

7891413



## Farm to School Grant Program

---

### Fiscal Year 2020 Request for Applications

Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.575

#### Dates:

**Publication Date:** October 8, 2019

**Application Due Date:** 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), December 13, 2019

**Estimated Award Date:** June 2020

OMB BURDEN STATEMENT: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0512. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

## Program Solicitation Information

---

### Executive Summary:

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) establishes a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

To fulfill the farm to school mandate in the NSLA, \$5 million is provided to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) on an annual basis to support grants, technical assistance, and the Federal administrative costs related to USDA's Farm to School Program. The USDA Farm to School Grant Program is housed within the Food and Nutrition Services' (FNS) Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS). Additional funding for the Farm to School Grant Program was made available through the FY 2018 and FY 2019 Agricultural appropriations and, as a result, up to \$10 million will be awarded under this solicitation.

Designed to increase the availability of local foods in schools, grants can help new farm to school programs get started or expand existing efforts. Grants are intended as one-time infusions of funds to help grantees accomplish farm to school objectives that will be sustained in the long term. Funds support a wide range of activities from training, planning, and developing partnerships, to creating new menu items, establishing supply chains, offering taste tests to children, purchasing equipment, planting school gardens, and organizing field trips to agricultural operations. FNS will competitively award grants to eligible applicants for projects that meet the purpose of the grant program. In the FY 2019 application and award cycle, FNS received 229 eligible applications and funded 126 (55 percent) of the applications. To be competitive, applications must be complete and of high quality.

According to the NSLA, selected grant projects will be awarded no more than \$100,000 each. There are three funding tracks available for FY 2020: Farm to School Planning grants, Implementation grants, and State Agency grants (new). Schools, school districts, Indian Tribal Organizations, producers, and nonprofit organizations that have received Implementation, Training, or Support Service grants through the Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2017, 2018, or FY 2019) are not eligible to apply in FY 2020; however, former Planning grantees may apply for the Farm to School Implementation grant after the active Planning grant has been completely closed out. **State agencies that received a Farm to School Grant in any prior year are eligible to apply for the State Agency track in FY 2020, and State agencies with active farm to school projects may still apply to the State Agency grant track.** Eligible applicants who received an award in a fiscal year prior to 2017 are encouraged to propose projects that differ from previous awards to the same applicant organization. A 25 percent cash or in-kind funding match is required to receive a Farm to School Grant award. Please refer to the FY 2020 Highlights and Changes page in this RFA for more information regarding updates to this funding opportunity.

## **Webinar Information and FAQ**

USDA will conduct at least one webinar to review the RFA and address questions regarding the application process. A webinar is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. ET**. Additional webinars will be scheduled as necessary to provide outreach and clarification to particular entities and priority areas. Notification of webinar details and call-in information will be communicated via the USDA Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS) [Resources for Grant Applicants](#).

In addition, applicants can find a set of ***Frequently Asked Questions***, summaries of previously awarded projects, and other important information online via the [USDA OCFS website](#). We strongly encourage applicants to review the ***Frequently Asked Questions*** resource prior to preparing their application.

## FY 2020 Highlights and Changes

---

Below are highlights of major changes to the Farm to School Grant Program since the last fiscal year. The FY 2020 RFA:

- Alters the grant tracks:
  - There are three grant tracks available in FY 2020: Farm to School Planning grants, Implementation grants, and a new State Agency grant track.
  - There is no longer a Training grant track.
  - Please note that entity eligibility varies by grant track.
    - Planning and Implementation grants are available to all eligible entities, with the exception of State Agencies.
    - The State Agency grant track is available only to State Agencies.
    - See section 3.1 for additional details.
- Adds project objectives to grant tracks:
  - To help proposed projects align with the intent of the Farm to School Grant Program, after selecting a grant track, applicants must propose activities that support the objective for the chosen grant track.
  - Please see Section 1.3, “Grant Tracks,” for additional details.
- Modifies the policy for former or current grantees seeking additional funding<sup>1</sup>:
  - Schools, school districts, tribes, producers, and nonprofit organizations that have received Implementation, Training, or Support Service grants through the Farm to School Grant Program in any of the last three funding cycles (FY 2017, FY 2018, or FY 2019) are ineligible to apply in FY 2020; however, former Planning grantees may apply for Implementation grants. Farm to School Planning grantees who have not completed closeout activities at the time that the RFA closes will be ineligible for funding.
  - State agencies that have received Implementation, Support Service, or Training grants through the Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2017, FY 2018, or FY 2019) **are eligible** to apply for FY 2020 funding under the **State Agency grant track only**.
  - Furthermore, State agencies with active Farm to School grants are **still eligible to apply** for FY 2020 funding.
- Changes the policy restricting projects to school-based sites only. Non-school based Child Nutrition Program operators are now eligible to receive funding via the State Agency track, if a State Agency proposes to distribute sub-grants to or otherwise partner with non-school-based Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operators.

---

<sup>1</sup> These policies apply to organizations that are the lead applicant (i.e. the organization submitting the grant application).

## Application Checklist

---

This application checklist provides a list of the required documents for a complete Farm to School Grant application; however, FNS expects that applicants will read and comply with the entire RFA prior to the submission of their application.

In order to apply, **at least three weeks** prior to submission, you must have:

- Obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
- Registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM); and
- Registered in Grants.gov.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- Your application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section 4 “Application and Submission Information,” including page limits, priorities outlined in Section 1.4, and all necessary attachments.

When **preparing your budget**, ensure the following information is included:

- At least a 25 percent cash or in-kind match is provided with a detailed description of the source of those funds.
- All key staff who will be paid by this grant.
- The percentage of time the project director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents.
- Your organization’s fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation.
- The type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds.
- Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justifications, basis for lodging estimates, and estimates, including expenses to attend a mandatory (for Implementation and Planning grant applicants) in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period.
- Types of equipment and supplies purchase with grant funds, including justifications and estimates to ensure that the budget is in line with the project description.
- If the sole purpose of equipment and/or supplies is not intended to be used to support Child Nutrition Programs, the applicant must determine what percentage of the good’s time or space will be dedicated to project activities.
- Information for all contracts and justification for any sole-source contracts.
- Justification, description and itemized list of all consultant services.
- Indirect cost information (either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or if no agreement exists, the basis of the indirect costs requested). If none requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.

When **submitting** your application, ensure you have accurately completed and submitted the following:

- [Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424 – [Application for Federal Assistance](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – [Budget Information and Instruction Form](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424B – [Assurances for Non-Construction Programs](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-LLL [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#).

- Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (in Appendix B)
- Project Narrative (PDF - Upload using the “**Add Attachments**” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Signed Letters of Commitment from Partner Organizations (PDF or MS Word – Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Signed Letters Verifying Matching Funds for EVERY cash and/or in kind resource (PDF or MS Word - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424)
- Staff Resumes for up to three key staff (PDF or MS Word - Upload using the “**Add Attachments**” button under SF-424 item #15)
- FNS-906 – [Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire](#) (Appendix B)

When applicable, application packages are required to include the following documents:

- AD-3030 – [Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov).
- [AD-1047](#) – Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters Primary Covered Transactions
- [AD-1048](#) – Certification Regarding Department, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions
- [AD-1049](#) – Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative I – For Grantees Other Than Individuals
- [AD-1052](#) – Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace State and State Agencies, Federal Fiscal Year
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Include 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Optional Priority Group Declaration Form – include in project narrative (does not count towards page limit)

# Table of Contents

---

## Table of Contents

<b>Farm to School Grant Program</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Fiscal Year 2020 Request for Applications</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Dates: 1</b>	
<b>Program Solicitation Information</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Webinar Information and FAQ</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>FY 2020 Highlights and Changes</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Application Checklist</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.0 Program Description</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.1 Legislative Authority</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.2 Defining Local Foods</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.3 Grant Tracks</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.3.1 Planning Grants.....	10
1.3.2 Implementation Grants.....	12
1.3.3 Farm to School State Agency Grants.....	13
<b>1.4 FY 2020 Funding Priorities</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>2.0 Federal Award Information</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>2.1 Type of Federal Assistance</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2 Award Amounts and Period of Performance</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>2.3 Allowable Costs</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>3.0 Eligibility Information</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>3.1 Planning and Implementation Grant Eligibility</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>3.2 State Agency Grant Eligibility</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>3.3 Additional Eligibility Requirements</b> .....	<b>20</b>
3.3.1 Fiscal Sponsors .....	21
<b>3.4 Grantee Requirements</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>4.0 Application and Submission Information</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>4.1 Application Format</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>4.2 Application Content: Project Narrative</b> .....	<b>22</b>
4.2.1 Planning Grant Proposal Narrative .....	22
4.2.2 Implementation Grant Proposal Narrative .....	26
4.2.3 State Agency Project Narrative .....	29
<b>4.3 Application Content: Budget and Budget Narrative</b> .....	<b>32</b>
4.3.1 Budget .....	32
Sample Match .....	33
4.3.2 Budget Narrative:.....	33
<b>4.4 Application Content: Attachments</b> .....	<b>34</b>
4.4.1 Required Attachments .....	34
7   <b>All Applicants:</b> .....	<b>34</b>

<b>4.5</b>	<b>Application Content: Required Grant Application Forms.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Submitting an Application .....</b>	<b>35</b>
4.6.1	Submission Date.....	35
4.6.2	Electronic Submission Details .....	35
4.6.3	More Information on the System for Award Management (SAM).....	36
4.6.4	More Information on Grants.gov .....	37
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Application Review Information.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Initial Screening .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Panel Review .....</b>	<b>37</b>
5.2.1	Scoring for Planning Grant Applications .....	37
5.2.2	Scoring for Implementation Applications .....	39
5.2.3	Scoring for State Agency Applications .....	41
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Selection Process .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Determination of Award Amounts.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Accounting System &amp; Financial Capability Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Federal Award Administration Information.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Federal Award Notice .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Non-selected Applicants .....</b>	<b>45</b>
7.2.1	Debriefing Request.....	45
7.3.1	Progress Reporting.....	46
7.3.2	Financial Reporting .....	46
7.3.3	Evaluation and Impact .....	46
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....</b>	<b>46</b>
7.4.1	Confidentiality of an Applicant .....	46
7.4.2	Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process .....	46
7.4.3	Administrative Regulations .....	47
	Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions .....	47
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Federal Awarding Agency Contacts .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Other Information.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>What is Farm to School? .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>9.2</b>	<b>A Vision for Health and Economic Opportunity.....</b>	<b>51</b>
	<b>Appendix A: Urban/Rural Classification Instructions.....</b>	<b>52</b>
	<b>Appendix B: Grant Program Accounting System &amp; Financial Capability Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>53</b>
	Financial Stability and Quality of Management Systems.....	53
	Audit Reports and Findings .....	54
	Applicant Certification .....	55
	<b>Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs .....</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>Appendix D: Optional Priority Group Declaration Form .....</b>	<b>58</b>



## 1.0 Program Description

---

### 1.1 Legislative Authority

The Richard B. Russell NSLA establishes a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

To fulfill the farm to school mandate in the NSLA, \$5 million is provided to the USDA on an annual basis to support grants, technical assistance, and the Federal administrative costs related to USDA's Farm to School Program. The USDA Farm to School Grant Program is housed within the FNS OCFS. Additional funding for the Farm to School Grant Program was made available through the FY 2018 and FY 2019 Agricultural appropriations and, as a result, up to \$10 million will be awarded under this solicitation.

Authorizing language in the NSLA directed the Secretary of Agriculture to award competitive grants, designed to improve access to local foods in eligible schools, for activities such as:

- Training;
- Supporting operations;
- Planning;
- Purchasing equipment;
- Developing school gardens;
- Developing partnerships; and,
- Implementing farm to school programs.

The Secretary of Agriculture was also directed through the NSLA to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural, and tribal communities in the distribution of grant awards, as well as give the highest priority to funding projects that, as determined by the Secretary –

- Make local food products available on the menu of the eligible school;
- Serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;
- Incorporate experiential nutrition education activities in curriculum planning that encourage the participation of school children in farm and garden-based agricultural education activities;
- Demonstrate collaboration between eligible schools, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, agricultural producer groups, and other community partners;
- Include adequate and participatory evaluation plans;
- Demonstrate the potential for long-term program sustainability; and,
- Meet any other criteria that the Secretary determines appropriate.

Authorizing language also states that as a condition of receiving a USDA Farm to School Grant, each recipient shall provide **matching** support in the form of **cash or in-kind** contributions, and agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds.

### 1.2 Defining Local Foods

USDA expects applicants to this RFA to have varying definitions of “local” that align with their particular needs and goals, as there is no Federal definition of “local.” Local and regional food

systems are typically defined as areas where all activities associated with producing, processing, distributing, and marketing foods take place. How one defines “local” or “regional” – which are used interchangeably in this RFA – can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters, seasonality, and/or other factors. Local procurement options differ greatly across communities depending on district and school size, proximity to agricultural areas, growing season, and demographics.

### 1.3 Grant Tracks

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of Federal funds, using three grant tracks: Farm to School Planning grants, Implementation grants, and State Agency grants. Applicant eligibility varies by grant track; for further clarification see Sections 3.0 through 3.3 of the RFA. The grant tracks are independently awarded and are not intended to be sequential sources of funding.

#### 1.3.1 Planning Grants

Planning grants are intended to increase the amount of local food in eligible schools by providing funding for the development of an Action Plan designed to initiate or expand farm to school programs. They are intended for eligible entities that are just getting started with farm to school activities. Planning grants should focus primarily on goals and activities that lay a solid foundation for launching or scaling farm to school work.

#### Objective

OCFS seeks proposals that align with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program goals as described in Section I.0: Legislative Authority. Additionally, recipients of Planning grants must develop a comprehensive **Farm to School Action Plan**, the development and submission of which is a required activity. Applicants may use the [Farm to School Planning Toolkit](#) and other technical assistance resources available on the OCFS website and prepared by USDA staff or partners. To help ensure that awarded projects align with the Farm to School Grant Program goals, eligible entities are required to propose project activities that support the following objective:

- **Objective: Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by developing a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.**

Planning grants will be awarded to entities that can demonstrate support and excitement for starting a farm to school program, but have undertaken few farm to school activities thus far. Over the course of the grant period, Planning grantees will be encouraged to use USDA resources intended to help organize and structure their farm to school efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations. Planning grantees are NOT expected to fully realize a comprehensive farm to school program by the end of the Planning grant period, but rather are expected to have a plan in place for how to implement farm to school activities after the conclusion of the grant period.

In the Proposal Narrative, applicants will identify the above objective in the Project Work Plan Narrative section and describe how their proposed activities align with the objective. Activities and indicators are required; however, applicants are encouraged to be creative and may include other

activities not listed below as long as proposed activities align with the objective.

## **Activities**

Activities supported by Planning grants should contribute to the development of a comprehensive farm to school program that includes both local procurement and agricultural education efforts. Please note that creating an Action Plan is a required activity for all Planning grants, as is attending a mandatory in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. Other activities that may be incorporated into a Planning grant include, but are not limited to:

- Aligning the Farm to School Action Plan with the agency's, organization's, farm's, school district(s)' or school(s)' existing operations, goals and commitments, integrating farm to school concepts in local wellness policies or school board resolutions, and identifying key internal and external allies;
- Assessing a state, community, farm's, school district(s)' or school(s)' need and readiness for development of a farm to school program and determining the tools, training, and technical assistance needed to create a farm to school program;
- Engaging a wide variety of internal and external collaborators and forming a leadership team with the purpose of designing a Farm to School Action Plan;
- Identifying obstacles and gaps in resources, training, and knowledge and exploring options for addressing existing barriers to launching or expanding farm to school activities;
- Hosting stakeholder meetings, conducting trainings, and/or attending professional development conferences and seminars;
- Conducting menu audits and/or issue surveys to determine reasonable first or intermediate steps school districts, schools, or school-based SFSP/ CACFP sponsors can take to offer locally sourced foods;
- Researching garden, farm, or classroom-based educational curriculum that integrates farm to school concepts;
- Developing a garden or farm-based food safety plan that aligns with the needs and expectations of Child Nutrition Program operators (e.g., schools, districts, child care centers, summer feeding sites, etc.);
- Visiting nearby model programs to learn about potential opportunities, partners, activities and lessons-learned;
- Piloting specific farm to school program elements to assess feasibility, cost, and effectiveness; and
- Assessing local or regional product availability and identifying key supply chain relationships necessary for successful implementation of a farm to school program.

## **Required Activities**

Please note that the activities below are required for all Planning grantees. Each of the below activities must be clearly indicated in the "Project Work Plan Narrative" and "Project Work Plan Table" sections of the proposal narrative. Failure to indicate one or both of the below activities may result in a reduced score during review.

- Developing a Farm to School Action Plan that includes goals, activities, and timelines necessary to develop and implement a farm to school program or project, identifying

responsible parties for each activity. The creation of a Farm to School Action Plan is a **required activity** for all awarded Planning grant projects, and applicants should budget ample staff time, staff, and resources for its completion. Sample action plans are available on the [USDA website](#).

- Attend a mandatory in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period.

### 1.3.2 Implementation Grants

Implementation grants are intended to increase the amount of local food in eligible schools by providing funding for eligible entities to scale up or further develop existing farm to school initiatives. Implementation grants are appropriate for eligible entities with established partnerships, a defined farm to school objective or objectives, and/or past success implementing farm to school activities. Applicants may focus on a relatively discrete set of schools as direct recipients of project activities, or may provide products and services that have national, regional, or statewide relevance and scope.

#### Objective

OCFS seeks proposals that are in line with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program goals as described in Section I.0: Legislative Authority. To assist with this alignment, eligible entities are required to propose project activities that support the following objective:

- **Objective: Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by implementing or expanding a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.**

Eligible entities applying for Implementation grants may design any project or program that aims to make local food products available on the menu of the eligible school and incorporate experiential activities in curriculum planning that encourage the participation of school children in farm and/or garden-based agricultural education activities. Please note that eligible entities selecting this grant track will be required to report data indicating progress towards completing their proposed activities. Applicants are encouraged to design projects that can be sustained after the end of the grant period.

In the Proposal Narrative, applicants must identify the above objective in the Project Work Plan Narrative section and describe how their proposed activities align with the objective. Activities and indicators are required; however, applicants are encouraged to be creative and may include other activities not listed below as long as proposed activities align with the objective.

#### Activities

Activities supported by Implementation grants include, but are not limited to:

- Bringing more unprocessed and value-added, minimally processed, regionally-sourced meal components into the cafeteria;
- Expanding farm to school programs beyond lunch to bring local products into the School Breakfast Program, school-based SFSP or school-based CACFP;
- Operating service projects that support farm to school initiatives in schools;
- Readying producers to participate in the school food market by providing training on procurement regulations, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other food safety-related

topics;

- Improving infrastructure to accommodate new local ingredients or local menu items;
- Providing technical support in the form of face-to-face trainings, consultations, webinars, etc.;
- Developing promotional campaigns in support of farm to school initiatives;
- Solving distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more regionally produced items by working closely with distributors or serving as a broker to develop business relationships between farmer(s), schools, and aggregation entities such as food hubs or food distributors;
- Encouraging increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through promotional activities, taste tests, and other activities;
- Expanding experiential learning opportunities, such as creation of school gardens, developing school-based farmers markets, providing support to ag/food clubs, and/or increasing exposure to local farms and on-farm activities; and,
- Developing and implementing integrated curriculum to reinforce food and nutrition-based learning throughout the school environment or on a local farm(s).

### **Required Activities**

Please note that the activity below is required for all Implementation grantees. The below activity must be clearly indicated in the “Project Work Plan Narrative” and “Project Work Plan Table” sections of the proposal narrative. Failure to indicate the below activity may result in a reduced score during review.

- Attend a mandatory in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period.

### **1.3.3 Farm to School State Agency Grants**

State Agency grants are intended to increase the amount of local food served in eligible schools by funding State agencies to support and grow farm to school efforts in their states. Eligible State agencies include any State-level agency working to promote farm to school activities in eligible schools, such as State Departments of Education, Health, or Agriculture. The State agency does not need to administer the Child Nutrition Programs in order to be eligible for this track; however, the State agency applicant must include a letter of support from the relevant CNP-administering State agency. Eligible State agencies are not eligible for any other grant track.

### **Objective**

OCFS seeks proposals that are in line with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program goals as described in Section I.0: Legislative Authority. To assist with this alignment, State agencies are required to propose project activities that align with the following objective:

- **Objective: Improve access to local foods in eligible Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) by supporting comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.**

In the Proposal Narrative, applicants must identify the objective above in the Project Work Plan Narrative section. Activities and indicators are required; however, applicants are encouraged to be creative and may include other activities not listed below as long as proposed activities align with the required objective. While Implementation and Planning award recipients must travel to a

mandatory in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period, attendance will be optional for State Agency award recipients. State Agency grant applicants may choose to use grant funds to pay for travel to and from the event.

Eligible State agencies may design any project or program that aims to make local food products available on the menu of the eligible child nutrition operator and incorporate experiential nutrition education activities that encourage the participation of children in farm and garden-based agricultural education activities. Please note that awarded State agencies are required to report data indicating progress towards completing their proposed activities. Applicants are encouraged to design projects that can be sustained after the end of the grant period.

### **Activities**

Activities supported by State Agency grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Hiring staff to support statewide farm to school, farm to summer, and/or farm to early care & education efforts;
- Building, expanding, and/or regularly convening network of key partners;
- Developing or enhancing state-level farm to school, farm to summer, and/or farm to early care & education strategic and/or evaluation plans;
- Offering training and technical assistance to Child Nutrition Program operators on local procurement, school gardens, or agricultural education strategies;
- Developing statewide marketing campaign or recognition programs;
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing local procurement, garden, and/or agricultural education tracking systems;
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning among program operators or with other States or agencies to improve program efficiency and learn best practices;
- Supporting the expansion, tracking, and marketing of local foods to School Food Authorities (SFAs) through USDA Foods and USDA DOD Fresh programs;
- Hosting state or regional farm to Child Nutrition Program gatherings or buyer-grower meetings;
- Developing state-level curriculum, toolkits, templates, and resources featuring local foods, gardens, and/or agricultural-education;
- Administering sub-grants to Child Nutrition Program operators within the state to initiate or enhance their Farm to School, Farm to Summer, or Farm to CACFP programs.<sup>2</sup>
- Attend the in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period (mandatory for Implementation and Planning grantees, optional for State Agency grantees).

## **1.4 FY 2020 Funding Priorities**

In addition to the general program purpose and priorities outlined above, USDA considers the following priorities for FY 2020:

- Applications that serve a high proportion of children (at least 40 percent or more) who are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Applications from Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and entities serving tribal communities.

---

<sup>2</sup> Recipients of sub-grants in the State Agency track may be any eligible entity for the FY 2019 Farm to School Grant, as well as any Child Nutrition Program operator, including non-school based SFSP and CACFP sites.

- Projects located in or targeting [Opportunity Zones](#), as defined by [26 USC Subtitle A, CHAPTER 1, Subchapter Z: Opportunity Zones](#) and identified in [IRS Notice 2018-48, 2018–28 Internal Revenue Bulletin 9](#), July 9, 2018, and [IRS Notice 2019-42, 2019–29 Internal Revenue Bulletin](#), July 15, 2019.
  - In order to qualify for Opportunity Zone consideration, the proposed project must target at least one school or school district that contains part or all of at least one Opportunity Zone. Applicants can check a list of Opportunity Zones at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-irbs/irb18-28.pdf>. Applicants claiming the Opportunity Zone priority must provide the name(s) of the school(s) or school district(s) the project will serve on the Farm to School Coversheet.
- In selecting successful applicants, USDA, to the maximum extent practicable, will seek to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural, and tribal communities.

If an applicant’s project reaches one or more priority groups and the applicant would like to be considered for 10 bonus priority points added to the review score of their application, please complete the form included in Appendix D of this RFA, entitled “Fiscal Year 2020 Priority Group Declaration Form” and include the completed form with the Project Narrative. The Priority Group Declaration Form does not count towards the narrative page limit. Applicants that do not complete the Priority Group Declaration Form will not be eligible to receive bonus points. If USDA is unable to verify information declared on the Priority Group Declaration Form, the applicant will not be eligible to receive bonus points.

## 2.0 Federal Award Information

---

### 2.1 Type of Federal Assistance

Funding of applications will be provided through the grant award/letter of credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by another payment method as determined by USDA, upon receipt of a properly executed grant agreement and subject to the availability of funding. USDA expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

### 2.2 Award Amounts and Period of Performance

Planning grant awards will range from \$20,000 - \$50,000. Implementation and State Agency grants will range from \$50,000 - \$100,000. While USDA sets specific Federal award amounts for each grant track, please note that the total project costs (comprised of the Federal award and the non-USDA match portion) may exceed these amounts. Applicants should anticipate grant requirements including start-up activities, execution, and closeout activities (final financial and program reports, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly to achieve project deliverables within award period.

The period of performance for the FY 2020 USDA Farm to School Grant Program will be as follows, beginning from the date of the award:

Grant Track	Award Period	Eligible Entities	Award Amounts
Planning grants	12 months	Schools and/or school districts, Nonprofit organizations, Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) Agricultural producers, local agencies	\$20,000 - \$50,000
Implementation grants	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	Schools and/or school districts, Nonprofit organizations, Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) Agricultural producers, local agencies	\$50,000 - \$100,000
State Agency grants	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	State agencies (Departments of Education, Agriculture, Health, etc.)	\$50,000 - \$100,000

Applicants may not choose any grant period other than 12 months or 24 months. All grant funds must be obligated, and all program activities under the grant (other than activities relating to the closeout of the grant) must be completed by the end of the award period. The closeout of the grant must occur no later than 90 days following the end of the award period, and all obligations incurred under the grant must be liquidated by this date. Any funds that are not used within 90 days following the end of the award period must be returned to USDA. In addition, final reports are due to USDA no later than 90 days following the end of the award period. For Planning grantees, the Farm to School Action Plan is due no later than 90 days following the end of the award period.

### 2.3 Allowable Costs

Among other costs, budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings. Please see Appendix C for more information about allowable costs. Allowable costs and other financial requirements will be provided in the Terms and Conditions of the grant award materials, if an applicant is awarded a grant.

**Equipment and Supplies:** Expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, coolers, processing equipment, hoop houses, and ovens) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, gardening or farming supplies, and food processors) are allowable expenses. Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

Equipment and supplies purchased using Farm to School Grant Program funds must be used during the grant period for the sole purpose of accomplishing the stated project objective. If purchased equipment or supplies are not fully dedicated to the grant project objective, including beyond the grant period end date, the applicant must determine what percentage of the good's time or space will be dedicated to project activities. This percentage must then be applied to the value of the



good in order to determine the amount of Federal funds that can be used to purchase said good.

**For example:**

- Purchase large walk-in freezer that will store local foods for Child Nutrition Program but will also store food for the community food pantry.
- Walk-in Freezer total cost: \$8,000
- 25% of freezer space used to store food that will be served in the Child Nutrition Programs
- \$8,000 x 25% = \$2,000 (amount of Federal funds that can used to make this purchase)

**Food Expenses:** No more than 10 percent of the federal share of grant funds may be used for food purchases, and the use must be clearly delineated in the grant budget. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on menus long-term; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes, such as: farm to school sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test run of a new local or regional product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds.

**Partnerships:** Partners essential to the proposed project that may require funding from USDA to participate in the proposed project can be included in applicant budgets as sub-grantees or line item contractors. Please be sure to describe the specific services provided and provide a rationale for the partner(s)' services in both the Project Narrative and Budget Narrative. Please see the Section 4.2 Project Narrative for more information.

**2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing**

For all grant types, Federal funds should constitute no more than 75 percent of the total project budget. Applicants may not use any federal funds as the source of any part of their match. The grant recipient must show evidence of matching support of at least 25 percent of the total budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, including facilities, equipment, or services provided by state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private sources as defined in The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.).

Federal Funds (no more than 75% of total) +  
Match funds (No less than 25% of total) =  
Project total

In-kind contributions are generally defined as the value of goods or services provided by a third-party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. Applicants may not use Federal funds of any kind, including Federal food service funds, as a match for this grant program. The host agency contribution for AmeriCorps service members, including FoodCorps service members, is unallowable as a match because both AmeriCorps and FoodCorps are federally funded programs. The match contributions reflected in the submitted grant proposal must be documented, including the basis for the value determination, as well as be reasonable, allocable, and allowable under the criteria for this grant award.

Matching funds may be in the form of **allowable** direct or indirect costs. For example, the value of buildings and/or property are unallowable costs for the Farm to School Grant, and therefore

unallowable as a source of matching funds. Additional information about allowable and unallowable costs is available in Appendix C. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with [2 CFR 200.306](#). A sample match calculation can be found in section 4.3.1.

All applicants are required to submit signed match letters verifying matching funds for each cash and/or in kind resource. Match letters are not subject to the three document limit, and are considered separate from letters of commitment described in Sections 3.1 and 4.2. An applicant must include a signed letter verifying matching funds for **every** cash and/or in-kind resource included in the budget.

The grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs, which are claimed as being its contribution to participation, as well as costs paid by the Federal Government. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost share, as described in the budget, the Government's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the grantee's contribution. These requirements will be described in more detail in the Terms and Conditions provided upon award.

### 3.0 Eligibility Information

---

The authorizing language specifies the following eligible entities that are described in more detail below:

- Eligible schools and school districts;
- State agencies;
- Local agencies;
- Indian tribal organizations;
- Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; and
- Non-profit entities.

Entity type must be clearly indicated and unambiguous in all application materials. If USDA cannot determine the applicant to be an eligible entity based on information contained within the application, the applicant may be subject to removal from consideration.

Eligible schools are defined as pre-K-12 School Food Authorities (SFAs), non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs. Eligible SFAs may apply for funding that spans the entire SFA, for a specific group of schools (e.g. only K-5 schools within an SFA), or for an individual school. The school(s) that comprise the primary target audience for or beneficiary of the grant project must participate in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. The application must come from the SFA, and only one application per SFA is allowed.

Funding for Implementation and Planning grants is available to support school-based programs only. If a proposal seeks to increase local foods in the CACFP or the SFSP, target sites must be located at an eligible school. If a proposal from a non-school entity seeks to target school(s) with farm to school activities, schools benefiting from the project must be eligible as defined earlier in this paragraph. For the purposes of this grant program, any non-profit private or charter school must apply as a school or school district, regardless of 501(c)(3) status.

State agencies are considered any statewide government agency that administers or works in partnership with the agency that administers the Federal Child Nutrition Programs (e.g. Office of Public Instruction, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, etc.). State agencies applying to the State Agency track are eligible to work with non-school based Child Nutrition Program operators that participate in a program under the NSLA, such as community-based SFSP sites and CACFP sponsors.

Local agencies are considered to be any unit of government within a state, including a: county, borough, municipality, city, town, township, parish, special district, or council of governments.

Indian Tribal Organizations (ITO) include an Indian tribe, band, or group recognized by the Department of the Interior or an intertribal council or group which is an authorized representative of Indian tribes, bands or groups recognized by the Department of the Interior and which has an ongoing relationship with such tribes, bands or groups for other purposes and has contracted with them to administer a Federal Child Nutrition Program located in an eligible school.

Agricultural producers are defined as any individual or entity that produces an agricultural commodity or agricultural food product. Please note that agricultural producers are not limited to those producing fruits and vegetables but also include fishers, ranchers and those raising other livestock for consumption. For the purposes of this grant program, an eligible agricultural producer is any individual or entity who operates a small- to medium-sized farm. A small- to medium-sized farm is any place from which up to \$1 million (gross) of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the previous calendar year. Alternatively, a small- to medium-sized farm is any place with land acreage measuring less than 1,582 acres that produced and sold, or normally would have sold agricultural products.

Groups of agricultural producers are defined as cooperatives, food hubs, or non-profit membership organizations that represent independent producers whose mission includes working on behalf of independent producers and the majority of whose membership and board of directors is comprised of independent producers representing eligible agricultural producers. Groups of agricultural producers must represent small- to medium-sized agricultural producers as their primary stakeholders.

Non-profit entities are defined as any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) Uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. For this purpose, the term “non-profit organization” excludes colleges and universities, hospitals, state, local, and Federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and those non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of this part in accordance with §230.20(c) (2 CFR Part 230.25). For the purposes of this grant program, non-profit entities are required to have 501(c)(3) status.

### **3.1 Planning and Implementation Grant Eligibility**

Eligible schools (defined as pre-K-12 School Food Authorities (SFAs), non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs), local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, small- and medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- and medium-sized agricultural producers, and non-profit entities are eligible to receive Planning and Implementation grants. State agencies are ineligible to

apply to Planning and Implementation grants.

Funding is available to support school-based programs only. If a proposal seeks to increase local foods in the CACFP or the SFSP, target sites must be located at an eligible school. If a proposal seeks to target school(s), schools discussed in the project proposal as benefiting from the project must be eligible as defined in section 3.0.

### 3.2 State Agency Grant Eligibility

Only State agencies are eligible to apply to the State Agency grant track. Departments of Education, Department of Agriculture, and Departments of Health are all examples of eligible State agencies. Eligibility is not restricted to the State agency that administers the Child Nutrition Programs. Local government agencies, such as city and county governmental agencies, are not eligible to apply to this track, but may apply for the Implementation or Planning track.

Projects supported by the State Agency grant track may target non-school based Child Nutrition Programs, such as non-school based SFSP sites and CACFP sponsors or sites. If a State Agency proposes to sub-grant to entities that are not eligible for Implementation or Planning grants, the applicant must indicate the process for determining awards. Please note that if the State agency submitting an application for the State Agency track does not administer the CNP(s), then the applicant must include a letter of commitment from the relevant CNP-administering State agency.

### 3.3 Additional Eligibility Requirements

**One grant application per entity:** Applicants must choose between submitting a Planning, Implementation, or State Agency grant request and may only submit one application.

- **Current and previous Implementation, Support Service, and Training grantees:** In order to ensure diversity among awardees, organizations that have received Implementation, Support Service, or Training grants through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2017 - FY 2019) are ineligible to apply for Implementation grants in FY 2020. State agencies that have received grants in FY 2017, FY 2018, or FY 2019 **are** eligible for the State Agency track. Furthermore, State agencies reapplying for funding **do not** have to closeout all current grant work (submit all required documentation) by the time the RFA closes to be eligible for FY 2020 farm to school funding.

**Past Planning grantees:** While being a past Planning grant recipient does not guarantee an Implementation award, previous Planning grantees who have completed all closeout activities at the time that the RFA closes may apply for funding.

- **Implementation and Planning grant applicants** must attend a mandatory in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. For State Agency grant applicants, this training meeting is optional.
  - Implementation and Planning grant applicants must include travel costs for at least one and no more than two project representatives, preferably including the project director, in their grant budget to attend this meeting.
  - Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc. When budgeting for these costs, please assume that attendance will require air travel to a venue at least two states away from your own.
  - Include travel for this meeting in the first year of the grant only.

- Cooperative Extension Service<sup>3</sup> programs and institutions of higher learning are **ineligible** to apply for these grant projects as the lead applicant. However, these entities can partner with other eligible entities as a key partner.
- Applicants must clearly and consistently indicate their entity type in the submission package. Ambiguity about entity type may result in removal of an application from consideration for award.

### 3.3.1 Fiscal Sponsors

Eligible applicants may use fiscal sponsors/agents in their effort to attain and administer a grant award. Such applicants seeking to implement a Farm to School Grant project may utilize a fiscal sponsor/agent to apply for an award on behalf of the implementing organization. By doing so, the sponsor/agent accepts all financial and legal liabilities for that organization at the time the award is made. Fiscal sponsors/agents must submit the application as the applicant organization, and the Authorized Organizational Representative responsible for all grant decisions should be listed as an employee of the fiscal sponsor/agent. Fiscal sponsors/agents are bound by the same requirements mentioned in this RFA as other applicant organizations.

An applicant organization cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to a fiscal sponsor/agent. Distinct eligible applicants that use the same fiscal sponsor may submit applications during the same round of funding.

## 3.4 Grantee Requirements

All grant recipients must:

- Participate in orientation calls and onboarding webinars.
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA, including the timely submission of baseline and final reports, semi-annual progress reports, and quarterly financial reports, as well as any other requested data specific to a grant track or objective as outlined in the reporting instructions.
- Acknowledge USDA support: as outlined in 2 CFR 415.2, grant recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any publications written or published with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity. Recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA FNS support on any audiovisual materials produced with grant support and which has a direct production cost of over \$5,000.
  - When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Whenever practical, FNS also expects that grantees use the Office of Community Food Systems identifier in publications, posters, websites and presentations resulting from their award. Grantees are asked to follow the [USDA Visual Standards Guide](#) when using the USDA logo.
- Make good faith efforts to provide conference details and/or training materials to USDA FNS Regional Farm to School personnel, time permitting, in order to coordinate trainings,

---

<sup>3</sup> Cooperative Extension Service is defined by USDA NIFA as, "a nationwide, non-credit educational network that addresses public needs by providing non-formal higher education and learning activities to farmers, ranchers, communities, youth and families throughout the nation." <https://nifa.usda.gov/cooperative-extension-system>

conferences, and/or other events within states.

- Where relevant, disseminate [USDA Farm to School Program fact sheets](#) and other relevant resource materials found on the [Farm to School website](#).
- Place the USDA logo on all public-facing materials made possible through Farm to School funding such as referencing USDA as a sponsor in all trainings and promotional materials including websites and presentations as applicable.

Grant recipients *may* be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award or during the training event. All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets. Site visits serve to augment USDA’s understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

## 4.0 Application and Submission Information

---

### 4.1 Application Format

Applications should meet the following formatting guidelines:

- Include a **table of contents** (not counted towards page limit);
- **4-page** maximum length for **Planning** grant narrative response; or
- **5-page** maximum length for **Implementation** and **State Agency** grant narrative response.
- A **suggested** word count for each subsection of the proposal narrative is provided.
- Narrative response page restrictions apply only to content of the narrative proposals and do not apply to other required forms/attachments, nor the budget-related documents. Pages exceeding the stated page limits may be omitted during the review process.
- **1-page** maximum length for each resume of key staff or, if a key position has not been filled, a job description which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education. Up to three resumes may be submitted;
- **1-page** maximum length for each letter of commitment, up to three letters.
- 8 ½” by 11” paper;
- 12 point Times New Roman font size (10 point font may be used in tables, charts, and graphs as long as they are clearly readable);
- Single-spaced;
- At least 1 inch margins on the top and bottom of the page; and,
- Numbered pages.

Letters of commitment should be written in size 12 font, Times New Roman using standardized letter formatting and are not to exceed one page. Letters may be addressed to “Gregory Walton.” Information provided beyond the page limit will not be considered. These documents must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add attachments” button under SF-424 item #15. Applications that do not follow guidelines may be subject to a reduced score during review.

### 4.2 Application Content: Project Narrative

#### 4.2.1 Planning Grant Proposal Narrative

When preparing a proposal narrative, applicants should provide the information requested, in the order presented below. Please note that each section of the proposal narrative will be evaluated

independently. Only address what is asked within each section. Additional information outside the scope of each independent section will not be considered.

- **Farm to School Background and Readiness (suggested length 400 words or fewer):** Briefly describe any experience with farm to school (e.g. local procurement, school gardens, education, etc.). If available, please share any information about the vision for your farm to school program, including any goals related to local food purchasing, school gardens, and agriculture education. Note any challenges, anticipated or existing, as well as how challenges may be overcome through this grant. Clearly indicate why your organization is ready to undertake this planning process at this time.

Describe the population being served by the proposal and how a farm to school program would address an identified gap or need that exists within your school and/or community. Support the need with at least one piece of relevant quantitative or qualitative data (e.g. Farm to School Census data, demographic information, levels of access to healthy foods, poverty statistics, public health information such as obesity rates in your city/county, school meal participation rates, Census of Agriculture information, etc.).

- **Project Work Plan Narrative (suggested length 800 words or fewer):** Describe the proposed project and identify activities you will undertake that will result in a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts. Ensure that the content of this section is reflected in the Project Work Plan Table section. Where dates are included, activities should not begin before July 1, 2020.
- **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance (suggested length 250 words or fewer):** Describe the management approach (staffing, procurement of contractors [if applicable], quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, monitoring progress) that will be used for the project.

Attach resumes of key project staff and letters of commitment from key partners to your grant application within Grants.gov using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education may be included in the application in lieu of a resume. Please note that there is a limit of three resumes and three letters of commitment per grant application. Please see section 3.1 of the RFA for more information.

- **Evaluation (suggested length 250 words or fewer):** Briefly describe your organization's plan for and ability to monitor project activities and evaluate success. Detail any relevant experience your organization or partner has conducting evaluations.

Describe the evaluation activities you will conduct to measure progress and success. Identify the indicator(s) that will be used for each activity. Indicate the date and frequency of the proposed activities. Lastly, identify a person or organization responsible for overseeing the evaluation plan.

- **Sustainability (suggested length 200 words or fewer):** Describe how your Farm to School

Action Plan will be executed beyond the period of performance (without additional USDA Farm to School grant funds). Identify how farm to school initiatives will be integrated into your organization’s operations. Identify potential funding sources and/or support mechanisms to help ensure implementation of the Action Plan (e.g. other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization’s long-term budget, etc.). Discuss partners’ and staff’s roles in continuing farm to school efforts past the grant period.

- **Project Work Plan Table (three page limit):** Applicants must list the activities, start and completion dates, target audiences, and responsible parties needed. Applicants are required to develop a Project Work Plan Table that includes all corresponding information provided in the Project Work Plan Narrative. Activities should not begin before July 1, 2020. There is a three page limit on content in the table.

The Project Work Plan Table should be organized into seven columns, clearly labeled and in the following order: “Activity”; “Activity Category”; “Indicator”; “Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)”; “Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)”; “Target Audience”; and “Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization).” Additional columns will not be considered.

Applicants must include required activities in the Project Work Plan Table. A sample table is provided on the following page. Please note that the sample table includes both required activities and examples of other relevant activities. Should an applicant copy and paste the table from this RFA into their application, all example activities must be removed before the application is submitted. Please include in the table any and all activities mentioned in the Project Work Plan Narrative section, and ensure that the information in the table matches the information provided in the narrative.

In the “Activity Category” column, please indicate whether the Activity on the same row relates to local procurement, agricultural education, or both. Please do not enter any additional information in the “Activity Category” cell.



## Project Work Plan Table

**Objective:** Improve Access to local foods in eligible schools by developing a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.

Activity	Activity Category	Indicator	Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)	Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)	Target Audience	Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization)
<b>Develop a Farm to School Action Plan</b>	Required	Percent Complete	July 2020	July 2021	Farm to School Planning Team	Applicant
<b>Attend mandatory in-person meeting with USDA personnel</b>	Required	Number Attended	September 2020	September 2020	N/A	Project Manager
<b>Example: Establish a local procurement advisory board.</b>	Local Procurement	<b>Example:</b> Identify 15 supply chain partners, such as local farmers and regional distributors, that we could work with to increase our procurement of local foods	<b>Example:</b> August 2020	<b>Example:</b> December 2020	<b>Example:</b> Local Farmers and Ranchers, Local and Regional Distributors, State Department of Agriculture	<b>Example:</b> James Greene, Farm to School Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Service Department
<b>Example: Identify curriculum resources for integrating agricultural education into high school biology courses.</b>	Agricultural Education	<b>Example:</b> Number of resources identified	<b>Example:</b> August 2020	<b>Example:</b> February 2021	<b>Example:</b> High school principals, biology teachers	<b>Example:</b> Alicia Flowers, Curriculum Coordinator, ABC School District

- **Budget (no limit on section length):** Provide an itemized budget describing appropriate use of grant funds. Include a narrative line item description for every line item expense, show how that expense supports the project goals, and include the calculation that shows how that expense was derived. Briefly describe how the total amount for that line item was determined. All budget line item expenses must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and [2 CFR 200](#). If key partner(s) are receiving a portion of grant funds to provide essential services, justify the organizations' participation in the project by describing their experience, expertise, and specific services to be provided. Ensure that all budget line items and partner services align with the activities described in the Project Work Plan Table above.

Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. Remember, USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include a funding match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost from non-federal sources. Please see Section 2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing as well as Section 4.3.1 Budget of the RFA and Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs. All applicants **must** submit a budget narrative and SF-424A (see Section 4.3 for more information).

#### 4.2.2 Implementation Grant Proposal Narrative

In preparing a proposal narrative, applicants should provide the information requested, in the order presented below. Please note that each section of the proposal narrative will be evaluated independently. Only address what is asked within each section. Additional information outside the scope of each independent section will not be considered.

- **Farm to School Background and Readiness (suggested length 400 words or fewer):** Identify the target population of your project. Provide at least one piece of relevant data (USDA Farm to School Census data, healthy food access data, poverty statistics, obesity rates, school meal participation rates, free and reduced-price meal eligibility data, agricultural statistics, etc.) to describe the need of the target population and how the objective you selected will meet that need.

Describe your experience planning and implementing farm to school initiatives, such as local procurement strategies, hands-on learning, training, and/or curriculum development that demonstrate your organization has the background necessary to successfully execute the proposed project.

- **Project Work Plan Narrative (suggested length 1,000 words or fewer):** Describe the proposed project, how the activities will improve access to local food in eligible schools, and identify both local procurement and agricultural education efforts to be implemented as part of the grant project. List the activities, start and completion dates, target audiences, required resources, and responsible parties needed to achieve the objective. Ensure that the content of this section is reflected in the Project Work Plan Table section. Where dates are included, activities should not begin before July 1, 2020.
- **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance (suggested length 300 words or fewer):** Describe the management approach (staffing, procurement of contractors [if applicable], quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, monitoring progress) that will be used for the project. Describe your plan for coordination, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Provide a clear description of staff or partners' relevant experience as it relates to the proposed project.

Attach resumes of key project staff and letters of commitment from key partners to your grant application within Grants.gov using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education may be included in the application

in lieu of a resume. Please note that there is a limit of three resumes and three letters of commitment per grant application. Please see section 3.1 of the RFA for more information.

- **Evaluation Plan (suggested length 300 words or fewer):** Briefly describe your organization’s ability to track progress on project activities and how the overall impact will be evaluated. Detail any relevant experience your organization or partner has conducting evaluations.

Describe the evaluation activities you will conduct to measure your program against the required objective. Identify the indicator(s) that will be used for each activity. Indicate the date and frequency of the proposed activities. Lastly, identify a person or organization responsible for overseeing the evaluation plan.

Please note that entities awarded Implementation grants will be required to report data indicating progress towards completing their proposed activities. For more information on evaluation resources, please see the [Farm to School Applicant Resource page](#).

- **Sustainability (suggested length 300 words or fewer):** Describe how the project will continue beyond the period of performance (without additional USDA Farm to School grant funds). Identify how farm to school initiatives will be integrated into your organization’s operations. Indicate which project components will require continued funding and identify potential sources of such funding (e.g. other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization’s long-term budget etc.). Discuss partners’ and staff’s roles in continuing farm to school efforts past the grant period.
- **Project Work Plan Table (three page limit):** Applicants must list the activities, start and completion dates, target audiences, and responsible parties. Applicants are required to develop a Project Work Plan Table that includes all corresponding information provided in the Project Work Plan Narrative. Activities should not begin before July 1, 2020. There is a three page limit on content in the table.

The Project Work Plan Table must contain the following seven columns, clearly labeled and in the following order: “Activity”; “Activity Category”; “Indicator”; “Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)”; “Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)”; “Target Audience”; and “Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization).” Additional columns will not be considered.

A sample table is provided on the following page. Please note that the sample table includes examples of activities. Should an applicant copy and paste the table from this RFA into their application, all example activities must be removed before an application is submitted. Please remove example rows before submitting a proposal. Please include in the table any activities mentioned in the Project Work Plan Narrative section, and ensure that the information in the table matches the information provided in the narrative.

In the “Activity Category” column, please indicate whether the Activity on the same row relates to local procurement, agricultural education, or both. Please do not enter any additional information in the “Activity Category” cell.

## Project Work Plan Table

**Objective:** Improve Access to local foods in eligible schools by developing a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts

Activity	Activity Category	Indicator	Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)	Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)	Target Audience	Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization)
<b>Attend mandatory in-person meeting with USDA personnel</b>	Required	Number Attended	September 2020	September 2020	N/A	Project Manager
<b>Example: Recruit &amp; convene a local foods student/staff advisory committee</b>	<b>Example: Local Procurement</b>	<b>Example: Number attended</b>	<b>Example: October 2020</b>	<b>Example: June 2022</b>	<b>Example: High school students &amp; teachers  Cafeteria Staff  Central office FNS staff</b>	<b>Example: Jessica Plum, Registered Dietitian, Food and Nutrition Service Department</b>
<b>Example: Train 50 cafeteria staff on new local salad recipes</b>	<b>Example: Local Procurement</b>	<b>Example: Number trained</b>	<b>Example: November 2020</b>	<b>Example: March 2021</b>	<b>Example: Cafeteria staff</b>	<b>Example: Sam Cooke, Chef, Food and Nutrition Service Department</b>
<b>Example: Convene an education and school garden committee that identifies areas for potential curriculum integration, project goals, roles and responsibilities, timeline, budget, and funding strategy</b>	<b>Example: Agricultural Education</b>	<b>Example: Number attended</b>	<b>Example: September 2020</b>	<b>Example: June 2022</b>	<b>Example: Cafeteria Manager  Science Coordinator  Parent Volunteer  Custodial Staff  Student President</b>	<b>Example: Mrs. Green, Elementary Science Coordinator, ABC School District</b>
<b>Example: Install ten raised beds to expand school garden</b>	<b>Example: Agricultural Education</b>	<b>Example: Number completed</b>	<b>Example: March 2021</b>	<b>Example: April 2022</b>	<b>Example: Elementary Students</b>	<b>Example: Mr. Williams, Head Custodian, ABC Elementary</b>

- **Budget (no limit on section length):** Provide an itemized budget describing appropriate use of grant funds. Include a narrative line item description for every line item expense, show how that expense supports the project goals, and include the calculation that shows how that expense was derived. Briefly describe how the total amount for that line item was determined. All budget line item expenses must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and [2 CFR 200](#). If key partner(s) are receiving a portion of grant funds to provide essential services, justify the organizations' participation in the project by describing their experience, expertise, and specific services to be provided. Ensure that all budget line items and partner services align with the activities described in the Project Work Plan Table above.

Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. Remember, USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include a funding match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost from non-federal sources. Please see Section 2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing as well as Section 4.3.1 Budget of the RFA and Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs. All applicants **must** submit a budget narrative and SF-424A (see Section 4.3 for more information).

#### 4.2.3 State Agency Project Narrative

In preparing a proposal narrative, applicants should provide the information requested, in the order presented below. Please note that each section of the proposal narrative will be evaluated independently. Only address what is asked within each section. Additional information outside the scope of each independent section will not be considered.

- **Farm to School Background and Readiness (suggested length 400 words or fewer):** Describe your agency's experience initiating or advancing farm to school programs within your state. If your agency has not yet implemented farm to school programming, discuss conditions or resources in place to support the launch of farm to school activities.  
  
Include relevant data describing the status of farm to school initiatives within your state and/or agency. Examples of relevant data may include the percent of Child Nutrition Program operators engaged in farm to school initiatives, the number of local producers selling to schools or programs, the number of students enrolled in agricultural education, common challenges faced by stakeholders, etc. Relevant data sources may include USDA Farm to School Census data, healthy food access data, poverty statistics, obesity rates, school meal participation rates, agricultural statistics, etc.
- **Project Work Plan Narrative (suggested length 1,000 words or fewer):** Describe your proposed project. Discuss how the project and proposed activities will achieve the required objective. Include all relevant activities that lead to the selected objective. Activities should not begin before July 1, 2020. Ensure that all activities described in the narrative section align with the activities in the Project Work Plan Table. If an applicant proposes use grant funding to award sub-grants, the applicant must include a description of the process for making sub-grant awards.
- **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance (suggested word limit 300**

**words or fewer):** Describe the management approach (staffing, procurement of contractors [if applicable], quality assurance, etc.) that will be used for the project. Describe your plan for coordination, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.

Additionally, attach resumes of key project staff and letters of commitment from key partners to your grant application within Grants.gov using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education may be included in the application in lieu of a resume. Please note that there is a limit of three resumes and three letters of commitment per grant application. Please see section 3.2 of the RFA for more information.

- **Evaluation Plan (suggested length 250 words or fewer):** Describe your organization’s ability to monitor project activities and how the overall impact will be evaluated. Detail any relevant experience your organization or partner has conducting evaluations.

Describe the evaluation activities you will conduct to measure your program against the required objective. Identify the indicator(s) that will be used for each activity. Indicate the date and frequency of the proposed activities. Lastly, identify a person or organization responsible for overseeing the evaluation plan.

Depending on whether an activity addresses local procurement, agricultural education, or both, the Evaluation Plan section should reflect evaluation activities that measure related outcomes.

- **Sustainability (suggested length 300 words or fewer):** Describe how the project will continue beyond the period of performance (without additional USDA Farm to School grant funds). Identify how farm to school initiatives will be integrated into your organization’s operations. Indicate which project components will require continued funding and identify potential sources of such funding (other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization’s long-term budget, etc.). Discuss partners’ and staff’s roles in continuing farm to school efforts past the grant period.

- **Project Work Plan Table (three page limit):** Applicants must list the activities, start and completion dates, target audiences, and responsible parties. Applicants are required to develop a Project Work Plan Table that includes all corresponding information provided in the Project Work Plan Narrative. Activities should not begin before July 1, 2020. There is a three page limit on content in the table.

The Project Work Plan Table must contain the following seven columns, clearly labeled and in the following order: “Activity”; “Activity Category”; “Indicator”; “Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)”; “Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)”; “Target Audience”; and “Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization).” Additional columns will not be considered.

A sample table is provided on the following page. Please note that the sample table includes examples of activities. Should an applicant copy and paste the table from this RFA into their application, all example activities must be removed before an application is submitted.

Please remove example rows before submitting a proposal. Please include in the table any activities mentioned in the Project Work Plan Narrative section, and ensure that the information in the table matches the information provided in the narrative.

In the “Activity Category” column, please indicate whether the Activity on the same row relates to local procurement, agricultural education, or both. Please do not enter any additional information in the “Activity Category” cell.

### Project Work Plan Table

**Objective:** Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by implementing or expanding a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.

Activity	Activity Category	Indicator	Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)	Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)	Target Audience	Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization)
Example: Conduct local procurement training for NSLP	Example: Local Procurement	Example: Number trained	Example: January 2021	Example: April 2021	Example: NSLP program operators	Example: Sage Smith & Rich Jones, Procurement Specialists, Department of Education
Example: Start a farm to school leadership team with fellow state leaders	Example: Both	Example: Number recruited	Example: September 2020	Example: January 2021	Example: Leadership in non-CNP administering state agencies	Example: Sandra Childs, CACFP Specialist, State Department of Health  Ed Money, Fiscal Manager, State Department of Health
Example: Create webpage linking to agricultural education curricula aligned to state standards	Example: Agricultural Education	Example:	Example: October 2020	Example: March 2021	Example: School district curriculum coordinators	Example: Sheila Gardner, Curriculum Specialist, State Department of Education  Franklin Farmer, Website Coordinator, State Department of Education

- **Budget (no limits on length):** Provide an itemized budget describing appropriate use of grant funds. Include a narrative line item description for every line item expense, show how that expense supports the project goals, and include the calculation that shows how that expense was derived. Briefly describe how the total amount for that line item was determined. All budget line item expenses must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and [2 CFR 200](#). If key partner(s) are receiving a portion of grant funds to provide essential services, justify the organizations' participation in the project by describing their experience, expertise, and specific services to be provided. Ensure that all budget line items and partner services align with the activities described in the Project Work Plan Table above.

Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. Remember, USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include a funding match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost from non-federal sources. Please see Section 2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing as well as Section 4.3.1 Budget of the RFA and Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs. All applicants **must** submit a budget narrative and SF-424A (see Section 4.3 for more information).

### 4.3 Application Content: Budget and Budget Narrative

Please note that the same budget format is used for all grant tracks. In addition to the submission of the "[Budget Information and Instruction Form](#)" (SF-424A)," an itemized budget with justification/rationale must be submitted using the appropriate Project Narrative format.

**NOTE:** If a discrepancy exists between the total funding request (submitted on SF-424, SF-424A, and budget or budget narrative) within the application package in response to this solicitation, FNS will only consider and evaluate the estimated funding request contained on SF-424.

#### 4.3.1 Budget

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of grant funds and justifying costs. Your budget must be submitted using the "[Budget Information and Instruction Form](#)" (SF-424A). Proposed costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project.

When submitting the SF-424A, please separate federal and non-federal funds into two columns on the second page of the form (federal request in column 1 and match/non-federal in column 2). You can do this by typing in "Federal Request" in box 1(a) and "Non-Federal" in box 2(a) on the first page. Please note that when applying for a two-year grant, the SF-424A must include amounts for **both years** of the grant.

*Reminder:* USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include a funding match of at least a **25 percent** of the total project cost from non-federal sources. Please see section 2.4.



### Sample Match

Grant Request:	\$100,000
Match Amount:	\$35,000
Total Project Cost:	\$135,000
Match Percent:	26% (match ÷ total project cost)
USDA Percent:	74% (grant request ÷ total project cost)

Reminder: Allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the federal funding portion of grant.

**Required Activities:** Implementation and Planning grant applicants must attend a mandatory in-person grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. For State Agency grant applicants, this training meeting is optional.

- Implementation and Planning grant applicants must include travel costs for at least one and no more than two project representatives, preferably including the project director, in their grant budget to attend this meeting.
- Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc. When budgeting for these costs, please assume that attendance will require air travel to a venue at least two states away from your own.
- Include travel for this meeting in the first year of the grant only.

**Indirect Cost Rate:** If available, the current **indirect cost rate**, negotiated with a Federal negotiating agency, should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated and the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) submitted using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate “None—will negotiate” and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. USDA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase “None requested” should be stated in the budget narrative.

#### 4.3.2 Budget Narrative:

In addition to the budget submitted via the “[Budget Information and Instruction Form](#)” (SF- 424A), you must also submit a budget narrative. You will provide a narrative line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals as well as briefly describe how the total amount for that line item was determined. If key partner(s) are receiving a portion of grant funds to provide essential services, please justify the organizations’ participation in the project. All of this information is submitted in the Project Narrative for each grant track.

## 4.4 Application Content: Attachments

### 4.4.1 Required Attachments

- **All Applicants:**
  - Project Narrative
  - Include no more than three resumes, each no more than one page in length, for staff managing or implementing this project.
  - If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education may be included in the application in lieu of a resume.
  - An applicant must include a signed letter verifying matching funds for **every** cash and/or in-kind resource included in the budget.
- **Nonprofit Applicants:** All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Applicants that are fiscally sponsored should include their fiscal sponsor's 501(c)(3) letter from the IRS along with a signed letter from the fiscal sponsor outlining the relationship between the fiscal sponsor and applicant.
- **Proof of existing support:** All applicants may submit up to three letters of commitment from key partners identified in the project plan or budget. Applications which do not include any letters of commitment may be subject to a reduced score in the review process. No more than three letters of commitment will be considered.

Letters must include a description of the partner's:

- overall support of the project's execution;
- role and responsibility in achieving the proposed project; and
- demonstrated experience or expertise with executing the assigned role/responsibility.

Letters of commitment must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add attachments" button under SF-424 item #15. Please note that letters of commitment are a separate and distinct requirement from match letters, which are required from every source of matching funds. Please see section 2.4 for more information on match letters.

**Planning and Implementation grant applicants** must show evidence of existing community support or partnerships with entities that will be involved in the implementation of the project, including organizations that will receive funding from or provide a match for the project. Potential partners may include, but are not limited to: key food service personnel (e.g. school nutrition directors), school administration (e.g. superintendent, principal, etc.), teachers, producers, ranchers, fishers or distributors providing local food for the school nutrition programs or educational enrichment, or other key organizations (e.g. cooperative extensions, rural development centers, etc.).

**State Agency grant applicants** must show evidence of partnerships or current relationships with entities in their states that will be involved in the implementation of the project and can assist State agencies in reaching the target population. Please note that applicants to the State Agency track that do not administer one or more CNP in the state are required to include a letter of commitment from the relevant CNP-administering State agency. Potential partners

may include, but are not limited to: State agencies, key food service personnel (e.g. school nutrition directors), school administration (e.g. superintendent, principal, etc.), teachers, producers, ranchers, fishers or distributors providing local food for the school nutrition programs or educational enrichment, or other key organizations (e.g. cooperative extensions, rural development centers, etc.).

## 4.5 Application Content: Required Grant Application Forms

Refer to the application checklist on page 4 for a list of required grant forms.

## 4.6 Submitting an Application

### 4.6.1 Submission Date

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), on December 13, 2019.

- Late applications will not be considered.
- FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications after the final due date.
- Applications must be submitted via the Grants.gov web portal, including all letters of commitment. Mailed, e-mailed or hand-delivered application packages will not be accepted.
- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding and/or appropriations of funds.
- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants this or subsequent fiscal years should additional funds become available.

USDA strongly encourages applicants to begin the process at least three weeks before the due date and to submit applications to Grants.gov at least one week before the deadline to allow time to troubleshoot any issues, should they arise. The Grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was **accepted** (not just received). Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) should contact the grant support team listed in Section 8.0: Agency Contacts.

### 4.6.2 Electronic Submission Details

Please be aware that the Grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) should contact the grant support team noted in Section 8.0: Agency Contacts.

In order to submit an application, you must:

1. Obtain a **DUNS** number
  - In order to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization does not have one, or if you are unsure of your organization's number, contact [Dun and Bradstreet](https://www.DunandBradstreet.com) or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm ET. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number.
  - **It may take 2-3 business days to obtain a DUNS number.**
2. Register in the System for Award Management (**SAM**)
  - SAM combines Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. For additional information regarding SAM, see the

following link:

<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>

- Must have organization's DUNS, entity's Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on last tax return). **It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM, however** in some instances the SAM process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require **5-7 days or more**.
- All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25.
- For your SAM.gov registration, you must submit a **notarized letter appointing the authorized** Entity Administrator. The review process changed for the Federal Assistance community on June 11, 2018. Read the updated FAQs to learn more:  
[https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/answer.do?sysparm\\_kbid=d2e67885db0d5f00b3257d321f96194b&sysparm\\_search=kb0013183](https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/answer.do?sysparm_kbid=d2e67885db0d5f00b3257d321f96194b&sysparm_search=kb0013183)
- USDA strongly encourages applicants to begin the process **at least 3 weeks** before the due date of the grant solicitation.

### 3. Register in **Grants.gov**

- Visit the [website](#).
- For an overview of the Grants.gov application process, visit the "How to Apply for Grants" [webpage](#).
- Must have DUNS and be registered in SAM.
- Applicants must have a valid SAM registration **no later than 3 days prior to the application due date** of this solicitation in order to upload their application in Grants.gov.
- Ensure that if your organization has previously registered in Grants.gov that the individual who is submitting the application has been designated as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) by the E-Business Point of Contact in your organization. **If you are not designated as an AOR, you will be unable to submit your application package through the Grants.gov.**
- Generally, the registration process takes between 3-5 business days.

#### **4.6.3 More Information on the System for Award Management (SAM)**

For applicant organizations that were previously registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), certain applicant information is already in SAM; however, you will need to set up a SAM account, as necessary, to update any information. **Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete and active after 3 days should contact SAM via phone at: 866-606-8220** (U.S. calls) or on their [website](#) (you must use a browser other than Internet Explorer to access the SAM website).

The General Services Administration (GSA) has created a [SAM training presentation](#). This presentation will be extremely useful for SAM users that are registering for SAM for the first time; setting up user permissions from CCR into the SAM registration (called migrating); or updating /renewing CCR record in SAM.

#### 4.6.4 More Information on Grants.gov

**Special Characters Not Supported in Grants.gov:** All applicants **MUST** follow Grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided in the Grants.gov [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

- File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &, -, \*, %, /, #', -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached\_File.pdf) in naming the attachments.”

Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected by Grants.gov. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to [Grants.gov](#) should contact the grant support team listed in Section 8: Agency Contacts.

## 5.0 Application Review Information

---

### 5.1 Initial Screening

USDA will screen all applications to ensure they are eligible. Eligible applications are those that meet the following requirements:

1. Submitted by eligible applicants (see Sections 3.0-3.3);
2. Meet all other eligibility requirements (see Sections 3.0-3.3);
3. Successfully submitted on or before the required deadline (see Section 4.0: Application and Submission Information);

In order to remain as competitive as possible, beyond the initial screening, FNS recommends submitting a complete application that includes all required documentation in the format requested in this Request for Applications.

### 5.2 Panel Review

After initial screening, USDA will convene an evaluation panel to consider the merit of each grant application. Each application that passes initial screening will be given to the panel to be evaluated and scored according to how well it addresses each application component. Each section of the narrative is evaluated independently according to the required criteria.

#### 5.2.1 Scoring for Planning Grant Applications

##### Farm to School Background and Readiness 10 points

- The applicant describes the vision for farm to school programming.
- Existing or anticipated challenges are described, and applicant clearly articulates a plan for

overcoming these obstacles.

- Applicant explains why the timing is right for a Farm to School Planning grant and how their organization is ready to initiate farm to school planning.
- Target audience is well-defined and the need for the project is clearly demonstrated. Applicant provides at least one piece of relevant data, such as demographic information, number of students, USDA Farm to School Census data, healthy foods access data, poverty statistics, obesity rates, school meal participation rates, free and reduced-price meal eligibility data, agricultural statistics, etc.
- The applicant is appropriate for a Planning grant, i.e., has minimal farm to school experience or no farm to school experience and would benefit from the development of an action plan.

#### **Project Work Plan Narrative 15 points**

- Proposal focuses primarily on actions that lay the foundation or framework for launching farm to school activities. Key planning activities include but are not limited to collecting data; engaging stakeholders; pinpointing obstacles; forming a leadership team; and identifying gaps in resources, training, knowledge, equipment/supplies, staffing, etc.
- The activities support the development of a Farm to School Action Plan that clearly aligns with the required objective:
  - Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by developing a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2020. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Narrative includes activities that relate to both local procurement and agricultural education efforts. Required activities are included. The activities in the Project Work Plan Narrative align with the activities in the Project Work Plan Table section.

#### **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance 20 points**

- Applicant included (no more than three) resumes of relevant key staff and the qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education has been included in the application in lieu of a resume.
- The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project and development of the action plan.
- The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
- Roles and responsibilities among staff are clearly outlined.

#### **Evaluation 10 points**

- The organization clearly describes its ability to monitor activities and conduct evaluations. The applicant details its experience conducting similar evaluations.
- A clear plan is in place that describes how activities will be monitored, how progress will be measured, and at what frequency activities will occur. The applicant identifies relevant indicators that will help measure progress towards achieving the required objective.

- Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating activities are clearly outlined (e.g. contractors, designating a current staff member, etc.)
- Evaluation plan is linked to proposed objective, activities, and timeline.

### **Sustainability**

**20 points**

- The applicant clearly describes how the program will continue past grant funding including future roles of staff and/or partners to continue key activities.
- Applicant also identifies key activities that require additional sources of funding and discusses what those sources of funding (e.g. other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization’s long-term budget, etc.) would be.
- The sustainability plan includes a variety of strategies to ensure long term viability, including but not limited to building organizational capacity, seeking other funding sources, a Farm to School advisory council, reallocating existing resources, integrating farm to school activities into existing operations, enacting policy, etc.
- The sustainability plan describes how the applicant will build or strengthen community partnerships to promote farm to school as a priority for local stakeholders.

### **Project Work Plan Table**

**15 points**

- The table includes actions that lay the foundation or framework for launching farm to school activities. Key planning activities include but are not limited to collecting data, engaging stakeholders, pinpointing obstacles, forming a leadership team, identifying gaps in resources, training, knowledge, equipment/supplies, staffing, etc.
- The activities support the development of a Farm to School Action Plan that clearly aligns with the required objective:
  - Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by developing a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2020. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Table is aligned with the information in the Project Work Plan Narrative section. Required activities are included. All activities described in the Project Work Plan Narrative section are included in the Table section.
- The Table is formatted correctly, including seven (7) columns with the same headers in the same order as the instructions and example provided in Section 4.2.1. and only one activity on each row.

### **Budget Plan**

**10 points**

- The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
- Proposed costs are reasonable and necessary to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
- The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.
- Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- The budget narrative, itemized budget, and proposal narrative align with one another.

## **5.2.2 Scoring for Implementation Applications**

### **Farm to School Background and Readiness 10 points**

- Target audience is well-defined and the need for the project is clearly demonstrated. Applicant provides at least one piece of relevant data, such as demographic information, number of students, USDA Farm to School Census data, healthy foods access data, poverty statistics, obesity rates, school meal participation rates, free and reduced-price meal eligibility data, agricultural statistics, etc.
- Applicant clearly indicates the required objective and explains how it connects to the need of the target population.
- Evidence of previous experience with farm to school work exists that would support successful execution of proposed project. If the applicant has limited or no farm to school experience, the application describes conditions or resources in place to support the launch of farm to school activities.

### **Project Work Plan Narrative 15 points**

- Applicant describes the overall project and how the project activities achieve the required objective. The activities support achieving the required objective:
  - Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by implementing or expanding a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2020. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Narrative includes activities that relate to both local procurement and agricultural education efforts. Required activities are included. Activities in the Narrative section align with activities in the Project Work Plan Table section.

### **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance 20 points**

- Applicant included (no more than three) resumes of relevant key staff and the qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education has been included in the application in lieu of a resume.
- The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the proposed project.
- The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
- Roles and responsibilities among staff are clearly outlined.

### **Evaluation 15 points**

- The organization clearly describes its ability to monitor activities and conduct evaluations. They have detailed their experience conducting similar evaluations.
- The applicant identifies relevant indicators that will help measure progress. A clear plan is in place that describes how activities will be monitored, how progress will be measured and at what frequency activities will occur.
- Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating activities are clearly outlined (e.g.



contractors, designating a current staff member, etc.)

- Evaluation plan is linked to proposed objective, activities, and timeline. The applicant has a plan for collecting the data required to measure progress towards the required objective.

### **Sustainability 15 points**

- The applicant clearly describes how the program will continue past grant funding including future roles of staff and/or partners to continue key activities.
- Applicant identifies key activities that require additional sources of funding and discusses what those sources of funding (e.g. other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization's long-term budget) would be.
- The sustainability plan includes a variety of strategies to ensure long term viability, including but not limited to building organizational capacity, seeking other funding sources, a farm to school advisory council, reallocating existing resources, integrating farm to school activities into existing operations, enacting policy, etc.
- The sustainability plan describes how the applicant will build or strengthen community partnerships to promote farm to school as a priority for local stakeholders.

### **Project Work Plan Table**

**15 points**

- Activities in the table clearly align with the required objective:
  - Improve access to local foods in eligible schools by implementing or expanding a comprehensive farm to school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2020. Required activities are included. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Table is aligned with the information in the Project Work Plan Narrative section. All activities described in the Project Work Plan Narrative section are included in the Table section.
- The Table is formatted correctly, including seven (7) columns with the same headers in the same order as the instructions and example provided in Section 4.2.1. and only one activity on each row.

### **Budget 10 points**

- The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
- Budget narrative includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals. If applicable, justification is provided for key partners receiving a portion of grant funding to execute essential services.
- Budget calculations clearly show how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- Budget narrative and project narrative align with one another.

## **5.2.3 Scoring for State Agency Applications**

### **Farm to School Background and Readiness 10 points**

- Evidence of previous experience with farm to school execution at the state level exists. If the

applicant has limited or no farm to school experience, the application describes conditions or resources in place to support the launch of farm to school activities.

- Target audience is identified and the need for the project is clearly demonstrated. When possible, applicant provides relevant information and/or data, such as demographic information, number of students, USDA Farm to School Census data, healthy foods access data, poverty statistics, obesity rates, school meal participation rates, free and reduced-price meal eligibility data, agricultural statistics, etc.
- Applicant identifies agency's farm to school goals and focus areas and discusses how a project aligned to the required objective will meet the state's need.

#### **Project Work Plan Narrative 15 points**

- Applicant describes the overall project and how the project activities achieve the required objective:
  - Improve access to local foods in eligible Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) by developing or implementing comprehensive farm to CNP programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2020. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Narrative includes activities related to both local procurement and agricultural education. Required activities are included. Activities in the Narrative section align with activities in the Project Work Plan Table section.

#### **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance 20 points**

- Applicant included (no more than three) resumes of relevant key staff and the qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education has been included in the application in lieu of a resume.
- The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the proposed project.
- The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution and program evaluation.
- Roles and responsibilities among staff are clearly outlined.

#### **Evaluation 15 points**

- The organization clearly describes its ability to monitor activities and conduct evaluations. They have detailed their experience conducting similar evaluations.
- A clear plan is in place that describes how activities will be monitored, how progress will be measured and at what frequency activities will occur. The applicant identifies relevant indicators that will help measure progress.
- Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating activities are clearly outlined (e.g. contractors, designating a current staff member, etc.)
- Evaluation plan is linked to proposed objective, activities, and timeline. The applicant has a plan for collecting the data outlined in the selected objective.

### **Sustainability 15 points**

- The applicant clearly describes how the program will continue past grant funding, including future roles of staff and/or partners to continue key activities.
- Applicant also identifies key activities that require additional sources of funding and discusses what those sources of funding (e.g. other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization's long-term budget, etc.) would be.
- The sustainability plan includes multiple strategies to ensure long term viability, including but not limited to building organizational capacity, seeking other funding sources, a Farm to School advisory council, reallocating existing resources, integrating farm to school activities into existing operations, enacting policy, etc.
- The sustainability plan describes how the applicant will build or strengthen community partnerships to promote farm to school as a priority for local stakeholders.

### **Project Work Plan Table**

**15 points**

- Activities in the table clearly align with the required objective:
  - Improve access to local foods in eligible Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) by developing or implementing comprehensive farm to CNP programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2020. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Table includes activities related to both local procurement and agricultural education, and is aligned with the information in the Project Work Plan Narrative section. Required activities are included. All activities described in the Project Work Plan Narrative section are included in the Table section.
- The Table is formatted correctly, including: seven (7) columns with the same headers in the same order as the instructions and example provided in Section 4.2.1. and only one activity on each row.

### **Budget 10 points**

- The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
- Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
- Budget narrative includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals. If applicable, justification is provided for key partners receiving a portion of grant funding to execute essential services.
- Budget calculations clearly show how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- Budget narrative and the project narrative align with one another.

## **5.3 Selection Process**

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by grant type (Planning, Implementation, or State Agency) and by score within each grant type, starting with the highest score. A list of all applications deemed eligible for award will be submitted to the Selection Official for a final decision regarding funding.

The Selection Official has ultimate authority to decide which applications are approved and funded, and *generally* will adhere to the recommendations made by the reviewers, provided that funding is available. However, the Selection Official reserves the right to deviate from those recommendations. The Selection Official may take other factors into account when selecting awards, such as: projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals; projects that serve more than one school; the need to ensure geographic diversity and a range of projects from rural and urban areas; representation of Indian Tribal Organizations and agricultural producers; agency and funding priorities; and the scores assigned by the review panel. In addition, USDA reserves the option to select one or more lower rated applications in order to achieve a diversity of projects and region representation. Selection Official may also determine that, based on their scores, few of the applications are of technical merit. In such a case, FNS may make fewer awards or smaller awards than expected or make no awards.

Prior to final award determinations, applicants are vetted to ensure that they are responsive, fiscally responsible entities capable of stewarding and executing the requirements of a Farm to School Grant.

Applicants are responsible for completing all contact fields correctly. Please note that if the applicant's primary point of contact changes after submission of a proposal, the applicant is solely responsible for notifying USDA of the change by informing the agency contacts shared in Section 8 of this RFA. If for any reason an FNS grants or program officer attempts to contact an applicant prior to award and fails to receive a response, the application may be removed from consideration due to unresponsiveness.

## 5.4 Determination of Award Amounts

As part of the technical review process, USDA will review applicants' budgets to ensure that all costs are reasonable, allowable, and applicable. Applications selected and approved for funding with budgets that are well justified and supported will likely be funded at the requested amounts. However, USDA reserves the right to fund applications at lesser amounts if USDA determines that the project can be implemented with less funding; or at lesser amounts if Federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards. This is subject to availability and appropriation of funds. USDA will not fund any costs deemed unallowable, which may result in a reduction of award amount.

**NOTE:** If a discrepancy exists between the total funding request (submitted on SF-424, SF-424A, and budget or budget narrative) within the application package in response to this solicitation, FNS will **only** consider and evaluate the estimated funding request contained on SF-424.

## 6.0 Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

---

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, Federal Awarding Agencies, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.400, are required, prior to making a Federal award, to review information available through various OMB-designated repositories for eligibility qualification or financial integrity, and to have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive Federal awards. The evaluation of the information obtained from the

designated repository systems and the risk assessment may result in FNS imposing special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed.

The Federal repository systems FNS will review include:

- SAM, the System for Award Management, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registration (CCR)/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS;
- FAPIIS, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System, is a database that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
- Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), the system where applicants establish a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number which is used by the Federal government to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems. The Federal government requires that all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals other than sole proprietors have a DUNS number.

Applicants must also respond to the application assessment questions to allow FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, and history of performance, reports and findings from audits. A questionnaire containing these questions has been provided to facilitate the process and can be found in Appendix A. Applicants must answer all the application questions. While answering "yes" may be an indicator of risk, the consideration and evaluation of these questions is only an indicator of potential risk and may or may not result in additional oversight requirements or special conditions placed on an award should an award be made. Decisions regarding additional oversight requirements will take into consideration the total number of risks identified.

## 7.0 Federal Award Administration Information

---

### 7.1 Federal Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions, any contact from a FNS grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless approved and stated on FNS' signed award document.

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Only the recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

### 7.2 Non-selected Applicants

Non-selected applicants will be contacted by FNS via email as soon as possible after awards are announced to inform them of the results.

#### 7.2.1 Debriefing Request

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to identify the strengths and weaknesses of submitted proposals. This information may be useful when preparing future grant proposals. Additional information on debriefing requests will be forwarded to non-selected applicants.

## **7.3 Reporting Requirements**

### **7.3.1 Progress Reporting**

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. All grant types will submit semi-annual reports. The award document will indicate the reporting schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. The recipient may be required to submit performance/progress reports to FNS using SF-908, the Periodic Progress Report. Additionally, award recipients must complete a baseline report at the start of the project and a final report no later than 90 days following the termination date of the grant term. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions.

### **7.3.2 Financial Reporting**

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425, Financial Status Report data into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. The award recipient will also be required to submit a final Financial Status Report no later than 90 days following the termination date of the grant project

In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. More detailed instructions for reporting will be included in the FNS Federal financial assistance award package.

### **7.3.3 Evaluation and Impact**

As per authorizing language, as a condition of receiving a grant, grant recipients shall agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds. Upon selection of grant awardees, USDA will provide further guidance and direction regarding evaluation protocols and common indicators. Applicants should expect that evaluation protocols will include both process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had). Awarded applicants may be asked to share feedback with USDA to evaluate the Agency's customer service performance. In addition, awardees may be asked to participate in a third-party evaluation conducted by FNS' Office of Policy Support.

## **7.4 Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

### **7.4.1 Confidentiality of an Applicant**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of FNS transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. Any application that does not result in an award will be not released to the public. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **7.4.2 Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process**

The agency requires all panel reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and

evaluation process. Names of applicants, including states and tribal governments, submitting an application will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

### **7.4.3 Administrative Regulations Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions**

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

### **Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions**

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

### **Debarment and Suspension 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417**

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, "Debarment and Suspension," codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking [SAM website](#).

### **Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25**

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number and a SAM number. Please also refer to Section 4.6.2. FNS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with the requirements described in 2 CFR 25 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active CCR registration with current information.

### **Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information 2 CFR Part 170**

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Public Law 109– 282), as

amended by Section 6202 of Public Law 110–252 requires primary grantees of Federal grants and cooperative agreements to report information on sub-grantee obligations and executive compensation. FFATA promotes open government by enhancing the Federal Government’s accountability for its stewardship of public resources. This is accomplished by making Government information, particularly information on Federal spending, accessible to the general public.

Primary grantees, including State Agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates \$25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first- tier sub- grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting System (FSRS). In order to access FSRS a current CCR registration is required. A primary grantee and first-tier sub-grantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives. Every primary and first-tier grantee must obtain a DUNS number prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

#### **Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417**

Section 872 of this Act requires the development and maintenance of a Federal Government information system that contains specific information on the integrity and performance of covered Federal agency contractors and grantees. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) was developed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from the CCR database, and suspension and debarment information from the EPLS. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

#### **Code of Federal Regulations and Other Government Requirements**

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II. Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and Central Locator Contractor Registration”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR 200: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR 400: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA “Implementation of OMB Guidance on Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 2 CFR Part 418 USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”



- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

General Terms and Conditions of the award may be obtained electronically. Please contact the Grants Officers at:

Grants and Fiscal Policy Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS  
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
E-mail: [farmtoschool@usda.gov](mailto:farmtoschool@usda.gov)

## 8.0 Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

---

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact us at: [farmtoschool@usda.gov](mailto:farmtoschool@usda.gov). Please note that agency contacts are only available during Eastern Standard Time operating hours.

Please visit the [Office of Community Food Systems' applicant resource page](#) for RFA supporting materials such as our FAQ document. For more general information about the Office of Community Food Systems, please [visit our website](#).

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's [Applicant Support](#)

## 9.0 Other Information

---

### 9.1 What is Farm to School?

While individual farm to school programs are shaped by their unique community, geographic region, and scope, the term 'farm to school' is generally understood to include efforts that connect schools with local or regional farmers, food processors, and manufacturers in order to serve local or regionally procured foods in school cafeterias. Bringing more locally sourced, fresh fruits and vegetables into school cafeterias is a foundational activity of many farm to school efforts; procuring locally sourced, minimally processed main meal items so that the entire school meal is representative of regional options is also a focus of many farm to school programs. Thus, USDA considers farm to school to be inclusive of many types of producers, such as farmers, ranchers, and fishermen, as well as many types of food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers, distributors, and other value-added operations.

In addition to procurement activities, farm to school programs often include agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts including standards-based curriculum and a whole host of hands-on experiential activities, such as school gardens, field trips to local farms, and cooking classes. For example, students might dissect vegetables in science class, run farm stands using school garden produce to learn business skills, or practice data visualization techniques using plant growth measurements, all contributing to a holistic approach to learning centered on food, agriculture, and nutrition. To embed farm to school activities into school culture, promotional and outreach efforts often aim to keep farm to school activities front and center in both the school and broader community.

As the potential impact of farm to school programs is significant, sophisticated evaluation and impact assessments are routinely used to monitor progress toward goals. Ultimately, farm to school programs are believed to strengthen children's and communities' knowledge about, and attitudes toward, agriculture, food, nutrition, and the environment, increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables, increase market opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and food manufacturers, and support economic development across numerous sectors.

## 9.2 A Vision for Health and Economic Opportunity

In USDA's vision, school cafeterias championing U.S. agriculture and proudly promoting regionally sourced foods that meet or exceed school nutrition standards are the norm, not the exception. Regional offerings, and therefore economic opportunities for U.S. food producers, span the school meal tray and include everything from the salad bar and fresh fruit and vegetable servings to the wheat in the pizza crust, beans in the chili, rice in the stir fry, turkey in the sandwiches, and cheese in the quesadillas. As routinely requested in bid specifications as the requirement to adhere to nutrition standards, activities related to sourcing regional foods are integrated into everyday workflows.

USDA fully recognizes that the vision described above is most likely to be achieved when food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts are also part of a school's daily rhythm. Thus, we view regional procurement activities as integrated with complementary efforts to encourage healthy eating behaviors. Ultimately, we expect dual health and wellness and economic prosperity impacts, where food-literate children graduate empowered to make life-long healthy eating choices and the U.S. school cafeteria represents a consistently reliable market for U.S. agricultural producers.

Consistent with the authorizing language referenced in Section 1.1, Legislative Authority, to achieve these outcomes, with this RFA, USDA intends to strategically invest in a wide variety of farm to school initiatives that improve access to local and regional foods in eligible schools.

Helping schools find and procure regionally produced food is a key component of the USDA's [local and regional food systems work](#). For more information on USDA's many farm to school initiatives, or to access resources associated with farm to school, please visit USDA's [Office of Community Food Systems website](#).

## Appendix A: Urban/Rural Classification Instructions

To determine urban/rural classification, please use the National Center for Education Statistics [online tool](#).

- 1) Go to the [search site](#).
- 2) Enter search criteria (*Tip: Use general search terms and then select from the results list, e.g., to search for Medina City Schools in Medina, Ohio, enter Medina in the 'district name' field and Ohio in the 'state' field. Then you can choose Medina City Schools from the search results.*)
- 3) Click 'Search'.
- 4) Choose the school/district from the search results.
- 5) Scroll down to 'Locale' and note the classification code (see screen shot).
- 6) Enter the two-digit classification code (e.g., 11, 12, 31) on the Cover Sheet.

**Search for Public Schools** CCD Common Core of Data

NOTE: The inclusion or exclusion of a school in this locator does NOT constitute an endorsement of the school and should NOT be used in any way to infer the accreditation status of the school.

**School Directory Information** (2017-2018 school year) [Search Results](#) [Modify Search](#) [Data Notes/Grant IDs](#) [Help](#)

<b>School Name:</b> Garfield Elementary School	<b>NCES School ID:</b> 390443801304	<b>State School ID:</b> OH-044388-012914
<b>District Name:</b> Medina City Sd <a href="#">district information</a>	<b>NCES District ID:</b> 3904438	<b>State District ID:</b> OH-044388
<b>Mailing Address:</b> 234 S Broadway St Medina, OH 44256-2602	<b>Physical Address:</b> <a href="#">234 S Broadway St</a> <a href="#">Medina, OH 44256-2602</a>	<b>Phone:</b> (330)636-4200
<b>Type:</b> Regular school	<b>Status:</b> Currently operational	<b>Charter:</b> No
<b>Supervisory Union #:</b> N/A	<b>Grade Span: (grades KG - 5)</b> KG 1 2 3 4 5	
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.medinabees.org">http://www.medinabees.org</a>		

**School Details** (2016-2017 school year)

**County:** [Medina County schools in county](#)

<b>Locale:</b> Suburb: Large (21)	<b>Total Students:</b> 298
<b>Magnet:</b> -	<b>Classroom Teachers (FTE):</b> 19.88
<b>Title I School:</b> Yes	<b>Student/Teacher Ratio:</b> 14.99
<b>Title I School-Wide Program:</b> Yes	

### Urban Classifications

11 – City, Large	21 – Suburb, Large	31 – Town, Fringe
12 – City, Midsize	22 – Suburb, Midsize	32 – Town, Distant
13 – City, Small	23 – Suburb, Small	33 – Town, Remote

### Rural Classifications

41 – Rural, Fringe
42 – Rural, Distant
43 – Rural, Remote

For complete definitions, visit the [National Center for Education Statistics website](#).

## Appendix B: Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire

---

Recipients of Federal funds must maintain adequate accounting systems that meet the criteria outlined in 2 CFR §200.302 Standards for Financial and Program Management. The responses to this questionnaire are used to assist in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency’s (FNS) evaluation of your accounting system to ensure the adequate, appropriate, and transparent use of Federal funds. Failure to comply with the criteria outlined in the regulations above may preclude your organization from receiving an award. This form applies to FNS’ competitive and noncompetitive grant programs. Please return this questionnaire with your application package to us.

### Organization Information

<b>Legal Organization Name:</b>	
<b>DUNS Number:</b>	

### Financial Stability and Quality of Management Systems

Requirement	Yes	No
1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does your organization separate the duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does your organization have a property /inventory management system in place to track location and value of equipment purchased under the award?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Audit Reports and Findings

Requirement	Yes	No
1. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years? (If the answer is "Yes" and this report was issued under the Single Audit Act please note this in the box below marked "Additional Information" and if not issued under the "Single Audit Act", please attach a copy or provide a link to the audit report in the Hyperlink space below).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Qualified Opinion" or an "Adverse Opinion"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Material Weakness" disclosed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a “Significant Deficiency” disclosed? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Provide Hyperlink to any audit findings (if available):
6. Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:

**Applicant Certification**

I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Authorized Representative’s Signature and Date Name:
Date:
Phone:
Email:

## Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs

---

There is limited funding to accomplish Farm to School Grant Program goals. Grantees will want to ensure that the best use of the available funding is achieved. Expenditures and purchases need to contribute to a sustainable program or activity. In approving grant or sub-grant requests, a positive answer should always be sought to the following questions:

1. Is the cost applicable to my grant and/or the sub-grant's objectives?
2. Is the cost allowable according to program cost principles?
3. Is the cost reasonable and appropriate?

Among other costs, budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings.

All equipment over \$5,000 has additional reporting and disposition requirements. Please see the regulations found at 2 CFR §200.313 and confirm that you are willing and able to meet the additional requirements. The regulation can be found online at [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1#se2.1.200\\_1313](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1#se2.1.200_1313).

Because AmeriCorps is a federally funded program, grant funds may not be used to pay for AmeriCorps personnel, either directly or with matching funds. The same is true for FoodCorps, as they are funded with AmeriCorps funds.

### **Allowable Costs for Farm to School Grants: General guidance of selected items under the Cost Principles**

#### **Evaluation**

Farm to School Grant funds may be used to support costs associated with evaluation activities. The evaluation methods and measurement tools in the proposal must be appropriate for the grant objective.

#### **Food Cost**

Farm to School Grant funds may not be used to purchase food for consumption in school meal programs. Farm to School Grant funds may not be used to purchase a meal for anyone. Grant funds may be used to pay for food if the food is part of a specific grant/training activity. For example, conducting a student taste test of a new menu item or demonstrating preparation techniques during a training, are reasonable requests. The use of the food must be related to training or directly related to an activity that satisfies the objective of the chosen grant track. The total expenditure of food purchases may not exceed ten percent of the federal share of the total grant award. For each sub-grant, the food expenditures may not exceed twenty percent of the funds awarded.

#### **Food and Nutrition Equipment**

Farm to School Grant funds may be used to purchase small foodservice operation equipment, such as salad bar components, slicers, food processors, electric skillets, and mixers. The equipment must be used for training school meal professionals and/or increasing their capacity to improve school meals. Equipment costs must be less than \$5,000 per unit.



### **Medical Equipment**

Farm to School Grant funds may **not** be used to purchase medical equipment or health services related to health assessments, such as obtaining clinical data on nutritional status, chronic disease, or chronic disease risk assessment.

### **Promotional Items**

The purchase of promotional items is allowed if they are directly related to the grant proposal's objective. Any cost associated with such promotions must be reasonable in comparison to the grant funding. A total expenditure of promotional items should not exceed 5 percent of a total sub-grant awarded.

### **Staff Development and/or Substitute Pay**

If adequate funding is available, Farm to School Grant funds may be used to hire a substitute food service staff person while school food service managers attend workshops and training. For accounting purposes, a record of who attended the session, how long it lasted, and the purpose of the session is required.

### **Sub-grants from State Agencies**

State agencies that award sub-grants are expected to:

- Ensure that all sub-grant recipients are eligible and participate in a program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.
- Provide oversight to these sub-grant recipients to ensure that expenditures authorized under the sub-grants are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
- Ensure that all expenditures are consistent with all local, State, and Federal policies, regulations, and procedures.
- Ensure that the expenditure does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under similar circumstances and would qualify as a sound business practice.
- Ensure that funds support the grant track objective.
- State agencies that apply for Farm to School Grant funds with a proposal to award sub-grants must describe in the project narrative their process for awarding sub-grants.

### **Travel**

Reimbursement for local travel and hotel costs for school nutrition managers to attend trainings and activities is allowable. A clear oversight process must be in place to ensure the appropriate use of funds according to established travel allowances within the State.

## Appendix D: Optional Priority Group Declaration Form

---

If your project reaches one or more priority groups and you would like to be considered for bonus priority points, please complete this form and include it with your application submission.

Any applicant whose project meets one or more priority areas will receive ten (10) additional points added to their total score when their proposal is reviewed. Please note that applicants claiming priority consideration must indicate at least one priority area served by their project in order to receive points. Applicants may claim as many priority groups as they like, but no more than 10 points will be awarded for priority consideration.

If USDA is unable to verify that an applicant is eligible for any priority groups claimed below, the applicant may not be permitted to qualify for priority consideration. Please see Section 1.4 “Funding Priorities” of the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Request for Applications (RFA) for more details.

Please check at least one priority group that you would like to claim:

- At least 40% of children served are eligible for free or reduced price meals
- Project is located in or targets an Opportunity Zone
- Indian Tribal Organization (ITO)
- Serving a tribal community (not ITO)