

# Coordinating SNAP & Nutrition Supports (CSNS) 2.0

## Request for Proposals

Open: Sept. 30, 2022 – Dec. 30, 2022

Share Our Strength, No Kid Hungry, in partnership with the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), will be launching a second round of Coordinating SNAP & Nutrition Supports (CSNS) grant funding. Proposals for funding under this program will be accepted until **December 30, 2022**.

State or local SNAP agencies, in partnership with their trusted community partners are invited to submit applications for funding to implement community-led process changes to scale solutions that reduce hunger and advance equity in their state or county. Proposed projects should result in increased access to SNAP and connected benefits and be guided by the needs of families who have used or actively use these programs. Applicants are encouraged to prioritize use of funds in areas where flexible philanthropic investment can support collaboration between SNAP agencies, community partners, and families to inform the co-design and implementation of strategic initiatives that reduce hunger and address structural inequities.

### RFP CONTACTS

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## About the CSNS Funder & Program Administrator

### About the CSNS Grant Funder: [Share Our Strength, No Kid Hungry](#)

Funding for the CSNS program is provided by Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign. No child should go hungry in America. But 1 in 8 kids in the United States faces hunger today. No Kid Hungry is working to end childhood hunger by helping launch and improve programs that give all kids the healthy food they need to thrive. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization committed to ending hunger and poverty in the United States and abroad.

### About the CSNS Grant Administrator: [American Public Human Services Association \(APHSA\)](#)

Direction and technical assistance for the CSNS program are being provided by APHSA. APHSA is a bipartisan, nonprofit membership organization representing state and local health and human service agencies. APHSA seeks to *influence* modern policies and practices that support the health and well-being of all children and families, *connect* its members to national policymakers and human-serving organizations, and *build* more capacity for their teams. APHSA will use their expertise in facilitation of peer-to-peer learning with state and local human services agencies to provide the direction and technical assistance for this project. APHSA will work directly with the cohort as sites create project plans, hire new staff, implement the program, and identify best practices for advancing cross-agency alignment.

## Commitment to Racial Equity

APHSA and Share Our Strength are committed to addressing the systemic and structural health, social, and economic inequities that disproportionately impact historically under-resourced communities, and people of color in particular. Through its campaigns, Share Our Strength has advanced solutions to childhood hunger in the United States, but we recognize that hunger is a consequence of poverty; ending it is impossible without addressing economic inequality and generational poverty.

For this opportunity, respondents must detail how projects will advance racial equity and work toward eliminating structural barriers faced by the communities they serve. Agency respondents and all members of project teams must demonstrate intentional commitment to advancing racial equity by acknowledging and honoring specific community needs. This should include engaging people within the communities affected by proposed process innovations to guide project planning, implementation, and sustainability.

*Please visit the No Kid Hungry website to learn more about [Share Our Strength's grantmaking beliefs and values](#), as well as how [Share Our Strength prioritizes grant funds](#).*

*Visit the [APHSA Race Equity page](#) to learn more about how APHSA is working to influence policies and practices that address structural bias and inequity, connect our members to resources, organizations, and best practices to apply a race equity lens, and build capacity within public human services to promote social and economic mobility and health and well-being for all races.*

## Background

Building on the learnings and innovations generated from the first round of [Coordinating SNAP & Nutrition Supports \(CSNS\)](#) cohort program funding, a second CSNS cohort will be funded for two years to help SNAP agencies partner with trusted community organizations to reduce hunger, increase economic opportunity, and advance equity. Selected projects should seek to effectively blend customer-centered business process changes in the delivery of SNAP and connected public benefits with efforts that deepen the capacity of agencies to advance community-led work.

In the first CSNS cohort, SNAP agencies led projects, and collaborated with peers in other program areas such as WIC and community partners, that address food access/nutrition to support streamlined access to and co-enrollment between SNAP and other supports. The first six CSNS site initiatives are coming to a close on a staggered timeline starting Fall 2022 through Spring 2023. Across the cohort, sites aimed to eliminate cross-departmental silos; facilitate community engagement; enhance outreach and service delivery; analyze demographic and administrative data to reduce disparities in access; and, improve the customer experience.

During the second round of this grant funding, Share Our Strength and APHSA will embrace opportunities to draw on lessons learned, experiences, and relationships built during Cohort 1 to assist Cohort 2 sites throughout planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects funded through this second round of funding. Specifically, Cohort 1 sites demonstrated the need for a sharpened focus on supporting community-driven government to advance equity priorities across agencies and sectors. Launching Cohort 2, the funder and administrator will sharpen our community focus by requiring partnership between SNAP agencies and community-based organizations on proposed initiatives, as detailed throughout this RFP.

## RFP Timeline

TIMELINE COMPONENT	TARGET DATE
<b>RFP RELEASE</b>	September 30, 2022
<b>PROJECT CONSULTATIONS &amp; INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR *</b>	October-November 2022
<b>PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE</b>	December 30, 2022
<b>ANTICIPATED REVIEW PERIOD</b>	January 2022
<b>PROPOSAL FOLLOW-UPS</b>	January & February 2023
<b>ANTICIPATED AWARD NOTIFICATIONS</b>	February 2023
<b>ANTICIPATED START OF GRANT</b>	March 1, 2023
<b>ANTICIPATED END OF GRANT</b>	March 30, 2025
<b>ANTICIPATED EXTENSIONS</b>	Extensions beyond March 2025 may be explored at a later date as needed by funded sites.

\* APHSA and SOS encourage interested project teams to reach out directly to discuss ideas as you consider this opportunity. More details regarding our informational webinar will be made available post RFP release.

## Funding Eligibility

A SNAP Agency at the state or local level must be a driving partner in the proposed project. All state and county-level SNAP agencies are eligible to apply. The SNAP agency *must* collaborate with a community partner on the proposal and project to be eligible for funding.

- *Community Partners:* For the purpose of this RFP, we define “Community Partner” broadly to refer to organizations that directly serve community and family needs including food security. Participation from community partners that work *directly* with individuals experiencing childhood hunger is strongly encouraged.
- Partnership with additional connected agencies such as those administering WIC, School Meals, Medicaid, and other economic supports that help to maximize impact and de-silo process change innovations are strongly encouraged.

## Funding Levels & Use

Selected states or local agencies and their designated partner will receive flexible funding to accommodate project needs, such as staffing and project management, technology enhancements, contracts with community partners, partner convenings, and more. As detailed further below, Share Our Strength anticipates awarding grants to four state or local agencies up to an initial award of \$750,000.

The funder will intentionally embed opportunities for sites to request funding enhancements over the course of the grant to support teams if and when they discover additional project requirements or opportunities to enhance project impact with added resources. Opportunities for site teams to explore and identify needed enhancements will be made available in Year 1 interim reports.

The funder anticipates identifying and distributing enhanced funding to sites by the close of year one, in conjunction with the Mid-Point Grant Report. We anticipate site project funding enhancements ranging from \$50,000-\$200,000, depending on additional needs identified by site teams in interim reports and budgets submitted.

### **Award Amounts:**

- Share Our Strength anticipates awarding 24-month grants to grantees, in amounts up to \$750,000.
- Full awards will be disbursed in two segments.
  - Funding requested by grant applicants does not need to be equally split over the two grant years.
  - Applicants will be asked to submit a 2-year budget with the grant application.
    - Year 1 funding will be disbursed with grant receipt in early 2023.
    - In conjunction with the Mid-Point Report, Year 2 funding will be disbursed in early 2024. Year 2 funding will be inclusive of approved budget enhancements, as agreed on by site teams, the grant administrator and the funder.

## Grant Opportunity

The goal of the second cohort of the *Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports* is to support SNAP agencies in scaling solutions to improve food security and advance equity in partnership with trusted community organizations. This round of CSNS funding will invest in projects that reinforce existing agency priorities to increase access to nutrition supports by embedding community-engaged strategies and human-centered design into these priorities.

Initiatives funded should result in clear and tangible process changes that center community voice in the redesign of outreach, application, certification, and/or ongoing participation processes. The process change should leverage funding in a manner that strengthens agency impact and addresses structural inequities by removing barriers to participation and improving the client experience.

This section outlines the project team and design information applicants will be asked to share in grant proposals, in alignment with the goals of this opportunity.

## Project Design

This section describes the design of projects that will be considered for funding in CSNS Cohort 2, with suggestions for strong applications. Project Design covers the following: Project Team, Project Activities, Uses of Funding (aside from staffing), Products and Deliverables, Project Timeline, and Budget.

## Project Teams

APHSA and Share Our Strength seek to support diverse, collaborative, innovative, and equity-driven project teams. In our experience, cohort learning projects thrive when core project teams are established to represent and drive complex projects forward across agencies. To support continued success for agencies and partners executing process innovation work, we request that projects submitted for funding under this opportunity are managed by collaborative **core teams** that include named representatives from:

1. Lead SNAP Agency
2. Lead Partner Community Organization
3. Any additional key partner agency or community organization – i.e. a representative from agencies administering WIC, School Meals, Medicaid, TANF, or other related services.

In proposal submissions, applicants will be asked to identify core teams and specify individuals (or plans to hire staff) who will fulfill the responsibilities specified below. In proposals, please be prepared to demonstrate experience and readiness to collaborate with key partners backed by strong cross-agency leadership support.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
<b>PROJECT SPONSORS</b>	Leadership-level sponsors at the SNAP agency, Community Organization, and other collaborating public agencies (if applicable)
<b>PROJECT MANAGER</b>	Individual responsible for managing project timelines, deliverables, and stakeholder coordination
<b>PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT</b>	Individual who will directly coordinate with the grant administrator, APHSA, over the project period

### *Team Structures*

Projects funded in this round of CSNS investment are encouraged to leverage this flexible funding opportunity to advance process changes that improve the experience of people accessing and using benefits and services. To this end, we encourage applicants to develop strategic teaming structures in support of cross-agency and community collaboration.

For example, sites funded in the first CSNS cohort leveraged this funding to support teaming structures across agencies that are often otherwise challenging to budget for under federal, state, local, or other more restrictive funding mechanisms, including roles such as:

- Project Manager – A project team member whose role is to support the project management functions, including meeting management and scheduling, coordinating reporting requirements, maintaining timelines, etc.
- Cross-Enrollment Coordinator – A project team member whose role is dedicated to cross-agency initiatives, relationship maintenance, and related efforts
- Field Navigator – A project team member whose role is to interface directly with customers and community members. This role may be situated at either the government agency or the community partner organization. This may also be a team of individuals. This role is best suited to individuals who personally relate to and connect with the community through their own lived expertise living in the community, engaging with public benefits, receiving or delivering community supports, etc.

APHSA and Share Our Strength are excited to support creative, collaborative teaming structures. In your proposals, please be prepared to describe the structure of your project team and describe how this arrangement supports cross-program alignment, smoother service delivery, improved customer experience, and program sustainability.

### *Project Activities*

APHSA and Share Our Strength encourage project teams to leverage funding to support activities and tasks necessary to operationalize innovative process changes. Applicants should be prepared to describe the major activities of their proposed project involved in grant proposals.

Examples of major project activities from the first CSNS cohort include:

- Planning and collaboration activities for project team
- Data analyses
- Technology improvement design and deployment
- Outreach planning and implementation
- Customer engagement activities
- Convenings or events
- Evaluation activities

## Products and Deliverables

In proposals, applicants will be required to include an overview of the work products and proposed final deliverables for the project. We anticipate proposals reflecting a wide variety of work products. Some work products may be project-specific, such as workplans or Data Sharing Agreements; while others may be public-facing, such as evaluation reports, white papers, and digital products; and still others may be customer-facing, such as client surveys, outreach materials, and client-facing technology builds.

Strong proposals will define the planned work products and deliverables that will be developed during the project period, including a description of how these products and deliverables contribute to overall project goals.

### Example CSNS Work Products

We have included a short list of example work products and deliverables from the first CSNS cohort that may be relevant to your proposed projects for your reference and consideration.

- Visual and written analyses of shared data through reports and digital tools such as maps and dashboards
- Customer feedback surveys and action plans
- Business process change and technology improvement design planning documentation
- Cross-agency or organization data sharing agreements
- Formal intervention or program evaluations
- Public report on business process change

## Project Timeline

The funder and grant administrator will consider proposals for projects with 24-month timelines. Extensions beyond March 2025 may be explored at a later date as needed by funded sites.

### Key Dates:

- Early 2023: Award notification followed by Year 1 funding disbursement
- March 2023: Projects launch, kicking off planning phases for funded initiatives.
- March 2024: Funded projects submit Mid-Point Report followed by Year 2 funding disbursement

Grant applicants will be asked to designate clear phases in submitted project timelines, which should begin March 2023 and end February 2025. If the proposed project lends to marking key milestones, please do so in your project timeline; for example, a project milestone might be the signing of a necessary Data Sharing Agreement.

### Example Timeline:

PHASE	DATES
PROJECT INITIATION	March 2023 – May 2023 <i>Milestone: DSA Signed May 2023</i>
PROJECT PLANNING	June 2023 – September 2023
PROJECT EXECUTION	October 2023 – October 2024
PROJECT PERFORMANCE & MONITORING	November 2023 – November 2024
PROJECT CLOSING	November 2025
PROJECT EVALUATION	December 2025 – February 2025
SUSTAINING & IMPROVING	Ongoing



## Budget

Proposals with budgets up to \$750,000 for 24-month projects will be considered for this funding opportunity. Proposal budget narratives should summarize and provide justification for total project costs, including direct and indirect costs. Selected grantees will have the opportunity to modify budgets if needed during the planning phase. In applications, respondents should describe their agency's ability to hire staff resources needed if funding will support the hiring and onboarding of new positions.

Please note that project budgets need not include costs related to CSNS Cohort convenings or travel; these costs will be separately covered by the grant funder.

## Grantee Benefits & Obligations

### Cohort Learning

The group of grantees funded under the second CSNS investment will engage in cohort learning throughout the grant period. The first CSNS cohort demonstrated the importance of broad collaboration over the course of their projects through peer sharing, collective troubleshooting, and expanding networks. APHSA will facilitate regular opportunities for the cohort to convene and collaborate on projects, learn from one another's process, and gain insights from states, counties, and field experts who have undertaken related initiatives.

The cohort aspect of this opportunity enables not only immediate assistance to funded sites, but also uncovers broader opportunities for process innovation and policy change at the systems level when trends emerge and solutions are collectively developed.

In proposals, please be prepared to discuss how your project team plans to contribute to the cohort community, as well as early considerations for what you hope to gain through the cohort experience and peer learning opportunities during the grant period.

### In-Person & Virtual Cohort Events

APHSA and Share Our Strength request that core project teams commit to attending virtual and in-person cohort convenings over the course of the grant period.

In-person cohort convening attendance for core teams will be fully funded by Share Our Strength, including travel and lodging as needed; therefore, applicants will not be asked to budget travel for cohort obligations in grant proposals. Please be prepared to address plans to ensure participation from the project sponsor, project manager, and community partner at in-person events.

### Tentative Schedule for In-Person CSNS Cohort Events

- May 2023 – In-person Cohort Planning Meeting
- August 2024 – In-person Summit

While core teams are encouraged to attend all cohort convenings, others working on site project teams are also welcome at virtual cohort convenings. For example, if the core project team does not have a policy expert, but we are planning to cover policy on a cohort meeting, teams are welcome to invite members of their policy unit to join.



## Technical Assistance

Over the course of the grant period, APHSA’s staff will be dedicated to providing ongoing support of funded projects, including provision of technical assistance. If your project team has identified technical assistance needs or areas of support, we encourage you to note those needs in proposals. This will be helpful information for our teams as learning agendas are developed for the cohort. APHSA and Share Our Strength will also connect funded sites to our national network of supports, comprised of:

- Field experts in areas including policy, data, outreach, evaluation, and more;
- Federal, state and county program administrators;
- Cross-country community organizations;
- Customers and community members; and,
- Other key stakeholders dedicated to advancing equitable systems.

## Grant Reporting

Participating states will be expected to work with Share Our Strength and APHSA to document project implementation, outcomes, and lessons learned. Reporting obligations for this grant project include six quarterly reports and one final report. APHSA and Share Our Strength will work with project teams during the planning phase to develop goals and metrics for reporting purposes. In grant proposals, please discuss early plans for measuring the success of your initiative, including desired outcomes and potential qualitative and quantitative metrics that will signify progress and be reported on in grant reports.

## Interim Reporting

Over the course of the 24-month grant period, grantees will complete six quarterly reports and one mid-point report using templates provided by the grant administrator.

## Final Reporting

A Final Report for funded CSNS projects will be due 30 days after project completion. As projects progress over this 24-month grant period, APHSA and Share Our Strength are cognizant that timelines for funded initiatives may shift. We intend to work closely with funded sites to generate reporting practices aligned with project milestones and offer timely reflection points for lessons learned.

## Reporting Schedule

Funded sites will be expected to work with the funder and administrator to ensure this reporting timeline is suitable for each funded project; therefore, this suggested reporting timeline may be subject to change according to site needs.

REPORT	ANTICIPATED MONTH DUE
QUARTERLY REPORT 1	June 2023
QUARTERLY REPORT 2	September 2023
QUARTERLY REPORT 3	December 2023
MID-POINT REPORT	March 2024
QUARTERLY REPORT 4	June 2024
QUARTERLY REPORT 5	Sept 2024
QUARTERLY REPORT 6	December 2024
FINAL REPORT	April 2025

## Project Check-ins

In addition to meetings convened by APHSA for the full cohort of grantees, the funder and administrator will check-in with project sites 1:1 on a regular cadence to be determined, such as bimonthly or quarterly.

Throughout Cohort 1, we found that it was helpful for dedicated APHSA staff to occasionally join site project team meetings. We will encourage sites funded in this second cohort to take advantage of APHSA's dedicated resources in their project meetings and planning as well.

## Proposal Guidelines

1. Proposals should be co-developed by the state or local SNAP agency and their primary community partner in the initiative.
2. Please use the accompanying RFP template provided for proposal development and submission.
3. Interested project teams are encouraged to reach out directly to the funder and/or administrator to discuss ideas as you consider this opportunity.
4. Final proposals must be submitted via email to Jess Maneely & Miranda Lauzon on or before **12/30/2022**.
  - a. Jess Maneely: [JManeely@aphsa.org](mailto:JManeely@aphsa.org)
  - b. Miranda Lauzon: [MLauzon@strength.org](mailto:MLauzon@strength.org)

## Partner Commitments

Partners named in project proposals will be required to sign off on the grant application. In addition to the direct sign-off of core partners, applicants should be prepared to submit letters of commitment from non-core agencies or organizations that will support the success and sustainability of proposed initiatives.