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**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE**

**PEOPLE'S GARDEN SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM**

**CFDA #10.579**

**Applications due November 8, 2010**

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## **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has \$1 million available in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 for a People's Garden School Pilot Program. FNS is requesting applications to enter into a cooperative agreement for the purposes of awarding grants to develop and run community gardens at eligible high-poverty schools; teaching students involved in the gardens about agriculture production practices, diet, and nutrition; contributing produce to supplement food provided at eligible schools, student households, local food banks, or senior center nutrition programs; and conducting an evaluation of funded projects to learn more about the impacts of school gardens.

### **AUTHORIZATION**

Funding will be awarded under the authority provided by section 18 (g) (3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769(g) (3)). This section allows the Secretary of Agriculture to award grants to public schools and nonprofit entities for projects to develop, run and evaluate community gardens at eligible schools<sup>1</sup>.

### **BACKGROUND**

On February 12, 2009, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture established the People's Garden Initiative at USDA in order to promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables grown in a sustainable manner in community gardens around the world.

In the FY 2010, USDA appropriations bill (P.L. 111-080), Congress provided \$1 million to USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to carry out a pilot program to provide grants to public schools and nonprofit entities for projects to develop and operate community gardens at high poverty public schools. This initiative is part of a broad effort on the part of USDA to provide

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<sup>1</sup> "Eligible school" means a public school, at least 50 percent of the students of which are eligible for free or reduced price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

children with access to a nutritious and safe diet and positively influence healthier choices for all American households.

The People's Garden School Pilot Program offers students at high poverty schools<sup>2</sup> an opportunity for improved access to nutritious food through learning about nutrition and agriculture production, and by becoming empowered with the knowledge and experience of growing their own food, as well as contributing to the nutritional value of their school meals and the nutritional well-being of their community.

Among the projects developed from this solicitation, FNS intends to identify models of successful school garden initiatives which then can be marketed to the elementary and secondary education community for inspiration, ideas, and replication.

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<sup>2</sup> High poverty schools are defined as public schools with 50 percent or more students eligible for free and reduced price meals, Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769(g)(3))

## **SECTION II: REQUIREMENTS**

### **THE PEOPLE'S GARDEN SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM**

This grant offering will be awarded as a cooperative agreement between the award recipient and FNS which means FNS will have involvement in carrying out the activities of the People's Garden School Pilot Program. Key areas of collaboration are identified within this section and in the checklist on page 19.

Applicants are required to present a scope of work that includes developing school gardens, evaluating the impact of the garden projects on education outcomes, and supporting the initiative with a budget of reasonable costs, including no more than \$1,000,000 of federal funds from this solicitation. FNS encourages the development of a project design that includes effective partnerships and demonstrates sustainability beyond the performance period of the People's Garden School Pilot Program.

The school gardens must be planted, cared for, and harvested primarily by students at the eligible schools during the project period. Participation by school staff, families, and community members is allowable. The school gardens must be new garden initiatives, not the maintenance or expansion of existing gardens. Each garden must serve two or more eligible schools at which 50 percent or more of the students are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch. School garden projects, in order to be eligible programs as defined in the National School Lunch Act, must be one of the following types:

- A school-based program with hands-on vegetable gardening and nutrition education that is incorporated into the curriculum for one or more grades at two or more eligible schools; or
- A community-based summer program with hands-on vegetable gardening and nutrition education that is part of, or coordinated with, a summer enrichment program and/or the Summer Food Service Program at two or more eligible schools.

Growing herbs and fruits in the gardens along with vegetables is an option that is allowable. Produce raised in gardens developed with these funds may be used to supplement food provided at eligible schools, student households, local food banks, or senior center nutrition programs.

FNS encourages using existing curriculum and educational materials. (See Federal Nutrition Education Resources 2005 – 2010 in Section VII on page 29).

The authorizing legislation for this pilot program specifies that school gardens are to be developed in at least three States and no more than five States that fall into three groupings of population size. One State must rank in the top 15 most populous States. One State must rank in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> largest States, and at least one State must be among the lowest populated States. (See U.S. Bureau of Census resources in Section VII on page 29).

A soil test must be completed for each proposed garden as a condition of receipt of the funding award. The cost of soil tests is an allowable pre-award cost under the cooperative agreement for the selected applicant only. Soil testing is not required prior to the selection of the grantee of the cooperative agreement and, therefore, soil tests should not be conducted prior to or submitted with the application. FNS will not reimburse the cost of soil tests that accompany this application.

For the purpose of budget estimates, applicants may obtain information about soil testing by calling their local Cooperative Extension office, State Department of Agriculture, or Public Health Department. Soil test laboratories are listed at [http://www.ahs.org/publications/the\\_american\\_gardener/07/03/web\\_special\\_4.htm](http://www.ahs.org/publications/the_american_gardener/07/03/web_special_4.htm) and <http://www.organicgardening.com/soiltest/1,7775,s1-2-7-0,00.html>. The USDA Service Center in the applicant's county can also provide assistance: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>. Soil testing will provide information that will help determine what can be grown and the associated costs of production. (See the People's Garden Initiative Checklist for Starting a School Garden in Section VII on page 29).

Funding will not be provided to grow produce (either at surface, in containers, or in raised beds) in soil containing unacceptable levels of heavy metals. FNS must review all soil test results in order to award funds for the program. If surface soils prove to be unacceptable, alternatives may be instituted, such as transporting acceptable soil from another location to grow crops in raised beds.

### **EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The authorizing legislation for the school gardens requires an evaluation of the pilot program. In addition to developing school gardens, applicants must evaluate the impact of those gardens. The applicant must select one or more research topics appropriate for a scientific evaluation that answers one or more of the following questions:

- Did students select or consume more fruits and vegetables at school as a result of their involvement in the garden project?
- Did students consume more fruits and vegetables at home as a result of their involvement in the garden project?
- Did participation in the school garden projects lead to starting a home garden?
- Did participants in the school community garden projects select more vegetable snacks than other students?
- Did participants in the school community garden projects select more vegetables as part of the reimbursable meal?
- Were participants in the school community garden projects more likely to enjoy the products that they grew as compared to other vegetables?
- Were there any improved education outcomes associated with the inclusion of the gardening and nutrition in the curriculum?

FNS anticipates a level of quality for the evaluation design such that the findings could be published in a peer review journal (See Terms and Conditions section on page 13). A social scientist must conduct the evaluation. Other project staff may collect data to support the evaluation; however, the social scientist is responsible for overseeing the data analysis.

USDA will approve the selection of a lead researcher (social scientist) and the evaluation research design, and will work with the social scientist to find ways to cooperatively support the analysis resulting from the evaluation. In terms of planning the evaluation research time line, applicants should be aware of and take account of the fact that a 60-day notice is required to be published in the Federal Register prior to collecting data for the evaluation.

The award recipient's project director will be responsible for implementing the People's Garden School Pilot Program and will provide oversight on garden development as well as evaluation of the impact of the school garden projects on learning outcomes.

The social scientist will report to the applicant's project director and will contribute significantly to the development of the evaluation research design, methodology and analysis plan to be submitted as a part of the application for funds. As part of cooperative work under this project, FNS will have final approval of the recipient's designated social scientist and any necessary personnel or project design changes that may occur within the performance period of the project.

Minimum qualifications for the social scientist are:

- holds a PhD in the relevant study field and is affiliated with an accredited university or prominent research organization;
- has an applied research background with experience in process and short-term outcome evaluations. Experience includes designing research approaches, designing survey samples, collecting quantitative and qualitative data, using quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques, and preparing reports of research findings; and
- is able to work effectively with other project members, study participants/respondents, and government officials.

### **FUNDING AND DURATION**

Using the \$1 million made available in FY 2010 for a school garden pilot program, a single cooperative agreement will be awarded to carry out all of the activities under this solicitation. An organization may submit only one application for this RFA. Within the parameters set forth above on pages 5 and 6, there are no limits to the number of participating schools, the number of participating students, or the number of new school garden projects included in one application.

The award recipient will use the grant funds for the duration of the project period as defined in the cooperative agreement. Project start date may be proposed by the applicant and determined with FNS approval. The project end date is two years after the cooperative agreement is awarded. No extensions will be granted.

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. FNS reserves the right to reduce, increase, or revise proposal budgets in accordance with the availability of funds. Funding will be awarded competitively, based on the evaluation criteria outlined on pages 26 and 27 in this request for applications (RFA).

Funds will be provided through USDA's Grant Award/Letter of Credit process.

The Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this competition is 10.579.

### **WHO MAY APPLY**

Public or private non-profit organizations are eligible to apply, including but not limited to the following:

- Community-based organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Government organizations
- Gardening, horticultural and agricultural organizations
- End hunger organizations

### **WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY**

The following entities are not eligible to apply for this award:

- For-profit organizations
- Individuals

Non-profit organizations are required to submit a copy of the IRS Determination Letter, form 501(c)(3) or proof of application for exempt status under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal

Revenue Code, a list of their Board of Directors if applicable, and their most recent audited financial statements signed by the Treasurer or the Treasurer of the board.

Educational entities are required to submit their federal identification number. Applications submitted without this will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from consideration.

### **TARGET POPULATION**

K-12 students at public schools with 50 percent or more of students eligible for free- and reduced-price meals are targeted.

The applicant should consider all potential stakeholder groups to the extent possible in the development and implementation of the garden projects:

- Students
- Teachers
- School food service
- School administration, including school board
- Farmers
- Parents
- Community, including non-profit organizations

Cost sharing is not required, but it is encouraged.

### **ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDING**

- Necessary and reasonable costs to develop and run new gardens.
- Educational materials for nutrition education and agricultural production, resources, and other supplies. FNS encourages using existing curriculum and educational materials; however, a portion of funds may be used for *justified* development of needed materials when: 1) no existing materials are available, 2) materials have potential as a national resource, or 3) materials require translation into other languages.
- Personnel cost. Grant funds may be used to pay for a percentage of salary and benefits for the project director, key staff, and the social scientist responsible for conducting the evaluation of the impact of school gardens (must be equal to the time spent on the project).

- Soil testing prior to planting gardens.
- Local transportation costs associated with the project.

### **UNALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDING**

- Capital expenditures and improvements, that is to say, construction or purchase of permanent, non-portable structures
- Existing garden or expansion of an existing garden
- Developing gardens in soil that has unacceptable levels of heavy metals

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

An application will be selected for funding based on eligibility, and on the completeness, quality, reasonableness, and value of the proposal. The technical review criteria are listed in Section V, pages 25 – 27. To verify the eligibility of schools to participate in this grant project, school principals or superintendents must submit a certified statement for each school where a garden project is planned showing the percentage of students who are eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch. The letter(s) must be submitted on letterhead signed by school principals or superintendents and submitted with the application.

### **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT**

Applicants must include letters of commitment in the complete application package submitted to be considered for funding. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received.

Applications submitted without the required signed letters of commitment will be considered non-responsive and will be eliminated from consideration for funding.

#### **Letters of Commitment from School Principals (required, one page limit)**

All applicants are required to provide a letter of commitment on organization letterhead from the principal or administrator of each participating school. The level of support needed from

principals will vary for each organization, depending on the nature of each school community garden project.

Letters of Commitment from Partners (required, one page per partner)

Applicants are encouraged to form partnerships with public or private organizations and/or with professionals and volunteers to help create an effective and sustainable project. In order for the contributions of a partner organization or individual to be considered as part of the application for review, a letter of commitment which describes their roles, responsibilities, and contributions must be included.

Letter of Commitment from Social Scientist (required)

Applicants are required to provide a letter of commitment from the accredited social scientist they selected to complete the evaluation of the impact of school garden projects on learning outcomes. The letter should detail the research question or questions selected for the evaluation and the scope of work they have committed to perform as part of the applicant's project.

**MEETING WITH FNS**

FNS will hold a prospective applicant webinar on October 14, 2010 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. This meeting will provide an opportunity for potential applicants to receive clarification and have questions answered. Applicants should register for the webinar at <http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/17fb9g44a76> prior to this meeting. A recorded webcast of the webinar will be provided on the FNS web at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/outreach.htm> for those unable to participate.

The award recipient will be required to participate in an orientation meeting with FNS staff via webinar, at some point prior to and/or during the project performance period. Details will be provided to the selected applicant once the award is finalized by FNS.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Each garden project will be entered into the USDA People's Garden database and provided with a sign designating the school garden as a "People's Garden."

At the conclusion of the People's Garden School Pilot Program, the award recipient's project director and social scientist will compile a final report which includes:

- Research design, methodology, and findings of the impact evaluation addressing one or more of the research questions identified above;
- A final summary of the process and other project outcomes of the school gardens, for example:
  - What was harvested, how much investment was needed, how many students participated, what happened to garden waste, etc.;
  - Description of coalition-building efforts;
- Identification of promising practices and lessons learned relevant to implementation of school garden projects;
- Assessment of the sustainability of the elements of school garden projects (such as funding and resources, local champions, etc.);
- Other supporting information:
  - Submission of curricula materials;
  - Student reflections on their experience in either written, oral, or video format;
  - Teacher reflections on their experience in either written, oral, or video format; and
  - Submission of digital pictures of project activities and student participation.

All costs under the grant awards are subject to the provisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments; A-122, Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations; and A-21, Cost Principles for Institutions of Higher Education, as well as USDA regulations.

OMB Circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>

Information about implementing these circulars can be found at the following Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) citations:

- 2 CFR Part 175: Trafficking in Person; Grants and Cooperative Agreements;
- 7 CFR Part 15 Subpart A: Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs;
- 7 CFR Part 3015: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements; implementing OMB directives (OMB Circular A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments now codified at 2 CFR Part 225, OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions now codified at 2 CFR Parts 215 and 220 and OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations now codified at 2 CFR Part 230);
- 7 CFR Part 3016: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments;
- 7 CFR Part 3017, Subparts A-E: Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);
- 7 CFR Part 3018: New Restrictions on Lobbying;
- 7 CFR Part 3021, Subpart F: Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)
- 7 CFR Part 3052: USDA Implementation of Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations.

## **RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING**

The award recipient must operate a financial management system that provides accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial status of their project. The awardee is required to submit:

- ***Quarterly Reports***—Quarterly financial and programmatic progress reports must be submitted to FNS. Financial reports should provide information on the grant expenditures for the period and totals to date using the form SF-425, Federal Financial Report. The format of the programmatic report will be provided as part of the final award. The reports are due 30 days after the end of each reporting period, based upon the effective date of the cooperative agreement.
- The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 reporting information into FNS's Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) and enter other reporting information into an on-line reporting portal which will be provided by FNS. To access FPRS, the award recipient must obtain a USDA e-authentication certification. Information about obtaining an e-authentication certification will be included in the cooperative agreement.

If online reporting is not available or if the award recipient is unable to use the online reporting feature to submit financial data, the award recipient will then be required to submit an electronic copy, along with one mailed original and one copy of each report. At the time of the award, FNS will notify the award recipient how to submit reports, and provide a reporting schedule and the addresses to which the award recipient may send reports.

### **SECTION III: APPLICATION FORMAT AND PROCESS**

#### **APPLICATION FORMAT**

A checklist of the complete application format is provided in Section IV: Application Format Checklist on pages 19 – 24 of this RFA. Please read the checklist carefully and use it to help put together your application package.

It is strongly suggested that applicants structure their application according to the checklist and use the suggested proposal outline. Doing so will assist technical reviewers in locating important information. The outline parallels the technical review criteria. However, applicants who opt not to use the suggested outline or format will not lose points simply for not using them.

#### **PROPOSAL FORMAT**

Applicants are asked to use Times New Roman font in 12 point for their application.

Applicants should number the pages of their technical proposal using page 1 as first page of the proposal and numbering the pages consecutively through the end of the attachments.

Applicants are strongly advised to include a table of contents prior to page one of the proposals.

#### **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

An organization may only submit one application for this RFA. Within the 3 – 5 States selected to participate and within the parameters set forth on pages 5 and 6 of this RFA, there are no limits to the number of participating schools or the number of participating students or the number of new school garden projects included in one application. Organizations may partner on more than one application.

**DUE DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 2010**

The completed application package must be received by FNS at or before 5:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time on Monday, November 8, 2010. Applications must be submitted in sufficient time to ensure timely receipt by the deadline. FNS recommends that applicants submitting their applications to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) do so at least two weeks before the due date in case the website experiences problems. Late applications will not be considered. Additions or revisions to applications already received will not be considered.

**DUNS NUMBER AND CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION (CCR)**

Applicants for Federal Government awards are required to have a DUNS number. To obtain a DUNS number if you do not have one already, contact Dun and Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711 or visit their website at <https://eupdate.dnb.com>. There is no charge for a DUNS number. The DUNS number serves as a means of tracking and identifying applications for Federal assistance and is required to be included on all applications for Federal assistance; regardless of the method they are submitted. The DUNS number is also required to complete the steps to become a registered Grants.gov user. (See the paragraphs in Submitting Your Application below for additional information). The applicant must register its DUNS number in the Central Contractor Register (CCR). CCR registration instructions can be found at <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/grantees.aspx>. A CCR is needed to access the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website and file an application on line.

**SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION**

The grant application and required forms including the 424, 424A, and 424B can be downloaded from the Grants.gov web site at [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms\\_active\\_form\\_SF424f.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_active_form_SF424f.jsp). Applicants should use these forms when submitting their applications via Grants.gov or via email.

Applications may be submitted by email to: [FY2010Prop\\_PeoplesGarden@fns.usda.gov](mailto:FY2010Prop_PeoplesGarden@fns.usda.gov) . All applications and supporting documents submitted via email should be in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file format. Additionally, the Organizational Authorized Representative (OAR) signature shown on all application documents is required. Applications in file formats other than Adobe Acrobat and without the OAR signature will not be referred to the panel for review.

Applications may also be submitted via Grants.gov. Please allow ample time to familiarize yourself with the system's requirements including the need to download and use software required for submitting grants through this portal. A DUNS number and CCR number are required to submit an application via Grants.gov.

Applicants opting to submit their application via Grants.gov must send an email to Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer, at [Lisa.Johnson@fns.usda.gov](mailto:Lisa.Johnson@fns.usda.gov) advising that the application was submitted through Grants.gov. This email must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the application due date of November 8, 2010. Be sure to keep your submission confirmation from Grants.gov in case there is an issue in retrieving the application.

Applications will not be accepted by U.S. Postal Service or a delivery service, only through Grants.gov or email.

Please remember to include letters of commitment and certified statements of the percentage of students qualifying for free- and reduced-price lunch as well as the required 424, 424A, and 424B standard forms. Letters of commitment and will not be considered if they are not included in the application package.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SOLICITATION**

Please direct any questions regarding this solicitation to:

Lisa Johnson, Grants Officer  
3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302  
Email: [lisa.johnson@fns.usda.gov](mailto:lisa.johnson@fns.usda.gov) or [PeoplesGardenSchoolPilot@fns.usda.gov](mailto:PeoplesGardenSchoolPilot@fns.usda.gov)

## **SECTION IV: APPLICATION FORMAT CHECKLIST**

The suggested application format is included below. Read the checklist carefully and use it to help you order the pages, prepare and format your application to make sure you have included all required components before submitting it to FNS.

Required OMB approved Standard Forms at  
[http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms\\_active\\_form\\_SF424f.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_active_form_SF424f.jsp)

- ✓ SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance including:
  - Data Universal Number (DUNS)
  - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number (CFDA #10.584)
- ✓ SF 424A (Budget Summary)
- ✓ SF 424B (Assurances – Non Construction Programs)
- ✓ SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities). Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “Not Applicable.” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf>

Required USDA approved forms [http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/ocio\\_forms.html](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/ocio_forms.html)

- ✓ Form AD-1047 - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, & other Responsibility Matters (Primary Covered Transaction)
- ✓ Form AD-1048 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, -Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – (Lower Tier Covered Transactions)
- ✓ Form AD-1049 - Certification Regarding Drug-free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative I – For Grantees Other Than Individuals
- ✓ Form AD-1052 – Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements State and State Agencies
- ✓ Optional Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- ✓ Table of Contents for technical proposal and all attachments
- ✓ PART 1. PROJECT SUMMARY DATA  
List the following information on page one at the beginning of the application:
  - Name and address of applicant organization
  - Name, title, and contact information for Project Director

- Name and location of school where each garden project is proposed, including a certified statement from the school principal or school superintendent for each school, listing the percentage of students qualifying for free- and reduced-price meals and the date this percentage was determined.
- Total cost of grant request
- Total number of students participating in this project

#### PART 2: RESEARCH DESIGN

- Describe the research question or questions selected by the applicant to evaluate the impact of school gardens on learning outcomes.
- Describe your evaluation goals, methodology, research design, action steps, and timelines. You may use the Project Plan template provided on page 28 as an attachment to the discussion.
- Indicate the credibility, capability and capacity of the social scientist who will conduct the evaluation. Include as an attachment the resume or curriculum vitae of the social scientist selected to conduct the evaluation.

#### ✓ PART 3: PROJECT DESIGN

- Provide a discussion of the school gardens proposed in which you outline your goals for each project, including:
  - the age groups and curricula you want to address
  - what you want to plant and type of garden
  - how you propose to use the produce grown
  - how you selected the States where gardens will be developed
  - how you will evaluate success of the garden
- Describe the overall project plan and how it meets the objectives of the pilot program
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of partners
- Describe how the project will be sustained both administratively and financially once the grant has ended
- Describe how you will document the project so that it may be replicated.

#### ✓ PART 4: ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES

- Describe the mission of the applicant organization and how many months/years the applicant organization and the partner organizations have been in operation and/or providing services.
- Indicate the credibility, capability and capacity to manage the project
- Describe past experience, or staff/volunteers with prior experience with developing community gardens, using agricultural production techniques, developing and delivering curricula on best agricultural production methods or extensive knowledge of same.
- Include names of project director and other key staff and a description of their roles and responsibilities. Note if the project will include use of volunteers and if so, how they will be trained and how turnover will be handled. Note how you will manage communication and reporting among all staff.

- Include as an Attachment: Resumes or brief biographical sketches for key staff showing their experience with similar projects and qualifications, including language skills.
- Include as an Attachment: Position descriptions for key staff yet to be hired.

✓ PART 5: BUDGET

- Provide a budget narrative that explains and justifies each cost and clearly explains how the amount for each line item was determined.
- Provide an explanation of how the project is cost effective. Describe how the project strives to minimize costs while maximizing the effectiveness of project goals. Describe how the project is economical.
- Provide and explain a cost per student served by this project. If the applicant fails to provide this information the application will be considered non-responsive and will not be forwarded to the technical panel for review.
- Include as an Attachment: Line item budget. The line item budget is not the same as the SF 424A. The line item budget is a detailed breakdown of the information placed in the SF 424A. Note: one way to display your line item budget is with a chart with a column for each proposed cost of the project, as well as the total cost for the life of the project and a calculation of cost per student served by the project.
- You may include columns for contributions from non-Federal sources, if applicable.
- All appropriate financial statements are attached.
- Include as Attachment: If indirect costs are a part of the budget, a copy of the negotiated and approved indirect cost rate agreement between the applicant and the applicant’s cognizant agency must be provided.

Please review the checklist to ensure all of the items below are addressed in the budget narrative.

Budget Narrative Checklist

	YES	NO
<b>Personnel</b>		
Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading?		
Are employees of the applicant’s organization identified by name and position title?		
Did you reflect the current yearly salary as a percentage of time to be devoted to the project?		

<b>Fringe Benefits</b>		
Did you include your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation?		
Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds?		
<b>Travel</b>		
Are travel expenses itemized? For example, include origination and destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation, and cost of each trip.		
Are the attendee objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative?		
Is the basis for lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example, include an excerpt from travel regulations.		
<b>Supplies</b>		
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		
<b>Contractual</b>		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contact or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all sole-source contracts must be provided in the narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		

<b>Other</b>		
Consultant Services – Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget? The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant’s name, and itemized list of all direct costs and fees. The cost of salaries and wages must have the number of personnel, including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), the number of estimated hours at X hourly wages, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.		
For all other line items listed under the “Other” heading, list all items to be covered under this heading along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.		
<b>Indirect Costs</b>		
Is the amount requested based upon a rate approved by a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the negotiated rate agreement, with dual signatures, must be provided along with the application.		
If no negotiated indirect cost agreement exists, determine the base rate of these costs. The application should show this cost as a direct cost to the budget.		

✓ Attachments.

- Letters of Commitment from school principals and partners. The letters must be on the letterhead of the school or school district or organization as appropriate and signed by authorized officials. The letter should include a brief description of the role (if any) the school officials and partners will play in the project, as well as a description of the following commitments if they are applicable to your project: amount of time to be dedicated; cooperation with project implementation; and cooperation with the evaluation activities.
- Letter of Commitment from social scientist. The letter must describe the impact questions selected for measurement, the methodology proposed, and the scope of work they have committed to perform as part of the applicant’s grant project.

✓ Presentation

- Signature of applicant's authorized representative.
- No slides, tapes, brochures, pamphlets, or other such items submitted with the application.
- Font is Times New Roman, 12 point.

## **SECTION V: REVIEW AND AWARD PROCESS**

### **APPLICATION SCREENING, REVIEW AND SELECTION**

The application screening, review, and selection process is as follows:

1. FNS will screen all applications received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, November 8, 2010 to ensure their completeness and conformity to the requirements of this announcement.
2. Applications without complete sections of the grant application and without the required certified statements and letters from school principals, partners, and the social scientist, and those without the required standard forms 424, 424A and 424B will not be considered for evaluation.
3. All complete applications will be scored and ranked in a technical review as measured by the quality of the application response to the items in the technical review described below.
4. Applicants will be notified of the funding decisions in writing.
5. The applicant selected to receive an award must sign a cooperative agreement, which contains the terms and conditions of the grant.

### **DETERMINATION OF AWARD AMOUNTS**

As part of the technical review process, FNS will review applicants' budgets to ensure that all costs are reasonable, allowable, and necessary. The application selected and approved for funding will be one with a budget that is realistic, well justified, and supported. However, FNS reserves the right to fund applications:

- Out of rank order to achieve priorities identified earlier; or
- At lesser amounts if FNS determines that the project can be implemented with less funding; or
- At lesser amounts if Federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards.

### **TECHNICAL REVIEW**

Each application will be ranked according to the quality and reasonableness of the substance of their proposal. Applicants should consider the information in the following chart when developing their proposals.

<b>TECHNICAL REVIEW CRITERIA</b>	
	<b>Maximum Points</b>
<b>1. Soundness of Research Design</b>	<b>25</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed evaluation of the impact of school gardens on learning outcomes is clearly defined, feasible, measurable and reasonable to meet the objectives given the resources allotted.</li> <li>• The social scientist is credible and capable and has the capacity to undertake the project as presented.</li> <li>• A letter of commitment from the social scientist/principal investigator is included with the application.</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Soundness of Project Design</b>	<b>35</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed plan (goals, objectives, time frames, and action steps) is comprehensive, feasible, measurable and reasonable to meet the objectives given the resources allotted.</li> <li>• The plan demonstrates a workable relationship with school officials and other community partners with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.</li> <li>• The proposed plan describes the criteria used to select school garden projects. The percentage of students qualifying for free- and reduced-price lunch is included in a certified statement from the school principal or superintendent of each participating school.</li> <li>• The proposal describes how the applicant has maximized the number of participating schools and the number of participating students.</li> <li>• Measures of success for the school gardens are defined and feasible.</li> <li>• The project can be sustained once the grant funding has ended.</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Organizational Experience and Management Capabilities</b>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant organization is credible and capable and has the capacity to undertake the project as presented. The organization and its partners have appropriate experience.</li> <li>• The project director and other key staff are clearly identified and possess</li> </ul>	

<p>appropriate experience and qualifications as demonstrated by their resumes or biographical sketches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project communication and reporting is clearly described.</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Budget</b>	<b>15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A line-item budget clearly demonstrates how the funds will be spent, by whom, and for what purpose.</li> <li>• Administrative costs are minimal. Vast majority of funds will be used to develop garden initiatives.</li> <li>• Costs are reasonable, allowable, and necessary. The proposal contains appropriate costs that relate to the scope of the grant project.</li> <li>• The budget narrative is clear and comprehensive. Each cost is justified and the proposal clearly demonstrates how costs were determined.</li> <li>• The budget includes a calculation for project cost per student involved and clearly describes how this figure was determined.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Presentation</b>	<b>5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application is well presented, well organized, well written, and free of major typographical and grammatical errors.</li> <li>• The font is Times New Roman, 12 point.</li> </ul>	

**SECTION VI: TEMPLATES**

**TEMPLATE: PROJECT PLAN TABLE**

**Note to Applicants:** To aid you in completing your proposal, FNS provides this template of a project plan table. Use of this template is not required. You will not lose points simply for not using this template. An electronic copy of this template is available in Word at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/outreach.htm>. To use the electronic template, right click on the document, select "Save Target As", browse to the directory you want to use, and save the document to your computer. Then simply input the information for your table as you would with any Word document. Add additional rows as needed.

<b>Goal 1:</b>					
<b>Objective 1.1:</b>					
Action Steps	Responsible Person	Time Frame		Data Elements	Eval Method
		Start	End		
1.1.1					
1.1.2					

<b>Goal 2:</b>					
<b>Objective 2.1:</b>					
Action Steps	Responsible Person	Time Frame		Data Elements	Eval Method
		Start	End		
2.1.1					
2.1.2					

<b>Goal 3:</b>					
<b>Objective 3.1:</b>					
Action Steps	Responsible Person	Time Frame		Data Elements	Eval Method
		Start	End		
3.1.1					
3.1.2					

## **SECTION VII: RESOURCES**

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

- Checklist for Starting a School Garden, USDA People's Garden Initiative



School Garden  
Checklist.pdf

- Federal Nutrition Education Resources 2005 – 2010, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion



USDA & DHHS  
Comprehensive listing

- National Agricultural Library <http://www.nal.usda.gov/>
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/>

### **U.S. Bureau of the Census**

- Ranking of States by Population  
<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/rankings.html>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_U.S.\\_states\\_and\\_territories\\_by\\_population](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_population)

### **Authorizing legislation**

## People's Garden School Pilot Program

### From FY 2010 Ag Approps:

*In lieu of the amounts made available in section 14222(b) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, for necessary expenses to carry out the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.), except section 21, and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.), except sections 17 and 21; \$16,855,829,000, to remain available through September 30, 2011, of which \$1,000,000 may be used to carry out the school community garden pilot program established under section 18(g)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769(g)(3)),*

### Sec. 18(g)(3) of the NSLA

*(3) PILOT PROGRAM FOR HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS.—*

*(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:*

*(i) ELIGIBLE PROGRAM.—The term “eligible program” means—*

*(I) a school-based program with hands-on vegetable gardening and nutrition education that is incorporated into the curriculum for 1 or more grades at 2 or more eligible schools; or*

*(II) a community-based summer program with hands-on vegetable gardening and nutrition education that is part of, or coordinated with, a summer enrichment program at 2 or more eligible schools.*

*(ii) ELIGIBLE SCHOOL.—The term “eligible school” means a public school, at least 50 percent of the students of which are eligible for free or reduced price meals under this Act.*

*(B) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide to nonprofit organizations or public entities in not more than 5 States grants to develop and run, through eligible programs, community gardens at eligible schools in the States that would—*

*(i) be planted, cared for, and harvested by students at the eligible schools; and*

*(ii) teach the students participating in the community gardens about agriculture production practices and diet.*

*(C) PRIORITY STATES.—Of the States in which grantees under this paragraph are located—*

*(i) at least 1 State shall be among the 15 largest States, as determined by the Secretary;*

*(ii) at least 1 State shall be among the 16th to 30th largest States, as determined by the Secretary; and*

*(iii) at least 1 State shall be a State that is not described in clause (i) or (ii).*

*(D) USE OF PRODUCE.—Produce from a community garden provided a grant under this paragraph may be—*

*(i) used to supplement food provided at the eligible school;*

*(ii) distributed to students to bring home to the families of the students; or*

*(iii) donated to a local food bank or senior center nutrition program.*

*(E) NO COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—A nonprofit organization or public entity that receives a grant under this paragraph shall not be required to share the cost of carrying out the activities assisted under this paragraph.*

*(F) EVALUATION.—A nonprofit organization or public entity that receives a grant under this paragraph shall be required to cooperate in an evaluation in accordance with paragraph (1)(H).*

*(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this subsection for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2009.*