



Gerald J. and Dorothy R.
Friedman School of
Nutrition Science and Policy

USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (*THIS-WIC*)

Request for Proposals Overview

February 13, 2020
3-4pm EST



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THIS-WIC Project Administrator



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THIS-WIC Project Director

Tufts | Friedman School of
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Agenda

- Overview of *THIS-WIC*
- Background
- Priority Areas
- Collaborative Evaluation
- Application Technical Support
- How to Apply
 - Phase I
 - Phase II
- Additional Requirements
- Questions



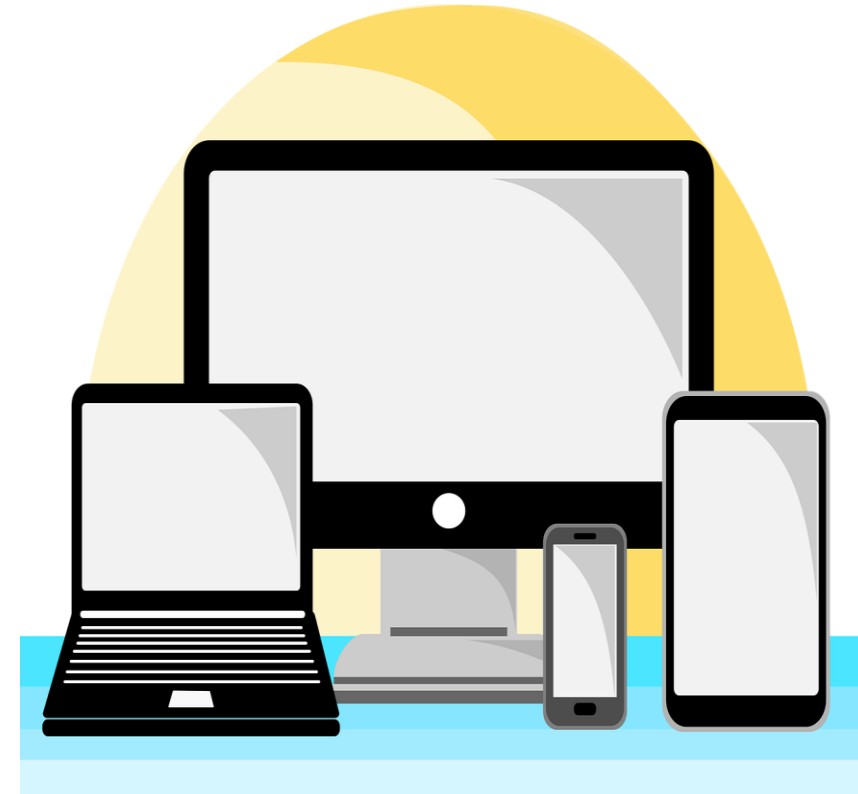
THIS-WIC Overview

- The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6) authorized the allocation of **\$5,000,000** for telehealth competitive grants to:
 - Supplement the nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support offered in the WIC clinic
 - Decrease barriers to access to WIC services, particularly in rural communities and other populations facing barriers to accessing support
 - Impact dietary habits, infant feeding practices, including breastfeeding rates, participant satisfaction and retention, and improve identified nutrition risks



Funding to Enhance Existing WIC Services

- *THIS-WIC* will provide technical support and up to \$1 million in funding for selected projects
- This funding opportunity will allow eligible WIC SAs to develop and/or implement telehealth strategies and tools that can enhance WIC nutrition education and/or breastfeeding counseling
- These strategies and tools can:
 - supplement nutrition education and breastfeeding contacts to WIC participants with qualified professionals
 - provide for effective counseling by WIC staff with tailored, up-to-date information to facilitate productive and meaningful discussions with participants
 - facilitate effective documentation, care planning, and appropriate follow-up

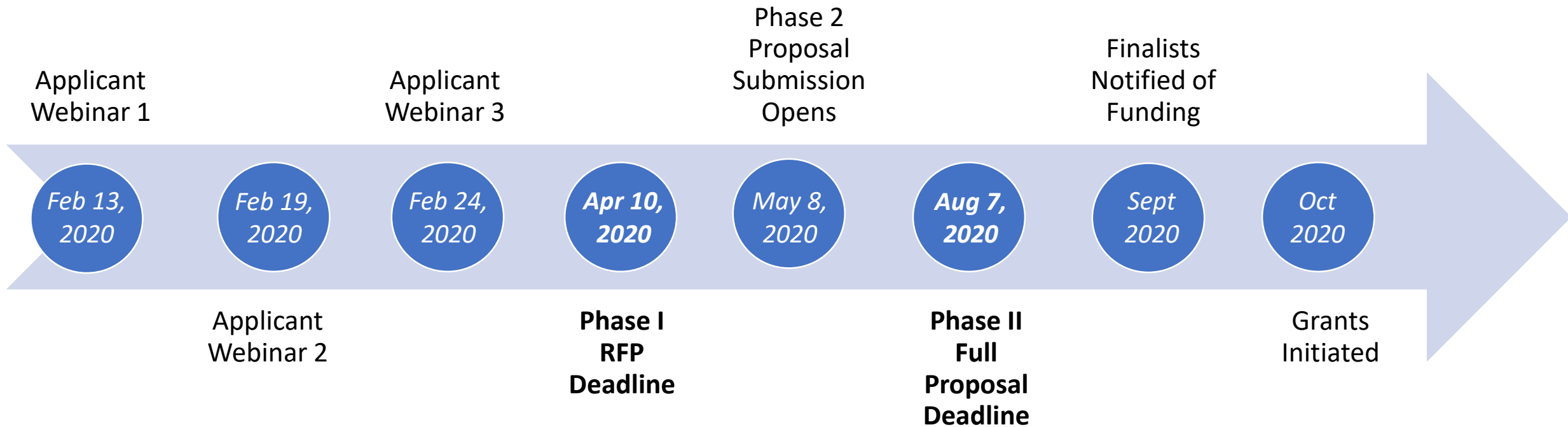




Requirements for Applicants

- Applications must be led and submitted by a State Agency or consortium of State Agencies.
- Applicants must address either Priority Area 1 or Priority Area 2.
- Applicants must submit all required components of the application by the due date using the online platform through the *THIS-WIC* web site.
- Applicants must demonstrate the willingness to implement the telehealth intervention in a randomized fashion or with comparison and treatment groups.
- Applicants must make a commitment to collaborating with *THIS-WIC* on the evaluation *i.e.*, supporting *THIS-WIC* in data collection and providing data needed to evaluate the intervention.

Key Dates and Deadlines



What is Telehealth?

- Telehealth is the provision of health-related services remotely through technology such as computers, smartphones, or tablets.
- This technology can be used to facilitate communication between practitioners and participants to deliver health education.
- Research has documented that many WIC participants are millennials or post-millennials who use smartphones.
- WIC participants want and support utilizing technology to better access existing WIC services.

Priority Area 1: *Implement an existing telehealth solution*



The most consistent benefit documented in telehealth research is when telehealth technology is used for communication and counseling



Although videoconferencing has some evidence of feasibility within WIC, to our knowledge, no research has been conducted to assess its impact.



One option to facilitate this communication is through videoconferencing (delivered either to a single participant or in a group setting).



WIC SAs may also propose solutions beyond videoconferencing (e.g., two-way text messaging, existing mobile app).

Interventions in this priority area should aim to facilitate:

- SAs reaching and better serving WIC participants who have historically faced barriers to access, including those in rural locations.
- Integration with and supplementation (not duplication) of WIC services by addressing challenges identified through the participants' nutrition and/or breastfeeding assessment (*i.e.*, high-risk) or barriers to access.
- Use of assessments and referrals from a WIC Competent Professional Authority to connect participants with appropriate follow-up counseling on complex nutrition and/or breastfeeding problems with qualified professionals.
- Any counseling contacts should be well documented, and information should be provided in a timely manner to WIC staff to enable follow-up.

Research Questions to Consider

Priority Area 1: *Implement an existing telehealth solution*

What is the impact of integrating the telehealth solution on WIC participants' outcomes, participant reach and retention, provider and participation satisfaction?

What is the feasibility, accessibility and acceptability of using this solution to engage with WIC participants? Among WIC staff? Among WIC participants?

What is the cost, with respect to both the provider (i.e., State Agency) and the WIC participant, to deliver the telehealth solution?

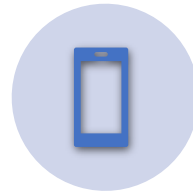
What are the costs for the WIC program associated with adoption (initial start-up), implementation (on-going administration), and sustainability?

What factors influence WIC staff delivery of the telehealth solution (i.e., WIC staff interest, telecommunication challenges faced, acceptance of method for delivery of education)?

Priority Area 2: *Develop an online (mobile- friendly) resource or tool*



The focus of Priority Area 2 is the development of new telehealth technologies and/or tools or novel integration of existing tools to support WIC staff in their delivery of WIC services.



Tools should supplement usual practice care, while also addressing program barriers for SAs and WIC participants



Projects awarded for this opportunity will help generate an emerging evidence base to better understand the integration of mobile-friendly tools within WIC

Development and implementation of online, mobile-friendly resources or tools may help to facilitate:

- Productive and meaningful interactions with participants.
- Improved engagement with WIC participants that includes participant-centered nutrition education practice and goal setting.
- Delivery of nutrition education content relevant to identified nutrition risk(s) and participant concerns.
- Use of evidence-based strategies to maximize participant engagement or impact participant nutrition behaviors.
- Use of evidence-based best practices for the delivery and reinforcement of nutrition messages.
- Enable WIC staff to analyze assessments and monitor use of the tool and its impact on participant dietary habits and/or health to support continual improvement.
- Tailoring information to the nutritional and/or breastfeeding needs of participant, care plan development, documentation and appropriate follow-up.
- Use of referrals and assessment to connect participants with appropriate follow-up on complex nutrition and/or breastfeeding problems.

Research Questions to Consider

Priority Area 2:
*Develop and
implement an online
(mobile-friendly)
resource*

What are WIC participant and staff perceptions regarding this new resource or tool?

Does the tool facilitate productive and meaningful discussions between WIC staff and participants, including by supporting participant-centered nutrition education practices?

What is the accuracy and reliability of this tool?

What are the costs associated with implementation and utilization of the new system (initial capital investment, ongoing costs)?

What is the impact of the tool on participant reach and retention?

Collaborative Evaluation of Proposed Interventions with *THIS-WIC*

- Throughout the project period, *THIS-WIC* will build WIC SAs evaluation capacity through trainings, webinars, and direct communication
- WIC SAs can use grant funding to either pay for current staff and/or hire new staff or contractors to implement their project.
- If current staff are used, time studies should be used to allocate their salaries and benefits between this grant and WIC NSA grant funds. USDA WIC program requirements are to be met throughout implementation and evaluation.

Applicant Process Technical Support

- The *THIS-WIC* team will provide technical support to WIC SAs during the application process and implementation period
- National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs)
 - The TRCs provide information and assistance to programs in their start-up, expansion, and maintenance phases in all 50 states and D.C., Pacific Basin territories, and U.S. Virgin Islands.
- During proposal development, TRCs can provide WIC SAs with assistance focused on the following:
 - Best practices for designing and implementing telehealth intervention (i.e., maintaining safety and confidentiality; over-coming connectivity challenges)
 - Selection criteria for identifying potential vendors

THIS-WIC Website: <https://thiswic.nutrition.tufts.edu/>



Tufts | THIS-WIC About Funding Resources What's New? [Contact us](#)

USDA/TuftsTelehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC)

The USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC) is a grant opportunity to implement telehealth solutions for WIC participants. Tufts University and collaborators are requesting proposals from WIC State Agencies.

[LEARN ABOUT GRANT](#) [HOW TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL](#)

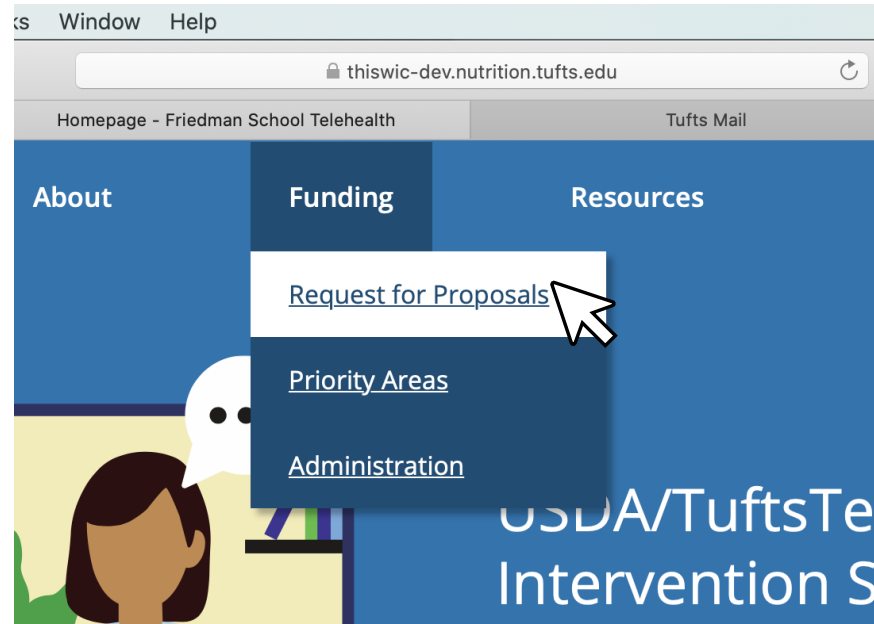
How to Apply

- All applications **must be submitted** online on *THIS-WIC* website
- Templates and detailed instructions provided
- Log in and understand submission requirements before deadline
- Late submissions will not be accepted

Phase 1: Brief Proposals (due April 10, 2020 by 11:59pm ET)

Phase 2: Full Proposals, if invited (due August 7, 2020 by 11:59pm ET)

How to Apply



Brief Proposal Deadline: April 3, 2020

The online application system provides templates and detailed instructions for each phase and component of the grant application.

APPLY ONLINE



Application Platform

Online Application Homepage



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Eligible Programs ▾

Search programs..



USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strate...

Accepting applications from Feb 5 2020 12:00 PM (EST) to Apr 10 2020 11:59 PM (EDT)

To help WIC State Agencies (SAs) develop and/or implement telehealth using various technologies to facilitate breastfeeding support, nutrition education and address barriers to participant access of WIC services, Tufts University and collaborators are requesting proposals for the USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC) grant opportunity.

MORE >



Hit Apply



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USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC)

USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC)

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We strongly recommend that applicants log in to the system and understand online submission requirements before the submission deadline. Staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted.

If you have any questions reach out to thiswic@tufts.edu or the [SurveyMonkey Apply help desk](#).

APPLY


Opens

Feb 5 2020 12:00 PM (EST)

Deadline




Apr 10 2020 11:59 PM (EDT)

Create Account



Register for an applicant account

Register with



OR

First name


Last name

Email

Password

Confirm password

By registering for an account, you agree to our [terms of service](#) and [privacy policy](#).

☐ I'm not a robot
reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms

CREATE ACCOUNT

Check Eligibility



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CHECK ELIGIBILITY

Opens

Feb 5 2020 12:00 PM (EST)

Deadline

Apr 10 2020 11:59 PM (EDT)



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Eligibility Check

Are you submitting a proposal as a State Agency or a consortium of State Agencies?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is your application approved by your State Agency Director?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

To which Priority Area is this application being submitted?

- ☐ Priority Area 1 (Implement an existing videoconferencing telehealth solution for nutrition education or breastfeeding support)
- ☐ Priority Area 2 (Develop and implement an online (mobile-friendly) resource or tool to provide nutrition or breastfeeding support)

I'll do this later

Save my profile

Hit Apply One More Time



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APPLY

Opens

Feb 5 2020 12:00 PM (EST)

Deadline

Apr 10 2020 11:59 PM (EDT)

0 of 1 tasks complete

Last edited: Feb 7 2020 04:41 PM (EST)

REVIEW

SUBMIT

Deadline: Apr 10 2020 11:59 PM (EDT)

USDA/Tufts Telehealth Interventi... [🔗](#)

[👁 Preview](#) [⋮](#)

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APPLICATION

ACTIVITY

Your tasks



[📄 Brief Proposal Form](#)





Phase I: Brief Proposals

Brief Proposal Requirements

- All applicants must submit a brief proposal describing the proposed study using the provided template
- No need to include a budget except for the anticipated total amount
- Applicants will be notified on or before May 1, 2020 if they are invited to apply to Phase II

Project Title:

Project Lead:

State Agency (SA):

Telehealth Solution (600 words)

- Describe the telehealth intervention in relation to Priority Area 1 or 2 and how it will build on participant assessment information to provide nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support and how the solution will be used to deliver only allowable WIC services by qualified professionals
- Describe how the intervention will address challenges identified through the participants' nutrition and/or breastfeeding assessment (e.g. high risk)
- Tell us how the intervention will facilitate documented counseling contacts, care plan development and appropriate follow-up
- Describe potential reach of the intervention, including geographical area and/or specific populations, and the number or range of local agencies or clinics that will be engaged during the project period

Problem Statement (600 words)

- Describe the population served by the WIC SA(s) (if a consortium) and the specific populations targeted in the intervention
- Tell us whether rural or other populations with decreased access to WIC are included and to what extent
- Explain the complex problems among WIC participants that limit their access or use of WIC services and/or require qualified professionals at the SA level

Staffing (300 words)

- Tell us about the capacity of the SA (or consortium) and any relevant partners to carry out the project, including roles of key team members with respect to implementation of the project

Evaluation (300 words)

- Indicate willingness to implement the intervention in a randomized fashion or with comparison and treatment groups
- Describe your interest and ability to work collaboratively with THIS-WIC on the evaluation including willingness to provide data and assist with data collection efforts

Budget (not scored)

- Provide anticipated total budget for the proposed project

Brief Proposal Form

✓ Draft saved 📄

Project Title

Project Lead

State Agency (SA) or Consortium of State Agencies (if consortium, please list all participating SAs)

Telehealth Solution

- Describe the telehealth intervention in relation to Priority Area 1 or 2 and how it will build on participant assessment information to provide nutrition education and/or breastfeeding support and how the solution will be used to deliver only allowable WIC services by qualified professionals.
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Staffing

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Staffing

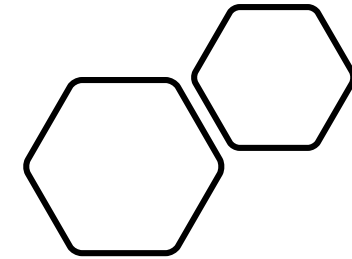
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Evaluation

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- Describe your interest and ability to work collaboratively with THIS-WIC on the evaluation including willingness to provide data and assist with data collection efforts

Budget

- Provide anticipated total budget for the proposed project





Phase II: Full Proposals

Full Proposal Requirements

Phase II applications must include:

1. Full proposal using a required project narrative following the provided template. Up to ~20 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font
2. Detailed budget and a budget narrative
3. Biosketches of key personnel (limit 5-pages for up to 5 personnel)
4. Supporting documents such as letters of support, etc.

USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC)—Phase II: Full Proposal Template

- All applications must be submitted online using the *THIS-WIC* online system. Visit thiswic.nutrition.tufts.edu and choose "Apply Online" on the "Request for Proposals" page under the "Funding" tab.
- Please **use the checklist below** to ensure you address all aspects of the full proposal application. Each component of the full proposal application is provided as downloadable templates on the application website.
- Completed templates should be uploaded on the application site.
- **Follow the upload tasks as presented on the application site.**
- **Do not submit components as one combined document.**
- **Address each bolded heading and subheadings** throughout. The required templates are available to download from the application site.
- You will be asked to upload each of the forms on the application site.
- Instructions for each section are in **blue**.

Full Proposal Checklist:

- ☐ Title page/cover sheet
 - Use the required title page and cover sheet template on p. 2-3
- ☐ Comprehensive overview of proposal
 - Telehealth Solution
 - Problem Statement
 - Evaluation Capacity
 - Staffing
 - Budget & Timeline
 - Sustainability and Transferability
 - Additional Information
- ☐ Biographical sketches
 - Provide a biographical sketch (**no more than 3 pages**) for each key personnel supporting the proposal (**no more than five people**) using the template on p. 7-8
- ☐ Budget and budget justification
 - Each SA or consortium needs to complete and submit a standard budget form and a budget justification (the budget template is provided on the application site in Excel format)
 - Address the required items in the budget justification on p. 9-12 to clearly explain all the expenses required to achieve proposal goals and objectives
- ☐ Project timeline
 - Use the timeline template on p. 13-14 to map out your proposal over 24-30 months

Additional Requirements

Human Subject Safety

Monitoring & Reporting

Use of Grant Funds

Human Subjects Safety



Evaluation activities involving human subjects, including WIC participants and WIC staff, must be carried out in alignment with federal and state regulations, institutional guidelines, and policies.



These exist to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects. All research and evaluation involving human subjects must be reviewed, approved, and overseen by an Institutional Review Board (IRB).



THIS-WIC will lead the IRB approval process and will submit protocols to the Tufts Institutional IRB.



Project implementation and/or evaluation cannot begin until approval from the Tufts University IRB is received.



Monitoring and Reporting

Requirements

- Submit quarterly progress reports and financial reports
- Draft final report to *THIS-WIC* for review and comment within 60 days of the end of the project funding period, and final report due within 30 days of the end of the project funding period
- Grantees will provide a short video brief along with their research results
 - *THIS-WIC* will provide instructions to create a 508 compliant video summarizing key elements of the intervention and outcomes
 - *THIS-WIC* team will also provide simple instructions for creating a straightforward webcam/PowerPoint presentation

THIS-WIC Team Engagement

- Bi-monthly progress calls to discuss implementation successes and challenges, share knowledge and troubleshoot evaluation and technology difficulties
- A post-award meeting with all grantees (delivered via webinar)
- Two in-person meetings
 - Initial Kick-off Training Workshop
 - Culminating Workshop just prior to completion of the award period

Use of Grant Funds

Funding may be used for:

- Project staff salaries
- Consultant fees (if applicable)
- Data collection and analysis
- Meetings
- Supplies
- Project-related travel
- Other direct project expenses (including a limited amount of equipment essential to the project)

Be sure to include:

- Travel costs for at least two team members to attend the Kick-off training *and* the WIC Telehealth Innovation Research Dissemination Workshop
 - Occur in first and last quarters of project period respectively
 - Held in Washington, DC area

Upcoming Webinars



Designing a Telehealth Solution:

3-4pm (EST) on February 19th, 2020

- Webinar will be jointly hosted by *THIS-WIC* and the TRCs to provide a deep dive into telehealth innovations related to each priority area and an overview of designing their solutions

Unpacking the Evaluation:

4-5pm (EST) on February 24th, 2020

- Webinar will be led by the *THIS-WIC* team to further clarify roles and expectations related to the evaluation of the telehealth solutions



Questions?

Thank you for attending today's webinar.

thiswic@tufts.edu

<https://thiswic.nutrition.tufts.edu/>

