

Title: Solicitation of Interest #20315 – Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Stellar Farmers’ Markets – Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program

AGENCY: Health, NYS Dept. of
(Center for Community Health/Division of Nutrition)

Contract Number: TBD

Contract Term: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2028

Date of Issue: April 19, 2023

Due Date/Time: May 17, 2023 4:00PM EST

County(ies): New York, Bronx, Kings, Queens and Richmond

Classification: Educational & Recreational – *Consulting & Other Services*

Opportunity Type: Grant or notice of funds availability

Description:

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Program (JSY) announces the opportunity for organizations to implement the Stellar Farmers’ Markets Program (SFM) for food insecure populations in five boroughs of New York City (NYC). The JSY SFM program is an evidence-based obesity prevention intervention that focuses on improving the nutrition and physical activity behaviors of low-income families residing in New York City neighborhoods. JSY SFM promotes the benefits of a diet rich in vegetables and fruits, provides nutrition education and facilitates policy, systems and environmental changes (PSE) to reduce obesity.

New York City residents’ consumption of fruits and vegetables does not meet recommendations for health promotion and disease prevention, and residence in a low-income neighborhood further negatively affects intake. The latest available data show that in NYC, 17% of adults in very high poverty neighborhoods reported consuming no servings of fruits and vegetables during the previous day compared with 7% of residents in low poverty (NYC Community Health Survey (CHS), 2017). Access to healthy food in high poverty NYC neighborhoods may be limited due to the lack of vendors selling fruits and vegetables within walking distance (NYC CHS, 2015) as well as affordability, quality, and variety of healthy foods available.

Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is a proven strategy to improve health and prevent obesity. Public health recognizes that improving fruit and vegetable consumption requires education accompanied by efforts to change the environment to support the education provided. Farmers’ markets are promoted as an environmental change to increase access to fresh produce in areas lacking access. The United States Department of Agriculture promotes the acceptance of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Electronic Benefit Transfer (SNAP EBT) by

farmers' markets to engage low-income shoppers at the market. However, this alone may not result in significant low-income shoppers at the market.

JSY SFM operates at farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods and their surrounding community to provide free nutrition education and cooking workshops to SNAP-eligible New York City (NYC) adults. JSY SFM aims to improve dietary habits by providing education and resources for planning, purchasing and preparing healthy meals, that often include locally grown produce. JSY SFM workshops run from July through November, include NYSDOH approved lesson plans and aim to address current nutrition-related topics: healthy portion sizes, nutrition facts labels, reducing food costs, increasing physical activity, healthy beverage consumption and meal planning. JSY SFM activities are year-round and are not limited to workshops at farmers' markets. Currently, during the harvest season, JSY SFM provides free, bilingual nutrition workshops and cooking demonstrations in-person at up to 15 markets located in low-income neighborhoods throughout NYC or equivalent digital direct education sessions.

Conducting JSY nutrition education workshops (JSY SFM) at farmers' markets located in low income areas of NYC has been associated with improved attitudes toward consuming fruits and vegetables; increased confidence in cooking/preparing fruits and vegetables; and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables (Dannefer *et al.*, 2015). In addition, as recommended by JSY SFM focus group participants, increasing the awareness of the opportunity to spend SNAP benefits at farmers' markets may help to attract more low-income shoppers to the market.

PSEs help enhance the impact of prevention efforts and engage stakeholders around a common goal to improve community health. PSEs are a way of modifying the environment to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members. They are instrumental in creating and encouraging healthy behaviors in communities. Successful PSEs are evidence-based, multi-sector community collaborations that create changes to make healthier lifestyle choices an easy and feasible option for every member of the community.

Project Narrative/Work Plan Outcomes

The long-term goals of the JSY SFM intervention are to:

1. Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
2. Reduce consumption of sugar sweetened beverages
3. Improve knowledge or confidence in food and physical activity skills
4. Improve the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the USDA food guidance

Annually, JSY SFM must evaluate progress towards meeting these long-term goals by measuring the attainment of supporting short-term objectives.

Expected Activities

The awarded organization is expected to implement seasonal (based on New York City farmers' market season of July to November) cooking demonstrations using seasonal produce available at the market that day and highlighting food safety and sanitation practices to SNAP eligible participants; PSE implementation to compliment the farmers' markets workshop; and PSE implementation in the same neighborhoods the farmers' markets operate.

The specific activities must include the following:

1. Identification of up to 15 farmers' markets locations throughout 5 boroughs of NYC to conduct JSY SFM educational sessions or approved equivalent digital direct education sessions. (see above for farmers' market location criteria).
2. Conduct at least 4 workshops per day per market for a minimum of 20 weeks at each market providing at least a total of 1,200 nutrition education sessions at the markets.
3. Market SFM workshop to low-income shoppers to ensure that at least a total of 50 persons participate in workshops each market day to reach at least 15,000 low-income participants during the market season.
4. Collaborate with community organizations to attract low-income shoppers receiving SNAP to shop at the market using SNAP EBT.
5. Recruit seasonal JSY SFM workshop staff. Pay seasonal educators a minimum of \$20/hour.
6. Staff each market with a JSY SFM educational team consisting of: Nutritionist, Culinary Educator and Bilingual Educator.
7. Train workshop staff in JSY curriculum and how to conduct effective food demonstrations.
8. Utilize JSY curriculum and teaching techniques to conduct workshops with SNAP-eligible participants visiting at these markets including:
 - a. Print needed program materials.
 - b. Workshops last approx. forty (40) minutes, are repeated at least four (4) times per market day.
 - c. Conduct all workshops in English with Spanish interpretation; provide Bengali or Chinese interpretation as needed.
 - d. Purchase all equipment, supplies and food needed to deliver the JSY SFM program.
 - e. Conduct recipe demonstrations using the seasonal fruits and vegetables available at the market that day, and using appropriate food safety and sanitation practices.
 - f. Provide workshop participants with nutrition education and recipe handouts, inform them of the total and per serving cost for each recipe prepared and offer taste samples of the prepared recipe.
 - g. Translate all handouts into Spanish, Bengali and Chinese.
 - h. Provide nutrition education reinforcement materials to participants for at-home recipe preparation. This refers to a class of goods given to program participants that conveys nutrition messages and promotes good nutrition. Such items must have a direct relationship to program objectives and cannot exceed \$5.00 per item. Some appropriate incentives include: vegetable peelers, measuring cups, cutting boards, coupons to purchase fruits and vegetables, etc.
 - i. Document and evaluate the implementation and outcomes (SMART Objectives) of

their program services, using validated and reliable process and outcome measures.

- j. Distribute, collect and data entry participant surveys.
 - k. Assure that recipes used for cooking demonstrations meet NYSDOH Division of Nutrition Recipe Guidelines.
 - l. Be responsible for all aspects of electronic record keeping and data collection for reporting to the NYSDOH.
 - m. Maintain electronic records necessary for the USDA's Education and Administrative Reporting System for all direct education, social marketing, indirect education and all financial expenditures.
9. Implementation of at least one policy, systems and environmental strategy to compliment all JSY SFM seasonal workshops. The PSE should address increasing access to affordable fruits and vegetables by modifying the environment to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members.
 10. Engage and involve the community through collaborating with partner community organization(s) to implement at least one policy, system and environmental strategy (PSE implemented must be approved by NYSDOH), in 2 neighborhoods served by two participating SFM farmers' markets addressing at least one of the following goals:
 - Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables;
 - Reduce consumption of sugar sweetened beverages;
 - Improve knowledge or confidence in food and physical activity skills;
 - Improve the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the USDA food guidance.
 11. Evaluate the effectiveness of implemented PSEs.
 12. Implement activities designed to sustain PSEs.

Qualifications of eligible organizations:

- Public or private not-for-profit organization (e.g., tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code).
- Minimum of 12 months' experience within the last 3 years providing nutrition education in low income populations at farmers' markets in New York City.
- At the time an award is made, organizational funding may not include SNAP-Ed grant funds for nutrition education to low-income populations shopping at NYC farmers' markets during the five year contract term of October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2028.
- Office location must be within the geographic service area (5 boroughs of NYC).

How to Apply

Interested eligible organizations should submit a statement of interest consisting of a short summary describing their organization's eligibility, location, and experience that demonstrates their capacity to administer the SFM initiative per the expected activities outlined in this Solicitation of Interest (provide a maximum of 2 pages). Information submitted may be subject to verification with the New York State Department of Health's Division of Nutrition. Please

submit the document via email to jsy@health.ny.gov no later than 4:00PM EST on May 17, 2023 with subject line “JSY SFM SOP”. The primary contact is Clare DiSanto.

It is anticipated that up to \$487,535 of Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) funding will be available annually to implement the JSY SFM for the five-year period of October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2028. An internal review will determine eligibility.

Funding for this project is contingent on the availability of funding and the number of eligible applicants that respond to the advertisement. Available funding to support this initiative will be limited to the amount(s) appropriated in the enacted State Fiscal Year budgets for this purpose. **This advertisement is not a guarantee or promise of funding.**

The Department reserves the right to withdraw this solicitation and/or issue a competitive procurement for this project if the number of interested and eligible parties exceed that which can be reasonably accommodated by available funds.

Upon approval, the Department will notify eligible organizations of their status and the proposed award amount (if any) and request a work plan and budget with justifications as well as required Minority/Women-owned Business Entity (MWBE) and other forms necessary to develop contracts (if applicable). MWBEs interested as potential subcontractor(s) on this contract can contact MWBE@health.ny.gov.

Minority Owned Sub-Contracting Goal: 15%
Women Owned Sub-Contracting Goal: 15%
Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Contracting Goal: 0%
Disadvantaged Owned Sub-Contracting Goal: 0%

Contact Information

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