



USDA Farm to School Grant Program Fiscal Year 2024 | Frequently Asked Questions

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

Contents

GENERAL.....	2
ELIGIBILITY	4
PRIORITIES.....	8
PARTNERSHIPS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	9
FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH CALCULATIONS	11
MATCHING FUNDS	12
BUDGET.....	15
APPLICATION.....	16

GENERAL

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

A: “Local” is left to each applicant to define. Since USDA expects applicants to have varying definitions of “local” and “regional” 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: 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 Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). There are a variety of methods by which program 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. Note that procurement requirements can vary based on state and local laws and regulations. For more information about local sourcing, you may visit the “[Procuring Local Foods](#)” page of the Community Food Systems Division (CFSD) 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 will address how the proposed project supports or aligns with local procurement efforts in USDA CNPs.

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

A: Please be sure to [subscribe](#) to the CFSD e-newsletter, “The Dirt,” for updates regarding the FY 2024 Farm to School Request for Applications, including webinars 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 or 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 subgrants to three large districts in our state). Additionally, projects with a statewide reach may complete the Child Nutrition Program 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 project’s intended targets.

Further, 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.

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

A: Applications will not be removed from consideration 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 Activities/Indicators Tracker section for State Agency and Implementation applications, which is subject to a separate three page maximum. Additionally, letters of commitment have a one-page limit, therefore only the information contained on the first page of each letter will be considered. 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 may propose State Agency track applications up to \$500,000. Other eligible organizations who are proposing Implementation track projects that are multi-State or national in scope may submit a proposal for up to \$500,000. Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) are also eligible to submit Implementation proposals of up to \$500,000. State agencies and ITOs applying for more than \$100,000 are not required to propose projects that reach multiple States or tribes or that 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.

Typically, **The National School Lunch Act (NSLA)** limits Farm to School 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 2024 agriculture appropriations, USDA will consider proposals for up to \$500,000 from these entities. Final award decisions will depend upon the authority to provide grants that exceed \$100,000 at the time awards are made.

For the purposes of this RFA, a national or multi-State project proposes a **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 considers participants from anywhere within the five target States, could qualify as a multi-State project. 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.

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

A: Yes. 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.

ELIGIBILITY

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for Farm to School Grants?

A: Please see Section 3.0 of the RFA for complete eligibility requirements. Section 3.7.4 includes the eligibility requirements specific to Turnkey grants, Section 3.8.3 for Implementation grants, and Section 3.8.4 for State Agency grants.

Q: Is an individual school eligible to apply?

A: Yes, individual schools are eligible to apply.

Q: If my school district was awarded a Farm to School Implementation Grant in FY 2021, FY 2022, or FY 2023, is our individual school still eligible to apply for a Farm to School Implementation Grant for FY 2024?

A: No, the individual school is not eligible to apply for an Implementation Grant in the FY 2024 cycle. See Section 3.1.3 of the RFA for more detail.

Q: If I applied to another farm to school grant from another agency, am I eligible for this year's grant?

A: Generally, an entity's status as an applicant or awardee for another grant, including other USDA grant programs, does not impact eligibility for this year's Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program unless specifically mentioned in the RFA. However, proposals to multiple grant programs must be unique; USDA will not provide double funding for one project.

Q: Are local government agencies (such as city and county government agencies) eligible for State Agency grants?

A: No. 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 tracks. Any other entity type applying to the State Agency track will have their application removed from consideration.

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 at facilities or sites participating in **CACFP**.

Q: Our State agency is interested in applying for a Farm to School grant, but do not administer any CNPs. Are we eligible?

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

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 entities located in the American territories eligible?

A: Entities located in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam are eligible to apply, given their participation in NSLP and SBP. 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 block grants in lieu of Child Nutrition Programs.

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 NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and/or 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: Our school does not participate in NSLP, SBP, CACFP, or SFSP. Are we eligible for farm to school grants?

A: No. Schools that do not participate in at least one CNP are ineligible. Schools that do not participate in any CNPs are ineligible regardless of non-profit status and may not apply for a farm to school grant as a non-profit entity even if the school has 501(c)(3) status. Any school applicant that does not operate a CNP will be deemed ineligible and removed from consideration.

Q: Are entities located outside of the United States eligible?

A: The Farm to School Grant Program is only available to eligible applicants within the United States.

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: There is no requirement related to what you call your programs. Note that FNS cannot provide support on whether specific activities are eligible, as it may create an unfair advantage. Applicants should carefully review eligibility requirements in Section 3.0 for complete eligibility requirements.

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. While federal regulations allow for the use of school garden grown produce in school meals, schools

must comply with all federal, State, and local laws and regulations and are encouraged to connect with State and local officials for guidance. For assistance reaching the appropriate point of contact in your State, please visit the [Contacts](#) page of the FNS website. Additionally, the [School Gardens factsheet](#) includes guidance for serving school garden produce in meals.

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, those schools or sites discussed in the project proposal as benefiting from the project must be eligible as defined in the RFA.

Q: I'm trying to decide between an Implementation or Turnkey grant. Which should I apply for?

A: The Implementation grant is designed to 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 propose their own project design but must clearly indicate in their proposal narrative how proposed activities are aligned with this required objective. Applicants applying to the Turnkey track agree to conduct one of three projects with specific activities defined by FNS. The Action Planning project focuses on beginning farm to school activities and culminates in the development of a written Farm to School Action Plan for submission to FNS at the end of the period of performance. The Agricultural Education project focuses on connecting students with their food and/or preparing them for careers in agriculture through thoughtful and relevant agricultural education. The Edible Garden Project focuses on developing or improving food-producing gardens based at CNP sites.

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 CNP at a single site, the sponsor must submit the application.

Q: Our child care institution provides meals to enrolled children but does not participate in CACFP. Are we eligible?

A: No. Child care institutions must meet the criteria in the RFA for “eligible child care institutions” and must operate CACFP in order to apply regardless of non-profit status. Even if the child care institution has 501(c)(3) status, the organization is not eligible to apply as a non-profit entity and will have its application deemed ineligible and removed if it does not operate CACFP.

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: 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: Are Tribal Colleges 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: We are applying now to participate in the NSLP or SBP 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 I 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: Can we choose our own evaluation indicators?

A: The Activities/Indicators Tracker tables in the RFA include the required indicators for each grant type. Grantees will be required to report on the included indicators and are encouraged to select additional indicators that are relevant and meaningful to their project activities.

PRIORITIES

Q: What are the priorities for the FY 2024 RFA?

A: USDA emphasizes the following priorities for FY 2024:

- 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).
- 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 of the RFA 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.

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

A: Please fill out the checklist included in Appendix B of the RFA, entitled “Optional Priority Group Declaration Checklist (Bonus Points)” and include the completed statement with the Project Narrative. Applicants should include the Priority Declaration Checklist as its own page or as a separate attachment to ensure full credit. 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 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: My organization is 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 or majority of the board, and/or staff are American Indians and Alaska Natives, and the proposed activities 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: 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 all that apply. 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 10 points.

PARTNERSHIPS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

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 Project Narrative section of the application review.

Q: My organization will work with five schools that operate CNPs. Do we need to submit a CNP operator letter for each school?

A: Only one letter from a site that operates one or more CNPs is required per application if the applicant does not operate or administer one or more of the USDA's CNPs. However, to demonstrate the reach of your project and the project partners, your project narrative should include information about the full scope of participating sites and partners. Additionally, include the information for all participating CNP sites on the Farm to School Grant Program Coversheet. The Coversheet allows you to add sections for each participating CNP site.

Q: We have nine partners for our project. Can we have multiple partners sign the same letter of commitment?

A: You may choose which of the partners to submit letters of commitment (three letters of commitment are allowed per application). Alternately, you may also combine multiple partners to sign a shared letter of commitment if the necessary information can reasonably be included within one letter, while still giving reviewers a clear sense of partners' roles, support, and contributions. Please note the requirements of letters of commitment in Section 3.6.2 of the RFA. Also note each letter of commitment is limited to one page.

Q: As a school food authority, can we apply with other schools in our 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 and, if awarded, is ultimately responsible for the grant deliverables and requirements.

Q: How can 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. Please visit the [Contacts page](#) of the FNS website.

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. Justification must be provided for any sole-source contracts.

Q: How can 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: Our non-profit is applying for an Implementation grant. Do we need to have a school or school district partner in order to apply?

A: Non-profit applicants that **do not operate** the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP must include at least one letter of commitment from a school, child care institution, or summer institution operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP. If specific partners operating one or more CNP(s) will not be identified until the project is awarded (for example, if the applicant intends to identify specific partners through an application process), the applicant can include a letter of commitment from a State agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP.

If a non-profit applicant operates a CNP, they should select “eligible school,” “eligible CACFP institution,” or “eligible SFSP sponsor,” as appropriate, on the application coversheet rather than selecting “non-profit entity,” and they are not required to include a letter of commitment from another entity operating NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP.

Q: Our school district operates NSLP. Do we need to submit a CNP Operator letter?

A: Applicants who operate NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP do not need to submit a CNP Operator letter with their application. However, the applicant should clearly indicate which CNP program(s) they operate in their application materials. Note that if FNS cannot confirm the applicant’s participation in NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, the applicant will be deemed ineligible and removed from consideration.

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

A: Yes. A letter of commitment from a CNP operator or CNP-administering State agency is now required for any applicant (such as a non-profit or local agency) that is not a CNP operator or an administering State agency. This change helps ensure that projects reach eligible CNP sites.

Q: As a non-profit applying to an Implementation grant, can my project solely support schools or school districts that do not participate in NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP?

A: No. Farm to school funds are intended to support eligible schools that participate in the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP. 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 NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP. Please note that submitted applications, including estimated reach, should discuss CNP sites deemed eligible according to the criteria outlined in the RFA.

Q: My project will be working with three SFSP sponsors. How do I enter information for each sponsor on the Coversheet?

A: After entering the first sponsor's information in the form fields in the Child Nutrition Program Information section, click the "Next" button on the right if using the PDF version of the form or "Add CNP Operator" if using the webform.

Q: As a non-profit applying for a Farm to School Grant, is an audited financial statement required?

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 application.

FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH CALCULATIONS

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

A: In order to ensure the Farm to School Grant Program is meeting its purpose and priorities, applicants should complete the free or reduced price eligibility fields in the Child Nutrition Program Information section of the FY 2024 Farm to School Grant Program Coversheet (found on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)).

Q: We're only working with select schools in our district. How do I submit the free or reduced price rate for only those schools?

A: Enter each school's information separately in the FY 2024 Farm to School Grant Program Coversheet. After entering the first school's information in the form fields in the Child Nutrition Program Information section, click the "Next" button on the right if using the PDF version of the form or "Add CNP Operator" if using the webform.

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

A: You may use the Identified Student Percentage (which is all direct certification [DC] and categorically eligible students) x 1.6 in place of free or reduced price percentages for CEP schools.

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

A: Yes, your school is eligible to apply regardless of your free or reduced price percentage. While projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals are eligible for 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 coversheet?

A: In the Child Nutrition Program 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 subgrants to three large districts in our state). In addition to providing a description, complete as much information as possible for the reach, free or reduced priced eligibility, and demographics as is available and relevant to your intended reach on page three of the Coversheet.

If a State Agency 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 CNP site or sponsor operating the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or SBP, or from a State agency administering NSLP, CACFP, SFSP, and/or the SBP.

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.

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 the award to be issued, the grantee must meet the requirement of 25 percent 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. Federal funds of any type cannot be used as match.

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: Can Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act funds be used to fulfill the non-federal match requirement?

A: Funds provided under The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5322) may be used to fulfill the non-federal match requirement of the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program, provided they are used in accordance with their intended purpose and align with the proposed project.

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 toward the match.

Q: If I anticipate receiving funds from other sources in the future (i.e., during the grant period of performance) 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 must be included in the application. See Appendix G in the RFA for a template for documenting match sources.

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 proposed 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.

Please note, 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. For example, if the typical rental fee is \$200 per event, the waived rental fee be used as a match; however, the property value of the facility is not permitted as a match.

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

A: Foregone 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.

Q: My organization is the applicant and is providing match. Does my organization need to provide a letter documenting the match?

A: Yes. All sources of match, including match from the applicant, must be documented with a letter from the match-providing entity. Match letters must include the source of matching funds and specific dollar amount. This information must also be the same as amounts described in the official budget materials.

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, with the specific exception of greenhouses, 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: Construction of a greenhouse is an allowable use of Farm to School Grant funds, unless the grant funds are placed in the nonprofit school food service account at any time. Assembling a temporary or movable structure is 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. Stipends are an allowable expense, but the applicant should describe how they will be used and how the amount was determined.

Q: Are stipends an allowable expense?

A: Stipends are an allowable expense, but the applicant should 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 no page limit on the budget narrative. Please ensure that the budget narrative is complete and conforms to all requirements specified in the RFA.

Q: Are grantees allowed to use funds for grantee conferences?

A: Yes. Grantees should budget \$500 (estimated) per person to cover the registration fee and travel expenses to the Mountain Plains region of the United States for up to two attendees at the required Grantee Gathering hosted by CFSD. Use Denver, Colorado as the destination for your calculations. The location is subject to change. Include travel for this meeting only in the **first year** of the grant. Travel costs for the Grantee Gathering should be included in the Federal portion of the grant budget.

Q: Am I required to use the budget narrative template provided in the RFA?

A: No. However, it is strongly encouraged to use the provided budget narrative template.

Q: Which sections of the SF-424A need to be completed?

A: On the first page, Section A, your full federal request should be listed in Box 1e, and your full match amount in Box 2f. On the second page, Section B, your full federal request should be listed in Column 1, broken out by budget category. Your full match amount should be listed in Column 2, also broken out by budget category. By “full federal request,” that means that if you are applying for a two-year grant, the full two-year budget should be included on this form. You do not need to complete Sections C, D, E, or F of the SF-424A.

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 1 at 3:00pm ET and November 2 at 2:00pm ET, USDA will host two RFA webinars. You can register in advance of the webinars, and view recordings of those webinars after the live event, on the [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 submitted 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 (e.g., if an application is submitted on Tuesday without a vital attachment, and then resubmitted on Friday with the attachment, USDA will only review the Friday submission). Changes or additions to the application after the submission deadline will not be accepted.

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 the other required fields in Box 10, and then your electronic signature in Box 11.

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

A: No, USDA will not provide applicants technical assistance with the Grants.gov system. The Grants.gov technical support center can be reached at 800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. For additional Grants.gov training resources, including video tutorials, visit: grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html.

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 send your question to SM.FN.FarmToSchool@usda.gov and Grant Officer Anna Arrowsmith, anna.arrowsmith@usda.gov.