Texas Congregate Meal Initiative: Request for Innovative Pilot Proposal

Pilot Proposal Due Date: Monday, February 22, 2021

Time: 5:00p.m. CT

Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University

OCTOBER 2020

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Public Policy
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Health and Human
Services

Executive Summary

As a part of the Texas Congregate Meal Initiative (TCMI) project funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University requests a proposal for an innovative low-cost congregate meal pilot project from each of the 16 selected Learning Collaborative (LC) participants. All these LC participants belong to the Texas aging nutrition provider network and are selected by the Texas HHSC to participate in the TCMI LC through a previous application process. With the support of the LC, the pilots would be assisted to exhibit innovative and promising practices that can be scaled across Texas.

Eligible Applicants	Selected 16 LC participants from Texas aging nutrition provider network
Funding Opportunity Title	TCMI Innovation Pilot
Application Submission Date	February 22, 2021 by 5 PM CT
Submission Method	By email to ajackson@ppri.tamu.edu with the Subject Line of "TCMI Innovation Pilot"
Total Funding Requested	Fixed Price of $7,500 for Each Pilot
Estimated Number of Awards	Maximum 16
Cost Sharing/Match Required	None
Pilot Performance Period	June 1, 2021 to December 2021

Pre-Proposal Technical Assistance

The Workbook Questions connected with each session of the TCMI Virtual Workshop hosted by PPRI in October 2020 provide the necessary guidance to applicants so they can develop the various sections of their pilot proposal. Additionally, from November 2, 2020 to February 15, 2021, PPRI will hold technical assistance (TA) office hours for LC applicants seeking guidance to develop this proposal. These office hours will be held on all **working Fridays from 1 pm to 2 pm over zoom virtual sessions**. Guidance will be provided based on applicant needs. Applicants are requested to email **ajackson@ppri,tamu,edu** with a prior indication that they will attend a TA session to discuss questions about the pilot proposal. Inquiries and comments must reference TCMI.

Proposal Background

The Texas Congregate Meal Initiative funded by the ACL (2019-2022) has been conducting research to identify the causes of decline in congregate meal program participation by adult Texans 60 and over. During Year 1 of the project, PPRI at Texas A&M University has conducted several stakeholder surveys and focus groups to identify the facilitators and barriers to the congregate meal programs across Texas and innovations that have been tried in various communities representing the 28 Texas Area Agencies on Aging to address and impact social isolation of the Older adults and decreased participation in the congregate meal programs. Integrating the comprehensive statewide data, during Year 2, the TCMI is providing 16 select members of the Texas aging nutrition provider networks with business acumen, project development training as well as the opportunity to pilot low-cost innovations with the support of a Learning Collaborative (LC). The providers determined to have innovative plans will get the final opportunity to pilot their proposals and demonstrate their efficacy, prior to disseminating effectiveness lessons and replication insights on a national scale. The LC will provide participants the unique opportunity to not only learn from each other through a community of practice but also to influence the trajectory of the congregate meal programs across

Texas and showcase local Texas innovations and replication possibilities to the nation. Resources available from the TCMI Learning Collaborative can be found at https://ppri.tamu.edu/tcmi.

Proposal Submission

All proposals must be sent as a MS Word Document via email to the following address: **ajackson@ppri.tamu.edu.** The subject line should refer to **TCMI Innovation Pilot**. The email should reach the designated address by 5 PM CT on Monday, February 22.

Award Information & Payment Terms

Award notifications will be sent to applicants on or before April 30, 2021. To implement the approved pilots, each applicant will receive an initial payment of $5,000 in June 2021 and a second payment of $2,500 in December 2021 during the wrapping up of the pilot projects. Please note that these two fixed payments are made on a set schedule assuming required commitment to pilot projects are met by the awardees.

Eligibility Information

Only the 16 selected Texas nutrition providers chosen to participate in the TCMI Learning Collaborative are eligible to submit a proposal to implement a low-cost innovative congregate meal pilot in their respective target communities. These providers were selected on September 30, 2020 based on a previous application submitted to Texas HHSC for participating in the Learning Collaborative phase of the TCMI.

Proposal Requirements

This section describes what the proposal application package should include. PPRI & Texas HHSC may reject a proposal that fails to include the application requirements. PPRI may seek clarification and revisions from an applicant at any time during the evaluation period, and failure to respond may be cause for rejection of a TCMI innovation pilot proposal. The applicant shall be as precise, accurate, and succinct as possible and not exceed **six double-spaced pages (using a font type no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman)** to submit the following requested information.

A. Applicant Information

1. Applicant Name, Position, Email Address & Contact Phone
2. Applicant Organization Name & Address
3. Applicant Mentor Name, Title & Contact Phone
4. Applicant's Area Agency on Aging
5. Total Budget Requested: This needs to equal $7,500.

B. Abstract

The abstract should provide a brief description of the proposed congregate meal innovative pilot project, summarize its purposes and goals and what is aimed to be achieved with the help of the project in the applicant's targeted geographical area. Abstract needs to clearly outline what makes the project innovative. The abstract should be written for a general public audience in 250 words or less. **(5 points)**

C. Project Narrative

The project narrative, as key part of the proposal, should provide the details of the proposed innovative congregate meal pilot and contain the information outlined in the table below.

C1. Purpose & Need	A needs statement establishes the rationale for a project by clearly identifying the gap or problem within a specific community. This should include: a. Description of the need for your proposed congregate meal innovative pilot project in your targeted community. Describe any recent changes or potential opportunities/ threats in your community for support of the congregate meal program participation. This can include the impact of the COVID-19 on the congregate program. b. Identification of the target population and the specific need(s) that the proposed project will address to serve. Description of needs can be well supported by evidence such as community population statistics and/or existing trends. (10 points)
C2.Organizational Capabilities	In this section, you must succinctly describe your organizational capacity to develop and implement the congregate meal innovation. This should include: a. How your existing organizational capacity and resources will help to effectively manage the programmatic, fiscal, staffing and administrative aspects of the proposed innovative pilot. b. Describe how the $7,500 funding from TCMI and any other community resources will be used to support the congregate meal innovation. c. Discuss if you plan to build on existing community relations and/or develop new partnerships to accomplish project goals. (10 points)
C3. Time Task Plan & Methodology	This is the key section of the proposal. The Time Task Plan must clearly describe what makes your proposed project "innovative" in nature and identify the goals, major activities and/or products, resources to be utilized to accomplish the goals, and the specific methods for accomplishing each along with the implementation timeline. The Time Task Plan must include: a. Steps for implementation of the innovation. This could include specific activities, resource development, marketing and/or communication strategies, b. Staff responsible for development and implementation of the project. Include any major responsibilities/roles of key staff or volunteers and clearly identify key project contact. c. A timeline for the key tasks. Note that the implementation timeline for all TCMI innovative pilots consists of 7 months: June 2021 to December 2021. (20 points)

C4. Marketing & Communication	The proposed pilot project should integrate a marketing and communication strategy. This should include: a. Intended audience and marketing objectives. b. Intended communication and dissemination strategy for the innovative pilot. (10 points).
C5. Impact & Evaluation	This section should identify the intended project success measures. a. Outline the types of outcome data that will be used to narrate the pilot project's performance and possible success. Examples of these are discussed during the October TCMI virtual workshop conducted by PPRI and provided in the session toolbox for Day 3. b. Identify the key personnel (with email address and phone number) who will be responsible for monthly reporting of project successes and challenges to PPRI. This is because there will be a comparative evaluation of TCMI innovation pilots conducted by PPRI. During the period of June 2021 to December 2021, all pilots are required to participate in periodic data reporting, surveys, focus groups and monthly teleconferences conducted by PPRI to share their activities, accomplishments, promising practices and challenges. Key objectives of this external evaluation are to identify the key 'lessons learned' from the implementation of the 16 pilots including strategies to better serve the targeted Older American population as well as capturing the promising practices and successes from program deliveries. (10 points)
C6. Sustainability	TCMI LC participants are expected to sustain key elements of their innovative projects, e.g., strategies, services, activities and/or interventions, which have been effective in improving practices and outcomes for the target population. The proposal must include: a. An outline for project sustainability plan beyond December 2021. b. You can refer to challenges that are likely to be encountered in sustaining the pilot and approaches that could be used to resolve such challenges. (5 points)

D. Budget

Applicants are required to provide a simple budget, with narrative, that includes a plan to spend a fixed sum of $7,500 for the implementation of the proposed innovative pilot over a period of seven months. The budget must be complete, reasonable, and directly related to the proposed project activities and tasks. Funding cannot be used for meal costs, construction or any rehabilitation of buildings. Budget may include projected expenditures for *personnel*, *materials and supplies*, any *other direct costs* including *contractors, entertainment or activity fees, any marketing costs including brochures, newspapers ads* etc. Continuation of existing projects in applicant's jurisdiction will be

allowed only with the expansion, enhancement and/or addition of new and innovative approaches in adherence to prohibitions imposed by the ACL grant conditions. (10 points)

E. Attachments Index

Applicants are advised not to include any other attachment with the proposal than what is specified below. These attachments are not included in the 6-page limit mentioned in page 3 of this document.

E1. A **logic model** as a one-page figure that presents the conceptual framework for the proposed innovative pilot project. Template is provided in TCMI Virtual Workshop Day 3.

E2. A **letter of support** from the applicant's Area Agency on Aging that specifically indicates a commitment to the innovative pilot including any resource commitment to the project (e.g., in-kind services, staff, space, equipment etc.).

E3. A **one-page budget sheet** as necessary.

Selection Procedure

PPRI staff, in partnership with Texas HHSC staff, will review all proposals for completeness and basic responsiveness to the solicitation. Applicants are encouraged to work closely with PPRI staff and subject matter experts and take advantage of the **Pre-Proposal Technical Assistance Office Hours** explained in page 1 of this solicitation. Evaluation criteria: Abstract (5%), Project Narrative (85%) & Budget (10%).

Selected Pilot Project Commitment

Approved pilot project implementers will commit to the following activities:

1) Implement pilot projects according to the approved plans over a 7-month period from June 2021 to December 2021.
2) Participate in a monthly virtual meeting with HHSC and PPRI during implementation/ piloting of their approved pilot projects. Share lessons learned on a regular basis with other members of the TCMI Learning Collaborative.
3) Coordinate with Texas A&M PPRI to collect and report data for outcome tracking and evaluation of their pilot projects.
4) Submit a 4-page project report to PPRI by January 31, 2022 based on an agreed upon format.

The Texas Congregate Meal Initiative (TCMI) is supported, in part by grant number **90INNU0013**, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.