

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline Application to Implement *Eating Smart from the Start*



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About Operation Frontline

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline®, nationally sponsored by the ConAgra Foods® Foundation, connects low-income families with food by teaching them how to prepare healthy, tasty meals on a limited budget. With its seven curricula, Operation Frontline takes a cooking-centered approach to nutrition and food budgeting. Each of Operation Frontline's specialized nutrition curricula teaches hands-on meal preparation, practical nutrition information, and food budgeting skills. Professional chefs and nutritionists volunteer their time and expertise to lead these hands-on courses. At the end of each session, participants receive recipes and handouts corresponding to each lesson, as well as a weekly bag of groceries so they can prepare at home the recipes taught in class.

Operation Frontline programming is run through a franchise-style partnership with a citywide, regional, or state-based social service agency. Each local program then works with social service organizations that act as host sites for Operation Frontline courses. Since 1993, Operation Frontline, its partner agencies and its hundreds of volunteer instructors have conducted more than 5,000 nutrition and financial-planning courses, helping more than 60,000 low-income families in communities across the country learn how to eat better for less. To learn more about Operation Frontline, please visit our website at www.operationfrontline.org.

About *Eating Smart from the Start*

Recognizing that child care providers face many of the same challenges as parents in creating healthy meals with limited resources, Operation Frontline launched *Eating Smart from the Start*, a professional training program designed to empower providers to plan, prepare, and serve healthy meals and create a healthy food environment for the kids in their care. Each of its five modules offer child care providers hands-on practice in the kitchen, interactive discussions on ways to make healthy choices about food served to kids, and strategies to promote positive attitudes about food among kids.

Currently, *Eating Smart from the Start* is offered only through Operation Frontline's existing program partners. However, Operation Frontline is seeking to pilot the program with agencies outside of our traditional partnerships, in order to evaluate the feasibility of forming new relationships with agencies that would implement only the *Eating Smart from the Start* curriculum.

Pilot Funding

Funding for these pilots has been provided with the generous support of the Walmart Foundation and the Pritzker Early Childhood Foundation.



Pilot Partner Benefits

All selected pilot partners will receive:

- *Eating Smart from the Start* instructor manuals, which include detailed lesson plans and other guidance for instructors leading this course.
- *Eating Smart from the Start* manuals for each provider that graduates from the course, which include handouts, child-friendly recipes, and activity ideas providers can use to teach kids in their care about healthy eating.
- Branded incentives to distribute to all providers that graduate from the course.
- A \$1,500 grant to cover incremental costs associated with implementing this program, such as food and staff costs.
- An average of 8 hours of training and technical assistance, which will allow partners to implement the pilots successfully and continue implementing the program thereafter. Training topics will include: course coordination, instructor recruitment and training, reporting protocols, and more.
- An opportunity to provide a fun, hands-on nutrition training for child care providers in your area, using an evidence-based curriculum launched by the nationally recognized Operation Frontline program. Operation Frontline has over 15 years of experience developing and supporting cooking-based curricula for local program partners.

Pilot Partner Requirements

All selected pilot partners will agree to:

- Implement at least two *Eating Smart from the Start* courses by April 15th, 2011 according to the following implementation protocols:
 - Provide 10 hours of training per course
 - Confirm a qualified culinary and nutrition professional to co-lead each course
 - Plan for hands-on cooking during every session of each course
 - Distribute take-home groceries for child care providers after every session
- Graduate a minimum of 45 child care providers across all pilot courses.
- Hold courses with providers serving low-income children, primarily under the age of 6.
- Offer the courses without compensation from providers.
- Participate in required phone- or web-based trainings provided by Share Our Strength, as well as potentially host a member of the Operation Frontline National team for observation and additional training.
- Distribute a participant waiver and an evaluation survey to all participating providers and submit completed forms to Share Our Strength.
- Submit at least two photographs or a video clip of your *Eating Smart from the Start* courses to Share Our Strength. Specifications to be provided.
- Submit agency feedback, via an electronic survey tool, on the *Eating Smart from the Start* program and the partnership with Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline.

Please note that we are able to send as more instructor manuals, participant manuals, and branded incentives as needed to conduct the number of courses you wish to implement. However, we are unable to offer additional monetary resources.

Timeline

Application Made Available Online By	June 21, 2010
Completed Applications Due By	July 19, 2010
Selected Pilot Partners Notified By	August 2, 2010
Pilot Partners Confirm Participation By	August 6, 2010
Materials Shipped to Pilot Partners By	August 9, 2010
Conference Call with Pilot Partners Held By	August 23 rd , 2010 at 1p.m. EST
Pilots Completed By	April 15, 2011
Feedback Forms and Evaluation Surveys Submitted By	April 15, 2011

Grant Evaluation Criteria

Your application will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- *Feasibility of Proposed Plan.* Proof of planning, including evidence of communication with relevant stakeholders in your community. Realistic ability to recruit culinary and nutrition professionals to lead the course, and to obtain appropriate space for the course.
- *Organizational Capacity.* Staff and administrative capacity to implement courses.
- *Evidence of Past Success.* Experience conducting similar trainings for child care providers.
- *Organizational Commitment.* Intention to abide by the implementation expectations and eligibility requirements, including a sincere commitment to conduct the course with providers serving low income children primarily under age 6.
- *Clarity and Presentation.* Answering all questions clearly and completely.

Preparing to Apply

The assessment of your application will be based in part on evidence of planning, and to facilitate successful implementation if selected. A best practice is to convene a group of relevant stakeholders to discuss this project before you submit your completed application. Ideas for stakeholders to invite include: agencies that might offer space to host the courses and/or recruit child care providers; potential culinary and nutrition instructors for the course; individuals who can assist in approving continuing education credit for providers that complete this program; individuals or groups who may be willing to provide additional resources to sustain this program after the grant period (e.g., local grocers, foundations, government agency staff). Potential discussion topics include:

- Strategies for marketing this training and enrolling child care providers
- Staff available to coordinate courses or provide assistance
- Qualified professionals available to instruct courses
- Space available to host courses
- Resources that may be shared across agencies or departments
- Additional funding or resources (such as for food costs associated with hosting additional courses, or for maintaining the program following the grant period)

Application Format

Applications must be submitted using Share Our Strength's online grant application system. Step-by-Step instructions for how to access and complete the application through Cybergrants are below.

Completing the Application

The following are step-by-step instructions for accessing and completing the online application. The actual fields on the application are embedded below.

Step 1: Log-in

1. Go to application at:
http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/ao_login.login?x_gm_id=1432&x_proposal_type_id=20164
2. If you are a first time cybergrants user with Share Our Strength:
 - a. In the center of your screen, click where it says “First time user? Click here to create your password.”
 - b. Select your region from the drop-down list and click ‘continue’
 - c. Enter all registration information requested, including invitation code and Tax ID. Use invitation code OFLMINI. Click save at the bottom of the registration screen.
3. If your organization already has a cybergrants login ID and password for Share Our Strength:
Enter your login information and invitation code as follows:
 - Log-in name: Your email address
 - Password: Password you selected
 - Invitation Code: OFLMINI. You will not be able to login without the invitation code.

If you do not remember your password, please use the “forgot your password?” link near the log-in form.

If you do not know the log-in name (email address) associated with your organization, please contact Susan Berkun at sberkun@strength.org or 202-478-6554. *(Please note: this is the contact for cybergrants questions only. Questions regarding the program and/or this request for proposals should be directed to Leigh Ann Edwards at laedwards@strength.org.)*

After you log-in, you will be directed to the **Welcome Page**. (If you have previously submitted proposals to Share Our Strength using cybergrants, those applications will also be listed on this page.)

Step 2: How does Cybergrants work?

Take note of the following to complete the application quickly and accurately.

- **Navigation bar:** The application has a navigation bar at the top of every page that allows you to navigate between the Welcome Page and its four sections—Contact Information, Organization Information, Request for Project Support and Supporting Documentation and Requirements. You should navigate through the sections in order.
- **Save and Proceed:** To save what you have entered while you are in a section, click Save and Proceed (this only saves the section you are in and must be repeated in each section). Once you click Save and Proceed, you can leave the application and return to work on it later. Share Our Strength cannot view your application until you complete and submit it.

Tip: A section will not save if you have left an item blank, or if you have exceeded the character limit for the field (see below). To save a partially completed section, enter a temporary value, like 0 or “asdf,” in each required field. You can then go back to complete the section later.

- **Word limits in paragraph responses:** All paragraph response questions have word limits—if you exceed the maximum your application will not save and you will lose data. **Please note:** Before you enter responses online, prepare paragraph responses using your word processing software, and count words using your software’s built-in word count tool. After you have verified that your responses are within the word limits, paste them into the online application. Note that 300 words represents approximately two-thirds of a page of single-spaced, 11-point font text, with one-inch margins.

Although the e-grant application will allow you to submit more words than the indicated word limit per question, we will not read any part of your response that is above the indicated word limit.

Tip: To count words using Microsoft Word, highlight the section to be counted. Go to Tools, Word Count. Refer to the Words figure.

Step 3: Start your application.

To start an application, go to the Welcome Page, and click on Start a New Application near the bottom of the screen.

Do not click this button more than one time. Clicking the button more than once will result in the creation multiple applications and it will be difficult to follow which one you were working on when you return to complete your work.

Step 4: Contact Information: How will we get in touch with you?

This section is used to confirm or update the contact information on record. Please check the box next to the person you would like to have associated with this application. If there is a new contact person who is not listed on the screen, please click on Create New to enter that person’s contact information.

NOTE: We will send important grants-related information to the email address you enter in this section so please be sure this address is active and monitored.

Move on by clicking Save and Proceed.

Step 5: Organization Information: All responses are short answer. Please answer all applicable questions.

The following fields are included in the application:

Organization Legal Name (required)
Physical Mailing Address (required)
City (required)
State (required)
Zip (required)
Telephone (required)
Fax (required)
Website Address
Executive Director (required)
Executive Director Email (required)

Move on by clicking Save and Proceed

Step 6: Request for Project Support

For Paragraph questions: Complete these questions by using your word processing software, count characters (see Step 2), and then paste into the online application.

The following fields are included in the application (all fields are required):

- Please explain why your agency is interested in offering Eating Smart from the Start and why you think your agency is particularly well-suited to run the course in your community (e.g., the need in your community and your organization's capacity to oversee this program). (Limit 750 words)
- Please describe the audience you expect to participate in your Eating Smart from the Start courses. Indicate anticipated number of providers, as well as the ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status of the children they serve. (Limit 500 words)
- Please explain your plans for recruiting culinary and nutrition professionals to co-instruct these courses, or describe the commitment you've already obtained. (Limit 500 words)
- Please describe specific sites you have in mind to act as hosts for these courses (e.g., local church, child care site, community centers). What is your current relationship or agreement with these sites? (Limit 500 words)
- Please list the key staff people that would work to manage and implement this pilot program. Briefly describe how they will be involved. (Limit 500 words)
- Please summarize similar trainings your agency has offered to child care providers within the last two years. Include the following information (Limit 1,000 words):
 - Training topic (indicate if nutrition-related)
 - Duration of training (in hours)
 - Training format (e.g., web-based, phone-based, in-person)
 - Number of participating providers
 - Recruitment strategies used
- Please provide a brief timeline of the major activities you will undertake to implement this program. Include plans for recruiting and training instructors, recruiting child care providers, implementing the training, etc. (Limit 1,500 words)

Move on by clicking **Save and Proceed**.

Step 7: Supporting Documentation: Get this information in the mail ASAP!

Prepare and mail the following documents so that they are received in our office by the deadline. Your application will be considered incomplete until these items are received. No faxes or emails will be accepted. **Note:** Public schools and public agencies are welcome to apply, and **do not** need to submit the following documents. If your organization is not a public school or public agency, nor a 501(c)(3), please contact Susan Berkun at sberkun@strength.org for more information on supporting documentation needed from your organization. All 501(c)(3) organizations must submit the following.

- Most recent audited financial statement.
- A copy of your IRS 501(c)(3) letter.
- Most recent annual report.

Submit to:

Share Our Strength
ATTN: Grants Department
1730 M St., NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

*****Please make sure you read the “Pilot Partner Requirements” and choose “yes” from the drop down box.**

Move on **by clicking Save and Proceed**.

Step 8: Review and Submit the Request for Funds

Read over what you have entered on the Review Your Application screen.

Submit your application by clicking on Submit at the bottom of the Review Your Application screen. If any sections are incomplete, you will be directed to finish them before your application is submitted. **Your application will not be sent to Share Our Strength until you complete this step.**

Questions

If you have questions regarding the pilots or the application process, first read thoroughly the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) below. Any outstanding program questions may be addressed to Leigh Ann Edwards at laedwards@strength.org. Please note that we will not respond to questions that are already answered in the Information for Applicants or the FAQ.

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about *Eating Smart from the Start*

Q: What is covered in the *Eating Smart from the Start* course?

A: *Eating Smart from the Start* teaches providers how to plan, prepare, and serve healthy meals and create a healthy food environment for the kids in their care. The course is broken down into five 2-hour modules, each of which gives providers hands-on practice in the kitchen and teaches key skills for creating a healthy food environment for the kids in their care:

- Module One: Creating Positive Mealtime Attitudes
- Module Two: Safe Cooking with Confidence
- Module Three: Choosing Healthy Foods for Kids
- Module Four: Meals That Appeal to Kids
- Module Five: Menu Management on a Budget

Q: Does this course cover information on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)?

A: The course has been designed to introduce providers to CACFP and reinforce understanding of program requirements. Relevant topics include CACFP meal patterns and considerations for planning reimbursable meals. However, lessons may be tailored based on providers' interest and experience with the program.

Q: Is this course appropriate for home-based and center-based providers?

A: This course was originally created to reach home-based child care providers; therefore, many of the examples and suggestions in the instructor guide are geared toward this audience. However, the content of the lessons is both applicable and valuable for center-based providers, and may be modified to meet their specific needs. While it is acceptable to implement this course with both home-based and center-based providers, we recommend that you do so by enrolling home-based and center-based providers into separate courses. This will help ensure that both groups of providers are able to share with their peers, have their specific questions answered, and get the most out of the course.

Q: Is the course available in languages other than English?

A: No. Course materials are only offered in English at this time. If you would like to hold the course with participants who do not speak English, you may consider using part of your grant money to engage a translator for the course.

Questions about Pilot Partner Benefits

Q: How much of the grant money should I expect to use to cover food costs?

A: We estimate that food costs will be approximately \$300-\$450 per course, depending on the recipes selected, ability to choose sale items, seasonality, etc.

Q: What are the “branded incentives” that providers will receive?

A: Each provider will be given one reusable grocery bag and one chop-chop board, branded with the Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline logo.

Q: What is included in the manuals for providers?

A: Provider manuals include:

- A one-page introduction to the course.
- 34 handouts, capturing key points from the course that providers can reference back at work. Notes pages are also included, so that providers can reference their own thoughts and ideas from the course.
- 30 child-friendly, healthy, low-budget recipes that providers can serve to kids in their care. Recipes include a “helping hand” icon to identify recipe steps appropriate for children’s help. CACFP crediting information for each recipe is also provided.
- 17 child-friendly activities that providers can use to teach kids in their care about healthy eating. Activities contain detailed instructions, along with suggestions for ways to tailor the activities for older or younger children.

Q: How many instructor manuals, participant manuals, and participant incentives can I expect to receive?

A: All pilot partners will be shipped 50 instructor and participant manuals, as well as participant incentives. Pilot partners who anticipate graduating more than the required number of providers and will need additional materials will be asked to provide this information before the materials are shipped. Please see the “Pilot Partner Benefits” section above for more information.

Questions about Pilot Partner Requirements

Q: Over what time period are the 10 hours of provider training expected to be implemented?

A: The course was designed with flexibility in mind to accommodate providers’ busy schedules and other required trainings. It is broken down into five 2-hour modules, which may be implemented weekly or in two half-day sessions. Training provided by Share Our Strength will help you plan an implementation schedule that works for your group.

Q: Who is considered a “qualified” culinary or nutrition professional?

A: Operation Frontline courses are designed to be taught by a team of instructors who share their expertise in cooking and nutrition. The curricula generally do not detail cooking and food safety topics, because it is assumed that chefs bring that expertise. Common standards for culinary instructors are: 1) graduates of, or enrolled in, a two year culinary training program, or 2) have at least two years experience working as a cook or chef. Nutrition educators may be Registered Dietitians or other nutrition professionals. It is preferred that this person be familiar with CACFP, appropriate child feeding practices, and the regulations for center- and home-based child care.

Q: Our agency does not have any eligible culinary or nutrition professionals on staff. Am I still eligible to apply?

A: Yes. The Operation Frontline model is based on recruiting qualified instructors to lead the course. This volunteer-led model is used successfully by our program partners across the country to implement our cooking-based nutrition education curricula. Volunteer instructors may be recruited by working with local culinary schools or dietetic programs, posting the opportunity via local newspapers, mailing lists, or online volunteer portals, or networking with other contacts available to your agency. Training provided by Share Our Strength will help you plan for preparing your instructor team.

Q: How will I be expected to prepare volunteer culinary and nutrition professionals to lead this course?

A: National Operation Frontline staff will provide you with training tools that may be used to prepare your instructor team. You may modify these as needed to deliver the training to your instructors. In addition, it is expected that a staff member of your organization will be present at each class to oversee and coach as needed.

Q: Our agency does not have an on-site kitchen for hands-on cooking during each session. Am I still eligible to apply?

A: Yes. You may use the grant money to rent an appropriate space to hold the course, or to purchase needed kitchen equipment, such as portable burners, to make your space appropriate.

Q: What do you mean by an “appropriate space” to hold the course?

A: Your space must include, at a minimum, running water so that providers may wash their hands before cooking. A fully stocked kitchen is ideal, but you may bring in needed kitchen equipment, such as portable burners, cutting boards, and knives, to conduct the cooking portion of each lesson. Providers should have individual work stations, or sufficient space so that all providers can actively participate in the cooking activity together.

In addition, you will need a separate, non-cooking space where instructors can facilitate discussions and small-group activities with providers.

Q: What does it mean to “graduate” a minimum of 45 providers?

A: A graduate is a course participant who completes at least 8 of the 10 required training hours. In order to graduate at least 45 providers it may be necessary to recruit a higher number, to account for some providers being unable to finish the training.

Questions about the Timeline

Q: Is the conference call for accepted pilot partners required?

A: Yes. All accepted pilot partners are expected to be on the call. The call will contain important information regarding planning for and implementing *Eating Smart from the Start*.

Q: The conference call for accepted pilot partners is on August 23rd at 1 p.m. EST. What happens if I am unavailable for that call?

A: We have aimed to provide sufficient time to plan to be available for the conference call. However, if you are unable to avoid a conflict with that date and time, you will need to find an appropriate representative from your organization to participate. We regret that we are unable to offer any make-up calls.