2014 TEAM NUTRITION TRAINING GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The projects in this grant proposal will strengthen the State Agency’s (Office of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Program and Montana Team Nutrition Program) plan to expand and enhance training programs, while working with state partners to improve children’s lifelong eating and physical activity habits. Training and technical assistance opportunities will be based on the USDA Choose MyPlate icon to promote the key messages of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. A priority will be to help schools implement Smarter Lunchrooms concepts which are based on behavioral economics, to increase student choices of nutrient-rich foods and beverages. It will also focus on strengthening a school’s ability to successfully implement the criteria to attain a HealthierUS School Challenge award and strengthen the school wellness policy.

The proposed projects will allow the State Agency to continue to build statewide support for nutrition education, school wellness policy implementation, and Farm to School programs in preK-12 school environments and child care programs. These projects will increase statewide awareness of the important role that USDA Foods play in helping schools meet the new USDA meal pattern requirements and will support preparation of local foods. Statewide partnerships will be strengthened and relied upon to enhance and sustain grant activities.

Grant action steps will include:

- Enhance training capacity of the regional School Wellness Coach to expand their outreach to child care center staff and to be competent trainers on Smarter Lunchrooms concepts.

- Increase the food preparation and culinary skills of food service personnel and use of USDA Foods and training resources by providing two offerings of the Montana Cook Fresh workshops.

- Enhance training of food service personnel on the Smarter Lunchrooms concepts through a statewide comprehensive (5 sessions; 2.5 hour per session) workshop based on Cornell University BEN Center’s Self Assessment Scorecard.

- Increase the ability for schools to achieve a HealthierUS School Challenge award by maintaining a School Wellness Coach Network, enhancing statewide training, and by increasing school district access to financial resources through the School Wellness in Action sub-grant program.

- Empower foodservice personnel and educators to motivate students to enjoy Montana grown foods by developing and test-piloting a Montana Harvest of the Month resource toolkit. This kit will include recipes, promotional materials and educational activities to utilize in promoting ten popular locally grown items.

- Strengthen training capacity to child care center staff participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program through one-on-one consultations from the School Wellness Coach Network to ensure menus are consistent with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- Increase local food procurement, garden-based nutrition education activities, and Farm to School initiatives through improved classroom, cafeteria, and community connections in school districts across Montana by co-hosting a statewide Farm to School conference.

- Improve compliance by local school districts in meeting the requirements of the new USDA school wellness policy by increasing statewide training and technical assistance opportunities and through a School Wellness in Action sub-grant program.