



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

CHILD NUTRITION TRIBAL PILOT PROJECTS

Tribes Operating as State Agencies to Administer Child Nutrition Programs

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

A photograph of children in a school cafeteria. In the foreground, a young boy with short dark hair, wearing a red shirt, is smiling broadly at the camera. To his right, a girl with brown hair in pigtails, wearing a purple shirt, is looking down at her food. In the background, other children are visible, some eating and one waving. The table is set with green trays, orange juice bottles, and various fruits like apples. A semi-transparent dark green banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text in white.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS



National
School
Lunch
Program



School
Breakfast
Program



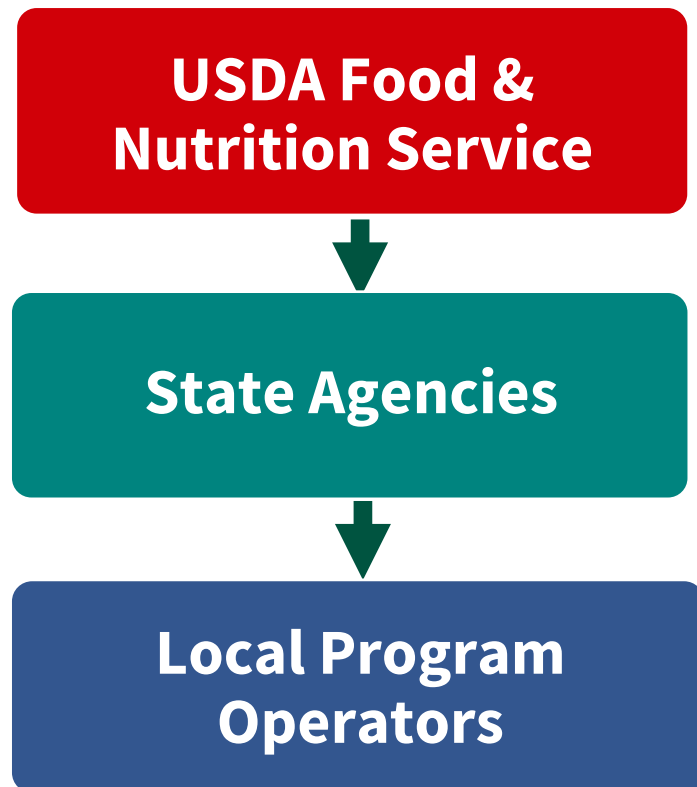
Child and
Adult Care
Food
Program



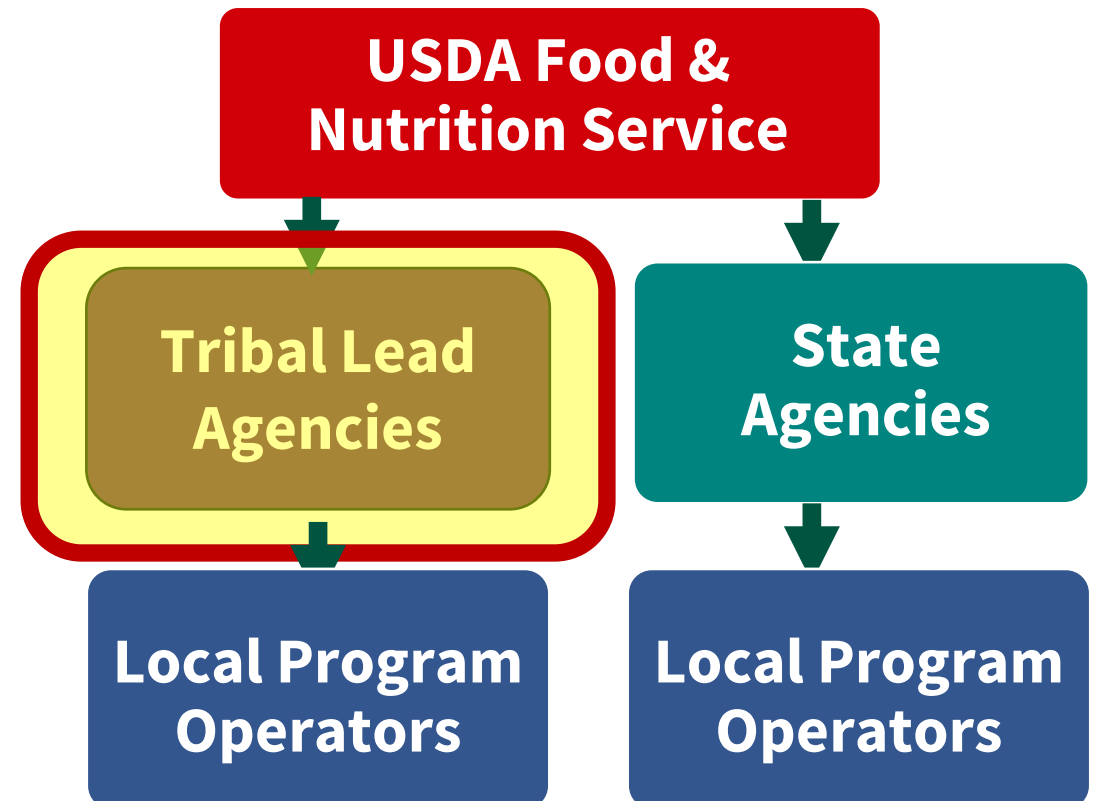
Summer
Food
Service
Program

ADMINISTRATIVE FLOW

Standard Operations



Pilot Projects



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Tribal Lead Agency/ State Agency

- Link between FNS and local Program operators
- Set Tribe/State-wide policies
- Enter into agreements with local Program operators
- Provide training and technical assistance
- Conduct monitoring & oversight
- Process claims and pay reimbursements to sites

Local Program Operator

- Certify participants for benefits
- Plan menus
- Purchase & prepare food
- Serve meals to participants
- Count & claim meals by category (Free, Reduced-Price, Paid)

A photograph of three young children sitting at a table in a classroom, eating. In the foreground, a child with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a white shirt with blue and green floral patterns, is using a red plastic spoon to scoop food from a white bowl. The bowl contains green peas and red strawberries. To the left of the bowl is a blue plastic cup. In the background, two other children are visible. One is a girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a pink and white patterned shirt, sitting with her hands near her face. The other is a boy with dark skin, wearing a blue vest over a white shirt, looking down at his food. The table is covered with a green placemat. There are yellow plastic plates and forks on the table. A white bowl of bread rolls is also visible. The background shows a classroom setting with shelves and a window.

CHILD NUTRITION TRIBAL PILOT PROJECTS

TRIBAL PILOT PROJECTS

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024

www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/4366/text



PILOT PROJECT PARAMETERS



Projects
Up to 10



Duration
Up to 2
years



Funding
Total: \$2 million
Per project: \$10,000-100,000/year

ELIGIBLE GRANTEES

- Indian Tribes;
- Tribal organizations approved by an Indian Tribe;
- Tribal educational agencies;
- A Consortium of Indian Tribes; or
- Partnerships between an Indian Tribe and either a:
 - State educational agency;
 - Local educational agency;
 - Tribal educational agency; or
 - The Bureau of Indian Education.

LOCATIONS

Projects may take place in:

- Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools;
- Schools on or near Indian reservations; or
- Early child care and education facilities.



RFI QUESTIONS FOR COMMENTERS

QUESTION #1

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, identifies the entities that may operate and implement the Tribal Pilot Projects.

What, if any, additional criteria should be established for a Tribe and/or Tribal organization to be considered eligible to participate in the pilot projects?

Current Eligible Entities

- an Indian Tribe;
- a Tribal organization approved by an Indian Tribe;
- a Tribal educational agency;
- a consortium of Indian Tribes; or
- a partnership between an Indian Tribe and either:
 - a State educational agency,
 - a local educational agency,
 - a Tribal educational agency, or
 - the Bureau of Indian Education.

QUESTION #2

Are there any specific criteria that should be prioritized in the selection process? For example, should FNS give priority to a Tribe or Tribal organization with experience operating a Child Nutrition Program, or other FNS nutrition assistance program, or to a pilot project that is implemented by a group of Tribes or Tribal organizations?





QUESTION #3

A Tribe or Tribal organization may partner with a State educational agency, a local educational agency, a tribal educational agency, or the Bureau of Indian Education to administer Child Nutrition Programs.

- a. How might Tribes or Tribal organizations partner with each of these entities?
- b. Should FNS consider any criteria or parameters regarding partnerships?

QUESTION #4

Considering the State agency roles and responsibilities referenced in the Child Nutrition Programs Administration section of this Request for Information, what support (if any) might Tribes and Tribal organizations need to implement the Tribal Pilot Projects and administer one or more Child Nutrition Programs?

State Agency Roles & Responsibilities

- Link between FNS and local Program operators
- Sets State-wide policies
- Enters into agreements with local Program operators
- Provides training and technical assistance
- Conducts monitoring & oversight
- Processes claims and pays reimbursements to schools

QUESTION #5

Given the amount of funding available and timeframe for implementation, should FNS:

- a. Limit grantees to administering only one Child Nutrition Program?
- b. Permit grantees to administer only part of a Child Nutrition Program? If yes, what opportunities or challenges might partial administration present?





QUESTION #6

How can FNS best ensure that Tribes or Tribal organizations have access to staff, technology, and financial support needed to successfully administer Child Nutrition Programs?

QUESTION #7

Should FNS fund as many pilot projects as possible (up to 10) in the first year? Or should FNS fund a limited number of projects in the first year, with future projects funded in subsequent years, to incorporate best practices and lessons learned as pilot projects evolve?



QUESTION #8



What outcomes should FNS measure to evaluate the Tribal Pilot Projects? How should FNS measure sustainability or feasibility of long-term implementation?

QUESTION #9

Is there anything else FNS should consider when implementing the Tribal Pilot Projects?



NEXT STEPS

Request for Information: Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects

www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-122324

Submit Comments by March 24, 2025



SUBMITTING COMMENTS STEP 1

Request for Information: Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects

[HOME](#)

Publication Date

Monday, December 23, 2024

Link

[Federal Register Notice](#) 

PDF Link

[Print version](#) 

Resource type

Policy

Federal Register Notices

Comment Request

Comment Period End Date

Monday, March 24, 2025

Summary

This is a Request for Information to inform the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) development of the Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects, as authorized in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. The Act authorized USDA to conduct pilot projects to allow one or more Tribes or Tribal organizations to administer one or more child nutrition programs, assuming the roles and responsibilities typically held by state agencies. USDA will use comments received in response to this Request for Information to inform the application process, and eligibility and selection criteria, for the Child Nutrition Tribal Pilot Projects. USDA invites feedback from Tribes; Tribal organizations, leaders, representatives, and associations; state agencies that administer the child nutrition programs; and others interested in opportunities to promote Tribal sovereignty in the operation of the child nutrition programs. This notice is not a request for proposals and does not commit the government to issue a solicitation, make an award, or pay any costs associated with responding to this announcement. All submitted information will remain with the government and will not be returned.

Request for Comments

Written comments must be received on or before March 24, 2025.

USDA invites the submission of the requested information through one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal (preferred method):* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> . Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Send written comments to the Child Nutrition Programs, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Braddock Metro Center II, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314.



SCAN ME

[www.fns.usda.gov/cn/
fr-122324](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-122324)



SUBMITTING COMMENTS STEP 2

Submit Comments by March 24, 2025

The screenshot shows the Regulations.gov website interface. At the top, there's a header with the site name and a search bar containing the text "Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects". Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "Dockets", "Documents", and "Comments". The "Documents" tab is selected. On the left side, there's a "REFINE DOCUMENTS RESULTS" section with a checkbox for "Only show documents open for comment (1)". Below this, there's a "Document Type" section with a list of document types: "Supporting & Related Material (2,310)", "Rule (247)", "Proposed Rule (178)", and "Other (157)". The main content area displays a "NOTICE" titled "Request for Information: Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects" from the "Agency Food and Nutrition Service", posted on "Dec 23, 2024" with ID "FNS-2024-0039-0001". Below the notice, there's a blue button labeled "Open for Comments" and a box indicating the "Comment Period Ends: Mar 24, 2025 at 11:59 PM EDT". A blue "Comment" button is located at the bottom right of the notice area. A large orange arrow points to this "Comment" button.



JOIN US IN FEBRUARY!

Listening Session:
National Indian
Education Association
Hill Week (Feb. 12)



QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

CONTACT US!

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