Technology Innovation Grant (TIG)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) both use information technology systems to fulfill operational and regulatory responsibilities related to administering child and adult nutrition programs. CDE oversees: School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Provisional Programs, Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), and the Special Milk Program (SMP). CDPHE oversees the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Child Nutrition Technology Collaborative

CDE and CDPHE formed CNTC in 2015 to address technology system concerns and improve collaboration, coordination, and customer service between CDE and CDPHE. CNTC conducted a feasibility study in 2017 that showed that a single technology system solution for both agencies would increase efficiency through data integration, new and enhanced functionality, and improved data storage and reporting.

Current Technology System

CDE and CDPHE currently hold separate contracts with Colyar Technology Solutions (CTS) for system hosting, maintenance, and enhancements related to their respective areas of child and adult nutrition programs. Two significant challenges arose from this arrangement:

1. Inefficient functionality of current technology system (i.e. CDE & CDPHE having separate, non-integrated systems and no data integration with CDE's system).
2. Inefficient and ineffective use of data.

CDE's current contract with CTS ends September 30 2020.

New Technology System

CDE and CDPHE released a joint Request for Proposal (RFP) in December 2018 awarding one vendor the opportunity to deliver one technology system for both state agencies. CTS was awarded the bid in Spring 2019 and CDE/CDPHE are currently finalizing separate contracts with CTS for one shared technology system. The new system will integrate data and have increased functionality including a mobile application to claim SFSP meals, modules to monitor financial management and procurement compliance, ad-hoc data reporting, risk management and application overview dashboard. The new system will include a one-year start-up period, which includes requirements discovery, design and

TIMELINE

2015

CDE and CDPHE form the Child Nutrition Technology Collaborative (CNTC)

2017

CNTC releases a feasibility study that finds a single technology solution would significantly streamline program administration and customer service for both CDE and CDPHE.

2018

CDE and CDPHE release a joint Request for Proposal (RFP) for one shared technology system.

SPRING 2019

CDE and CDPHE award CTS.

OCT 2019 – SEPT 2020

CDE and CDPHE work closely with CTS to build, test, and implement the new technology system.

OCTOBER 1 2020

Implement new system

SCHOOL YEAR 20-21

SFA/Sponsor training on new system

development of new functionality, testing and retesting, and implementation by October 1 2020.

Why are CDE and CDPHE doing this?

- To address technology system concerns that came out of the CNTC feasibility study in 2017.
- To improve collaboration, coordination, and customer service across both state agencies.
- To improve efficiency, program integrity, reduce errors, improve programs and increase customer satisfaction.

How are CDE and CDPHE doing this?

- Contracts with CTS will be finalized by the fall of 2019. Each agency will enter into a separate contract with CTS.
- CDE and CDPHE will share the cost of the system.
- CDE is using TIG and reallocated USDA funds to pay for the new system and associated costs.
- CDE and CDPHE are hiring Project Managers to assist in grant maintenance, oversight of the new CTS contract, and testing and implementation of the new system. Current staff will help with contract oversight, system design, testing, implementation and training.
- CDE is currently in the process of hiring a data manager to assist with streamlining existing and future program data.

What are the next steps? What can SFAs expect?

- By October 1, 2019, CDE and CDPHE will enter into the Start-Up Period of the new contract in which key project personnel will begin development, testing, and retesting elements of the new system.
- In 2020 CTS will train CDE and CDPHE in the functionality of the new system.
- In school year 2020-2021, CDE and CDPHE will offer school food authorities and sponsors online and one-on-one/small workgroup training on the new system
- CDE and CDPHE will develop internal and external customer satisfaction surveys to evaluate system success and opportunities for improvement.
- CDE and CDPHE will continue to evaluate duplicative data entry and work with CTS to eliminate it.

What are the outcomes?

- Increased efficiency, collaboration, & coordination among two state agencies
- Streamlined processes (i.e. applications, reviews)
- Increased customer satisfaction for shared CDE and CDPHE customers
- Increased functionality in one system including:
  - CDE:
    - mobile application to claim SFSP meals; modules to monitor financial management and procurement compliance; ad-hoc data reporting; risk management; application overview dashboard
  - CDPHE
    - automated NDL check; ad-hoc data reporting; risk management; application overview dashboard