



Request for Applications (RFA)
**Colorado Department of Public
Health & Environment**

**Colorado Special Supplemental Nutrition
Program for Women, Infants and
Children (COWIC) Local Administrative
Services Contract**

RFA #24076181

Application Due Date: June 14, 2024



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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Colorado Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (COWIC) is located within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and federally funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The program provides grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for income-eligible pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

COWIC operates through a shared service model where participants have all Program services available to them through either a local authorized agency, a local agency partnership, or Colorado WIC. The shared service model provides participants with more equitable services across the state, allows local health agencies to offer the Program in their clinics, and enables COWIC to efficiently use federal funds to provide services to participants. The shared service model and revised contract and funding formula are designed to be revenue-neutral from a state perspective. WIC contracts do not produce income. Consistent with federal requirements, the model allows the most effective use of federal funds across the state while ensuring high-quality nutrition services to all eligible Coloradans

Objectives focused on the delivery of high-quality services to participants include:

- A. Guaranteeing access to high-quality COWIC services wherever participants live and reducing barriers to access for all participants.
- B. Focusing funds and support on core services to improve the clients' direct experience with the COWIC program.
- C. Supporting new and existing partnership models across the state to maximize operational efficiencies whenever possible.

Objectives focused on improving fiscal operations and efficiently managing department resources include:

- A. Making transparent the budgeting process to standardize how local agencies are supporting COWIC operations.
- B. Maximizing the impact and efficiency of existing resources to build resilience and adaptability to navigate future programmatic, technologic, and policy changes.

II. PROJECT BUDGET PERIOD, FUNDING PERIOD, AND BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

- A. Budget Period: Annually beginning October 1, 2024
- B. Funding Period: October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025
- C. Budget Requirements: Submit completed COWIC-provided budget template.
 1. Funding is allocated through a funding formula process for all selected sub-recipient contractors authorized for COWIC.
 2. This program is Federally funded. Grant funds are to be administered based upon rules and regulations defined by:
 - a. Federal WIC legislations: 7 C.F.R. Part 246
 - b. Federal Rules and Regulations regarding fiscal management of grants. (OMB Omni Circular)
 - c. WIC Policies and Procedures as listed at coloradowic.gov.

3. Examples of allowable expenses that may be charged to the WIC program include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Costs associated with the issuance of WIC food benefits, such as personnel costs.
 - b. Costs associated with the certification of WIC participants.
 - c. Nutrition Education.
 - d. Breastfeeding Promotion.
 - e. Outreach.
 - f. General Program Administration.
 - g. Personnel costs, for those people that actively participate in the administration of the WIC program.
 - h. Supplies.
 - i. Medical Supplies.
 - j. Travel.
 - k. Hemoglobin Testing Supplies.
 - l. Translation/Interpretation.
 - m. Rent.
 - n. IT costs.
 - o. Maintenance.

4. Examples of unallowed costs include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Leave payouts, such as retirement payouts may not be allowable. They are associated with type of accounting system utilized: cost or accrual basis.
 - b. Food - except for food demonstrations for COWIC participants and other situations with prior approval from the COWIC program.
 - c. Bad Debts.
 - d. Contingencies.
 - e. Contributions and Donations.
 - f. Entertainment.
 - g. Fines and penalties.
 - h. Interest and other financial costs.
 - i. Implementation and maintenance of HIPPA and National Smallpox Vaccination Program (NSVP).
 - j. Physical Activity costs such as fitness center dues, exercise equipment, exercise classes, and incentive items.
 - k. Governor's expenses.
 - l. Legislative expenses.

5. Indirect (F&A) Cost Rate:

Definition: Indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective or grant account. Indirect costs may be called Facilities and Administration costs (F&A) at some agencies. Indirect costs are different from administrative costs in most cases. For example, a program employee can be considered administrative and not be included in an organization's indirect costs. Costs classified as indirect can differ depending upon your organizational structure and accounting practices but some common examples include depreciation on buildings and equipment, operating and maintenance costs of facilities, and general administrative expenses such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers and accounting or legal staff.

If Applicant's organization/business maintains an indirect or F&A rate and Applicant chooses to include this cost on the application budget, it is expected that the

amount budgeted will reflect the organization's/business's approved rate. Be prepared to submit one of the following if awarded:

- A. Federally Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement - An entity that receives funding directly from the federal government is eligible to recover indirect costs by using a federally negotiated indirect cost rate from their Federal cognizant agency.
- B. CDPHE Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement - An entity that does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate with a federal agency AND does not receive federal funds directly from a federal agency can negotiate an indirect cost rate with the internal audit unit at CDPHE.

Alternatives to a negotiated indirect cost rate:

- C. *De minimis* indirect cost rate - The *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) is available to all non-Federal entities (2 CFR 200.414(f)).
- D. Direct Charge All Expenses - Organizations may elect to direct charge all allowable expenses on their billings for each contract, grant or award. Billed costs will be subject to field review by the CDPHE.

III. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

A. Eligibility - To be eligible to apply for a local service area administrative services contract, the applicant must meet the following eligibility:

- 1. The Applicant must be located within the State of Colorado.
- 2. The Applicant must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) registered with SAM.gov and eligible to receive federal funding.
- 3. The Applicant must be one of the following:
 - a. Public or a private nonprofit health agency that will provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care, and administrative services.
 - b. Public or a private nonprofit health or human service agency that will enter into a written agreement with another agency for either ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care or administrative services.
 - c. Public or private nonprofit health agency that will enter into a written agreement with private physicians, licensed by the State, in order to provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care to a specific category or participants (women, infants, or children).
 - d. Public or private nonprofit human service agency that will enter into a written agreement with private physicians, licensed by the State, to provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care.
 - e. Public or private nonprofit health or human service agency that will provide ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care through referral to a health provider.

B. **Required Project Components** - The requirements to run the COWIC program are outlined in the following;

- 1. Vendor Information Sheet- Attachment 1
- 2. COWIC Local Agency Application - Attachment 2
- 3. COWIC Local Agency Statement of Work - Attachment 3

4. Budget Template - Attachment 4
 5. Letter of Intent/Support required for partnership arrangements - Attachment 5
 6. Financial Risk Assessment (not required for LPHAs) - Attachment 6
- C. **Formatting Instructions** - Return completed application, Budget Template, letters of intent/support (for partnerships), and financial risk assessment form (not required for LPHAs) to cdphe_cowic_application@state.co.us on or before June 14, 2024, 5 pm.

IV. TOOLS AND GUIDANCE

A. Definition of Terms

1. **Core services** are direct-level education, enrollment, and navigation support given to Program participants. COWIC is committed to partnership with local health agencies with deep and long-standing links to their respective local community to maintain a highly responsive level of service across the state. Authorized local agencies provide core services to educate participants about nutrition, to understand the benefits to which they are entitled, and to make a warm handoff to specialized or external services when needed.
2. **Health Screenings:** USDA requires WIC Program participants to have an in-person visit to obtain height, weight, and a hematological assessment to identify nutritional deficiencies. Rather than local WIC agencies performing this in-person visit, we encourage these screenings to be provided by healthcare providers in clinical settings to reduce the burden of travel by program participants.
3. **Specialized services** meet unique needs, such as breastfeeding support, and are delivered to various sub-groups of WIC participants. They should be delivered by personnel with specialized expertise or certifications and require a greater amount of time and resources to deliver. Local agencies might explore different staffing models or MOU agreements to deliver these specialized services. We propose to incorporate a new principle of recognizing the distinctiveness of these needs and responding to the unique hiring and staffing challenges associated with these needs. For many communities, these services will be better provided in a shared service area.
4. **Operational services** provide a consistent foundation of excellence across the state and backfill local agency staff when needed. Except for the state support team, they are typically not client-facing, but they are client-critical. They should be seen as distinct and separate program needs from the oversight, program management, and financial administration the state must also provide. These services can be provided centrally, either through the state agency or through providers with a statewide mandate.

V. SELECTION, EVALUATION, AND AWARDS

A. Evaluation

The technical aspects of applications will be assessed based on the soundness of the applicant's approach and the applicant's understanding of the requirement. Past experience/qualifications will be assessed by considering the extent to which the qualifications, experience, and past performance are likely to foster successful, on-time performance. Technical and past experience assessments may include a judgment concerning the potential risk of unsuccessful or untimely performance, and the anticipated amount of State resources necessary to ensure timely, successful performance. The State may use all information available regarding past

performance as defined in C.R.S. §24-106-107 et seq.

The program has carefully designed a scoring and selection process to ensure a fair selection of the best-qualified applicants. The selection process is described below. The criteria for scoring are in direct correlation to the required application components.

Applications that fail to follow all of the requirements may not be considered.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the information provided within the application which includes:

- A. **Attachment 1 Vendor Information Sheet** - is required but will not be rated.
- B. **Financial Risk Assessment Rating in Evaluation 5 points** - The financial risk rating determined from the submitted Financial Risk Assessment will be reviewed. Questionnaire or FRMS rating (Local Public Health Agencies only) will be communicated to reviewers during the application review process. Applications that fail to follow all requirements may not be considered.
- C. **Agency Information 20 points** - The experience and qualifications will be evaluated based on the breadth and depth of similar experience
- D. **Staffing Information 30 points** - The qualifications and background of the personnel assigned to the project.
- E. **Clinic Information 10 points** - Information provided about proposed clinic operations
- F. **Funding Information 20 points** - Budget information submitted
- G. **Compliance/Performance Information 15 points** - Compliance related questions as well as past monitoring experience with the WIC program (if applicable)

VI. HOW TO APPLY

Responses must be submitted as specified in this announcement. **Applications that fail to follow all of the requirements may not be considered.**

A. Required Documents

All applications must include the following in this order:

1. **Attachment 1**
CDPHE RFA Cover Sheet and Signature Page (**must be signed digitally or with a wet ink signature**)
2. **Attachment 2**
COWIC Local Agency Application - Fully completed and returned to cdphe_cowic_application@state.co.us on or before June 14, 2024, 5pm.
3. **Attachment 4**
Completed Budget template. Project Budget - **IMPORTANT:** The budget form must explain all expenses included. The budget will not match the grant award. Allocations are made through a funding formula. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the calculations in the budget are accurate. There will be no reimbursement of pre-award costs. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment reserves the right to deny requests for any item listed in the budget that is deemed unnecessary for the

implementation of the project.

4. **Attachment 5**

Letter of Intent/support for partnership arrangements. A letter of intent/support must be submitted for all agencies applying for partnership funds. The letter must include information about the agency(ies) the applicant intends to partner with, the positions/services to be provided, and be signed by the leadership of each partnering agency.

5. **Attachment 6**

a. **Financial Risk Assessment Questionnaire (can also be completed through Google Forms)**

b. A financial risk rating will be assigned for all applicants. Local public health agencies are not required to complete Attachment E: Financial Risk Assessment Questionnaire because they already have a risk rating assigned by the CDPHE Financial Risk Management System (FRMS). Colorado State Agencies and Colorado State Institutions of Higher Education are not required to complete the Attachment E: Financial Risk Assessment Questionnaire. This form must be completed and submitted by all other applicants, including nonprofits, for-profit businesses or governmental agencies. Applicants must retain a copy of their completed Financial Risk Assessment Questionnaire for any additional funding applications within a 12 month period, the same budget period. Any changes will require a new form to be submitted. The application may not be reviewed if the completed form is not included. The Financial Risk Assessment rating does NOT determine whether or not CDPHE will fund an applicant, rather, it determines an applicant's financial and management strength, and the level of technical assistance and contract monitoring necessary to help the applicant succeed with the project if awarded. In order to incorporate all relevant information, programs must include the financial risk rating in their initial discussions about which applications should be provided to the review committees AND during the review committee evaluations for funding decisions. The final application score may be impacted by risk determinations made by CDPHE based on information contained in the form. Scores will be communicated to the grant review committee and may be considered in the overall score. Technically, the score could be impacted when the review committee members see the financial risk assessment score. The form and guidance are part of this announcement. For more information, please see Attachment 6: Financial Risk Assessment FAQs.

c. **Instructions:** If your entity is a nonprofit, for-profit business or governmental agency, you are required to complete the financial risk assessment questionnaire (Attachment 6). Local public health agencies are not required to complete the form because they already have a risk rating assigned via the CDPHE Financial Risk Management Survey (FRMS).

d. Any questions regarding the Risk Assessment Questionnaire must be submitted through the inquiry process.

B. Documents for Applicant Review Only

1. **RFA business documents**

- a. State of Colorado Contract Template: Includes terms and conditions.
- b. COWIC Contract Additional Provisions: Details WIC-specific provisions.
- c. Contract Federal Provisions: Describes conditions for accepting federal funds.

C. Submission Instructions

1. General Information

This Request for Applications (RFA) is issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), also referred to as the "State". The CDPHE contact listed in these instructions is the **sole point of contact** concerning this RFA.

During the solicitation process for this RFA, all official communication with applicants will be via notices on the CDPHE program website listed in the schedule of activities. Notices may include any modifications to administrative or performance requirements, answers to inquiries received, clarifications to requirements, and the announcement of the apparent winning applicant(s). Applicants are responsible for monitoring for publication of modifications to this solicitation. **It is incumbent upon applicants to carefully and regularly monitor for any such notices.** Applicants are not to contact any other state office or individual regarding this RFA or this project. Applicants are not to rely on any other statements that alter any specification or other term or condition of the solicitation.

Applications must be received on or before the due date and time as indicated in the Schedule of Activities. **Late applications may not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that its application is received by the CDPHE at the location listed in these instructions on or before the due date and time.** Applicants mailing their applications must allow sufficient mail delivery time to ensure receipt of their applications by the time specified.

One completed copy of the Request for Application Cover Sheet & Signature Page MUST be signed digitally or in ink, preferably blue ink, by a person who is legally authorized to bind the applicant to the application. Submissions that are determined to be at a variance with this requirement may be deemed non-responsive and may not be accepted.

All materials submitted shall become the property of the CDPHE.

2. Instructions for Electronic Applications

Applications must be received electronically no later than by the due date and time indicated on the cover page of this document. Faxed applications will not be accepted. Email your application and all attachments to the following individual:

Program contact name: Heidi Hoffman
Program contact email: cdphe_cowic_application@state.co.us
Division name: Prevention Services Division, Nutrition Services Branch, WIC Program

Applications received via email will receive email confirming the delivery.

D. Questions and Inquiries

1. Applicants may make written inquiries via email to obtain clarification of requirements concerning this RFA. No inquiries will be accepted after the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Activities. Send all inquiries to:

Program contact name: Heidi Hoffman
Program contact email: cdphe_cowic_application@state.co.us

2. Clearly identify your inquiries with:
 - a. RFA Number.
 - b. RFA Title.
 - c. The section number and paragraph number the inquiry applies to.

3. Responses to applicant inquiries will be published as outlined in the Schedule of Activities by close of business on the date indicated. Applicants are not to rely on any other statements that alter any specification or other term or condition of the RFA.

D. Schedule of Activities

| Schedule of Activities Timeline | Time | Date |
|--|---------|-------------------------|
| RFA Published on coloradowic.gov | N/A | 05/10/2024 |
| Deadline for applicants to submit written inquiries. Submit all written questions by email to cdphe_cowic_application@state.co.us by June 5, 2024 . No Questions will be accepted after this Date/Time. | 5 PM MT | 06/05/2024 |
| Answers to written inquiries and any changes to the RFA will be published on the WIC website . | 5 PM MT | 06/10/2024 |
| Application submission deadline | 5 PM MT | 06/14/2024 |
| Evaluation Period June 17, 2024 - June 30, 2024 | N/A | 06/17/2024 - 06/30/2024 |
| Estimated Notification of Award | 5 PM MT | 07/15/2024 |
| Estimated Contract Effective Date The resulting contract may be renewed for a maximum of up to 4 additional years, at the sole discretion of CDPHE. | N/A | 10/01/2024 |