

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
2025 California Nutrition Incentive Program - Request for Proposals

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

Q: Are current CNIP grantees eligible to apply for the 2025 grant application?

A: Yes, current CNIP grantees can propose a start date for their new project immediately after their current one ends. For example, a current grantee ending their current CNIP project on January 31, 2025, can propose their new grant period starting February 1, 2025.

Q: Can we apply for the 2025 year with California funding and for the 2026 and beyond for the GusNIP application in the same application?

A: Yes, applicants only need to submit 1 proposal even if you are requesting funds from both state-only and federal-state round. Period 1 is for state-only funds. Periods 2 to 4 cover the state/GusNIP funds. Applicants will specify the project timeline/periods requesting funds in the proposal and budget sheet.

Q: Would a non-profit be eligible in applying on behalf of farmers to create the CSA? Or does the CSA have to be established prior to application?

A: Yes, non-profits can apply on behalf of farmers to create the CSA. However, non-established sites must be able to provide proof of SNAP authorized documentation by the time of proposal submission.

Q: Can proposals include a mix of farmers markets and retail stores or farmers markets and farm stands?

A: Yes, a proposal can include various types of sites.

Q: If we already work with FMs, but one of them is not yet certified, could we still apply with those that do, while this FM applies for certification? Do you know how long certification takes?

A: Either way, this grant is a reimbursement program so the stores then submit their invoices to CDFA, and we reimburse them in about 45 days. Grantees can submit monthly or quarterly.

Q: If a university has a non-profit organization that submits grants, is the university an eligible entity for application?

A: The certification time can vary by county - follow up with us afterwards and we can check the time for this specific market. The FM must also have the FNS/SNAP authorization by the time of proposal.

Q: How does CDFA identify eligible fruit and vegetables for CNIP?

A: For the 2025 CNIP grant, we follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture fruit and vegetable eligibility guidelines. Applicants may search in the [USDA's FoodData Central](#) database for guidance.

Q: Could two different organizations with two different programs, in the same county, apply for CNIP funding?

A: Two different organizations can submit proposals for two different programs. There is no restriction to the number of proposals from the same county/city. However, as a reminder, one of the criteria proposals that will be rated on is Composing a Unified State Application & Federal Competitiveness. So, CDFA will look at how all proposals can be combined with each other to be part of a unified state application with a broad programmatic and statewide reach.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Q: Is there a preferred methodology for tracking incentives that are applied as a discount?

A: Grantees can use several different tracking methodologies – a customer or transaction log being the most common, but also POS print outs and receipts. The important requirement is that the tracking does not include EBT numbers (in whole or in part), and to include the amount of SNAP/CalFresh, dollar value of incentives matched, and number of transactions. The easiest way would likely be a log that shows each transaction and the totals at the bottom (e.g. 10 CSA boxes sold (\$100 SNAP, \$300 incentives), and \$25 in EBT purchases and \$75 incentives (CA produce) from 3 farmstand sales), but we can work with you all on what would be easiest in your end.

Q: Is there a list of retail stores that currently accept SNAP and, if so, can it be filtered by county/city/zip code/census tract etc.?

A: We defer to USDA's list of SNAP authorized retailers:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=15e1c457b56c4a729861d015cd626a23>.

You can enter an address and find all the SNAP authorized retailers within a specified radius.

Q: For non-profit organizations, if one of our incentive distribution sites is located at the organization, would it be considered a CSA pick or a small business/retail store?

A: It depends on your model for shoppers' procurement of the incentive-eligible items, and how you market/promote it. We'd likely consider it a retail space if the shoppers can walk in and choose to buy any assortment of produce. As opposed to signing up ahead of time for a fixed bundle of items, which would likely be considered a CSA box pick up site.

- Please note you can choose the description you think best fits and explain the model in detail in the proposal as it will not be scored on the "types of sites" you select.

Q: In the budget spreadsheet, Column F-I, Row 8-10, there are brackets requesting applicants to [insert] information. Should applicants edit and fill in the cell with the requested information?

A: Yes, applicants should select the specific cell and replace the “[insert ‘information]” with the requested information.

Q: Is the 15 pages single or double-spaced?

A: Single spaced is fine. Please note that there are character limits for each section.

Q: If there are multiple organizations overseeing the project, what to put down as the “Organization Legal Name” on the proposal?

A: The name of the organization incorporated as/pays taxes as/is on the bank account that would cash the reimbursement check from the state.

Q: Is there a funding limit for proposals for farm stands?

A: No funding limit for farm stands (or any other entity).

Q: Under locations: would the owner’s name for a farmers’ market be the market manager or a board member?

A: Market manager’s name is fine.

BUDGET QUESTIONS

Q: Is the 50% incentive to the total requested budget, with or without indirect costs?

A: 50% of total grant costs, including indirect.

Q: How do we get paid? And how long does it take?

A: This is a reimbursement program. The grantee will provide the shopper with the incentive and then invoice CDFA for that cost. For example, a store might have 10 customers that each receive \$20 worth of incentives for one month. That store will then submit an invoice to CDFA for \$200 and receive a check for \$200 within 45 days of submitting that invoice under most circumstances.

Q: Is there a recommended amount that can be applied for?

A: There is no limit to funding requests per proposal whether applying for state-only and/or federal round. Funding requests typically vary with the number of sites and projected shoppers reached. Applicants will have to consider how much incentive dollars they can distribute in conjunction with the expenses to implement the program. Applicants should estimate the # of CalFresh shoppers at the potential sites and how much shoppers would spend/redeem incentives. Keeping in mind the 50% incentive to total request ratio.

CNIP FUNDING & PROGRAMATIC QUESTIONS

Q: I am curious why the funding has moved from funding/supporting WIC FMNP to SNAP/Cal Fresh. Can you explain? Is this due to recent changes in your GusNIP funding?

A: We continue to fund both CalFresh and WIC/Senior FMNP. We keep the two RFPs separate because for the CalFresh incentives we apply for federal funding as well, which only matches CalFresh spending (through the GusNIP program). We plan to issue our WIC/Senior FMNP grant request in October 2024.

Q: The RFP includes an eligible category of "Small businesses authorized to accept SNAP benefits such as retail stores." How do these small retailers get reimbursed for vouchers? Do they have to use tokens like farmers markets or do the incentives get added to EBT cards so they can be processed automatically? If it's the former option, how long does it typically take for small retailers to get reimbursed?

A: Stores can use several different models. Many choose to use a "50% discount" model so shoppers receive and use the incentive immediately. Others choose to issue coupons or use loyalty cards so shoppers can use the incentive on a return visit.