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The Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Activity

Small Grants Program

Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Awards (PIAs)

Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA: SC-IDEAL-PIA-RFA-2021-01

Subject: Protocols, methods, and tools for qualitative monitoring and evaluation to address food and nutrition security knowledge gaps

Date RFA Issued:	January 25, 2021
End of Question Period:	February 5, 5 PM EST
Webinar Date:	February 4, 9 AM EST
Due Date for Applications:	March 5, 5 PM EST

Award Ceiling: US \$100,000 per Program Improvement Award

Issued by: Save the Children Federation, Inc. / IDEAL Activity



Save the Children®

Disclaimer:

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Acronyms

BHA	USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
DUNS	Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System
FAA	Fixed Amount Award
FFP	USAID Office of Food for Peace
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IDEAL	Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning Activity
IP	Implementing Partner
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NICRA	Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement
P&G	<u>Policy and Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Development Food Security Activities V2.0</u>
PDM	Post distribution monitoring
PIA	Program Improvement Award
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PRO-WASH	Practices, Research and Operations in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
QM	Routine qualitative monitoring
QS	Qualitative study
R&I	Refine and Implement
RFA	Request for Applications
RFSA	BHA Resilience Food Security Activity
SAM	System for Award Management
SC	Save the Children Federation, Inc.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollars
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Introduction from the IDEAL Activity Director

January 25, 2021

Dear prospective applicants,

We are excited to release this Request for Applications (RFA) under IDEAL's Small Grants Program: the Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Award RFA. Through this award, implementers of emergency and non-emergency food and nutrition security activities will have the opportunity to generate evidence of best practices. This will significantly contribute to the improved design, implementation, and overall effectiveness of Title II food and nutrition security programming by USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) implementing partners.

The Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Award responds to feedback from implementers of BHA activities indicating a need for practical, program-oriented qualitative research approaches. Implementing partners have asked for user-friendly protocols, methods, and tools that can be used to strengthen capacity for qualitative monitoring and evaluation in their activities.

The Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Activity, funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, is unique in its relationship with implementing partners, whose priorities drive our efforts. We look forward to seeing your applications and to working with you to share the resulting knowledge.

Sincerely,

Karen Romano

Karen Romano
IDEAL Activity Director

A. Authority and Introduction

Save the Children Federation, Inc., prime implementer of the IDEAL Activity, is soliciting applications that strengthen the capacity of USAID Title II implementers to incorporate qualitative analysis into monitoring and evaluation. Applications will support the development, testing, packaging, and sharing of processes, systems, and tools to improve qualitative data collection, analysis, and utilization in support of the BHA strategy and policy. The awards under this RFA will consist of **Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Awards** (Qualitative PIA) funded up to US \$100,000 for up to a 12-month period. Save the Children Federation, Inc. will issue up to five Qualitative Program Improvement Awards under this RFA.

Questions on this RFA will be collected through February 5, 2021, and responses will be posted on the [Grant Opportunities webpage](#) of the [FSN \(Food Security and Nutrition\) Network website](#) on February 12, 2021.

The authority for these awards is found in the Food for Peace Act of 1954 (as amended) and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended). It is re-delegated to Save the Children Federation, Inc. under its Cooperative Agreement No. 72DFFP19LA00001 with USAID.

B. Award Guidance

B1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

IDEAL is a five-year USAID BHA-funded activity that aims to address knowledge and capacity gaps expressed by the food and nutrition security implementing community. The goal of IDEAL is to strengthen food and nutrition security among BHA-target populations through promotion of systems-level approaches to improve the design, implementation, and overall effectiveness of emergency and non-emergency food and nutrition security activities. It seeks to achieve this through four pathways: i) Capacity Strengthening; ii) Peer-to-Peer Learning; iii) Small Grants Program; and iv) Stakeholder Consultations.¹

The purpose of this RFA is to strengthen the design, implementation, and utilization of qualitative data used in program monitoring and discrete studies. It will generate knowledge and learning, which contribute towards IDEAL's second Content Focus Area: Data Collection and Analysis.² Specifically, it seeks to operationalize the qualitative component of the former FFP (BHA) [Policy and Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Development Food Security Activities V2.0 \(P&G\)](#). With the release of this policy and guidance, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance signals the importance of integrating qualitative methods into existing M&E systems for food security activities. The RFA is intended to support the development, testing, packaging, and sharing of "processes, systems and tools" across the Title II community to improve qualitative data collection, analysis, and utilization in support of BHA strategy and policy. Although the P&G is geared towards non-emergency activities, emergency activities are encouraged to apply for these awards. Emergency activity implementers should refer to page 18 in the [draft BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting for Emergency Activities](#) and as well as the P&G.

This Qualitative PIA is not intended to solicit applications to carry out formative research conducted by Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs) carried out during the Refine and Implement (R&I) period.

Applicants should keep in mind that the products developed under this RFA are intended to be useful, relevant, and accessible for Title II food security implementers and stakeholders beyond any single activity or organization (full information on selection criteria is given in Section F).

The final deliverables that result from activities carried out under this award must be freely available to the public (i.e., must never require payment for access by any organization).

¹ <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/ideal>

² https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/IDEAL_RFA_-_72DFFP18RFA00001.pdf

B2. FOCUS AND SUBJECT AREAS

The M&E P&G for non-emergency programs identifies two main categories of qualitative inquiry: qualitative studies and qualitative monitoring, defined as follows:

- **A qualitative study (QS)** is a discrete study to better understand dynamics or phenomenon related to higher-level results or outcomes, and specifically in cases where qualitative data will be more informative or appropriate than quantitative data.
- **Routine qualitative monitoring (QM)** collects data at consistent intervals. It is used to gather information that the activity staff know they need on a regular basis to complement data generated through quantitative measures, thereby facilitating a more holistic understanding of the situation.

While there are various resources and guidance for qualitative research, there is a need for better models to integrate qualitative inquiry into monitoring and evaluation for Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs) and emergency activities, to align with and effectively implement current M&E P&G, and to improve the overall utilization of qualitative information in BHA activities. Save the Children Federation, Inc. seeks applications that demonstrate the development, piloting, and subsequent sharing of effective practices for integrating qualitative methods into M&E activities to improve implementation of high-impact emergency and/or non-emergency food security activities. The development of these qualitative resources and/or processes should strive to address a known resource, knowledge, methodological, or capacity gap within the food security community, including, but not limited to:

- Models for integrating qualitative routine monitoring and discrete studies into M&E systems to better understand drivers of/ barriers to change and inform implementation (e.g., qualitative sentinel sites, iterating qualitative and quantitative data, case studies, recurrent monitoring studies).
- Approaches and tools to help understand and monitor systems level change in support of the former [FFP Strategy](#) (e.g., community and institutional level—nutrition and health systems, agricultural, market, and financial systems, natural resource and environment systems, governance structures and systems at the community, district, or regional levels).
- Processes, systems, and tools for qualitative monitoring and discrete studies in emergency programming and/or challenging and non-permissive environments (e.g., COVID-19, conflict settings, inaccessible sites), including remote data collection methods and tools and processes for utilizing data.
- Processes and tools to improve qualitative design, data collection, robust and timely data analysis, and data utilization and representation, including systems to ensure findings are integrated into effective adaptive management.
- Qualitative monitoring approaches that integrate quantitative methods, noting the emphasis of the award is on the generation of innovative qualitative methods and the use of quantitative data must be clearly justified.

It is paramount that the outputs from this funding opportunity improve the ability of BHA IPs to operationalize existing monitoring and evaluation P&G. In alignment with the P&G, this RFA seeks applications that demonstrate the use of qualitative monitoring or discrete studies for the following priority areas:

Process monitoring: Sub-optimal implementation quality could be a major factor for an activity not to achieve its objective. The activity could be designed based on proven theories, but adoption of activity promoted practices could be very low. Qualitative monitoring tools can be utilized to observe and understand signs of adoption or non-adoption. Examples include participant observation of interventions, discussions with participants, interviews with front line staff, or semi-structured visits to participants' homes, farm plots, or centers of business.

Unexpected and unexplained achievements: Quantitative indicators may suggest that progress toward a quantitative target is not on track (e.g., when progress against targets is unexpectedly low or high). Qualitative methods or tools could be used to understand the reasons behind this under- or over-

performance. The information then can be used to tailor the implementation strategy either to improve performance or use it as a positive deviance to inform other interventions.

Outcome monitoring: There are anticipated outcomes that are not easy to quantify. Therefore, qualitative tools and methods are suitable to capture these outcomes. For example, peoples' agency, empowerment, gender equity in decision-making, coping strategies, and changes in norms and attitudes.

Post distribution monitoring (PDM): While quantitative methods work well to capture data to track the use of transfers, they are not as effective in understanding the reasoning behind the decisions. Qualitative methods are well suited in understanding the dynamics of targeting, feedback on protection issues, transactional costs, and waiting time. It may also be more appropriate in specific settings (e.g., school feeding programs or politically sensitive contexts where randomized sampling is not feasible).

Unintended effects: Qualitative data collection is well-suited to explore possible unintended consequences or unexpected outcomes of interventions that would be overlooked in routine quantitative monitoring.

Effects of layering, sequencing, integrating: Qualitative methods can be used to explore the interaction among interventions and how activities are best sequenced and integrated to achieve desired outcomes (e.g., VSLAs together with alternative livelihoods programs and value chains).

Monitoring Sustainability: Implementers begin planning for exit and for long-term sustainability of interventions from the beginning of an activity. Qualitative data are critical to monitor key factors that enhance the likelihood of sustained activities and benefits, such as motivation, capacity (both technical and managerial), adequate and sustained resources, and external linkages (e.g., market, government, or service provider linkages).³

Secondary Adoption: BHA expects a population-level change for key outcome indicators for RFSAs. It is, therefore, important for these activities to monitor adoption by indirect beneficiaries. Without this secondary adoption, an activity may not be deemed successful even if most direct participants adopt activity promoted practices. Qualitative methods and tools may help to get a sense of the magnitude of secondary adoption and understand why certain practices are adopted by neighbors and what could be done to further promote secondary adoption.

Note the Qualitative PIA is **not** suitable for:

- Conducting monitoring and evaluation activities that are a routine and expected part of implementing a RFSA. This includes studies carried out under RFSA R&I activities.
- Studies or monitoring activities focused on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities. If you are interested in WASH related research, please explore opportunities with [PRO-WASH](#) and [WASHPaLS](#).

B3. TYPE AND NUMBER OF AWARDS

The award(s) will be a Fixed Amount subaward (FAA), which is a type of subaward that provides a pre-defined level of funding based on a schedule of pre-determined milestones and results rather than reimbursement based on actual costs.⁴ By utilizing this awarding mechanism, Save the Children Federation, Inc. aims to reduce the administrative burden, encourage smaller organizations to apply, and focus efforts on strengthening capacity for qualitative inquiry.

³ See Rogers, Beatrice Lorge and Coates, Jennifer. 2015. Sustaining Development: A Synthesis of Results from a Four-Country Study of Sustainability and Exit Strategies among Development Food Assistance Projects. Washington, DC: FHI 360/Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA).

⁴ Please see 2 CFR 200.45 "Fixed amount awards" for more information.

SC plans to award up to five subawards under this Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Award RFA. The final number of awards will depend on the quality of applications received, demand, and availability of funding. It is anticipated that Qualitative Program Improvement Awards solicited through this RFA will be issued on or about June 2021. SC reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of SC or USAID, nor does it commit SC or USAID to pay for the costs incurred in the submission of an application. SC and USAID reserve the right to reject any or all submissions received and to negotiate separately with an applicant, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of SC and the IDEAL donor, USAID.

B4. AWARD TIMELINE

The duration of a Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation PIA under this RFA is a maximum of 12 months from the issue date of the award.

B5. LEARNING PRODUCTS

Final award products should be proposed in the application and contribute to dissemination and utilization of knowledge gained through the grant, including guidance, tools, and templates as well as documentation (e.g., case study narrative) of the process and lessons learned. In this way, the award seeks to build the evidence base for best practice in qualitative approaches for monitoring and evaluation. It is not required that the results be submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal. However, this caliber of research is welcomed, and publication is encouraged beyond the 12-month life of the award.

Before deliverables can be considered final or grantees are issued their final milestone payment, all deliverables must be approved by SC for general usability and for proper branding and marking (according to the IDEAL Award Branding and Marking Guidelines).

B6. KNOWLEDGE SHARING PLAN

All awardees are expected to propose and execute a dissemination and socialization plan to share their study results within the life of the award and beyond. The IDEAL Activity may be enlisted to support this final phase, such as by facilitating access to relevant stakeholder audiences through a Knowledge Sharing Meeting, posting on the Food Security Network website and listserv, promoting an online event, and/or other forms of support. However, it is the responsibility of the awardee to present plans for a user-friendly learning product(s) and knowledge-sharing plan appropriate for Title II implementing partners.

While SC will not provide financial assistance beyond a 12-month timeframe, IDEAL will provide ongoing support for broader socialization of learning products and new resources. This may include but is not limited to the following: technical review and preparation for publication, outreach to the FSN Community, and promotion of resources during IDEAL in-person and online events.

All resources, including final reports and deliverables generated through IDEAL funding, will be shared on the FSN Network and USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse for use by USAID, SC, and any organizations implementing food and nutrition security activities.

B7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The type, number, content, etc. of milestones submitted and the timeline for submission shall be based on the successful applicant's proposed deliverables outlined in the application. At a minimum, every Qualitative PIA recipient will be required to submit:

- Qualitative Learning Brief: One- to two-page brief that describes the process and products developed, and highlights key lessons learned and programming implications for the food security community.

- Final Report: Upon completion of the award activities and before final payment can be made, the awardee is required to submit a Final Report. The Final Report is a narrative report of no more than 10 pages, for which awardees will be provided a template. This report is intended to describe activities, lessons learned, and conclusions. Pursuant to standard provision "Submission of Datasets to the Development Data Library",⁵ the awardee must also submit all clean datasets and intellectual work generated in the course of this PIA. The awardee is responsible for removing any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from the data before submission.
- All the deliverables for each subaward Milestone as outlined in the signed subaward agreement.

Before deliverables can be shared or successful applicants can receive payment for achieving a subaward milestone, all deliverables under the milestone shall be approved by SC as meeting the agreed upon quality standards from the subaward agreement.

B8. PAYMENT

Fixed amount payments will be scheduled in the award as Milestone payments and will depend on the selected applicant's negotiated budget amount, the agreed upon amount for each Milestone, and successful completion of the deliverable(s) associated with each Milestone.

Payment shall be issued for properly invoiced amounts within 30 days of receiving completed deliverables agreed upon in the grant agreement. Payment currency shall be United States dollars (USD).

B9. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Final funding levels for each award will depend on content, relevance, quality, and needs, with a ceiling of US \$100,000 per award (subject to availability of funds.) Acceptance of an application under this RFA does not constitute an award, nor does it guarantee that the application (if awarded) will be funded at the full dollar amount requested.

B10. AUTHORIZED GEOGRAPHIC CODE

The authorized geographic code for procurement of goods and services under this RFA is 937. However, local procurement is authorized within the parameters specified in 22 CFR 228.40, "Local Procurement." Code 937 countries include the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but exclude any country that is a prohibited source listed in USAID's ADS 310.

C. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be US or non-US nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), for-profit organizations, research institutions, or Higher Education Institutions (HEI) that can contribute to IDEAL's strategic objective of promoting systems-level approaches to improving the design, implementation, and overall effectiveness of emergency and non-emergency Title II activities. While the Lead Applicant and potential collaborating organization(s) do not need to have experience with BHA funding to apply, the Lead Applicant must:

- Have received USAID funding in the past three years as a prime recipient or sub;
- Demonstrate the capacity to manage awards of comparable size or above (US \$100,000+); and
- Furnish relevant past performance examples with references

Applications can incorporate partnerships between more than one organization. If partnering for an application, one organization needs to be selected to lead the application process, award management, and reporting. This **Lead Applicant** will be required to sign a subaward agreement with SC and, in turn, will establish a partnership with other collaborating organization(s). The Lead Applicant will be responsible for ensuring that these **collaborating organizations** comply with all rules and regulations stated in that agreement. The Lead Applicant will be the only organization to communicate directly with SC regarding the

⁵ See attachments 6 and 7, respectively.

application process and during the life of the award, unless otherwise deemed necessary for activity implementation purposes. Thus, the Lead Applicant will be responsible for managing any financial transactions between the Lead Applicant and collaborating organization(s), and for collating programmatic reporting from all partners during the life of the award. The programmatic roles and responsibilities of each of the proposed partners must be clearly described in the Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Award application.

Lead Applicants or collaborating organization(s) must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law of the country where the activity will be implemented. At the time of submission and through the life of the award, Lead Applicants must comply with all applicable Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements at <http://www.sam.gov/SAM/>. The Lead Applicant must also ensure all collaborating organizations comply with application DUNS and SAM Requirements.

Qualitative PIAs must be implemented in countries where USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance funded Title II Emergency or non-Emergency Activities⁶ in FY 2019, 2020 or 2021.

All applicants are permitted to submit only one application as the lead organization in response to this RFA. Organizations can act as a collaborating organization in multiple applications. Organizations can act as a collaborating organization even if they submitted one application as the lead organization.

The following are not eligible to apply for grants under this RFA or be a collaborating organization that receives funding through this RFA:

- Members of the IDEAL consortium: Save the Children, the Kaizen Company, Mercy Corps, and TANGO International, including other country and fundraising offices beyond the US (e.g., Save the Children UK, Mercy Corps Uganda)
- Individuals and/or sole proprietorships;
- Government entities, including ministries;
- Public international organizations; or
- Firms operating as commercial companies or other organizations (including nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations) that are wholly or partially owned by foreign governments or agencies.

Organizations which are sub recipients or subcontractors to Save the Children, Mercy Corps, TANGO or the Kaizen Company in any agreements are not restricted from applying because of their work with these IDEAL consortium members. They should consider applying if they meet the eligibility criteria.

In their cost applications, organizations should indicate whether they have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with any US Government Agency. Organizations or institutions that do not have a NICRA are eligible for grants under this RFA either by using a de-minimis indirect cost rate (if requirements of 2 CFR 200.414(f) are met) or by directly charging all costs using a documented cost allocation methodology. All proposed costs must be reasonable, allocable, and allowable in accordance with applicable cost principles.

Applications by for-profit organizations cannot include profit in the proposed budget. Profit is prohibited per 2 CFR 700.13.

D. Authorization for Research Activities

Where applicable, applicants must comply with institutional review board (IRB) requirements of their own institutions and any national-level IRBs in the country(-ies) where the research will be conducted. These

⁶ See the [FFP FY19 Annual Report](#) for a map of countries with Title II emergency or non-emergency funding.

reviews should be factored into the research plan with the aim of being completed within the first three months of the start of the award.

Applicants must fully adapt study activities for a COVID-19 pandemic environment. If primary research is completed, applicants must demonstrate in the Research Design and Methodology section of the application how they will account for COVID-19 restrictions and mitigate any risks of virus transmission among the implementing staff and the community. Award recipients will be expected to follow all COVID-19 regulations in their target country(-ies) of research.

E. Selection Process and Timeline

E1. SELECTION PROCESS: OVERVIEW

The full application package includes a narrative application (Attachment 1), an implementation timeline (Attachment 2), detailed budget (Attachment 3), budget narrative (Attachment 4), and past performance information (Attachment 5). Applications will be evaluated using the technical and financial criteria set forth in Section F. Applications will be ranked based on the combined scores on their technical and financial components.

After evaluation and ranking of the applications, either award(s) will be recommended to BHA or, if deemed necessary or desirable by IDEAL, written discussions/negotiations will be conducted with top-scoring applicants to address reviewer questions and/or negotiate modifications to the technical or financial application.

All applicants recommended to BHA will be required to complete a standard pre-award assessment to confirm programmatic and administrative/financial capacity to meet all applicable USAID rules and regulations for a Fixed Amount Award before the award is issued. This assessment requests information regarding relevant financial policies and systems, recent financial audits, programmatic experience with the project's target population, and the organization's capacity to follow USAID-stipulated award conditions. Any identified compliance risks will be incorporated into the capacity and action plan in the sub-award agreement.

SC reserves the right to determine the resulting level of funding for the award(s).

E2. TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The IDEAL Activity will establish the Technical Review Committee for this RFA. Collectively, the technical experts will have academic, professional, and implementation experience relevant to the specific qualitative application. At least one technical expert will have a strong background in qualitative methods. The technical review committee will make final selection of successful applicants. USAID will provide final approval. Technical review committee members will be required to disclose any potential or actual conflict of interest with regard to the assessment of any specific application.

E3. TIMELINE FOR ISSUING RFA AND SELECTING APPLICATIONS

- This Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Award RFA is open from the date of issue.
- Submissions are due by March 5, 2021, 5 PM EST.
- The full selection process, including review of applications, final negotiations with top-ranked applicants, and final selection, is expected to take four to five months.
- The activity must be conducted, finalized, and publicly shared by the applicant within the 12-month award timeline. This ensures SC can further socialize learnings after the award period.

E4. AMENDMENTS TO RFA

This Qualitative Program Improvement Award RFA may be amended at any time and will be posted on the [FSN Network website](#). Save the Children Federation, Inc. and/or USAID reserve the right to cancel this RFA at any time.

E5. QUESTIONS

The point of contact for this RFA is Mr. Austen Musso, IDEAL Small Grants Program Manager, IDEAL_PIA@savechildren.org. Questions on this RFA may be submitted to Mr. Musso in writing no later than February 5, 2021, 5 PM ET with *IDEAL Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Program Improvement Award RFA* and the name of the Lead Applicant as the subject line. Answers to the questions will be posted by Friday February 12, 2021, 5 PM ET on the IDEAL [Small Grants Program webpage](#) on the FSN Network. Common questions will be addressed during the RFA Webinar on February 4, 2021, 9 AM EST. This webinar will be recorded and shared on the FSN Network by February 5, 2021.

F. Qualitative Application Evaluation Criteria

F1. SCORED EVALUATION CRITERIA

The maximum points possible between the technical and financial criteria is 100 points.

Criteria	Description
Activity Objectives and Review of Secondary Literature 20 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity objectives and/or study questions are clearly stated. Demonstrates clear understanding of the problem to be addressed by the proposed tool, methodology, or process. Describes the knowledge, process, tool, and/or resource gap (the purpose) that has been identified in the Title II implementing community that this activity will address. Demonstrates the significant need for the proposed tool, methodology, or process and how it will contribute to Title II Programming.
Design and Implementation Plan, and Implementation Timeline 20 Points	<p><i>Please provide a concise summary of the overall study plan. The Qualitative Activity Schedule (Attachment 2) should align with and complement the narrative application.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall design, methodology, and implementation plan are up to international standards for rigor, well-reasoned, well organized, and based on sound rationale. If the proposal involves collection of primary data, the methodological approach, sampling strategy, tools, and analysis plan align with the purpose, objectives, and research questions. Feasibility of work plan (esp. with regard to time required for each step). Demonstrates how the activity will be adapted to the COVID-19 context and applications considers relevant COVID-19 restrictions, regulations, and best practices.
Deliverables and Plan for Utilization and Socialization 25 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly describes the nature and format of the deliverables/learning product(s). Clearly demonstrates how the deliverables/learning products from this award will be packaged and disseminated to reach the maximum number of food security and nutrition activity implementers Demonstrates that proposed study findings have a high likelihood of being translated into or scaled up as improved food and nutrition security processes, practices, policy, or products. The application describes how the study results and deliverables will be utilized by the Title II community, relevant communities of practice, and other key food and nutrition security stakeholders. Describe how the final results and products will be utilized by the staff involved in this project, how it will be further rolled out within the organization, and the expected organizational benefits once the project is complete.

Contribution to RFA and BHA Objectives 15 Points	<p><i>For reference, see IDEAL's background and RFA focus in Section B2.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed activity substantively addresses at least one priority area for qualitative monitoring or discrete studies, described in the former Food for Peace P&G for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for DFSAs V2.0. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Monitoring Unexpected and unexplained achievements Outcome monitoring Post distribution monitoring (PDM) Unintended effects Effects of layering, sequencing, integrating Monitoring Sustainability Secondary Adoption
Applicants' Roles and Background 10 Points	<p><i>This criterion applies to the combined experience of the Lead Applicant, collaborating organization(s), and any other partners/collaborators.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names and roles of the Lead Applicant, each collaborating organization(s), and any other partners are clearly defined in a table format. Experience working in food and nutrition security in emergency and/or non-emergency contexts. Relevant experience within the past three years and capacity to carry out proposed study. Demonstrated capacity of Lead Applicant to lead, manage, and execute research or related activities of similar magnitude and scope.
Budget and Budget Narrative 5 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget is sufficient for the proposed activity. The budget takes into account major cost items for the proposed activity and demonstrates there are adequate resources for the IP and Study Partner(s) to carry out the proposed activity.
Developing Country Preference 5 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application is led by and/or includes equitable partnership with research institutions, HEIs, or NGOs headquartered in developing countries, as defined by USAID's List of Developing Countries.

F2. NON-SCORED REQUIREMENTS

Research applications must comply with the following non-scored requirements:

- Applicants for the Qualitative Program Improvement Award must submit technical and financial application with all required attachments and Appendices before March 5, 5 PM ET as described in section F.6.
- Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C.
- Outputs, Outcomes, and Learnings from the activity must have a significant benefit to current or future Title II Programming.
- The proposed budget must not exceed US \$100,000 and demonstrate understanding of project activity accounting and USAID costs principles.
- The Application Narrative must follow all the formatting requirements found in Attachment 1: Narrative Application Template.
- The application narrative includes a table for clearly defined milestones and their due dates, which will be used subaward payments.
- Applications, including all attachments and appendices must be in English.

Applications that do not comply with the above requirements will not be considered for funding.

F3. REQUIRED APPENDICES

Document	Details:
Letter of Support (1 Page per collaborator)	Non-binding documentation of collaborators' intent, willingness, and ability to commit to conducting research together if the proposed team receives the award.

F4. BUDGET PREPARATION

The activity budget must be submitted using the Detailed Budget Template in Excel (Attachment 3) and Budget Narrative Template (Attachment 4). Please follow directions in the workbook when entering numbers.

The budget should include the total cost of implementation for the activity proposed as well as any planned cost share (if any). No cost share is required.

Save the Children Federation, Inc. will not allow funding for the following categories of items:

- Procurement of Commodities Listed below:
 - Agricultural Commodities
 - Motor Vehicles
 - Pharmaceuticals
 - Pesticides
 - Used Equipment
 - U.S. Government-owner excess property
 - Fertilizer
 - Military equipment
 - Surveillance equipment
 - Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities
 - Abortion equipment and services
 - Luxury goods and gambling equipment
 - Weather modification equipment
- Construction (e.g., alteration or repair, including dredging and excavation of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration, and refurbishment). The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures.
- Capital Assets (e.g., land, buildings, equipment, and intellectual property).
 - Exceptions: Equipment with cumulative value less than US \$5,000 and purchases of computer software will be allowed in budgets if they are essential to activity implementation.

Save the Children Federation, Inc. may request additional detailed budget information following notification to an applicant that it is under consideration for an award. If necessary, Save the Children Federation Inc. may arrange meetings to evaluate specific elements of costs, and examine data to determine the necessity, reasonableness, and allocability of the costs reflected in the budget and their allowability per the applicable USG cost principles.

F5. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Among applications that are highly and closely ranked based on the scoring criteria in Sections F2 and F4, preference will be given to applicants that partner with research entities based and working in the countries where BHA is implementing activities currently or has implemented an activity in the past five calendar years.

F6. HOW TO SUBMIT THE APPLICATION

Research applications shall be submitted electronically and shall include the Narrative Research Application Template (Attachment 1), Qualitative Activity Schedule (Attachment 2), Budget Template (Attachment 3), Budget Narrative Template (Attachment 4), and Past Performance Information Request (Attachment 5).

Please send applications to IDEAL_PIA@savechildren.org.

By submitting an application for a Qualitative Program Improvement Award, the Lead Applicant's primary point of contact will be automatically enrolled in the FSN Network Bi-weekly Newsletter. Standard organizational information (e.g., email addresses, points of contact, operating country, technical expertise, etc.) for the Lead Applicant and contributing organizations will be stored in IDEAL's internal partner database and may be contacted about targeted funding and event opportunities, which are not publicized in the bi-weekly newsletter. No confidential or sensitive organizational or programmatic information will be stored in this system. If an organization does not wish to be signed up for the newsletter or have organizational information stored in IDEAL's partner database please notify Save the Children Federation, Inc. when submitting an application. Organizations can also opt-out of receiving the newsletter or having contact information in IDEAL's systems when applying or at any time during the life of the IDEAL Activity by emailing IDEAL_PIA@savechildren.org.

G. IDEAL Award Branding and Marking Guidelines

As a condition of receipt of the IDEAL Qualitative Program Improvement Award, adherence to the IDEAL Award Branding and Marking Guidelines is required. The guidelines will be sent to applicants whose applications are selected for further review or at the time of the award.

H. Intellectual Property

Any materials developed under this award relating to intangible property, such as intellectual property or patents are subject to applicable rules under 2 CFR 200.315, "Intangible Property."⁷ If applicants have intangible property developed previously under non-federal awards and are planning to use the intangible property in this award, clearly identify the intangible property and its anticipated use in the project. Applicants must also specify if the applications include any proprietary information and mark it as proprietary, if applicable.

I. Other Applicable USAID Regulations

As Save the Children Federation, Inc. is providing a subaward under United States law, the Lead Applicant is, therefore, subject to the laws and regulations of the United States pertaining to sub-awards, including but not limited to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (the "Super Circular"), as set forth in 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700, the specific terms and conditions set forth in the Prime Award, and USAID's Standard Provisions Fixed Amount Awards **Attachment 6**. Where appropriate "USAID" shall mean Save the Children Federation, Inc. and "recipient" shall mean "Lead Applicant."

Awards to non-U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with the cost principles contained in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E and USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations. Please refer to **Attachment 6** for applicable USAID Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards for both US and Non-US organizations.

J. Attachments

- Attachment 1: Narrative Application Template (Required for Application)

⁷ In 2 CFR 200.315, "The applicant may copyright any work subject to a copyright that was developed under a Federal award. The federal government has the right to: (1) obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data under a Federal award; and (2) Authorize other to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for Federal purposes." For more details, see 2 CFR 200.315 and e-CFR 401 "Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights."

- Attachment 2: Qualitative Activity Schedule (Required for Application)
- Attachment 3: Budget Template (Required for Application)
- Attachment 4: Budget Narrative Template (Required for Application)
- Attachment 5: Past Performance Information Request (Required for Application)
- Attachment 6: USAID Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards