

**Agricultural Food and Research (AFRI) Initiative FY 2015**  
**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program**  
**(SNAP and EFNEP): Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Centers of Excellence**  
**AFRI-RNECE – FY 2015**

Please note, the AFRI RNECE RFA can be found at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-childhood-obesity-prevention-challenge>. All other communications regarding the AFRI-RNECE RFA can be found on this page – the RNECE webpage, <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/program/regional-nutrition-education-and-obesity-prevention-centers-excellence-rnece>.

Included here (on the RNECE page) are:

- 1) AFRI – RNECE RFA – overview webinar – <http://nifa-connect.nifa.usda.gov/p27egcmvd6t>.
- 2) Updated webinar slides, which include **new pictures and links consistent with NIFA’s redesigned website. Check this document for corrected links if the links listed in the RFA do not work. Additionally, you may need to refresh your browser.**
- 3) Frequently asked questions about the RFA – with NIFA’s response – **updated regularly**
- 4) Other supporting information and documents.

After you have reviewed these resources, if you still cannot find answers to your questions, contact, Ms. Marly Diallo or Helen Chipman.

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**ALL FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS, regarding the AFRI-RNECE will be posted here – on the RNECE webpage. Most recent questions and responses are listed at the top of the Q&A page.**

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**Questions from RFA training and thru 3-10**

**Eligibility**

Who can apply for the new standard grants, e.g. the new regional center and the new signature research project?

Three types of organizations/agencies are eligible to apply: 1) EFNEP implementing agencies; 2) SNAP-Ed implementing agencies; and 3) non-profit organizations that meet certain criteria that are spelled out in the RFA. If you meet any of these three criteria, you would be eligible to apply for these funds.

What is meant by SNAP-Ed Implementing agencies? Would this include 'local' agencies (health departments, food banks, etc.), and non-profits that conduct SNAP-Ed? Would this include state agencies?

Implementing agencies and organizations are those that receive funding directly from that state SNAP agency to implement or conduct the program. In most cases these are land-grant universities, state public health departments, and some non-profit organizations. An interactive

map that lists implementing agencies by state can be found at: <http://snap.nal.usda.gov/state-contacts>. Please note, the implementing agency is not the state SNAP agency. It is the “sub-grantee” that has contracted with the state SNAP agency to conduct the program.

“Local” agencies and non-profit organizations (health departments, food banks, etc.) would be eligible to apply only if they are one of the state’s implementing agencies, e.g. only if they receive funds directly from the state SNAP agency to conduct the program. If they are a sub-grantee or a sub-contractor to an implementing agency, they would not be eligible to apply.

State SNAP agencies would not be eligible to apply unless they also implement (e.g. conduct) the program. In most states, the state SNAP agencies contract with other organizations and agencies to implement the program. If a state SNAP agency has contracted with another state agency to implement SNAP-Ed, that other state agency would be eligible to apply.

Can only land-grant universities apply for these grants? What about other universities?

1862 and 1890 land-grant universities are eligible to apply because they administer EFNEP. Other land-grant universities would be eligible to apply if they administer SNAP-Ed. Similarly, non-land-grant universities, and other entities would also be eligible to apply if they administer SNAP-Ed. Although only the designated eligible institutions/organization/agency can apply for each grant, the inclusion of other universities, organizations, and agencies that bring expertise, experience, and networking relationships can strengthen the application.

Can two or more organizations/agencies apply as co-chairs for a single grant?

NIFA will fund only one host site for each grant. However, organizations/agencies are welcome to work out co-chair leadership responsibilities among themselves to determine how to best share grant leadership and management responsibilities.

### **AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention vs. RNECE Requirements**

For some parts of the RFA, there seems to be some inconsistency between the RNECE project and the AFRI childhood obesity prevention expectations. Are we required to follow all AFRI and all RNECE requirements?

Inclusion of the RNECE initiative into the AFRI umbrella of grants was not an exact fit. The RNECE component of the AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention RFA has been written to distinguish where RNECE expectations may include some exceptions to the AFRI umbrella of grants. Where there are questions, the RNECE requirements are to be followed. As an example, for the Childhood Obesity Prevention RFA, the expectation is that the research should focus on overweight and obesity among children and adolescents, ages 2 – 19 years. However, for the RNECE projects, the expectation is to focus research on nutrition education and obesity prevention for audiences that would be eligible for EFNEP and/or SNAP-Ed. There is no age limitation.

Please explain what is meant by the agricultural functions of research, education and extension? How do these terms apply to the RNECE grants?

Research, [higher] education, and extension are integral to the land-grant university mission, and is required language for AFRI RFAs. By design, the RNECE initiative is expected to support program implementation research. Thus, for the RNECE grants, two of the three agricultural functions are met (research and extension). Some potential applicants may use different terminology to describe program/outreach efforts, but as long as their focus is on program

implementation research – especially as applies to SNAP-Ed and EFNEP, they would meet the AFRI requirement.

### **NEW Standard Grants – Topic-Based Regional Center and Signature Project**

This seems an ambitious RFA – what is expected for the time allotted and resources available. It takes several years to conduct a community assessment, prepare and implement, and then evaluate a public health plan, especially where there are constrained resources. What exactly is NIFA expecting?

NIFA (and FNS) recognize that the RNECE Initiative is an ambitious endeavor. At the same time, we have a sense that there is already good work underway or that has been developed, along with expertise yet to be tapped. Potential applicants are encouraged to review the RFA and consider how, working with others, they can contribute to the RNECE body of evidence.

How many collaborators are expected? Is there a minimum number?

The RFA does not include a specific numerical expectation for collaboration. Rather it encourages inclusivity – thinking through what types of expertise might be important to accomplish what the proposal sets out to do, and what is possible with the resources available. Additionally, the “regional” language implies the need for involving broad participation. The previous RNECE grant required research, program, evaluation, and communication expertise. Those elements would continue to be important.

Is the topic-based Center expected to coordinate with EFNEP and SNAP-Ed agencies across the nation or just within the region within it is based?

Given that the topic-based center has no geographic constraints, EFNEP and SNAP-Ed organizations and agencies could be included from across the nation.

### **Supplemental Grants**

For the supplemental grants, does the proposal need to add new research or can we expand on what we already have?

It would be the grantees’ responsibility to determine how they will meet the new requirements – whether by building upon the research that is already underway or initiating something new.

### **Regional Restrictions**

Can we go outside our region when collaborating (for example multi-state AES)?

Assuming you are talking about the geographic regions, those are meant to be regional projects and to engage other states within the region as fully as possible. Expertise outside of the geographic region is also allowable, particularly as it supports and strengthens what the region has set-out to do.

What is meant by “region” for the new Regional Center? Does it include geographical boundaries?

The new regional center is to be a topic-based regional center. The region might be viewed as a “community” of expertise on the topic regardless of geographic location.

### **EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Expectations**

To be more competitive, should new research projects incorporate both SNAP-Ed and EFNEP? Similarly, do both have to be included in a new signature project?

The RNECE Initiative represents a collaboration between FNS and NIFA with respect to SNAP-Ed and EFNEP at the federal level. Both programs should be incorporated for all projects.

### **Existing Projects**

Are there any programmatic priorities or channels of interest, or building on existing docs, such as the SNAP-Ed Toolkit?

See the RFA, pages 13 – 16, for specific details on leveraging and extending work that has already been done.

What are the current signature projects that Centers are working on so that we can complement or not duplicate efforts?

To learn about the signature projects that are underway, applicants are encouraged to contact the Regional Centers directly. A contact list, which aligns states with the respective centers has been developed. It can be found in the webinar slides, and on the NIFA RNECE program site – see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/program/regional-nutrition-education-and-obesity-prevention-centers-excellence-rnece>, and scroll to program specific resources.

### **eXtension Community of Practice (COP)**

An expectation to contribute to eXtension's COP is noted in several places within the RFA. Generally it says that projects can contribute to existing COPs or form a new COP; whereas pages 16 and 17 indicate that the Community Nutrition COP is to be used. Which guidelines should we follow?

For SNAP-Ed (and EFNEP) a COP has already been established. It is the Community Nutrition COP. Therefore, the RNECE projects should contribute to that body of work.

Is there a specific link for the Community Nutrition COP?

Yes. See the RFA, page 17. It is [http://extension.org/low\\_income\\_nutrition\\_education](http://extension.org/low_income_nutrition_education).

For the supplemental grants, do the current regional centers need to submit an additional letter of support from eXtension and the Community Nutrition COP or can we resubmit what we already have?

Applicants for all types of grants – both new and supplemental – will be required to submit new letters of support from eXtension and the Community Nutrition COP. Although the current grantees submitted these letters last year, the COP did not have a good understanding of what they could expect from the grantees. Going forward, it will be important that there is good understanding on both sides – the grantee and the COP – as to what expectations will be. Those expectations are to be worked out between the applicant and the COP. The purpose of the letters of support is to reflect that there is such understanding and agreement between the potential grantee and the COP.

### **Match Requirements**

Can you provide more details regarding the matching fund requirements? Will local teacher time qualify for matching funds?

There are no match requirements for the RNECE grants.

### **Miscellaneous**

Is there an expectation about advanced degree requirements for PIs or Co-PI, such as a PhD, DrPH?

No such requirement has been included in the RFA.

Can we apply for more than one-type of Childhood Obesity Prevention Grant – i.e. is there any restriction to applying for an RNECE grant and another type of AFRI Childhood Obesity Grant simultaneously?

Although there is not prohibition against applying for more than one grant, such action is not encouraged as it may result in weaker proposals. Applicants are encouraged to focus their efforts to submit the strongest proposals, possible.