

USDA Farm to School Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

Please refer to the request for applications (RFA) for more detailed information.

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GENERAL

Q: How is “local” defined for the Farm to School Grant Program?

A: “Local” is left to each applicant to define. Since USDA fully expects applicants to have varying definitions of “local” and “regional” as each definition may be specific to individual contexts, please make sure to clearly define your definition of “local” and “regional” in your grant application.

Q: Can you define local procurement?

A: USDA expects applicants to have varying definitions of “local” that align with their particular needs and goals. How one defines “local” or “regional” can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters, seasonality, and/or other factors. Local procurement options differ greatly across communities depending on district and school size, proximity to agricultural areas, growing season, and demographics. The term “procurement” refers to purchasing done with federal funds. Note that procurement requirements can vary based on state and local laws and regulations. For more information about procurement, you may visit the [“Procuring Local Foods”](#) page of the Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS) website.

Q: Does my Implementation or State Agency grant proposal have to include procurement related activities?

A: In accordance with the overall purpose of the program to improve access to local foods in eligible schools, a strong proposal would address how the proposed project supports or aligns with local procurement efforts in USDA Child Nutrition Programs.

Q: How can I be notified with updates about the Farm to School Grant?

A: Please be sure to [subscribe](#) to the Office of Community Food Systems’ (OCFS) e-newsletter, “The Dirt,” for updates regarding the FY 2022 Farm to School Request for Applications, including webinar and grant resources.

Q: How many projects can I lead or participate in?

A: An eligible applicant can serve as the lead on only one Turnkey, Implementation, or State Agency grant application. You may be listed as a key partner on more than one application.

Q: If I’m conducting a statewide project, must I provide information about Free/Reduced Price eligible populations, Rural/Urban Classification codes, and student demographics for each of the project participants?

A: Statewide projects may provide a brief explanation of how you plan to partner with schools (e.g. our project will recruit 16 schools to participate in a statewide farm to school network, or, our project will award sub-grants to three large districts in our state). Additionally, projects with a statewide reach may complete the “School Information” section in the aggregate, as the data provided may affect whether your project qualifies for any priority considerations. Please make sure that a letter of commitment is secured from at least one of your application’s intended targets. Please note that State agency applicants to the Producer Training project in the Turnkey track are not required to submit this information.

Q: My project targets Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and/or Summer Food Service Program (SFP) participants and is not associated with a school or school district. How do I complete the “Urban/Rural Classification Code” section of the Farm to School Coversheet?

A: In order to provide the Urban/Rural classification code, you can use the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) [Search for Public Schools](#) tool and enter the classification code for the district that

would serve your target population, or you can use the NCES [Locale Lookup](#) to find your location on the interactive map and enter the associated code.

Q: Can I exceed the word count for each section of the proposal narrative as described in the RFA?

A: Yes, however your application must comply with the page limit requirements. Applications must not exceed three pages for Turnkey grants or five pages for Implementation or State Agency grants. The suggested word counts are simply recommendations intended to help guide applicants in determining how much content to write for each subsection of the proposal. You may go over or under the suggested word count length as long as you have adequately responded to the proposal narrative questions and stay within the page limits stated in the RFA.

Q: I stayed under the suggested word count for each section, but my application exceeds the page limit. Will my application still meet the length requirements?

A: No. The suggested word counts are simply recommendations intended to help guide applicants in determining how much content to write for each subsection of the proposal. You may go over or under the suggested word count length as long as you have adequately responded to the proposal narrative questions and stay within the page limits stated in the RFA. If your application exceeds three pages for a Turnkey grant, or five pages for an Implementation or State Agency grant, you will need to edit your application in order to meet the page length requirements.

Q: Will my application be rejected if it exceeds the page limit?

A: Applications will not be disqualified because of length; however, any information contained on pages after page 3 (in the case of Turnkey grants) or page 5 (for Implementation and State Agency grants) will be discarded and not scored—they will not be considered a part of the application, even if the text is a continuation of information from the previous page. Please note that this does not apply to information in the required Project Work Plan Table section, which is subject to a separate three page maximum. In order to guarantee that all sections of your application are scored, please abide carefully by the page limits listed in the RFA.

Q: Will USDA participate in trainings conducted by State Agency grantees?

A: State Agency grant recipients are encouraged to make good faith efforts to include USDA FNS Regional Farm to School personnel in the planning process for any trainings, conferences, and/or other events within states.

Q: Who can submit a proposal for a Farm to School Grant between \$100,000 and \$500,000?

A: State agencies or other eligible organizations proposing projects that are multi-state or national in scope may submit a proposal for up to \$500,000. The National School Lunch Act (NSLA) limits grant awards to no more than \$100,000 each. However, in anticipation of authority to provide grants of up to \$500,000 in the FY 2022 agriculture appropriations, USDA will consider proposals for up to \$500,000 from these entities. Final award decisions will depend upon the final appropriations language.

Q: Is the match requirement still applicable for Farm to School Grant proposals between \$100,000 and \$500,000?

A: A 25 percent cash or in-kind funding match is required to receive a Farm to School Grant award and cannot be waived for any applicant.

Q: What is the award period for Farm to School Grant proposals between \$100,000 and \$500,000?

A: Applicants must choose a grant period of 24 months for proposals from \$100,000 - \$500,000.

ELIGIBILITY

Q: Are institutions operating the CACFP required to have non-profit status to be eligible?

A: No, for-profit institutions participating in the CACFP are eligible to apply, but only for projects implemented for facilities or sites served by CACFP.

Q: What CACFP and SFSP organizations are included in the definition of “eligible schools and institutions”?

A: For organizations operating CACFP, “eligible schools and institutions” means schools, school districts, a sponsoring organization, child care center, at-risk afterschool care center, outside-school-hours care center, or emergency shelter which enters into an agreement with the State agency to assume final administrative and financial responsibility for Program operations. For SFSP operators, “service institutions” (referred to in the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] as “sponsors”) can include a public or private nonprofit residential summer camp, a unit of local, municipal, county or State government, or a private nonprofit organization which develops a special summer or other school vacation program providing food service similar to that made available to children during the school year under the NSLP and SBP and which is approved to participate in the SFSP.

Q: Is my individual family day care home eligible to apply for a grant?

A: No. Based on the definition in 7 CFR 226.2 of “day care home” as an organized nonresidential child care program for children enrolled in a private home, licensed or approved as a family or group day care home and under the auspices of a sponsoring organization, an individual day care home is not eligible to apply as the lead applicant; however, the sponsoring organization may apply as the lead applicant for a project that serves one or more day care homes sponsored by the organization administering the food program.

Q: Are any individual CACFP/SFSP operating sites eligible to apply for a grant?

A: The lead applicant for the grant must be the organization with ultimate administrative and financial responsibility for Program operations. While there may be a situation where the sponsor is responsible for the administration of the food program at a single site, the sponsor must submit the application.

Q: If I am an individual teacher or parent, am I eligible to apply for a Farm to School Grant?

A: No, individuals may not apply for a Farm to School Grant.

Q: Am I eligible to apply as an individual school?

A: Yes, you may apply as an individual school.

Q: If my school district was awarded a Farm to School Implementation Grant in FY 2019, FY 2020, or FY2021, am I, as an individual school, still eligible to apply for a Farm to School Implementation Grant for FY 2022?

A: No, the individual school is not eligible to apply for an Implementation Grant in the FY 2022 cycle.

Q: Through my proposed project, I would like to work with an agricultural producer who does not meet the small- and medium-sized guidance outlined in the RFA. Is this allowable?

A: Agricultural producers that are key partners of the grant project do not have to conform to the small- and medium-sized guidance outlined in section 3.0 of the RFA. However, they are not eligible as a lead applicant.

Q: My institution of higher learning or extension program is considered a non-profit 501(c)(3); can I apply as a non-profit?

A: No, however you can be a key partner.

Q: My institution of higher learning or extension program is considered a State or local agency; can I apply as a State or local agency?

A: No, however you can be a key partner.

Q: I am a Tribal College. Am I eligible for a farm to school grant?

A: No, Indian Tribal Colleges are ineligible for this grant opportunity because they are a higher education institution. A Tribal college can be a key partner.

Q: Are 501(c)(6) organizations eligible for this grant opportunity?

A: No, however they can be a key partner.

Q: Are private schools eligible for farm to school grants?

A: Pre-K-12 non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and/or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), including those operating a Seamless Summer Option (SSO) program, are eligible to apply. Private schools should indicate “eligible school” as their entity type on the Coversheet regardless of 501(c)(3) status.

Q: We are applying now to participate in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program but don’t currently participate. Can we still apply for the grant program since we will be participating next year?

A: No. Applicants must be eligible at the time that the application is submitted.

Q: I don’t have my non-profit status yet. I’ve applied and expect to get it soon. Can I still apply as a non-profit?

A: No, you must be a designated 501(c)(3) organization at the time of application.

Q: Are state commodity commissions eligible?

A: Yes. For the purposes of this RFA, state commodity commissions are considered State agencies and therefore are eligible to apply for a Farm to School grant.

Q: Are schools that are considered a Local Education Agency (LEA) eligible?

A: Yes. For the purposes of this grant program, an LEA is considered a local agency, and therefore is eligible to apply for a Farm to School grant.

Q: We are a State agency interested in applying for a Farm to School grant, but do not administer any Child Nutrition Programs. Are we eligible?

A: All State agencies are eligible for the State Agency grant track. However, State agencies that do not administer Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) are required to partner with a CNP-administering State agency and must include a letter of support from the CNP-administering agency. No other entity type is eligible for the State Agency grant track.

Q: Are entities located in the American territories eligible?

A: Eligible entities located in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam are eligible to apply, given their participation in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Entities located in Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the Freely Associated States (Federated States of

Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and Republic of Marshall Islands) are **ineligible** for this funding opportunity because they receive a Nutrition Assistance Program block grant.

Q: Are institutions of higher learning eligible to be key partners?

A: Though institutions of higher learning cannot submit an application as the lead applicant, institutions of higher learning can partner (i.e. be a key partner) with eligible entities.

Q: Am I required to submit three letters of commitment?

A: Applicants must submit at least one letter of commitment and may submit no more than three letters. Submitting zero letters demonstrates a lack of partnerships, which is evaluated in the Staffing, Partnerships, Management, and Quality Assurance section of the application review.

Q: We have some agricultural and farming activities already in place at our school that we'd like to expand, but we do not call them farm to school, nor have we received farm to school funding before. Are we eligible?

A: Yes, there is no requirement related to what you call your programs.

Q: Can produce grown in a school garden be used in school meals?

A: School garden-related activities are allowable in the Farm to School Grant Program. Please note that whether produce grown in school gardens can be incorporated into school meals depends on a variety of factors, including State and local laws and regulations. For assistance reaching the appropriate point of contact in your state, please visit the [Contacts](#) page of the FNS website.

Q: My organization utilizes a regional farm to school institute model to provide resources such as information on farm to school program development, practitioner education and training, and ongoing school year coaching and technical assistance to entities such as school districts. Is this activity eligible?

A: Activities supporting regional farm to school institutes are permissible under the Implementation and State Agency grant tracks as long as proposed activities align with the required objective and are not otherwise unallowable. Please note that if a proposal intends to target specific school(s) or sites, schools or sites discussed in the project proposal as benefiting from the project must be eligible as defined in the RFA.

Q: I am a previous or current Planning grantee. Can I apply this year for Implementation funds?

A: Former Planning grantees are welcome to apply. The previous grant must be past their approved current end date and all project activities must be completed at the time of application. The time of application for this funding opportunity is defined as the RFA close date (Monday, January 10, 2022). Grant termination is determined by the date listed in box 21 of the grantee's FNS-529 form. Active Planning grantees that received a COVID-19 related no-cost extension may apply regardless of closeout status, though if awarded, newly funded activities may not begin before the planning grant is entirely closed out.

Q: I'm trying to decide between a Turnkey grant and an Implementation/State Agency grant. Which should I apply for?

A: Turnkey grants are a good choice for organizations interested in conducting one of four project choices as a standalone project. Turnkey applications are also subject to a streamlined application process and may be a good fit for organizations with no experience or limited experience applying for federal grant funding. The Action Planning project is designed for applicants interested in starting a farm to school program. The Producer Training project specifically targets State agencies interested in implementing the *Bringing the Farm to School* [curriculum](#) developed by USDA. The Agricultural

Education Curriculum and Edible Garden projects are suitable for a wide range of experience levels. Applicants choosing either of these projects might be starting farm to school activities for the first time or could have a robust program in place that they would like to expand. Implementation and State Agency grants are a good choice for organizations who want to customize their own activities and/or pursue projects that incorporate many different types of activities. For example, if an applicant wants to use funding to both develop an agricultural education curriculum and build relationships with local producers, an Implementation grant would allow the applicant to pursue both activities.

Q: Can I be a fiscal sponsor for an organization and also submit my own farm to school grant proposal in the same RFA cycle?

A: No, a fiscal sponsor is not eligible to serve as a fiscal sponsor for an organization and submit their own farm to school grant proposal in the same application year. A fiscal sponsor is considered an applicant (or grantee, depending on current/previous award status) for the purposes of this grant opportunity. According to section 1.3 of the RFA, applicants may only submit one application in response to the solicitation.

PRIORITIES

Q: What are the priorities for FY22 RFA?

A: USDA emphasizes the following priorities for FY 2022:

- Applications that serve a high proportion of children (at least 40 percent or more) who are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Applications from Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and eligible entities where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are Native Americans and the proposed projects are serving Native American communities.
- Applications from eligible entities where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are Black/African American, and the proposed projects are serving Black/African American communities.
- Applications from eligible entities where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are people of color and the proposed projects are serving communities of color (defined as Black/African American, American Indian, Alaskan native, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and/or Pacific Islander).
- Applications from small- to medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- to medium-sized agricultural producers. Please refer to the specific eligibility criteria in Section 3.0 for the definition of an eligible small- to medium-sized agricultural producer.
- Projects located in or targeting [Opportunity Zones](#), as defined by [26 USC Subtitle A, CHAPTER 1, Subchapter Z: Opportunity Zones](#) and identified in [IRS Notice 2018-48, 2018–28 Internal Revenue Bulletin 9](#), July 9, 2018, and [IRS Notice 2019-42, 2019–29 Internal Revenue Bulletin](#), July 15, 2019.
- In order to qualify for Opportunity Zone consideration, the proposed project must target at least one school or school district located in part or all of at least one Opportunity Zone. Applicants can check a list of [Opportunity Zones](#) at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-%20irbs/irb18-28.pdf>. Applicants claiming the Opportunity Zone priority must provide the name(s) of the school(s) or school districts(s) or other eligible Child Nutrition Program institutions or sites the project will serve on the Farm to School Coversheet.
- Projects operating in and serving eligible schools/sites located in rural areas. For the purposes of Farm to School Grants, rural is defined as an area where the school participating in the project, or the location of the site participating in the project is located in the attendance boundary of a

school 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 B of the RFA.

Q: What do I need to submit to earn priority points?

A: Please fill out the checklist included in Appendix D of the RFA, entitled “Fiscal Year 2022 Priority Group Declaration Checklist” and include the completed statement with the Project Narrative. The Priority Group Declaration Checklist does not count towards the narrative page limit. Applicants that do not complete the Priority Group Declaration Checklist will not be eligible for consideration of these bonus points. If USDA is unable to verify information declared on the Priority Group Declaration Checklist, the applicant will not be eligible to receive bonus points.

Q: Are there new priorities in the FY 2022 RFA?

A: In FY 2022, USDA added priority bonus point consideration for projects serving rural communities and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. This specifically includes:

- Applications from Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and eligible entities where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are Native Americans and the proposed projects are serving Native American communities.
- Applications from eligible entities where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are Black/African American, and the proposed projects are serving Black/African American communities.
- Applications from eligible entities where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are people of color and the proposed projects are serving communities of color (defined as Black/African American, American Indian, Alaskan native, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and/or Pacific Islander).
- Projects located in and serving rural areas.

Q: I am not an Indian Tribal Organization, but my proposal serves Native communities. Will my application be considered as meeting the Indian Tribal Organization priority?

A: If you would like to be considered for priority points related to serving a Native community, but your organization is not an ITO, your organization must be an eligible entity where the leader, and/or 80 percent of the board, and/or 50 percent of the staff are Native Americans and the proposed projects are serving Native American communities in order to be considered for priority points.

Q: Can I earn more points if I meet multiple priorities?

A: Applicants may claim as many priority groups as they like, but no more than 10 points will be awarded for priority consideration.

PARTNERSHIPS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Q: As a school food authority, can I apply with other schools in my area?

A: Yes, in addition to individual submissions, USDA will consider submissions where a USDA investment might impact multiple districts and thus a broader geographic range than any one district might cover. This could take the form of a “multi-district” submission with one lead district that is collaborating with multiple districts to conduct a comprehensive regional or multi-district planning process. In this case, the lead district is the one that submits the proposal.

Q: How might I find others to partner with to submit a “multi-district” application?

A: You might connect with the Farm to School Coordinator in your State Department of Agriculture or Education, or statewide nonprofit partners that coordinate farm to school activities in your state.

Q: Can I contract with or subgrant to a partner or another entity?

A: Yes. Partners essential to the proposed project that may require funding from USDA in order to participate can be included in applicant budgets as a subgrantee or line item contractor.

Q: How might I find others to partner with?

A: You might connect with the Farm to School Coordinator in your State Department of Agriculture or Education, or statewide nonprofit partners that coordinate farm to school activities in your state.

Q: I am a non-profit applying for an Implementation grant. Do I have to have a school or school district partner in order to apply?

A: No. Applicants are, however, strongly encouraged to include letters of commitment from eligible schools which are defined as schools or institutions that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) as authorized under the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act or the School Breakfast Program established under section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (SBP). This is intended to ensure that eligible schools and institutions are vested partners in and/or ready markets for any farm to school activities funded through the grant request.

Q: Does a letter of commitment from the CNP-administering State agency count toward the three-document limit for letters of commitment?

A: Yes.

Q: As a non-profit applying to an Implementation grant, can my project solely support schools or school districts that do not participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs or that operate CACFP/SFSP programming?

A: No. Farm to school funds are intended to support eligible schools that participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs, CACFP, and/or SFSP. USDA understands that the implementation of certain farm to school activities (e.g. integration of local foods into meal service) may impact schools that do not operate the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs. Please note that submitted applications, including estimated reach, should discuss schools and CACFP/SFSP sites deemed eligible according to the criteria outlined in the RFA.

Q: As a non-profit applying for a Farm to School grant, do I have to have an audited financial statement?

A: No.

Q: My non-profit has never been audited; are we eligible to apply as the lead organization?

A: Grant applicants are not required to have received an audit prior to being selected for a USDA Farm to School Grant. However, under Federal audit requirements, recipient institutions that expend \$500,000 or more per year in Federal funds must have a single or program-specific audit for that year.

Q: Can I attach any documentation in addition to what is required by the RFA?

A: No, there are no optional attachments permitted with the FY 2022 application.

FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH CALCULATIONS

Q: How will information on the free and reduced-price percentage be collected?

A: In order to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, Turnkey and Implementation grant applicants should complete the Free and Reduced Price Meal Participation section of the Cover Sheet (found on www.Grants.gov).

Q: We're only working with select schools in our district. Do we submit the district free/reduced price average or the average for the schools we're working with?

A: Submit the combined average rate of the schools you are working with.

Q: Our district participated in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) last year. How do we calculate the free/reduced price rate?

A: Child Nutrition programs accept the Identified Student Percentage (which is all direct certification [DC] and categorically eligible students) x 1.6 in place of free/reduced price percentages for CEP schools.

Q: Our school has a free or reduced price rate below 40%. Are we eligible to apply?

A: While projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals will be eligible for ten (10) bonus points, all proposals will be scored against the criteria set forth in the RFA, and the highest scoring applications will be recommended to the Selection Official for funding. The Selection Official may give priority consideration to projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals, among other priorities.

Q: I am applying to an Implementation or State Agency grant, but don't know specifically with which schools I will be working. How do I fill out the cover sheet?

A: Under the "School Information" section, please provide a brief explanation of how you plan to partner with schools (e.g. our project will recruit 16 schools to participate in a statewide farm to school network, or, our project will award sub-grants to three large districts in our state). If available, please complete boxes 1 through 3 (estimated reach of the project) in the "Free/Reduce Price Meals section" on page three of the coversheet. Please make sure that a letter of commitment is secured from at least one of these intended targets.

MATCHING FUNDS

Q: Can matching funds be used as an in-kind contribution for this project and another federal grant?

A: No. These contributions cannot satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used towards satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement the applicant is party to.

Q: What is a cash contribution?

A: A cash contribution means the recipient's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the recipient by non-Federal third parties. Some examples of cash contributions are:

- The salary and fringe benefits of the grantee or third-party employees in proportion to their efforts under a project.
- The grantee's cost to purchase items of equipment to be used under a project.

Q: Do I need all the required matching resources secured prior to issuing the award or submission of application?

A: Yes, in order for us to issue the award, the grantee must meet the requirement of 25% matching by providing information that they have secured the matching funds and providing confirmation that the matching funds will be *available* during the grant period. The match funds do not need to be *in hand* at the time of submission, but they must be confirmed as secured for the project at the time of application. In addition, documentation of match must be maintained for audit or review of the project.

Q: Can registration fees collected from participants attending a USDA-funded training count towards the match?

A: No, these monies would be considered federal funds and would not count.

Q: Can I use Federal food service funds as a match for this grant program?

A: No.

Q: Can I use a la carte sales as a match for my proposal?

A: No. In accordance with 7 CFR Part 210.14(a), school food authorities are required to maintain a non-profit food service. Revenues, including a la carte sales, received by the non-profit school food service are to be used for the operation or improvement of such food services, and therefore, funds in the nonprofit school food service account take on a federal identity and cannot be used as match.

Q: Can I charge the salary of AmeriCorps or FoodCorps staff to the grant?

A: No. Because AmeriCorps is a federally funded program, grant funds may not be used to pay for AmeriCorps personnel, either directly or with matching funds. The same is true for FoodCorps, as they are funded with AmeriCorps funds. 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.

Q: Is Cooperative Extension funding eligible to fulfill the match requirement?

A: Cooperative Extension Service is defined by USDA National Institutes 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.” Because of this definition and because institutions of higher learning are deemed ineligible to apply for these grants, cooperative extension funding from a **Federal source** is not an allowable match for this grant. However, **non-federal** cooperative extension funds may be used towards a match. The applicant should include match letters for each cash and/or in-kind resource.

Q: I have cash in hand for my project right now. Can it count toward the match since I’ll be spending it on the same project I’m proposing to USDA?

A: Yes, however the match must be spent during the same time period as the proposed project. Any cash match expended before the start of the USDA grant period will not count.

Q: If I anticipate receiving funds from other sources in the future (i.e., weeks, months, year,) may I count them as anticipated, or secured, matching costs?

A: Yes. The applicant is responsible for providing a 25 percent match and information confirming this match at the time of application. Anticipated funds originating from a source other than the applicant’s organization must be documented by a formal letter of intent to provide matching funds upon a grant award. The letter of intent should be on official letterhead and signed by a lead official of the organization providing the match. If the match will come from multiple sources, a letter of intent from each match-providing organization should be included in the application.

Similarly, if the applicant intends to use future volunteer hours allocated against the project during the project period, please include a letter of intent from the lead official of the organization providing the volunteer(s).

The total grant budget submitted in the grant application must reflect the requirement of a split of 75 percent Federal and 25 percent non-Federal funds to support the project. If, during the grant period, the 25 percent match is not met, the grantee’s Federal funds will be adjusted to ensure the Federal grant

funds account for only 75 percent of the total project budget. Please note that previous volunteer work hours cannot be counted towards the in-kind match, as matching funds must be allocated towards the project during the period of performance.

Q: Does time spent cultivating relationships with growers, coordinating purchases and developing menu plans count towards an in-kind match?

A: Yes, work performed by staff and volunteers on the farm to school project may be used to satisfy the matching contribution.

Q: Is the use of facilities an allowable source of matching funds? For example, our school would like to host trainings and meetings in our gymnasium. If we waive the rental fee for the meeting space, can this count towards the match?

A: Yes; the use of a facility may be used as a match for this grant project. You may only charge “market rate” for the rent of the facility.

Q: If we as a school district decide to forego an indirect cost rate, could that count towards our match?

A: Indirect costs may be used to satisfy the match component of the grant project. Your organization must have a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may not use de-minimis indirect for your match.

BUDGET

Q: Is a vehicle an allowable expenditure?

A: No, purchasing vehicles with grant funds is not an allowable cost. However, applicants can consider leasing a vehicle or purchasing a trailer/attachment. Trailers and or attachments are not permitted to be self-propelling (i.e. have an engine).

Q: Can I use grant funds to purchase food?

A: No more than 10 percent of the federal share of grant funds may be used for food purchases in the grant budget. Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes, including but not limited to farm to school sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test run of a new local or regional product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds, as long as no more than 10 percent of the federal share of the grant contributes to this cost.

Q: Do seeds/plants and livestock fall under the food purchases category?

A: No, seeds and livestock are supplies.

Q: Is construction an allowable cost?

A: No, construction is not an allowable cost. Replacing old equipment in a school cafeteria is considered a non-construction project and therefore is an allowable cost. Erecting a building or making substantial changes to the footprint of a building would be considered a construction project and therefore is not an allowable cost.

Q: Is building a greenhouse an allowable cost?

A: Assembling a temporary or movable structure is an allowable cost. Building or renovating a permanent and/or stationary structure (such as pouring cement, significantly altering the footprint of a building, wiring, etc.) is not an allowable cost.

Q: We have several organizations that will be participating and receiving funds. How do I determine where to input salary costs in the SF 424A?

A: Essentially, salaries for personnel that are employed by the applicant would go on the personnel line and the rest would go under the contractual section (assuming they are contractors).

Q: Are gift cards an allowable expense?

A: No, gift cards are not an allowable cost under this grant opportunity.

Q: I am applying for the State Agency grant. I would like to offer small travel stipends or reimbursements to training participants. May I include this in the budget?

A: Yes.

Q: Are stipends an allowable expense?

A: Stipends are permissible but please describe how they will be used and how the amount was determined.

Q: Does the page limit also include the budget narrative?

A: No. There is also no page limit on the budget narrative. Please ensure that the budget narrative is complete and conforms to all requirements specified in the RFA.

APPLICATION

Q: What support will USDA be able to offer applicants during the application process?

A: USDA is happy to field any general, high-level inquiries that grantees may have regarding the application process. However, USDA is unable to offer specific guidance on how to craft, structure or write one's proposal. In an effort to provide unbiased support to all those interested in the funding opportunity, USDA will refrain from providing advice that cannot otherwise be obtained through the resources that have been made publicly available via the [Farm to School Grant webpage](#). On November 8 and November 9 at 2:30pm ET, USDA will host two RFA webinars. You may also view recordings of those webinars on [Farm to School Grant webpage](#).

Q: What happens if I forget to include one of the documents in my Grants.gov application?

A: The only means of making a correction or adding to a Grants.gov application is re-submitting a new, complete application prior to the deadline. USDA will review the most recent submitted application from your organization (i.e. if an application is submitted on Friday without a vital attachment, and then resubmitted on Saturday with the attachment, USDA will only review the Saturday submission).

Q: Our organization does not lobby. How should we complete the form SF-LLL?

A: Grants.gov will not let you submit the package without this form. If you do not lobby, enter your information in Box 4, FNS's information in boxes 6 and 7, and then enter "We do not lobby" in the first required field of Box 10 and "n/a" in all of the other required fields in box 10, and then your electronic signature in Box 11.

Q: If I have problems with www.Grants.gov, will USDA staff help me submit?

A: No, USDA will not provide applicants technical assistance with the www.Grants.gov system. The www.Grants.gov technical support center can be reached at 800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Q: Where can I get more help if I still have questions about the Farm to School Program or application?

A: The USDA Farm to School Team strongly recommends that you read the entire Farm to School Grant RFA before submitting questions. If you still have questions after reading the RFA, you can forward your question to SM.FN.FarmToSchool@usda.gov and Grant Officer Anna Arrowsmith Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov