WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project

WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project (WIC CIAO): Round 2 Subgrants Request for Application

July 8, 2024

Deadline to Apply: September 6, 2024

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WIC CIAO Subgrant Project Application Checklist

- ❑ At least <u>six</u> weeks prior to submission, you should:
  - ❑ Create an account through the WIC CIAO online application portal. (https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/r2_frac_wic-ciao)
  - ❑ Request a signed letter of support (LOS) from your WIC State agency. A WIC State agency could be either a geographic state, a territory, or an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) that administers the Program (7 CFR 246.2). A letter of support demonstrates the State agency's willingness to support the project by providing WIC administrative data. A template for the letter of support is included in Appendix A.
    - ▪ Tribal governments encountering difficulty obtaining a letter of support should reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org for additional technical assistance. The LOS requirement may be modified on a case-by-case basis for Indian Tribal Organizations or other governmental instrumentalities of a federally recognized Indian Tribe not currently administering WIC per 7 CFR 246.2 . If the LOS is not obtained by August 30, 2024, please reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org for information on completing the application in the WIC CIAO online application portal.
  - ❑ Submit a Letter of Intent to apply (*highly encouraged*, but not required).
  - ❑ Review the application template included in Appendix A.

- ❑ At least <u>five</u> weeks prior to submission, you should:
  - ❑ Attend at least one informational webinar and/or view webinar recordings (*highly encouraged*, but not required; see Section V-E).
  - ❑ Develop the project's goals, based on the selected Project Track, and identify the priority population, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and outreach activities using the work plan template included in Appendix A.
  - ❑ Request a signed letter of commitment from each applicant team member organization, if applicable. A template for the letter of commitment is included in Appendix A.

- ❑ When preparing your budget and budget narrative, ensure the following information is included:
  - ❑ All staff who will be paid by this subgrant.
  - ❑ Time the project director and project staff will devote to the project as a percentage of their total time.
  - ❑ Your organization's/agency's fringe benefit amount.
  - ❑ Itemized travel expenses, travel justifications, and basis for estimates.
  - ❑ Detailed information and justification for all contracts, consultants, and subgrants.
  - ❑ Detailed information and justification for all other direct expenses.
  - ❑ Your organization's/agency's indirect cost rate, which is capped at 10 percent of total modified indirect costs, unless your organization/agency has an indirect cost rate agreement from a federal agency (if so, please provide your entity's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement [NICRA]).

❑ Double-check that the staff and other resources needed to accomplish your work plan are reflected in your project budget.

❑ When submitting your application, ensure you have submitted the following:
  ❑ Answers to all application questions (available through the online application portal at https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/r2_frac_wic-ciao; application template provided in Appendix A).
  ❑ Project work plan (template provided in Appendix A).
  ❑ Budget (template provided in Appendix A).
  ❑ Budget narrative (template provided in Appendix A).
  ❑ Résumé or biosketch, no longer than two pages, for each key project staff member who the applicant proposes be funded through the subgrant.
  ❑ Signed letter of support from a WIC State agency (see Section II-D; template provided in Appendix A).
  ❑ Letter(s) of commitment from applicant team member(s) organizations (required if applying as part of an applicant team) and/or other organization(s) (not required; template provided in Appendix A).
  ❑ Governmental information letter from Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (for WIC State and local agencies) **or** 501c3 letter of determination from IRS (for nonprofit organizations).
  ❑ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from a federal agency, if applicable. If an organization/agency does not have a NICRA, the indirect cost rate is capped at 10 percent.
  ❑ A copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statements and IRS Form 990.
  ❑ A copy of your organization's overall line-item budget for 2023 and 2024.
  ❑ A completed Financial Management Questionnaire.

I.   WIC CIAO Background

In September 2022, the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to:

- Increase awareness, especially among underserved populations, about Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits and services.

- Identify effective communication and outreach methods for increasing participation among those eligible but not utilizing WIC services.

Funding for this WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project (WIC CIAO) is part of FNS' broader WIC Outreach, Innovation, and Program Modernization efforts. Through these efforts, FNS seeks to increase WIC participation through increased enrollment and retention of participants for the full length of their eligibility; increase redemption of benefits; and ensure equity in program access.

WIC CIAO is a partnership between FRAC, UnidosUS, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI), and the Center for Nutrition and Health Impact (The Center) (hereafter, all organizations are referred to as the Project Team). WIC CIAO also includes an Advisory Board of individuals that reflect the diversity of communities served by WIC, including current and former WIC participants and nationally recognized experts on WIC innovation and outreach.

WIC CIAO refers to the cumulative project, which takes place from September 2022 to September 2027, and includes two rounds of subgrant projects during which the Project Team will solicit, review, award, and evaluate subgrantees' innovative WIC outreach projects. Best practices and lessons learned from subgrantee outreach efforts will be synthesized to build a series of WIC Outreach Toolkits. The first round of subgrants were awarded in May 2023. The information in this Request for Application (RFA) pertains to the second round of subgrants (WIC CIAO Subgrant Project).

II.   WIC CIAO Subgrant Project

A.   Purpose

WIC is one of the nation's largest federal nutrition programs, providing healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding counseling and support, and healthcare and social service referrals to more than 6 million women, infants, and young children. WIC helps reduce racial disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. However, despite evidence that WIC contributes to healthy outcomes, only 51.2 percent of eligible women, infants, and children participated in the Program in 2021.

The purpose of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project is to assist WIC State and local agencies, including Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and territories, and nonprofit entities and organizations (including community-based and nonprofit organizations chartered under the Tribal law of a state or federally recognized Tribe) to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative outreach strategies to increase WIC awareness, participation, and redemption of benefits, and to reduce disparities in program delivery. The WIC CIAO Subgrant Project is an exciting opportunity to expand outreach and engagement between the WIC Program and community partners. The WIC CIAO Subgrant Project aims to spur community

innovation in designing outreach strategies to address disparities in WIC coverage (i.e., the percent of eligible individuals who participate), health outcomes, and access to nutritious foods. Furthermore, the Project Team is committed to centering equity in the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project and addressing disparities that priority populations may face when accessing WIC services.

These are our definitions and guiding principles:

- Equity exists when everyone has the fair and just opportunity to thrive, regardless of their identity or other social characteristics. Equity is different from equality, where everyone has the same opportunity.[1] In order to achieve equity, resources must be tailored to each person's (or community's) specific circumstances.
- A disparity is a difference "that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. "Disparities adversely affect groups of people who have *systematically* experienced greater obstacles based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics [historically and/or currently] linked to discrimination or exclusion."[2]
    - People identify in multiple ways and may experience multiple types of disparities that intersect to create uniquely challenging obstacles. For example, grandparents taking care of grandchildren in rural communities may face both ageism and fewer opportunities to work or access public transportation, making it especially difficult to find or maintain employment.

B. Overview of the Funding Opportunity

The WIC CIAO Subgrant Project funding opportunity will support the implementation and evaluation of WIC outreach initiatives with strong potential to meet the WIC CIAO goals to increase WIC awareness, participation, redemption of benefits, and reduce disparities in program delivery, with impact that can be sustained once subgrant funding ends. Proposals are expected to prioritize partnerships that support collaboration between WIC State or local agencies and nonprofit entities and/or use community-level data to test new ways of delivering WIC messaging.

Eligible proposals must align with one of the RFA's four Project Tracks. A Project Track is a specific focus area within the broader scope of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project funding opportunity (see Section III-B for complete Project Track information):

- Project Track 1: WIC Agency and Nonprofit Organizational Partnerships: Leverage existing partnerships between WIC State and/or local agencies and nonprofit entities to improve the WIC participant experience and meet the goals of WIC CIAO.
- Project Track 2: WIC Program Champions and Navigators: Apply community champion and/or navigator models that connect families to similar programs (e.g. SNAP or Medicaid) to meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

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[1] See figure from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on "equality" compared to "equity"
[2] Healthy People 2030 definition of a health disparity

- Project Track 3: Head Start/Early Head Start Partnerships: Build or improve partnerships between WIC State and/or local agencies and Head Start and/or Early Head Start to improve the WIC participant experience and meet the goals of WIC CIAO.
- Project Track 4: Innovative Outreach Project: Implement an innovative project that includes outreach strategies that will be adapted for diverse communities to meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

Successful proposals will have the following features:

1. Include applicants that serve and/or have staff from historically and currently marginalized populations with disparities in access to WIC and other maternal and child health resources. Propose innovative outreach strategies that fall into one of the RFA's four Project Tracks (see Section III-B for Project Track information).
2. Address overarching project goal(s) to increase WIC awareness, participation, and redemption of benefits, and reduce disparities in program delivery.
3. Ensure sustainability beyond the period of funding and technical assistance. Sustainable projects are those that can carry out their innovative ideas beyond the end of the subgrant period when WIC CIAO Subgrant Project funding and technical assistance come to an end.
4. Leverage existing staff positions and minimize hiring new staff to be able to implement the project. Grant funded positions that end when the funding runs out are not sustainable.
5. Result in best practices that are transparent so that successful activities can be scaled or easily adapted to other organizations and/or WIC agencies of varying sizes and resources, and with different local contexts and priority populations.

C.   Applicant Eligibility

Eligible WIC CIAO applicants include the following:

- WIC agency (including current WIC CIAO subgrantees):
  - WIC State agency, including a geographic state, a territory, or an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) that administers the Program (7 CFR 246.2).
  - WIC local agency, including Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) that administer the Program.

- Nonprofit entity (including current WIC CIAO subgrantees): An association, cooperative, or other organization with IRS 501(c)(3) status and nonprofit organizations chartered under the Tribal law of a state or federally recognized Tribe.

  Examples include, *but are not limited to*:
  - Colleges and universities
  - Community-based organizations
  - Community health centers
  - Cooperative extension services
  - Faith-based organizations

- Federally qualified health centers
- Hospitals
- Indian Health Service facilities
- Intertribal consortia
- Migrant health centers and camps
- Nonprofit advocacy organizations and coalitions
- Public housing sites

- A Head Start entity: A prenatal - age 3 Early Head Start, ages 3-5 Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCPs), Migrant Seasonal B-5 Head Start, American Indian Alaska Native Early Head Start and Head Start, State Head Start Associations, and/or any combination of the previously mentioned program(s) or organizations.

Additional considerations for WIC CIAO subgrantees

- WIC CIAO subgrantees who are granted a no cost extension after July 1, 2024 are ineligible to apply.
- Funding through this RFA will not be considered for renewal of a Round 1 subgrant (i.e., the proposed project is not a continuation of the same Round 1 activities).
- While current WIC CIAO subgrantees can apply for funding under any of the Project Tracks, the project must be substantially different from their Round 1 subgrant.
- Current WIC CIAO subgrantees will not be given a preference under this RFA based on their participation in Round 1.

Eligible applicants may apply as a singular applicant (for Project Tracks 2, 3 and 4) or as part of an applicant team (for all Project Tracks). All applicant teams must have one primary applicant, who will act as the project lead, primary contact, and budget manager. Other organizations must be included in the proposal's applicant team if they are participating in the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project (e.g., staff members will be serving key roles in the project). Applicant teams must have a signed letter of commitment from every applicant team member organization documenting their relationship and understanding of their roles and responsibilities if funded (template provided in Appendix A). A WIC agency is eligible to be a singular applicant, the primary applicant, or part of an applicant team. Non-WIC State and local government agencies and for-profit entities are eligible to participate as part of an applicant team but are not eligible to be the primary applicant.

The primary applicant will receive the project funds from FRAC. Applicant team member organizations will receive funds from the primary applicant. If the proposal is selected for funding, contracts must be formalized between the primary applicant and members of the applicant team. Therefore, we encourage applicants to consider choosing a primary applicant who has the fewest institutional barriers to developing and approving contracts in a timely manner. Applicants should consider leveraging existing staff and programmatic resources to ensure timely completion of grant deliverables.

WIC CIAO will fund a given organization or agency through only one subgrant. Organizations or agencies may be involved in subgrant projects in multiple applications, but funding cannot be received through multiple subgrants.

D.   WIC State Agency Letter of Support

Obtaining a signed WIC State agency letter of support

Applicants are required to obtain a signed letter of support from a WIC State agency demonstrating willingness to support their WIC CIAO Subgrant Project by providing WIC administrative data (template provided in Appendix A). This applies to all applicants except for WIC State agencies including ITOs or Tribal government entities currently administering the WIC program per (7 CFR 246.2). Applicants should reach out to their relevant WIC State agency, including an Indian Tribal Organization currently administering the WIC program per 7 CFR 246.2, as early as possible to obtain a signature on their letter of support (LOS), since it may take several weeks. A list of WIC State agency contacts is available through the online application portal at https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/r2_frac_wic-ciao. Applicants who encounter issues in obtaining a signed LOS should reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org for assistance before August 23, 2024.

Special note for ITO's or Tribal Governmental Entities Not Currently Administering WIC: If you represent an Indian Tribal Organization or other governmental instrumentality of a federally recognized Indian Tribe, but your ITO or Tribal government entity is not currently administering WIC per 7 CFR 246.2, you will need to include a letter of support with your WIC CIAO application. If you encounter any difficulty in obtaining an LOS, please reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager immediately at wic-ciao@frac.org for additional technical assistance. This LOS requirement may be modified for Tribal governments on a case-by-case basis. If the LOS is not obtained by August 30, 2024, please reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org for information on completing the application in the online portal.

Filling out the WIC State agency letter of support

A template for the WIC State agency letter of support is provided in Appendix A. Applicants must insert a description of their WIC CIAO Subgrant Project in the letter of support prior to submitting to the WIC State agency contact for signature. The description should include the project's proposed goals, the Project Track chosen, and the specific WIC outreach activities included in the proposal. If applicable, the applicant should provide a description of their qualifications for working within the project focus area and past efforts working with the WIC State agency.

E.   Key Funding Details and Dates
- Total funding available: Approximately $14.8 million is expected to be available under this RFA. The total funding amount is subject to change based on availability of funds.
- The minimum request amount is $100,000.

- The maximum request amount is $1,000,000.
- Subgrant length and dates are 24 months, from January 2025 to December 2026. Applicants must complete all grant requirements within this period. The first three months of the grant period will be a start-up period with activities reflecting project initiation (e.g., executing agreements, staffing activities, outreach material development, setting up necessary training procedures, translation, etc.); the next 18 months will be the implementation period, during which all outreach activities will occur; the final three months of the grant period will be for wrap-up and grant close-out activities (e.g., final reporting, subgrant close-out meeting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly to achieve project deliverables and reporting requirements within the subgrant period. FRAC does not anticipate granting no-cost extensions.

Table 1: Key Application and Project Dates

Date	Event
July 8, 2024	**RFA Release**
July 16, 2024	*Webinar: Overview of the WIC CIAO RFA and Evaluation
July 24, 2024	*Webinar: Subgrant Project Tracks & Work Plan
July 25, 2024	****Letter of Intent due by 11:59 p.m. ET** (*highly encouraged*, but not required)
July 30, 2024	*Webinar: Subgrant Project Budget & Personnel
September 6, 2024	**Applications due by 11:59 p.m. ET**
January 2025	Subgrants awarded
January 6, 2025	**Project start date** • **January 2025--March 2025: Start-up period** • **April 2025--September 2026: Implementation period** • **October 2026--December 2026: Close-out period**
December 31, 2026	**Project end date**

*All webinars are optional and will be provided in English and Spanish (see Section V-E for registration information).

**WIC CIAO subgrant applicants are *highly encouraged,* but not required, to submit a nonbinding Letter of Intent (LOI) by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 25, 2024. This document will *not* be considered in the review process but provides useful information to the Project Team in preparing for providing technical assistance to applicants as well as ensuring that the RFA is being adequately disseminated through diverse channels. WIC CIAO applicants who do not submit an LOI by the specified deadline may still apply by the due date of September 6, 2024.

The Project Team is committed to providing support throughout the application process. If potential applicants have any questions during the application process, they should immediately reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org. More detail about technical assistance is provided in Section V-E below.

F.   Expectations of WIC CIAO Subgrant Project Applicants

WIC CIAO applicants/applicant teams are expected to center equity and address disparities throughout the project design, including in subgrant goals and/or outreach strategies. Centering equity means there is no single checkbox to demonstrate that applicants are prioritizing equity. Instead, applicants will be expected to demonstrate equity-promoting practices throughout their subgrant application. Depending on the proposed project, these practices may include providing authentic opportunities for engagement and input from community organizations and individuals and ensuring that innovative strategies do not unintentionally widen disparities. If the project design involves engaging community partners and potential, current, and/or former WIC participants, they should be given appropriate compensation[3] and/or an incentive[4] for their involvement.

Applications will be scored for their plans for addressing equity in the Community Description section of the application (see Section III-A). This includes describing:
- How community strengths and resources will be used in the proposed project to improve WIC;
- How the project impacts disparities and promotes equity;
- How the applicant/applicant team has a history of serving, representing, or working with underserved communities, including having leadership/staff reflective of the community and/or who have lived experience with WIC.

G.   Expectations of WIC CIAO Subgrantees

WIC CIAO subgrantees are required to participate in the evaluation of WIC CIAO. A key goal of WIC CIAO is to generate robust evidence of the impact of innovative outreach strategies on WIC agencies and participants. Findings from this evaluation will help improve services in communities and at WIC State and local agencies, helping to ensure that all eligible families are aware of and using valuable WIC services.

The Project Team will be responsible for the overarching WIC CIAO evaluation, using a standard set of evaluation activities across all subgrant projects. Subgrantees are expected to support the Project Team in data collection activities related to the standard set of evaluation activities. Applicants may choose to conduct their own additional evaluation activities, above and beyond the standard set, using their

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[3] For purposes of this RFA, we recommend that community members with lived experience are adequately compensated in a timely manner for all aspects of WIC CIAO work (e.g., preparation, work, training, travel time, allowable expenses).

[4] The term "incentive" means financial inducements that would increase the likelihood of an individual responding to a request to participate in some project-related activity. For purposes of this RFA, small incentives may be used to encourage participants to respond to evaluation-related activities (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups). Examples of allowable financial incentives include coupons or gift cards redeemable for food or general household items.

internal staff or preferred evaluation partner(s) (e.g., evaluation/research firm, university, etc.). In this instance, the Project Team will still be available for evaluation guidance and technical assistance (e.g., evaluation development, implementation, and analysis).

Each WIC CIAO subgrantee will be assigned a WIC CIAO Mentor Team to provide individualized technical assistance during the subgrant period. The WIC CIAO Mentor Team will be a subset of the Project Team tailored to each subgrantee to maximize developing trusting relationships between the WIC CIAO Mentor Team and subgrantee project staff. The WIC CIAO Mentor Team will include two evaluation team members from the Center for Nutrition and Health Impact and one WIC programmatic lead from FRAC or UnidosUS. For subgrantees from and/or serving Native American communities, the technical assistance team will also include one mentor from IFAI. For subgrantees in Project Track 3, the Mentor Team will also include a mentor from the National Head Start Association. Subgrantees are expected to participate in regularly scheduled meetings with their WIC CIAO Mentor Team, who will tailor the technical assistance provided to subgrantees' specific goals, activities, and needs. Technical assistance efforts will be collaborative and will help ensure interventions can be sustained beyond the grant period and adopted by other organizations and/or WIC agencies.

 In addition, subgrantees are expected to participate in:

- The WIC CIAO Peer Learning Community of Practice: An online portal accessible only to subgrantees that includes forums where subgrantees can regularly share project updates, document lessons learned, and describe challenges or ask questions for peer and Project Team input.
- Monthly webinars: Regular training on topics applicable across subgrantee projects.

III.　　WIC CIAO Subgrant Project Application

There are four primary sections of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project application that relate to project design:

A. Community Description: Applicants will describe their community, including the priority population(s) the project intends to serve, and local resources and barriers as they relate to WIC participation. Applicants must explain how their proposed project will impact disparities and engage community members who are eligible for WIC.

B. Subgrant Project Goals and Project Tracks: Applicants will describe their overarching project goal(s) to increase WIC awareness, participation, and redemption of benefits, and/or reduce disparities in program delivery. Applicants will choose a Project Track and explain how their proposed outreach strategies fulfill the purpose of the Project Track. Applicants will describe their work plan and the outreach activities in each goal under their chosen Project Track. Applicants will also be asked what new knowledge will be gained from these outreach strategies to build the evidence base for the Project Track and describe their project's plan for sustainability.

C. Participation in the Evaluation of WIC CIAO: Applicants will be asked to identify key performance indicators relevant to their project, agree to participate in standard evaluation activities, specify

if they intend to complete additional evaluation activities (which will be led by their internal staff or preferred evaluation partner[s]), and describe potential resources and challenges related to the evaluation process. Of note, additional evaluation activities are optional and will not impact the likelihood of project funding.

D. Project Management Plan: Applicants will be asked to identify that they have allocated sufficient staff time and funds for the proposed work. Applicants must show that they are able to leverage existing staff (specifically all key personnel on the subgrant project) and utilize partnerships with members of their applicant team and other entities to begin work as soon as possible, if awarded grant funds.

Below applicants will find detailed instructions for each section of the application, including the corresponding questions. Use this information when completing the online application available at: https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/r2_frac_wic-ciao. The application template available in Appendix A contains all application questions and submission information.

A. Community Description
Questions 1–3 in the online application

This section asks applicants to describe their community (population, barriers, needs, strengths, etc.), including identifying local community resources and challenges that affect different populations and impact the strength and reach of the community's WIC Program. In this section, applicants will also describe their history of serving, representing, or focusing on underserved communities, and how leadership/staff reflect the community and/or have lived experience with WIC.

Applicants will be required to identify:

● The priority population(s) the project intends to serve experiencing disparities in (1) access to or use of WIC and/or (2) maternal and child health/nutrition outcomes.
● The barriers to WIC awareness, participation, and redemption of benefits their priority population(s) experiences (e.g., lack of transportation options, distrust of government programs, limited English proficiency); disparities in program delivery; and which barriers could feasibly be addressed within the scope of the proposed project.
● Community strengths and resources that facilitate access to WIC (e.g., trusted community organizations that serve families, pre-existing community coalitions, accessible WIC clinics).
● How the proposed project will address and reduce disparities (e.g., reduce barriers to WIC participation; increase community capacity or resources, increase opportunities to enroll in WIC, strengthen community partnerships among organizations serving women, infants, and children).

The information in this section can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, the knowledge and experience of the applicant(s), discussions with eligible families or community partners, and/or "community-level" or administrative data. Importantly, community partners who are from and/or serve the priority population should be engaged to help with the Community Description. Community partners offer key perspectives on resources and barriers and whether proposed outreach strategies will be effective, equitable, innovative, sustainable, and transferable.

Applicants are encouraged to use "community-level" data, defined as data that is detailed enough to understand characteristics of the local population or a project's identified priority population(s).

Sources of community-level data may include, but are not limited to:

- Data updated at least once a year:
    - Data from community-based organizations on the resources and needs of the priority population(s) (e.g., community assessment)
    - Electronic health records data from healthcare organizations
    - WIC redemption data at authorized vendors
    - Focus groups, interviews, listening sessions, town hall meetings, surveys, and reports
    - Community eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals
    - WIC State and local agency administrative data
    - WIC coverage estimates
    - SNAP enrollment data
    - Medicaid enrollment data
    - RWJF County Health Rankings
- Data updated every few years:
    - Community Health Needs Assessments conducted by hospitals as part of the Affordable Care Act
    - Prevalence of broadband or mobile phone use
- Data updated infrequently:
    - Census tract data on language, poverty, immigration, etc.
    - Aggregate measures and maps, such as the Food Access Research Atlas, Area Deprivation Index, or the Child Opportunity Index

B. Subgrant Project Goals and Project Tracks

Questions 4–7 in the online application and Work Plan Template

Subgrant Project Goals

In this section, applicants should develop goals to address their identified community need(s) and opportunities to improve WIC access, aligned with the WIC CIAO goals to increase awareness, participation, and redemption of benefits, and to reduce disparities in program delivery. For the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project, we suggest one to three goals. These goals will be entered into your work plan in Column A.

Goals should reflect the subgrant's intended accomplishments. Examples of goals include, but are not limited to:

- Increase WIC enrollment among those who are eligible in a rural community.
- Increase retention of children up to age 5 among military families.
- Improve awareness of WIC benefits and services among a county's immigrant population.
- Increase use of WIC food package benefits among enrolled participants who live in a neighborhood with low access to WIC vendors.

Project Tracks

In this section, applicants must select one of the four Project Tracks (described in detail below). A Project Track is a specific focus area within the broader scope of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project funding opportunity.

- Project Track 1: WIC Agency and Nonprofit Organizational Partnerships: Leverage existing partnerships between WIC State and/or local agencies and nonprofit entities to improve the participant experience and meet the goals of WIC CIAO.
- Project Track 2: WIC Program Champions and Navigators: Apply community champion and/or navigator models that connect families to similar programs (e.g. SNAP or Medicaid) to meet the goals of WIC CIAO.
- Project Track 3: Head Start/Early Head Start Partnerships: Build or improve partnerships between WIC State and/or local agencies and Head Start and/or Early Head Start to improve the participant experience and meet the goals of WIC CIAO.
- Project Track 4: Innovative Outreach Project: Implement an innovative project that includes outreach strategies that will be adapted for diverse communities to meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

The WIC CIAO Subgrant Project is only accepting applications aligned with the four Project Tracks. Applicants can only select one Project Track and should select the Project Track that best aligns with their proposed project.

Projects that will not be considered for funding include:

- Projects that require data matching agreements at the State level for comparing WIC enrollment data with SNAP and Medicaid data, including projects that intend to conduct targeted outreach stemming from data matching activities.
- Creation of an online application.

Separate from WIC CIAO, USDA has funded a cooperative agreement of nearly $10 million to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in support to WIC State agencies to streamline access to WIC through outreach and data matching with other federal programs. FNS expects funding opportunities for State agencies to implement data matching projects to be announced in 2024. Additionally, FNS has provided funding and will soon provide guidance to WIC State agencies that can be used to develop online applications.

The strongest applications will have clear alignment between the Project Track selected, the project's priority population(s) and needs identified in the Community Description section of the applicant's proposal, the goal(s) of the subgrant project, and the outreach strategy(ies) proposed.

USDA defines outreach as a way of conducting business to ensure that underserved individuals and groups are made aware of, understand, and have a working knowledge of USDA programs and services. Outreach is meant to ensure that programs and services are equitable and made accessible to all.[5]

Regardless of the chosen Project Track, all projects must focus on activities and strategies that:

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[5] National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- Can be implemented at the start of the subgrant project period.
- Can be completed by the end of the subgrant project period.
- Can be sustained when the subgrant project period ends.
- Adhere to current federal and state WIC regulations.
- Incorporate feedback loops to continuously assess and adapt strategies as needed throughout the project.
- Leverage community-level data as described in the Community Description section of the RFA (see III-A) to ensure approaches are tailored and specific to the needs of the community.

Work plan

The work plan should be used to build the steps needed to achieve each goal under the Project Track selected. A work plan template is provided in Appendix A.

For each goal, the applicant should outline the outreach activities, by quarter, that will be used to achieve that goal. Under each outreach activity, a series of specific actions should be described that include the priority population, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) affected, and the specific applicant and applicant team member staff responsible for completing each activity, and the activity timeline.

Detailed Project Track Information

Project Track 1: WIC Agency and Nonprofit Organizational Partnerships

Leverage existing partnerships between WIC State and/or local agencies and nonprofit entities to improve the participant experience and meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

- Purpose: This Project Track focuses on strengthening existing partnerships between WIC State or local agencies and nonprofit entities (defined in RFA Section C) that facilitate increases in participation, redemption of benefits, and/or improvements to the WIC participant experience. Outreach activities in this track should prioritize implementation or improvement of partner service delivery to engage more eligible nonparticipants and/or increase retention and benefits redemption for current WIC participants. Proposals under this track must be submitted by an applicant team that includes at least one WIC agency, and one nonprofit entity. Applicant teams must have a signed letter of commitment from every applicant team member organization documenting their established relationship and understanding of their roles and responsibilities if funded (template provided in Appendix A).

Applicants interested in Project Track 1 are encouraged to incorporate some of the following components when developing projects:

- Establish co-location agreements and practices between a WIC agency and nonprofit entity via satellite or mobile WIC site at the community organization or partnering to provide virtual access to WIC services (where possible).
- Create appointment scheduling procedures to allow enough time for a client visit with the nonprofit service provider partner and on-site WIC clinic back-to-back.

- Eliminate barriers to re-certification and nutrition education appointments for WIC families.
- Foster streamlined services, for example by implementing accessible locations for WIC services, flexible hours of operations (e.g., evenings, weekends), and other innovative solutions to prioritize the applicant and participant experience and/or to collect anthropometric (height and weight) and bloodwork (blood iron level) data to support WIC virtual services.
- Develop protocols for active referral strategies between WIC agencies and nonprofits (and vice versa) in order to alleviate the burden of navigation for clients.
  - Active referrals occur when providers connect participants with programs through a supportive process. This could include warm handoff referrals (the participant is navigated through the referral process by the providers); closed loop referrals (the referral is tracked and benchmarked across provider agencies); or other innovative and active referral strategies.
  - WIC and nonprofit agency staff should be adequately trained on protocol procedures.
- Develop systems to streamline WIC certification based on FNS guidance to reduce additional barriers for enrollment.[6]
- Identify and train staff from WIC agency and nonprofit entities to support key referral activities.
- Establish formal agreements between participating nonprofit entities and the WIC agency to share resources and responsibilities (e.g., authorizing on-site WIC staff view-only and chat access to nonprofit entities' client management databases or referral software).

Note: Although data matching is out of scope for WIC CIAO as described above, FNS encourages data sharing as a way to reduce barriers to enrollment and streamline certification. Data sharing projects may be considered for WIC CIAO. To be considered, proposed projects must comply with all applicable WIC regulations and must be implemented in coordination with WIC State agencies. Projects that include bi-directional data sharing between a WIC State or local agency, and another provider (including healthcare and/or nonprofit entity) will only be considered if applicants can demonstrate through their application that the proposed project is in compliance with federal regulations including 7 CFR 246 and WIC Policy Memorandum #2023-5 and **all** required agreements are in place, or will be executed prior to the start of the period of performance. If a WIC local agency is proposing a bi-directional data-sharing project, they must demonstrate that their respective WIC State agency is aware and supportive of the project. It must be demonstrated in the WIC State agency letter of support and in the application narrative, that WIC Policy Memorandum #2023-5 and **all** required agreements are in place, or will be executed prior to the start of the period of performance.

Project Track 2: WIC Program Champions and Navigators

Apply community champion and/or navigator models that connect families to similar programs (e.g. SNAP or Medicaid) to meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

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[6] WIC Policy Memorandum #2023-6: Streamlining Certification Documentation Guidance - https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/wic-policy-memo-2023-6.pdf

- Purpose: This Project Track focuses on applying models that are currently in use to the WIC landscape. In this track, subgrantees may develop policies, procedures, trainings, and/or materials and resources to build capacity among current community champions and/or navigators that work to connect families to similar programs (e.g. SNAP or Medicaid) to begin connecting their communities to WIC. Proposals under this track may be submitted by a singular applicant or an applicant team. The goal of this track is not to hire new staff to provide these services, but to equip current staff working in a variety of community-based organizations to support WIC outreach and enrollment long-term. The training and other materials that are developed during the project and the partnerships must be sustainable after the grant ends.

- Definitions:
    - WIC Program champions are defined as trusted community spokespersons/messengers who have day-to-day connections with current WIC participants and eligible nonparticipants.
        - Examples include, but are not limited to, faith-based organization staff or volunteers, farmers' market staff, radio DJs, local shop owners, transportation services staff (e.g., public transportation, ride services, etc.), doulas, and/or community leaders.

    - WIC Program navigators are defined as individuals trained to support current participants and eligible nonparticipants in enrolling and fully participating in WIC.
        - Examples include, but are not limited to, promotores de salud/Community Health Workers (CHWs), doulas, SNAP navigators, SNAP-Ed providers, SNAP outreach specialists, WIC agency or nonprofit entity staff, and community members, who are trusted by and understand the needs of priority populations, particularly those who have lived and/or have had professional experience with WIC.

Applicants interested in Project Track 2 are encouraged to incorporate some of the following components when developing projects:

- Identify how project plan is based on existing models.
- Establish a plan to train identified WIC champions and/or navigators in collaboration with project partners.
- Develop comprehensive training protocols, onboarding procedures, best practices, and mechanisms to collect lessons learned.
- Tailor engagement and communication to the WIC champion and/or navigator audience.
- Implement training for WIC champions and/or navigators in WIC eligibility and benefit redemption.

- Engage WIC champions and/or navigators in conducting outreach events and developing communications, training materials, and WIC resources tailored for the priority populations' needs.
- Ensure that the champions and/or navigators who are community members with lived experience (not staff of the applicant or applicant team) are adequately compensated in a timely manner for all aspects of subgrant project work (e.g., preparation, work, training, travel time, allowable expenses).
- Consider testing non-monetary forms of compensation that can continue to support WIC outreach and enrollment after the end of the subgrant project period (e.g., professional development, exposure as a community expert, networking, free child care to attend WIC trainings).
- Explore ways that WIC champions and/or navigators can most effectively provide education to families to increase redemption of WIC benefits including assistance on using the WIC app, identifying conveniently located WIC vendors, selecting WIC-approved foods in store, and/or shopping online with WIC (where available).
- Identify ways that WIC champions and/or navigators can work with WIC vendors to improve the shopping experience for families.
- Identify ways that WIC champions and/or navigators can assist families that need to get anthropometric (height and weight) and/or bloodwork (blood iron level) data to provide to WIC in order to facilitate virtual appointments.
- Encourage word-of-mouth referrals by families participating in WIC among populations identified as having low participation rates.
- Explore ways to build referrals to WIC and enrollment assistance into the scope of work for CHWs and doulas.
- Identify best practices for including WIC navigators in SNAP Navigator outreach programs and SNAP-Ed.

Project Track 3: Head Start/Early Head Start Partnerships

Build or improve partnerships between WIC State and/or local agencies and Head Start and/or Early Head Start to improve the participant experience and meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

- Purpose: This Project Track builds on current collaborative work between USDA FNS and Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in meeting the common goals of WIC and Head Start to promote positive health and nutrition status for young families. By engaging with WIC agencies, Head Start (defined below) grant applicants can coordinate opportunities to increase WIC awareness, participation, and redemption of benefits among eligible Head Start families, and reduce disparities in program delivery. By leveraging their combined resources, strengths, and best practices and minimizing duplicative efforts on the part of families and staff, WIC and Head Start can effectively reach and assist more families in need and enhance participant centered services that improve program coordination and customer service, as described in the USDA FNS and HHS ACF publication. While applicants can also include strategies for WIC Programs to promote Head Start, the focus of the project must

be to meet the goals of WIC CIAO. Proposals under this track may be submitted by a singular applicant, either a WIC agency or Head Start, or an applicant team comprised of a WIC agency and Head Start. Applicants selected under this track will be matched with the National Head Start Association for technical assistance.

- Definition: For purpose of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project, the term 'Head Start' refers to prenatal - age 3 Early Head Start, ages 3-5 Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCPs), Migrant Seasonal B-5 Head Start, American Indian Alaska Native Early Head Start and Head Start, State Head Start Associations, and/or any combination of the previously mentioned program(s) or organizations.

Applicants interested in Project Track 3 are encouraged to incorporate some of the following components when developing projects:

- Implement effective WIC retention and redemption outreach strategies to pregnant women and families with children birth to 5 to close the WIC participation gap.
- Develop new methods of providing timely information about WIC to Head Start families.
- Create referral pathways between WIC and Head Start including the use of a joint WIC/Head Start application form.
- Enter into written agreements authorizing the use and disclosure of confidential participant information and/or the use of data to identify families participating in Head Start who may be eligible for WIC.
- Coordinate and cross-train WIC and Head Start program staff.
- Assist Head Start participants with virtual appointments (e.g., walk through technology, provide onsite spaces for virtual appointments at Head Start, etc.).
- Co-locate WIC services, including virtual appointments, at Head Start to coordinate nutrition services, cross-program operations, and participant-centered services.
- Provide education to Head Start families on using the WIC app, selecting WIC-approved foods in store, and/or shopping online with WIC (where available).
- Share WIC nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion resources to support health.
- Coordinate health and nutrition screening between WIC and Head Start programs, including the sharing of anthropometric (height and weight) and bloodwork (blood iron level) data.
- Encourage word-of-mouth recommendations by families participating in both Head Start and WIC among populations with low participation rates.
- Collect ongoing feedback on how well the outreach strategies are working in order to tailor or adapt the strategies as needed.
- Add WIC staff members to Head Start Health Services Advisory Committees.

NOTE: Projects' components can include the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Data Sharing Agreements (DSA) to formalize partnership between WIC and Head Start in order to facilitate ongoing coordination of services. However, the timeline for implementing the MOU or DSA must be outlined in the proposal and where applicable, all applicant team member letters of

commitment must affirm the timeline. Additionally, project activities or project outcomes should not hinge or depend on the creation of an MOU or DSA.

Project Track 4: Innovative Outreach Project

Implement an innovative project that includes outreach strategies that will be adapted for diverse communities to meet the goals of WIC CIAO.

- Purpose: This Project Track is for applicants to propose their own project that is tailored to meet the needs of the priority population. The proposed project could have novel strategies not found in Project Tracks 1-3 or could be a combination of Project Tracks 1-3. Proposals in this track may be submitted by a singular applicant or an applicant team.

- Definitions
  - For the purpose of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project, innovation is defined as the following:
    - A novel strategy that will improve upon an existing outreach strategy or adapt it for diverse communities and circumstances, or
    - A partnership that is unique or uniquely valuable.

 Examples of outreach strategies suitable for innovation include, but are not limited to:

  - Create, adapt, and distribute WIC Program outreach and eligibility information so that it is relevant and culturally and linguistically appropriate.
  - Communicate the importance of WIC through marketing strategies (e.g., texting, social media, billboards, radio, etc.).
  - Expand an existing coalition to leverage the coalition's network for WIC outreach.

C. Participation in Evaluation of WIC CIAO
Questions 8–12 in the online application

This section informs applicants of the evaluation requirements associated with the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project and outlines expectations for additional evaluation (optional), if included. As outlined in Section II-G (Expectations of WIC CIAO Subgrantees), subgrantees are expected to participate in the standard evaluation activities outlined below. Applicants that do not agree to participate in the standard evaluation activities by selecting the checkbox in the online application will not be considered for funding.

If funded, each subgrantee must participate in the evaluation of the WIC CIAO Project. The Project Team will be responsible for the overarching WIC CIAO evaluation across all subgrant projects, using a standard set of evaluation activities, described below. This standard set of evaluation activities will provide useful information to evaluate each subgrant project, in addition to the WIC CIAO Project overall. Funded subgrantees are required to support the Project Team in data collection activities related to this standard set of evaluation activities.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

The collective goal of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Projects is to move the needle on five key outcomes, or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): WIC awareness, engagement, enrollment, participation, and retention (Table 2). The standard evaluation activities will assess these KPIs. **Proposed projects should be designed to address and impact at least one KPI and up to five KPIs.** The number of KPIs addressed by the subgrant project *will not* affect the project's chances of being funded*.*

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators for WIC CIAO Subgrant Projects

Key Performance Indicator	Generalized Definition
WIC Awareness	Having knowledge of the WIC Program and/or the services available within WIC.
WIC Engagement	The number of WIC services or WIC CIAO Subgrant Project strategies that WIC participants/priority populations engage in, and/or satisfaction with these services.
WIC Enrollment	The number of individuals certified to receive WIC benefits each month, including individuals who did not redeem their WIC food benefits in that month.
WIC Participation	The sum of: (1) The number of persons who received supplemental foods or food instruments during the reporting period; (2) The number of infants who did not receive supplemental foods or food instruments but whose breastfeeding mother received supplemental foods or food instruments during the report period; and (3) The number of breastfeeding women who did not receive supplemental foods or food instruments but whose infant received supplemental foods or food instruments during the report period.
WIC Retention	Percent retention will be calculated as the number of individuals active minus the individuals terminated or at another agency over the number of individuals active overall. In other words, percent retention = [enrollment – (transfers out + terminations] / enrollment.

Standard Set of Evaluation Activities

The standard set of evaluation activities for the subgrant projects will focus on key measures developed by the Project Team, aligned with the USDA WIC Modernization Efforts and evidence-based evaluation frameworks. The standard evaluation will explore several aspects of the subgrant projects, including how the subgrant projects were implemented or carried out, how many people or partners were reached by the project activities, and how effective the projects were in impacting the KPIs.

Data Collection Expectations for the Standard Set of Evaluation Activities

The Project Team will collect both quantitative and qualitative data for the evaluation (Table 3). Subgrantees will be expected to collaborate with the Project Team to support data collection for the standard set of evaluation activities.

Table 3: Standard Evaluation Measures and Responsibilities

Data Points	WIC CIAO Project Team Responsibilities	Subgrantee Responsibilities
Reach measures for project strategies[7]	• Collaborate with subgrantees in the development and adoption of reach measures, relevant to each Project Track, to record the number and types of contacts made with the subgrant projects' priority population(s) (e.g., number of individuals engaged with at a community health fair and the total number of individuals who attended the community health fair) throughout the project implementation period. • Provide suggested strategies for the subgrantee team to track these measures (i.e., tally sheets, spreadsheets, apps).	• Collect data for agreed upon reach measures. • Report reach measures quarterly as part of the quarterly reporting process, unless a different timeframe is agreed upon between the subgrantee and their assigned Mentor Team.
Subgrant project staff/ partner(s) key informant interviews	• Collect project staff perspectives on project successes and challenges through interviews with 2–5 subgrant project staff/partner(s) involved in the implementation of each subgrant project. • Provide gift card incentives to interview participants in appreciation for their time and the information they share.	• 2–5 subgrant project staff/partner(s) are expected to participate in interviews. • During interviews, openly discuss what went well and what challenges the project strategies encountered, and what advice subgrant project staff/partner(s) would give to others trying to implement a similar project. Share additional information through the interviews such as the potential for sustaining and/or scaling up the project and its transferability to other settings.

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[7] RE-AIM Improving Public Health Relevance and Population Health Impact (n.d.). REACH of Health Behavior Interventions. RE-AIM.org. https://re-aim.org/learn/what-is-re-aim/reach/

Priority population/ partner(s) pre- and post-project KPI surveys	• Provide KPI survey templates that collect information on sociodemographics and WIC awareness and engagement as previously defined in KPI Table 2. • Support subgrantees in survey distribution to the priority population(s) (i.e., WIC participants or other relevant project recipients) and partner(s) of each subgrant project. • Supply recruitment materials for subgrantee KPI surveys.	• Deploy two rounds of WIC CIAO KPI surveys, once before the implementation of project strategies and once after; doing so will help evaluate change in WIC awareness and engagement, if any, among the projects' priority population(s) and partner(s). • Translate surveys into priority population(s) languages as identified by the subgrant project. • Distribute incentives to survey respondents. • Develop and analyze any additional questions added to the survey that are pertinent to your project, if desired. (See section below on additional evaluation) • **Note**: **Your proposed budgets should include adequate funding for any expected survey translations, dissemination, and incentives.** Please see the budget narrative instructions for guidance on how to budget for these activities.
Administrative or aggregate data	• Support the subgrantee in identification of aggregate data collected routinely by the subgrantee or partner organizations pertinent to the subgrant project and standard evaluation activities. This includes WIC administrative data and may include other data sources. • Work with the subgrantees to make sharing this data safe, secure, and minimally burdensome to the subgrantee.	• Provide aggregate data collected routinely by the subgrantee or partner organizations and/or additional data collected as part of the subgrantee's individual evaluation that is agreeable to both parties to share. • For example, this will include data on WIC participation, enrollment, and/or retention that is collected by the WIC agency.

Potential Challenges

Subgrantees will be asked to identify and describe any anticipated or potential challenges for supporting the Project Team in the standard evaluation activities described above. If anticipated or potential challenges are identified, subgrantees should explain mitigation strategies in the proposed project that will be leveraged to overcome the challenges and/or how the Project Team can support the subgrantee to overcome the identified challenges. If no anticipated or potential challenges are identified, subgrantees should provide a justification or reasoning for not identifying any anticipated or potential challenges.

Additional Evaluation (Optional):

The activities listed above comprise the expected level of effort that subgrantees will take in contributing to the evaluation of their subgrant projects. Some subgrantees may seek to understand additional information outside of the standard evaluation activities. Therefore, if desired by the applicant team, subgrantees are welcome to conduct additional evaluation activities for their projects using their internal staff or preferred evaluation partner(s) (e.g., evaluation/research firm, university, etc.), while receiving guidance and technical assistance (e.g., evaluation development, implementation, and analysis) from the Project Team. Subgrantees that opt to complete additional evaluation of their subgrant projects are still expected to participate in and complete activities outlined above for the standard set of evaluation activities. The Project Team anticipates working closely with any subgrantee evaluation partner(s) to reduce duplication of efforts by collaborating on data collection and data-sharing efforts where it makes sense and is agreed upon by all parties. If the subgrant team chooses to include additional evaluation activities, adequate funding to cover costs related to these activities (e.g., staff time for planning, data collection, and analysis; additional participant incentives; etc.) should be included in the budget in addition to the recommended budget items to cover the standard evaluation activities. Please note, any additional evaluation activities should be designed to minimize any burden to local and/or State WIC agencies.

Institutional Review Board (IRB):

The standard evaluation activities have been deemed non-human subjects research by the University of Nebraska Medical Center.   If the subgrantee's organization requires that standard or supplemental evaluation activities be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Project Team can help with this process as soon as the funding award is accepted. The Project Team can provide support and IRB access if the subgrantee does not have their own IRB process. If subgrantees are required to submit their project and evaluation protocols through their own State agency IRB/review processes, the Project Team will work with the subgrantee to complete the review and approval process according to those specific protocols.

D. Subgrant Project Management Plan
Questions 13- 18 in the online application

Below applicants will find information to complete the Subgrant Project Management Plan section of the application. The table below entitled Table 4: Subgrant Management Activities summarizes the responsibilities of the WIC CIAO Mentor Team compared to the responsibilities of the subgrantees. The Project Team encourages applicants to consider the required subgrantee project management activities and the required staff time in order to answer questions 13–18 in the online application:

- Question 13: Describe a plan for how the project manager(s) will ensure that activities are (1) completed on time, (2) within budget, and (3) with desired outcomes to a high-quality standard. Please address all three of these areas in your answer and explain the applicant team's experience managing grants.
- Question 14: Describe the feasibility of starting your outreach strategies within the first quarter (three months) of the subgrant period. What are potential delays (e.g., bureaucratic barriers) that could occur and how would you alter your project to make sure you can start your outreach within the first quarter?
- Question 15: Describe the feasibility of fully implementing the proposed outreach strategies during the two-year subgrant period. What are potential delays that could occur in your project timeline, how would you alter your project to make sure it stays on track to be completed within two years?
- Question 16: List the key staff/positions that will be involved in the project.
- Question 17: If your organization/agency(s) will hire additional staff to assist with this project, how long after funds are awarded do you anticipate filling positions?
- Question 18: If your project involves any subcontracting to other organizations, please describe the subcontracting process and timelines that you would need to complete in order to obtain subcontracts and launch your subgrant.

Table 4: Subgrant Project Management Activities

Technical Support	WIC CIAO Mentor Team	Subgrantee
Project Design	• Work with subgrantee to refine intervention strategies, support evaluation design, and troubleshoot challenges. • If needed, establish safe data-sharing procedures or agreements among project partners. • Provide standard evaluation questions and measures to assess project implementation and impact across all subgrantee projects. • Obtain IRB approval for the WIC CIAO standard evaluation activities. • Provide support for IRB applications if the subgrantee has their own IRB process.	• Work with WIC CIAO Mentor Team to finalize intervention strategies, data collection, and data safety plans. • Hire additional staff or contractors needed to support the project in a timely manner and consistent with their proposal. • Applicants should consider leveraging existing staff and programmatic resources infrastructure to ensure timely completion of grant deliverables. • If new staff are hired, there should be a plan in place to integrate their duties beyond the subgrant period if their position is no longer funded.

Technical Support	WIC CIAO Mentor Team	Subgrantee
		• If needed, obtain IRB approval for subgrant activities. (see IRB section under Section III-C).
Preparation and Training	• Provide support, guidance, and training to subgrantees to carry out outreach strategies (e.g., effective use of social media or other outreach strategies). • Provide support, guidance, and training to subgrantees to support data collection activities. • Establish data reporting requirements and timing for all subgrantees. • Organize and facilitate a virtual closeout meeting at the end of the project.	• Support key staff attendance at monthly webinars and active engagement with other technical assistance and training opportunities. • **Note**: This requires a time commitment of one hour per month for Community of Practice webinars and up to one hour per month with the WIC CIAO Mentor Team (can be adjusted as needed). • Provide feedback and input on data collection methods and tools developed by the WIC CIAO Mentor Team, and support data collection efforts as needed. • Attend and present project findings at a virtual close-out meeting at the end of the project. One person from each project is required to attend. If a project is organized by an applicant team, one member of the applicant team is required to attend.
Implementation	• Provide expertise on WIC that may impact project design, including information and updates on federal WIC rules, regulations, and waivers.	• Dedicate sufficient staff time to project management and implementing intervention following agreed-upon timeline. • Complete on-the-ground tasks and engagement of partners and potential WIC participants.

Technical Support	WIC CIAO Mentor Team	Subgrantee
Data Collection and Evaluation	● Work with subgrantees to complete all standard evaluation activities. ● **Note:** See Table 3 for a breakdown of standard evaluation activities. ● Support and provide technical assistance for subgrantee project additional evaluation, as applicable.	● Support the WIC CIAO Mentor Team in standard evaluation efforts. ● **Note:** See Table 3 for a breakdown of standard evaluation activities. ● Design and lead additional evaluation efforts, as desired.
Data Management and Analysis	● Conduct analyses of all data collected for the standard evaluation of the overarching project. ● Provide guidance on the analysis of any additional data that the subgrantee opted to collect.	● Collect and share all agreed-upon, de-identified data. ● Conduct analyses on any data that the subgrant team opted to collect. Reach out to the Mentor Team for guidance on additional analyses, as needed.
Reporting	● Provide guidance for dissemination materials. ● Develop quarterly and overall reports to submit to FNS. ● Provide templates for subgrantee quarterly and final reports. ● Prepare abstracts for scientific and WIC-oriented meetings; publish peer-reviewed manuscripts.	● Submit all required quarterly and final reports to FRAC. ● **Note:** This will require adequate time for completion of quarterly and final reports. ● Collaborate with the Project Team to create dissemination materials summarizing key elements of the project and notable results. ● Collaborate with the Project Team to develop presentations and manuscripts (optional).

Technical Support	WIC CIAO Mentor Team	Subgrantee
Financial Management	• Define payment schedule based on milestones and dispersing payments. • Provide guidance on financial management, auditing, and pacing how funds are spent by the end of the grant period. • Conduct grant closeout activities at the end of the grant period.	• Provide information necessary to disperse funding. • Track expenses as part of quarterly reporting.

IV.   Additional Requirements

Question 19 in the online application

The information in this section provides applicants with additional requirements of the WIC CIAO Subgrant Project funding. Question 19 in the online applications asks applicants to agree to a list of assurances to receive funding.

A.   Monitoring and Reporting

All subgrant recipients must submit quarterly reports on their project activities to reflect efforts to date. Quarterly reports should address both activity and financial progress against recipients' workplans and milestones. As part of its broader technical assistance responsibilities, the WIC CIAO mentor team will provide recipients support during the planning stage to define specific reporting requirements, and identify any technical assistance needed prior to or during the implementation period to continuously meet these requirements, understand recipient progress, and proactively identify interventions needed to support recipient success.

At a minimum, quarterly reports must describe, in sufficient detail for WIC CIAO program monitoring and learning needs:

- Overall progress against project goals and objectives
- Specific activities and actions undertaken during the reporting period (including any follow-up from the preceding quarter)
- Measurable achievements (qualitative and, where feasible, quantitative) associated with those activities and project milestones
- Implementation challenges encountered during the reporting period, including the cause and effect of those challenges on the project
- Impact of the challenges encountered on workplan, timeline, and/or payment milestones and schedule
- Lessons learned and proposed actions to mitigate continued challenges or risks going forward

All subgrant recipients must also submit a final report on their project. The final report must include a narrative of the implementation process, evaluation results, key challenges and risks faced, mitigation efforts, successes, and lessons learned including information on how the subgrant project was adapted to meet community needs and context.

Subgrantees must also submit any materials (e.g., educational, promotional, interview guides, data codebooks) developed as a part of this project with their final reports. The Project Team will provide a specific format and template for all reports. Subgrantees must consent to allow these reports to be shared with FNS and FNS contractors for the purposes of evaluating WIC Outreach, Innovation, and Program Modernization efforts, and to be shared publicly for educational purposes.

All subgrantees must participate in a project close-out meeting at the end of the subgrant period. The Project Team will organize and facilitate a virtual meeting that includes presentations of all subgrantees' project findings, limitations, and sustainability considerations.

B.   Acknowledgement of Funding Source

As outlined in 2 CFR 415.2,[8] subgrantees should include acknowledgement of USDA FNS support on any publications written or published with grant support, and if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity. Recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA FNS support on any audiovisual, which is produced with grant support and which has a direct production cost of over $5,000.

When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Subgrantees should follow the USDA Visual Standards Guide when using the USDA logo.

Guidelines for written and visual acknowledgment of the Project Team will be provided at the time of the award.

C.   Ensuring Confidentiality of Participants

All applicants must document procedures used to maintain the quality and integrity of all data, particularly in protecting data privacy, if data is shared between partners. No personally identifiable information should be saved to public websites (e.g., Google files) or shared with the Project Team. This includes personally identifiable information (i.e., WIC participant name, phone number, or address) or a combination of information that individually identifies an applicant or participant and/or family members, regardless of the source.

Each subgrantee's WIC CIAO Mentor Team will provide technical assistance to develop:

- Protocols for sharing, storing, and/or using confidential data.

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[8] 2 CFR 415.2 refers to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2 (Grants and Agreements), Chapter IV (Department of Agriculture), Part 415 (General Program Administrative Regulations), Section 415.2 "Acknowledgement of USDA Support on Publications and Audiovisuals." Available at: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-415. Please refer to this regulation's webpage for definitions of publications, audiovisuals, and their production. Please direct questions to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org.

- Data-sharing agreements or protocols between organizations/agencies that wish to share confidential data to facilitate outreach efforts.

D.   Use of Grant Funds

Budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, and approved meetings, conferences, and training travel expenses (whether in-person or virtual). All funding requests should be in whole dollars.

Examples of allowable program expenses include, but are not limited to:
- Salary (personnel, contractors) and fringe benefits
- Compensation for community partners who serve as key project partners (e.g., play an active role in conducting outreach with the priority population, serve as WIC Program champions or navigators (Project Track 3)) (e.g., time for project activity preparation and implementation, travel time, participation in evaluation-related activities, training/professional development for WIC-related activities, etc.).
- Internet and telephone (internet and cell phone use related to the project)
- Office space and utilities
- Incentives for participation of community partners and/or WIC participants in evaluation-related activities:
  - Incentives may be used to encourage participants to respond to evaluation-related activities (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups, advisory boards). All proposed incentive costs should be reasonable and necessary to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Examples of allowable financial incentives include coupons or gift cards redeemable for food or general household items. For incentives for focus group participants, (e.g., 6-10 participants per focus group) the Project Team recommends between $25 to $50 depending on the length of time of the focus group.
- Equipment and/or supplies needed to complete physical measurements (e.g. height and weight) and complete bloodwork requirements
- Software (e.g., upgrades to Electronic Medical Records systems to incorporate referral processes)
- Meeting/conference expenses (e.g., Zoom accounts, travel to and from meetings/conferences, food and refreshments, etc.)
- Participant support costs (stipends, subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants; gift cards can be used to cover these costs)
- Outreach expenses (e.g., table fees to participate in community outreach events, flyers, posters, pamphlets, multimedia advertising campaigns, etc.)
- Photography and video for events/meetings/conferences
- Communication tool development (e.g., tools to track social media metrics, etc.)
- Translation and interpretation services
- Travel for outreach and training purposes (e.g., to and from outreach events, travel costs associated with running a mobile WIC clinic, etc.)
- Public transportation, contract transportation services, or transportation vouchers/incentives are allowable as outlined:

- A WIC State agency may use subgrant funds to support transportation to clinics. A State agency may also use nutrition services and administration (NSA) program funds to support transportation to clinics *if the service is essential to assure program access* ([7 CFR 246.14(c)(7)](#)).
- A WIC local agency may use subgrant funds to support transportation to clinics. Additionally, a WIC local agency may use NSA program funds to provide transportation services to clinics with prior approval from the State agency ([7 CFR 246.14(c)(7)](#)).
- A WIC State or local agency may use subgrant funds to support transportation to WIC vendors to obtain supplemental foods. NSA funds must *not* be used to provide transportation to vendors, nor to directly reimburse participants for transportation to vendors ([7 CFR 246.14(c)(7)](#)).
- A non-WIC entity (e.g., a nonprofit applying as an applicant or part of an applicant team) may use subgrant funds to support transportation to and from WIC clinics and WIC vendors.

Budgets may not include:
- Equipment (e.g., vehicles, laptops, cell phones, medical equipment)
- Office supplies for general use, although these may be covered under the 10 percent allowable overhead
- Decorative materials
- Live entertainment
- Gift cards that are not for participant support costs
- Incentives for enrollment in WIC
- Administrative/processing costs and fees (these must be a part of either the fringe or indirect rate, depending on the exact purpose of these costs and fees)
- Insurance costs and fees (these must be a part of either the fringe or indirect rate, depending on the exact purpose of these costs and fees)
- Travel expenses not related to training activities
- Funds for clinical care except to develop referral processes
- Reimbursement for pre-award costs
- Lobbying or advocacy:
  - Publicity or propaganda purposes, for the preparation, distribution, or use of any material designed to support or defeat the enactment of legislation, appropriations, regulation, administrative action, or Executive Order before any legislative body.
  - The salary or expenses of any grant or contract recipient, or an agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of the legislation, appropriations, regulation, administrative action, or Executive Order proposed or pending before any legislative body.
  - Supporting campaign or political events where elected officials will be present.

Recommended budget allocations for evaluation activities:

- Staff time to participate in and complete the activities outlined in the standard set of evaluation activities (Table 3).
- Translation costs related to evaluation activities. These costs will need to be identified and accounted for in your requested budget. For example, KPI surveys and corresponding recruitment materials will need to be translated into the language(s) of the priority population(s) for your proposed project.
  - Applicants are welcome to use any translation service they prefer, and translation costs/fees should be included in the requested funding amount. If the applicant does not have a preferred way to translate surveys/materials, the Project Team recommends including translation services at an estimated cost of $500 per language for the KPI survey templates that will be provided by the Project Team.
- Incentives for KPI survey respondents (i.e., individuals from the project's priority population(s) and/or partner(s)) as desired by the subgrant project (see Allowable Program Expenses above).
  - *To calculate these costs, we recommend estimating the number of people you expect to complete the pre-survey. Then multiply that number by 2, to cover the incentives for post-survey respondents. Take this number and multiply it by your desired gift card incentive amount. A gift card of $10–$25 dollars per survey is recommended.*
- Additional staff time, consulting fees, incentives etc. if opting to complete additional evaluation activities outside of the standard set.

The budget will be scored on whether items are appropriate for the description of the proposed subgrant project, meaning that applicants should not request funds for items that are beyond the scope of the subgrant, but should also allocate sufficient staff time and funds for the proposed work. Applicants must be able to leverage existing staff (specifically all key personnel funded through the subgrant project) and utilize partnerships with members of their applicant team and other entities to begin work as soon as possible, if awarded grant funds.

All applicants will be limited to no more than 10 percent of the allowed indirect costs applied to personnel and direct costs, unless applicants have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a federal agency, in which case a copy of the agreement must be included in the application materials. A detailed explanation on how to calculate indirect costs for your budget request is included in the budget template.

The WIC CIAO Mentor Team will work with subgrantees to ensure that funding is spent down over the course of their subgrants. Any funds that the subgrantee does not spend by the end of the approved project period shall be forfeited.

V. Submitting an Application

A. How to Submit a Full Application

Applicants must submit the full proposal via the online application portal available at https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/r2_frac_wic-ciao. All applicants should log into the system and familiarize themselves with the online application requirements.

Singular and primary applicants will be required to provide a brief description of the applicant's organization, including relevant special interest in outreach and the geographic area(s) (counties and zip codes) in which they plan to carry out the outreach activities, a description of the priority population(s) served, and a brief summary of their proposed project.

If an application is submitted by an applicant team, all applicant team member organizations must be listed in the application, but only one application package is required and should be submitted by the primary applicant. As a reminder, a letter of commitment is required from each applicant team member organization listed on the application. (see Section II-C).

Additional letters of commitment are encouraged, but not required. These letters may come from organizations that demonstrate the applicant organization's commitment to improving their community's health and well-being, knowledge of WIC, and ability to work collaboratively.

Required Attachments:
- Project work plan (template provided in Appendix A).
- Budget (template provided in Appendix A).
- Budget narrative (template provided in Appendix A).
- Résumé or biosketch, no longer than two pages, for each key project staff member (i.e., funded through the WIC CIAO subgrant and/or serving key roles in the project).
- Letter of support from a WIC State agency (required for all applicants except WIC State agencies; template provided in Appendix A). A WIC State agency could be either a geographic state, a territory, or an Indian Tribal Organization that administers the Program ([7 CFR 246.2](#)). A letter of support demonstrates the State agency's willingness to support the project including by providing WIC administrative data. A template for the letter of support is included in Appendix
  - Tribal governments encountering difficulty obtaining a letter of support should reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager immediately at wic-ciao@frac.org for additional technical assistance. The LOS requirement may be modified on a case-by-case basis for Indian Tribal Organizations or other governmental instrumentalities of a federally recognized Indian Tribe not currently administering WIC per [7 CFR 246.2.](#) please reach out to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org for information on completing the application in the WIC CIAO online portal.
- Letter(s) of commitment from applicant team member organizations (required if applying as part of an applicant team).
- Governmental information letter from Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (for WIC State and local agencies) *or* 501c3 letter of determination from IRS (for nonprofit organizations).
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a federal agency, if applicable. If an organization/agency does not have a NICRA, the indirect cost rate is capped at 10 percent.
- A copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statements and IRS Form 990.
- A copy of your organization's overall line-item budget for 2023 and 2024.
- A completed [Financial Management Questionnaire.](#)

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. ET on September 6, 2024. Late submissions will *not* be reviewed. Note that submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis prior to the deadline for required materials, and applicants may be provided with the opportunity to supply supporting documents if the Project Team finds that an incorrect or outdated document was submitted.

Please email wic-ciao@frac.org with any questions, including technical difficulties with the submission. Be sure to check your spam folder(s) for replies, as emails from FRAC and the online application portal may be blocked by spam filters.

B. Letter of Intent (optional but highly encouraged)

WIC CIAO subgrant applicants are *highly encouraged,* but not required, to submit a nonbinding Letter of Intent to Submit an Application (LOI) by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 25, 2024. Please note: The LOI is a brief survey and should take no longer than five minutes to complete.

The LOI survey will *not* be considered in the review process but provides useful information to the Project Team in preparing for providing technical assistance to applicants as well as ensuring that the RFA is being adequately disseminated through diverse channels.

The Project Team will not provide feedback on LOIs beyond confirmation of receipt. WIC CIAO applicants who do not submit a LOI by the specified deadline may still submit an application by the application due date of September 6, 2024.

C. Selection Criteria

The Review Team (Project Team, select external reviewers, and Advisory Board members) will conduct a review of all applications that have not been disqualified. Disqualifications may occur due to one of three reasons: (1) failure to prove eligible entity status; or (2) failure to submit by the closing deadline; or (3) failure to pass an initial application and financial screening.

The initial application and financial screening will consist of the following:

- Completeness: all required documents have been submitted with the application and are filled out;
- Financial viability: 1) tax forms and audits are up to date and reflect the applicant's financial stability; 2) an applicant's organization/agency operating budget compared to their WIC CIAO subgrant project budget does not exceed 30% of the applicant's operating budget; 3) an applicant's Financial Management Systems Questionnaire reflects sound financial practices; and 4) the applicant filled in all checkboxes in the Assurances section of the application;
- Other:
  - o Confirmation of the applicant's active eligibility registrations;
  - o Agreement to participate in the evaluation (i.e., checking "yes" to the Question 9 evaluation checkbox);
  - o Project Track alignment.

In addition, current WIC CIAO subgrantees will undergo an initial screening based on their answers to subgrantee-specific application questions.

All applications cleared for review will be reviewed using the same criteria regardless of project focus and Project Track selected. The Project Team will also seek to ensure diversity in the geographical representation, priority population, Project Track, and agency/organization type in the subgrants awarded.

Table 5: Application Selection Criteria

Total Possible Point Value	Section Heading	Subsection Headings and Scoring Criteria
0 points	**Questions for Current WIC CIAO Subgrantees ONLY**	This section is not scored. Purpose of this section: • Identify which applications involve agencies and organizations who are currently participating in the Round 1 WIC CIAO subgrant funding. • Determine whether applicant is currently meeting their project goals and completing project activities on time. • Determine whether the project activities in the application are substantially different (i.e., the proposed Round 2 project is not a continuation of the same Round 1 activities). Applications from current WIC CIAO subgrantees will undergo an initial review. Only applications from WIC CIAO subgrantees meeting the Round 1 project goals and completing project activities on time *and* proposing a substantially different outreach project will be reviewed using the selection criteria below.

22 Points	**Subgrant Project Design**
	
	Section A: Community Description
		• **Question 1: Needs and Barriers to WIC (8 points)**
		    o Does the applicant clearly define the priority population(s) and the disparities they face?
		    o Does the applicant clearly define barriers in WIC that will be addressed in the project?
		    o Does the community description, use of community-level data, and/or applicant knowledge support the need for the project?
		
		• **Question 2: Community Resources and Impact on Disparities (12 points)**
		
		    o Does the applicant clearly define community strengths and resources and how they will be used in the project to improve WIC?

		o Does the applicant or applicant team have a history of serving, representing, and/or focusing on the priority population? o Does the applicant or applicant team have leadership/staff reflective of the priority population and/or have lived experience with WIC? o Does the project impact disparities? • **Question 3: Community Engagement (2 points):** Will the proposal engage potential WIC participants in the project and incorporate their input?
36 Points	**Subgrant Project Design** **Section B: Subgrant Project Goals and Project Tracks**	• **Question 4: Project Goals (4 points)** o How well do the project goals based on the selected Project Track support increased WIC awareness, participation, redemption of benefits, and/or retention, and reduce disparities in program delivery? o Are the project goal(s) tailored to local context and/or the priority population(s)? • **Work Plan Template: Project Work Plan (10 points)** o Do the activities included within each quarter align with the project's goal(s)? o Are appropriate milestones/indicators proposed? o If the project has multiple priority populations, is a priority population identified for each activity? o Are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each activity identified? o Is a responsible party identified for each activity and are these current staff members identified in the application? o Are realistic timelines proposed? • **Question 5: Project Track and Outreach Strategies (10 points)** o Does the applicant present a clear narrative explaining how the outreach strategies will be carried out?

		▪ Are strategies that will start in the first quarter clearly identified?
		○ Do the outreach strategies fit cohesively under their proposed goal(s)?
		○ How well does the project meet the needs identified in the Community Description section of the application?
		○ Did the applicant discuss how they believe their proposed outreach strategies reduce disparities in WIC?
		
		• **Question 6: Project Track and Innovation (8 points)**
		
		    • Initial check boxes: (1) Does the applicant / applicant team meet the requirement of the Project Track? (2) Do the proposed goals and outreach strategies align with the chosen Project Track? [*If NO, project will not be considered for funding – rare exceptions may be considered for innovative strategies that fit under Project Track 4*]
		        ○ How well do the proposed outreach strategies fulfill the purpose of the Project Track?
		
		        ○ Will new knowledge be gained from these outreach strategies to build the evidence base for this Project Track?
		
		• **Question 7: Sustainability (4 points):**
		    ○ What is the likelihood that activities exclusively funded by the subgrant continue after the project ends?
		    ○ How well does the proposal plan to build the community's capacity (e.g., financial resources, knowledge, skills, relationships, networks) so that the solution can be sustained beyond the subgrant period?
		    ○ How well does the proposal leverage and/or influence the work of other community partners?

| 6 Points | **Subgrant Project Design**

 Section C: Evaluation Questions and Support | • **Question 8: Key Performance Indicator(s) (KPIs) (1 point)**
     ○ Does the proposal **appropriately** identify one or more KPIs related to the project?

 • **Questions 9: Standard Evaluation Agreement:**
     • Has the applicant read Section III-C, Table 3 and agreed to participate in the standard evaluation for the project? [*If NO, project will not be considered for funding.*]

 • **Question 10: Supporting the Evaluation (3 points)**
     ○ Does the proposal identify resources or supports in place that will support the standard evaluation activities?

 • **Question 11: Potential Challenges (2 points)**
     ○ Does the proposal describe any potential challenges regarding standard evaluation activities?
         • If yes, does the proposal describe mitigation strategies for the identified challenges?
             • OR
         • If no, does the proposal provide a justification for not identifying any challenges?

 • **Question 12: Additional Evaluation Questions (0 points):** |

		o Is additional evaluation outside of the standard evaluation activities proposed? If so, is it appropriately reflected in the budget and staffing levels?
22 Points	**Subgrant Project Design** **Section D: Subgrant Project Management Plan**	• **Question 13: Project Management (7 points)** o How well does the proposal articulate a clear and reasonable plan to ensure high-quality products and other outcomes and to keep the project on time and within budget? o Does the proposal incorporate feedback loops to continuously assess and adapt strategies as needed throughout the project? o Does the applicant team have prior experience managing grants? • **Question 14: Project Readiness (2 points)** o Does the applicant adequately describe the feasibility of beginning their project implementation after the start-up period (e.g., Data Sharing Agreements are in place, project is utilizing existing staff and/or leveraging long-standing partnerships)? o Do they provide an appropriate back-up plan? • **Question 15: Feasibility (3 points)** o Does the applicant adequately describe the feasibility of executing their project within the two-year time frame? Do they provide an appropriate back-up plan? • **Questions 16-18: Staffing Needs (10 points)** o Does the applicant clearly describe the core responsibilities of key personnel and other partners and staff involved in the proposed project? o Is sufficient staff time allotted? (e.g., Full Time Equivalents, or FTEs) o Will the applicant be able to initiate the project with current staffing?

		o Does the project team have relevant experience? Specifically, are there team members with experience in engaging community partners and program beneficiaries, conducting outreach, and managing projects? o Does the applicant have a clear plan for managing personnel associated with the project? o Does the applicant have a clear plan for hiring and overcoming hiring challenges and/or contracting personnel associated with the project?
14 Points	**Budget and Budget Narrative**	**Content (10 points)** o Does the applicant propose costs that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goal(s) and objectives? o Are all partners on the applicant team and contractors, especially community partners (including WIC champions), appropriately compensated for their role? o Are WIC participants and eligible non-participants appropriately compensated for standard research activities outlined in section III-C of the RFA? o Are evaluation expenses included in the budget calculations? (e.g., incentives for fielding KPI surveys) o Are translations included in the budget calculations, if applicable to the project? **Transparency (4 points)** o Does the proposal include a line-item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goal(s)? o Does the proposal provide complete budget calculations and documentation to show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated?

		o If applicable, does the proposal clearly identify a bona fide need to justify the cost for any subcontractor or consultant expenses?

D. Selection Process

Following an initial screening process for confirmation of the applicant organization's eligibility (see "disqualifications" above in Section V-C), members of the Review Team will review and determine the technical merits of each application. Each application will be assigned one primary reviewer and at least one additional reviewer. Reviewers will independently score each proposal based on the criteria outlined in Section V-C. Reviewer scores will be averaged and discussed among the reviewing team. This process will generate a list of fundable, competitive proposals for consideration.

The Review Team will require all reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process. Names of applicants applying will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

Lastly, FNS will review the recommendations and approve final subgrantee award decisions. FNS reserves the right to accept the Review Team's recommendations or to select an application for funding out of order to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, project diversity, and applicant organization variety.

E. Technical Assistance During the Application Process

The Project Team will hold a series of optional webinars in English and in Spanish to provide an overview of the funding opportunity, information on the WIC CIAO evaluation, and detailed instructions on how to complete an application. The webinars will include time for potential applicants to ask questions, and the webinar will be recorded and posted to FRAC's YouTube webpage and the www.HelloWIC.org website.

- July 16, 2024: Overview of the WIC CIAO Subgrant RFA and Evaluation (English and Spanish) Registration
- July 24, 2024: WIC CIAO Subgrant Project Tracks and Work Plan (English & Spanish) Registration
- July 30, 2024: WIC CIAO Subgrant Project Budget and Personnel (English & Spanish) Registration

Any questions related to the application process can also be directed to the WIC CIAO Project Manager at wic-ciao@frac.org. We encourage applicants to reach out early in their process to ensure they have enough time to discuss questions and take appropriate steps to complete their proposals.

To ensure that all technical assistance provided to applicants is uniformly available to all, the questions submitted through outreach and dissemination presentations, webinars, or email will be collected, summarized, and answered in a regularly updated FAQ list on the www.HelloWIC.org website. No identifying information will be shared.

VI. Project Direction

Funding for this opportunity is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Direction and technical support for this opportunity are provided by FRAC, the Center for Nutrition and Health Impact, UnidosUS, and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative. Please direct all inquiries to:

> WIC CIAO Project Manager
> Food Research & Action Center
> Website: www.HelloWIC.org
> Email: wic-ciao@frac.org

Key staff members at the Food Research & Action Center are:

- Alexandra Ashbrook, JD, LLM, WIC and Root Causes Director
- Sally Mancini, MPH, WIC CIAO Project Manager
- Tommi-Grace Melito Alvaro, MPP, MSW, WIC CIAO Senior Technical Assistance Mentor
- Eli Yussuf, Grants Manager
- Susan Beaudoin, Senior Program Manager
- Irene Lewis, SNAP Policy Analyst

Key staff members at the Center for Nutrition and Health Impact are:

- Betsy Anderson Steeves, PhD, RD, Senior Research Scientist
- Jennie Hill, PhD, Senior Research Scientist
- Eric Calloway, PhD, RD, Senior Research Scientist
- Laura Balis, PhD, Research Scientist
- Miguel Ángel López, PhD, MPH, RDN, Postdoctoral Fellow
- Emily Duffy, PhD, MPH, RD, Postdoctoral Fellow
- Emily Dimond, MPH, RDN, Senior Research Associate
- Maddy Wierenga, MPH, Research Associate
- Christina Ballu, MPH, Research Associate
- Chelsea Hollowell, MS, RDN, CLC, Senior Project Manager
- Francesca Papa, MS, Data Collection and Analytics Manager
- Whitney Clausen, MPH, Project Manager

Key staff members at UnidosUS are:

- Rita Carreón, Vice President, Health
- Ana Gabriela Power, Senior Director
- Sonia Ruiz-Bolanos, PhD, Consultant

Key staff members at Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative are:

- Kelli Case, JD, Staff Attorney

Please visit the WIC CIAO website at www.HelloWIC.org for background information and resources related to WIC certification, frequently asked questions related to this RFA, and general updates on the project.

VII. Appendix A: Templates

- Application Template
- Budget Template
- Budget Narrative Template
- WIC State Agency Letter of Support Template
- Applicant Team Member Letter of Commitment Template
- Work Plan Template