



USDA Farm to School Grant Program

Getting Your Package Together

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A decorative header with a light green background featuring white line-art icons of various food items including carrots, piggy banks, forks, and other kitchenware.

Agenda

- » Align Proposal with Grant Program Priorities
- » Building Your Grant Writing Team
- » Writing the Proposal Narrative
- » Budget & Match
- » Resources
- » Questions?



Reminder to please:

Read the
[FY 21 Farm to School Grant Program](#)
[Request for Applications](#)

Bookmark and leverage the
[Grant Applicant Resource Page](#)

Align Proposal with Grant Program Priorities



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Purpose

To assist eligible entities in implementing farm to school programs that **improve access to local foods in eligible schools.**



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Grant Program Priorities

Legislative Priorities

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

Grant Program Priorities

FY 2021 Priorities



- » Serve a high proportion of children (at least 40 percent or more) who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- » Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and entities serving tribal communities.
- » Located in or targeting Opportunity Zones
- » Small- to medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- to medium sized agricultural producers.

FY2021 Grant Tracks

Grant Track	Timeline	Funding Amount
Turnkey	12 <u>or</u> 24 months (depending on project choice)	Up to \$25,000 Up to \$50,000 (Depends on project)
Implementation	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	\$50,000 - \$100,000
State Agency	12 <u>or</u> 24 months	\$50,000 - \$100,000



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Build your Grant Writing Team



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Build Your Grant Writing Team

- » A well-developed farm to school project requires research and careful planning.
- » Think strategically about who you need to have at the table to create a comprehensive plan.
- » Even if someone is not directly writing the grant, can they offer a perspective you should incorporate?



Choosing Team Members

What does your project involve?

» Local Procurement

- » Food service director, school administration, food service management company (if applicable), food suppliers (ex: farmers, producers), students

» Edible Gardens

- » Food service director, volunteers, support organizations, school administration, teachers

» Experiential Activities/Curriculum

- » School administration, teachers, support organizations



Writing a Successful Proposal Narrative



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Writing 101 Tips

- » Start preparing your application early!

- » Do not exceed the page limit
 - Turnkey – 3 page maximum
 - Implementation– 5 page maximum
 - State Agency – 5 page maximum

- » Arrange proposal narrative sections in the order that they appear in the RFA

- » Clearly label each section and subsection



Writing 101 Tips

- » Be responsive to the questions in each subsection of the proposal narrative.
- » Don't write each subsection in a vacuum! Sections should connect
- » Provide more details on the sections worth more points. See sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.3 of the RFA.
- » Make sure application has all required attachments
- » Have someone unfamiliar with your project evaluate it using the scoresheet found in sections 5.2.1-5.2.3 of the RFA





Required Objectives (Implementation and State Agency ONLY)

Objectives for the State Agency and Implementation Grant tracks are streamlined.

Required Objective:

- **Improve access to local foods in eligible schools through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts.**
- See Section 1.3.2 of the RFA.





Background

- » Clearly distinguish previous achievements from the current project plan
- » Don't forget to tell reviewers how challenges will be *overcome*
- **Turnkey Track**: Describe any experience planning and implementing farm to school initiatives that demonstrate you have the background necessary to successfully execute the proposed project.
- » **Implementation & State Agency Track**: Be thoughtful about previous experience shared. Describe experience that demonstrates that you're well-prepared to execute the project you are seeking to have funded.



Need

- » Describe why your community needs this project.
- » If the project targets schools, providing free/reduced price lunch eligibility rates is a good indicator of poverty
- » Be illustrative and compelling. Use relevant data to support rationale and demonstrate deep understanding of community's unique needs:
 - » [Center for Disease Control](#), [US Census Bureau](#), [Census of Agriculture](#), data collected in-house, etc.
 - » data collected in-house, etc.



Project Work Plan Narrative & Table

- » This section is important—prioritize accordingly!
- » **Turnkey grants:**
 - » For each Turnkey project: required activity, responsible activity, how the activity will be accomplished, and proposed timeline must be listed and aligned with your projects (*Templates in Sections 4.2.1-4.2.4*)
- » **Implementation & State Agency:**
- » Describe how the project supports the grant program intent
 - » E.g. if your project solely focuses on launching a school garden, address how that garden will help to get more local foods into the cafeteria
 - » Based on staffing capacity and the length of the grant term, select a reasonable number of activities to complete and execute in a logical order.
 - » Activities must lead to accomplishing the objective

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Staffing, Project Management, and Quality Assurance (Implementation and State Agency ONLY)

- » Be clear about staff member's percentage of time allocated to the project **when applicable**.
 - » Only three resumes are permitted – choose strategically
 - » If a key staff member has not been hired yet, describe the position responsibilities and requirements
- ★ Tip to save space! If contractor(s) providing service(s), refer reader to their letter of commitment instead of describing qualifications in this section.



Evaluation

(Implementation and State Agency ONLY)

- » Align evaluation plan with project activities
- » Be as specific as possible
- ★ Don't reinvent the wheel by committing to create new tools – reference and leverage existing evaluation toolkits/instruments/surveys. Here are some [resources!](#)
- » Take measurements at the start of the project so that you can track progress over the course of the grant

Sustainability

- » Demonstrate to reviewers that you have conducted research on what other funding sources are available
- » Clarify which activities will continue after the grant period ends and how.
- » Discuss how partnerships will be leveraged to continue work beyond grant period if other funding sources are not available.



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Letters of Commitments

- » Up to 3 letters of commitment permitted.
- » Strategically select from whom to request a letter
- » Must be included in grant application submission (not emailed separately).
- » Letters of commitment or support are different than your match letters.



Budget & Budget Narrative



SF-424A

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Number: 4040-0006
Expiration Date: 01/31/2019

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Federal	10.575	\$	\$	\$ 100,000.00	\$	\$ 100,000.00
2. Non-Federal	10.575				34,000.00	34,000.00

Budget Categories

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES					
6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1) Federal	(2) Non-Federal	(3)	(4)	
a. Personnel	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 34,000.00	\$	\$	\$ 59,000.00
b. Fringe Benefits	6,500.00				6,500.00
c. Travel	2,000.00				2,000.00
d. Equipment	4,000.00				4,000.00
e. Supplies	500.00				500.00
f. Contractual	50,000.00				50,000.00
g. Construction					
h. Other	12,000.00				12,000.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	100,000.00	34,000.00			\$ 134,000.00
j. Indirect Charges					\$
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 34,000.00	\$	\$	\$ 134,000.00
7. Program Income	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

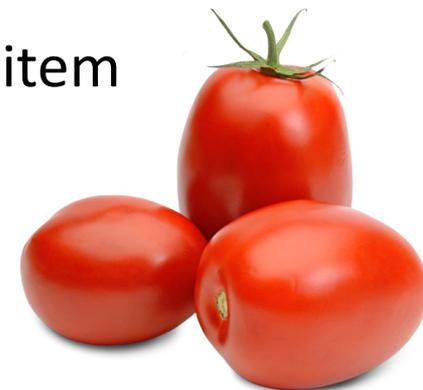
Budget Narrative

For each line item, provide full details, such as:

- » Salaries – By position, identify position title, percentage of time or hours dedicated to the project, and job duties.
- » Travel – Identify number of trips, number of staff traveling, average cost per trip, purpose of trip(s), mode of transportation.

Be sure to provide an explanation as to how the line-item amounts were derived;

A sample budget narrative is available on the [grant website](#).



Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are those costs benefiting more than the proposed grant project, such as utility costs for the project location, salary costs for the payroll clerk, etc.

- » If claiming indirect costs, you must provide a copy of your negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA).
- » Applicants who do not have, and have never had, a NICRA may request a de minimis amount up to 10% of direct costs.





Matching Funds

MUST provide

A 25% match of total project cost from non-federal sources

- Include a description in the budget narrative and identify the entity who will be providing the support
- Federal grant award + match
- Leverage the USDA Match Calculator tool!

Sample Calculation

Grant Request: \$65,000

Match Amount: \$25,000

Total Project Cost: \$90,000

Match Percent: 28 % (match amount / total project cost)

USDA Percent: 72 % (grant request / total project cost)



Matching Funds

Examples

- **Cash** – salary paid to an employee of the partner organization for project related activities
- **In-kind** – value of loaned or donated equipment, based on fair market value or value of volunteer time spent on project activities.
 - Hourly wages should be based on the current wage rate in the community

Documentation of Matching Funds

- Time sheets of volunteer hours worked
- Documentation of the value of loaned or donated equipment, such as an invoice, property records, etc.

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Resources



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

Visit the Grant Applicant Resource Page

Resources for Farm to School Grant Program Applicants

HOME > COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS > RESOURCES FOR FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM APPLICANTS

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Our Agency

Programs

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA) now open! Please use the resources below to learn more about the Farm to School Grant Program and go to [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) to submit an application. We encourage those seeking grant funding to check this page often, as the Office of Community Food Systems will post new and updated materials throughout the application period.

For additional funding opportunities for farm to school activities, see [USDA Grants and Loans that Support Farm to School Activities](#) for more details.

- ✓ [Getting Started](#)
- ✓ [Preparing a Grant Application](#)
- ✓ [Webinars](#)
- ✓ [Sample Application Materials](#)

Fact Sheets

Community Food Systems Fact Sheets

HOME > COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

Resource Type
Fact Sheets



General Overviews

- [Office of Community Food Systems Resources](#)
- [Research Shows Farm to School Works](#)
- [Integrating Local Foods into Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Selling Local Food to Schools: A Resource for Producers](#)
- [How Cooperative Extension Professionals Can Support Farm to School Programs](#)
- [Effective Strategies State Agencies Can Use to Support Community Food Systems](#)
- [Farm to Child Nutrition Programs Planning Guide](#)

Special Topics

- [School Gardens: Using Gardens to Grow Healthy Habits in Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Communities](#)
- [Bringing Tribal Foods and Traditions into Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Gardens](#)
- [Gardens in Tribal Communities](#)



10 FACTS ABOUT LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOL CAFETERIAS

- 1. USDA supports and encourages the procurement of local foods.**
In USDA's vision, school cafeterias championing U.S. agriculture and proudly promoting locally sourced foods are the norm, not the exception.
- 2. The definition of "local" is different from school to school.**
Definitions for local vary widely depending on the unique geography and climate where a school is located and on the abundance of local food producers and manufacturers. Many schools define local as within a certain number of miles from the school, within the county, or within the state. Alternatively, definitions might include more than one state (i.e., Georgia, Alabama, and Florida) or discrete parts of several states (i.e., specific counties in southwest Washington, northeast Oregon, and Idaho). In addition, many schools use different definitions of local depending on the product or season.
- 3. Many local products are easy to find and source.**
Some products are more likely to be local than others. For example, fluid milk is produced in almost every state. Since milk is perishable and expensive to transport, most milk on school menus is relatively local. Similarly, schools in California serving avocado are likely using local avocados, while schools in Florida probably serve local citrus. Local products that are unique and/or abundant in a region are generally easier to find and source.
- 4. Food distributors and food service management companies can be great partners for local sourcing.**
Increasingly schools are including expectations regarding local sourcing in their contracts with food service management companies and/or distributors. Even without contractual obligations regarding local, many distributors already offer local products so all a school needs to do is find out what items on the contracted list are local and order those products. This approach is a very easy way to bring local products into schools without creating separate distribution channels.
- 5. Locally sourced fruits and vegetables are available through the DoD Fresh Program.**
Schools can elect to spend a portion of their USDA Foods entitlement money on fresh fruits and vegetables through the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, operated by the Department of Defense. To supply fresh fruits and vegetables to schools, DoD contracts with over 45 produce vendors across the country. DoD Fresh vendors often have local products and they identify them as such in the FFAVORS catalogue.

THE FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM

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Thank you! Questions?



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