

The Food Trust Cooking Matters RFP Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When are proposals due?

A. We have extended the due date to Friday, July 5, 11:59 p.m. (EST).

Q. Is the timeline for the project negotiable?

A. Yes, the timeline is flexible. We are hoping to have most of the work wrapped up by September 30, 2025, but there are components that can stretch beyond that date.

Q. If the project timeline is negotiable, would you suggest we propose a longer timeline in our response or explain what we believe can be accomplished with rigor by September 2025 and then describe what additional time would be beneficial and why?

A. We would recommend proposing the timeline that you believe is best for the project.

Q. I am working on the proposal and am wondering what the RFP Proposal Requirements mean by “Terms & Conditions.” Does this refer to what language might be included in an MOU?

A. That part of the proposal is optional and is referring to any terms and conditions your organization might have in order to complete this project (aside from the traditional terms that would be included in an MOU).

Q. Do you have a preferred budget layout that you would like to see?

A. No, there is no preferred budget layout aside from breaking down the budget into project components.

Q. When you say you want the budget broken down into project components, are you referring to components like design, tool development, piloting, main trial implementation, data analysis, project write-up and publication?

A. Yes. This will enable us to project spending over the course of the project timeline.

Q. Are there any formatting requirements for the proposal (e.g., page limit, font size, font, etc.)?

A. No, there are no formatting requirements for the proposal.

Q. Do you have an estimated budget for the project or range so that we can propose an approach that meets both your technical requirements and your budget requirements?

A. We are asking evaluators to submit a complete budget that meets the RFP deliverables and covers all of your costs. We are anticipating budgets between \$100,000-\$150,000, but this is just an estimate.

Q. Are there any budget restrictions such as a cap on indirect costs?

A. No, there is no cap on indirect costs; however, overall budget will be a factor when evaluating proposals.

Q. How will proposals be evaluated? Are all required components of the proposal weighted equally?

A. We will be evaluating proposals primarily on the quality of the proposed evaluation plan, background and experience of the evaluator, as well as the overall proposed budget.

Q. Will preference be given to organizations who have conducted evaluation for The Food Trust previously or have conducted Cooking Matters-related evaluations before? Does The Food Trust have any preferred firms to conduct the evaluation for this proposal?

A. Preference will be given to organizations that have conducted evaluations similar in scope to this project. The Food Trust is looking forward to receiving proposals from a number of organizations and does not have preferred firms to conduct the evaluation.

Q. Are there any restrictions on submission pertaining to the organization/entity type or geographic location of the evaluation firm?

A. No, there are no restrictions related to the type or location of the evaluation firm.

Q. Is there flexibility related to publishing the results of the evaluation? What if the publication is not accepted into a peer-reviewed journal or is not accepted during the time period of the project?

A. We understand that not all publications are accepted and that the timeline for acceptance can be lengthy. We are asking the evaluator to produce and submit an article to at least one peer-reviewed journal for consideration.

Q. Where will the evaluation take place?

A. This is a national evaluation project and will involve partners from across the country.

Q. Could you share in which states or geographic locations you expect Cooking Matters Core will be implemented (or in what locations you expect the evaluation to be conducted)?

A. This is still to be determined; however, The Food Trust has already received interest from partners in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Q. Could you provide any additional information on whether there is a target sample or recruitment source you have in mind, or if you'd like the evaluation team to identify recruitment partners?

A. There is currently a network of over 150 partners across the country that use Cooking Matters, many of whom have expressed interest in being a part of this pilot. The Food Trust will provide the evaluator with a list of those partners.

Q. Are we allowed to provide incentives (e.g., gift cards) to research participants? If so, are there limits on the amount or type of incentive allowed?

A. There is currently no additional funding for incentives for participants. If the evaluator wants to build that into their budget they can do so.

Q. Do you have a sample size in mind for the evaluation?

A. The selected evaluator will help to determine the sample size.

Q. If the evaluator works with participants from the Cooking Matters network, is there an estimate of how large of a pool of participants that would be?

A. The selected evaluator will help to determine the sample size.

Q. Will the proposer be at a disadvantage for only proposing to evaluate the English curriculum?

A. We would like to include as many diverse audiences as possible as part of the evaluation.

Q. Is The Food Trust able to advise on the estimated proportion of Cooking Matters' sessions that are implemented in Spanish, English, or both?

A. We do not currently have this information available.

Q. Does The Food Trust wish to limit this evaluation effort to adults (age 18+) only? Will anyone under age 18 participate in the Cooking Matters lessons?

A. The evaluation is targeted toward adults 18+, even though children may participate in lessons.

Q. Does the research design need to be an RCT, or would a QED be acceptable?

A. We are open to discussing this with the selected evaluator.

Q. Does The Food Trust wish to account for both online and in-person implementation of the Cooking Matters Core curriculum? If so, when participating online, is The Food Trust able to support a hyperlink/redirection to the evaluation survey?

A. We anticipate discussing this with the selected evaluator.

Q. Will the evaluator need to train Cooking Matters Core providers/implementers to administer study protocols and surveys to participants?

A. This could either be done by the evaluator or Food Trust staff.

Q. How long does an individual participate in Cooking Matters Core?

A. We are looking to evaluate single sessions as well as series of up to 6 sessions.

Q. Regarding the mention of “consulting an expert committee for content analysis and validity,” is this a committee that the evaluator is responsible for developing/convening or is this group currently in place?

A. The expert committee would need to be developed, but would be done so collaboratively between The Food Trust and the evaluator.

Q. The SNAP-Ed checklist for establishing evidence-based programs notes the following requirements: (a) “Justify that the reach of the SNAP-Ed population warrants the cost of the intervention”; and (b) “Assess that staff have a clear understanding of the nature of the intervention.” As such, does The Food Trust desire the evaluation firm to propose methods of assessing (a) cost effectiveness or (b) implementer perceptions of the intervention?

A. No, The Food Trust is not looking for the evaluator to propose methods of assessing these requirements.