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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Special Nutrition Programs
Farm to School Grant Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.575

DATES:

Letter of Intent Date: May 18, 2012

Application Submission Date: June 15, 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. BACKGROUND	4
A. What is Farm to School	4
B. USDA Context	4
C. A Vision for Health & Economic Opportunity	5
III. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE OF GRANT FUNDING	6
IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	7
A. Eligible Entities	7
B. Planning & Implementation Grants	8
C. Implementation Grants: Schools	8
D. Implementation Grants: All others	8
V. TYPES OF GRANTS: PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION	9
A. Planning Grants	9
B. Implementation Grants: Schools	12
C. Implementation Grants: All others	15
VI. DISTRIBUTION OF AWARDS	17
VII. IMPORTANT DATES & AWARD PERIODS	17
A. Letter of Intent Deadline	17
B. Grant Application Deadline	17
C. Award Notices	17
D. Award Periods	18
VIII. LETTER OF INTENT	18
IX. GRANT APPLICATION: WHAT TO INCLUDE	19
A. Planning Grants	19
B. Implementation Grants: Schools	22
C. Implementation Grants: All others	26
X. APPLICATION FORMAT	29
XI. HOW TO SUBMIT	29
XII. APPLICATION REVIEW & GRANT AWARD PROCESS	30
A. Initial Screening	30
B. Panel Review	30

C. Selection	35
D. Determination of Award Amounts	35
XIII. ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICES AND REQUIREMENTS	36
A. Confidentiality of an Application	36
B. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process	36
C. Award Notice	36
D. Financial Reporting	36
E. Progress Reporting	36
F. Evaluation and Impact	37
XIV. ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS	37
XV. CODE OF FEDERAL REGS AND OTHER GOVT REQUIREMENTS	38
XVI. RFA APPLICATION CHECKLIST	39
XVII. RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST	41
APPENDIX	
1. Letter of Intent	44
2. Farm to School Grant Application Cover Sheet	45
3. Additional Background Information on Farm to School at USDA	46

I. INTRODUCTION

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) amended Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) to establish a Farm to School program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

To fulfill the farm to school mandate in the HHFKA, effective October 1, 2012, \$5 million will be provided to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on an annual basis to support grants, technical assistance, and the Federal administrative costs related to USDA's farm to school program. This Request for Applications (RFA) provides additional details regarding the grants aspect of the farm to school program.

The USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) is charged with implementing the farm to school program. In this first funding cycle, FNS anticipates awarding up to \$3.5 million in grant funding to support efforts that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. It is anticipated that the remaining \$1.5 million will support training and technical assistance, administrative costs, and/or additional farm to school grants.

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of Federal funds. Applicants are encouraged to first submit a Letter of Intent and then apply for either a Planning Grant or an Implementation Grant. Planning grants are expected to range from \$35,000 - \$50,000 and represent approximately 25 percent of the total awards. Implementation grants are expected to range from \$65,000 - \$100,000 and represent approximately 75 percent of the total awards. For both types of grants, the applicant must provide at least 25 percent of the costs of the grant project as the Federal share of costs for this grant cannot exceed 75 percent of the total cost of the project, as required by the HHFKA.

Applicants must choose between submitting a Planning grant or an Implementation grant. Only one application per eligible entity is permitted.

FNS reserves the option to award these funds using either a grant agreement or a cooperative agreement. Specifically as it relates to Planning grants, FNS anticipates awarding funds via cooperative agreements to allow FNS to collaborate with the grantee during the award period.

USDA expects to provide further information about farm to school Training & Technical Assistance (T&TA) at a later date. To receive updates on USDA's plans for farm to school T&TA, please see the USDA [Farm to School website](#) or subscribe to the [Farm to School Listserve](#) (select "Farm to School" as a topic of interest from the many FNS options once you've entered your email address).

The purpose of this RFA is to:

- Provide background information and context related to farm to school activities at USDA;
- Describe the types of grants available;
- Describe which entities are eligible to apply for grant funds;

- Solicit applications from eligible entities;
- Describe the requirements for submitting a successful application;
- Describe how applications will be reviewed and selected; and
- Describe the terms and conditions that grantees must adhere to.

FNS will conduct a series of webinars to provide training on how to submit an RFA and address questions regarding the application process. Notification of the webinar date(s), time and call-in information will be communicated via the USDA [Farm to School website](#), the [Farm to School Listserve](#) (select “Farm to School” as a topic of interest from the many FNS options once you’ve entered your email address), and FNS Regional offices.

II. BACKGROUND

A. What is Farm to School?

While individual farm to school programs are shaped by their unique community, geographic region, and scope, the term ‘farm to school’ is generally understood to include efforts that connect schools with local or regional farmers, food processors and manufacturers in order to serve local or regionally procured foods in school cafeterias. Bringing more locally sourced, fresh fruits and vegetables into school cafeterias is a seminal activity of many farm to school efforts; procuring locally sourced, minimally processed main meal items so that the entire school meal is representative of regional options is also a focus of many farm to school programs. Thus, USDA considers farm to school to be inclusive of many types of producers, such as farmers, ranchers, and fishermen, as well as many types of food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers, distributors and other value-added operations.

In addition to procurement activities, food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts that span a whole host of hands-on experiential activities, such as school gardens, field trips to local farms, and cooking classes, are also included in the concept of farm to school. Standards-based curriculum often integrates as well. For example, students dissect vegetables in science class, run farm stands using school garden produce to learn business skills, or practice data visualization techniques using plant growth measurements, all contributing to a holistic approach to learning centered on food, agriculture and nutrition. To embed farm to school activities into school culture, promotional and outreach efforts often aim to keep farm to school activities front and center in both the school and broader community.

As the potential impact of farm to school programs is significant, sophisticated evaluation and impact assessments are routinely used to monitor progress toward goals. Ultimately, farm to school programs are believed to strengthen children’s and communities’ knowledge about, and attitudes toward, agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment; increase children’s consumption of fruits and vegetables; increase market opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers, and support economic development across numerous sectors.

B. USDA Context

In 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack laid out a five-year strategic plan for USDA. One pillar of this plan was the development and support of regional food systems. He stated:

An increased emphasis on regional food systems will have direct and significant benefits to rural communities. Increased economic activity in food-related sectors of the economy helps communities build and maintain prosperity. Building on the foundation established [by Congress] in the 2008 Farm Bill, USDA will work closely with all its strategic partners... to develop and revitalize the critical infrastructure necessary for vibrant regional food systems.

Helping schools find and procure regionally produced food is directly tied to the USDA's strategic plan and a key component of the USDA [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#) (KYF) initiative.

For more information on USDA's many farm to school initiatives, or to access resources associated with farm to school, please visit USDA's [Farm to School website](#) or see the additional background information shared in the Appendix.

C. A Vision for Health and Economic Opportunity

In addition to being a key priority for USDA, farm to school activities also align with broader Administration efforts – most notably First Lady Michelle Obama's [Let's Move](#) Initiative – to increase healthy food options in schools.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 brought sweeping reforms to the school meal programs and set a high bar for health and nutrition standards. USDA's farm to school program focuses on achieving a complementary standard – that American school children have *daily* access to regionally sourced foods.

In USDA's vision, school cafeterias championing U.S. agriculture and proudly promoting regionally sourced foods that meet or exceed school nutrition standards are the norm, not the exception. Regional offerings, and therefore economic opportunities for U.S. food producers, span the school meal tray and include everything from the salad bar and fresh fruit and vegetable servings to the wheat in the pizza crust, beans in the chili, rice in the stir fry, beef in the burgers, and cheese in the quesadillas. As routinely requested in bid specifications as the requirement to adhere to nutrition standards, activities related to sourcing regional foods are integrated into everyday workflows.

USDA fully recognizes that the vision described above is most likely to be achieved when food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts are also part of a school's daily rhythm. Thus, we view regional procurement activities as integrated with complementary efforts to encourage healthy eating behaviors. Ultimately, we expect dual health and wellness and economic prosperity impacts, where food literate children graduate empowered to make life-long healthy eating choices and the U.S. school cafeteria represents a consistently reliable market for U.S. agricultural producers.

Consistent with the authorizing language referenced below, to achieve these outcomes, with this RFA, USDA intends to strategically invest in a wide variety of farm to school initiatives that improve access to local and regional foods in eligible schools.

Defining local foods. Local and regional food systems typically centralize within a specific region all of the activities associated with producing, processing, distributing and marketing foods. How one defines “local” or “regional” – which are often used interchangeably, and will be for the purposes of this Request for Applications – can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters; seasonality; or other factors.

For the purpose of the school meal programs, and therefore this RFA, as defined in the Final Rule, [Geographic Preference for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs](#), published on April 22, 2011, a school district participating in the Child Nutrition Programs, as well as State agencies making purchases on behalf of such a school district, “may apply a geographic preference when procuring unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products. When utilizing the geographic preference to procure such products, the school food authority making the purchase, or the State agency making purchases on behalf of such school food authorities, have the discretion to determine the local area to which the geographic preference option will be applied.” USDA fully expects applicants of this RFA to have varying definitions of “local” as each definition may be specific to individual contexts.

III. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE OF GRANT FUNDING

As noted above, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 amended Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a Farm to School program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

Further, authorizing language in the HHFKA directed the Secretary of Agriculture to award competitive grants for:

- (i) Training;
- (ii) Supporting operations;
- (iii) Planning;
- (iv) Purchasing equipment;
- (v) Developing school gardens;
- (vi) Developing partnerships; and
- (vii) Implementing farm to school programs.

The Secretary of Agriculture was also directed through the HHFKA to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural and tribal communities, as well as give the highest priority to funding projects that, as determined by the Secretary –

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

Authorizing language also states that as a condition of receiving a Farm to School grant, each grant recipient shall provide matching support in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, and agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds.

In concordance with this directive, in this funding round, USDA is soliciting applications for two types of grants:

1. **Planning grants** are intended for school districts or schools just starting to incorporate farm to school program elements into their operations.
2. **Implementation grants** are intended primarily for school districts or schools to scale or further develop existing farm to school initiatives. The majority of grants in this category will be made to school districts and schools, with a limited number of grants awarded to state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agriculture producers, and non-profit entities working in partnership with school districts. (See IV: Eligibility Requirements and VI: Distribution of Awards.)

IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. Eligible Entities

Authorizing language specifies the following eligible entities:

- Eligible schools;
- State and local agencies;
- Indian tribal organizations;
- Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; and
- Non-profit entities.

Eligible Schools Defined

For the purposes of this RFA package, with a few exceptions noted below, eligible schools are considered K-12 School Food Authorities (SFA's) that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs.

Eligible SFA's may apply for funding that spans the entire SFA, for a cluster of schools (e.g., only K-5 schools within an SFA), or for an individual school. In the case where an SFA exists, the application must come from the SFA and only one application per SFA is allowed.

K-12 nonprofit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs, but are not associated with an SFA, are also eligible to apply. Only one application per entity is allowed.

Planning grants: Eligible entities

Only K-12 SFA's, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs are eligible to receive planning grants.

Implementation grants: Eligible entities

USDA invites two types of Implementation grant applications: those from K-12 SFA's, nonprofit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs and those from all other eligible entities (including State and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities) as noted above.

B. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Planning & Implementation Grants

K-12 only: At this time, funding is not available for farm to school initiatives focused on pre-K environments or for providers participating exclusively in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For this RFA, funding is intended only for those SFA's, nonprofit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that serve children in grades K-12 through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

One application per entity: Only one application per eligible entity is permitted. Applicants must choose between submitting a Planning grant or an Implementation grant, and in either case, may only submit one application.

C. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Implementation Grants: Schools

Proof of existing community support: In order to be deemed eligible, applicants must show evidence of existing community support and engagement via no less than three letters of support. (See Section IX Grant Application: What to Include.) Note: Applicants who can demonstrate funded collaborations, where a USDA investment would be additive or readily leveraged, are preferred. Evidence of supply chain partnerships with regional producers, processors, manufacturers or distributors is also strongly encouraged.

D. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Implementation Grants: All others

Connection to an SFA: In order to be deemed eligible, applicants must show proof of support from, or the active engagement of, at least one K-12 SFA, nonprofit private school, charter school, Indian tribal school, or other that participates in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs by including letters of support from the school district or school that will benefit from the proposed project. This is intended to ensure school districts are vested partners in and/or ready markets for any farm to school activities funded through this grant solicitation request.

V. TYPES OF GRANTS: PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

A. Planning Grants

Planning grants will be awarded to school districts or schools just getting started on farm to school activities and are intended to help school districts or schools organize and structure their farm to school efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations. Recipients of planning grants must complete a Farm to School Implementation Plan; submission of a completed Farm to School Implementation Plan will be required in final reporting documents.

Given the HHFKA mandate that priority consideration be given to schools serving a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals, school districts and schools that have high free and reduced price meal enrollment will receive extra points in evaluation scoring (See Section XII: Application Review and Grant Award Process).

Activities supported by Planning grants include, but are not limited to:

- Assess the school district or school's need and readiness for development of a farm to school program, and determine the tools, training and technical assistance needed to create a farm to school program;
- Identify obstacles and begin to explore options for addressing existing barriers;
- Align the farm to school plan with the school district or school's existing goals and commitments, integrate farm to school concepts in wellness policies or school board resolutions, and identify key internal allies;
- Engage a wide variety of internal and external collaborators in the design of a Farm to School Implementation Plan;
- Host stakeholder meetings, conduct trainings, attend professional development conferences and seminars;
- Conduct menu audits to determine reasonable first or intermediate steps school districts or schools can take to offer local or regionally sourced foods;
- Assess local or regional product availability and identify key supply chain relationships necessary for successful implementation of a farm to school program;
- Develop a final Farm to School Implementation Plan that includes goals, specific activities, timelines for implementation and responsible parties for each activity. (This is a required activity for all awarded Planning grants.)

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to: personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings.

Applicants that reasonably expect kitchen upgrades or supply purchases will inevitably be called for in their planning processes, or be necessary to test preliminary program designs, may include expenditures for equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, coolers, or ovens) and/or supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors). Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

No more than 10% of the grant funds may be used for food purchases in the grant budget. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on school

menus; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. 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.

Planning grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$35,000 and shall not exceed \$50,000. Funding of applications will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by FNS, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement and subject to the availability of funding. FNS expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

All Planning grant activities must be completed in one year. Applicants should expect the grant life cycle to include stand up activities, execution, and close out activities (i.e., final financial and program reports, submission of an implementation plan, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly in order to achieve project deliverables within the grant period specified.

While there is no guarantee of additional USDA funding, upon successful completion and submission of a Farm to School Implementation Plan, USDA will invite and encourage Planning grant awardees to apply for an Implementation grant to execute their Farm to School Implementation Plan.

As a key component of the planning process, and therefore the Planning grant, will involve identifying partners and solidifying partner relationships, applicants are not required to show evidence of existing partnerships.

As noted earlier, these awards may be made via cooperative agreements so that USDA may actively participate with and learn from awardees as they design model programs. Specific details regarding FNS' engagement will be included in the cooperative agreement terms and conditions at the time of grant execution.

Individual Submissions, Cluster Submissions and Linked Submissions: As noted above, Planning grants will be awarded to K-12 SFA's, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs. 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: (1) a "Cluster" submission with one lead district that is collaborating with multiple districts to conduct a comprehensive regional or multi-district planning process, or (2) multiple individual "Linked" submissions from districts where coordinated efforts and collaboration between the districts can lead to greater impact in the region. In the case of (2), as with "Individual" submissions, every application received will be evaluated on its own merit.

Planning grant recipients will be required to:

- Use USDA approved planning processes, modules, and templates and collaborate with USDA personnel and/or USDA T&TA preferred providers in creating their Farm to School Implementation Plan.
- Participate in an orientation webinar and periodic T&TA throughout the course of the Planning grant (e.g., webinars, guidance materials, etc.).
- Engage in periodic one-on-one consultations with USDA personnel and/or USDA T&TA preferred providers in creating their Farm to School Implementation Plan.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, timed to coincide with a national conference that provides exposure to farm to school best practices and networking opportunities. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting will be to discuss project progress, explore opportunities for collaborative efforts, and enhance dissemination of exemplary methods. (Applicants must include travel costs for at least one project representative, preferably the project director, in their grant budgets to attend this meeting.)
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

In addition, Planning grant recipients *may* host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

Match Required: Federal funds may constitute no more than 75 percent of the total project budget. The grant recipient must show evidence of matching support of at least 25 percent of the total budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, including facilities, equipment or services provided by State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private sources as defined in the HHFKA. In-kind contributions are generally defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided by a third-party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. 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. The match contributions reflected in the grant proposal submitted must be documented, including the basis for the value determination as well as be allowable, reasonable and allocable.

B. Implementation Grants: Schools

Implementation grants are intended primarily for school districts or schools that are already operating farm to school programs where partnerships are established and early successes have accrued. Further, it is expected that applicants will be well on their way to executing fully integrated programs, where cafeteria changes are supported and reinforced throughout the school learning environment (e.g. in school gardens, through food, agriculture and nutrition-based curriculum integration, and via promotional and educational initiatives that attempt to reach the school community, broadly defined, among many other activities).

Given the HHFKA mandate that priority consideration be given to schools serving a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals, school districts and schools that have high free and reduced price meal enrollment will receive extra points in evaluation scoring (See Section XII: Application Review and Grant Award Process).

Implementation grants should be used to scale and institutionalize existing farm to school programs.

Applicants must show proof of existing community support and partnerships by including letters of support with their application. Applicants that can demonstrate funded collaborations, where a USDA investment would be additive or readily leveraged, are preferred. Evidence of supply chain partnerships with regional producers, processors, manufacturers or distributors is also strongly encouraged. Applicants who do not submit at least three letters of support will be deemed ineligible.

School applicants are encouraged to show evidence that farm to school planning, or, in its absence, substantive farm to school program success, has already taken place.

Given USDA's vision that regionally sourced foods become a *daily* reality for K-12 school children, projects that include a focus on innovative procurement strategies are preferred.

For schools applicants, activities supported by Implementation grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Bringing more value-added, minimally processed, regionally sourced meal components into the cafeteria;
- Solving distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more regionally produced items;
- Augmenting local food offerings by canning, freezing, storing or otherwise processing seasonal items for later use;
- Forming a buying group with other districts to increase purchasing power related to local foods;
- Conducting training of food services staff to augment skills related to food prep, safe handling and storing, etc.;
- Establishing new or strengthening existing community partnerships (e.g. working with culinary schools on training or menu development; partnerships with extension personnel to identify appropriate suppliers, etc.);

- Encouraging increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through promotional activities, taste tests, and other activities;
- Creating communications and outreach efforts that promote cafeteria changes and increase participation rates.

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to: personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings. Note that expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, coolers, or ovens) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors) are allowable expenses for the Implementation grants. Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

While projects focused on innovative procurement practices are encouraged, no more than 10% of the grant funds may be used for food purchases in the grant budget. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on school menus; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. 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.

Implementation grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$65,000 and shall not exceed \$100,000. Funding of applications will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by FNS, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement and subject to the availability of funding. FNS expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Implementation grants are expected to range from 1 – 2 years. Applicants should expect the grant life cycle to include stand up activities, execution, and close out activities (final financial and program reports, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly in order to achieve project deliverables within the grant period specified.

Partnerships: As noted above, applicants will be required to show proof of existing partnerships via letters of support (See Section IX: What to Include).

Partners essential to the proposed project that may require funding from USDA to participate in the proposed project can be included in a school application as a subgrantee or line item contractor. Alternatively, eligible community partners may submit a separate application for funding.

Individual Submissions, Cluster Submissions and Linked Submissions: As noted above, Schools Implementation grants will be awarded to K-12 SFA's, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs. In addition to individual submissions, USDA will consider submissions where a USDA investment might impact multiple SFA's and thus a broader geographic range than any one SFA might cover. This could take the form of: (1) a "Cluster" submission with one

lead SFA that is collaborating with multiple SFA's, or (2) multiple individual "Linked" submissions from, for example, school districts where coordinated efforts and collaboration between the districts can lead to greater impact in the region. In the case of (2), as with "Individual" submissions, every application received will be evaluated on its own merit.

School Implementation grant recipients will be required to:

- Participate in an orientation webinar and periodic webinars throughout the course of the Implementation grant.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, timed to coincide with a national conference that provides exposure to farm to school best practices and networking opportunities. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting will be to discuss project progress, explore opportunities for collaborative efforts, and enhance dissemination of exemplary methods. (Applicants must include travel costs for at least one project representative, preferably the project director, in their grant budgets to attend this meeting.)
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

In addition, Implementation grant recipients *may* host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

Match Required: Federal funds constitute no more than 75 percent of the total project budget. The grant recipient must show evidence of matching support of at least 25 percent of the total budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, including facilities, equipment or services provided by State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private sources as defined in the HHFKA. In-kind contributions are generally defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided by a third-party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. 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. The match contributions reflected in the grant proposal submitted must be documented, including the basis for the value determination as well as be allowable, reasonable and allocable.

C. Implementation Grants: All others

Implementation grants in the “All others” category must be responsive to the Farm to School grant goals as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.

Applicants are encouraged to show evidence of strong community support and partnerships, and are required to show the support of at least one eligible SFA via at least one letter of support. This is intended to ensure school districts are vested partners in and/or ready markets for any farm to school activities funded through this grant solicitation request. Applicants who do not submit at least one letter of support from a school district or school will be deemed ineligible.

Given USDA’s vision that regionally sourced foods become a *daily* reality for K-12 school children, projects that include a focus on innovative procurement strategies are preferred.

For All others applications, activities supported by Implementation grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Aggregating supply to more effectively meet the needs of area school districts;
- Ready area producers to participate in the school food market by providing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other food safety training;
- Development of promotional campaigns in support of farm to school initiatives; product testing or school food market feasibility analyses; and
- Hosting networking or other meet and greet events designed to bring school food service directors in contact with regional producers, processors, manufacturers and distributors.

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to: personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings. Note that expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, coolers, or ovens) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors) are allowable expenses.

While projects focused on innovative procurement practices are encouraged, no more than 10% of the grant funds may be used for food purchases in the grant budget. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on school menus; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. 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 region product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds.

Implementation grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$65,000 and shall not exceed \$100,000. Funding of applications will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by FNS, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement and subject to the availability of funding. FNS expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Implementation grants are expected to range from 1 – 2 years. Applicants should expect the grant life cycle to include stand up activities, execution, and close out activities (final financial and

program reports, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly in order to achieve project deliverables within the grant period selected.

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

All other Implementation grant recipients will be required to:

- Participate in an orientation webinar and periodic webinars throughout the course of the Implementation grant.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, timed to coincide with a national conference that provides exposure to farm to school best practices and networking opportunities. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting will be to discuss project progress, explore opportunities for collaborative efforts, and enhance dissemination of exemplary methods. (Applicants must include travel costs for at least one project representative, preferably the project director, in their grant budgets to attend this meeting.)
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

In addition, Implementation grant recipients *may* host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

Match Required: Federal funds constitute no more than 75 percent of the total project budget. The grant recipient must show evidence of matching support of at least 25 percent of the total budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, including facilities, equipment or services provided by State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private sources as defined in the HHFKA. In-kind contributions are generally defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided by a third-party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. 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. The match contributions reflected in the grant proposal submitted must be documented, including the basis for the value determination as well as be allowable, reasonable and allocable.

VI. DISTRIBUTION OF AWARDS

We expect Planning grants will represent approximately 25 percent of the total grant funding awarded, while Implementation grants to school districts and schools are expected to represent 60 percent of the total awards. Finally, Implementation grants to all other applicants are expected to represent 15 percent of the total awards made.

In selecting successful applicants, USDA, to the maximum extent practicable, will seek to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural, and tribal communities. Priority will also be given to projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals. However, based on the number, quality, and diversity of applications the actual percentages of grant awards may be different than those noted above.

We strongly encourage state and local agencies, agricultural producers or groups of producers, and nonprofit entities interested in farm to school activities to consider applying as part of an SFA application or review other USDA funding mechanisms that support farm to school initiatives, such as, but not limited to, Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG), Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG), Community Food Projects (CFP), and Federal State Marketing Improvement Grants (FSMIP). For a complete list of federal grant opportunities relevant to farm to school, please refer to the [grants section](#) of USDA's Farm to School website. You can also sign up to receive periodic updates on funding opportunities by joining the [Farm to School Listserve](#) (select "Farm to School" as a topic of interest from the many FNS options once you've entered your email address).

VII. IMPORTANT DATES & AWARD PERIODS

A. Letter of Intent Deadline

A letter of intent is encouraged but not required. Letters of intent help USDA gauge estimated response rates and allow us to plan for adequate review time and staffing. Please consider submitting a letter of intent by May 18, 2012. For more information, see Section VIII: Letter of Intent and the Appendix.

B. Grant Application Deadlines

The complete application must be uploaded on www.grants.gov on or before midnight on June 15, 2012. Applications received after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. FNS will not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. FNS will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications. Please see Section XI: How to Submit for specific details on the required registrations and process for submitting an application.

C. Award Notices

Applications selected for award will be announced within approximately 90 days following the grant application deadline. Funding of applications will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by FNS, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement and subject to the

availability of funding. FNS expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

D. Award Periods

The award period for the FY 2013 Farm to School Grants will be as follows, beginning from the date of the award:

- Planning grants will be awarded for up to a one year grant period; and
- Implementation grants will be awarded for up to a two year grant period.

All grant funds must be obligated and all program activities under the grant (other than activities relating to the close out of the grant) must be completed by the end of award period. The close out of the grant must occur no later than 90 days following the end of the award period, and all obligations incurred under the grant must be liquidated by this date. Any funds that are not liquidated within 90 days following the end of the award period must be returned to FNS. In addition, the final progress reports are due to FNS no later than 90 days following the end of the award period. Please see Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements for additional reporting requirements.

VIII. LETTER OF INTENT

As noted above, before submitting a Planning grant or an Implementation grant proposal, applicants are requested to first submit a Letter of Intent notice by May 18, 2012. The notice is not required, nor does it obligate the applicant to submit an application. The notice simply provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The notice should include the potential applicant's name and address, organization's name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the primary point of contact. Please also indicate which type of eligible entity you are and which type of grant application (Planning or Implementation) will be submitted. Send the letter via the mail or e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

Gregory Walton, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 732
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail: Farm2School2013@fns.usda.gov

IX. GRANT APPLICATION: WHAT TO INCLUDE

A. Planning Grants

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet found in the Appendix

Step II: Include a Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 5 pages)

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below. *(If you are a lead applicant requesting funds on behalf of multiple school districts, answer the questions below as comprehensively as possible.)*

- 1. School District & Farm to School Background Info.** Briefly describe the state of your farm to school efforts to date. What farm to school activities, if any, have you executed to date? Have your efforts spanned the district or been isolated to select schools? Note any early successes, lessons learned, or challenges.
- 2. Need & Readiness.** Describe any resources, infrastructure, or systems/processes already in place that will help your school district implement a successful farm to school program. Clearly indicate why the school district is ready for or interested in a farm to school program and why now is the right time to go through the planning process. Do you foresee any challenges in farm to school, and if so, how do you envision the planning process will help you overcome them?
- 3. Objectives, Activities and Timeline.** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines. All objectives should lead to the end goal of having a comprehensive Farm to School Implementation Plan in place by the end of the grant period.

(Example) Objective: By October 1, 2013, identify supply chain partners we could work with to increase our procurement of regional foods by 20%.

Activities:

- Identify local farmers and other regional supply chain actors (By Jan 2013)*
 - Host initial meeting w/ potential supply chain partners to explore options (By Feb 2013)*
 - Follow up w/ select supply chain partners one-on-one (Feb – Apr 2013)*
 - Develop menus that incorporate readily available local foods (May 2013)*
- 4. Evaluation.** Evaluating your farm to school progress, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, and then assessing your program's overall impact, will be critical. Please discuss the tracking mechanisms you currently have in place that could be employed to support your farm to school evaluation efforts, and discuss any previous experience performing multi-faceted evaluations and analyses.
 - 5. Project Management & Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar planning activities.

6. **Staffing.** Identify the staff (or contractors) who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.
7. **Dispersed Benefit.** Detail the professional associations you belong to and note any leadership role your district or school might play. As for collaborations, note the nature of your collaboration (e.g. does your district participate in group buys, partner with other districts on trainings, etc.). How might you share your experiences in developing a Farm to School Implementation Plan with others in your peer group?
8. **Sustainability.** Upon successful completion and submission of a Farm to School Implementation Plan, Planning grant awardees will be invited to submit an Implementation grant application. However there are no guarantees that Planning grant awardees will receive a subsequent Implementation grant. How will you ensure your farm to school program is executed regardless of whether you receive additional Federal funding?

Step III: Provide a Budget (not included as part of 5 page maximum).

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of Planning grant funds and justifying costs. Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. The budget must include a line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match. Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the total project budget, and that travel costs to at least one face to face meeting must be included.

Step IV: Include Attachments

1. Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV's) or resumes for staff managing this project.
2. Applicants may also choose to include relevant newspaper articles or letters of support that demonstrate community need and interest. These attachments, no more than five in total, are allowed but **not required**.

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants. They are located at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp: Click Active Forms.

Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

The following required OMB form can be obtained at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf>

SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities): Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “**Not Applicable.**”

B. Implementation grants: Schools

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet found in the Appendix

Step II: Include a Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 10 pages)

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below. *(If you are a lead applicant requesting funds on behalf of multiple school districts, answer the questions below as comprehensively as possible.)*

Farm to School Experience

- 1. Procurement.** Describe your specific efforts to date to buy local and regional products. How does your program define local? In addition, provide information on key indicators regarding your progress by answering the following questions:
 - What were your overall 2010-2011 food costs?
 - What percentage of your food costs were directed to local or regional suppliers? (Please estimate a percentage with and without fluid milk.)
 - How many calendar days do you offer meal service during the school year, excluding summer feeding programs?
 - Approximately what percentage of those days included local or regional offerings?
 - Would you describe local offerings as occurring daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or infrequently/irregularly?
 - Which types of products have you been sourcing locally (fruits, vegetables, legumes, grain and bread products, meats, dairy, etc.)? List categories in order of most to least and provide examples of regionally sourced items.
- 2. Promotion.** Briefly describe how you share information with the school community about local offerings in the cafeteria (e.g. highlighted on menus, announced on the PA system, info sent home in school newsletters, taste tests with students, preview of products day before served, cafeteria staff encourage tasting, district's public affairs office distributes press releases, etc.). Have you created any regular or branded special programs (e.g. Harvest of the Month, Local Lunch Day, etc.)?
- 3. Experiential Learning.** Briefly describe what types of experiential learning opportunities are available in your district or school that allow children hands-on opportunities to learn about food, agriculture or nutrition? (e.g. school gardens, field trips, cooking classes, etc.)
- 4. Curriculum Integration.** Briefly describe how cafeteria programs are reinforced and supported throughout the broader school environment and how lessons regarding food, agriculture and nutrition education are disseminated in your district or school? (e.g. the 5th grade history curriculum is tied traditional foods of the Americas that we serve in November; 2nd graders measure plant growth in the school garden as part of their math curriculum; etc.)
- 5. Management and Organization.** Briefly describe how your farm to school program is organized. Do you have a coordinator, facilitator, or team lead? Is there an oversight

committee or other formal governance body to guide efforts? If so, who participates and how frequently does the group meet? Do you have specific farm to school goals for this school year or next? Is farm to school, specifically or in concept, included in your district's Wellness Policy or Administrative Rules or other guidance documents or policies?

6. **Key Partners & Strategic Relationships.** Who have been your key partners and how do they contribute to your farm to school efforts?
7. **Evaluation Protocols.** How are you evaluating your progress? Who is responsible for data gathering and evaluation? To what extent are you conducting process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and to what extent are you conducting outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had)?
8. **Lessons Learned to Date.** Please summarize what you have learned to date. What has worked well and what hasn't? What specific opportunities do you see on the horizon? What have been key challenges you've worked through and/or still need to address?

The Project

9. **Proposed Project.** What is your proposed project? Focus on what impact successful completion of the project will have on your school community and the community at large. Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the objectives of the Farm to School grant program as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
10. **Key Project Partners.** As applicable, list the organizations and businesses involved in carrying out this project. Include a description of the relevant experience each will bring as well as information about what each is responsible for.
11. **Objectives, Activities and Timeline.** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines as well as responsible parties.

(Example) Objective: By August 31, 2013, freeze at least XXX lbs of local fruit for use in the 2013-2014 school year.

Activities:

- *Query food service staff regarding type of fruit preferred along with preferences for receipt of product (size pouch, amount of pre cutting, etc.)*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, District (By: March/April 2013)*
- *Identify 3-5 test products*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, District, and Bob Jones, MidValley Growers (By: May 2013)*

12. **Evaluation Plan.** How do you plan to evaluate your success in accomplishing key activities and achieving end results or impacts? (Note that USDA reserves the option to provide further detail regarding specific metrics and evaluation expectations at the time grants are awarded. See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

13. **Sustainability.** USDA funds are envisioned as a one-time infusion of capital. Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. How will your farm to school program be sustained over the long-term?

Quality Assurance & Staffing

14. **Project Management & Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar projects.

15. **Staffing.** Identify the staff (or contractors) who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.

Step III: Provide a Budget (not included as part of 10 page maximum).

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of Implementation grant funds and justifying costs. Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. The budget must include a line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match. Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the total project budget, and that travel costs to at least one face to face meeting must be included.

Step IV: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

- Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV's) or resumes for staff managing this project.
- Include at least three (3) but no more than six (6) letters of support detailing the degree to which your farm to school efforts are supported by external partners. It is strongly recommended that, as relevant, you include letters of support specific to the proposed project. You must include a letter of support for any partner included in your budget as a recipient of grant funds, and this letter must include a statement related to the work the partner will perform as part of the grant. (If you intend to subcontract to more than six (6) entities, you may submit more than six (6) letters.)

Optional Attachments

- You may include evidence of your farm to school program's maturity and/or success to date. Relevant attachments include: media coverage of your program, current or past planning documents related to your farm to school efforts, meeting minutes from past farm to school committee meetings, spreadsheets detailing supply chain relationships or amount of produce purchased locally, etc. (Attach no more than five documents.)

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants. They are located at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp: Click Active Forms.

Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

The following required OMB form can be obtained at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf>

SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities): Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “**Not Applicable.**”

C. Implementation Grants: All others

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet found in the Appendix

Step II: Include a Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 10 pages)

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

Background Info

1. **Organizational Information.** Describe the type of organization you operate, including your line of business and the product(s) or services you produce or distribute. Identify whether you are approved, by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a non-profit organization with 501(c) (3) status. (Please include a copy of your approval letter from the IRS in your submission.)
2. **Describe your experience in farm to school initiatives.** Address your previous experience and success in farm to school procurement strategies, promotional efforts, hands-on learning, training, curriculum development, planning and evaluation, as appropriate.
3. **Farm to School Lessons Learned to Date.** Please summarize what you have learned to date. What has worked well and what hasn't? What specific opportunities do you see on the horizon? What have been key challenges you've worked through and/or still need to address?

The Project

4. **Proposed Project.** What is your proposed project? Focus on what impact successful completion of the project will have on your partner SFA and the community at large. Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the objectives of the Farm to School grant as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
5. **Key Project Partners.** Your project must be supported by an eligible school. Who are the school districts or schools that support this project? What other community groups or partners are involved? List the organizations and businesses to be involved in carrying out this project. Include a description of the relevant experience each will bring and what they will contribute.
6. **Objectives, Activities and Timeline.** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines as well as responsible parties.

(Example) Objective: By August 31, 2013, host at least three different meet and greet events so that Mid-Valley school districts can identify new supply chain partners.

Activities:

- *Recruit for the planning committee; encourage widespread participation*
 - *Who: Bob Brown, XYZ Nonprofit (By: March 2013)*

- *Create Query schools regarding which types of producers they are most interested in*
 - *Who: Bob Brown, XYZ Nonprofit (By: April 2013)*

7. **Evaluation Plan.** How do you plan to evaluate your success in accomplishing key activities and achieving end results or impacts? Who will be responsible for data gathering and evaluation? To what extent do you have experience conducting process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and to what extent do you have experience conducting outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had)? (Note that USDA reserves the option to provide further detail regarding specific metrics and evaluation expectations at the time grants are awarded. See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)
8. **Sustainability.** USDA funds are envisioned as a one-time infusion of capital. Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. How will your farm to school program be sustained over the long-term?

Quality Assurance & Staffing

9. **Project Management & Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar projects.
10. **Staffing.** Identify the staff (or contractors) who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.
11. **Financial Management System.** Describe your financial management system and how you will manage Federal funds if you receive an award, including how you will separately identify, track, and report the use of Federal funds. Provide assurance that you are financially viable and a going concern and can manage a Federal grant award.

Step III: Provide a Budget (not included as part of 10 page maximum).

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of Implementation grant funds and justifying costs. Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. The budget must include a line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match. Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the total project budget, and that travel costs to at least one face to face meeting must be included.

Step IV: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

- Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV's) or resumes for staff managing this project.
- Include at least one (1) letter of support from an eligible SFA that is actively participating in or will be positively affected by this project.

- Include up to three (3) letters of support detailing the degree to which your farm to school efforts are supported by external partners. It is strongly recommended that, as relevant, you include letters of support specific to the proposed project. You must include a letter of support for any partner included in your budget as a recipient of grant funds, and this letter must include a statement related to the work the partner will perform as part of the grant. (If you intend to subcontract to more than six (6) entities, you may submit more than six (6) letters.)
- As relevant, include a copy of your approval letter from the IRS in your submission.

Optional Attachments

- Include evidence of your experience executing farm to school programming. Relevant attachments include: media coverage of your activities, current or past planning documents related to your farm to school efforts, meeting minutes from past farm to school committee meetings, spreadsheets detailing dollar value or volume of products previously sold to schools, etc. (Attach no more than five documents.)

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

The following grants.gov forms are required of grant applicants. They are located at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp:

Non-Construction Grant Projects Forms: SF-424 Family

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

The following required OMB form can be obtained at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf>

SF LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities): Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities. If your organization does not intend to lobby, write “**Not Applicable.**”

X. APPLICATION FORMAT

Applications should meet the following formatting guidelines:

- Cover page;
- Include a **table of contents** (not counted in either page limit);
- **5-page** maximum length for **Planning** grant narrative response;
- **10-page** maximum length for **Implementation** grant narrative response;
- Page restrictions apply only to content of the narrative proposals and do not apply to other required forms, the budget, and supporting documents;
- 8 ½” by 11” paper;
- 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font size (smaller font may be used in tables, charts and graphs as long as they are clearly readable);
- Numbered pages.

XI. HOW TO SUBMIT

Your application must be submitted via www.grants.gov. In order to submit your application via www.grants.gov, you must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, registered in both the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system, and on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The applicant is strongly advised to allow ample time to initiate its [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) application submission. All applicants must have current CCR status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25. Please visit the following websites to obtain additional information on how to obtain a DUNS number (<http://www.dnb.com/>) and register in the CCR Registry (<https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx>).

Below is some additional information that should assist the applicant through this process:
DUNS Number: In order to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization does not have one, or if you are unsure of your organization’s number you can contact Dun and Bradstreet via the internet at <http://www.dnb.com/> or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm EST. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number.

CCR Registration: Once the DUNS number is assigned, your organization must register at the Central Contractor Registration website via <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx>. According to the website, registration usually takes 3-5 business days. This is a free on-line registrant database for the U.S Federal government.

Grants.gov Registration: In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations as well as register on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) registration process can be accessed at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. Generally, the registration process takes between 3-5 business days.

Once the applicant has submitted its application, an e-mail should be sent to Farm2School2013@fns.usda.gov stating that the application was submitted through the [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) portal. Please be aware that the [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) system provides several confirmation notices; you need to be sure that you have confirmation that the application was accepted.

Special Instructions/Notices:

- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, certification will not be considered.
- Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov portal will not be considered.
- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.

XII. APPLICATION REVIEW & GRANT AWARD PROCESS

A. Initial Screening

FNS will screen all applications to ensure they are eligible and fully responsive. Eligible and responsive applications are those that meet the following requirements:

1. Submitted by eligible applicants (see Section IV: Eligibility Requirements);
2. Meet all other eligibility requirements (see Section IV: Eligibility Requirements);
3. Submitted on or before the required deadline (see Section VII: Important Dates and Award Periods);
4. Include at least a 25 percent match;
5. Are complete (see Section IX: Grant Application: What to Include); and
6. Are in the required format (see Section X, Application Format).

If an application does not include all appropriate information, FNS will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

B. Panel Review

After initial screening, FNS will convene an evaluation panel to consider the merit of each grant application. Each application that passes initial screening will be given to the panel to be evaluated and scored according to how well it addresses each application component. The panel will assign each application a score using the evaluation criteria and weights specified below for each evaluation component.

Scoring for Planning Grant Applications:

- **High Percentage Free & Reduced** **15 points**
 - >70% free & reduced price meal enrollment = **15 points**
 - 50 – 69% free & reduced price meal enrollment = **10 points**
- **Need, Readiness and Likelihood of Success** **25 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; school district or school’s readiness is evident.
 - Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success.
 - Challenges have been identified and addressed and/or a path for addressing obstacles is in place.
- **Alignment with Farm to School Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the Farm to School grant focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.

- The planning activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education;
 - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships;
 - Evaluation and data tracking requirements.
- **Project Design and Management** **30 points**
 - The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project.
 - The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
 - The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the Planning grant time frame.
- **Sustainability and Transferability** **10 points**
 - The proposed planning project is likely to produce outcomes and information that not only will aid the applicant in implementing a farm to school program, but also will produce knowledge that is transferable to other school districts and/or schools.
 - The applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to implement farm to school program elements after the planning process has been completed, with or without continued Federal support.
- **Budget Plan** **10 points**
 - The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
 - Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
 - The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.
 - Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
 - The budget includes at least a 25 percent match.
 - No more than 10 percent of the budget is allocated to allowable food costs.
 - If indirect costs are included, ensure the approved indirect cost rate is properly applied to direct costs. (A copy of the approval letter from the cognizant Federal agency must be provided.)

Scoring for Implementation Grant Applications (Schools):

- **High Percentage Free & Reduced** **15 points**
 - >70% free & reduced price meal enrollment = **15 points**
 - 50 – 69% free & reduced price meal enrollment = **10 points**
- **Farm to School Experience, Track Record** **25 points**
 - Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success and evidence of previously successful experience with farm to school execution exists.
 - Evidence of an integrated approach that includes procurement and other farm to school elements exists.
 - Evidence that a strong leadership team or management structure is in place.
 - Evidence that a culture of learning and problem solving exists such that obstacles have been overcome or innovative approaches have been demonstrated.
- **Alignment with Farm to School Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the Farm to School grant focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
 - Community partnerships are in place as evidenced by support letters and applicant's previous success in working with community partners.
 - The activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education;
 - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships;
 - Evaluation and data tracking requirements.
- **Project Design and Management** **20 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; school district or school's capacity is evident.
 - The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership and management structure reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project.
 - The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
 - The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the Planning grant time frame.
- **Evaluation** **10 points**
 - Evidence exists that the applicant has experience with multi-faceted evaluation methodologies, and evaluation protocols are embedded in the current request.

- **Sustainability and Transferability** **10 points**
 - The applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to implement farm to school program elements with or without continued Federal support.
- **Budget Plan** **10 points**
 - The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
 - Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
 - The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.
 - Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
 - The budget includes at least a 25 percent match.
 - No more than 10 percent of the budget is allocated to allowable food costs.
 - If indirect costs are included, ensure the approved indirect cost rate is properly applied to direct costs. (A copy of the approval letter from the cognizant Federal agency must be provided.)

Scoring for Implementation Grant Applications (All others):

- **High Percentage Free & Reduced** **15 points**
 - >70% free & reduced price meal enrollment = **15 points**
 - 50 – 69% free & reduced price meal enrollment = **10 points**
- **Farm to School Experience, Track Record** **25 points**
 - Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success.
 - Evidence that community partnerships and a strong leadership team or management structure are in place.
 - Evidence of program or organizational maturity.
 - Evidence that a culture of learning and problem solving exists such that obstacles have been overcome or innovative approaches have been demonstrated.
- **Alignment with Farm to School Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the Farm to School Grant focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
 - Support from school districts or schools as evidenced by letters of support.
 - Community partnerships are in place as evidenced by support letters.
 - The activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education;
 - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships;
 - Evaluation and data tracking requirements.
- **Project Design and Management** **20 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; applicant’s capacity is evident.
 - The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership and management structure reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project.
 - The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
 - The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the Planning grant time frame.
- **Evaluation** **10 points**
 - Evidence exists that the applicant has experience with multi-faceted evaluation methodologies, and evaluation protocols are embedded in the current request.

- **Sustainability and Transferability** **10 points**
 - The applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to implement farm to school program elements with or without continued Federal support.
- **Budget Plan** **10 points**
 - The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
 - Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
 - The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.
 - Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
 - The budget includes at least a 25% match.
 - No more than 10% of the budget is allocated to allowable food costs.
 - If indirect costs are included, ensure the approved indirect cost rate is properly applied to direct costs. (Copy of the approval letter from the cognizant agency must be provided.) If there is no approved rate, please e-mail the Grant Office Gregory Walton at Farm2School2013@fns.usda.gov for information regarding how to claim indirect costs without an approved rate.

C. Selection

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by type (Planning, Implementation: School districts and schools, or Implementation: All others) and by score within the type, starting with the highest score. Applications with the highest scores for each type will be recommended to receive funding.

A list of all applications deemed eligible for award will be submitted to the Selection Official for a final decision regarding funding. The Selection Official has ultimate authority to decide which applications are approved and funded, and *generally* will adhere to the recommendations made by the reviewers, provided that funding is available. However, the Selection Official reserves the right to deviate from those recommendations. The Selection Official may take other factors into account when granting awards and/or not awarding a particular award.

Other USDA or FNS priorities the Selection Official may consider include, *but are not limited to*: the need to ensure geographic diversity and a range of projects from rural and urban areas; innovation demonstrated in an application; agency priorities; and the scores assigned by the review panel. The Selection Official may also determine that, based on their scores, few of the applications are of technical merit. In such a case, FNS may make fewer awards or smaller awards than expected or make no awards. In addition, FNS reserves the option to select one or more lower rated applications in order to achieve a diversity of projects and regional representation.

D. Determination of Award Amounts

As part of the technical review process, FNS will review applicants' budgets to ensure that all costs are reasonable, allowable and applicable. Applications selected and approved for funding with budgets that are realistic, well justified, and supported will likely be funded at the requested amounts. However, FNS reserves the right to fund applications out of rank order to achieve priorities identified earlier; or at lesser amounts if FNS determines that the project can be

implemented with less funding; or at lesser amounts if Federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards. This is subject to availability of funds.

XIII. ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Confidentiality of an Application

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of FNS transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be not released to the public. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

B. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process

The agency requires all panel reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process. Names of applicants, including States and tribal governments, submitting an application will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

C. Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions; any contact from a FNS grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless approved and stated on FNS' signed award document.

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Only the recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

D. Financial Reporting

Planning grant awardees will submit a mid-term financial report and a final financial report. Implementation grant awardees will submit financial reports on a quarterly basis throughout the grant term and a financial report. Award recipients will be required to enter the SF-425, Financial Status Report data into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS). In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. More detailed instructions for reporting will be included in the FNS Federal financial assistance award package.

E. Progress Reporting

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. Planning grant awardees will submit a mid-term progress report and a final report. Implementation grant awardees will submit progress reports on a quarterly basis throughout the grant term and a final report. The award document will indicate the reporting

format and schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions.

F. Evaluation & Impact

As per authorizing language, as a condition of receiving a grant, grant recipients shall agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds. Upon selection of grant awardees, USDA will provide further guidance and direction regarding evaluation protocols and common indicators. Applicants should expect that evaluation protocols will include both process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had).

XIV. ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Debarment and Suspension 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, “Debarment and Suspension,” is codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) found at www.epls.gov.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number. To request a DUNS number visit: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

The grant recipient must also register its DUNS number into the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system, which is the repository for standard information about applicants and recipients. Current registration must be maintained in the CCR throughout the performance period of the grant award. CCR registration can be accessed at www.bpn.gov/ccr.

FNS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with the requirements described in 2 CFR 25 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active CCR registration with current information.

Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information 2 CFR Part 170

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Public Law 109–282), as amended by Section 6202 of Public Law 110–252 requires primary grantees of Federal grants and cooperative agreements to report information on sub-grantee obligations and executive compensation if this information is not available publicly. FFATA promotes open government by enhancing the Federal Government’s accountability for its stewardship of public resources. This is accomplished by making Government information, particularly information on Federal spending, accessible to the general public.

Primary grantees, including State agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates \$25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first-tier sub-grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting System (FSRS). In order to access FSRS a current CCR registration is required. A primary grantee and first-tier sub-grantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives. Every primary and first-tier grantee must obtain a DUNS number prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417
Section 872 of this Act requires the development and maintenance of a Federal Government information system that contains specific information on the integrity and performance of covered Federal agency contractors and grantees. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) was developed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from the CCR database, and suspension and debarment information from the EPLS. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

Sections 738 and 739 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55)

Section 738 (Felony Provision) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to any corporation that was convicted (or had an officer or agency of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation, or such officer or agent, and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government.

Section 739 (Tax Delinquency Provision) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that (has) any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

XV. CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations and the corresponding OMB Circulars that establish the principles for cost determination found at

2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II: Part 220, Education Institutions (OMB Circular A-21); Part 225, State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87); and Part 230, Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122). Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

A. Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and Central Locator Contractor Registration”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR Part 417: “Office of the Chief Financial Officer: Department of Agriculture Implementation of OMB Guidance on Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”

B. USDA Regulations

- 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”
- 7 CFR Part 3015: “Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations”
- 7 CFR Part 3016: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 7 CFR Part 3018: “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- 7 CFR Part 3019: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations”
- 7 CFR Part 3021: “Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 7 CFR Part 3052: “Audits of State, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations”

XVI. RFA APPLICATION CHECKLIST

All proposals submitted under this RFA must contain the applicable elements as described in this announcement. The application must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov, by midnight on June 15, 2012. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to submission.

- ✓ Read the RFA carefully, usually more than once.
- ✓ Have you obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered the number into the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system?
- ✓ Have you prepared and submitted the appropriate forms as shown under the Required Grant Applicant Forms section of this RFA?
- ✓ Have you included the RFA CFDA # [enter the number] on your application?
- ✓ Have you included your contact information: telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address?

- ✓ Have you addressed, met, and considered any program specific requirements or restrictions?
- ✓ Is the project's proposal clearly stated?
 - Does it comply with any format requirements?
 - Does it comply with the page limitation?
 - Most importantly does it directly relate to the RFA's objectives and priorities?
 - Don't assume that reviewers know anything about your organization and its work.
- ✓ Have one or more persons read your proposal who did not participate in its writing and ensure that it was clear to them?
- ✓ Does the proposed project and budget meet the bona fide needs of the RFA?
 - Does it include a line item for the travel required of all fund recipients?
- ✓ Is the budget summary included?
 - Does it agree with the calculations shown on the OMB budget form?
 - Is the budget in line with the project description?
- ✓ Be sure to submit a timely application into www.Grants.gov in order to meet the RFA application deadline.
- ✓ FNS reserves the right to request additional information not clearly addressed in the initial application.

XVII. RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST

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

NOTE: The budget and budget narrative must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fine need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed.

	YES	NO
Match		
Have you detailed at least a 25% match?		
Personnel		
Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading?		
Are employees of the applicant's organization identified by name and position title?		
Did you reflect percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)?		
Fringe Benefits		
Did you include your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation?		
Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds?		
Travel		
Are travel expenses itemized? For example origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip.		
Are the Attendee Objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative?		
Is the basis for the lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example include excerpt from travel regulations.		
Equipment		
Is the need for the equipment justified in the narrative?		
Are the types of equipment, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased listed in the budget?		
Is the basis for the cost per item or other basis of computation stated in the budget?		
Supplies		
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		
Contractual: (FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards)		

and associated costs after the contract is awarded.)		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all Sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		
Other		
Consultant Services. – Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget. The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant’s name and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), Number of estimated hours X hourly wages, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.		
For all other line items listed under the “Other” heading, list all items to be covered under this heading along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.		
Indirect Costs		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application.		
If no negotiated agreement exists, the basis and the details of the indirect costs to be requested should also be reflected in the budget.		

APPENDIX

Letter of Intent Sample

Date

Attention: Gregory Walton, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 732
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail: Farm2School2013@fns.usda.gov

This letter serves to inform you of our intent to submit a Farm to School grant application. We will be submitting as a _____ (Select either: Eligible school; State and local agencies; Indian tribal organizations; Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; or Non-profit organization).

We intend to submit a _____ (Select either Planning grant, Implementation grant: Schools, or Implementation grant: All others).

Include the full name of the submitting entity along with complete contact information.

FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT CFDA#10.575 APPLICATION COVER SHEET			
Name of Organization:			
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip:
Contact:	Name:		Title:
Phone:		e-mail:	
Project Title:			

Type of Request <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation Grant: Schools <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation Grant: All Other	Type of (Lead) Entity <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> State/Local Organization <input type="checkbox"/> ITO <input type="checkbox"/> Ag Producer or Producer Group <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization	(For Schools Submissions) Type of Submission: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual SFA Submission (One district or school) <input type="checkbox"/> "Cluster" SFA Application (One lead SFA working with multiple SFA's) <input type="checkbox"/> "Linked" Application (A submission that relates to other individual submission(s))
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If this is a **"Linked" Application** (an application that relates to other applications), please list the name of the other applications to which your project is related.

For Schools Applicants (2010-11) (Cluster Applicants, answer for lead entity)		# Schools in District:	# Served by this Proposal:	Total Enrollment:
Avg % Free/Reduced:	Avg % Full Pay:	Highest % Free/Reduced:	Lowest % Free/Reduced:	
Avg # Meals Served/Day: (Complete boxes at right.)	Breakfast:	Lunch:	Dinner:	
For All others Applicants:		Name of SFA(s) this project is connected to: (Detail Free/Reduced for this SFA below.)		
Avg % Free/Reduced:	Avg % Full Pay:	Total Enrollment:		

Brief Project Description (200 words or less):

Total Project Cost:	Grant Request:	Cash Match:	In-kind Match: \$
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FARM TO SCHOOL AT USDA: ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack laid out a five-year strategic plan for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). One pillar of this plan was the development and support of regional food systems. He stated:

An increased emphasis on regional food systems will have direct and significant benefits to rural communities. Increased economic activity in food-related sectors of the economy helps communities build and maintain prosperity. Building on the foundation established [by Congress] in the 2008 Farm Bill, USDA will work closely with all its strategic partners... to develop and revitalize the critical infrastructure necessary for vibrant regional food systems.

Helping schools find and procure regionally produced food is directly tied to the USDA's strategic plan. And although USDA has supported farm to school initiatives for over a decade, the [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#) (KYF) initiative, considered a cross agency priority, has provided an opportunity for great emphasis on these activities. In 2009, the USDA created a [Farm to School Team](#) to coordinate USDA support across agencies and help K-12 schools link with local producers, processors and manufacturers. The team developed an online [Farm to School toolkit](#) with guidance, resources, [archived webinars](#), and evaluation tools for schools and food producers alike. In 2010, the team visited 15 school districts across the country and developed a [summary report](#) documenting aspects of farm to school in K-12 schools.

In 2010, FNS and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) launched [Produce Safety University](#), a week-long training for foodservice professionals addressing food safety practices for handling fresh produce received from any supplier, including local producers. Also related to food safety, USDA's [Risk Management Agency](#) funded the development of food safety tools for local producers, including the [On-Farm Food Safety Project](#) and [Food Safety Plan 4U](#) (FSP4U), to help farms meet institutional food safety requirements.

In another collaborative effort, AMS and FNS are piloting a [Fresh Fruit Pilot Program](#), currently in Michigan and Florida, to test an alternative method for purchasing fresh produce through a State's USDA Foods program and distributing the fresh produce to schools (see FAQs [here](#)).

In the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress included a provision to allow schools to apply a geographic preference for locally-grown or raised unprocessed agricultural products. USDA has developed several resources to help schools exercise this authority, including policy memoranda; procurement and geographic preference guidance and technical assistance; a free online procurement training; as well as in-person and webinar trainings from USDA staff. These resources are all available in the [policy section](#) of the Farm to School website.

USDA also compiled information on promising practices related to farm to school and will continue to make the findings available to the public. For example, the National Agricultural Library published an extensive [farm to school annotated bibliography](#) for researchers and others interested in learning from the literature.

Given that K-12 schools report that gardening projects help students learn about agriculture first-hand and begin to appreciate the work that goes into producing food, USDA is helping confirm these anecdotal findings with the help of 4,000 youth in 57 schools in Iowa, Arkansas, New York, and Washington through [Healthy Gardens, Healthy Youth](#), a project of the [People's Garden School Pilot](#) administered by USDA's FNS. Master gardeners help participating students learn gardening skills; experts provide nutrition, food safety and food preparation classes; and the program facilitates farm to school connections with producers to stimulate the local economy. University researchers will study how fruit and vegetable consumption changes for the youth participating in the program.

USDA staff also work directly with students in the community. For example, through its [Ag in the Classroom](#) program, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture is connecting kids from kindergarten through high school to agriculture.

USDA has also supported farm to school initiatives through other grant programs, such as AMS's [Specialty Crop Block Grants](#), which are administered through state departments of agriculture. As but one example, [Oklahoma](#) is funding the development of a guide for local farmers to grow salad bar crops for local schools. USDA's FNS administers [Team Nutrition](#) training grants to help K-12 schools promote children's health. Schools have identified farm to school as a way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption; institutions in a number of states, including [Idaho](#), [Montana](#), [South Dakota](#), [West Virginia](#), and [Wisconsin](#), received Team Nutrition grants to implement farm to school activities in 2011.

Additionally, school districts and others have access to loans and grants from Rural Development's [Community Facilities](#) program to develop infrastructure to store, process and serve local food. For example, in South Carolina, the Dorchester School District received a grant in 2010 to purchase a high-efficiency steamer to prepare locally-grown produce. (Learn more about how schools can utilize Community Facilities loans and grants [here](#).) For a complete list of other Federal grants that support farm to school activities, please refer to the [grants](#) section of USDA's Farm to School website.

For more information on USDA's many farm to school initiatives, or to access resources associated with farm to school, please visit USDA's [Farm to School website](#).