TEXAS Department of State Health Services

Memorandum

#16-102

TO: WIC Regional Directors
WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Amanda Hovis, Director
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
Nutrition Services Section

DATE: October 21, 2016

SUBJECT: Loving Support Award of Excellence Application Period

The State Agency is excited to announce the recognition program, Loving Support Award of Excellence, was launched Friday, October 14th. The Loving Support Award of Excellence was developed to recognize and celebrate local WIC agencies that provide exemplary breastfeeding programs and support services. Local WIC agencies that have operated a peer counseling program for at least one year, which meets all of the required core components of the FNS **Loving Support© Model** for a successful peer counseling program are eligible to apply by going to http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic

The applications, instructions, and frequently asked questions are now available to view and download on the public web. Attached is a PDF slideshow for technical assistance.

The 2016 application period opens Friday, October 14th and closes Wednesday, December 14th.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Kristina Arrieta, Peer Counselor Coordinator, at (512)341-4593 or at kristina.arrieta@dshs.state.tx.us

Loving Support Award of Excellence Application Assistance for Local WIC Agencies

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The purpose of this PowerPoint presentation is to inform applicants how to complete the Loving Support Award of Excellence applications.

Updates

- FAQ's
- Dedicated webpage for past Awardees
- Gold Application
  - Added one question, 30 total points for Gold
  - New instructions for past Gold Award Awardees
- Gold Premiere Application
  - Reduced points from 3 points to 2 points on one question, 37 total points for Gold Elite

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FNS has updated the FAQ's and Applications, along with creating a new page dedicated to past Gold and Gold Premiere Awardees.

These updates have been incorporated into the slideshow.

Documents Needed

Download the following documents from the FNS website: http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/loving-support-award-of-excellence-program

- Gold Application
- Gold Application Instructions
- Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application
- Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application Instructions

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Before you continue, please be sure you have downloaded the documents you see listed here as you will need them for reference for this presentation.
If you have not, I recommend you go to the FNS website (http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/loving-support-award-of-excellence-program) and download the documents listed.

Who can apply?

Local WIC Agencies

- Designated in WIC Local Agency Directory Report Form FNS–648
- Operated a peer counseling program for at least 1 year
- Peer counseling program must meet all of the required core components of the FNS Loving Support Model© for a successful peer counseling program.

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What are the awards?

- Gold Award
- Gold Premiere Award (midlevel award)
- Gold Elite Award (highest level award)

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There are 3 awards but only 2 applications: one application for the Gold award and one combined application for Gold Premiere Award or the Gold Elite Award.

The criteria for each award will be discussed later in the presentation.

At this point you should have both the Gold application and Gold application instructions in front of you.
The images here are the first page of the Gold Award application and the Gold Award application instructions.

The awards build on one another so you must start with the Gold application whether you are applying for the Gold award or a higher award.

Your first step in applying will be to fill out the cover sheet of the application, seen here on the right.

It is important that you take the time to enter your full Local agency name and all of the information on the cover sheet correctly so FNS will have your contact information when the time comes to notify awardees.

On the left of the screen you see the instructions for filing out the Gold application. You will need the instructions to help you work through the application as the instructions will give you the information the evaluators will be looking for.

Gold Award Prescreening Questions

In order to apply for an award of excellence, your local agency must first be able to answer "Yes" to the following two questions.

1. **Has your local agency peer counseling program been in place for at least one year? Check Yes on the application if appropriate.**

2. **Does your local agency peer counseling program meet ALL of the components of the FNS Loving Support© Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program as listed below? Check Yes on the application if appropriate.**

LOVING SUPPORT© MODEL
REQUIRED PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Program Management

- The local agency has a designated peer counseling program manager or coordinator.
- The local agency has standardized breastfeeding peer counseling program policies in place as part of its nutrition education plan.
- Local agency staff is trained on supporting the peer counseling program.
- The local agency has a WIC designated breastfeeding expert for referrals outside of the peer counselor's scope of practice.
- The local agency has established community partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of its peer counseling program, e.g., hospitals, health care providers, home visiting programs, etc.

Peer Counselor Staffing

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Here you see page 2 of the Gold award application.

As you can see there are 2 prescreening questions that you are required to answer before proceeding to the application.

These questions are based on the criteria mentioned previously with regard to who can apply for this award. In order to apply for any award, you must have operated a peer counseling program for at least 1 year and the peer counseling program meets all core components of the FNS Loving Support Model for a successful peer counseling program.

For question 2, please refer to the Loving Support© Model Required Program Components. If you answer 'yes' to both prescreening questions, you are eligible to apply for the Gold Award.

If you do not meet the prescreening requirements, do not continue with the application. Instead, strengthen those identified areas to improve upon for the next application period.

The application will open again next fiscal year to provide you with an opportunity to apply at that time.

Documentation and Narrative Explanation

Documentation

Some questions in this application require additional documents. There are two types of document requests, a unique narrative and/or supportive documentation.

Narrative refers to a document with explanatory statements that have been written exclusively for the purpose of this application. The narrative should describe how your agency meets the criteria of a specific question as noted in the instructions. **Narratives are not to exceed 500 words.**

Supportive documentation refers to documents that already exist. An example may be, but is not limited to, a policy/ procedure from the state manual that your local agency follows or a locally developed MOU. You may submit these documents to demonstrate your agency meets the criteria of a specific question as noted in the instructions for that question. When attaching documentation, indicate the page number(s) where the specific information can be found in response to the question.

Each document you attach to the application must have a unique name/title entered into the application. The title should reflect the content of the document. If you submit the same document for more than one question, enter the same document title again, and indicate the page number(s) that corresponds to the specific question.

Do not submit entire policy and procedure manuals.

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On page 3 of the Gold Application Instructions, as well as page 2 of the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application Instructions you will see the documentation and narrative explanation shown here.

Some questions require additional documentation. Narratives are written exclusively for this application and should not exceed 500 words.

Supportive Documentation is preexisting policies, procedures, agreements, etc.

Pay special attention to the examples of acceptable supportive documentation and narratives within the Instruction document. This is the criteria which the response will be evaluated and points given or not given.

Acceptable forms of documentation include PDF (.pdf) and Word (.doc or .docx) documents

Documentation example

Application

2. Do you have a protocol that describes how peer counselors address a mother's concerns and needs outside of usual clinic hours, including how peer counselors make after-hour referrals? Attach supportive documentation. Fill in the document title and indicate the page number(s) where the information that answers this question can be found.	Yes ◯ Document Title Page Number(s)	No ◯

Application instructions

Question 2. (1 point)
Do you have a protocol that describes how peer counselors address a mother's concerns and needs outside of usual clinic hours, including how peer counselors make after-hour referrals?

The key to success in peer counseling is being available to mothers when they need it most. Breastfeeding problems often occur outside usual business hours, and peer counselors provide important support beyond usual WIC services. The Loving Support© Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program requires that peer counselors be available to mothers outside of usual clinic hours, i.e., evenings and weekends. Exemplary peer counseling programs develop strategies to ensure that peer counselors are available to address a mother's concerns and needs in a timely manner (via telephone, hotline, or face-to-face) and that referral and follow-up are provided.

The supportive documentation should indicate that the local agency has a specific plan in place that addresses how peer counselors address a mother's concerns and needs outside of usual clinic hours.

Examples of Acceptable Supportive Documentation: Policies and procedures or protocols, Training materials, Position descriptions / Roles and Responsibilities

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Here you can see an example of how the application and instructions work together.

The top box in this slide is a screenshot of Question 2 from page 2 of the Gold award application, and the bottom box is a screenshot of the criteria for Question 2 found on page 4 of the Gold award application instructions.

Based on the criteria in the instructions, you will be able to determine what supportive documentation can be used to fully answer each question. On the instructions you will find what should be included in the documentation or narrative.

For example, Question 2 shown here requires that you attach supportive documentation describing how peer counselors address a mother's concerns and needs outside of usual clinic hours. Examples of acceptable supportive documentation include: policies and procedures or protocols, training materials, and position descriptions with roles and responsibilities. As mentioned in the third paragraph down in the instructions box, you see the list of the specific criteria that the document must include.

In this example "The supportive documentation should indicate that the local agency has a specific plan in place that addresses how peer counselors address a mother's concerns and needs outside of usual clinic hours."

Therefore for each question that requires documentation the instructions will have this important information on what type of documentation is acceptable and what content should be included. *That is the criteria the evaluators will be looking at to determine if points can be awarded.*

Once you have your determined your supportive documentation, you will then go to the application, as seen in the top box, and enter the name of the document (i.e Peer Counseling Availability Policy) and enter the page(s) where the information supporting your response can be found.

Please do not submit entire policy and procedure manuals!

Gold Award
Evaluation and Scoring

- 30 points
- All questions are required
- Performance data is not considered

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Your State Agency and FNS will evaluate your application and supportive documentation based on the criteria as described in the Application Instructions.

To be eligible for the Gold award you must have 30 points.
There are 30 questions each worth 1 point, therefore you must answer all the questions "yes" to be eligible for a Gold award.

Performance data is not considered for the Gold award.

Submitting the Gold Award Application

- A complete Gold award application includes:
  - Cover sheet with the Agency information
  - Responds to all 30 questions
  - Attached documentation
- Upload complete Gold application to https://www.hightail.com/u/WWRS.

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Please ensure all documents referred to in the Gold Application are uploaded with the application as additional submission of documents will not be accepted.

A complete application includes:

Cover sheet with Agency information
Responded to all 30 questions
Attached documentation

Use the checklist provided on page 6 of the Gold Application to ensure a complete application package.

Complete the Applicant Verification Form on Page 7.

Upload the complete Gold application to https://www.hightail.com/u/WWRS. Instruction on how to use Hightail Secure Upload will be discussed later in the presentation.

Once you have completed the Gold award application you have the option to start Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application

Previous Gold Awardees

- Awards are valid for 4 years.
- When applying to a higher level award with a valid Gold Award:
  - New process for this year
- Past Gold Awardees will submit a Gold Application with:
  - Cover Page
  - Prescreening Questions
  - Checklist
  - Verification of the Gold Application

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These instructions are only for Past Gold Awardees interested in applying for a higher award. For those without a past Gold Award, please resume on slide 15 for instructions on Gold Premiere/Elite Applications.

All Awards are valid for 4 years.

When applying to a higher level award with a valid Gold certificate, the Gold application does not have to be completely redone to apply to the combined Premiere and Elite application.

However, the Applicant must complete the Cover Page, Prescreening Questions, Checklist and Verification of the Gold Application before moving onto the Gold Premiere/Elite Application.

The next slides will explain the steps to complete within the Gold Application and Gold Application Instructions before moving onto the higher level applications.

Previous Gold Awardees

- http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic

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After completing the Cover Page and Prescreening Questions of the Gold Application, you are instructed proceed to page 12 of the Gold Application Instructions.

Previous Gold Awardees applying for a higher level award can verify the year they received an Award by going to http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic . This will link you to the list of all Awardees (highlighted in blue).

The year your Local agency was awarded will be entered on the Gold Application Checklist on page 6 of the Gold Application.

OMB Control Number: 0584-0591
Expiration date: 03/31/2017

Loving Support of Excellence Gold Award Application Checklist

Please review the checklist prior to submitting application and supportive documentation.

Previous Gold Awardees		
If your local agency has a valid Gold award, please fill out the year your local agency received the award.	Year Received ☐	
Please enter the full name of your Local Agency without abbreviations or acronyms and complete the Application Verification Form on page 7 of the Application.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Continue on to the application for the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Awards to apply for a higher level award.	Yes ☐	No ☐
New Applicants		
All 30 questions need to be answered "Yes" to be eligible for the Gold Award. Verify that all questions have been answered.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Narratives and/or supportive documentation must be attached to the application to be eligible for an Award.	Yes ☐	No ☐

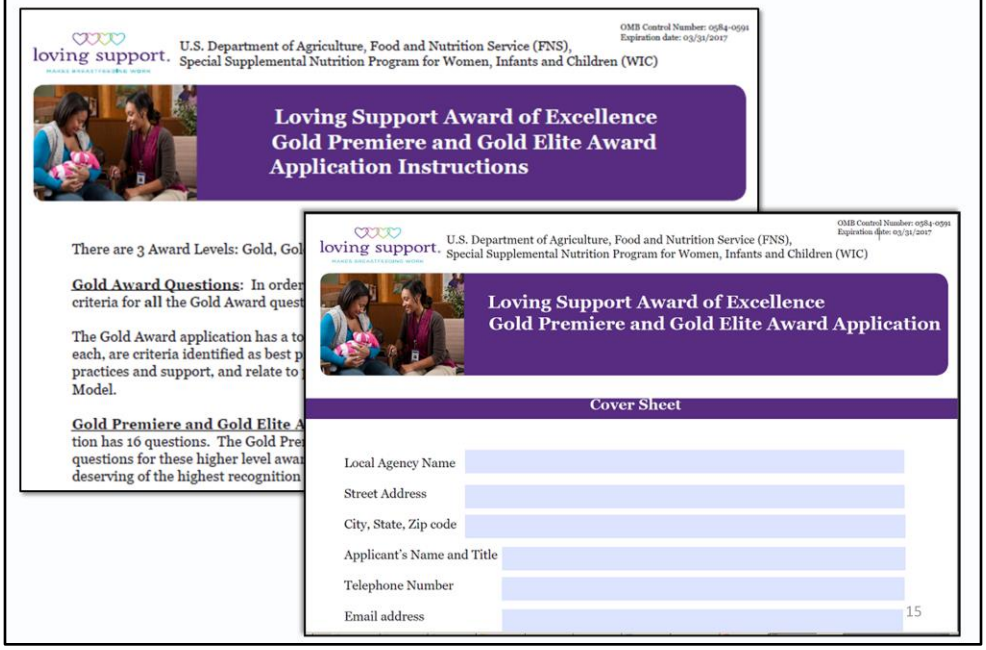
This slide is a screenshot of the Gold Award Application Checklist in the Gold Application on page 6.

After verifying the year you received an Award, put the year your local agency received the award in the textbox. Complete the next two items on the checklist.

Make sure you have entered information in for the following before moving onto the Gold Premiere/Elite Application: Cover Page, Prescreening Questions, Checklist and Verification of the Gold Application.

If you have not received a Gold award in the past 4 years, you MUST complete the Gold application with supportive documentation to be considered for any award.

Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Award



Now that we covered the Gold award, I will be covering the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite awards.

For this section you should have the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite award application along with the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite application instructions in front of you.

The images here are the first page of both of those documents.

As with the Gold award application, your first step will be to fill out the cover page of the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application.

And similar to the Gold award instructions you will find the criteria and points for each question in the application instructions.

Also you will see on page 2 of the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite award application instructions, the explanation of supportive documentation and narrative section for this application is the same as the Gold Application.

Prescreening for
Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Awards

DOWNLOAD INSTRUCTIONS FROM WIC WORKS BEFORE BEGINNING APPLICATION IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR A GOLD PREMIERE OR GOLD ELITE AWARD, YOU MUST HAVE APPLIED AND MET THE CRITERIA FOR A GOLD AWARD FOR THIS APPLICATION PERIOD.

1. Have you completed the Gold Award application for this application? Yes

Application

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If you open the combined Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Award application to page 2, you will see the prescreening question here on the slide, at the top of the page.

The prescreening question must be answered before proceeding to the application questions.

The Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application can only be completed after the Gold Application is complete.

The awards build on each other; you must be eligible for a Gold Award in order to be able to apply for a Gold Premiere award or a Gold Elite award.

Evaluation and Scoring for the Combined Gold Premiere and Gold Elite Application

16 questions

- each worth 2 or 3 points (see points in the instructions)

3 areas

- Peer Counseling
- Partnerships
- Other Criteria

Performance data considered

- You *do not* upload your performance data

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As you look at the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite application and instructions, you will see that there are a total of 16 questions in 3 areas: Peer Counseling, Partnership, and Other Criteria.

The questions are worth 2 or 3 points. You can find how many points may be awarded for each question in the application instructions next to the question number.

Again, the application and application instructions are meant to be used together. You will need to refer to the instructions throughout the time that you are filling out the application.

The points will be used to calculate your score for eligibility for an award.

Performance data is considered for these 2 higher level awards.

You will not have to upload your performance data; however you will want to know what it is to determine if you are eligible for the 2 higher awards.

Performance Data

- Participant data for fully breastfed infant food package participation, expressed as a percentage of total infant participants in each local agency
- WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Report
  http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic

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The performance data considered for the awards is the program participant data for fully breastfed infant food package participation, expressed as a percentage of total infant participants in each local agency.

See the WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Reports or FAQ for more information.

The performance data used will be from the most recently posted WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Reports posted on the FNS public website at the URL listed here on the slide
http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic

Gold Premiere Award Evaluation and Scoring

Premiere Award- 18 points in addition to Gold Award points

- a minimum of 9 points from the Peer Counseling section
- a minimum of 4 points from the Partnership section
- a minimum of 5 points from the Other Criteria section

Premiere Award Performance Data

- 15 % or higher of the infants are exclusively breastfed in the previous year of published data, and the most recently published year of data shows an increase over the previous year **OR**
- the rate of exclusively breastfed infants is at least 25 % or higher in the most recently published year of data

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To be eligible for a Gold Premiere Award you will need 18 points in addition to the Gold Award points.
There are a minimum number of points need from each of the sections. You will need

- a minimum of 9 points from the Peer Counseling section,
- a minimum of 4 points from the Partnership section,
- a minimum of 5 points from the Other Criteria section

And although you do not need to answer all 16 questions to meet the minimum point requirements for the Gold Premiere award, it is recommended that you respond to as many questions as possible.

AND

The performance data indicating that 15 % or higher of the infants are exclusively breastfed in the previous year of published data, and the most recently published year of data shows an increase over the previous year OR the rate of exclusively breastfed infants is at least 25 % or higher in the most recently published year of data

Gold Elite Award Evaluation and Scoring

- Gold Award criteria met
- ALL questions on the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite application answered "yes"
- Performance Data
  - **40%** or higher

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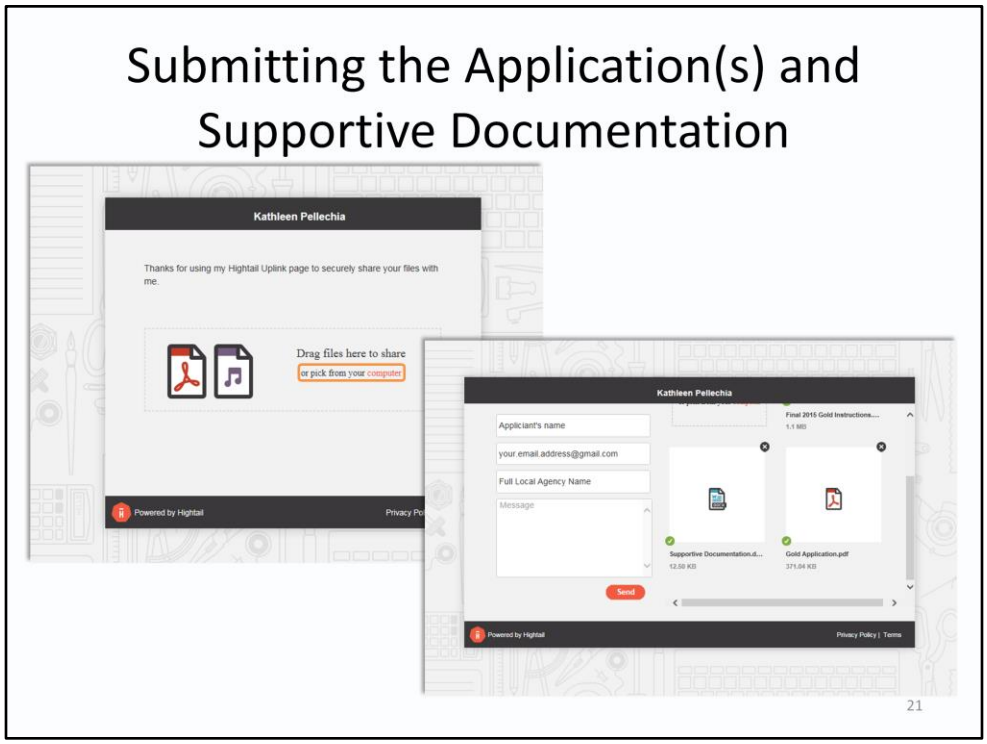
Now we will move on to the scoring of the highest level award, the Gold Elite award.

As stated previously the awards build on each other. The highest award, the Gold Elite award, builds on both the Gold and the Gold Premiere awards.

The Gold Elite award requires that you have met the criteria for the Gold award,
And that you have answered ALL the questions, and met the criteria for all the questions, on the Gold Premiere and Gold Elite application, and the performance data criteria is met.

The performance data required for the Gold Elite award is the percent of exclusively breastfed infants at 40% or higher.



Upload the completed application and supportive documentation to https://www.hightail.com/u/WWRS

To upload your application(s) and supportive documentation, click on “pick files from your computer”. A window will appear where you can locate and open your files for uploading.

In the “Your Name” box, please enter your name. This should be the same person who’s name is on the Application Verification Form on page 6 of the Gold Application or page 5 for the Gold Premiere/Elite Application.

Enter your email in the “Email” text box. After submission, you will receive an confirmation receipt.

In the Subject text box, please enter your Full Local Agency name exactly as it is written on the Application Coversheet. It is not necessary to enter any information in the “Message” text box.

You can only have one submission via Hightail per Local Agency and you cannot attach additional documents after you click “Send”.
Double check to make sure all you have attached your completed application and **ALL** supportive documentation. Click the “Send” button to submit your application packet.

You are now finished with the Loving Support Award of Excellence application process!
Congrats!

Technical Assistance

- Frequently Asked Questions on the FNS Website http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/loving-support-award-of-excellence-program

Email WICHQ-SFPD@fns.usda.gov for assistance with:

- Downloading and/or uploading application and documents email
- Application Questions and/or Instructions email

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If you have questions regarding the application process, the Frequently Asked Questions are available on FNS website at the URL listed here.

Frequently Asked Questions on the FNS website http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/loving-support-award-of-excellence-program.

If you have questions or need assistance with downloading and/or uploading the applications and documents or for questions about the Application Questions and/or the Instructions you can use the email listed here: WICHQ-SFPD@fns.usda.gov

Thank you for taking the time to view this PowerPoint presentation.