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Farm to School Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Applications (RFA)

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Application Checklist

This Application Checklist provides applicants with a list of the required documents. However, Food and Nutrition Service expects that applicants will read the entire RFA prior to the submission of their application and comply with all requirements outlined in the solicitation. The Application Checklist is for applicant use only and should not be submitted as part of the Application Package.

Complete the following **at least four weeks** prior to submission:

- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number;
- Register the UEI number in the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
- Register in Grants.gov.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- Application format and narrative meet the requirements included in [Section 3.0](#). This includes page limits, priorities outlined in [Section 1.7](#), and all necessary attachments.
- You are eligible to apply for a grant as described in [Section 3.0](#) “Eligibility Information.”
- The chosen track best fits your project, as described in [Section 1.6](#) “Grant Tracks,” and the track is correctly indicated on the Farm to School Coversheet.
- Application format and narrative meet the requirements included in [Section 3.0](#). This includes page limits, priorities, and all necessary attachments.
- You include any required letter(s) of commitment (up to a maximum of three letters).
- If your organization does not operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP), you **must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, child care institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.** This letter does count towards the three-letter limit.
- If applicable, you completed the Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist ([Appendix B](#)) and included it in the project narrative (not counted towards page limit). **Applicants that do not submit the completed checklist with their application will not receive bonus priority points.**

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

- The total funding amounts requested on the Coversheet, SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative are identical and do not exceed the maximum request amount for that grant track/type.
- At least a 25 percent cash or in-kind match is provided with a detailed description and signed commitment letter for ALL matching funds. All matching funds must comply with [2 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 200.306](#).
- Applicants failing to provide the match contribution documentation will be deemed ineligible and removed from further consideration.
- All key staff proposed to be paid by this grant.

- The percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- Your organization's fringe benefit rate and amount, as well as the basis for the computation.
- The type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds.
- Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justification, and basis for lodging estimate.
- Types of equipment and supplies, justifications, and estimates, ensuring that the budget is in line with the project description.
- Information for all contracts and justification for any sole-source contracts.
- Justification, description, and an 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 and the applicant has never been approved for a NICRA, they may charge up to 10 percent de minimis). If an applicant is requesting the de minimis rate or indirect costs are not required, please state this in the budget narrative.

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

- Farm to School Grant Program (FSGP) Coversheet (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424 – [Application for Federal Assistance](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – [Budget Information and Instruction Form](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424B – [Assurances for Non-Construction Programs](#) (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-LLL – [Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#)
- FNS-906 – Grant Program Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- A signed letter accounting for every source of matching funds, totaling a minimum 25 percent of the total project cost
- Resumes of key staff
- Letters of support/commitment from key staff and partners
- Project Narrative and Activities/Indicators Tracker
- Budget Narrative
- Optional: Priority Group Declaration Checklist

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1. Program Description and Objective

1.1 Executive Summary

The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program is designed to increase the availability of local foods in schools and help connect students to the sources of their food through education, taste tests, school gardens, field trips, and local food sourcing for school meals. Grants can launch new farm to school programs or expand existing efforts. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Farm to School Grant awards projects of 24 months in length for funding up to \$500,000. Applicants are required to provide matching support of at least 25 percent of the total project budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. The RFA offers three tracks - Implementation, State Agency, and Turnkey - to support a variety of projects and implementation stages. Eligible applicants may include schools and other institutions that operate Child Nutrition Programs, Indian Tribal Organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, nonprofit entities, and State and local agencies.

1.2 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 the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Child Nutrition Programs (CNP), including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Each year \$5 million is provided to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support grants, technical assistance, and other activities related to USDA's Farm to School Program. Additional funding for the Farm to School Program was made available from the FY 2018 through FY 2023 agriculture appropriations acts and, as a result, USDA expects to award approximately \$12 million under this solicitation. As mandated by the NSLA, selected grant projects are limited to no more than \$100,000 each. However, in recent years the Agriculture Appropriations Act has included a provision to allow grant projects of up to \$500,000. In anticipation of authority to provide grants of up to \$500,000 being again provided in the FY 2024 agriculture appropriations, USDA will consider proposals of up to \$500,000 from State agencies or other eligible organizations proposing projects that are multi-State or national in scope. Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) are also eligible to submit proposals of up to \$500,000. For more information about projects above \$100,000 and multi-State projects, please see [Section 3.8](#). For a definition of ITOs, see [Section 3.1](#). Final award decisions will depend upon the final appropriation language. The USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program is administered by FNS Community Food Systems Division (CFSD).

Authorizing language in Section 18(g) of the NSLA (42 U.S.C 1769(g)) directs 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 NSLA also directs the Secretary 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(s);
- 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.

The NSLA also requires each Farm to School Grant recipient to 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 3.4](#) for a discussion of matching and in-kind requirements.

1.3 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 locally 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 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 fishers, as well as many types of food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers,

distributors, and other value-added operations. Farm to school also encompasses a variety of meal-serving institutions, including schools, child care institutions, and summer sponsors and sites. These entities are broadly referred to as CNP operators or CNP sites in this RFA.

In addition to local sourcing 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, promotion and outreach efforts often aim to keep farm to school activities front and center in both the school and broader community.

The potential impact of farm to school programs is significant, and program operators often use evaluations and impact assessments 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.

1.4 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 1.2](#), USDA intends to strategically invest in a wide variety of farm to school initiatives that improve access to local and regional foods in eligible CNP sites. Helping CNP operators find and procure regionally produced food is a key component of the USDA's local and regional food systems work (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional>). For more information on USDA's many farm to school initiatives, or to access resources associated with farm to school, please visit USDA's Farm to School Program webpage at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-to-school>.

1.5 Defining Local Sourcing and Local Foods

For the purposes of farm to school, USDA does not define "local". Instead, CNP operators and applicants to this RFA may have varying definitions of "local" that align with their particular needs and goals. Local and regional food systems typically include the producing, processing,

distributing, and marketing of foods within a specific geographic area. How a program operator 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. This definition is not all encompassing, as program operators may vary their definition of “local” or “regional” for specific foods or food groups to best align with what is available in their geographic area.

For the purpose of this RFA, local sourcing means purchasing or obtaining foods that meet the program operator’s definition of local for service in CNPs. There are a variety of methods by which CNP operators may source local foods for service in their meal programs. The primary method is by purchasing or procuring foods from local producers, sometimes through intermediaries like distributors and food hubs, using allowable procurement methods. Purchasing local foods can benefit local economies, increase communities’ access to local foods, and build connections and infrastructure that help make more local foods available on program menus in the long term. Program operators also source local foods by receiving donated foods from a variety of sources like school gardens, local producers, and local community organizations.

1.6 Grant Tracks/Key Objectives

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to the availability of Federal funds, using five grant tracks:

- State Agency grants;
- Implementation grants;
- Turnkey – Action Planning grants;
- Turnkey – Agricultural Education grants; and
- Turnkey – Edible Garden grants.

Applicant eligibility varies by grant track. For eligibility information, see [Section 3.0](#). Applicants should carefully read the entire RFA before applying to determine which grant track is best for their organization and proposed project.

Below is a list of the Program Objectives. Implementation and State Agency applicants may propose any activities aligned with the objective below. Applicants to all Turnkey tracks must adhere to the activities specific to their track of choice as detailed in Section. Examples of activities that meet the objectives for State Agency and Implementation grants are provided in [Section 3.8](#). Note that if awarded, grantees will be required to report on progress towards activities aligned with the required objective using the FNS-908 Performance Progress Report.

Track	Objectives
Turnkey – Action Planning	Develop a Farm to School Action Plan to facilitate launching or scaling farm to school activities.
Turnkey – Edible Gardens	Plan, implement, and evaluate a food production operation that produces food for CNP operator activities.
Turnkey – Agricultural Education	Plan, implement, and evaluate the integration of farm to school topics into CNP sites’ curriculum.
Implementation	Improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts.
State Agency	Improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts.

Note: although the objectives for the Implementation and State Agency tracks are the same, each track has distinct allowable activities and eligibility, please see [Section 3.8](#).

1.7 Funding Priorities (Bonus Scoring Points)

In addition to the general program purpose and priorities outlined in [Section 1.2](#), and in alignment with the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (Executive Order 13985, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>), the FY 2024 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant program takes a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all in farm to school programming, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. To reflect this, the FY 2024 Farm to School Grant awards will offer up to 10 priority scoring incentives (bonus points) to applications serving at least 40 percent of students who are eligible for free or reduced price meals; applications from ITOs serving tribal communities; applications from organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous or other communities of color; applications based in and serving rural communities; and applications from agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers. The priorities are grouped into two categories and are detailed as follows:

Racial Equity Priorities

- Applications from ITOs, or an entity led and/or staffed by American Indians and Alaska Natives and serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities.
- Applications from organizations led and/or staffed by Black/African Americans and serving Black/African American communities.
- Applications from organizations led and/or staffed by people of color and serving communities of color (defined as Black/African American, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and/or Pacific Islander).

Organization Type Priorities

- 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 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 operating in and serving eligible CNP sites located in rural areas. For the purposes of Farm to School Grants, rural is defined as an area where the school or site participating in the project is located in the attendance boundary of a school or in a location with a locality code of 41, 42, or 43 using the National Center for Education Statistics online tool to determine urban/rural classification, as described in [Appendix A](#).

In selecting successful applicants, to the maximum extent practicable, USDA will seek to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

If an applicant's project reaches one or more priority groups as outlined above and the applicant would like to be considered for up to an additional 10 bonus priority points to be added to the scoring of their application, please fill out the checklist included in [Appendix B](#) and include the completed checklist with the Project Narrative. Seven points will be awarded for meeting one or more of the Racial Equity priorities and one point per Organization Type priority, up to three points, will be awarded for a total of up to 10 bonus points. 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.** Note that the Priority Declaration Checklist must be easily identifiable within the application. Applicants should include the Priority Declaration Checklist as its own page or as a separate attachment to ensure full credit.

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. Federal Award Information

2.1 Type of Federal Assistance

The following information is intended to provide applicants with information to help make informed decisions about proposal submissions.

- Total amount of funding across all grant tracks listed in [Section 1.5](#) that FNS expects to award: \$12 million
- Anticipated number of awards across all grant tracks: 150
- Minimum award amount (award floor): \$0
- Maximum award amount (award ceiling): varies by grant track, see [Section 2.2](#)

- Anticipated award announcement date: July 2024
- Anticipated period of performance (start and end date of the award): 24 months, see [Section 2.3](#)
- Anticipated funding of individual awards: varies by grant track, see [Section 2.2](#)
- Application due date: January 12, 2024

Please note:

- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding and/or appropriations of funds.
- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants this year or in the subsequent fiscal year, should additional funds become available.

2.2 Award Amounts

Award amounts vary by grant track. Turnkey grant awards will range up to \$50,000, with no minimum award amount. Implementation and State Agency grants will range from \$50,000 - \$500,000. 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-Federal match portion) may exceed these amounts.

The award amounts for the FY 2024 USDA Farm to School Grant Program will be as follows:

Grant Track	Award Amount
Turnkey Grant – Action Plan	Up to \$50,000
Turnkey Grant – Edible Garden	Up to \$50,000
Turnkey Grant – Agricultural Education	Up to \$50,000
Implementation Grants (\$100,000 or less)	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Implementation Grants (greater than \$100,000)	\$100,001 - \$500,000 (see note below)
State Agency Grant	\$50,000 - \$500,000

Note: Eligible entities proposing projects of national or multi-State scope may apply for Implementation grants that exceed \$100,000 and be up to \$500,000. If FNS cannot verify the national or multi-State scope based on the information contained in the application materials, the application may be removed from consideration. ITOs are also eligible to submit proposals of up to \$500,000. ITOs applying for more than \$100,000 are not required to propose projects that reach multiple tribes or States or are national in scope. For more information about projects above \$100,000 and multi-State projects and eligibility, please see [Section 3.8](#).

2.3 Period of Performance

The period of performance for the FY 2024 USDA Farm to School Grant Program will be 24 months for all tracks, beginning from the date of the award.

However, a grantee might not need the entire grant period to complete their projects and may closeout early. 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.

Applicants should anticipate all grant requirements including start-up activities, execution, and closeout activities (final financial and program reports, accounting, etc.) within the period of performance. Applicants are expected to plan accordingly to achieve project deliverables within the award period.

2.4 Allowable Costs

In order to accomplish Farm to School Grant Program goals, grantees must ensure that the best use of the available funding is achieved. Expenditures and purchases need to contribute to an approved project activity. In approving grant or subgrant expenditures, a positive answer should always be sought to the following questions:

1. Is the cost applicable to my grant and/or the subgrant'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 (other than meals), travel, and trainings. Financial requirements will be provided in the Terms and Conditions upon award.

Please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document under the "Related Documents" tab on Grants.gov for more information and examples of allowable and unallowable costs.

Please refer to the general guidance of selected items under the Cost Principles found in 2 CFR 200, (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200#part-200>).

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 implements, 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. 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/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR8feb98c2e3e5ad2/section-200.313>.

For example:

- Purchase of a large walk-in freezer that will store local foods for CNP site(s) but will also store food for the community food pantry.
- Walk-in freezer total cost: \$8,000
- 25 percent of freezer space used to store food that will be served in CNP site(s)
- \$8,000 x 25 percent = \$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. Furthermore, no more than *10 percent* of the non-federal match may be used for food purchases, and the use must also 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 offering 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. In general grant funds may NOT be used to purchase meals or snacks for training or meeting attendees, unless approved in advance in accordance with 2 CFR 200.432.

Partnerships

Partners essential to the proposed project and partners contributing to project activities may require funding from USDA to participate in the proposed project. These funds may be included in applicant budgets as subgrantees or line-item contractors. Please be sure to describe the specific services provided by the partner and provide a rationale for the partner(s)' services in both the Project Narrative and Budget Narrative.

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.

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 subgrant awarded. Promotional costs associated with advertising and public relations are unallowable. The term advertising costs means the costs of advertising media and corollary administrative costs. Advertising media include magazines, newspapers, radio and television, direct mail, exhibits, electronic or computer transmittals ([2 CFR 200.421 Advertising and Public Relations](#)).

Staff Development and/or Substitute Pay

If adequate funding is available, Farm to School Grant funds may be used to hire substitute food service staff while school food service staff 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.

Stipends

Stipends are an allowable expense, but the applicant should describe how they will be used and how the amount was determined. Please refer to [2 CFR 200.75, Participant Support Costs](#), for further information.

Subgrants from State Agencies

State agencies that award subgrants are expected to:

- Ensure that all subgrant recipients are eligible and participate in the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP as authorized under the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act, or the SBP established under Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.
- Provide oversight to these subgrant recipients to ensure that expenditures authorized under the subgrants 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 subgrants must describe in the project narrative their process for awarding subgrants.

Travel

Reimbursement for travel and hotel costs for project staff or participants 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.

2.5 Unallowable Costs

All costs proposed in the budget and detailed in the budget narrative must be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable. Refer to [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](#) for a detailed description of all allowable and unallowable costs.

Entertainment

Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any associated costs are unallowable (such as mascot costumes, promotional items, etc.) unless there is a programmatic purpose and prior approval is granted by FNS.

AmeriCorps and FoodCorps

Because AmeriCorps and FoodCorps programs are federally funded programs, Farm to School Grant funds may not be used to pay for AmeriCorps/FoodCorps service member stipends or benefits, either directly or as matching funds. Additionally, service member time may not be used as match for a Farm to School Grant. Service site fees that do not support service member stipends or benefits, or project activities conducted by AmeriCorps/FoodCorps programs, sites, and/or service members may be allowable grant costs.

Construction

Construction is not an allowable cost of the nonprofit school food service account. However, construction of a greenhouse may be an allowable use of Farm to School Grant funds, as long as the grant funds are **not** placed in the nonprofit school food service account at any time.

Gift Cards

Gift cards are not an allowable expense under this grant opportunity. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, “gift cards” refers to any token, voucher, ticket, certificate, or other item with cash value that serves as a substitute for cash.

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. Please note that hospitals are not eligible as lead applicants for the FY 2024 Farm to School Grant.

Vehicles

Purchasing a vehicle with grant funds is not an allowable cost. Applicants can consider leasing a vehicle or purchasing a trailer/attachment if there is a clear need for delivery of the grant project. Trailers and/or attachments are not permitted to be self-propelling (i.e., have an engine).

3. Eligibility, Activities, Application, and Submission Information

3.1 Eligible Applicants

The following are generally eligible entities, which are described in more detail below. Please see each track's eligibility section for track-specific eligibility.

- Eligible schools, including nonprofit private and charter schools, which operate the NSLP and/or SBP;
- Eligible child care institutions, including non-school based institutions that have an agreement with the State agency to operate CACFP;
- Eligible summer sponsors, including non-school based institutions that have an agreement with the State agency to operate SFSP;
- 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 will be deemed ineligible and removed from competition without further consideration.

Eligible schools are defined as schools that participate in the NSLP, CACFP, or SFSP as authorized under the Richard B. Russell NSLA or the SBP established under Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. The school(s) that comprise the primary focus 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. School districts should select "Eligible school" when completing the Farm to School Coversheet. Multiple applications from within the same entity will not be considered; for example, if both a school district and an individual school within the district apply, neither application will be considered. FNS will not choose between different applications from the same entity to determine which should be forwarded for consideration.

Eligible child care institutions are defined as non-school based institutions that have an agreement with the State agency to operate CACFP. The institutions and site(s) that comprise the primary focus of the grant project must have an agreement with the appropriate administering State agency to participate in CACFP and must be in good standing.

Eligible summer sponsors are defined as non-school based institutions that have an agreement with the State agency to operate SFSP. The sponsors and site(s) that comprise the primary focus

of the grant project must have an agreement with the appropriate administering State agency to participate in SFSP and must be in good standing.

State agencies are any statewide government agency that administers or works in partnership with the agency that administers the Federal CNPs (e.g., Office of Public Instruction, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, etc.). If a State Agency applicant does not administer the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include a letter of commitment from the CNP-administering State agency. This letter of commitment does count toward the three-letter limit.

Local agencies are 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.

Note: For the purposes of this RFA, school districts, SFAs, and other institutions operating CNPs are not considered local agencies and should select “eligible school,” “eligible child care institution,” or “eligible summer institution” on the Farm to School coversheet as appropriate.

Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) include:

- An Indian tribe, band, or group recognized by the Department of the Interior;
- 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 CNP located in an eligible school; and
- tribal entities recognized as charitable under Section 7871 of the Internal Revenue Code (<https://www.irs.gov/government-entities/indian-tribal-governments/irc-section-7871-treatment-of-indian-tribes-as-states>).

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, vegetables, or grains, 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 the purposes of this grant program, non-profit entities are required to have 501(c)(3) status. **If a non-profit entity operates a CNP, they should select “eligible school,” “eligible child care institution,” or “eligible summer institution,” as appropriate, on the application coversheet rather than selecting “non-profit entity.”** For the purpose of Farm to School Grants, the term “non-profit entity” excludes colleges and universities, college and university foundations, cooperative extension services, hospitals, hospital foundations, and State, local, and Federally recognized Indian tribal governments.

3.1.2 Eligible Child Nutrition Programs

For all tracks, if a proposal seeks to target a specific school(s) or site(s), the school(s) or site(s) discussed in the project proposal as benefiting from the project must participate in one or more of the CNPs (e.g., NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP).

3.1.3 Current and Former Farm to School Grantee Eligibility

Read this section carefully if your organization currently has a Farm to School grant or received a Farm to School grant within the last three fiscal years (FY 2021, FY 2022, or FY 2023). Except for State agencies, all applicants must have passed the current approved end date on their most recent fully executed FNS-529 by the RFA close date regardless of former grant track, current grant track, or proposed grant track. If an applicant to the Turnkey or Implementation track has not passed the current approved end date on its 529, the application will be removed from consideration. Additionally, as outlined in the first bullet below organizations which received Implementation grants through the USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2021 – FY 2023) are ineligible to apply for an Implementation grant in FY 2024 regardless of project end date.

To be considered an applicant for a current (FY 2024) Farm to School award, all entities in receipt of any existing or prior year Farm to School grant must submit all deliverables required by the Terms and Conditions, including, but not limited to, all progress and financial status reports. These deliverables must be submitted on or before June 1, 2024. If the required deliverables are not received by the required due date, the applicant will be deemed nonresponsive and considered ineligible for award.

Current or Former Implementation Grantees

- Organizations which received Implementation grants through the USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program in the last three funding cycles (FY 2021, FY 2022, or FY 2023) are ineligible to apply for an Implementation grant in FY 2024 regardless of project end date.
- Current and former Implementation grantees, regardless of the year of award, are eligible to apply for any of the Turnkey tracks, except for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Action Planning

track, if they have completed all project activities and passed their approved current end date at the time that the RFA closes.

- Current and former Implementation grantees are not eligible to apply for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Action Planning track regardless of the year they received their award or approved current end date.

Current or Former State Agency Grantees

- State agencies applying to the State Agency track are not subject to any restrictions based on whether a previous Farm to School Grant has ended.
- State agency applicants to the Turnkey or Implementation track will have their application removed from consideration because State agencies are not eligible for the Implementation or Turnkey tracks.

Former Action Planning Grantees

- Former Action Planning grantees are not guaranteed an award in FY 2024.
- Former Action Planning grantees who have completed all project activities and passed their approved current end date at the time that the RFA closes may apply to the Implementation track in FY 2024.
- Former Action Planning grantees may apply to any of the Turnkey tracks, with the exception of the Turnkey – Action Planning track, if they have completed all project activities and passed their approved current end date at the time that the RFA closes.
- Former Action Planning grantees are not eligible to apply for the Turnkey – Action Planning track regardless of the year they received their current or former award or their approved current end date.

Current or Former Turnkey Grantees

- Current and former Turnkey grantees, regardless of the year of award, are eligible to apply for an FY 2024 Turnkey grant under a different project type, except for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Action Planning track, if they have completed all project activities and passed their approved current end date at the time that the RFA closes.
 - Current and former Turnkey – Edible Gardening grantees are not eligible to apply for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Edible Gardening track regardless of the year of award or the approved current end date.
 - Current and former Turnkey – Agricultural Education grantees are not eligible to apply for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Agricultural Education track regardless of the year of award or the approved current end date.
 - Current and former Turnkey – Action Planning grantees are not eligible for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Action Planning track regardless of the year of award or the approved current end date.
- Current and former Turnkey grantees, regardless of the year of award, are eligible to apply for an FY 2024 Implementation grant if they have completed all project activities and passed their approved current end date at the time that the RFA closes.

- Current and former Turnkey grantees are not eligible to apply for the Turnkey – Action Planning track regardless of the year they received their current or former award or their approved current end date.

Other Current or Former Farm to School Grantees

- Former Farm to School Grant recipients, regardless of track type, are ineligible to apply for the FY 2024 Turnkey – Action Planning track. The FY 2024 Turnkey – Action Planning track is intended for interested applicants who have never received a Farm to School Grant award.

3.1.4 Other Eligibility

All 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.

Applications submitted without the required documents, forms, and certification will be deemed ineligible and removed from the competition without further consideration.

3.2 Ineligible Applicants

The following entities are ineligible to receive a grant for the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program. Applicants identified as any of the entity types described below will have their application removed from competition without further consideration. Please note that the list below is not a comprehensive list of all ineligible entity types. This section is provided as a resource to address frequently asked questions which FNS often receives from one or more of the entity types described below.

- **Individuals**, such as individual parents or teachers, are ineligible for the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program.
- **Institutions of higher education**, including colleges and universities, are not eligible for the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program. Note that for the purposes of this RFA, Indian Tribal Colleges and university foundations are considered institutions of higher education and are not eligible as the lead applicant. **Institutions of higher education are ineligible regardless of 501(c)(3) status.** Institutions of higher education can be key partners.
- **Hospitals**, as defined by [2 CFR 200.1 "Hospital"](#) are ineligible for the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program. Note that for the purposes of this RFA, hospital foundations are considered ineligible entities and are not eligible as the lead applicant. **Hospitals and hospital foundations are ineligible regardless of 501(c)(3) status.** Hospitals and hospital foundations can be key partners.
- **Cooperative extension services** are ineligible for the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program. Cooperative extension service is defined by USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture 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.” Cooperative extension services are ineligible regardless of 501(c)(3) status. Cooperative extension services can be key partners.

- Additionally, applications that are deemed nonresponsive to requirements outlined in the RFA will be considered ineligible.

3.3 Cost Sharing or Matching Considerations

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 NSLA (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). **Applications that fail to provide evidence of matching support of at least 25 percent of the total budget will result in a nonresponsive determination and be removed from consideration for award.**

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

Sample Match

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

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 to support AmeriCorps and FoodCorps service member stipends 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, land, and/or property are unallowable costs for the Farm to School Grant, and therefore unallowable as a source of matching funds.** If it costs \$10 per student to use space within a community center and the community center offers to waive those costs, the total of costs per student may be used as a match; however, the property value of the community center facility is not permitted as a match.

Additional information about allowable and unallowable costs is available in [Sections 2.4 and 2.5](#). The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/section-200.306>).

All applicants are required to submit signed letters verifying matching funds for **each** cash and/or in-kind resource including applicants whose budgets indicate a match from their own organization. Match letters are considered separate from letters of commitment described in [Section 3.10](#), 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 match source included in the budget. **Applicants failing to provide the match contribution documentation for each match source will be removed from further consideration.** Each match contribution letter must include the source, exact dollar amount, and description of how the match was calculated. The match letter must include the source of matching funds, even if the match is cash supplied from within the applicant's own organization. Match letters that do not include the specific dollar amount, how the calculation was derived, and the source of funds will be deemed nonresponsive and removed from consideration. Please ensure that the total amount of match in the supporting documentation matches the amounts described in all budget materials.

If awarded, the grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs claimed as being a match contribution, 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 and budget narrative, 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.

3.4 Pre-Award Screening Requirements

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, prior to making a Federal award, Federal awarding agencies, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205, are required to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualifications or financial integrity information. Additionally, Federal awarding agencies are required to have a framework in place for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive Federal awards. The FNS review of risk posed by applicants will be based on the following:

- SAM.gov, the *System for Award Management*, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS
- FAPIIS, the *Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System* that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance
- FNS Risk Assessment Questionnaire

- Applicants must complete the FNS-906 Grant Program Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire that allows FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, and history of performance, reports, and findings from audits. The questionnaire contains questions that may be an indicator of potential risk.

The evaluation of the information obtained from the designated systems and the risk assessment questionnaire may result in FNS imposing special conditions or additional oversight requirements that correspond to the degree of risk assessed.

3.5 Acknowledgement of 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 Food and Nutrition Service support on any audiovisual which is produced with grant support, and which has a direct production cost of over \$5,000.

- When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Grantees should follow the [USDA Visual Standards Guide](#) when using the USDA logo.
- Grant recipients *may* be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.

3.6 Content and Form of Application Submission

3.6.1 Special Instructions

- The Richard B. Russell NSLA mandates that Farm to School Grant Program awards improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites. Consequently, **if an Implementation or Turnkey applicant does not operate the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, childcare institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.** This letter of commitment does count toward the three-letter limit.
- **If a State Agency applicant does not administer the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include a letter of commitment from the CNP-administering State agency to be eligible to receive an FY 2024 Farm to School Grant.** This letter of commitment does count toward the three-letter limit.

- Late application submissions will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications unless they are submitted via Grants.gov by the deadline. No additions or revisions will be accepted after the deadline.
- Letters of support must be submitted with the application through Grants.gov. Letters submitted via email will not be considered.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, certification will be considered ineligible.
- Applications missing a written Proposal or Budget Narrative will be deemed nonresponsive and ineligible.
- FNS reserves the right to request clarification on any application submitted in response to this solicitation.
- Applications not submitted via Grants.gov will not be considered.
- If multiple application packages are submitted through Grants.gov by the same applicant in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.

3.6.2 Formatting

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following application format. The proposed project plan, budget narrative, and supporting documents should be presented on 8 ½-inch x 11-inch white pages with at least 1-inch margins on the top and bottom. All pages should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font, with the exception of the budget table which may be no smaller than 11-point. All pages, excluding form pages, must be numbered.

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

- Applications must include a table of contents (not counted towards page limit). The Table of Contents should include relevant sections, subsections, and associated page numbers.
- All applications must include a narrative response:
 - Three-page maximum length for Turnkey track narrative response (Background and Need plus Project Narrative).
 - Five-page maximum length for Implementation or State Agency narrative response.
 - Three-page maximum length for Activities/Indicators Tracker Table response in Implementation or State Agency applications (does not count towards the five-page limit for narrative response). Formatting the table in landscape orientation rather than portrait orientation is acceptable, but the three-page maximum length still applies.
 - Narrative response page restrictions apply only to the content of the narrative proposals and do not apply to other required forms/attachments, nor to the

budget-related documents. Pages exceeding the stated page limits may be omitted during the review process. Applications that do not include required narratives will be removed from consideration.

- One-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.
- One-page maximum length for each letter of commitment, up to three letters.
- **Letters of commitment should** be written in size 12-point Times New Roman font 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. Applications that do not follow guidelines may be subject to a reduced score during review. These documents must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add attachments” button under SF-424 item #15 and submitted via Grants.gov. Letters submitted separately or outside the Grants.gov web portal will not be accepted. See [Appendix E](#) for a letter of commitment template and [Section 3.6.1](#) for more information.
- 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 suggested budget narrative template is available in [Appendix C](#) of the RFA, which applicants are **strongly encouraged** to use for completing the budget narrative section of their application. If the budget narrative is created in a spreadsheet, please “print to PDF” before submitting in order to preserve formatting and ensure it fits on the standard page size.

3.6.3 FSGP Coversheet

The FSGP coversheet includes the following information:

- Name of organization
- Grant application type (grant track)
- Type of eligible entity
- Length of project (select only 24 months)
- Brief project description (1000 characters including spaces maximum)
- CNP operator information (or scope if specific CNP operators have not been identified, maximum 2000 characters). For each CNP site/operator that is participating in the project provide the following:
 - Name of CNP operator
 - State
 - Type
 - Free or reduced price eligibility percentage
 - Total enrollment
 - Urban/rural classification code

- Demographics (percentages should add up to 100%)

3.6.4 Application Project Summary

The application should clearly describe the proposed project activities and anticipated outcomes that would result if the proposal were to be funded.

3.7 Turnkey Activities, Eligibility, and Application Content

3.7.1 Turnkey – Action Planning Activities

Applicants applying to the Turnkey – Action Planning track agree to conduct specific activities defined by FNS, culminating in the development of a written Farm to School Action Plan for submission to FNS at the end of the period of performance. All activities listed below are required, and applicants to this track agree to complete the required activities using Farm to School Grant funds. Applicants are encouraged to utilize or follow the corresponding project narrative provided in [Section 3.7.5](#), as failure to do so may significantly weaken the proposal. Additional activities added by the applicant will not be considered and may weaken the application.

- Identify and regularly convene the farm to school planning team, with diverse leadership and membership that reflects the community served.
- Conduct an inclusive and comprehensive action planning process, which might include defining a vision and mission, conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, holding key informant interviews, attending trainings, visiting other farm to school programs, conducting pilots or trial runs, brainstorming activities, or prioritizing activities. See the USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-school-planning-toolkit>) for inspiration.
- Draft a plan that identifies at least one need in the community that the project will address; includes both local sourcing and agricultural education activities; identifies any relevant State and/or local health and food safety requirements and develops compliance strategies/procedures; determines how local foods will be incorporated at the eligible school(s) or service site(s); determines how delivery, processing, and storage of local foods will take place; determines how project partners will promote the farm to school program; identifies diverse funding and other resources to ensure the project's sustainability; and includes an evaluation plan.
- Gather input and/or feedback on the action plan from the broader community.
- Compile and share a final action plan that incorporates both local sourcing and agricultural education components, and may include farm to school goals, activities, funding, timelines, evaluation strategies and partners.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in [Section 3.12](#). Please note that Action Plan project grantees are **not** expected to fully implement 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. Action Planning applicants

should not propose any implementation activities or tasks. If an organization already has a plan in place and seeks funding to execute their existing plan, the organization should apply to the Implementation, Turnkey – Agricultural Education, or Turnkey – Edible Garden tracks. Turnkey – Action Planning proposals that emphasize implementation rather than planning may be subject to a reduced score during review and/or removal from consideration.

The action plan does not need to follow a specific format or contain specific elements, as long as it is useful to the community in implementing farm to school activities (both local sourcing and agricultural education) in the months and years following the plan’s release.

3.7.2 Turnkey – Edible Garden Activities

The Edible Garden Project focuses on developing or improving food-producing gardens based at CNP sites. Please note, for the purposes of this opportunity, “Edible Garden” includes any food production operation based at an eligible CNP site, including gardens, indoor grow towers, greenhouses, farms, aquaponics, livestock, etc. The below activities are required for applicants to the Turnkey grant for Edible Garden Projects. Applicants are encouraged to utilize or follow the corresponding project narrative provided in [Section 3.7.5](#), as failure to do so may significantly weaken the proposal. Additional activities added by the applicant will not be considered and may weaken the application.

- Establish or convene an edible garden team, with diverse leadership and membership that reflects the community served, including representation from school/site food service professionals.
- Establish a vision, goals, and objectives for the edible garden project, including how the project will increase access to local foods, how it will be used for agricultural education, and how it will be maintained and sustained beyond the grant 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.
- Carry out the edible garden project including procuring supplies and installation.
- Conduct an evaluation of the project.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in [Section 3.12](#).

3.7.3 Turnkey – Agricultural Education Activities

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 project. Applicants are encouraged to utilize or follow the corresponding project narrative provided in [Section 3.7.5](#), as failure to do so may significantly weaken the proposal.

Additional activities added by the applicant will not be considered and may weaken the application.

- Establish a curriculum planning team, with diverse leadership and membership that reflects the community served.
- Determine if and how local foods will be incorporated into the curriculum (e.g., taste tests, farm visits).
- 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 CNP sites.
- Gather input and feedback on the curriculum from relevant stakeholders.
- Incorporate the agricultural education curriculum into school/site activities.
- Identify strategies for ensuring the curriculum remains integrated with school/site activities beyond the period of performance.
- Conduct an evaluation of the project.

More information on submitting a proposal is available in [Section 3.12](#).

3.7.4 Turnkey Grant Eligibility

Eligible entities for the Turnkey track are eligible schools, eligible child care institutions, eligible summer sponsors, local agencies, ITOs, agricultural producers and groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities. State agencies are not eligible for the Turnkey track. State agencies which apply to the Turnkey track will have their applications removed from consideration.

The Richard B. Russell NSLA mandates that Farm to School Grant Program awards improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites. Consequently, **if a Turnkey applicant does not operate the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, child care institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.** This letter of commitment does count toward the three-document limit.

To apply for a Turnkey track, applicants must indicate that they will complete the activities prescribed in [Sections 3.7.1-3.7.3](#) and include a section in their narrative for Farm to School Background and Need (see below). The combined Background and Need plus Activities/Indicators Tracker must not exceed three total pages.

3.7.5 Turnkey Application Content: Project Narrative

Farm to School Background and Need

- Identify the community and organizations participating in your project. Describe the current status of farm to school initiatives within your participant population and/or organization and explain how the turnkey project will fit into (or result in) your comprehensive farm to school plan.
- Describe how the project team includes leadership and members from the community being served by the project.
- Describe how the project team reflects the community being served and ensures that the values, cultures, and needs of the community are represented.
- 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.

Turnkey Activities/Indicators Tracker

The Activities/Indicators Tracker templates on the following pages are populated with all required activities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to copy and paste the template into a text editor (e.g., Microsoft Word) and edit columns B, C, and D 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 track. Ensure that you complete only the template that corresponds to your desired track/project.

Note that activities and indicators on the Activities/Indicators Tracker are aligned with the objectives identified in [Section 1.6](#) and are the same activities and indicators that grantees will use to report on progress using the FNS-908 Performance Progress Report during the period of performance (see [Section 5.5](#) for more information).for more information).

Indicators are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant. Common examples include Number of People Attended, Number of People Impacted, Number of Conferences Delivered, Number of Materials Created, Number of Trainings, Number of People Trained. Grantees will report on these activities and indicators on progress reports. Please select indicators that are relevant for the activity and are feasible to collect during the grant performance period.

Note: additional indicators can be added as needed.

Action Planning Project Activities/Indicators Tracker

Objective: Develop a Farm to School Action Plan to facilitate launching or scaling farm to school activities

A: Required Activity (Do not edit)	B: List tasks required to accomplish activity	C: Responsible party for each task	D: Proposed Timeline (Month, year – Month, year)	E: Indicators(s)
Attend one-time training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel.				Number attended
Identify and regularly convene the farm to school planning team, with diverse leadership and membership that reflects the community served.				Number and types of partner organizations
Conduct an inclusive and comprehensive action planning process, which might include defining a vision and mission, conducting a SWOT analysis, holding key informant interviews, attending trainings, visiting other farm to school programs, conducting pilots or trial runs, brainstorming activities, or prioritizing activities. See the USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit for inspiration.				
Draft a plan that: identifies at least one need in the community that the project will address; includes both local sourcing and agricultural education activities; identifies any relevant State and/or local health and food safety requirements and develops compliance strategies/procedures; determines how local foods will be incorporated at the eligible school(s) or service				Number of collaborating CNP sites by level: early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k), primary (grades k-5), secondary (grades 6-12)

A: Required Activity (Do not edit)	B: List tasks required to accomplish activity	C: Responsible party for each task	D: Proposed Timeline (Month, year – Month, year)	E: Indicators(s)
site(s); determines how delivery, processing, and storage of local foods will take place; determines how project partners will promote the farm to school program; identifies diverse funding and other resources to ensure the project's sustainability; and includes an evaluation plan.				
Gather input and/or feedback on the action plan from the broader community.				
Compile and share a final action plan that incorporates both local sourcing and agricultural education components, and may include farm to school goals, activities, funding, timelines, evaluation strategies, and partners.				Number of early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k) students, primary students (grades k-5), secondary students (grades 6-12) impacted

Agricultural Education Project Activities/Indicators Tracker

Objective: Plan, implement, and evaluate the integration of farm to school topics into CNP sites' curriculum.

A: Required Activity (Do not edit)	B: List tasks required to accomplish activity	C: Responsible party for each task	D: Proposed Timeline (Month, year – Month, year)	E: Indicators(s)
Attend one-time training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel.				Number attended
Establish a curriculum planning team, with diverse leadership that				Number and types of partner organizations

reflects the community served.				
Determine how local foods will be incorporated into the curriculum (e.g., taste tests, farm visits).				
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 CNP sites.				
Gather input and feedback on the curriculum from relevant stakeholders.				
Incorporate the agricultural education curriculum into school/site activities.				<p>Number of early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k) students, primary students (grades k-5), secondary students (grades 6-12) impacted</p> <p>Number of collaborating CNP sites by level: early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k), primary (grades k-5), secondary (grades 6-12)</p> <p>Dollar value of local foods purchased by product type: fruit, vegetables, fluid milk, other dairy, protein, grains</p>

				(including baked goods), other
Identify strategies for ensuring the curriculum remains integrated with school/site activities beyond the period of performance.				
Conduct an evaluation of the project.				

Edible Garden Project Activities/Indicators Tracker

Objective: Plan, implement, and evaluate a food production operation that produces food for CNP operators' activities.

A: Required Activity (Do not edit)	B: List tasks required to accomplish activity	C: Responsible party for each task	D: Proposed Timeline (Month, year – Month, year)	E: Indicator(s)
Attend one-time training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel.				Number attended
Establish or convene an edible garden team, with diverse leadership and membership that reflects the community served, including representation from school/site food service professionals.				Number and types of partner organizations
Establish a vision, goals, and objectives for the edible garden project, including how the project will increase access to local foods, how it will be used for agricultural education, and how it will be maintained and sustained beyond the grant project.				

A: Required Activity (Do not edit)	B: List tasks required to accomplish activity	C: Responsible party for each task	D: Proposed Timeline (Month, year – Month, year)	E: Indicator(s)
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.				
Carryout the edible garden project including procuring supplies and installation.				<p>Number gardens completed</p> <p>Number of early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k) students, primary students (grades k-5), secondary students (grades 6-12) impacted</p> <p>Number of collaborating CNP sites by level: early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k), primary (grades k-5), secondary (grades 6-12)</p> <p>Dollar value of local foods purchased by product type: fruit, vegetables, fluid milk, other dairy, protein, grains (including baked goods), other</p> <p>Pounds of food produced or pounds provided to CNP site(s) from edible garden site</p>
Conduct an evaluation of the project.				

Budget (no limit on section length)

Provide an itemized budget describing appropriate use of grant funds. See [Section 3.9](#) for budget and budget narrative requirements.

3.8 Implementation Track and State Agency Track Activities, Eligibility, and Application Content

3.8.1 Implementation Grant Activities

Proposed Implementation grant activities must support the required objective, **improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts**. Applicants must clearly indicate in their project narrative how proposed activities align with the required objective. If an entity applies for an Implementation grant in excess of \$100,000, up to \$500,000, the applicant must clearly indicate the national or multi-State scope of its project in the application materials. If FNS cannot verify the national or multi-State scope based on the information contained in the application materials, the application may be removed from consideration. ITOs applying for more than \$100,000 are not required to propose projects that reach multiple tribes or States or are national in scope. For more information and eligibility for multi-State projects and projects above \$100,000, please see [Section 3.8.3](#).

Examples of activities supported by Implementation grants that involve local sourcing, agricultural education, or both include, but are not limited to:

Local Sourcing

- Incorporating more unprocessed and value-added, minimally processed, locally or regionally sourced meal components into the cafeteria program meals;
- Expanding farm to school programs beyond the NSLP to incorporate bring local products into the SBP, SFSP, and/or CACFP;
- 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;
- Developing recipes that incorporate local products;
- Working with a food producer or manufacturer to minimally process or develop a value-added product that uses one or more locally sourced food products for use in program meals;
- Solving distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more locally or regionally produced items by working closely with intermediaries (e.g., distributors, food hubs) or developing business relationships between farmer(s), CNP operators, intermediaries, and other local food businesses;
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing local food procurement tracking systems; and
- Developing databases of local producers or local food purchase ordering systems.

Agricultural Education

- Integrating agricultural education with career and technical preparation programs to encourage the next generation of agricultural producers;
- 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;
- Encouraging increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through promotional activities, taste tests, and other activities featuring local products; and
- Developing and implementing integrated curriculum to reinforce food and nutrition-based learning throughout the school environment or on a local farm(s).

May Incorporate Both Local Sourcing and Agricultural Education

- Conducting a State or regional farm to school institute;
- Operating service projects that support farm to school initiatives in eligible CNP sites;
- Incorporating food justice, food sovereignty, youth empowerment, or other related efforts into farm to school programming;
- Providing technical support in the form of face-to-face trainings, consultations, webinars, etc.; and
- Developing promotional campaigns in support of farm to school initiatives.

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

3.8.2 State Agency Grant Activities

State Agency grants are intended to promote agricultural education and increase the amount of local food served in eligible CNP operators by funding State agencies to support and grow farm to CNP efforts in their States. Proposed State Agency grant activities must support the required objective, **improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts**. Applicants must clearly indicate in their project narrative how proposed activities align with the required objective.

Examples of activities supported by State Agency grants that involve local sourcing, agricultural education, or both include, but are not limited to:

Local Sourcing

- Offering training and technical assistance to CNP operators on local sourcing;
- Supporting the expansion, tracking, and marketing of local foods to SFAs through USDA Foods and USDA DOD Fresh programs;
- Hosting a Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producer Training as one component of a project containing other activities aligned with the required objective;

- Hosting State or regional farm to CNP buyer-grower meetings;
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing local procurement tracking systems;
- Working with food producers or manufacturers to minimally process or develop value-added products that use one or more locally sourced food products for use in program meals;
- Solving distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more locally or regionally produced items by working closely with intermediaries (e.g., distributors, food hubs) or brokering business relationships between farmer(s), CNP operators, intermediaries, and other local food businesses; and
- Developing databases of local producers or local food purchase ordering systems.

Agricultural Education

- Offering training and technical assistance to CNP operators on school gardens, or agricultural education strategies; and
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing school garden, and/or agricultural education tracking systems.

May Incorporate Both Local Sourcing and Agricultural Education

- Supporting a State or regional farm to school institute;
- 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;
- Conducting an equity analysis of the agency's farm to school efforts;
- Conducting or attending training specifically focused on equity in farm to school programming;
- Developing or enhancing State-level farm to school, farm to summer, and/or farm to CACFP strategic and/or evaluation plans;
- Developing a statewide farm to school marketing campaign or recognition program(s);
- Offering training and technical assistance to CNP operators on equity in the food system;
- Facilitating peer-to-peer learning among program operators or with other States or agencies to improve program equity, efficiency, and learn best practices;
- Hosting State or regional farm to CNP gatherings;
- Partnering with multiple States to deliver regional farm to school programming;
- Developing State-level curriculum, toolkits, templates, and resources featuring local foods, gardens, food sovereignty, and/or agricultural education; and
- Administering subgrants (mini-grants) to CNP operators within the State to initiate or enhance their farm to school, farm to summer, or farm to CACFP programs. Note: recipients of subgrants in the State Agency track may be any eligible entity for the FY 2024 Farm to School Grant.

3.8.3 Implementation Grant Eligibility

Eligible entities for the Implementation track are eligible schools, eligible child care institutions, eligible summer sponsors, local agencies, ITOs, agricultural producers and groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities. State agencies are not eligible for the Implementation track. State agencies which apply to the Implementation track will have their applications removed from consideration.

The Richard B. Russell NSLA mandates that Farm to School Grant Program awards improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites. Consequently, **if an Implementation applicant does not operate the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, child care institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.** This letter of commitment does count toward the three-document limit.

Eligible entities proposing projects of national or multi-State scope may apply for Implementation grants that exceed \$100,000 up to \$500,000. If FNS cannot verify the national or multi-State scope based on the information contained in the application materials, the application may be removed from consideration. ITOs are also eligible to submit proposals of up to \$500,000. ITOs applying for more than \$100,000 are not required to propose projects that reach multiple tribes or States or are national in scope. In all cases, the cost of project must be commensurate with the project scope and well justified in the application and supporting documents.

National and Multi-State Scope Projects

For the purposes of this RFA, a national or multi-State project proposes a widespread statewide reach or impact in at least two States. For example, a farm to school institute that recruits participants from across five States, where the recruitment process supports multiple participants from anywhere within the five target States, could qualify as a multi-State project. However, a project targeting five specific school districts, one in each of five States, would not qualify for multi-State consideration because the scope is too narrow, even though the project proposes activities in more than two States. The applicant must make a convincing case through their proposal narrative, letters of commitment, and other supporting materials, that the project both satisfies the multi-State or national scope requirement and that a funding amount greater than \$100,000 is justified.

3.8.4 State Agency Grant Eligibility

Only State agencies are eligible to apply to the State Agency grant track. State Departments of Education, Departments of Agriculture, and Departments of Health are examples of eligible State agencies. Eligibility is not restricted to the State agency that administers the CNP(s). **If a State Agency applicant does not administer the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include a letter of commitment from the CNP-administering State agency. This letter of commitment does count toward the three-document limit.**

Local government agencies, such as city and county government agencies, are not eligible to apply to the State Agency track but may apply for the Implementation or Turnkey track. Any other entity type applying to the State agency track will have their application removed from consideration.

If a State agency proposes to award subgrants, the applicant must indicate the process for determining awards in the Project Narrative.

3.8.5 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 [Section 1.6](#) Grant Tracks and [Section 3.0](#) Eligibility Information. This project narrative section must not exceed eight pages in total; five for the narrative and three for the Activities/Indicators Tracker table separately. There is no page limit on the budget materials.

Project Description

Provide a high-level overview of the proposed project and describe how your project will increase access to local foods in eligible CNP sites, how your project will generate sourcing and purchasing from local and regional producers, and how your project will increase access to agriculture education. Describe how the project has or will seek and consider feedback from the community being served in the design and delivery of the project. Ensure that any specific activities mentioned in this section are reflected in the Activities/Indicators Tracker. Where dates are included, activities should not begin before July 1, 2024. If an applicant proposes to use grant funding to award subgrants, the applicant must include a description of the process for making subgrant awards and describe how equitable distribution of the subgrants will be ensured.

Organizational Experience and Management

Identify the community and organization(s) participating in your project. Describe the need for the project, how that need was identified, and explain how the specific proposed project is designed to address or meet the need.

Describe how the project team includes leadership and members from the community served by the project. Describe how the project team reflects the community served and ensures that the values, cultures, and needs of the community are represented. Describe the strengths of the community that make this the right time and place for your project, such as prior experience planning and implementing farm to school initiatives (such as local sourcing and agriculture education) that would demonstrate that your organization has the background necessary to successfully execute the proposed project.

Describe the management approach for staffing, procurement of contractors (as applicable), quality assurance planning, tracking timelines, and progress monitoring that will be used for the

project. Describe your plan for coordination, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Provide a clear description of staff or partners' relevant experience as it relates to the proposed project.

Attach resumes of key project staff and letters of commitment from key partners to your grant application within Grants.gov using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15. If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes desired knowledge, skills, and education may be included in the application in lieu of a resume. Please note that there is a limit of three resumes and three letters of commitment per grant application. Please see [Section 3.10](#) for more information.

Activities/Indicators Tracker

Applicants must list the activities, activity category, indicators, start and completion dates, and responsible parties. Applicants are required to develop an Activities/Indicators Tracker that identifies specific activities that the grantee will pursue to complete the project proposed in the narrative. Activities should not begin before July 1, 2024. There is a three-page limit on content in the table. A suggested template will be provided on the related documents tab on grants.gov and the Resources for Grant Applicants webpage at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants>.

The Activities/Indicators Tracker must contain the following seven columns, clearly labeled and in the following order: "Activity", "Activity Category", "Indicators", "Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)", "Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)", and "Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization)." Additional columns will not be considered. Please note that activities and indicators must be aligned with the objective identified in [Section 1.6](#) and, if awarded, grantees will be required to report on **all** activities and indicators proposed in their application using the FNS-908 Performance Progress Report provided by FNS. Carefully considering proposed activities and indicators will prepare grantees for their progress reporting requirements if awarded. See [Section 5.5](#) for more information about reporting.

Indicators are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant. Common examples include Number of People Attended, Number of People Impacted, Number of Conferences Delivered, Number of Materials Created, Number of Trainings, Number of People Trained. Please select indicators that are relevant for the activity and are feasible to collect during the grant performance period.

The following indicators are required of State Agency and Implementation grantees and must be included in the Activities/Indicators Tracker aligned with relevant activities:

- Number of early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k) students, primary students (grades k-5), secondary students (grades 6-12) impacted
- Number of collaborating CNP sites by level: early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k), primary (grades k-5), secondary (grades 6-12)

- Number and types of partner organizations
- Dollar value of local foods purchased by product type: fruit, vegetables, fluid milk, other dairy, protein, grains (including baked goods), other

A sample table is provided below. 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 Narrative 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 three-page limit still applies.

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

3.8.6 Sample Activities/Indicators Tracker Table

Objective: improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts.

Activity (Repeat table headings if table extends to multiple pages)	Activity Category	Indicator(s)	Anticipated Start Date (Month, Year)	Anticipated Completion Date (Month, Year)	Responsible Party (Name, Title, Organization)
Attend mandatory training meeting (Grantee Gathering) with USDA personnel	Required (this is the only required activity. Do not enter this for any other row)	Number attended	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2024	Project Manager
Example: Recruit and convene a local foods student/staff advisory committee	Enter "Local Sourcing," "Agricultural Education," or "Both." Example: Local Sourcing	Example: Number students attended by level: early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k), primary (grades k-5), secondary (grades 6-12) Number staff attended	Example: Oct. 2024	Example: June 2025	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.	Enter "Local Sourcing," "Agricultural Education," or "Both." Example: Local Sourcing	Example: Number staff trained Hours training provided Dollar amount of local foods purchased by product type: fruit, vegetables, fluid milk, other dairy, protein, grains (including baked goods), other (please specify)	Example: June 2025	Example: July 2025	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	Enter “Local Sourcing,” “Agricultural Education,” or “Both.” Example: Agricultural Education	Example: Number students attended by level: early childhood education (age 0 – pre-k), primary (grades k-5), secondary (grades 6-12) Number staff attended	Example: Sept. 2024	Example: June 2025	Example: Ms. Green, Elementary Science Coordinator, ABC School District
Example: Install ten raised beds to expand school garden	Enter “Local Sourcing,” “Agricultural Education,” or “Both.” Example: Agricultural Education	Example: Number completed	Example: March 2025	Example: April 2025	Example: Mr. Williams, Head Custodian, ABC Elementary

Evaluation and Sustainability

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 how the project will collect feedback from the participating community in conducting the evaluation.

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 sourcing, 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. See [Section 3.8.5](#) for information about selecting indicators and the required indicators for this track. For more information on evaluation resources, please see the Farm to School Applicant Resource webpage at:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants>.

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, including how access to local foods will be sustained, such as making local foods available on program menus.

Budget

Provide an itemized budget describing appropriate use of grant funds. See [Section 3.9](#) for budget and budget narrative requirements.

3.9 Application Content: Budget and Budget Narrative

3.9.1 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) (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-individual-family.html>). 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, Section B (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. The **SF-424** must also show the 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. The applicant 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 NSLA (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). **Applicants failing to provide the match contribution documentation will be deemed ineligible and removed from further consideration.** Each match contribution letter must include the exact dollar amount and the amount identified in the letter must match the dollar amount included in budget. Please see [Section 3.3](#) 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 percent (match ÷ total project cost)
USDA Percent:	74 percent (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 must be used for educational purposes only. See [Sections 2.4 and 2.5](#) for more information.

Required Activity for Budget

If awarded, all grantees must attend the Grantee Gathering, a mandatory grantee training meeting hosted by USDA in the first year of the grant period. USDA will host the meeting in-person in September 2024. To ensure that grantees reserve sufficient funding to attend an in-person meeting, grant applicants should:

- Include in the budget travel costs for at least **one project representative** preferably the project director, to attend this meeting. No more than two attendees per project will be approved within a budget.
- Use Denver, CO as the destination city for budgeting purposes, but understand that the final location is subject to change. The FY 2024 Grantee Gathering will be located in the Mountain Plains Region.
- Include \$500 per person for the registration fee in the budget. Note that the specific amount of the registration fee may change. If selected, awardees will be notified of the exact amount of the registration fee.
- Estimate four 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 Denver, CO area.
- Include travel for this meeting in the first year of the grant **only**. Travel costs for the Grantee Gathering should be included in the Federal portion of the grant budget.

3.9.2 Application Budget Narrative

All applicants must submit a budget narrative, formatted as a table, and budget categories in this table must match those listed on the SF-424A form. **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.** The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget's direct cost. All budget line-item expenses must be allowable costs as defined in this RFA and 2 CFR 200 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>). 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. If the budget includes indirect costs,

the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

Ensure that all budget line-items and partner services align with the activities described in the Project Narrative, Activities/Indicators Tracker, and with the budget categories and amounts listed on the SF-424A form.

If the budget table is created in a spreadsheet, it must be formatted to fit on an 8.5 x 11-inch page, with a font no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman. Please “print to PDF” to ensure that no formatting is lost.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the suggested budget narrative template, available in [Appendix C](#), when completing this section. Please also see [Section 2.4](#), [Section 2.5](#), and [Section 3.3](#) for additional information.

3.9.3 Indirect Cost Rate

A current NICRA, negotiated with a cognizant Federal agency, should be used to charge indirect costs. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a NICRA is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If the applicant does not have, and has never been approved for, a NICRA, they may charge up to 10 percent de minimis. In this instance, the applicant must indicate they are requesting the de minimis rate. 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. For questions related to the indirect cost rate, please work with the Grant Officer as noted in [Section 6.0](#) of this RFA.

3.9.4 Funding Restrictions

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.

Construction is not an allowable expense for the Farm to School Grant Program. FNS will not provide funding for construction expenses. Construction funds may not be used as a matching funds source.

3.10 Application Content: Required Attachments

All applicants are required to include the following attachments:

- Project narrative;
- Line-item budget narrative;
- No more than three resumes, each no more than one page in length, for staff managing or implementing the project;

- If a key position has not been filled, a job description no more than one page in length, which includes required knowledge, skills, and education may be included in the application in lieu of a resume; and
- Signed letter(s) verifying matching funds for every cash and/or in-kind resource included in the budget. There is no limit on the number or length of match letters. **Applicants failing to provide the match contribution documentation will be deemed ineligible and removed from further consideration.** Each match contribution letter must include the exact dollar amount and it must match the dollar amount included in budget.
- The Richard B. Russell NSLA mandates that Farm to School Grant Program awards improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites. Consequently, **if an Implementation or Turnkey applicant does not operate the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, childcare institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.** This letter of commitment does count toward the three-letter limit.
- **Non-profit applicants:** All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- **Proof of existing support:** All applicants may submit up to three letters of commitment from key partners identified in the project plan or budget. Applicants may submit fewer than three letters of commitment, but 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;
 - 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. Letters of commitment will not be accepted outside the Grants.gov web portal. Please note that letters of commitment are a separate and distinct requirement from match letters, which are required for every source of matching funds. Please see [Section 3.10](#) for more information on match letters.
- **Turnkey and Implementation grant applicants** must show evidence of existing community support or partnerships with entities that will be involved in the execution 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, distributors providing local food for the school nutrition programs or educational enrichment, or other key organizations (e.g., cooperative extension, rural development centers, etc.).

- **If a Turnkey or Implementation applicant does not operate the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, child care institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP. This letter does count toward the three-letter limit.**
- **State Agency grant applicants** must show evidence of partnerships or current relationships with entities in their States that will be involved in the implementation of the project and can assist State agencies in reaching the target population. **Please note that applicants to the State Agency track that do not administer one or more CNP in the State are required to include a letter of commitment from the relevant CNP-administering State agency. This letter does count toward the three-letter limit.** 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, distributors providing local food for the school nutrition programs or educational enrichment, or other key organizations (e.g., cooperative extensions, rural development centers, etc.).

3.11 Required Grant Application Forms

The required Grants.gov forms are located at: [grants.gov/web/grants/forms/forms-repository.html](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/forms-repository.html).

- Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family
 - Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 - Budget Information and Instructions (SF-424A)
 - Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities)
 - Indicate on your form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “Not Applicable” in boxes required to be completed.
- Additional Required Forms and Information
 - Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. Please see below for further information
 - SAM registration. Please see below for further information.

3.12 Submitting an Application

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to and submitted by 11:59 PM EST on January 12, 2024.

- Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov. Mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered application packages will not be accepted. For further instructions, see the “[Preparing for Electronic Application Submission through Grants.gov](#)” below.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

- FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications unless they are submitted via Grants.gov by the deadline. No additions or revisions will be accepted after the deadline.
- If multiple application packages are submitted through Grants.gov by the same applicant in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.

FNS strongly encourages applicants to begin the registration process at least **four 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. Please note that upon submission, Grants.gov may send multiple confirmation notices. Applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was **accepted**.

FNS will not accept applications outside of Grants.gov. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications through grants.gov should contact applicant support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. This service is available 24/7.

3.12.1 Preparing for Electronic Application Submission through Grants.gov

Applicants must register with Grants.gov and [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) in order to submit an application to FNS via Grants.gov as required.

In order to submit an application, you must:

1. Obtain a UEI Number

What is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)?

A UEI is a unique number assigned to all entities (public and private companies, individuals, institutions, or organizations) who register to do business with the federal government. For more information, visit the [U.S. General Services Administration website](https://www.gsa.gov).

2. Register in the System for Award Management (SAM)

- SAM combines federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one system. Visit [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) for additional information.
- To register, you must have your organization's UEI, the organization's Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the last tax return). It may take up to 5 to 7 business days or more to register and/or complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of an entity record.
- 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.
- FNS strongly encourages applicants to begin this process at least **4 weeks** before the due date of the grant solicitation.

3. Create a Grants.gov Account

The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's UEI to complete this process. For more detailed instruction about creating a profile on Grants.gov, visit: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>.

3.12.2 How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Applicants can apply online using *Workspace* within Grants.gov. *Workspace* is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement or RFA, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, visit: [grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html).

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to contact grants.gov support and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the Center with tracking your issue.

For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, please contact the Grant Officer noted in [Section 6.0](#) – Federal Awarding Agency Contacts of this RFA.

NOTICE: Special Characters and Naming Conventions

All applicants **must** follow Grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions for all attachments within the application package. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided by Grants.gov (per the Grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions).

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 (e.g., ! @ # \$ % ^ & * - '). This includes periods (.) and spacing followed by a dash in the file. To separate words in naming a file, use underscore (_). For example, Attached_File.pdf.

If these guidelines for file names are not followed, your application will be rejected. FNS will not accept any application rejected from the Grants.gov portal due to incorrect naming conventions.

Additional information can be found at: [grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#attachments](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#attachments).

3.12.3 Grants.gov Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 PM ET on the due date listed on the cover page, as detailed in [Section 3.12](#). Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An

electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (e.g., GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and a Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When FNS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for FNS funding.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission could take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

4. Application Review Information

4.1 Review Criteria

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure the applicants are eligible entities and are in compliance with all Program regulations. FNS will not approve any waivers from Program regulations for any projects submitted in response to this solicitation.

Complete applications are those that meet the following requirements:

1. Submitted by eligible applicants (see [Section 3.0](#)).
2. Meet all other eligibility requirements (see [Section 3.0](#)); and
3. Successfully submitted a complete application on or before the required deadline (see [Section 3.12](#)).

Please ensure when submitting an application that you only complete the project narrative that corresponds to the track and, if applicable, Turnkey project type for which you intend to apply. Ensure that the track indicated on the Farm to School Coversheet matches the narrative format submitted.

4.2 Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate applications for this RFA. See [Section 1.7](#) for Funding Priorities (Bonus Scoring Points).

4.2.1 Scoring for Turnkey Grant Applications (100 points)

Background and Need (25 points)

- The applicant clearly establishes the need for the program, including clearly identifying the participant population.
- The applicant clearly describes how the participating community, including individuals historically underserved in the community, will lead, have a voice in, participate in, and/or benefit from the project.
- The applicant describes their 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 or will result in a comprehensive farm to school plan.
- The applicant clearly describes how project activities will continue beyond the period of performance.
- Applicant provides up to three letters of commitment that demonstrate a demand for the project among the participants and/or within the community.
- If applicable, submit Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist (Bonus Points). See [Section 1.7](#) for more information.

Activities/Indicators (50 points)

- For each activity defined by FNS, the applicant identifies the specific tasks that will be deployed to complete the activity and identifies a responsible party to complete the tasks.
- 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, 2024, and are completed within the period of performance defined for each track.
- Applicant included resumes of relevant key staff and the qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflects 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 required knowledge, skills, and education, has been included in the application in lieu of a resume. No more than three resumes should be submitted.

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 are itemized sufficiently to clearly show how the budget components were developed and costs estimated and derived.
- Budget narrative and project narrative align with one another; there should be no items in the budget narrative that are not discussed in the project narrative.

4.2.2 Scoring for Implementation and State Agency Grant Applications (100 points)

Please note that the Implementation track and State Agency track are separate grant tracks, each with its own unique eligibility requirements, including eligible activities. Please ensure that you apply 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.

Project Narrative (50 points)

- Applicant describes the overall project and how the project activities achieve the required objective. Applicant emphasizes how the project will increase access to local foods, increase sourcing from local and regional producers, and increase access to agriculture education.
- Applicant describes how the project incorporates input from the community being served in the design and delivery of the project. Applicant includes relevant data describing how the need was identified and the status of farm to school initiatives within the participant population and/or organization.
- Applicant includes leadership and members from the community being served and ensures that the values, cultures, and needs of the community are represented in the design and delivery of the project.
- Applicant clearly indicates the required objective ([Section 1.6](#)) 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.
- Applicant included 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 required knowledge, skills, and education has been included in the application in lieu of a resume. No more than three resumes should be submitted.
- The level of staff allocation is appropriate for program execution and program evaluation.
- Roles and responsibilities among staff are clearly outlined.
- Letters of commitment demonstrate appropriate involvement of partners.

- The applicant clearly describes how the program will continue beyond grant period of performance including future roles of staff and/or partners to continue key activities without this grant funding.
- Applicant identifies key activities that require additional sources of funding and identifies those potential sources of funding (e.g., other grants, in-kind donations, volunteers, integration into organization’s long-term budget).
- The applicant includes a variety of strategies, such as policy, systems, and environmental changes, to ensure long-term viability and discusses partner and staff roles in continuing farm to school efforts past the grant period.
- The applicant describes how they will sustain access to local foods, such as making local foods available on program menus.
- If applicable, submit Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist (Bonus Points). See [Section 1.7](#) for more information.

Activities/Indicators Tracker and Evaluation (30 points)

- Activities in the table clearly align with the required objective.
- The Activities/Indicators Tracker aligns with the information in the rest of the Project Narrative.
- The Activities/Indicators Tracker specifies both local sourcing and agricultural education activities.
- Activities do not begin prior to July 1, 2024, and are completed within the period of performance defined for each grant track. Required activities are included. Overall, the timeline is realistic.
- All required indicators are included. Any additional indicators provided by the applicant are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound, and are associated with a specific activity.
- The organization clearly describes its ability to monitor activities and conduct 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.)
- Proposed objective, activities, indicators, and timeline are all in alignment with one another.
- The Activities/Indicators Tracker is formatted correctly, including six columns with the same headers in the same order as the instructions and example provided in [Section 3.8.6](#) and only one activity on each row. Overall, the table is readable.

Budget (20 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 are itemized sufficiently to clearly show how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- Budget narrative and project narrative align with one another; there should be no items in the budget narrative that are not discussed in the project narrative.

4.3 Review and Selection Process

Following the initial screening process, FNS will assemble a panel of individuals to review and determine the technical merits of each application. The panel will evaluate the proposals based on how well they address the required application components and rank the applications from highest to lowest score. The panel members will recommend applications for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring. The Selecting Official reserves the right to accept the panel's recommendation or to select an application for funding out of order to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation, or project diversity.

Please note that all applicants who meet the criteria for one or more priority areas **and** submit the optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist will receive up to 10 bonus points added to their total score, if it is determined that the criteria for one of the designated priority groups have been reached. **Applicants that do not complete the Priority Group Declaration Checklist will not be eligible for consideration for these bonus points.** FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available.

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 the SF-424.

4.4 Grant Applicant Webinars and Trainings

FNS will be providing two live webinars and four recorded webinars with information to assist applicants with applying for the FY 2024 Farm to School Grant Program. The titles of these webinars are listed below and will be available in October and November.

- Getting Familiar with the FY 2024 Farm to School RFA
- Planning Sustainable Projects
- Drafting Effective Grant Proposals
- Identifying Match Contributions

- Getting Your Grant Package Together
- Executing Successful Assessment Plans
- For more information, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants> or email Sm.Fn.FarmtoSchool@usda.gov.

5. Federal Award Administration Information

5.1 Federal Award Notice

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. 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 (FNS-529). 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.

5.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

5.2.1 Confidentiality of an Application

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.

5.2.2 Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) SP 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable information, April 2010).

Applicants submitting applications in response to this RFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. All federal and non-federal employees (e.g., contractors, affiliates, or partners) working for or on behalf of FNS are required to acknowledge understanding of their responsibilities and accountability for using and protecting FNS PII in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974; Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-06-15, *Safeguarding Personally Identifiable*

Information; M-06-16, Protection of Sensitive Agency Information; M-07-16, Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information; and the NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information.

By submitting an application in response to this RFA, applicants are assuring that all data exchanges conducted throughout the application submission and pre-award process (and during the performance of the grant, if awarded) will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable Federal laws. By submitting a grant application, applicants agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality, including the following: (1) ensuring that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained, or otherwise associated with USDA FNS funded grants is securely transmitted. Transmission of applications through Grants.gov is secure; (2) ensuring that PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, and that PII and other sensitive data is not submitted via email; and (3) Data transmitted via approved file sharing services (WatchDox, ShareFile, etc.), CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted.

5.2.3 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.

5.3 Administrative Regulations

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 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.

5.3.3 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 12549 and 12669, “Debarment and Suspension,” codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts subawards 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 subcontractors and subgrantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a subgrant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.gov.

5.3.4 Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Requirement for System for Award Management. Unless you are exempted from this requirement under [2 CFR 25.110](#), you as the recipient must maintain current information in the SAM. This includes information on your immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all your predecessors that have been awarded a Federal contract or Federal financial assistance within the last three years, if applicable, until you submit the final financial report required under this Federal award or receive the final payment, whichever is later. This requires that you review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your information or another Federal award term.

Requirement for UEI: If you are authorized to make subawards under this Federal award, you:

- Must notify potential subrecipients that no entity (see definition in paragraph C of this award term) may receive a subaward from you until the entity has provided its UEI to you.
- May not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its UEI to you. Subrecipients are not required to obtain an active SAM registration, but must obtain a UEI.

5.3.5 Reporting Subaward 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 subgrantee 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 subgrantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Subaward Reporting System

(FSRS). In order to access FSRS a current SAM registration is required. A primary grantee and first-tier subgrantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives. Every primary and first-tier grantee must obtain a UEI prior to being eligible to receive a grant or subgrant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

5.3.6 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) is designed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from SAM.gov, and suspension and debarment information from the SAM. 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.

5.3.7 Freedom of Information Act Requests

The Freedom of Information ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, provides individuals with a right to access records in the possession of the Federal Government. The Government may withhold information pursuant to the nine exemptions and the three exclusions contained in the Act.

Application packages submitted in response to this grant solicitation may be subject to FOIA by requests by interested parties. In response to these requests, FNS will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including departmental regulations.

FNS will forward a Business Submitter Notice to the requested applicant's point-of-contact. Applicants will need to review requested materials and submit and submit any recommendations within 10 days from the date of FNS notification. FNS will redact Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

For additional information on the Freedom of Information (FOIA) process, please contact the FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at FOIA@usda.gov.

5.3.8 USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any

program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

5.3.9 Privacy Policy

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service does not collect any PII without explicit consent. To view the Agency's Privacy Policy, visit: <https://www.usda.gov/privacy-policy>.

5.4 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.

5.4.1 Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: "Universal Identifier and System for Award Management"
- 2 CFR Part 170: "Reporting Subaward 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 Part 200: "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"
- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA's implementing regulation of 2 CFR Part 200 "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 "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)”
- 7 CRR 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 FNS grant awards may be obtained electronically in advance of an award. For a copy of the Terms and Conditions, please contact the Grant Officer noted in [Section 6](#) – Federal Awarding Agency Contacts of this RFA.

5.5 Reporting Requirements

5.5.1 Financial Reports

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 (Financial Status Report) into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. For additional information on FPRS, visit: <https://fprs.fns.usda.gov/>.

5.5.2 Performance Progress Reports (PPR)

Grantees will be required to submit progress reports to FNS 30 days following the end of each semi-annual period, using the FNS-908 PPR form that will be sent to grantees at the time of award. The reports should cover the preceding period of activity. **Please note:** the FNS-908 PPR form specific to this opportunity will be sent to grantees at the time of award. Use of the FNS-908 PPR form for progress reports is required. Please ensure your organization has software capable of opening and completing a PDF with fillable form fields.

As noted in [Section 3.0](#), if awarded, grantees will be required to report on all activities proposed in their application using the FNS-908 PPR. All activities reported on the FNS-908 must align with the required objective from [Section 1.6](#). Carefully considering proposed activities and indicators will prepare grantees for their progress reporting requirements if awarded.

Grantees must submit progress reports via electronic mail to the Farm to School Report mailbox at SM.FN.FarmSchRprt@usda.gov.

All Turnkey – Action Planning grantees will be required to submit a Farm to School Action Plan within 120 days of the end of the grant period of performance.

5.5.3 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.

6. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact the Grant Officer at:

Anna Arrowsmith
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
1320 Braddock Place, Suite 620
Alexandra, VA 22314
E-mail: anna.arrowsmith@usda.gov

Please visit the [Farm to School Resources | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#) page for RFA supporting materials such as our FAQ document. For more general information about the Community Food Systems Division, please [visit our website](#).

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's Applicant Support (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>).

7. Other Information

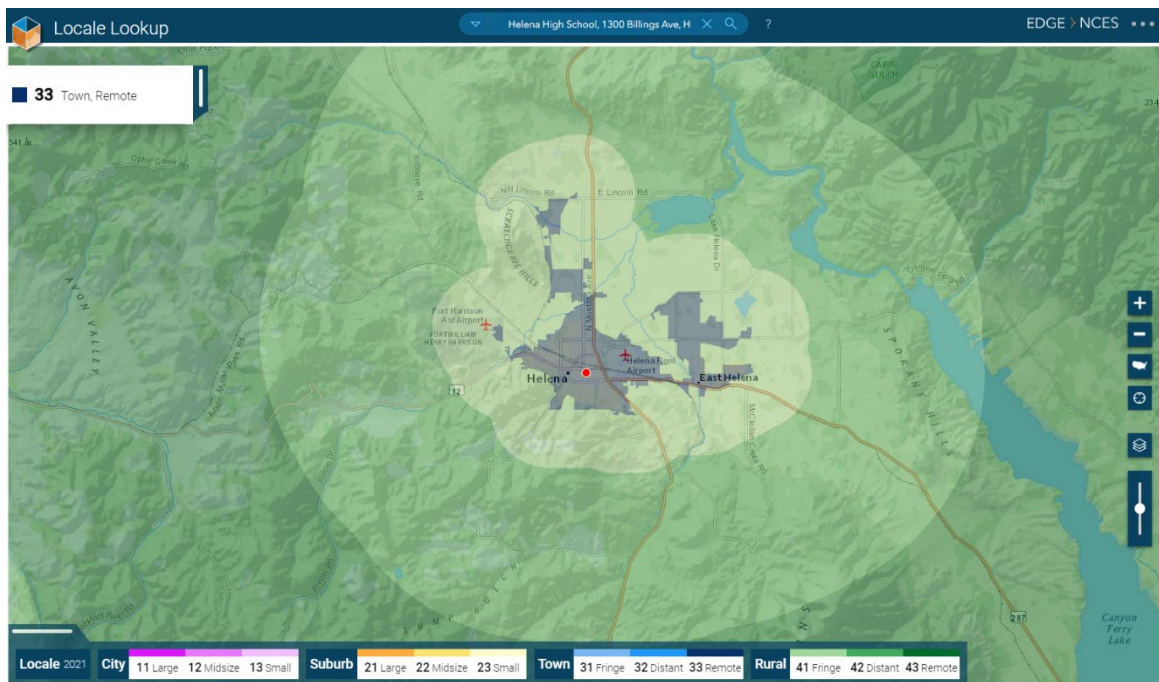
7.1 Debriefing Requests

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to discuss the strengths and weakness 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. FNS reserves the right to provide this debriefing orally or in written format.

Appendix A: Urban/Rural Classification Instructions

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

1. Go to the search site.
2. Click in the field marked “Search by Location”. Type in a school name, district name, physical address, or town. As you type, the tool will begin populating suggestions as a dropdown menu. Once your desired site or location appears in the list, click on it. (Tip: You may also narrow your search criteria by clicking the down arrow next to the search field and selecting one of the displayed options that is relevant to your search).
3. After you have selected the desired location, the location will be displayed on the map as a gray dot. Click directly on the dot to display the locale code. Clicking anywhere else on the map will display the code for the area that you clicked, not the location you searched. The dot will turn red for the location that has been selected on the map.
4. Once the location is selected, the locale code will display on the upper left of the map. See screenshot below. Enter the two-digit classification code (e.g., 11, 12, 31) on the Coversheet.



For complete definitions, visit the National Center for Education Statistics website.

Appendix B: Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist (Bonus Points)

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.

Applicants that do not submit the completed checklist with their application will not receive bonus points. Applicants should include the Priority Declaration Checklist as its own page or as a separate attachment to ensure full credit.

An applicant reaching any of the racial equity priorities is eligible for seven bonus points. More than one racial equity priority may apply to the applicant's project, and applicants are encouraged to check multiple, but only seven bonus points will be awarded regardless of how many racial equity priorities are selected. Applicants will receive one priority point for each organization type priority their project satisfies. The maximum number of bonus priority points awarded shall not exceed ten (10) points.

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 1.7](#) of the FY 2024 RFA for more details.

Please check all the priority group(s) that your project will serve and for which you would like to identify for priority consideration:

Racial Equity priorities (seven points):

- Applicant is an ITO, or an entity led and/or staffed by American Indians and Alaska Natives and serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities.
- Applicant is an organization led and/or staffed by Black/African Americans and serving Black/African American communities.
- Applicant is an organization led and/or staffed by people of color and serving communities of color (defined as Black/African American, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and/or Pacific Islander).

Organization Type priorities (one point each, three points maximum):

- At least 40 percent of children served are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Applicant is a small- to medium-sized agricultural producer or group of small- to medium-sized agricultural producers.
- Project is located in and serving eligible CNP sites in a rural area.

Appendix C: Suggested Budget Narrative Template and Checklist

Suggested Budget Narrative Template

1. PERSONNEL	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
1a. Title				Hourly wage x # hours
1b. Title				Annual salary x FTE x # years
1c. Title				
Personnel Total				

2. FRINGE BENEFITS	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
2a. PERSONNEL 1a.				Total salary x fringe % rate
2b. PERSONNEL 1b.				
2c. PERSONNEL 1c.				
Fringe Benefits Total				

3. TRAVEL	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	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				

3. TRAVEL	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
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				
Travel Total				

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)	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
4a. XXX				
4b. XXX				
4c. Office supplies				
4d. Professional development materials				
4e. Computer(s)				
4f. Computer workstation(s)				
4g. Software				
Supplies Total				

5. EQUIPMENT	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
5a. XXX				
5b. XXX				
Equipment Total				

6. CONTRACTUAL	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	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.				
Contractual Total				

7. OTHER	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
7c. Operating Costs per person				
7d. Professional Development				
7e. Software Licenses				
7f. Postage, Shipping/Handling				
7g. Fees				
Other Total				

8. TOTAL COSTS	FEDERAL REQUEST	MATCH/IN-KIND	TOTAL	NARRATIVE EXPLANATION
8a. Total Direct Costs				[You will not need to write anything in this column]
8b. Total Indirect Costs [or maximum Administrative Costs % allowed]				calculation = total Direct costs x IDC rate
Total costs (Budget categories 8a + 8b)				[You will not need to write anything in this column]

Budget Narrative Checklist

FOR GRANT APPLICANT USE ONLY. DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM WITH THE APPLICATION.

This checklist will assist you in completing the budget narrative portion of the application. Please review the checklist to ensure the items below are addressed in the budget narrative.

Note: The budget and budget narrative, as well as forms SF-424 and SF-424A must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fide need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed. All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

ITEM	YES	NO
Personnel		
Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading?		
Are employees of the applicant's organization identified by name and position title?		
Did you reflect percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)?		
Fringe Benefits		
Did you include your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation?		
Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds?		
Travel		
Are travel expenses itemized? For example, origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip.		
Are the attendee objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative?		
Is the basis for the lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example, include excerpt from travel regulations.		
Equipment		
Is the need for the equipment justified in the narrative?		
Are the types of equipment, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased listed in the budget?		
Is the basis for the cost per item or other basis of computation stated in the budget?		
Supplies		
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		
Contractual: (FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and associated costs after the contract is awarded.)		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or subgrant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		

ITEM	YES	NO
Other		
<p>Consultant Services: Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget? The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant's name and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), number of estimated hours and hourly wages per hour, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.</p>		
<p>For all other line items listed under the "Other" heading: List all items to be covered within "Other" along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.</p>		
Indirect Costs		
<p>Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent and signed NICRA must be provided along with the application.</p>		
<p>2 CFR 200 allows any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate to charge a de Minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs, which the non-Federal entity may use indefinitely as a Federally-negotiated rate.</p>		

Appendix D: Grant Program Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire

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. Please submit this questionnaire along with your application package.

Organization Information

Legal Organization Name:

Unique Entity ID (SAM):

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"/>

Requirement	Yes	No
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? <i>(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).</i>	<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"/>
Hyperlink <i>(if available)</i> :		
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.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date

Name of Authorized
Representative:

Phone Number:

Email:

Appendix E: Template CNP Operator Letter of Commitment

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act mandates that Farm to School Grant Program awards improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites. Consequently, **if an applicant does not operate the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP, the applicant must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, child care institution, or summer sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State Agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.** This letter of commitment does count toward the three-letter limit.

CNP Operator's Letterhead

{Date}

{CNP operator's organization name}

{CNP operator's street address}

{CNP operator's city, State, ZIP}

To Gregory Walton, Chief, Grants Management Operations Branch:

The {CNP operator's organization name} provides this letter to indicate our commitment to serve as the program site and implementation partner for {applicant's name} in their project, {"Project Title"}.

{Provide information about the CNP operator, including the nature of the commitment.}

{Identify the specific CNP(s) that the partnering organization operates. Any combination of one or more of the programs NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP is acceptable.}

Sincerely,

{Signature}

{Name of Director, CEO, etc.}

{Contact information}

Appendix F: Match Letter Template

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. See [Section 3.3](#) for more information regarding match requirements.

School District/Agency/Organization Letterhead

{Date}

{Name of Entity Providing Match}

{Address}

{City, State, ZIP}

To Gregory Walton, Chief, Grants Management Operations Branch:

The {Organization Name} commits to providing {total \$ amount which must match what is in budget} in matching funds for {applicant's name} in their project, {"Project Title"} under the {track name} track.

The {total \$ amount} matching funds will be provided during the project's period of performance. This amount will be distributed as {Describe the source of match, what expenses are being provided, e.g., in-kind personnel expenses, garden supplies, etc., and how the calculation was derived} towards the completion of the project.

Should there be any questions regarding this letter, please contact us at {contact information}.

Sincerely,

{Signature}

{Name of Director, CEO, etc.}

{Contact information}