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Farm to School Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2021 Request for Applications

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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 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, these grants can help new farm to school programs get started or expand existing efforts. These 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 2020 application and award cycle, FNS received 204 eligible applications and funded 159 (78 percent) of the applications. To be competitive, applications must be complete, i.e., fully responsive, and of high quality.

As mandated by the NSLA, selected grant projects will be awarded no more than \$100,000 each. There are three funding tracks available for FY 2021: New Turnkey grants, Implementation grants, and State Agency grants. Each track, along with the related eligibility requirements, is described in more detail below. Please see Section 3.0 for additional eligibility information. State agencies that received a Farm to School Grant in any prior year are eligible to apply for the State Agency track in FY 2021, and State agencies with active farm to school projects may still apply to the State Agency grant track or applicable Turnkey track project. Eligible applicants who received an award in a fiscal year prior to 2018 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 and cannot be waived.

Please refer to the FY 2021 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 Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 2:30 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 2021 Highlights and Changes

Below are highlights of major changes to the FY 2021 Farm to School Grant Program and RFA since the last fiscal year.

- FNS has moved from Planning, Implementation and State Agency grant tracks to the new Turnkey, Implementation, and State Agency tracks.
- While we have removed the specific Planning track from previous years, planning activities are now available through the Turnkey track. Applicants may include planning activities as elements of the Implementation and State Agency tracks. The Turnkey track streamlines the application requirements and process for FY 2021.
 - Project requirements are pre-defined and limited to a specific set of key activities. The application features significantly fewer required proposal sections. Applicants are encouraged to apply for the Turnkey track if they want to implement their choice of four projects specified by FNS. Note that certain eligibility requirements still apply depending on entity type.
 - The four projects available under the Turnkey track are Action Planning projects; Agricultural Education Curriculum projects; Edible Garden projects; and Producer Training projects. Proposal templates are provided for each within the RFA.
 - A budget narrative template is included in Appendix D of the RFA to assist applicants with completing the budget narrative section of their application.
- Funding is now available for smaller amounts than in previous years via the Turnkey track, as there are no minimum request amounts in the Turnkey track.
- Small- to medium-sized agricultural producers are now eligible for priority consideration.
- Institutions participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and/or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) are now eligible for funding regardless of whether the program is located at a school-based site.
- Objectives for the State Agency and Implementation Grant tracks have been streamlined and the project narrative section of the RFA has been simplified to reflect that Implementation and State Agency applicants will submit their proposal narrative using the same structure.
- The Grantee Gathering first-year training meeting is now a required activity for all Implementation and State Agency grantees. Attendance is optional but encouraged for Turnkey grantees.
 - If USDA hosts the Grantee Gathering as an in-person opportunity, the event will take place in the San Diego, CA area. The RFA contains information about how to budget for attendance at the Grantee Gathering.
- A suggested budget narrative template is now available in the RFA, located in Appendix D.

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.
- ☐ If applicable, you complete the Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist – include in project narrative (does not count towards page limit)

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 matching funds must comply with [2 CFR Part 200.306](#).
- ☐ 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 grantee training meeting (the Grantee Gathering) hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. USDA may transition to a virtual meeting but encourages applicants to budget for an in-person opportunity in the San Diego, CA area.
- ☐ Types of equipment and supplies to be purchased 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)
- ☐ FNS-906 – Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (included at the end of the RFA)
- ☐ SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.
- ☐ 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)

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-1050](#) – Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative II – For Grantees Who Are 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)

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1.0 Program Description

1.1 Legislative Authority

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) 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 Program was made available through the FY 2018 through FY 2020 agricultural appropriations and, as a result, FNS expects to award approximately \$10 million 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.

In addition to legislatively mandated priorities, FY 2021 Farm to School Grant awards will offer priority scoring incentives to applications serving at least 40% of students who are eligible for free or reduced price meals; applications from Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and entities serving tribal communities; applications from agricultural producers and groups of agricultural producers; and projects located in or targeting Opportunity Zones. Specific information about FY 2021 funding priorities is available in Section 1.4 FY 2021 Funding Priorities.

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. Please refer to Section 2.4 for a discussion of matching and in-kind requirements.

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 Turnkey 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 applicants may only submit one application. . Applicants should carefully read the entire RFA to determine which grant track is best for their situation before submitting an application.

1.3.1 Turnkey Grant

The Turnkey grant is a new opportunity available for all eligible applicants, intended to streamline and simplify the application process by requiring that all Grantees must engage in specific, prescribed activities needed to complete each Grant. FNS has identified the activities prescribed by the Turnkey grant as model programs that organizations can replicate with sufficient customization to meet the unique needs of their communities. To submit a Turnkey proposal, applicants must submit a proposal narrative summarizing the background and need and explaining how the applicant will complete specific activities required by FNS. A template for each Turnkey application narrative is contained in Section 4.2 of this RFA and will be provided online through the [Resources for Grant Applicants webpage](#). Please note that all Turnkey applicants, except for State agencies, are required to submit school or site information using the Farm to School Coversheet. Turnkey applications that require school or site information but that do not include it on the coversheet will be removed from consideration.

Applicants applying to the Turnkey track agree to conduct specific activities defined by FNS. Applicants interested in the Turnkey track may choose from one of four projects: (1) Farm to School Action Plan Development; (2) Agricultural Education Curriculum development and delivery; (3) Edible Garden projects; or (4) USDA Farm to School Producer Training. The required activities for each Turnkey proposal are listed below; when submitting a Turnkey application, applicants must commit to completing all of the required activities listed. Applicants are encouraged to utilize or follow the corresponding proposal narrative template provided in Section 4.2 Turnkey Application Content:

Proposal Narrative, as failure to do so may significantly weaken the proposal. The pre-selected activities are already populated in the proposal narrative template to simplify the application process. Additional activities added by the applicant will not be considered, and may weaken the applicant's proposal.

Applicants may only apply to one Turnkey project, and applicants may not apply to more than one grant track in the same year. Turnkey applications prescribe specific activities and may not offer the best fit for every applicant; therefore, the Implementation or State Agency tracks may be a better fit for applicants with an interest in innovative, original proposals and/or proposals that cover a broad range of activities. More information about the Implementation and State Agency tracks is available in Section 1.4.2 below.

Please note that if awarded, grantees are required to report on progress towards completing the objectives and activities specified in their application using the FNS-908 Performance Progress Report form provided by FNS.

Required Activities: Farm to School Action Plan

The Farm to School Action Plan project focuses on activities that will lay a solid foundation for launching or scaling farm to school work. Recipients of these grants must develop a comprehensive Farm to School Action Plan document, the submission of which is required at the end of the period of performance.

Please note that the activities below are required for all Action Planning Project grantees. Applicants must indicate in the proposal narrative that they will conduct all of the following activities and provide a brief explanation of how they will conduct the activities, responsible parties, and the proposed timeline. Applicants are encouraged to use the proposal narrative template provided in Section 4.2.1 Action Planning Project Narrative Template, where all activities are pre-populated for the applicant. **Failure to respond to one or more of the below activities may result in a reduced score during review.**

- Identify and regularly convene the farm to school planning team.
- Identify at least one gap or need in the community that the project will address.
- Establish a vision and goals.
- Define "local."
- Identify and include both local procurement and agricultural education activities in the plan.
- Identify any State and/or local health requirements with which the participating organizations must comply.
- Determine how local foods will be incorporated at the eligible school(s).
- Determine how delivery, processing, and storage of local foods will take place.
- Determine how project partners will promote the farm to school program.
- Identify diverse funding to ensure the project's sustainability.
- Develop an evaluation plan.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in section 4.0 Application and Submission Information. Please note that Action Planning project grantees are NOT expected to fully realize a

comprehensive farm to school program by the end of the 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.

Required Activities: Agricultural Education Curriculum Development and Delivery

The Agricultural Education Curriculum Development and Delivery project focuses on connecting students with their food and/or preparing them for careers in agriculture through thoughtful and relevant agricultural education. The below activities are required for applicants to the Agricultural Education Curriculum Development and Delivery project. Applicants must indicate in the proposal narrative that they will conduct all of the following activities and provide a brief explanation of how they will conduct the activities, responsible parties, and the proposed timeline. Applicants are encouraged to use the proposal narrative template provided in Section 4.2.2 Agricultural Education Curriculum Project Narrative Template, where all activities are pre-populated for the applicant.

Failure to respond to one or more of the below activities may result in a reduced score during review.

- Establish a curriculum planning team.
- Establish a vision, goals, and objectives for the curriculum.
- Determine the desired outcomes and competencies to be achieved from the curriculum.
- Identify state standards connected to the curriculum.
- Identify the student population who will participate in the curriculum.
- Develop or procure the curriculum.
- Determine how the agricultural education curriculum will be integrated into participating schools.
- Incorporate the agricultural education curriculum into school activities.
- Identify strategies for ensuring the curriculum remains integrated with school/district activities beyond the period of performance.
- Conduct an evaluation of the project.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in Section 4.0 Application and Submission Information.

Required Activities: Edible Garden Project

The Edible Garden Project focuses on developing food-producing gardens based at schools and/or CACFP/SFSP sites. Please note, for the purposes of this opportunity, “Edible Garden” includes any food production operation based at an eligible school, including gardens, farms, aquaponics, livestock, etc. The below activities are required for applicants to the Turnkey grant for Edible Garden Projects. Applicants must indicate in the proposal narrative that they will conduct all of the following activities and provide a brief explanation of how they will conduct the activities, responsible parties, and the proposed timeline. Applicants are encouraged to use the proposal narrative template provided in Section 4.2.3 Edible Garden Project Narrative Template, where all activities are pre-populated for the applicant. **Failure to respond to one or more of the below activities may result in a reduced score during review.**

- Establish an edible garden planning committee.
- Establish a vision, goals, and objectives for the edible garden project.

- Identify and comply with any applicable Federal, State, and/or local regulations.
- Develop a garden food safety plan.
- Determine how processing, storage, and ultimate use of school garden foods will take place.
- Procure supplies for installing the edible garden(s).
- Install the edible garden(s).
- Develop a sustainability plan that identifies how activities will continue beyond the grant period of performance.
- Conduct an evaluation of the project.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in Section 4.0 Application and Submission Information.

Required Activities: Producer Training

The Producer Training project funds State agencies interested in developing the farm to school market for agricultural producers through training and technical assistance, using the *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training* curriculum provided by USDA. Please note that all applicants who agree to host a *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training* must attend a Regional Train the Trainer Workshop; however, applicants are not required to use Farm to School Grant Funds to pay for attendance at the Regional Train the Trainer Workshop. If an applicant agrees to use Farm to School Grant funds to pay for attendance to the Regional Workshop, the applicant is then required to host its own *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training*.

All State agencies are eligible for this project, but State agencies that do not administer Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) must include a letter of commitment from the CNP-administering agency. **No other entity type is eligible for this project.** The below activities are required for applicants to the Producer Training project. Applicants must indicate in the proposal narrative that they will conduct all of the following activities and provide a brief explanation of how they will conduct the activities, responsible parties, and the proposed timeline. Applicants are encouraged to use the proposal narrative template provided in Section 4.2.4 Producer Training Project Narrative Template, where all activities are pre-populated for the applicant. **Failure to respond to one or more of the below activities may result in a reduced score during review.**

- Assemble a training team.
- Attend the Regional Train-the-Trainer workshop hosted in your FNS Region.
- Schedule a date to host your own *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Training*.
- Identify and reserve a location for the *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Training*.
- Promote the *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Training* opportunity in your State using the outreach and marketing guide provided by FNS.
- Host at least one *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Training* using the curriculum materials provided by FNS.
- Conduct an evaluation of your training according to the requirements in the USDA curriculum and using the survey tools provided.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in Section 4.0 Application and Submission Information. Please note that State agencies are not eligible for any other Turnkey project.

1.3.2 Implementation and State Agency Tracks

The Implementation and State Agency tracks return from the FY 2020 Farm to School Grant Program opportunity. These tracks provide an opportunity for applicants to propose projects that support innovative, original ideas, and/or encompass a broader scope than the discrete, pre-designed activities prescribed under the Turnkey track.

Please note that if awarded, grantees are required to report on progress towards completing the objectives and activities specified in their application using the FNS-908, Performance Progress Report form provided by FNS.

Required Objective and Activities

OCFS seeks proposals that align with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program goals as described in Section I.0: Legislative Authority. Grant activities must support the following objective:

- **Objective: Improve access to local foods in eligible schools through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.**

If an applicant chooses to apply through the Implementation or State Agency track, the proposed activities must support the above objective. Applicants to Implementation or State Agency grants must therefore clearly indicate in their proposal narrative how proposed activities align with the required objective. More information is available in Section 4.3 Implementation and State Agency Application Content: Project Narrative.

Required Activities

Please note that the activity below is required for all Implementation and State Agency 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 grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period.

Implementation Grants

Applicants to the Implementation track may propose any combination of activities that align with the required Farm to School Grant Program objective stated above. Examples of activities supported by Implementation grants include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting a regional farm to school institute;
- 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, SFSP, or CACFP;
- Operating service projects that support farm to school initiatives in eligible schools;

- Ready 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 featuring local products;
- 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).

Please note that applicants interested in a limited project to conduct Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, or Edible Garden projects are recommended to apply using the Turnkey track.

State Agency Grants

State Agency grants are intended to increase the amount of local food served in eligible facilities participating in CNPs by funding State agencies to support and grow farm to CNP efforts in their States. Eligible State agencies include any State-level agency working to promote farm to CNP activities in facilities participating in CNPs, 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 commitment from the relevant CNP-administering State agency. Eligible State agencies are not eligible for the Implementation track.

Eligible State agencies applying to the State Agency track may design any project or program that aims to make local food products available on the menu of the eligible CNP facility 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.

In the Proposal Narrative, applicants must identify the required objective from Section 1.3.2 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. Please note that failure to identify the required objective may result in a reduced score during review.

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

- Supporting a regional farm to school institute;
- Hosting a *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producer Training* as one component of a project containing other activities aligned with the required objective;
- Hiring staff to support statewide farm to school, farm to summer, and/or farm to CACFP efforts;
- Building, expanding, and/or regularly convening a network of key partners;
- Developing or enhancing State-level farm to school, farm to summer, and/or farm to CACFP 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 a statewide marketing campaign or recognition program(s);
- 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.¹

1.4 FY 2021 Funding Priorities

In addition to the general program purpose and priorities outlined in Section 1.1 above, USDA emphasizes the following priorities for FY 2021:

- 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.
- Applications from small- to medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- to medium-sized agricultural producers. Please refer to the specific eligibility criteria in Section 3.0 for the definition of an eligible small- to medium-sized agricultural producer.
- 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

¹ Recipients of sub-grants in the State Agency track may be any eligible entity for the FY 2021 Farm to School Grant.

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 as outlined above and the applicant would like to be considered for an additional *10 bonus priority points* to be added to the scoring of their application, please fill out the checklist included in Appendix D of this RFA, entitled "Fiscal Year 2021 Priority Group Declaration Checklist" and include the completed statement with the Project Narrative. The Priority Group Declaration Checklist does not count towards the narrative page limit. Applicants that do not complete the Priority Group Declaration Checklist will not be eligible for consideration of these bonus points. If USDA is unable to verify information declared on the Priority Group Declaration Checklist, 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 letter of credit process, 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. FNS may announce awards at different times.

2.2 Award Amounts and Period of Performance

Turnkey grant awards will range up to \$50,000 for Action Planning, Edible Garden, and Agricultural Education Curriculum projects, with no minimum award amount. Turnkey grant awards will range up to \$25,000 for the Producer Training project, available to State agencies only, with no minimum award amount. 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.

Please note that periods of performance and award amounts vary by grant track. The period of performance for the FY 2021 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
Turnkey Grant (Action Planning and Edible Garden projects ONLY)	12 months	Schools or institutions that participate in CACFP, SFSP, NSLP, and/or the National School Breakfast Program; local agencies; ITOs; agricultural producers; and non-profit entities	Up to \$50,000
Turnkey Grant (Agricultural Education Curriculum project ONLY)	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	Schools or institutions that participate in CACFP, SFSP, NSLP, and/or the National School Breakfast Program; local agencies; ITOs; agricultural producers; and non-profit entities	Up to \$50,000
Turnkey grant (Producer Training project ONLY)	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	State agencies (Departments of Education, Agriculture, Health, etc.)	Up to \$25,000
Implementation grants	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	Schools or institutions that participate in CACFP, SFSP, NSLP, and/or the National School Breakfast Program; local agencies; ITOs; agricultural producers; and non-profit entities	\$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 Action Planning Turnkey 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 B 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
- $\$8,000 \times 25\% = \$2,000$ (amount of Federal funds that can be 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; therefore, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. **Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes only, 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. Any food purchase, as well as any expenditures associated with food purchases, must be clearly identified within the submitted budget narrative.

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, non-profit 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 considered separate from letters of commitment described in Sections 3.1 and 4.5, and match letters are not subject to the three document limit that applies to letters of commitment. 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 following eligible entities, which are described in more detail below:

- Institutions, including schools, school districts, and non-school based sites, that operate the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Program(s), CACFP, and/or SFSP. On the coversheet, any applicant to whom this definition applies should select "Eligible school" for entity type;
- 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 schools or institutions that participate in the National School Lunch

Program (NSLP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) as authorized under the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act or the School Breakfast Program established under section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (SBP). The school(s) or site(s) that comprise the primary target audience for or beneficiary of the grant project must have an agreement with the appropriate administering State agency to participate in the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, and must be in good standing. Where a School Food Authority (SFA) exists, the application must come from the SFA, and only one application per SFA is allowed.

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, and is only eligible if participating in NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the School Breakfast Program. For-profit institutions participating in the CACFP are eligible to apply, but only for projects implemented for facilities or sites served by CACFP.

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.).

Local agencies are considered to be any unit of government within a State, including but not limited to 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 Turnkey Grant Eligibility

Eligibility varies depending on project selection. For the Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, and Edible Garden projects, eligible entities are schools or institutions that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, National School Lunch Program, or School Breakfast Program; local agencies; Indian tribal organizations; small- and medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- and medium-sized agricultural producers; and non-profit entities.

State agencies are only eligible for the Producer Training project, and no other entity is eligible for the Producer Training project. The State agency is not required to administer the CNPs, but if the applicant does not administer CNPs then the applicant must include a letter of commitment from the CNP-administering State agency.

Turnkey Project	Eligible Entity Type(s)
Action Planning	Schools or institutions that participate in CACFP, SFSP, NSLP, and/or the National School Breakfast Program; local agencies; ITOs; agricultural producers; and non-profit entities
Edible Garden	Schools or institutions that participate in CACFP, SFSP, NSLP, and/or the National School Breakfast Program; local agencies; ITOs; agricultural producers; and non-profit entities
Agricultural Education Curriculum	Schools or institutions that participate in CACFP, SFSP, NSLP, and/or the National School Breakfast Program; local agencies, ITOs; agricultural producers; and non-profit entities
Producer Training	State agencies

3.2 Implementation Grant Eligibility

Eligible schools or institutions that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, National School Lunch Program, or School Breakfast Program; 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 Implementation grants. State agencies are ineligible to apply to Implementation grants.

If a proposal seeks to target specific school(s) or sites, schools or sites discussed in the project proposal as benefiting from the project must be eligible as defined in Section 3.0.

Please note, Schools, school districts, Indian Tribal Organizations, producers, and non-profit organizations that have received Implementation, or formerly awarded Training grants through the Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2018, FY 2019, or FY 2020) are not eligible to apply for an Implementation Grant in FY 2021. Former Planning grantees may apply for the Farm to School Implementation grant after the active Planning grant has been completely closed out, meaning all reports and deliverables have been submitted, reviewed, and accepted, and all funds deobligated.²

3.3 State Agency Grant Eligibility

Only State agencies are eligible to apply to the Producer Training Turnkey grant or the State Agency grants. 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 or the Producer Training project under the Turnkey track, but may apply for the Implementation track or the Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, or Edible Garden projects within the Turnkey 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 award sub-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.

3.4 Additional Eligibility Requirements

One grant application per entity: Applicants must choose between submitting a Turnkey, Implementation, or State Agency grant request and may only submit one application. Applicants who submit an application to more than one track will be eliminated from the competition. Applicants interested in including Turnkey activities as components of a larger project should apply through the Implementation or State Agency track.

- **Current and previous Implementation and Training grantees:** In order to ensure diversity among awardees, organizations that have received Implementation or Training grants through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2018 - FY 2020) are ineligible to apply for an Implementation grant in FY 2021. State agencies that have received grants in FY 2018, FY 2019, or FY 2020 **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 2021 farm to school funding. Past Implementation grantees **must** closeout all current grant work (submit all required documentation) in order to be eligible for the Turnkey track.
- **Past Planning grantees:** While being a past Planning grant recipient does not guarantee an

² Planning grantees who received a COVID19 related No Cost Extension (NCE) may apply for FY 2021 grant funding. However, if awarded, the applicant may not begin any new awarded project activities until the prior grant has been completely closed out and all funds deobligated.

Implementation award, previous Planning grantees who have completed all closeout activities at the time that the RFA closes³ may apply for funding to the Implementation track or the Agricultural Education Curriculum or Edible Garden projects within the Turnkey track. Past planning grantees are not eligible to apply for the Action Planning project in the Turnkey track.

- Cooperative Extension Service⁴ 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.

3.4.1 Fiscal Sponsors/Agents

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. If the fiscal sponsor is located in a different State from where activities will occur, please note the difference clearly in the application.

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.

3.5 Grantee Requirements

All grant recipients must:

- Participate in orientation calls and onboarding webinars.
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA, including but not limited to, 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

³ Planning grantees who received a COVID19 related No Cost Extension (NCE) may apply for FY 2021 grant funding regardless of closeout status at the time the FY 2021 application closes; however, if awarded the applicant may not begin any new awarded project until the prior grant has been completely closed out and all funds deobligated.

⁴ 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>

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 project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or Organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.”
- 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, conferences, and/or other events within or between States.
- Where relevant, disseminate [USDA Farm to School Program fact sheets](#) and other relevant resource materials found on the [Farm to School website](#).
- **All Implementation and State Agency Grant applicants** must attend a mandatory grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. USDA will host the meeting in-person if possible, but may host the gathering as a virtual event. The meeting is optional for Turnkey applicants. To ensure that grantees reserve sufficient funding to attend an in-person meeting, grant applicants should:
 - 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;
 - estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc. When budgeting for these costs, please assume that attendance will require travel to a venue in the San Diego, CA area; and
 - include travel for this meeting in the first year of the grant only.

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

All applications, unless otherwise noted, should meet the following formatting guidelines:

- Implementation and State Agency applicants must include a **table of contents** (not counted towards page limit);
- Narrative Response
 - **3-page** maximum length for **Turnkey track** narrative response (Background and Need plus Proposal Narrative).
 - **5-page** maximum length for **Implementation or State Agency** narrative response.
 - **3-page** maximum length for **Project Work Plan Table** response in Implementation or State Agency applications (does not count towards the 5-page limit for narrative response). Formatting the table in landscape orientation rather than portrait orientation is acceptable, but the 3-page maximum length still applies.

- 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.
- **All applicants** are required to submit a budget narrative. There is no page limit on the budget narrative and it does not count toward the page limit for any other section. A budget narrative template is available in appendix D of the RFA, which applicants are encouraged to use for completing the budget narrative section of their application.
- 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, Chief, Grants Management Operations Branch." 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 Turnkey Application Content: Project Narrative

In order to apply for a project in the Turnkey track, applicants must indicate that they will complete the activities prescribed in Section 1.3.1 Turnkey Grant and include a section in their narrative for farm to school background and need (see below). All Turnkey applicants must:

- Submit a budget narrative 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, include the calculation that shows how that expense was derived, and briefly describe how the total amount for that line item was determined. More information is available below and in Section 4.4. Application Content: Budget and Budget Narrative. Applicants are encouraged to use the budget narrative template available in Appendix D.
- For all entity types except for State agencies, ensure you have provided the free/reduced price lunch, rural/urban classification code, and student demographics for each of the project participants on the Farm to School Coversheet.
- Include one-page letter of commitment from at least one and no more than three of the most important community organizations, farms, and/or businesses that will be involved in the project. If a State agency applicant does not administer the CNPs, then one letter must come from the CNP-administering State agency.

- Attach a one-page resume for up to three staff who will be paid using grant funds.

Farm to School Background and Need (250 words or less): Identify the target population of your project. Describe the status of farm to school initiatives within your participant population and/or organization and explain how the turnkey project of your choosing fits into your comprehensive farm to school plan. Describe your experience planning and implementing farm to school initiatives (even if limited) that demonstrates your organization has the background necessary to successfully execute the proposed project. Include details about any existing farm to school processes or plans that will make clear to USDA that you will be able to continue project activities beyond the period of performance. All entity types except State agencies must also complete the School Information section on the Farm to School Coversheet. If the applicant is a State agency, the applicant is not required to include school information on the Farm to School Coversheet.

Farm to School Proposal Narrative: The proposal templates on the following pages are pre-populated with all required activities. Applicants are encouraged to copy and paste the template into a text editor (e.g. Microsoft Word) and edit columns B and C in order to provide the requested information. Additional activities will not be considered. Removing or modifying the wording of any activities in column A may result in removal from consideration. It is strongly recommended that applicants **do not edit** column A. Applicants may only apply to one Turnkey project. Ensure that you complete only the template that corresponds to your desired project.

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. Applicants are encouraged to use the budget narrative template available in Appendix D of the RFA when completing this section.

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. A sample budget template that applicants may fill in is available in Appendix D and on the Resources for Grant Program Applicants web page. Please see Section 2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing as well as Section 4.4.1 Budget of the RFA and Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs. All applicants **must** submit a budget narrative and SF-424A (see Section 4.4 for more information). . All funding requests must be in whole dollars only.

4.2.1 Action Planning Project Narrative Template

A: Required Activity (do not edit)	B: Responsible party and how the activity will be accomplished	C: Proposed Timeline
Attend optional training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel	You may mark “NA” <i>for this activity only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.	You may mark “NA” <i>for this activity only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.
Regularly (at least once per quarter) convene the farm to school planning team.		
Identify at least one gap or need in the community that the project will address.		
Establish a vision and goals.		
Define “local.”		
Identify both local procurement and agricultural education activities.		
Identify any State and/or local health requirements with which the participating organizations must comply.		
Determine how delivery, processing, and storage of local foods will take place.		
Determine how local foods will be incorporated at the eligible school(s).		
Determine how project participants will promote the farm to school program.		
Identify diverse funding sources to ensure the project’s sustainability.		
Develop an evaluation plan.		

4.2.2 Agricultural Education Curriculum Project Narrative Template

A: Required Activity (do not edit)	B: Responsible party and how the activity will be accomplished	C: Proposed Timeline
Attend optional training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel	You may mark “NA” <i>for this activity only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.	You may mark “NA” <i>for this activity only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.
Establish a curriculum planning team.		
Establish a vision, goals, and objectives for the curriculum.		
Determine the desired outcomes and competencies to be achieved from the curriculum.		
Identify state standards connected to the curriculum.		
Identify the student population who will participate in the curriculum.		
Develop or procure the curriculum.		
Determine how the agricultural education curriculum will be integrated into participating schools.		
Incorporate the agricultural education curriculum into school activities.		
Identify strategies for ensuring the curriculum remains integrated with school/district activities beyond the period of performance.		
Conduct an evaluation of the project.		

4.2.3 Edible Garden Project Narrative Template

A: Required Activity (do not edit)	B: Responsible party and how the activity will be accomplished	C: Proposed Timeline
Attend optional training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel	You may mark “NA” <i>for this activity only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.	You may mark “NA” <i>for this activity only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.
Establish an edible garden planning committee.		
Establish a vision, goals, and objectives for the edible garden project.		
Identify and comply with any applicable Federal, State, and/or local regulations.		
Develop a garden food safety plan.		
Determine how processing and storage of school garden foods will take place.		
Procure supplies for installing the edible garden(s).		
Install the edible garden(s).		
Develop a sustainability plan that identifies how activities will continue beyond the grant period of performance.		
Conduct an evaluation of the project.		

4.2.4 Producer Training Project Narrative Template

A: Required Activity (do not edit)	B: Responsible party and how the activity will be accomplished	C: Proposed Timeline
Attend optional training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel	You may mark “NA” for this activity <i>only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.	You may mark “NA” for this activity <i>only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Grantee Gathering.
Assemble a training team.		
Attend the Regional Train-the-Trainer workshop hosted in your FNS Region.	You may mark “NA” for this activity <i>only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Regional Workshop.	You may mark “NA” for this activity <i>only</i> if you will not use Farm to School Grant funding to attend the Regional Workshop.
Schedule a date to host your own <i>Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training</i> .		
Identify and reserve a location for the <i>Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training</i> .		
Promote the <i>Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training</i> opportunity in your State using the outreach and marketing guide provided by FNS.		
Host the complete <i>Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Training</i> using the curriculum materials provided by FNS.		
Conduct an evaluation of your training according to the requirements in the USDA curriculum and using the survey tools provided.		

4.3 Implementation Track and State Agency Track Application Content: Project Narrative

Implementation track and State Agency track applicants must organize their applications according to the requirements in this section. Please note that these are two different tracks with separate eligibility requirements, including eligible activities. Both tracks will use the same project narrative structure. For more information about each track, please see Sections 1.3 Grant Tracks and 3.0 Eligibility Information.

While 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 those items asked within each section. Additional information outside the scope of each independent section will not be considered.

- **Farm to School Background and Readiness (400 words or less):** Identify the target population of your project. Include relevant data describing the status of farm to school initiatives within

your participant population and/or organization. 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.

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.

- **Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance (300 words or less):** Describe the management approach (staffing, procurement of contractors [as 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 Sections 4.1 and 4.5 of the RFA for more information.

- **Evaluation Plan (300 words or less):** Briefly 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.

Please note that awardees 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 (300 words or less):** 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 Narrative (1,000 words or less):** Provide a high-level overview of 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. Ensure that any specific activities mentioned in this section are reflected in the Project Work Plan Table section. Where dates are included, activities should not begin before July 1, 2021. 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.
- **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 identifies specific activities that the grantee will pursue to complete the project proposed in the Project Work Plan Narrative. Activities should not begin before July 1, 2021. There is a three page limit on content in the table. A suggested template will be provided on the Resources for Grant Applicants webpage at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants>.

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. Please note that if awarded, grantees will be required to report on **all** activities proposed in their application using the Performance Progress Report provided by FNS. Carefully considering proposed activities and indicators will prepare grantees for their progress reporting requirements if awarded.

A sample table is provided on page 34. 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 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. Formatting the table in landscape orientation rather than portrait orientation is acceptable, but the same page limit still applies.

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)
Attend mandatory training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel	Required	Number Attended	September 2021	September 2021	N/A	Project Manager
Example: Recruit & convene a local foods student/staff advisory committee	Example: Local Procurement	Example: Number attended	Example: October 2021	Example: June 2023	Example: High school students & teachers Cafeteria Staff Central office FNS staff	Example: Jessica Plum, Registered Dietitian, Food and Nutrition Service Department
Example: Deliver training to five farm to school teams, representing multiple States, in a regional farm to school institute.	Example: Local Procurement	Example: Number trained	Example: June 2021	Example: July 2021	Example: Cafeteria staff School Nutrition Director Teachers	Example: Sam Cooke, Director, Example Nonprofit, Inc.
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	Example: Agricultural Education	Example: Number attended	Example: September 2021	Example: June 2023	Example: Cafeteria Manager Science Coordinator Parent Volunteer Custodial Staff Student President	Example: Mrs. Green, Elementary Science Coordinator, ABC School District
Example: Install ten raised beds to expand school garden	Example: Agricultural Education	Example: Number completed	Example: March 2022	Example: April 2023	Example: Elementary Students	Example: Mr. Williams, Head Custodian, ABC Elementary

- **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. Applicants are encouraged to use the budget narrative template available in Appendix D of the RFA when completing this section.

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. A sample budget template that applicants may fill in is available in Appendix D and on the Resources for Grant Program Applicants web page. Please see Section 2.4 Match Requirements and Cost Sharing as well as Section 4.4.1 Budget of the RFA and Appendix C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs. All applicants **must** submit a budget narrative and SF-424A (see Section 4.4 for more information). . All funding requests must be in whole dollars only.

4.4. 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. All funding requests must be in whole dollars only.

4.4.1 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; however, when submitting the SF-424A, **do not break out your budget by year.**

The SF-424a should show total requested Federal funding and match contribution amounts.

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 for more information about match requirements and cost sharing.

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 the grant and be used for educational purposes only. See Section 2.3 Allowable Costs for more information.

Required Activities: If awarded, all Implementation and State Agency grantees must attend a mandatory grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. The meeting is optional for Turnkey grantees. USDA will host the meeting in-person if possible, but may host the gathering as a virtual event. To ensure that grantees reserve sufficient funding to attend an in-person meeting, grant applicants should:

- 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 in the San Diego, CA area.
- Include travel for this meeting in the first year of the grant only.

Indirect Cost Rate: If available, the current approved **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 budget narrative information is submitted in the Project Narrative for each grant track. A budget narrative template is available in **Appendix D**, and applicants are strongly encouraged to use the provided template to ensure alignment between the project narrative, budget narrative, and SF-424A. **All funding requests must be submitted in whole dollars only.**

4.5 Application Content: Attachments

4.5.1 Required Attachments

All Applicants:

- Project Narrative
- Line item budget 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.

Non-profit 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.

Turnkey and Implementation grant applicants (with the exception of State agencies—see below) 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 or Producer Training project in the Turnkey 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.).

4.6 Application Content: Required Grant Application Forms

Refer to the application checklist on page 5 for a list of required grant forms.

4.7 Submitting an Application

4.7.1 Submission Date

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), on January 8, 2021.

- 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 in this or the subsequent fiscal year 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.

4.7.2 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/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
- 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](https://www.grants.gov).
- 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.**

4.7.3 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](#).

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.

4.7.4 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.

Additional information on Organization registration is available on the grants.gov website at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

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 3.0-3.4);
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. Please note that all applicants who meet the criteria for one or more priority areas and submit the optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist will have ten (10) points added to their raw score.

FNS will only score each application based on the grant track and Turnkey project, if applicable, selected by the applicant. FNS will not move the application if the applicant submitted to an incorrect or ineligible category. Please ensure when submitting an application that you only complete the proposal narrative that corresponds to the track and, if applicable, Turnkey project for which you intend to apply.

5.2.1 Scoring for Turnkey Grant Applications

Background and Need (25 points)

- The applicant clearly establishes the need for the program, including clearly identifying the participant population. If applying to the Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, or Edible Garden projects, applicant provides demographic data about project participants using the School Information fields on the Farm to School Coversheet.
- The applicant describes any experience planning and implementing farm to school initiatives (even if limited) that demonstrate the applicant organization has the background necessary to successfully execute the proposed project. The applicant explains how the chosen Turnkey project fits into the comprehensive farm to school plan.
- The applicant includes details about any existing farm to school processes or plans that will make clear to USDA that project activities will continue beyond the period of performance.
- Applicant provides up to three letters of support that demonstrate a demand for the project among the participants and/or within the community.

Project Work Plan Narrative (50 points)

- For each activity defined by FNS, the applicant identifies a responsible party and provides a brief summary explaining how the activity will be completed.
- The applicant does not add to, remove, or edit any activities defined by FNS.
- The applicant provides a realistic timeline for each activity. Activities do not begin earlier than July 1, 2021.
- 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.

Budget (25 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 and derived.
- Budget narrative and project narrative align with one another.

5.2.2 Scoring for Implementation and State Agency Grant Applications

Please note that the Implementation track and State Agency tracks are separate grant tracks, each with its own unique eligibility requirements, including eligible activities. Please ensure that you have applied only to the track for which you are eligible. FNS will not move the application if the applicant submitted to an incorrect or ineligible category.

Farm to School Background and Readiness (10 points)

- Target audience is well-defined and the need for the project is clearly demonstrated. Applicant includes relevant data describing the status of farm to school initiatives within the participant population and/or organization.
- Applicant clearly indicates the required objective (from RFA Section 1.3.2) 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.

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 applicant describes a plan for coordination, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.
- The level of staff allocation is appropriate for 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.
- 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 beyond 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 and discusses partners' and staff's roles in continuing farm to school efforts past the grant period.
- 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 Narrative (15 points)

- Applicant describes the overall project and how the project activities achieve the required objective. The project description support achieving the required objective:
 - Improve access to local foods in eligible schools through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.
- Any specific activities mentioned in the narrative section are reflected in the Project Work Plan Table section.
- Activities are associated with relevant resources and assigned to appropriate parties. Where dates are provided, activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2021. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Narrative includes efforts that relate to both local procurement and agricultural education efforts.

Project Work Plan Table (15 points)

- Activities in the table clearly align with the required objective:
 - Improve access to local foods in eligible schools through comprehensive farm to school 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, 2021. Required activities are included. Overall, the work plan outlines a realistic timeline.
- The Project Work Plan Table aligns with the information in the Project Work Plan Narrative section. Specific activities described in the Project Work Plan Narrative section are included in the Table section. The Project Work Plan Table specifies both local procurement and agricultural education activities.
- 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 4.3 and only one activity on each row. Overall, the table is readable.

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.
- Applicant includes the calculation that shows how each line item expense was derived. Budget calculations clearly show how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- Budget narrative and project narrative align with one another.

5.3 Selection Process

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. The 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 FNS attempts to contact an applicant prior to award and fails to receive a response, the application may be removed from consideration due to unresponsiveness.

5.3.1 Turnkey Grant Selection

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by project type (Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, Edible Garden, or Producer Training) and by score within each project type, starting with the highest score. In FY 2021, FNS has set aside a maximum of \$3 million for Turnkey grants and shall award Turnkey grants until all quality applications are funded, or until no more funding remains from the \$3 million set aside. A list of all applications deemed eligible for award will be submitted to the Selection Official for a final decision regarding funding.

5.3.2 Implementation and State Agency Grant Selection

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by grant type (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.

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. FNS will provide grant funding in whole dollar amounts.

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 is included at the end of the RFA, entitled **Grant Program Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire**. Applicants must answer all of 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 notified 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

Semi-Annual and Final Progress Reports: Progress reports must be sent to the Agency 30 days following the end of each semi-annual period, using the FNS-908 Performance Progress Report (PPR) form. These reports should cover the preceding semi-annual period of activity. The final report is due 90 days after the end date of this Agreement. **Note:** Use of the FNS-908 PPR form is required for all progress and final reports. The FNS-908 PPR form will be sent with the award package and/or can be received upon request to the Grants Officer.

As noted in Sections 1.3 and 4.3, if awarded, grantees will be required to report on **all** activities proposed in their application using the FNS-908, Performance Progress Report. Carefully considering proposed activities and indicators will prepare grantees for their progress reporting requirements if awarded.

The Recipient must report immediately any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that impair the Recipient's ability to meet the project objectives. The notification must include information on action taken or contemplated in response to the problem.

All materials developed with funding from this Agreement must be submitted in an electronic format (preferably Microsoft Word).

The Recipient is strongly encouraged to submit Progress Reports via electronic mail to the Grants Officer listed on the FNS-529. If the Recipient wishes to send a hard copy, an original shall be sent to the address listed on the Grant/Cooperative Agreement Form FNS-529, box 18.

If awarded a grant, the recipient may be expected to submit information about the baseline conditions at the time of award. The recipient will be strongly encouraged to use templates provided by FNS for the baseline and final reports.

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 Restrictions on Federal Funding for Duplicative Scope of Work

By submitting an application for a Farm to School Grant, the applicant agrees that if funded the USDA Farm to School Grant funds will not be used to fund activities already funded by any USDA or other Federal Agency grant program. Please ensure that your application does not contain any duplicative scope of work and funding if other federal grant funding has been awarded. If awarded Farm to School Grant Program funds while another Federal grant application is pending for a duplicative scope of work, the applicant will be required to withdraw the application for other Federal funding.

7.4.4 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 4.7.2. 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)”
- CFR Part 3: “Debt Management”
- 7 CFR Part 16: “Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations”
- 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
 Food and Nutrition Service
 1320 Braddock Place
 Alexandria, VA 22314
 E-mail: kimberly.shields@usda.gov

Executive Order on Combatting Race and Sex Stereotyping

In addition, awardees must comply with the requirements set forth in Section 5 of the executive order combatting race and sexual stereotyping, approved September 20, 2020 as follows:

In accordance with Section 5 of the Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping (issued on September 22, 2020), all award recipients, as a condition of receiving a grant, shall certify that they will not use Federal funds to promote the concepts that (a) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (b) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (c) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex; (d) members of one race or sex cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race or sex; (e) an individual’s moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex; (f) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex; (g) any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex; or (h) meritocracy or traits

such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by a particular race to oppress another race. Although training and education for employee development may otherwise be an allowable cost under 2 CFR 200.472, training or education on the divisive concepts specified in the Executive Order is not an allowable cost unless otherwise provided by law.

8.0 Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact the FNS Grant Officer, Kimberly Shields, at: kimberly.shields@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 Moving Families Forward - Promoting Health and Economic Opportunity Through Farm to School

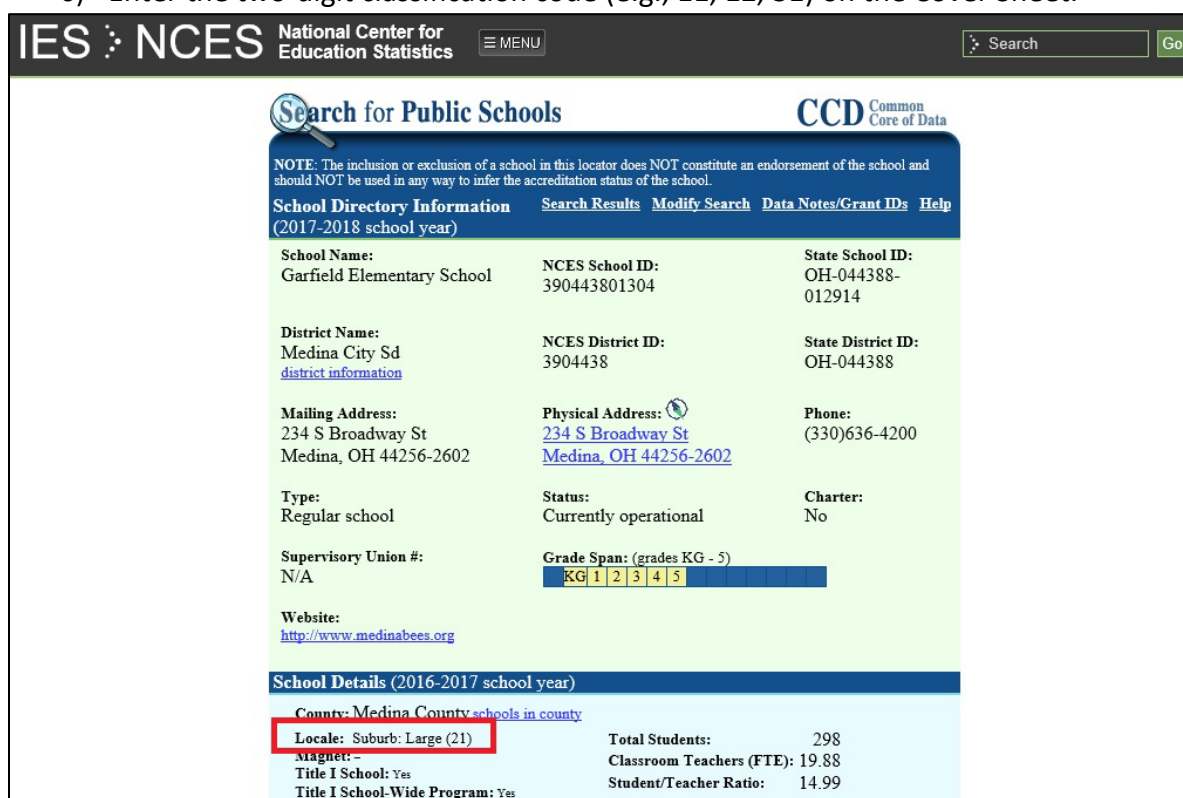
Farm to school programs can play an important role in improving local economies and increasing health and learning outcomes by connecting children and communities to the farm. Effective and comprehensive farm to school programs incorporate locally and regionally produced foods across the entire plate, connect children to food and agriculture education, improve consumption of nutritious food, and inspire children to pursue agriculture related careers while establishing the U.S. school cafeteria as 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.



IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics

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](#)

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

School Details (2016-2017 school year)

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

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

AmeriCorps and FoodCorps

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: Please refer to the 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.

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 the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) as authorized under the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act or the School Breakfast Program established under section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (SBP).
- 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 C: Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist

If your project reaches one or more priority groups and you would like to be considered for bonus priority points, please fill out this checklist 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 1.5 “Funding Priorities” of the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Request for Applications (RFA) for more details.

Please check at least one priority group that your project will serve and that you would like to identify for priority consideration:

- ☐ At least 40% of children served are eligible for free or reduced price meals
- ☐ Applicant is an agricultural producer or group of agricultural producers
- ☐ Applicant is an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO)
- ☐ Project serves a tribal community (the applicant is not an ITO)
- ☐ Project is located in or targets an Opportunity Zone

Appendix D: Budget Narrative Template

The template below is provided to assist in completing the budget narrative requirement for all applicants. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete their budget narrative using the below template by copy and pasting the table into a text editor (e.g. Microsoft Word) and filling in the information that applies to their project. Include in the narrative a calculation for each line item. Applicants may delete rows that are not applicable, but please ensure that every budget line item is accounted for. It is strongly recommended that applicants do not delete any columns.

Budget Narrative Template

1. PERSONNEL	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
1a. Title			Hrly wage x # hour
1b. Title			Annual salary x FTE x # yrs
1c. Title			
<i>Personnel Total</i>			
2. FRINGE BENEFITS	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
2a. PERSONNEL 1a.			Total salary x fringe % rate
2b. PERSONNEL 1b.			
2c. PERSONNEL 1c.			
<i>Fringe Benefits Total</i>			
3. TRAVEL	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
Airfare, RT name of Airport to/from name of Airport, XXX Airline, XXX Fare as of date, # people @ \$XXX / person (\$XXX base fare + \$XX tax and fees)			
Airline checked baggage fee: # bags @ \$XX / bag			
Travel agent: describe fee and cost basis (if applicable)			
Mileage, RT place of business to/from Airport, type of transportation, # mi. x # people @ \$0.XXX / mi.			
Airport parking: # days x # people @ \$XX/day			
Ground transportation: # days x # people @ est. \$XX/day			
Lodging: in-state/out-of-state rate, date, # days x # people @ \$XXX / day			
Lodging tax: in-state/out-of-state rate, XX% / day, # days x # people @ \$XX.XX / day			
Per diem (M&IE): in-state/out-of-state rate, full day, # days x # people @ \$XX.XX / day			
Per diem (M&IE): in-state/out-of-state rate, first & last days of travel, # days x # people @ \$XX.XX / day			
<i>Travel Total</i>			

4. SUPPLIES (Less than or equal to a unit cost of \$4,000. NOTE: Allowable costs are located at 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E)	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
4a. XXX			
4b. XXX			
4c. Office supplies			
4d. Professional development materials			
4e. Computer(s)			
4f. Computer workstation(s)			
4g. Software			
<i>Supplies Total</i>			
5. EQUIPMENT	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
5a. XXX			
5b. XXX			
<i>Equipment Total</i>			
6. CONTRACTUAL	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
6a. Type/Name of contractor, service to provide, # hrs. / yr. @ \$XXX / hr.			
6b. Type/Name of contractor, service to provide, # hrs. / yr. @ \$XXX / hr.			
<i>Contractual Total</i>			
7. OTHER	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
7c. Operating Costs per person			
7d. Professional Development			
7e. Software Licenses			
7f. Postage, Shipping/Handling			
7g. Fees			
<i>Other Total</i>			
8. TOTAL COSTS	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS	MATCH/IN-KIND	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
8a. Total Direct Costs			<i>[You will not need to write anything in this column]</i>
8b. Total Indirect Costs [or maximum Administrative Costs % allowed]			<i>calculation = total Direct costs x IDC rate</i>
<i>Total costs (Budget categories 7+8)</i>			<i>[You will not need to write anything in this column]</i>

GRANT PROGRAM ACCOUNTING SYSTEM & FINANCIAL CAPABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not 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-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 hour 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. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Policy Support, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302, ATTN: PRA (0584-XXXX). Do not return the completed form to this address.

PURPOSE

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.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Legal Organization Name: _____

D-U-Ns Number: _____

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"/>

SBU

Hyperlink (if available): _____

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

Date

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____