



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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DATE: February 6, 2013

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SUBJECT: USDA Farm to School Grants – Please Spread the Word

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

This memorandum announces a request for applications (RFA) for the latest round of Department of Agriculture (USDA) [USDA's Farm to School](#) grants. I am writing to encourage you to pass this information on to school districts in your state and region, and have attached an information sheet that provides a quick reference about the grants.

This year, three different types of farm to school grants will be made available.

Planning grants are intended for K-12 school food authorities that are in the beginning stages of their farm to school efforts.

Implementation grants are intended for K-12 school food authorities that seek to advance existing farm to school initiatives.

Support Service grants are intended for eligible entities working with school districts or schools to further develop and provide broad reaching support services to farm to school initiatives.

Proposals are due at *midnight EST, April 24, 2013*. In all cases, a 25% cash or in-kind match of the total project cost is required.

For more detailed information, please visit the USDA Farm to School website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/>).

Original Signed

Cynthia Long
Director, Child Nutrition Division

Attachment

USDA Farm to School Grants

February 2013

Brief Summary for Use in Promoting the Availability of Grant Funding For Specific Farm to School Grant Program Details, Please Refer to the Request for Applications

Prepared by Matthew Russell, Program Officer, USDA Farm to School Program
(matthew.russell@ams.usda.gov or 202.720-6765 with questions)

Background

Across the country, an increasing number of schools and districts have begun to source more foods locally and to provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition. This nationwide movement to enrich children's bodies and minds while supporting local economies is often referred to as "farm to school." The term encompasses efforts that bring local or regionally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and the integration of food-related education into the regular, standards-based classroom curriculum.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) established a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is charged with implementing the Farm to School Program.

Amount Available

In this funding cycle, FNS anticipates awarding up to \$5 million in grant funding to support efforts that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

Three Types of Grants

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of Federal funds. In this funding round, USDA will solicit applications for three types of grants:

1. **Planning grants** are for schools or school districts just getting started on farm to school activities and are intended to help these entities organize and structure their efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations.

Who can apply:

- K-12 School Food Authorities, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch (NSLP) or Breakfast Programs (SBP).

2. **Implementation grants** are intended to help schools or school districts scale or further develop existing farm to school initiatives.

Who can apply:

- K-12 School Food Authorities, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the NSLP or SBP,

3. **Support Service grants** are intended for eligible entities working with schools or school districts to further develop and provide broad reaching support services to farm to school initiatives.

Who can apply:

- State and local agencies, non-profit organizations, Indian tribal organizations, and agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers.

Funding Amounts and Expected Distribution of Awards

Planning grants are expected to range from \$20,000 - \$45,000 and represent approximately 25 percent of the total awards. Implementation and Support Service grants are expected to range from \$65,000 - \$100,000 and represent approximately 75 percent of the total awards.

A Match is Required, Evaluation Too

For all three types of grants, the applicant must provide at least 25 percent of the total project cost as the Federal share of costs for this grant cannot exceed 75 percent of the total cost of the project, as required by the HHFKA. Authorizing language also states that as a condition of receiving a farm to school grant, each grant recipient shall cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds.

Pick One, Then Think about Partnering

School applicants must choose between submitting a Planning grant or an Implementation grant. Only one application per eligible school is permitted. As appropriate, USDA encourages school districts to work together and submit multi-school applications where a USDA investment in, for example, one school district working with several districts, might benefit a wider geographic area than funding to any one district alone.

Schools are encouraged to partner with eligible entities as part of a support service grant proposal.

How to Access the Request for Applications (RFA)

The RFA will be posted on USDA's [Farm to School website](#) and available at www.grants.gov.

Important Dates

- February 6, 2013: Request for Applications Released
- April 24, 2013 (Midnight EST): Proposals Due
- October 2013: Awards Announced and Funds Available (*Pending the Availability of Federal Funds*)

Webinars to Learn More:

Three webinars will be offered so that grant applicants can learn more about this grant opportunity. To receive additional information about webinars, please be sure to sign up for the [Farm to School E-Letter](#).

- March 5, 2013, 1:00 p.m. EST – Planning Grants
- March 6, 2013, 1:00 p.m. EST – Implementation Grants
- March 7, 2013, 1:00 p.m. EST – Support Service Grants

Regional Directors

State Directors

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Don't Wait for a Webinar to Get Your Question Answered

You can get your question answered at any point in the process by contacting:

Matthew Russell, Program Officer, Farm to School Grant Program

Matthew.Russell@ams.usda.gov or 202.720.6765

Additional Information

For updates on the USDA Farm to School Program, please visit the [Farm to School website](#) or subscribe to the [Farm to School E-Letter](#).