



CREATED BY GUSNIP NTAE CENTER

Reporting and Evaluation for GusNIP Pilot Projects

Overview

This resource is intended to serve as supplemental guidance to the Request for Applications (RFA) for organizations applying for GusNIP Pilot Projects (FPP) within the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Competitive Grants Program Portfolio. This resource specifically covers reporting and evaluation requirements for GusNIP Pilot Projects. All GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Project grantees, upon award, are required to cooperate with the GusNIP Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE) in the following ways (RFA p.22):

- Support implementation of evaluation requirements;
- Meet periodically with staff from NIFA, FNS, the NTAE centers, and other GusNIP grantees to review project plans, evaluation objectives and methods, data collection and reporting requirements, and analysis and reporting of results;
- Facilitate access to or provide documentation of project implementation, operations, costs, and outcomes; and
- Facilitate site visits and interviews with project staff, partners, and program participants.¹

Specific reporting and evaluation requirements differ by project type. GusNIP Pilot Projects have different reporting and evaluation expectations as compared to GusNIP Standard (FIP) and GusNIP Large Scale Projects (FSLP).

What are the reporting and evaluation requirements of GusNIP Pilot Projects (FPP)?

Per the FY 2024 RFA (p.10), "All [FPP] projects must involve SNAP/NAP participants and a SNAP/NAP purchase. **All FPPs must submit a project proposal that includes a self-assessment method of evaluating the success of the program in developing a viable project, such as a process or formative evaluation.** Because GusNIP Pilot Projects are in the earliest stages of development, they are not required to submit a comprehensive program evaluation like the FIP and FSLP projects. **FPPs are encouraged to work with the NTAE Center to include GusNIP comprehensive program evaluation core participant-level and firm-level metrics to be well positioned for future funding opportunities.**"¹

In short, GusNIP Pilot Projects are required to include a process evaluation in their proposal, examples of which are included in the next section of this guide. GusNIP Pilot Projects are not required to include an outcome evaluation (i.e., collect firm- or participant-level data as part of the comprehensive GusNIP evaluation), but outcome evaluation is encouraged.

What is process or formative evaluation?

Process evaluation is a method of self-assessment and is utilized to monitor how a project is implemented, assesses whether project activities have been implemented as originally intended² and provides data to answer questions about a project's effectiveness and efficiency.

What are examples of process evaluation research questions that would fulfill this requirement?

The types of process evaluation research questions that you might ask will vary widely depending on the proposed activities of your project. However, a few broad examples of process evaluation questions for a nutrition incentive (NI) pilot project might include:

- Who was reached by the NI project? How does this differ from the intended impacted priority population?
- When and where did NI project activities take place?
- Was the NI project delivered as planned or intended?
- Is the program accessible and acceptable to the intended impacted priority population?
- What barriers were encountered in implementing the NI project?
- What facilitated success in implementing the NI project?

What is outcome evaluation?

Outcome evaluation is distinct from process evaluation. An outcome evaluation looks at the effects of a project on the intended impacted priority population. In the case of GusNIP, outcome evaluation looks at the impact of nutrition incentives on participants' fruit and vegetable intake, food security, health, and related variables.

Can a GusNIP Pilot Project include an outcome evaluation in their proposal, in addition to the required process evaluation?

Yes! To be well-positioned for future GusNIP funding opportunities, USDA NIFA and the NTAE encourage GusNIP Pilot Projects to consider including collection of firm- and/or participant-level data in their proposals. Firm- and participant-level data comprise the comprehensive GusNIP evaluation that GusNIP Standard and Large-Scale Projects are required to participate in. The NTAE has developed a standardized set of metrics at the firm and participant levels that GusNIP Standard and Large-Scale Projects contribute to in order to understand the national

impact of GusNIP.

Firm-level data are data reported from firms (e.g., brick and mortar or farm direct sites) on a monthly basis (submitted quarterly) and from the grantee organization and its firms on an annual basis. These data help describe NI project operations and the extent to which firms are impacted by NI projects. Firm-level data also help the NTAE identify which properties of NI projects are most effective in increasing redemption of incentives by participants and shed light on which project components are most instrumental in improving participant outcomes across varying settings and in different communities. Below, Table 1 provides an overview of the firm-level core metrics selected for inclusion in the evaluation of NI projects.

Table 1: Firm-level core metrics and example items

Core Metric	Example Items	Rationale
Grant-level information <i>Reported annually</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenses associated with establishment and operations of the project Grant funds used for incentives 	Allows for determination of actual costs and provides input to cost-related analyses
Firm- or site-level descriptive information <i>Reported annually</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial instrument used FV products eligible for incentives 	Provides firm-level descriptive information to understand contextual elements of project delivery and implementation
Firm- or site-level numeric information <i>Reported monthly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount (\$) of nutrition incentives issued and redeemed Number of unique customers 	Describes NI utilization and redemption patterns, and tracks “dose” of intervention

More information about [firm-level data](#) can be found on the Nutrition Incentive Hub website.

Participant-level data are data collected from NI participants in the form of a survey. This core survey consists of approximately 30 questions, and its main goal is to assess participants’ fruit and vegetable intake and food security, the two primary evaluation outcomes of interest for GusNIP. The survey also includes items related to incentive program usage and demographic information. Below, Table 2 provides an overview of the participant-level core metrics selected for inclusion in the evaluation of NI projects.

Table 2: Participant-level core metrics and example items

Core Metric	Example Item(s)
SNAP/NAP Participation	In the last 30 days, have you or anyone in your household received EBT, food stamps, or SNAP/NAP?

Incentive Program Use	How long have you been using [incentive program] to get fruits and vegetables?
Firm Types	Have you used [incentive program] to get fruits and vegetables at any of the following places?
Program Satisfaction	Overall, how would you rate your experience with [incentive program]?
Fruit and Vegetable Consumption	10-Item Dietary Screener Questionnaire (DSQ)
Food Security	USDA 6-Item Household Food Security Survey Module
Self-Perceived Health	Would you say that in general your health is poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent?
Sociodemographics	Age, Sex, Race, Ethnicity
Geography	Zip code

More information about [participant-level data](#) can be found on the Nutrition Incentive Hub website.

In summary, GusNIP Pilot Projects are required to conduct process evaluation, but not outcome evaluation. GusNIP Pilot Projects have flexibility as it relates to outcome evaluation; they may propose collecting none, some, or all of the firm-level and/or participant-level core metrics as described above in their proposal. Collecting partial firm-level core metrics could look like collecting firm-level metrics from some, but not all firms. Collecting partial participant-level core metrics could look like collecting participant-level surveys from a small sample of participants and/or administering a pared down version of the survey that includes some but not all core items.

Collecting some or all of the core metrics allows GusNIP Pilot Projects to better demonstrate the impacts of their projects, positioning them well for future funding and demonstrating capacity to collect core metrics. It also helps GusNIP Pilot Projects establish collaboration with the NTAE, which will contribute to an organization’s success as a GusNIP Standard or Large-Scale Project grantee in the future.

Do I need Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for my evaluation?

Any project collecting data from human subjects (e.g., people) requires IRB approval. This means that all GusNIP Standard and Large-Scale Projects must have IRB approval. If a GusNIP Pilot Project chooses to collect **participant-level** data from participants, they will need IRB approval prior to starting data collection. IRB approval is not required at the time of your proposal submission; however, it is prudent to identify an IRB and begin the process as soon as

possible. [More resources related to IRB](#) can be found on the Nutrition Incentive Hub website.

How can I get help with my evaluation plan?

The NTAE is here to help with your proposal, including developing an evaluation plan that meets and/or exceeds the requirements and is feasible within the capacity of your proposed team and budget. Reach out to ta@nutritionincentivehub.org to request a 1:1 or group consultation where your evaluation plan can be discussed, or evaluation@nutritionincentivehub.org to receive support via email.

References

1. Request for Applications - The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Competitive Grants Program. Published February 14, 2024. Accessed March 19, 2024. <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/FY24-GusNIP-NI-RFA-P.pdf>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Types of Evaluation*. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/program/pupestd/types%20of%20evaluation.pdf>

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