications submitted for multiple Regions will not move onto the evaluation phase to be evaluated and considered for an award.

Applicant must submit their completed Application(s) by the Deadline for Submission of Applications provided in the **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, using one of the approved methods identified below. Applications submitted by any other method (e.g., facsimile) will not be considered and will be disqualified.

Submission Option #1 HHS Online Bid Room: Applicants shall upload the following documents to the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit M, HHS Online Bid Room Instructions**. **File Size Limitation:** Restriction to 250MB per file attachment.

- A. One (1) copy marked as "Original Application" that contains the Applicant's entire Application in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file.
- B. One (1) copy of the completed **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal**, in its original Excel format.

- C. One (1) copy of the complete Application marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable, in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act-Application Disclosure Requirements**, in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.

Submission Option #2 Sealed Package with USB Drives: Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives:

- A. One (1) USB drive with the complete Application file marked as “Original Application” in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed Application package and mark the USB and envelope with “Original Application.” USB drive must include the completed **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal**, in its original Excel format.
- B. One (1) USB drive with a copy of the complete Application file marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable and in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act-Application Disclosure Requirements**. The copy must be in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed package and mark the USB and envelope with “Public Information Act Copy” or “PIA Copy.”

Sealed packaged must be clearly labeled with the following:

- A. RFA Number
- B. RFA Title
- C. Deadline for Submission of Applications
- D. Sole Point of Contact’s name
- E. Applicant’s legal name

Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring the USB drives are submitted in sealed packaging that is sufficient to prevent damage to contents and delivered by U.S. Postal Service, overnight or express mail, or hand delivery to the addresses below. No HHS agency will be responsible or liable for any damage.

Overnight/Express/Priority Mail	Hand Delivery
Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Dedra Williams Tower Building Room 108 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756	Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Dedra Williams Procurement & Contracting Services Building 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756

8.4 COSTS INCURRED FOR APPLICATION

All costs and expenses incurred in preparing and submitting an Application in response to this RFA and participating in the RFA selection process are entirely the responsibility of the Applicant.

8.5 APPLICATION COMPOSITION

All Applications must:

- A. Be responsive to all RFA requirements;
- B. Be clearly legible;
- C. Be presented using font type Verdana, Arial, or Times New Roman, font size 12 pt., with one (1) inch margins and 1.5 line spacing; the sole 12-point font size exception is no less than size 10 pt. for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- D. Include page numbering for each section of the Application; and
- E. Include signature of Applicant's authorized representative on all exhibits and forms requiring a signature. Copies of the Application documents must be made after signature.

8.6 APPLICATION ORGANIZATION

The complete Application file .pdf must:

- A. Be organized in the order outlined in the **Article XIII. Submission Checklist**, and include all required sections (e.g., "Administrative Information," "Narrative Proposal," and "Exhibits to be Submitted with Application,").
 1. **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal**, is to be submitted in its original Excel format.
 2. Each Application section must have a cover page with the Applicant's legal name, RFA number, and Name of Grant identified.
- B. Include all required documentation, exhibits, and forms completed and signed, as applicable. Copies of forms are acceptable, but all copies must be identical to the original. All exhibits must be submitted and obtained directly from the posted RFA package; previous versions and copies are not allowed or acceptable.

8.7 APPLICATION WITHDRAWALS OR MODIFICATIONS

Prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, an Applicant may:

- A. Withdraw its Application by submitting a written request to the Sole Point of Contact;
or
- B. Modify its Application by submitting an entirely new submission, complete in all respects, using the method of submission set forth in this RFA. The modification must be received by HHSC by the Deadline for Submission of Applications set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda.

No withdrawal or modification request received after the Deadline for Submission of Applications, set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, will be considered. Additionally, in the event of multiple Applications received, the most timely received and/or modified Application will replace all prior submission(s) in its entirety and the original submission(s) will not be considered.

Article IX. Application Screening and Evaluation

9.1 OVERVIEW

A three-step selection process will be used:

- A. Application screening to determine whether the Applicant meets the minimum requirements of this RFA;
- B. Evaluation based upon specific criteria; and
- C. Final selection is based upon State priorities and other relevant factors, as outlined in **Section 10.1, Final Selection**.

9.2 INITIAL COMPLIANCE SCREENING OF APPLICATIONS

All Applications received by the Deadline for Submission of Applications as outlined in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, will be screened by HHSC to determine which Applications meet all the minimum requirements of this RFA and are deemed responsive and qualified for further consideration. See **Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements**.

At the sole discretion of HHSC, Applications with errors, omissions, or compliance issues may be considered non-responsive and may not be considered. The remaining Applications will continue to the evaluation stage and will be considered in the manner and form as which they are received. HHSC reserves the right to waive minor informalities in an Application. A “minor informality” is an omission or error that, in the determination of HHSC if waived or modified, would not give an Applicant an unfair advantage over other Applicants or result in a material change in the Application or RFA requirements. **Note: Any** disqualifying

factor set forth in this RFA does not constitute informality (e.g., **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations Version 2.4**, or **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal**.)

HHSC, at its sole discretion, may give an Applicant the opportunity to submit missing information or make corrections at any point after receipt of Application. The missing information or corrections must be submitted to the Sole Point of Contact e-mail address in **Section 7.2, Sole Point of Contact**, by the deadline set by HHSC. Failure to respond by the deadline may result in the rejection of the Application and the Applicant's not being considered for award.

9.3 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION FOR APPLICATIONS

System Agency reserves the right to ask questions or request clarification or revised documents for a submitted Application from any Applicant before award. System Agency reserves the right to select qualified Applications received in response to this RFA without discussion of the Applications with Applicants.

9.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated and scored in accordance with the following scoring criteria using **Exhibit N, Evaluation Tool**.

Scoring Criteria: Qualified Applications shall be evaluated based upon:

- A. Narrative, Personnel, and Organization (20%);
- B. Performance Requirements and Project Work Plan (50%); and
- C. Expenditure Proposal and Justification (Cost Effectiveness) (30%).

9.5 PAST PERFORMANCE

System Agency reserves the right to request additional information and conduct investigations as necessary to review any Application. By submitting an Application, the Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing information about the Applicant at the request of System Agency.

System Agency may examine Applicant's past performance which may include, but is not limited to, information about Applicant provided by any governmental entity, whether an agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas, another state, or the Federal government.

System Agency, at its sole discretion, may also initiate investigations or examinations of Applicant performance based upon media reports. Any negative findings, as determined by System Agency in its sole discretion, may result in System Agency removing the Applicant from further consideration for award.

Past performance information regarding Applicants may include, but is not limited to:

- A. Notices of termination;
- B. Cure notices;
- C. Assessments of liquidated damages;
- D. Litigation;
- E. Audit reports; and
- F. Non-renewals of grants or contracts based on Applicant's unsatisfactory performance.

Applicants also may be rejected due to unsatisfactory past performance under any grant(s) or contract(s) reflected in vendor performance reports, reference checks, or other sources. An Applicant's past performance may be considered in the initial screening process and prior to making an award determination.

Reasons for which an Applicant may be denied a Grant Agreement at any point after Application submission include, but are not limited to:

- A. If applicable, Applicant has an unfavorable report or grade on the CPA Vendor Performance Tracking System ("VPTS"). VPTS may be accessed at: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/vendor-performance-tracking/>, OR,
- B. Applicant is currently under a corrective action plan through HHSC or DSHS, **OR**,
- C. Applicant has had repeated, negative vendor performance reports for the same reason, OR,
- D. Applicant has a record of repeated non-responsiveness to vendor performance issues, OR,
- E. Applicant has contracts or purchase orders that have been cancelled in the previous 12 months for non-performance or substandard performance, OR
- F. Any other performance issue that demonstrates that awarding a Grant Agreement to Applicant would not be in the best interest of the State.

9.6 COMPLIANCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN STATE CONTRACTS

Prior to the award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA and in addition to the initial screening of Applications, all required verification checks will be conducted.

The information (e.g., legal name and, if applicable, assumed name (d/b/a), tax identification number, DUNS number) provided by Applicant will be used to conduct these checks. At System Agency's sole discretion, Applicants found to be barred, prohibited, or otherwise excluded from award of a Grant Agreement may be disqualified from further consideration under this Solicitation, pending satisfactory resolution of all compliance issues.

Checks include:

A. State of Texas Debarment and Warrant Hold

Applicant must not be debarred from doing business with the State of Texas (<https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/vendor-performance-tracking/debarred-vendors.php>) or have an active warrant or payee hold placed by the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA).

B. U.S. System of Award Management (SAM) Exclusions List

Applicant must not be excluded from contract participation at the federal level. This verification is conducted through SAM, the official website of the U.S. Government which may be accessed at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/searchRecords/search.jsf>

C. Divestment Statute Lists

Applicant must not be listed on the Divestment Statute Lists provided by CPA, which may be accessed at: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/publications/divestment.phphttps://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/publications/divestment.php>

1. Companies that boycott Israel;
2. Companies with Ties to Sudan;
3. Companies with Ties to Iran;
4. Foreign Terrorist Organizations; and
5. Companies with Ties to Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

D. HHS Office of Inspector General

Applicant must not be listed on the HHS Office of Inspector General Texas Exclusions List for people or businesses excluded from participating as a provider:
<https://oig.hhsc.texas.gov/exclusions>

E. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Applicant must not be listed on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE), excluded from participation as a provider, unless a valid waiver is currently in effect:
<https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>.

Additionally, if a subrecipient under a federal award, the Grantee shall comply with requirements regarding registration with the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM). This requirement includes maintaining an active SAM registration and the accuracy of the information in SAM. The Grantee shall review and update information at least annually after initial SAM registration and more frequently as required by 2 CFR Part 25.

For Grantees that may make procurements using grant funds awarded under the Grant Agreement, Grantee must check SAM Exclusions that contain the names of ineligible, debarred, and/or suspended parties. The Grantee certifies through acceptance of a Grant Agreement it will not conduct business with any entity that is an excluded entity under SAM.

HHSC reserves the right to conduct additional checks to determine eligibility to receive a Grant Agreement.

Article X. Award of Grant Agreement Process

10.1 FINAL SELECTION

After initial screening for eligibility and Application completeness, and initial evaluation against the criteria listed in **Section 9.4, Evaluation Criteria**, the System Agency may apply other considerations such as program policy or other selection factors that are essential to the process of selecting Applications that individually or collectively achieve program objectives. In applying these factors, the System Agency may consult with internal and external subject matter experts. The funding methodology for issuing final Grant Agreements will include the following identified factors:

The System Agency will make final funding decisions based on Applicant eligibility, evaluation rankings, the funding methodology above, and include as applicable: geographic distribution across the state, State priorities, reasonableness, availability of funding, cost-effectiveness, and other relevant factors.

All funding recommendations will be considered for approval by the HHSC Executive Commissioner.

10.2 NEGOTIATIONS

After selecting Applicant for award, the System Agency may engage in negotiations with selected Applicant. As determined by System Agency, the negotiation phase may involve direct contact between the selected Applicant and HHS representatives by virtual meeting, by phone and/or by email. Negotiations must not be interpreted as a preliminary intent to award funding unless explicitly stated in writing by the System Agency and is considered a step to finalize the Application to a state of approval and discuss proposed grant activities.

During negotiations, selected Applicants may expect:

- A. An in-depth discussion of the submitted Application and Requested Budget; and
- B. Requests from the System Agency for revised documents, clarification or additional detail regarding the Applicant's submitted Application. These clarifications and additional details, as required, must be submitted in writing by Applicant as finalized during the negotiation.

10.3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTED PARTIES

Subject to certain specified exceptions, Section 2252.908 of the Texas Government Code, Disclosure of Interested Parties, applies to a contract of a State Agency that has a value of \$1 million or more; requires an action or vote by the governing body of the entity or agency before the Contract may be signed; or is for services that would require a person to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 of the Texas Government Code.

One of the requirements of Section 2252.908 is that a business entity (defined as "any entity recognized by law through which business is conducted, including a sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation") must submit a Form 1295, Certificate of Interested Parties, to the System Agency at the time the business entity submits the signed Contract.

Applicant represents and warrants that, if selected for award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA, Applicant will submit to the System Agency a completed, certified and signed Form 1295, Certificate of Interested Parties, at the time the potential Grantee submits the signed Grant Agreement.

The Form 1295 involves an electronic process through the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). The on-line process for completing the Form 1295 may be found on the TEC public website at: https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/whatsnew/elf_info_form1295.htm.

Additional instructions and information to process the Form 1295 will be provided by the System Agency to the potential Grantee(s). Grantee may contact Sole Point of Contact or designated Contract Manager for information needed to complete Form 1295.

If the potential Grantee does not submit a completed, certified and signed TEC Form 1295 to the System Agency with the signed Grant Agreement, the System Agency is prohibited by law from executing a Contract, even if the potential Grantee is otherwise eligible for award. The System Agency, as determined in its sole discretion, may award the Grant Agreement to the next qualified Applicant, who will then be subject to this procedure.

10.4 EXECUTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANT AGREEMENT(S)

The System Agency intends to award multiple Grant Agreements as a result of this RFA. However, not all Applicants deemed eligible to receive funds are assured of receiving a Grant Agreement.

At any time and at its sole discretion, System Agency reserves the right to cancel this RFA, make partial award, or decline to award any Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA.

The final funding amount and the provisions of the grant will be determined at the sole discretion of System Agency.

HHSC may announce tentative funding awards through an “Intent to Award Letter” once the HHSC Program Deputy Executive Commissioner and relevant HHSC approval authorities have given approval to initiate and/or execute grants. Receipt of an “Intent to Award Letter” does not authorize the recipient to incur expenditures or begin Project activities, nor does it guarantee current or future funding.

Upon execution of a Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA, HHSC will post a notification of all grants awarded to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and Texas eGrants website.

Article XI. General Terms and Conditions

11.1 GRANT APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

In an effort to maximize State resources and reduce duplication of effort, the System Agency, at its discretion, may require the Applicant to disclose information regarding the Application for or award of State, federal, and/or local grant funding to the Applicant or subgrantee or subcontractor (i.e. organization who will participate, in part, in the operation of the Project) within the past two years to provide outreach and Application assistance.

11.2 TEXAS HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES (HUBS)

In procuring goods and services using funding awarded under this RFA, Grantee must use HUBs or other designated businesses as required by law or the terms of the State or federal grant under which this RFA has been issued. See, e.g., 2 CFR 200.321. If there are no such requirements, System Agency encourages Applicant to use HUBs to provide goods and services.

For information regarding the Texas HUB program, refer to CPA's website: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/vendor/hub/>.

Article XII. Application Confidential or Proprietary Information

12.1 TEXAS PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT – APPLICATION DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Applications and resulting Grant Agreements are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (PIA), Texas Government Code Chapter 552, and may be disclosed to the public upon request. Other legal authority also requires System Agency to post grants and Applications on its public website and to provide such information to the Legislative Budget Board for posting on its public website.

Under the PIA, certain information is protected from public release. If Applicant asserts that information provided in its Application is exempt from disclosure under the PIA, Applicant must:

A. **Mark Original Application:**

1. Mark the Original Application, at the top of the front page, with the words “CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION” in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font); and
2. Identify, adjacent to each portion of the Application that Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure, the claimed exemption from disclosure (NOTE: no redactions are to be made in the Original Application).

B. **Certify in Original Application – HHS Solicitation:** Certify, in the designated section of the Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, Version 2.4, Applicant's confidential information assertion and the filing of its Public Information Act Copy; and

C. **Submit Public Information Act Copy of Application:** Submit a separate “Public Information Act Copy” of the Original Application (in addition to the original and all copies otherwise required under the provisions of this RFA). The Public Information Act Copy must meet the following requirements:

1. The copy must be clearly marked as “Public Information Act Copy” on the front page in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font);

2. Each portion Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure must be redacted (blacked out); and
3. Applicant must identify, adjacent to each redaction, the claimed exemption from disclosure. Each identification provided as required in **Subsection (C) of this section** must be identical to those set forth in the Original Application as required in **Subsection A(2)**, above. The only difference in required markings and information between the Original Application and the “Public Information Act Copy” of the Application will be redactions – which can only be included in the “Public Information Act Copy.” There must be no redactions in the Original Application.

By submitting an Application under this RFA, Applicant agrees that, if Applicant does not mark the Original Application, provide the required certification in Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, Version 2.4, and submit the Public Information Act Copy, the Application will be considered to be public information that may be released to the public in any manner including, but not limited to, in accordance with the Public Information Act, posted on the System Agency’s public website, and posted on the Legislative Budget Board’s public website.

If any or all Applicants submit partial, but not complete, information suggesting inclusion of confidential information and failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this section, the System Agency, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to (1) disqualify all Applicants that fail to fully comply with the requirements set forth in this section, or (2) to offer all Applicants that fail to fully comply with the requirements set forth in this section additional time to comply.

No Applicant should submit a Public Information Act Copy indicating that the entire Application is exempt from disclosure. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire Application is protected from disclosure because it contains any amount of confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or privileged information is not acceptable, and may make the entire Application subject to release under the PIA.

Applications must not be marked or asserted as copyrighted material. If Applicant asserts a copyright to any portion of its Application, by submitting an Application, Applicant agrees to reproduction and posting on public websites by the State of Texas, including the System Agency and all other State Agencies, without cost or liability.

The System Agency will strictly adhere to the requirements of the PIA regarding the disclosure of public information. As a result, by participating in this RFA, Applicant acknowledges that all information, documentation, and other materials submitted in its Application may be subject to public disclosure under the PIA. The System Agency does not have authority to agree that any information submitted will not be subject to disclosure. Disclosure is governed by the PIA and by rulings of the Office of the Texas Attorney General. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel concerning disclosure issues resulting from this process and to take precautions to safeguard trade secrets and proprietary or otherwise confidential information. The System Agency assumes no obligation or responsibility relating to the disclosure or nondisclosure of information submitted by Applicants.

For more information concerning the types of information that may be withheld under the PIA or questions about the PIA, please refer to the Public Information Act Handbook published by the Office of the Texas Attorney General or contact the attorney general's Open Government Hotline at (512) 478-OPEN (6736) or toll-free at (877) 673-6839 (877-OPEN TEX). To access the Public Information Act Handbook, please visit the attorney general's website at <http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov>.

12.2 APPLICANT WAIVER – INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

SUBMISSION OF ANY DOCUMENT TO ANY HHS AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THIS SOLICITATION CONSTITUTES AN IRREVOCABLE WAIVER, AND AGREEMENT BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY TO FULLY INDEMNIFY THE STATE OF TEXAS AND HHS FROM ANY CLAIM OF INFRINGEMENT REGARDING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THE SUBMITTING PARTY OR ANY THIRD PARTY FOR ANY MATERIALS SUBMITTED TO HHS BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY.

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Article XIII. Submission Checklist

HHSC, in its sole discretion, will review all Applications received and will determine if any or all Applications which do not include complete, signed copies of these exhibits and/or addenda, will be disqualified or whether additional time will be permitted for submission of the incomplete or missing exhibits. If additional time is permitted, Applicants will be notified in writing of the opportunity to provide the missing documentation by a specified deadline. Failure by an Applicant to submit the requested documentation by the deadline WILL result in disqualification. Applications that do not include **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, Version 2.4** (completed and signed), and **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal** (completed), will be disqualified. See **Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications** for further detail.

This Submission Checklist identifies the documentation, forms and exhibits required to be submitted as part of the Application.

The Application must be organized in the order below and include each required section and the forms and exhibits identified within a section:

A. Administrative Information

- 1. Form A, Face Page – Applicant Information _____
- 2. Form B, Administrative Information _____
- 3. Form B-1, Authorized Officials - Governmental Entity, if applicable; or _____
- 4. Form B-2, Authorized Officials - Nonprofit Entity, if applicable; or _____

B. Narrative Proposal

- 1. Form C, Narrative Proposal _____
- 2. Form D, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire _____

C. Expenditure Proposal

Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal _____
Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal is mandatory and must be submitted with the Application, in the original format (Excel) included in the RFA, for the Application to be considered responsive. Applications received without the completed Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal will be disqualified.

D. Indirect Costs

Form E, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs
Rate (ICR) Questionnaire _____

E. Exhibits to be Completed, Signed, and Submitted with Application

- 1. Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, Version 2.4 _____
Exhibit A is mandatory and must be completed, signed, and submitted for the Application to be considered responsive. Applications received without Exhibit A or with an unsigned Form A, Face Page may be disqualified.
- 2. Exhibit F, Exceptions Form, if applicable _____

3. Exhibit G, HHS Data Use Agreement V.8.5 or
Exhibit G-2 Governmental Entity Version 8.5 HHS Data Use Agreement _____
4. Exhibit G-1, Texas HHS System-Data Use Agreement-Attachment 2 , Security and Privacy
Inquiry (SPI) Version 2.1 _____
5. Exhibit H, Assurances – Non-Construction Program, Version 1.1 _____
6. Exhibit I, Certification Regarding Lobbying _____
7. Exhibit J, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)
Certification _____

Article XIV. List of Exhibits and Forms Attached To RFA

Exhibits

- Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, Version 2.4
- Exhibit B, Health and Human Services (HHS) Uniform Terms and Conditions - Grant, Version 3.5
- Exhibit C, Health and Human Services (HHS) Additional Provisions Version 1.0
- Exhibit D, SNAP Outreach Contract Requirements
- Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal
- Exhibit E-1, Expenditure Proposal Instructions
- Exhibit F, Exceptions Form
- Exhibit G, HHS Data Use Agreement v8.5
- Exhibit G-1, Texas HHS System-Data Use Agreement-Attachment 2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI) Version 2.1
- Exhibit G-2 Governmental Entity HHS Data Use Agreement Version 8.5
- Exhibit H, Assurances – Non-Construction Program, Version 1.1
- Exhibit I, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- Exhibit J, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Certification
- Exhibit K, Key Performance Requirements
- Exhibit L, Deliverables
- Exhibit M, HHS Online Bid Room Instructions
- Exhibit N, Evaluation Tool
- Exhibit O, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) State Outreach Plan Guidance
- Exhibit P, HHSC List of Eligibility Offices
- Exhibit Q, Insurance Requirements SNAP Outreach
- Exhibit R, Funding by Region and Strategy & Regional Population

Forms

- Form A, Face Page – Applicant Information
- Form B, Administrative Information
- Form B-1, Authorized Officials - Governmental Entity, if applicable
- Form B-2, Authorized Officials - Nonprofit Entity, if applicable
- Form C, Narrative Proposal
- Form D, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire
- Form E, Texas HHS System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire