



Rooted in Evidence

A Food Bank Grant and Evaluation Program of the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition

Request for Proposals 2019

Applications Due: April 26, 2019, 5 p.m. CDT

BACKGROUND

The Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN) is pleased to release the Request for Proposals (RFP) for its inaugural 2019 Rooted in Evidence Food Bank Evaluation and Grant Program (herein referred to as “Rooted in Evidence”). Rooted in Evidence is an opportunity for selected food banks and their partners to enhance measurement and evaluation related to their programming. In addition, this program will provide funding for innovative and dynamic programming to improve the health and dietary quality of emergency food recipients. A highlight of this opportunity is to work in partnership with GSCN to conduct a robust evaluation of the grant activities in order to disseminate meaningful results. The overarching goal of this RFP is to strengthen the skills and competency of funded organizations to effectively evaluate impact of their programming and disseminate findings to relevant partners and other funders.

The [Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#) (GSCN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Omaha, Nebraska, established in 1973 with a focus on research and evaluation related to obesity prevention, local food systems, and food insecurity. GSCN specializes in both process and outcome evaluation, including the development and implementation of mixed-methods approaches, measurement development, statistical analysis, and qualitative data collection and analyses. GSCN works collaboratively with partners to design feasible, yet rigorous, study designs, along with developing complementary high-quality reports and other communication deliverables. Through Rooted in Evidence, recipients can expect to work collaboratively to design and implement a high-quality project and accompanying evaluation that will yield meaningful data and information to disseminate to partners and leverage future funding.

WHAT WE AIM TO FUND

Since the focus of Rooted in Evidence is to enhance evaluation and dissemination capacity, we anticipate that food banks will allocate dedicated staff time for communication and collaboration with GSCN through in-person and virtual meetings, data collection and management activities, and reporting.

GSCN intends to fund innovative and dynamic programming and/or initiatives that seek to improve dietary quality among food pantry and food bank clients. These approaches could include existing or new/adapted programming that may include various:

- Settings and distribution sites (e.g., mobile or other “pop-up” pantries, college campuses, schools, traditional pantries, clinics).
- Components or levels of the emergency food system (e.g., distribution, procurement, food environment, client interactions to target knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors).
- Target populations (e.g., children, adults, families, seniors, college students, staff/volunteers, cancer survivors or other disease conditions, urban/rural).

Specific components of the RFP are outlined in the following sections. This is a competitive process, and grants will be awarded based on criteria detailed in the RFP instructions. Individual grants of up to \$20,000 will be available for up to five organizations. Grants will occur over a 15-month timeline, beginning June 1, 2019, and ending August 31, 2020. This 15-month timeline will include a 2-month planning phase, an 11-month implementation phase, and a 2-month dissemination phase.

To be eligible for funding, organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Non-profit 501(c)(3) food bank organizations in the U.S. are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible to apply. Food pantries are encouraged to collaborate on proposals, but the primary applicant must be a food bank organization.
- Applicants must propose programming, policies, and/or practices that are innovative and dynamic which aim to improve the health and dietary quality of emergency food recipients in partnership with pantries or another distribution/client serving setting. We are interested in funding both existing and new/adapted programming that will benefit from a robust evaluation that will be conducted in collaboration with the GSCN team.
- Active participation in data collection in partnership with GSCN is required. This means that there should be dedicated staff time (in-kind, matching/leveraged funds, or within the budget) in order to help facilitate data collection and management. Data will be co-owned by GSCN and the grantee organization, and we intend for grantees to work with GSCN to receive guidance about the evaluation throughout the grant program.
- Active participation and coordination with the GSCN marketing team is also required. This means some dedicated staff time from a team member at any level as appropriate for your organization (e.g., marketing personnel, executive director, program manager). We intend that your participation will help to provide connection with local media outlets and assistance with grant promotion at a local level (e.g., provide promotional content such as human-interest stories; help disseminate information; provide promotional content as needed for website, social media, newsletter). Some of these marketing activities may include: copy writing, sharing of short videos or photography, and participation in 3-5 calls with the GSCN marketing team.

For more information, please refer to the table below summarizing “What GSCN will provide” and expectations for “What grantees will provide.” A large component of Rooted in Evidence is to help build capacity for grantee organizations. We will be intentional and not overly burdensome with any meetings or requests and anticipate that the grant program will be a useful and eventful learning experience. These meetings will also be an opportunity to interact with peer grantees and build capacity for peer-to-peer learning. Please note that **attendance is required at a grant kick-off meeting in Omaha, Nebraska**, before the main implementation period starts (July or August 2019, date TBD).

What GSCN will provide	What Food Bank grantees will provide
Measurement and evaluation support (e.g., training, technical assistance, guidance, measures, data collection tools, analysis, interpretation of results, dissemination).	Staff or volunteer time for data collection on your proposed project and coordination with GSCN.
Marketing expertise and resources (e.g., copywriting, logos, strategy, and technical assistance to develop story ideas/pitching to media, slide decks, infographics, social media activity).	Staff time for coordination with the GSCN marketing team and provision of requested materials.
Coordination of Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. This will ensure that results from the funded projects will follow ethics guidelines and be eligible for publication and other dissemination.	Coordinate with GSCN staff for Institutional Review Board application. This may require research ethics and compliance training for those involved with data collection.
Contribution to manuscript preparation through review and co-authorship.	Development of peer-reviewed manuscript(s) reporting key findings from grantees’ projects.
There will be the opportunity beyond grant terms for scientific and other broader field dissemination of results through publications, presentations at conferences, etc. Grantees can help serve as “ambassadors” for their programs, extending the reach of funded programming for a larger impact. (There may be an opportunity for some funding to support these activities.)	

** Note: We will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that describes these activities and commitments.*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

March 18, 2019

RFP released

April 1, 2019

Applicants submit questions to rootedinevidence@centerfornutrition.org

Responses to questions will be posted within a week on the grant program's website page at

<https://www.centerfornutrition.org/rootedinevidence> and applicants will be notified

April 26, 2019 (5 p.m. CDT)

Deadline for receipt of proposal via email to rootedinevidence@centerfornutrition.org

May 20, 2019

Applicants notified of funding recommendations

June 1 – July 31, 2019

Grant "ramp-up" period, planning and coordination

July or August 2019 (date TBD)

In-person grant kick-off meeting in Omaha, Nebraska

August 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Grant implementation period

July 1 – August 31, 2020

Follow-up and reporting period

RFP INSTRUCTIONS

All proposals must be prepared in the format requested and emailed as a single, complete PDF to rootedinevidence@centerfornutrition.org with the subject line "Rooted in Evidence Proposal." To be considered for review, **complete proposals must be submitted by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on Friday, April 26, 2019.** No late proposals will be accepted. Incomplete proposals will not be considered for review.

Required components for the RFP are outlined in the following pages, and final proposals should be **no longer than 12 pages, 1.5 spaced, 12-point font, with one-inch margins.** Please format your application with the following sections labeled and the requested information addressed.

The RFP is divided into four sections (see below for more detail):

Section 1: Organizational Information

Section 2: Fiscal/Budget Manager Information

Section 3: Project Narrative

Section 4: Budget and Disbursement Timeline

For questions regarding the RFP instructions, proposal criteria, and deadlines, please contact Ms. Katie Stern:

rootedinevidence@centerfornutrition.org or (402) 559-5500. Responses to questions sent before April 1, 2019, will be

compiled and posted online on the grant program's website page at

<https://www.centerfornutrition.org/rootedinevidence>.

SECTION 1: ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Organizational Background

Briefly describe your organization (i.e., mission, geographic reach, population you serve) and the primary services or programming you provide either directly to clients or through pantries or other sites within your network. Please include activities that are most relevant to this proposal. List geographic locations (e.g., counties, cities) where you have pantries (or other sites) in your network/service area as well as the location(s) where grant activities will take place. Please also describe any efforts your organization has made focusing on the healthfulness of the foods your food bank distributes, nutrition education, and any goals for the future within these areas.

Abstract

In one to two paragraphs, state your goals with regard to improving dietary quality using innovative and dynamic programming and/or initiatives that seek to improve dietary quality among food pantry and food bank clients in response to this RFP.

Primary Contact (This person will be the main contact for grant-related activities at your organization.)

Please provide the name, title/position, mailing address, physical address (if different from mailing address), email, and phone number of the primary contact for this grant if awarded.

Key Project Staff (List key staff who will be associated with grant-related activities at your organization.)

Please provide names, job titles, organizational affiliations, and location of the organization for each of the individuals who will have a key role in the project (including any volunteers or interns).

Total Amount Requested

Please provide the total budget requested which may be up to \$20,000.

Section 2: FISCAL / BUDGET MANAGER INFORMATION

Fiscal Agent

Please provide the name and contact information for the organization that would receive the funds. (Note: The primary grant recipient must be a food bank but may work with pantries and other sites which can be included as collaborators/sub-awardees.)

Budget Manager

Please provide the contact information for the person who will be managing the grant budget. This should be the person(s) who will receive funds and be responsible for fiscal aspects of the grant. Please provide their name, title or position, mailing address, physical address (if different from mailing address), email, and phone number.

Section 3: PROJECT NARRATIVE

A. Background

- Please provide a description of previous experience with nutrition education/initiatives, if applicable. If you have previously conducted any work that aimed to increase the dietary quality and health among the clients you serve, briefly describe these projects, outcomes achieved, and any other relevant details.
- Describe the target population and geographic region for this proposal. Be specific, including relevant socio-demographics (e.g., age ranges, race, ethnicity, income, education, urban and/or rural), any specific target populations (e.g., children, adults, families, seniors, college students, staff/volunteers, cancer survivors or other disease conditions), and the rationale for selecting the population and geographic region.

- Describe the need for innovative and dynamic nutrition education strategies in the target population.
- Describe the potential impact/significance of your proposed activities. Provide a description of how this proposal introduces new or different approaches or improves upon or leverages previous work done by your organization to yield a greater impact on the target population.

B. Need for Evaluation

- Describe any specific needs your organization has, and how you could benefit from enhanced capacity, such as: guidance on selection of surveys or other measurement tools, designing evaluation activities (e.g., when to administer surveys, such as before a project and at the end (pre-post), examining the process of a project along the way (e.g., what is working well, not working as well, how could improvements be made in the future), outcome measures (e.g., how you show impact of a particular program or activity, such as increased intake of healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables).
- Describe your organization’s current capacity to conduct evaluation activities (e.g., staff that focus on evaluation efforts, existing and ongoing evaluation studies). We are trying to determine the level of support needed for your project’s evaluation. It is acceptable to have limited capacity for evaluation (i.e., to have not conducted much in terms of evaluation) or to have conducted some previous evaluation work and are looking to enhance your organization’s approach.

C. General Project Approach

- Provide a detailed description of your proposed project using *clear and concise* language.
- State project goals and link these goals to main outcomes (e.g., nutrition, knowledge, attitudes, behavior, organizational capacity).
- Describe how you intend to reach, recruit, and engage participants for the proposed activities. (Note: Participants can be food bank and/or pantry staff, volunteers, clients, or any other population.)
- Describe how you would want to evaluate this project including potential outcomes of interest. (Note: You will not be scored on this, as GSCN will work in partnership with your team to design an appropriate evaluation. This is just a tentative plan.) Please describe which personnel will work alongside GSCN. We are interested to see how your project outcomes and goals align with other applicants and determine the needs for evaluation moving forward.
- Describe the project timeline highlights in terms of major milestones that will be accomplished over the grant period. Please include the 2-month “ramp-up” planning phase, the 11-month implementation phase, and the 2-month dissemination phase (all across the 15-month grant period). We are most interested in seeing details regarding your proposed timeline for the implementation phase.

D. Project Team and Organizational Capacity

- Using the key project staff identified in Section 1, describe their key responsibilities for project implementation and their expertise or experience for that role. If you intend to use temporary staff or volunteers, please describe the anticipated experiences and roles these individuals may play.
- Clearly describe how the project team will internally communicate and coordinate activities to accomplish proposed aims/goals.
- Describe who will primarily be in charge of working in partnership with GSCN on evaluation and marketing. Please include all team members’ experience/capacity to carry out the proposed activities.
- Describe your organization’s capacity and plans to communicate the project to external audiences (e.g., local media, social media, newsletters). (Note: As noted above for evaluation, you will not be scored on this, as GSCN will work in partnership with your team. This is just a tentative plan.)

E. Sustainability

- Provide a brief statement indicating how you will sustain the proposed activities within your organization beyond this funding cycle. Address how your organization will plan for staffing, funding, and organizational support for continuing this work. In particular, we are interested in learning how your organization plans to maintain capacity for evaluation into the future and the benefit(s) you foresee in receiving the experiential evaluation as part of this grant.

F. Willingness to grow organizational capacity

- Provide a statement indicating your understanding and willingness to work in partnership with GSCN in terms of overall program planning, evaluation, and marketing as part of this opportunity, if funded. Briefly describe the current capacity of your project team to carry out various aspects of the proposed project activities and areas where technical assistance may be needed.

Section 4: Budget and Disbursement Timeline

Please note the following rules regarding budget:

- Funds will be released in two payments (\$15,000 in June 2019 and \$5,000 (remainder) in August 2020 (end of grant period). This may be modified on a case-by-case basis with GSCN, however, organizations making such a request will need to provide detailed justification for the request.
- Request for indirect costs is limited to 10% of the total budget and must be included in the \$20,000.

Budget

Provide a detailed budget for funding requested using the budget template at the end of the RFP. There are limited allocations pertaining to the budget as outlined below.

Budget Justification

For the major categories included in your budget request, provide a brief justification for the item and description of how it relates to project implementation.

Salary and Benefits

For each staff member funded through this grant, provide the estimated percent of time that will be spent on grant activities and briefly describe their responsibilities in grant implementation. Please also indicate any in-kind/volunteer time (i.e., for staff or volunteers who would be on this project; this could include, but is not limited to: project manager, interns, volunteers, marketing, executive director).

Project Materials

Provide a brief justification for the item(s) and how they will be used in the project.

Participant Incentives

Provide a brief description of any incentives that will be needed for the project.

Training and Education

Provide a brief description of the training and education, estimated expenses, and how they relate to the grant project.

Travel

Provide a brief description of travel needs/expenses and how they relate to project implementation. Allow for up to \$1,200 for air, lodging, ground transportation, and food to cover a representative to attend the kick-off meeting in Omaha, Nebraska.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are limited to no more than 10% of the total budget. Provide a brief description of the items and justification of indirect costs.

Funds may not be used for: purchasing or distributing food, equipment, or construction.

Proposal Review and Award Criteria

The strength of the proposal will be evaluated based on the criteria described above and the overall purpose of Rooted in Evidence. Depending on the review process, we may follow up with questions or request to arrange a call for points of clarification in order to inform our selection of grantees.

Grants Budget Template

Agency Name: _____

Project Name: _____

EXPENSES		Requested from GSCN	In-Kind Support from Applicant
Personnel	FTE		
Salaries (list positions and % FTE as allocated on this project)			
		\$0	
		\$0	
		\$0	
Payroll Taxes/Benefits (specify)			
		\$0	
		\$0	
		\$0	
Subtotal Personnel		\$0	
Operating			
Project Materials		\$0	
<i>(Supplies and materials necessary for project)</i>			
Participant Incentives		\$0	
Training & Education		\$0	
<i>(Professional development, travel, educational materials)</i>			
Consulting		\$0	
<i>(Expert support for project deliverables)</i>			
Name of Consultant:			
Scope of Work:			
Name of Consultant:			
Scope of Work:			
Travel		\$0	
<i>(Mileage, related travel expenses)</i>			
Indirect Costs		\$0	
<i>Not to exceed 10% of total budget</i>			
Total Project Cost		\$0	