



## **Advancing Food and Childcare Systems in Rural Georgia: Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program**



### **2025 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)**

**Full Application: Release date Nov. 1, 2024**  
**Letter of Interest (LOI) Due Date: November 8, 2024**  
**Application Deadline: November 22, 2024**

<b>Summary</b> <b>Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program</b>	
<b>Issuing Agency</b>	The Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) grant program is provided by the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD).
<b>Program Overview</b>	The purpose of this grant program is to improve and advance regional food systems and childcare services in Upson and Dougherty counties in Georgia.
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<p><b>Improving Food Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Reduction in Food Insecurity</b></li> <li>● <b>Increase in Local Food Access</b></li> <li>● <b>Expansion of Participation in Food Assistance Programs</b></li> <li>● <b>Increase in Community-Based Food Availability</b></li> <li>● <b>Improvement in Health Outcomes Related to Food Security</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Improving Childcare Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Increase in the Number of Children Receiving Access to Childcare Services</b></li> <li>● <b>Increase in the Number of Options for Childcare Services</b></li> <li>● <b>Lowering Monthly Costs of Childcare Services</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Economic Development Scope of Work Statement</b> SCRC will fund grants that support building sustainable communities and strengthening economic growth in Upson and Dougherty counties, located in the Southeast Crescent region of rural Georgia.</p>
<b>Eligible projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Projects that relate to and support advancing and developing food systems in Upson and/or Dougherty counties in Georgia.</li> <li>- Projects that address and support access to childcare services in Upson and/or Dougherty counties in Georgia.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligible applicants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Non-profit organizations described in section 501(c) and 501(a)</li> <li>● Entities in Dougherty and Upson counties local government entities (village, town, city and county)</li> <li>● Educational Institutions, to include institutions of higher learning, and K-12 public institutions.</li> <li>● Other political subdivisions (regional planning commissions, local economic or community development entities or a consortium of political subdivisions)</li> <li>● Indian Tribes: §200.54 Indian tribe (“federally recognized Indian tribe”)</li> </ul>
<b>Deadlines</b>	<p>Full Application Portal Opens ..... November 1, 2024</p> <p>Letter of Interest Due Date ..... November 8, 2024</p> <p>Full Application Due Date ..... November 22, 2024</p> <p>SCRC Notification of Awards ..... December 6, 2024</p> <p>Anticipated Project Start Date ..... January 6, 2025</p>

<b>Funding Amount</b>	Total Funding Available: \$5,000,000 Grant Minimum - \$100,000 Grant Maximum - \$1,000,000
<b>Match Requirement</b>	A match is not required to participate in this program. Applicants are required to demonstrate a collaborative approach with food system providers and/or childcare service providers.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) is publishing this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to solicit applications for grants under the FY 2025 Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program. This program is being conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD), through the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS).

This NOFA provides an overview of the CANS Grant Program and outlines specific requirements needed to complete the application process. Access to the application and additional information can be found on [scrc.gov](http://scrc.gov).

## II. GENERAL INFORMATION

### A. About Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC)

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) is a federal-state partnership authorized by Congress in the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (“the Farm Bill”) to promote and encourage economic development in parts of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and all of Florida. SCRC invests in projects that support basic infrastructure, business development, natural resource preservation and workforce development. SCRC is committed to supporting job creation, building communities and improving the lives of those who reside in the 428 counties of the seven-state region.

The leadership of SCRC consists of a Senate-confirmed Federal Co-Chair (FCC) and the collective of Governors representing each state located within the SCRC footprint. The collective is led by a States’ Co-Chair, one Governor elected by majority vote of the Governors. Local participation is represented by 55 local development districts (LDDs).

### B. About U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD)

The U. S. Department of Agriculture provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management.

USDA RD has a vision to provide economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve our

Nation's natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improved watersheds, and healthy private working lands.

USDA Rural Development (RD) provides grants and technical assistance programs that have the potential to support rural communities' economic development efforts and maintain and improve a healthy rural population by leveraging funding assistance to key priorities. These priorities build upon RD's continuing commitment to serving traditionally underserved and economically challenged rural areas, such as Persistent Poverty Counties.

### **III. PROGRAM INFORMATION**

#### **A. Funding Overview**

The Childcare Access and Nutrition Systems (CANS) Grant Program is funded through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD) and the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC). USDA Rural Business Cooperative Service provided the funding to SCRC to advance regional food and childcare systems in the distressed-identified rural counties of Dougherty and Upson, Georgia.

The SCRC geographic area stretches from the Tidewater part of eastern Virginia southward through the Carolinas along Interstate 95, west through Georgia and lower Alabama, and northwesterly to the Mississippi Delta. According to a recent Wallet Hub economic study, Georgia is the sixth most financially distressed state in the country and has the ninth most people with accounts in distress and the 10th highest average number of accounts in distress across the United States. Georgia's Southeast Crescent region is mostly rural, offering natural beauty, a distinct cultural heritage and relative proximity to metropolitan Atlanta, which is the leading economic driver of the state. While most counties in Georgia are economically distressed, the changing demographics of the region, ranging from high-growth areas to those that are losing population, require special interventions and policies to help close the region's development and economic growth gap.

This grant program will support rural Georgia communities' economic development efforts and maintain and improve a healthy Georgia population by leveraging funding assistance from the USDA RD to key Administration priorities, such as advancing racial equity place-based growth, and opportunity by ensuring rural residents in the most distressed communities in Georgia have equitable access to RD programs and benefit from RD funded projects.

#### **B. Funding Strategy**

- *Target Multiple Sectors:* The strategic investment in childcare will support an increase in workforce participation. Comparable investment in food production and sustainable farming ends food insecurity and supports sustainability, while positively contributing to multiple facets of rural life.
- *Increase Local Food Production:* By engaging local farms and food-related businesses, and encouraging sustainable food system practices, these projects will support job creation, economic growth, and better health outcomes. Local food production can improve regional self-sufficiency and contribute to long-term economic stability.
- *Leverage Employer and Community Partnerships:* Through employer and community partnerships, these projects will encourage local support, thus ensuring that both businesses and communities have a stake in the success of the project and its broader implications.
- *Scalable Impact:* Funded projects will offer an investment in local communities while impacting a broader audience. By expanding access to stronger local food systems and improving access to childcare services, these projects address immediate infrastructure needs, building a foundation for long-term community resilience.

### C. Alignment with Other Administration Priorities

CANS applications should reflect the following Administration initiatives and Executive Orders:

- [NATIONAL STRATEGY ON HUNGER, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH](#)
- [JUSTICE40](#)
- [EXECUTIVE ORDER TO ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY AND SUPPORT FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT](#)

### D. Funding Availability

The CANS Grant Program is an SCRC grant program designed to encourage and support food systems development as well as childcare improvements activities in Upson and Dougherty Counties in Georgia. In FY 2025, the grant program will invest \$5 million in projects that align with the priorities identified in the authorizing inter-agency agreement between USDA RD and SCRC. Awards made under this program will support construction or non-construction projects that improve rural food systems or childcare services.

## **E. Period of Performance**

The period of performance for the CANS Grant Program is only through Fiscal Year 2025. The anticipated start date for awards made under this announcement is *January 6, 2025*. All proposed projects must be completed on or before September 30, 2025.

## **F. Eligible Applicants**

The following entities are eligible for funding under this announcement:

- Non-profit entities. The term ‘nonprofit entity’ means any organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under 501(a) of that Code.
- Dougherty and Upson (GA) governments (village, town, city and county)
- Educational Institutions, to include institutions of higher learning, and K-12 public institutions.
- Indian Tribes: §200.54 Indian tribe (or “federally recognized Indian tribe”)

## **G. Ineligible Applicants**

- For-profit entities and other entities that are not a 501(c), *40 U.S.C. §15101(c)*.
- Those entities normally deemed eligible but, due to prior federal or state funding history, have been identified as ineligible for future investments.
- A non-profit identified by a state that does not have a federally recognized 501(c) status is not an eligible applicant.

## **H. Required Partnerships**

Applicants are encouraged to partner with the local Regional Commission to act as the grant administrator unless previous successful federal grant administration is demonstrated. Applicants are required to collaborate with either public or private partners who will support the proposal thus supporting sustainability.

## **I. Eligible Activities**

CANS Grant Program funds may be used for:

- **Developing Food Systems**

Food systems refer to the interconnected processes involved in producing, processing, distributing, and consuming food within rural communities. This includes efforts to increase local food production, improve access to fresh and nutritious foods, and strengthen the infrastructure that supports local



farmers, food hubs, markets, and distribution networks, particularly in underserved rural areas.

- **Childcare Projects**

Childcare systems refer to the network of services and resources that support the availability, affordability, and quality of childcare. This includes expanding access to early childhood education, supporting the development of new childcare facilities, improving existing facilities, and ensuring that working families in rural areas have access to reliable and affordable childcare services for children birth to 18 years of age. Applicants should consider how their projects will enhance these systems that promote community health, economic development, and sustainability.

**J. Ineligible Activities - CANS Grant Program funds shall NOT be used for:**

- pass-through funding where eligible entities are conduits for entities such as private-sector businesses or other entities that are not listed as co-applicants. Property purchased with SCRC funding cannot be sold or donated.
- financial assistance to assist in relocating from one area of the region to another.
- as funds to replace or displace existing federal programs.
- projects that promote unfair competition between businesses within the same immediate service area

**K. Eligible Costs – CANS Grant Program funds may be used for:**

- applicable and allocable costs as outlined in the Federal Cost Principles. Uniform Guidance (2 CFR §200).
- fees to contractors for services rendered, not any fee or profit to the recipient or subrecipient.
- construction and pre-construction costs such as engineering and environmental review.
- funds to match federally funded projects (when both federal agencies allow)

**L. Funding Restrictions – CANS Grant Program funds shall NOT be used for:**

- Application preparation
- Entertainment
- Alcohol
- Appraisals of property to be purchased or used as a match
- Any committed or incurred costs prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed (this includes SCRC funds, and any funds committed as match to the project)
- Allowance or payment of debts
- Food and beverages\*

*\*SCRC will only cover the cost of food and beverages when being purchased for the purpose of a training, conference or forum held in support of the project and is clearly outlined in the budget narrative. SCRC will not cover the costs of alcoholic beverages or tips associated with the purchase of food or beverages.*

## **M. Indirect Costs**

Applicants can use a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate up to the De minimis rate of 15% based on modified total direct costs, as defined in 2 CFR §200. However, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs and may not be double-charged or inconsistently charged as both.

## **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. How to Apply**

The mandatory online grant application will open on **November 1, 2024**, at 9 am EST. Applicants can access the application portal and required forms at [scrc.gov](https://scrc.gov). The due date for all applications is **November 22, 2024, at 5pm EST**. To be eligible for funding, the applicant must respond to each question and upload each required document.

#### *Letter of Interest*

Applicants are required to submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) Form in the SCRC Grant Portal to state their intention to submit a full application. The LOI is due on or before November 8, 2024. If eligible, the applicant will receive an email after submitting the LOI inviting them to continue to the full application process.

#### *Application Process*

Applicants are also highly encouraged to work closely with the SCRC Director of Grants and Programs, Program Manager, Regional Commissions, and other organizations and agencies involved in their project for planning and moving to meet all deadlines. Applicants proposing a construction project should be aware of the time constraints and alert engineers to strictly observe set deadlines.

Applicants can reach the SCRC Director of Grants and Programs as well as the Program Manager via [grants@scrc.gov](mailto:grants@scrc.gov).

## **B. System for Award Management (SAM) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)**

As required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 and 2 *CFR* §200, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Register in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting the application (SAM.gov);
- Provide a valid Unique Entity ID (UEI); and
- Grantees are responsible for always maintaining an active SAM registration with up-to-date information when in receipt of a federal award, or when an application or plan is under consideration by a federal awarding agency. It is the grantee's responsibility to proactively ensure that their SAM registration is current, as failure to do so may result in delays or disqualification from funding opportunities.

## **C. Grants Management System**

Letter of Interest (LOI) and Full Applications (including required and optional attachments) must be submitted electronically via the portal link located here:

[SCRC GRANT PORTAL](#)

***Neither mail, facsimile nor email transmissions of applications will be accepted.***

## **D. Grant Administration**

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission in the state of Georgia is supported by 10 regional Local Development Districts (LDD) known as Regional Commissions in Georgia and help SCRC with outreach activities, application development and administering grant programs on behalf of grant recipients. Grants funded in Upson are within the Three Rivers Regional Commission and grants funded in Dougherty are within the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission.

GA Regional Commissions are knowledgeable about federal and state programs that can fund economic and community development projects. SCRC leverages GA Regional Commissions to ensure SCRC resources are deployed effectively and efficiently, while maintaining the integrity of this grant program through quarterly reporting. For projects where GA Regional Commissions serve as the grant administrator, SCRC will maintain regular communication with the GA Regional Commissions to monitor project performance and settle compliance issues.

Qualified administrative work should be reimbursed through a process based on the formula of 4% of the total SCRC grant award. Grant administration costs are eligible under this Grant Program for an amount not to exceed the formula. If grant administration assistance is needed beyond the total available under the formula,

that assistance must be paid for with non-SCRC/USDA RD sources such as matching funds. Grant administration costs must be reflected within the budget submitted for the project.

Grant applicants will be assessed based on their previous federal grant administration experience. Applicants that do not have experience administering federal grants may be required to use a GA Regional Commission for grant administration. Other grantees are also encouraged to use the GA Regional Commission for grant administration activities. Required grant administration activities include:

- Quarterly Program and Financial reports: Complete and submit quarterly reports on time. Quarterly reports must thoroughly describe project progress, in accordance with the approved scope of work, and actual outcomes. Quarterly reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period (Quarterly Reporting Periods: January 1 – March 31; April 1 – June 30; July 1 – September 30).
- Reimbursement or Advancement requests: Complete reimbursement requests (SF-270 “Request for Advance or Reimbursement”) by ensuring the reimbursement requests are accurate, in alignment with the scope of work and budget narrative and include the necessary documentation to substantiate the reimbursement (or partial advance) request.
- Final report: Complete and submit final report and final reimbursement request. Final reports are due on November 30, 2025 which is 60 days after the required completion of the project.
- General assistance: Regional Commissions can assist grantees by providing technical assistance, such as grant compliance and the procurement of goods, services, and/or contractors, etc.

**Note:** Grant administration does not include documentation related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If a Regional Commission can provide the applicant with services to complete NEPA documentation, that must be in a separate contract and is an eligible Grant Program cost. This information must be included in the project budget.

### **E. Full Application (Required)**

Eligible entities invited to apply for a grant must submit a full application via the SCRC grant portal to be considered for funding. The full application is due by 5pm EST on November 22, 2024.

The type of information requested by SCRC in the full application includes the following:

- Project name
- Project summary

- Service area and community needs
- Project design
- Rationale
- Applicant experience
- Partnerships
- Work plan (including timeline)
- Anticipated outcomes
- Budget and budget narrative

Required Forms and Attachments to upload to the SCRC Grant portal.

- SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance
- Letter(s) of engagement from significant project partners
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- Grants Administration Assurances
- Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying
- Drug-Free Workplace Certification
- CANS Project Team Sheet
- CANS Grant Authorized Official Documentation
- SCRC 1003: Committed Partnership Form
- CANS Timeline
- Scope of Work
- SCRC and Project Target Reporting Workbook
- *(Non-construction projects only)*
  - SF-424A: Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
  - SF-424B: Assurances Non-Construction Programs
- *(Construction projects only)*
  - SF-424C: Budget Information for Construction Programs
  - SF-424D: Assurances Construction Programs
  - Preliminary engineering report
  - NEPA Intake Form
  - BABA Acknowledgement Form

## APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### V. Criteria and Scoring Rubric

SCRC has established a technical review process to provide an objective evaluation of all applications. The criteria set forth aligns with strong project implementation as well as SCRC and USDA RD grant proposal designs.

<b>Application Scoring Rubric</b> Maximum Points Possible = 100	
<b>I. Project Description</b>	<b>30 Points</b>
a. Identification of Needs	
b. Project Design	
c. Implementation Plan	
<b>II. Project Rationale</b>	<b>20 Points</b>
a. Demonstration of Connected Successes	
b. Demonstration of research-based rationale	
<b>III. Community Capacity and Partnerships</b>	<b>15 Points</b>
a. Experience of Project Team	
b. Demonstration of Local and Regional Public and/or Private Partnerships	
<b>IV. Work Plan</b>	<b>15 Points</b>
a. Project Activities/Deliverables	
b. Project Timeline	
<b>V. Performance Measurement and Sustainability</b>	<b>10 Points</b>
a. Demonstration of Realistic and Attainable Outcomes	
b. Demonstration of Project Sustainability	
<b>VI. Budget Information</b>	<b>10 Points</b>
a. Budget Narrative Aligns with Acceptable Costs	
b. Budget Alignment with Project Narrative	

### Application Scoring Information – 100 Points

#### **Project Description – 30 Points**

##### **Identification of Needs**

Each community is unique with unique characteristics, make up, and needs. To the extent possible, the applicant should describe the project service area and population to be served by the proposed project. Applicants should describe the project service area’s demographics and economic challenges, including the population, race and ethnicity, median household income, unemployment rate, poverty rate, labor force participation rate, and any other data that may be applicable to the project. Demographic and economic data indicators should come from

primary sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics or U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. In addition, the applicant should also identify the unique needs of the community that create the need for the project.

## **Project Design**

The applicant should describe a coherent and feasible approach for successfully implementing the proposed project. The project design should describe all grant activities by demonstrating how the applicant will implement its proposed project, including all start-up activities. This section must also be clearly reflected in the Work Plan (i.e. project activities/deliverables and timeline), Budget, and Budget Narrative. The applicant must address factors that could impact the project's success and a related contingency plan.

## **Implementation Plan**

The applicant should align the implementation plan described in the project narrative clearly to the Work Plan (i.e. project activities/deliverables and timeline), Budget, and Budget Narrative. The applicant should address all factors that could impact the project's success and a related contingency plan.

## **Project Rationale – 20 Points**

### **Demonstration of Connected Successes**

The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed project will generate broader impacts both within the project's immediate scope and across the county, focusing on the development of food systems and childcare projects. The applicant should explain how these systems will be strengthened and connected to wider community benefits. The following areas are examples of how they could be addressed:

- **Economic Impact:** Explain how the project will stimulate local economies. For food systems, this includes supporting local farmers and creating distribution networks. For childcare projects, show how expanding childcare access will enable workforce participation and economic growth.
- **Workforce Development:** Detail how the project will create job opportunities. In food systems, this could involve agricultural training. In childcare, it could create jobs in early education and caregiving.
- **Community Resilience:** Demonstrate how the project will increase food security or provide reliable childcare, contributing to overall community stability and well-being.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Highlight partnerships with sectors like health, education, and local government. This could include collaborations to improve access to food or expand childcare options.

- **Scalability and Replicability:** Describe how the project can be scaled or replicated in other areas to broaden its impact.
- **Alignment with Priorities:** Show how the project aligns with federal and local goals, such as improving food access or expanding childcare to support working families.

Applicants should provide data, case studies, or other supporting evidence to illustrate how the project connects to broader economic, social, and developmental goals, specifically in food systems and childcare projects. The ability to demonstrate these connections will be a critical factor in evaluating the project's potential for long-term, sustainable success.

### **Demonstration of Research-Based Rationale**

The applicant should provide a plan that is based on research which demonstrates effective practice and success. The research should be provided to connect with various aspects of the project to demonstrate expected successes.

### **Community Capacity and Partnerships – 15 Points**

#### **Experience of Project Team**

The applicant should identify key members of the project team and describe their roles and responsibilities as a part of the project. To be considered for full points, the applicant must demonstrate the project team has relevant experience and the organizational capacity to manage and implement the proposed project, including but not limited to prior experience in or demonstrated capacity for managing federal grant requirements. Staff resumes and/or job descriptions (for positions the applicant is proposing to fill with grant funds) must be included as attachments to the application.

#### **Demonstration of Local and Regional Partnerships**

The applicant must demonstrate partnerships with local and regional entities representing the public and/or private sectors. To be considered for full points, the applicant must describe the role and responsibilities of each partner and identify any leveraged resources (i.e. cash, in-kind, other). Letters of engagement are required. Letters of engagement must describe how the partner will be involved in the proposed project, the extent to which a partnership between them and the applicant has evolved, and/or how it will be strengthened. *Generic letters of support will not receive points.*

### **Work Plan – 15 Points**

#### **Project Activities/Deliverables**



The applicant must describe the phases/tasks necessary to complete the proposed project including key personnel assigned, timeline for completion, major activities/deliverables and budget estimate for each phase/task. The applicant must provide a detailed work plan for the entire 9-month period of performance with the understanding that there is no possibility of an extension.

## **Project Timeline**

To the extent possible, the applicant should demonstrate project completion deadlines during the period of performance of one year. The SCRC timeline provided to the applicant must be used and cover the entire proposed 9-month period of performance which may not be extended.

## **Performance Measurement and Sustainability – 15 Points**

At this critical moment, The Advancing Food and Child Care Systems is positioned to set the standard for anti-poverty, sustainable community and economic growth efforts in the region. Driven to affect change, this SCRC/USDA RD partnership has established key impact measures to evaluate efforts and investments made through this grant. The targets listed below will measure outcomes associated with the priorities of the CANS program. Applicants must combine both quantitative and qualitative measures when evaluating the impact of these grants. Additional project specific outcomes will also be required by the applicant and listed in the project workbook.

### **FOOD SYSTEMS OUTCOMES:**

#### **1. Reduction in Food Insecurity**

- a. Target: Reduce the prevalence of food insecurity in the target population by 20% within the performance period.
- b. Outcome Measure: Percentage of households classified as food insecure before and after intervention, using USDA RD's Food Security Survey Module.

#### **2. Increase in Local Food Access**

- a. Target: Improve access to affordable and nutritious food by increasing the percentage of households living within a specified radius (e.g., 1 mile in urban areas, 10 miles in rural areas) of a grocery store or farmers' market by 15%.
- b. Outcome Measure: Distance to grocery stores or markets, and the number of households with improved access.

#### **3. Expansion of Participation in Food Assistance Programs**

- a. Target: Increase enrollment in food assistance programs, such as SNAP, WIC, and school meal programs, by 15% among eligible households within the performance period.
- b. Outcome Measure: Number and percentage of households or individuals enrolled in these programs.

#### **4. Increase in Community-Based Food Availability**

- a. Target: Increase the volume of food distributed by community programs, food banks, and pantries by 25% within the target communities within the performance period.
- b. Measure: Total volume of food distributed (in pounds) or number of meals provided over time.

#### **5. Improvement in Health Outcomes Related to Food Security**

- a. Target: Achieve a 10% improvement in key health metrics, such as Body Mass Index (BMI) and anemia rates, among children in the target areas within the performance period.
- b. Measure: Track changes in health outcomes, such as BMI, anemia rates, and other relevant health indicators.

### **CHILDCARE SYSTEMS:**

#### **1. Increase in the Number of Children Receiving Access to Childcare Services**

- a. Target: Increase the prevalence of childcare systems in the target population by 10% within the performance period.
- b. Outcome Measure: Number of opportunities for local families to have access to childcare.

#### **2. Increase in the Number of Options for Childcare Services**

- a. Target: Improve access to affordable childcare by increasing the percentage of households living within a specified radius (e.g., 1 mile in urban areas, 10 miles in rural areas) of childcare services by 15%.
- b. Outcome Measure: Distance to a childcare service, and the number of households with improved access.

#### **3. Lowering Monthly Costs of Childcare Services**

- a. Target: Make childcare services more affordable through greater competition.
- b. Outcome Measure: Cost of monthly childcare.

### **Demonstration of Realistic and Attainable Outcomes**

The applicant should propose realistic and attainable Project specific outcomes to be achieved during the period of performance. To receive full points, the applicant must include anticipated outcomes for the targets listed above as well as additional project specific targets that are specific and relevant to the proposed project.

### **Demonstration of Project Sustainability**

The applicant should demonstrate project sustainability as to how the project will continue operating beyond the period of performance. To receive full points, the applicant must describe how the project will continue to have support after completion. *Complete reliance on SCRC Grant Program funding or other federal funding to demonstrate project sustainability will not receive points.*

### **Budget Information – 10 Points**

## **Budget Alignment with Project Narrative**

The applicant's budget and budget narrative must align with the project narrative. To receive full points, the applicant must provide a detailed budget narrative, using the SCRC Budget Narrative form with specific cost descriptions for each entry under the corresponding category.

## APPENDIX I

### A. Timeline

NOFA Released	November 1, 2024
Full Application Portal Opens	November 1, 2024
Letter of Interest (LOI) Due Date	November 8, 2024
Full Application Due	November 22, 2024
FCC Grant Awards	December 3, 2024
SCRC Notification of Awards	December 6, 2024

### B. Administrative Program Requirements

Administration of SCRC awards is subject to the same regulations, restrictions and requirements as other federal awards. These include but are not limited to [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR §200](#), as currently updated; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); past performance and non-compliance; restrictions on making awards to corporations convicted of felony criminal violations and unpaid federal tax liabilities; environmental and historic preservation; and national policy requirements, including but not limited to those protecting free speech, religious liberty, public welfare, the environment and prohibiting discrimination, e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). SCRC reserves the right to change the reporting time periods and, depending on the nature of the project, may request additional relevant data.

In addition, SCRC requires grantees to cooperate with post-award evaluations, which require maintaining records for at least three years after project closeout. All SCRC awards are subject to audit. If the applicant's organization has been subject to a federal audit within the past five years, the applicant must include in the application, recommendations made and the response(s) to those recommendations. Additional program requirements can be found in *Appendix II: Award Administration*.

### C. Reimbursement or Advancement of Funds

Funds are reimbursed to awardees for eligible expenses as determined by 2 CFR 200. Advanced payments up to 25% of the total award may be considered at a time outside of the reimbursement process with proper justification. The required supporting documentation (i.e., itemized bills, invoices and receipts, detailed accounting of personnel costs, copies of contracts and/or a contractor's partial pay estimate, etc.) should be provided to the grant administrator or staff responsible for reporting. The grant reporter will review the materials and associated budget

balances before uploading the request into the funding portal. As outlined in the approved project Budget, there can be SCRC costs and non-SCRC costs; invoices should be provided for ALL costs. All funding sources should be drawn down as approved in the budget. Budget items that include both SCRC and non-SCRC sources will be drawn down at the predetermined pro-rata share. Other budget items may be dedicated 100 percent to SCRC or a non-SCRC source.

- All reimbursement and advancement requests, scope changes, modifications, etc., will be received by or emailed directly to the SCRC CANS Program team using the proper forms,
- Reimbursement requests will not be paid unless the project is in compliance with reporting requirements or any other deficiency, such as, a project that is beyond its performance period have been remedied, and,
- Any questions or feedback regarding actions taken by the CANS Program staff should be directed back to the same team.

Upon receipt, review and approval of the request, funds will be transferred electronically to the account established for the project by the awardee or basic agency and as identified in the Automated Clearing House (ACH) form (SF-3881), provided by SCRC. The information provided on all ACH forms must match the banking information, which is registered in SAM.gov. Further information for SAM.gov. SCRC's reimbursement will be processed for payment within ten business days once all required documentation is completed and received. However, delays may occur if errors in the documentation are found or there is a lack of sufficient supporting details, the SCRC staff will work with and through the grant administrator to make necessary corrections. This does not take into consideration the amount of time needed by the grant administrator to collect, review and upload the request.

#### **D. SCRC Contact Information**

SCRC strongly encourages interested applicants to contact the Grants and Program Director and/or Program Specialist and their Regional Commission with questions about the CANS grant program or the use of grant funds to support projects in communities located within the identified region.

Director of Grants and Programs: Dr. Dennis Dotterer – [ddotterer@scrc.gov](mailto:ddotterer@scrc.gov)  
Program Specialist – TBD – [grants@scrc.gov](mailto:grants@scrc.gov)

GA Regional Commissions: Three Rivers Regional Commission:  
Director: Paul Jerrell – [pjarrell@threeriversrc.com](mailto:pjarrell@threeriversrc.com)

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission:  
Director: Barbara Reddick - [breddick@swgrc.org](mailto:breddick@swgrc.org)

## APPENDIX II: AWARD ADMINISTRATION

### A. Administrative Program Requirements

All grantees will be subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations, including the OMB Uniform Guidance, and the terms and conditions of the award. The grant(s) awarded under this NOFA will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions.

- 1) Non-Profit Organizations, Educational Institutions, For-profit entities and State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments—2 *CFR Part 200* (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)
- 2) All recipients must comply with the applicable provisions of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*, *Public Law No. 113-328, 128 Stat. 1425* (codified as amended at *29 U.S.C. 3101 et. seq.*) and the applicable provisions of the regulations at *20 CFR Part 675 et. seq.*
- 3) All entities must comply with *29 CFR Part 93* (New Restrictions on Lobbying), *29 CFR Part 94* (Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)), *2 CFR Part 180* (OMB Guidance to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)), and, where applicable, *2 CFR Part 200* (Audit Requirements).
- 4) All entities must comply with the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Build America, Buy America Act (the Act)*, *Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52*, as well as the Executive Memorandum M-24-02, dated October 25, 2023, Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure.

### B. Build America, Buy America Act Requirements

[Definitions section of Buy America terms](#)

**Buy America Preference** means the “domestic content procurement preference” set forth in section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act, which requires the head of each Federal agency to ensure that none of the funds made available for a Federal award for an infrastructure project may be obligated unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials incorporated into the project are produced in the United States.

**Infrastructure project** means any activity related to the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States regardless of whether infrastructure is the primary purpose of the project.

*Component, Construction materials, Iron or steel products, Manufactured products, Predominantly of iron or steel, etc. See 2 CFR 184.3 Definitions*

For all SCRC grants for infrastructure, construction-related projects, the grantee must comply with the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Build America, Buy America Act (the Act), Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52.*

**The Act requires the following Buy America preferences:**

- 1) All iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States. This means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.
- 2) All manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States. This means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States, and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation.
- 3) All construction materials<sup>1</sup> are manufactured in the United States. This means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

**Waivers**

Recipients may submit a written waiver request to SCRC to waive the domestic content procurement preference. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office.

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<sup>1</sup> Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives.

- i. When SCRC has determined that one of the following exceptions applies, a final determination of waiver approval will be made:
  1. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest;
  2. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or
  3. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent.

### **C. Other Federal Requirements**

- 1) Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- 2) Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the SCRC pursuant to the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of age by recipients of Federal financial assistance and in federally assisted programs or activities but permits the use of certain age distinctions and factors other than age that meet the requirements of the Act and this part.
- 3) Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (except sections 904 and 906 of those Amendments) [20 U.S.C. 1681, 1682, 1683, 1685, 1686, 1687, 1688](#), which is designed to eliminate (with certain exceptions) discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, whether or not such program or activity is offered or sponsored by an educational institution as defined in these Title IX regulations.
- 4) Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- 5) Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs, and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.
- 6) SCRC will follow the procedures outlined in the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) policy. If SCRC receives a FOIA request for your application, the procedures in SCRC's FOIA policies for responding to requests for commercial/business information submitted to the government will be followed, as well as all FOIA exemptions and procedures. See generally 5 U.S.C. § 552.

### **D. Other Legal Requirements**



- 1) Religious Activities - SCRC notes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb, applies to all federal law and its implementation. If an applicant organization is a faith-based organization that makes hiring decisions on the basis of religious belief, it may be entitled to receive federal financial assistance under this grant solicitation and maintain that hiring practice. Religious organizations are eligible on the same basis as any other organization, to seek SCRC support or participate in SCRC programs for which they are otherwise eligible.
- 2) Lobbying or Fundraising the U.S. Government with Federal Funds - In accordance with Section 18 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (*Public Law 104-65*) (2 U.S.C. § 1611), non-profit entities incorporated under Internal Revenue Service Code section 501(c)(4) that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible to receive federal funds and grants. No activity, including awareness-raising and advocacy activities, may include fundraising for, or lobbying of, U.S. federal, state, or local governments (see 2 CFR 200.450 for more information).
- 3) Transparency Act Requirements - Ensure that the necessary processes and systems are in place to comply with the reporting requirements of the *Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006* (Pub. Law 109-282, as amended by the *Government Funding Transparency Act of 2008*, Pub. Law 110-252, Title VI, Chap. 2, Sec. 6202), as follows.
  - i. Except for those excepted from the Transparency Act under subparagraphs 1, 2, and 3 below, you must ensure that you have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, should you receive funding.
  - ii. Upon award, you will receive detailed information on the reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, as described in 2 CFR Part 170, Appendix A, which can be found at <https://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-22705.pdf>.

**E. Types of Awards Not Subject to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act.**

- 1) Federal awards to individuals who apply for or receive federal awards as natural persons (e.g., unrelated to any business or non-profit organization he or she may own or operate in his or her name);
- 2) Federal awards to entities that had a gross income, from all sources, of less than \$300,000 in the entities' previous tax year;

- 3) Federal awards, if the required reporting would disclose classified information, and
- 4) Safeguarding Data Including Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Applicants submitting applications in response to this NOFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the Southeast Regional Commission and must be observed except where disclosure is allowed by the prior written approval of the Grant Officer or by court order.

  - i. By submitting an application, you are assuring that all data exchanges conducted through or during the course of performance of this grant will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable federal law and TEGL 39-11 (issued June 28, 2012). All such activity conducted by recipient(s) will be performed in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal laws.
  - ii. By submitting a grant application, you agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality by complying with the following provisions that are applicable in governing the handling of confidential information: You must ensure that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained or otherwise associated with SCRC funded grants is securely transmitted.
  - iii. To ensure that such PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, all PII and other sensitive data transmitted via e-mail or stored on CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted using a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 compliant and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) validated cryptographic module. You must not e-mail unencrypted sensitive PII to any entity, including SCRC or contractors.
  - iv. You must take the steps necessary to ensure the privacy of all PII obtained from participants and/or other individuals and to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure. You must maintain such PII in accordance with the SCRC standards for information security and any updates to such standards we provide to you. Grantees who wish to obtain more information on data security should contact their Federal Project Officer.
  - v. You must ensure that any PII used during the performance of your grant has been obtained in conformity with applicable federal and state laws governing the confidentiality of information.
  - vi. You further acknowledge that all PII data obtained through your SCRC grant must be stored in an area that is physically safe from access by unauthorized persons at all times and the data will be processed using recipient-issued equipment, managed information technology (IT) services and designated locations approved by SCRC. Accessing, processing and storing of SCRC grant PII data on

personally owned equipment, at off-site locations, (e.g., employee's home), and non-recipient managed IT services, (e.g., Yahoo mail), is strictly prohibited unless approved by SCRC.

- vii.** Your employees and other personnel who will have access to sensitive / confidential / Proprietary / private data must be advised of the confidential nature of the information, the safeguards required to protect the information, and that there are civil and criminal sanctions for noncompliance with such safeguards that are contained in federal and state laws.
- viii.** You must have policies and procedures in place under which your employees and other personnel, before being granted access to PII, acknowledge their understanding of the confidential nature of the data and the safeguards with which they must comply their handling of such data, as well as the fact that they may be liable to civil and criminal sanctions for improper disclosure.
- ix.** You must not extract information from data supplied by SCRC for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.
- x.** Access to any PII created by the SCRC grant must be restricted to only those employees of the grant recipient who need it in their official capacity to perform duties in connection with the scope of work in the grant agreement.
- xi.** All PII data must be processed in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records/ documents and is designed to prevent unauthorized persons from retrieving such records by computer, remote terminal or any other means. Data may be downloaded to, or maintained on, mobile or portable devices only if the data are encrypted using NIST validated software products based on FIPS 140-2 encryption. In addition, wage data may be accessed only from secure locations.
- xii.** PII data obtained by the recipient through a request from SCRC must not be disclosed to anyone but the individual requestor, except as permitted by the Grant Officer or by court order.
- xiii.** You must permit SCRC to make onsite inspections during regular business hours for the purpose of conducting audits and/or conducting other investigations to assure that you are complying with the confidentiality requirements described above. In accordance with this responsibility, you must make records applicable to this Agreement available to authorized persons for the purpose of inspection, review, and/or audit.
- xiv.** You must retain data received from SCRC only for the period required to use it for assessment and other purposes, or to satisfy applicable federal records retention requirements, if any.

Thereafter, you agree that all data will be destroyed, including the degaussing of magnetic tape files and deletion of electronic data.

## **F. Record Retention**

You must have an individual records retention policy which follows federal guidelines on record retention, which require that you maintain all records pertaining to grant activities for a period of at least three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report. See *2 CFR 200.333-337* for more specific information, including information about the start of the record retention period for awards that are renewed quarterly or annually, and when the records must be retained for more than three years.

## **G. Use of Contracts and Subawards**

You must abide by the following definitions of contract, contractor, subaward, and subrecipient.

- 1) **Contract:** Contract means a legal instrument by which a non-federal entity (defined as a state or local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education (IHE), non-profit organization, for-profit entity, foreign public entity or a foreign organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient) purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. The term as used in this NOFA does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-federal entity considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a federal award or subaward (see definition of Subaward below).
- 2) **Contractor:** Contractor means an entity that receives a contract as defined above in Contract.
- 3) **Subaward:** Subaward means an award provided by a pass-through entity (defined as a non-federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program) to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.
- 4) **Subrecipient:** Subrecipient means a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other federal awards directly from a federal awarding agency. You must follow the provisions at *2 CFR 200.330-.332* regarding subrecipient monitoring and management. Also see *2 CFR 200.308(c)(6)* regarding prior approval requirements for subawards. When

awarding subawards, you are required to comply with provisions on government-wide suspension and debarment found at *2 CFR Part 180* and codified at *2 CFR Part 2998*.

## **H. Closeout of Grant Award**

Any entity that receives an award under this Announcement must close its grant with SCRC at the conclusion of the grant project, and no later than November 30, 2025.

## **I. Administrative Requirements**

- 1) **Award Announcements** - SCRC will coordinate award announcements with appropriate federal and state entities. Grantees will be informed by the Commission once cleared to share award announcements with media outlets.
- 2) **Notice to Proceed** - The Commission will issue a Notice to Proceed letter to each grantee once grant agreements have been executed. Grantees shall not incur any project-related expenses funded by their SCRC award until a Notice to Proceed letter has been signed by the Federal Co-Chair and received by the grantee's authorized organizational representative. Costs incurred before the Notice to Proceed letter has been received will not be eligible for reimbursement by SCRC grant funds.

## **J. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions**

Except as specifically provided in this NOFA, our acceptance of an application and an award of federal funds to sponsor any program(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirements and/or procedures. For example, the OMB Uniform Guidance requires that an entity's procurement procedures ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, full and open competition. If an application identifies a specific entity to provide goods or services, the award needs to provide justification to sole-source the procurement (i.e. avoid competition).

## **K. Special Program Requirements**

- 1) **SCRC Evaluation** - As a condition of grant award, grantees are required to participate in an evaluation, as undertaken by SCRC. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grantees, and a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive program services or enhanced program services, or into control group(s) that would receive no program services or program services that are not enhanced). Applicants are required to collect data elements to aid the

evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to:

- i. make records available to the evaluation contractor on participants, employers, and funding;
- ii. provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits;
- iii. in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment by lottery of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and
- iv. follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor under the direction of SCRC.

## 2) Performance Goals

Please note that applicants will be held to outcomes provided, and failure to meet those outcomes may result in technical assistance or other intervention by SCRC and may also have a significant impact on decisions about future grants with SCRC.

## 3) Definitions

- i. Construction materials include an article, material, or supply – other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives – that is or consists primarily of:
  - non-ferrous metals;
  - plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinyl chloride, composite building materials and polymers used in fiber optic cables);
  - glass (including optic glass);
  - lumber; or
  - drywall.
- ii. Domestic content procurement preference means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States.

- iii. Infrastructure: Infrastructure includes, at minimum, the structure, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States (1) roads, highways, and bridges; (2) public transportation; (3) dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime systems; (4) intercity passenger and freight railroads; (5) freight and intermodal facilities; (6) airports; (7) water systems; including drinking water and wastewater systems; (8) electrical transmission facilities and systems; (9) utilities; (10) broadband infrastructure; and (11) buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport and distribute energy.

### APPENDIX III: CANS FORMS/DOCUMENTS

- (All projects) SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance”
- (All projects) Letter(s) of engagement from significant project partners
- (All projects) Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying
- (All projects) Grants Administration Assurances
- (*All projects*) NEPA Intake Form

***And***

- (*Non-construction projects only*) SF-424A “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs”
- (*Non-construction projects only*) SF-424B “Assurances Non-Construction Programs”

***Or***

- (*Construction projects only*) SF-424C “Budget Information for Construction Programs”
- (*Construction projects only*) SF-424D “Assurances Construction Programs”
- (*Construction projects only*) Preliminary engineering report