



Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center Application Help Guide

This guide is intended to help you answer some of the more technical questions on the application. If you have difficulty with an item on the application and the answer is not in the *RCPNC Application Help Guide*, please contact Joann Lianekhammy at info@rcpnc.org for assistance.

General Information

1. What is a principal investigator or lead coordinator?

The principal investigator or lead coordinator is the primary individual who is responsible for fulfilling terms of the grant, keeping funded projects on schedule and within budget, and overseeing project activities to ensure that high quality products, services, and outcomes are delivered. This person from your organization is the lead coordinator for all project activities.

14. If you have limited or unreliable access to the Internet, you will be asked: Please describe your current situation in terms of Internet availability.

Although many of the communication and training tools available today are web-based, we realize some areas still have limited Internet access. If your organization does not have a regular, reliable Internet connection, we will ask you to describe your current situation. We want to know how difficult it would be to travel to a location that does have access, by what means you now communicate with partners, and any other details that would help determine alternative means for training and communication during the grant period.

Existing Nutrition Assistance Programs in your Service Area

15. Describe the service area your project will most impact.

We would like to know the geographic scope of your project. Do you intend to improve collaborative efforts within a city or community or does your project target the entire county? If your proposed project would serve Native American Tribal areas, please mark



Tribal Areas as your response. If the service area is not listed, select “Other” and then describe the geographic area that will be reached through your project.

16. Which nutrition assistance programs have offices in your county?

The USDA-FNS collaborates with state and local governments as well as Indian Tribal organizations to provide approximately 15 nutrition assistance programs nationwide. These nutrition assistance programs improve food security and diet quality among children and low-income people by providing low-income households with access to a healthful diet and nutrition education. If other programs with offices in your county are not listed, please mark “Other” and provide the names of the programs.

The USDA-FNS has provided the following information for the largest nutrition assistance programs available to low-income populations:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the U.S. It provides low-income individuals and families with additional resources to purchase food each month. In fiscal year (FY) 2013, SNAP served an average of 47.6 million low-income people each month, providing over \$76 billion in benefits. In FY 2012, 45 percent of all SNAP households included children and 17 percent included elderly individuals.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) - The NSLP provides funds to states for lunches served to students at school and for snacks served to children who participate in after-school care programs. Children with families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines qualify for free meals and those with incomes up to 185 percent qualify for reduced price meals. In FY 2013, average daily participation was 30.6 million children in about 100,000 schools and residential child-care facilities. Approximately 70 percent of all lunches served were provided to children free or at reduced price.

School Breakfast Program (SBP) - SBP provides funds to states to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential child-care institutions across the U.S. In FY 2013, the SBP served over 13.1 million schoolchildren each day in about 90,000 schools and residential child-care facilities. In school year 2012-2013, SBP reached 27.3% of schoolchildren, with over 80% of participating schools serving low-income areas; almost 85% of meals were served free or at reduced price. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for free meals; those from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of poverty are eligible for reduced-price meals.



Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) - The WIC program provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, breastfeeding support, health care referrals, and nutrition education. WIC benefits are for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and infants and children up to age five who are determined to be at nutritional risk. Low income is defined as a household income at or below 185 percent of poverty level. States and Indian Tribal Organizations receive federal grants, which are used to cover the cost of foods purchased with WIC benefits along with specified nutrition services and administrative costs. In FY 2013, WIC served an average of 8.7 million participants each month.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) - CACFP provides aid to approximately 180,000 child and adult-care institutions and family or group day-care homes. The program helps provide nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled people. In FY 2013, CACFP served more than 3.3 million children and 120,000 adults through child-care institutions, family day-care homes, adult day-care centers, and after-school care programs.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) - The SFSP provides meals and snacks to children in low-income areas when school is not in session. Free meals that meet federal nutrition guidelines are provided to all children, age 18 and under, at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. SFSP served over 2.4 million children on an average day in July 2013.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) - The FDPIR is a federal program that provides USDA foods to low-income households (including the elderly) on Indian reservations and to Native American families that live in designated areas near reservations and in Oklahoma. In FY 2013, FDPIR served an average of 75,600 low-income Native Americans each month. Five states and 100 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) operated FDPIR on 276 Indian reservations.

17. Four common barriers distinct to rural communities are:

- ***Information and Awareness.*** A lack of knowledge often prevents otherwise eligible families from participating in programs such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), School Lunch and School Breakfast. Providing this information can be difficult and requires coordination among different nutrition programs.
- ***Physical Access.*** In rural areas, physical access often presents challenges to those who need these programs. Children who rely on rural bus routes to travel to school, or who travel by other means, may find it difficult to get to school early enough for school breakfast programs. Access to high quality and inexpensive food is also a major concern.



- **Community Resources**. Insufficient community resources also play a crucial role, especially in providing school breakfast, lunch, and summer meal programs. For example, some schools may not have the physical capacity to house lunch programs.
- **Social Stigma**. Social stigma is a well-known issue in providing aid to those in poverty. The poor are often stigmatized when they use identifiable cards or vouchers from programs such as SNAP or WIC to purchase food in public stores and farmers' markets. The greater community's lack of understanding of the programs can create social stigma.

With these barriers in mind, what types of challenges prevent families with children from enrolling in programs that provide nutrition assistance in your service area?

Each community has its own set of unique barriers and challenges that may prevent families with children from enrolling in nutrition assistance programs. Work with your partners to identify those factors in your community and list any supporting information (Example: Rural bus routes make it difficult for some children to arrive at school in time to participate in school breakfast programs).

Organizational Capacity

19. How old is your organization?

In other words, how long has your organization been around? If you represent a state or local government agency, we know that your organization has been established 11+ years. This question helps us better understand how long the applying organization has served the community.

20. Estimate the number of employees in your organization.

Your answer will allow us to better understand your organization's operating capacity. The number of employees also represents the availability of human resources if needed for the project. Try to provide an accurate estimate of the total number of people employed by your organization.

22. Please share an example of previous success in program implementation, management, and/or reporting.

Is there a particular project that you feel best represents your ability to strongly implement, plan, and maintain reporting duties? Provide any necessary details about this



program and how it reflects your organization's abilities to fulfill the conditions of the grant.

Collaborations and Partnerships

24. Do you have existing partners that will be collaborating with your organization on this proposed project? If so, list each partner and the number of years you have collaborated with them.

Having partners that you have previously partnered with is not a requirement, but we would like to know how much your organization has collaborated with others that will be working on the project. If you have a working relationship with partners on this project, list each partner organization and the length of time you have worked with them.

25. What kind of success have you had with existing partners you are proposing to work with on this project?

Describe accomplishments that were possible only through collaboration with partners. Answers to this question will give us insight about the working relationships of the applying organization's partners.

26. If you have not worked with other organizations previously, what barriers prevented you from developing partnerships?

There are many reasons that organizations don't develop partnerships. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported these common barriers to collaboration:

1. Conflicting missions between organizations, which make it difficult to reach consensus on strategies and direction.
2. Issues with roles and responsibilities and control of resources that may cause problems in partnerships and create distrust concerning the use of resources.
3. Organizations with incompatible procedures have difficulty finding common ground in collaboration.

Describe any barriers your organization has faced that have prevented collaborations with others. Were any of the reasons stated above a barrier that prevented your organization from partnering with others or were there other issues that made collaboration difficult?



27. List and describe the roles and responsibilities of project staff, including collaborating partners. Include each member's organizational affiliation, qualifications, and relevant experience to support their role in the project.

Regardless of whether partnering organizations are new or existing collaborators, it is important for all parties to agree on the roles and responsibilities required of the project. By identifying this information early on, partners can determine which organization will be responsible for each piece of the project. To answer this question, talk to your partnering organizations and discuss which responsibilities each member of the team is willing to accept. Show that staff can effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities of the project by providing supporting information for each person, such as relevant education, skills, and experience.

Project Proposal: Strategies to Improve Coordination and Increase Program Participation

28. Provide a description of possible strategies to improve program coordination toward anti-hunger efforts in your service area. Include efforts related to FNS Child Nutrition programs. Narratives should include:

- 1. A description of how collaboration strategies will address barriers to program enrollment identified in question 17.**
- 2. Ways the project will utilize community involvement.**
- 3. An explanation of how projects will be sustained after grant funding ends.**

We are interested in hearing your ideas on how your agency and its partners can improve coordination among FNS Child Nutrition programs and other nutrition assistance programs. This means that all of the agencies must be committed to working with one another, agree on roles and responsibilities, and share available resources. To improve coordination, you and your partners can identify common goals or outcomes and discuss joint strategies that will allow you to achieve those goals. For example, if one of your common goals is to increase awareness of nutrition assistance programs that have the same eligibility requirements, a joint strategy could be to run a united advertising campaign that involves all partners. Partners can also improve the likelihood of project sustainability by creating a detailed plan to improve collaboration. That plan would include a list of common goals, roles and responsibilities, action steps, and a list of resources that each partner can contribute.

Brainstorm possible sustainable strategies by thinking about the following project areas:

1. Identifying and applying effective models of sustained nutrition program coordination through community involvement.



2. Improving outreach through more effective uses of technology and digital media and/or advances in communications and coordination.
3. Engaging program participants to lead cross-program coordination efforts.
4. Other ideas that you and your partners might have.

Strategies should not only aim to improve coordination among nutrition assistance programs, with special emphasis on FNS Child Nutrition programs, but also utilize community involvement and address common barriers to participation in the service area targeted in the proposal.

Try to be as clear and detailed as possible within the 1,000-word limit. If you compose your response in a Microsoft Word document, the total word count for your narrative will appear in the bottom left-hand corner of the computer screen.

29. Indicate the estimated number of entities that will be reached by the proposed project (Example: 3 local WIC offices, 2 SNAP offices, and 4 CACFP sites or 4 NSLP elementary schools and 2 NSLP middle schools).

Reviewers need to determine the scope of your proposed project. Provide a list and number of organizations, delivering agencies, etc. in your service area that will be impacted by your proposed project.

30. Describe the anticipated target audience that will be reached as a result of your project.

When you began planning your project, what audience did you intend to reach? From the example used in the previous question, if the entities in your proposed project are primarily four National School Lunch Program (NSLP) elementary schools and two NSLP middle schools, your target audience would be families with children aged 5-13 and/or delivering agencies that work with those families.

31. What concrete outcomes do you anticipate as a result of your proposed project?

Outcomes can be defined as the project's impact on the target audience and collaborative partners. What does your organization hope to accomplish? Outcomes should be realistic and attainable, within the scope of your project. Examples include:

- Increased knowledge and awareness of Child Nutrition (CN) program(s) among those eligible
- Increased participation in CN program(s)



- Increased coordination within each CN program
- Increased visibility of CN program(s)
- Increased coordination between CN programs at the community-level
- Increased community involvement in promoting and expanding CN program(s)
- Increased understanding of the barriers to participation
- Reduced stigma associated with CN program participation among those eligible
- Reduced barriers to CN program participation
- More effective community involvement in increasing CN program participation
- Improved CN program participation in other communities because of implementation of similar efforts in additional communities
- Increased organizational capacity to maintain and increase program participation

32. How will these outcomes be sustained beyond the project?

The RCPNC is interested in creative strategies that are sustainable at the end of the grant. How will you and your partners sustain the outcomes achieved through the project without additional funding from this grant? Below are questions that may help answer this question.

- Will collaborating partners continue to work with your organization?
- Will collaborating partners commit future resources toward maintaining project strategies?
- Has community involvement in implementing this project created a commitment from community members to help sustain outcomes?
- Did the project strategy involve capacity building that will later allow project outcomes to be sustained?

33. Letters of support from your organization's leadership as well as from members of partnering organizations should be provided to show their commitment to collaborate on the proposed project. Partnering organizations willing to provide data, such as program participation rates for the project evaluation, should include a statement in their letter of support acknowledging this agreement.

Letters from federal, state, and local legislators/officials may also be submitted on behalf of the applicant to demonstrate the state's commitment toward reducing child hunger.

Partnering organizations may be new or existing collaborators. They are defined as any agency or group, in addition to your own that is collaborating on the project. This includes



entities that will be reached by the proposed project (example: WIC or SNAP delivering agencies) and should include an emphasis on FNS Child Nutrition programs.

Letters of support should, at a minimum, provide a statement that demonstrates commitment toward collaborating with other agencies on the proposed project. Letters should embody the shared vision of reducing child hunger by improving collaborative efforts, resulting in increased participation in programs. The organization's leadership should submit a letter of support on behalf of the primary investigator and staff who are applying for the grant and all entities that will be involved in the project. Applicants with collaborating partners who are willing to provide data relevant to project evaluation, such as program participation rates, should include that information in the letters.

If organizations submit letters from federal, state, and local legislators/officials that represent strong political will and commitment to the child anti-hunger mission, they will receive additional points toward their overall score. The online portal allows only one document to be uploaded with the application, so all letters of support should be combined and uploaded as one file.

Project Timeline

The project timeline is an important part of project planning. We understand that timelines will likely change after grantees are selected and their projects become further developed. However, mapping out initial thoughts on project activities will not only give you an idea of when major events will occur, it will also help you and your partners realistically consider project constraints, roles and responsibilities, and the proposal's feasibility. The information under *Key Activities*, *Timeframes*, and *Purpose of Activities* should help you conceptualize steps needed to develop your own project timeline.

Timeline of Grantee Projects

Key Activities

Start creating your timeline by thinking about project goals. Write down any tasks required to achieve those goals. Next, think about the order of those tasks. Do some tasks need to take place before other tasks can begin? If so, organize your list by the order in which key activities need to happen. In the *Grantee Project Timeline* (Table 1) Grantee Start Date, First Webinar, First Workshop, and Community Needs Assessment are listed because they must be included in your timeline. These activities must take place before you can refine and implement your projects.



Timeframes

As you review your list of key activities, try to decide what timeframe is reasonable to initiate each item. To do this, you may want to work with partners to help determine appropriate timeframes and also consider the following questions:

- Are there any project constraints? (Example: Projects that involve school partnerships may need to consider academic year/summer schedule.)
- Is staff training needed and included?
- Will staff and partners have a difficult time completing these tasks within the time limits set?
- Are there vacations, meetings, or holidays involving partners and staff members that could delay the project?
- If there are barriers or challenges, was enough time included for these delays?

Purpose of Activities

The purpose of the activity should describe why the key activity is necessary to accomplish your project goals. Briefly describe what you want to accomplish through the key activity listed. Ask yourself, “How will this help me achieve my goals?” and “Are the activities relevant to the overall goal?”

Adding Additional Rows to the Table

You may need more space in the table for your key activities. To insert additional rows, place your cursor in the row above the position where you would like to add more information and do the following: *Right click the mouse → Insert → Insert Rows Below*

Budget and Budget Justification

To develop a budget, you must identify and estimate all costs associated with your project. Your budget is an important project management tool. It allows you to compare actual costs to your estimated costs and will help you determine when the scope or schedule of your project needs to be adjusted throughout the course of the grant. Since attending workshops is mandatory, you can begin developing your budget by determining costs related to traveling to two workshops in Alexandria, VA. Keep a record of how estimates were obtained for each item because you will need it for your budget justification.

Your budget should also include costs related to conducting a community needs assessment. We recognize that applicants may not be familiar with the needs assessment. At the most basic level, the community needs assessment can be defined as a systematic



process to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a community. For this grant, the results of the needs assessment will be used to better understand the needs and barriers to accessing healthy foods for families with children. Grantees will collect information from stakeholders and community members using surveys, focus groups, and key information interviews. Grantees will be provided with formal training on how to conduct a needs assessment, but for the purpose of completing the application, try your best to include estimated expenses related to the needs assessment. Some examples of costs related to conducting a needs assessment are: salary and wages for staff that collect the surveys or hold focus groups/interviews, costs from in-state mileage for traveling to community members, material costs of surveys, etc. Make sure to describe costs related to the needs assessment in your budget justification narrative.

A budget justification is a narrative that explains how costs were estimated and justifies why expenses in the budget are necessary. (Example: travel, salaries and wages, local mileage, etc.) It is also where you will show a breakdown of each expense category to support how you came up with the total estimated budget. Try to provide information for each category about “what, when, where, who, and why” as appropriate.

Out-of-State Travel

Estimate travel expenses for each workshop (one in March 2016 and one in March 2019) by considering the listed items for all those related to your project. Estimated expenses should include everyone who is attending the workshop.

Airfare – Internet sites such as kayak.com or expedia.com may be used to get a base estimate on the price of airfare for two-way travel from your departure city to Alexandria, VA. Remember that the price of airfare generally rises as the departure date nears so your estimate should reflect that increase. Please note: First-class or business-class tickets are not allowed.

Mileage Reimbursement – Costs related to driving personal vehicles to the airport will be reimbursed using the federal mileage rate (currently \$0.575) or the rate your organization authorizes, whichever is less. What is the distance, roundtrip, in miles, between your point of departure and the airport? Take that estimate and multiply it by \$0.575. Example: A roundtrip to airport (149 miles) x federal rate (\$.575) = \$85.68.

Parking – If you must leave your car at the airport while traveling, visit the airport website or call an airport representative to obtain daily parking rates at the airport.

We have estimated costs related to the workshop after you arrive in Alexandria, VA for you. Costs are estimated at \$700 per person. This includes lodging, per diem for meals, conference registration fee, and miscellaneous transportation.



To calculate total expenses for the first and second workshop, add \$700 to the amount estimated for airfare, travel to/from the airport, and airport parking. Take this total and multiply it by the number of people attending the workshop. Provide a breakdown of the estimate and a description of how estimates were obtained in your budget narrative. For your budget justification narrative, start a section labeled “Out-of-State Travel” and write down each of the estimates for the categories listed: Airfare, Mileage Reimbursement, and Parking. Under each category, explain, in writing, how you arrived at the estimate and any relevant information that may support your figures.

For example:

First Workshop

Airfare – \$600. Using Kayak.com, my search results showed that the average round-trip airfare from Bluegrass Airport in Lexington, Ky., to Washington, D.C. Reagan National (nearest airport to Alexandria, VA) was approximately \$300 in early March 2016. Two people from my organization will attend the workshop. (Workshop 1: \$300 x 2 people = \$600)

Project Expenses

It will take a little more time and investigation to determine an estimate for each category of the next section of the budget. This guide describes each expense category. But in order to create an accurate working budget for your project, you will need to discuss project details with project staff members and gather information that fits your service area. The budget narrative for project expenses should be written similarly to the out-of-state travel section. However, expenses related to the project may require a little more detail to demonstrate why they are needed for implementation or to meet project objectives.

In-state travel: Local mileage – Mileage for privately owned vehicles accrued during in-state travel for project-related activities may be reimbursed. Travel must be documented and approved for reimbursement. Travel to the airport to attend workshops should not be included in this expense category. To estimate expenses for in-state travel, consider the key activities in your timeline. For activities that require travel, estimate the number of miles that will be driven and multiply the total miles by your organization’s rate or the federal reimbursement rate of \$0.575, whichever is less.

Facility rental – This expense category is for costs related to facility usage. If your project requires the use of facilities that must be rented, provide total expected costs in the corresponding box on the application. Your budget narrative should briefly explain what type of facility is needed for the project, how often it will be needed, and how the facility will be used.

Postage and delivery – Expenses for postal service or package delivery should be included under this category. For example, if you plan to mail informational brochures to your target audience, those postage costs must be estimated. Narratives should address specifics such



as which project activities require postage, the number of items that will be mailed or delivered, and when mail or delivery services will be needed during your project.

Marketing and Advertising – Some projects may involve marketing or advertising strategies. Expenses for project-related marketing messages through various publications (e.g., newspapers, television, billboards) to intended recipients should be included in this category. The narrative should describe the planned marketing or advertising strategies, in addition to the estimated cost.

Contract Services – Some projects may require the help of professionals with specific skill sets. Costs of these services can be added to this field. Examples of professional service contractors include graphic designers, computer programmers, and copy editors, among others. Budget narratives should define what contract services are needed, supporting information to justify the need for the service, and projected fees for each service.

Materials – This category describes the costs of materials needed for the project. Examples include training books, pamphlets, software licensing fees, equipment, or supplies. Include a description of these materials in the budget narrative.

Salaries and Wages; Fringe Benefits - Salaries and wages that cover the amount of time spent by staff on project activities may be included as a project expense when not funded by other sources. If salaries and wages are included, additional columns should show salary and wages from other sources and total salary and wages per key personnel. Using the table provided, list each staff member who is assisting with project activities and their base annual salary. Salaries and Wages should be calculated separately for each year that the staff member will be working on the grant project. Include the tables in your budget narrative.

Year #

Key Personnel ^A	Salary and Wages				Fringe Benefits			
	Salary base ^B	FTE ^C	MO Equiv ^D	Total Salary Request ^E	Health Ins base ^F	Life ins base ^G	Benefit level (%) ^H	Total Fringe request prorated to FTE ^I
John Doe	24,000	.25	3 mo	\$6,000				

**Note.* Descriptions of headings (A-I) are provided on the next page. Complete the table as appropriate to your organization; actual expenses or percentages may be used.



A. *Key Personnel*: Name of staff members who will work on the project

B. *Salary Base*: Staff member’s annual salary

C. *Full Time Equivalent (FTE)*: The equivalent to one budgetary position filled for the entire year. Estimate how much of the staff member’s time will be spent working on the project. A “1” is equal to one full-time position; .25 would represent a quarter of the staff member’s hours.

COMMON FTE: *Based on 26 bi-weekly pay periods x 80 hours = 2080 hours per year

1 FTE	2080 hours
.75 FTE	1560 hours
.5 FTE	1040 hours
.25 FTE	520 hours

D. *Monthly Equivalent (MO Equiv)*: The monthly equivalent is based on a 12-month year. If staff is working on this project .25 FTE, the monthly equivalent will be 3 months (.25 FTE X 12 months per year= 3 MO Equiv)

E. *Salary request*: Using the base salary and FTE, calculate the salary needed to cover the staff member’s time spent working on the project. If staff member John Doe has a salary base of 24,000 and an FTE of .25, the salary request is \$6,000. ($\$24,000 \times .25 = \$6,000$).

F, G, and H. *Fringe benefits*: Organizations determine fringe benefits in different ways. Some use a percentage of salaries to determine health insurance^F, life insurance^G and general fringe benefits^H such as FICA or unemployment insurance. Others use actual expenses for health insurance and life insurance. Complete the table as appropriate for your organization.

I. *Total Fringe request prorated to FTE*: The total amount requested for fringe benefits should be prorated to the amount of time the staff member will be working on the project.

If your organization uses **actual expenses** for health and life insurance, use the equation below to obtain the total fringe request.

$$\text{Total Fringe Requested Prorated to FTE (I)} = (F \times C) + (G \times C) + (H \times E)$$

If your organization uses a **percentage** of the salary to calculate fringe benefits, use the following equation to obtain the total fringe request.

$$\text{Total Fringe Requested Prorated to FTE (I)} = (F \times E) + (G \times E) + (H \times E)$$

Other – Include total project expenses not covered by the provided categories in this category and justify these expenses in your narrative.