

OMB BURDEN STATEMENT: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0512. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Child Nutrition Programs

Farm to School Grant Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.575

DATES:

RFA Release Date: **February 26, 2015**

Letter of Intent Date: **11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), April 23, 2015 (Training Grants ONLY)**

Application Submission Date: **11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), April 30, 2015**

Estimated Award Date: **November 18, 2015**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION | 5 |
| A. Legislative Authority | 5 |
| B. Grant Tracks | 6 |
| C. FY 2016 Funding Priorities | 6 |
| D. Defining Local Foods | 7 |
| II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION | 7 |
| A. Award Amounts | 7 |
| B. Distribution of Awards | 7 |
| C. Issuing Funds | 8 |
| D. Period of Performance | 8 |
| E. Grant Track Descriptions and Allowable Costs | 9 |
| Support Service Grant | 9 |
| Implementation Grants | 10 |
| Planning Grants | 11 |
| Training Grants | 12 |
| Allowable Costs | 13 |
| G. Grantee Requirements | 13 |
| III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION | 14 |
| A. Eligible Entities | 14 |
| B. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Planning, Imp. and Support Service Grants | 15 |
| C. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Implementation Grants | 16 |
| D. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Support Service Grants | 16 |
| E. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Training Grants | 16 |
| F. Match Requirements and Cost Sharing | 17 |
| IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION | 17 |
| A. Due Dates | 17 |
| B. Grant Application: What to Include | 18 |
| Planning Grant Proposal Narrative (Maximum 5 pages) | 18 |
| Implementation Grant Proposal Narrative (Maximum 10 pages) | 19 |
| Support Service Grant Proposal Narrative (Maximum 10 pages) | 22 |
| Training Grant Letter of Intent (Maximum 3 pages) | 24 |
| Required Attachments | 25 |
| Optional Attachments | 26 |

| | |
|--|----|
| B. Application Format | 27 |
| C. How to Submit a Proposal | 28 |
| Training Grant Application | 28 |
| Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grant Application | 28 |
| V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION | 31 |
| A. Initial Screening | 31 |
| B. Panel Review | 31 |
| C. Selection Process | 35 |
| D. Determination of Award Amounts | 36 |
| VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION | 36 |
| A. Federal Award Notice | 36 |
| B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements | 37 |
| Progress Reporting | 37 |
| Financial Reporting | 37 |
| Evaluation and Impact | 37 |
| Confidentiality of an Applicant | 37 |
| Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process | 37 |
| Administrative Regulations | 38 |
| Code of Federal Regulations and Other Government Requirements | 39 |
| VII. FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACTS | 40 |
| VIII. OTHER INFORMATION | 41 |
| A. RFA CHECKLIST | 41 |
| B. RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST | 43 |
| C. ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND | 45 |
| What is Farm to School? | 45 |
| USDA Context | 45 |
| A Vision for Health and Economic Opportunity | 46 |
| D. URBAN/RURAL CLASSIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS | 47 |

Changes from FY 2015 RFA

1. The RFA is reformatted to reflect new requirements in the OMB Super Circular.
2. The planning grant period of performance has been increased from 12 to 18 months.
3. Equipment is NOT an allowable cost for Planning grant projects.
4. Conference and Event grants have been replaced with Training grants.
5. Cooperative Extension programs are NOT eligible for Training grants.
6. The review criteria are updated to incorporate stakeholder feedback.
7. Additional information added to identify FY 2016 funding priorities.

Webinar Information and FAQ

USDA will conduct a webinar to review the RFA and address questions regarding the application process. The webinar is scheduled for **March 12, 2015, 1:00 p.m. EST.**

Notification of the webinar call-in information will be communicated via the USDA [Farm to School website](#) and the USDA [Farm to School E-letter](#).

In addition, applicants can find a set of *Frequently Asked Questions* and access examples of previously successful applications online via the USDA [Farm to School website](#).

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

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, \$5 million is 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 USDA Farm to School Program.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is charged with implementing the Farm to School Program. In this funding cycle, USDA anticipates awarding approximately \$6 million in grant funding to support efforts that improve access to local foods in schools. Beyond the \$5 million in funding provided in the HHFKA, in fiscal year (FY) 2016 USDA anticipates the availability of an additional \$1 million in grant funding to support placement of volunteer service members (e.g., AmeriCorps, VISTA, local service corps programs, etc.) in schools throughout the country to build or maintain school gardens, incorporate nutrition education into the schools' culture, and support school food service personnel in procuring or promoting local and regional products for the school meal program.

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; and,
- (g) Meet any other criteria that the Secretary determines appropriate.

Authorizing language also states that as a condition of receiving a USDA Farm to School Program 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.

B. Grant Tracks

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of federal funds, using four grants tracks:

1. **Support Service grants** are intended for eligible entities working with schools or school districts to further develop and provide broad reaching support services to farm to school initiatives.
2. **Implementation grants** are intended to help schools or school districts scale or further develop existing farm to school initiatives.
3. **Planning grants** are for schools or school districts just getting started on farm to school activities and are intended to help these entities organize and structure their efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations.
4. **Training grants** are intended for eligible entities to support trainings that strengthen farm to school supply chains, or trainings that provide technical assistance in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education and/or integration of agriculture-based curriculum.

Note: Applicant eligibility varies across grant type, for further clarification see Section III: Eligibility Information.

C. FY 2016 Funding Priorities

In addition to the general program purpose and priorities outlined in Section I: Program Description, across all grant categories – Planning, Implementation, Support service and Training - USDA considers the following priorities for FY 2016:

- Projects that include a focus on innovative procurement strategies.
- Projects that aim to bring local or regional foods into school-based Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sites.
- Project submissions that reach more than one school.

In addition, service programs (e.g. AmeriCorps, VISTA, local service corps programs, etc.) play a significant role in building farm to school capacity nationwide by placing service members in positions that support a wide variety of farm to school initiatives in communities across the country. Service activities can vary to meet local need and often include school garden projects, curriculum development, menu planning, producer outreach, marketing and local procurement support. Therefore, projects that focus on: **(1)** the expansion of an existing *farm to school service project* or **(2)** the development of a new farm to school component of an existing *service project* are considered an FY 2016 priority in the **Support Service** grant track.

D. 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. USDA fully expects applicants of this RFA to have varying definitions of “local” specific to their individual contexts.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Award Amounts

Planning grants are expected to range from \$20,000 - \$45,000 and implementation grants and support service grants are expected to range from \$65,000 - \$100,000. Funding for Training grants is expected to range from \$15,000-\$50,000, and will be funded at the following levels: State focused project awards will range from \$15,000 to \$25,000; and regionally / nationally focused project awards will range from \$25,000 to \$50,000. See table below for review.

Note: While USDA sets specific award amounts for each grant track, please note that the total project costs (including the non-USDA portion) may exceed these amounts.

| Grant Track | Award Amounts |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Support Service | \$65,000 - \$100,000 |
| Implementation | \$65,000 - \$100,000 |
| Planning | \$20,000 - \$45,000 |
| Training Grants – State | \$15,000 - \$25,000 |
| Training Grants – Regional / National | \$25,000 - \$50,000 |

B. Distribution of Awards

In this funding cycle, USDA anticipates awarding approximately \$6 million in grant funding to eligible applicants. The following table shows the estimated average award amount and distribution of the grant funds across each grant track.

| Grant Track | Estimated % of Funding | Average Award Amount | Estimated # of Awards |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Support Service | 50% | \$98,000 | 30 |
| Implementation | 25% | \$97,000 | 15 |
| Planning | 15% | \$40,000 | 23 |
| Training | 10% | \$29,000 | 21 |

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 consideration will be given to projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals. USDA expects to fund at least one statewide or regional training in all seven FNS regions, and at least one national training. However, based on the number, quality, and diversity of applications, the actual percentages of grant awards may be different than those noted above.

C. Issuing Funds

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 USDA, upon receipt of a properly executed grant agreement and subject to the availability of funding. USDA expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Note: Planning grants and Training grant awards will be executed via cooperative agreements. Specific details regarding USDA’s engagement will be included in the cooperative agreement terms and conditions at the time of grant execution.

D. Period of Performance

The period of performance for the FY 2016 USDA Farm to School Program grants will be as follows, beginning from the date of the award:

| Grant Track | Award Period |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Support Service | 12 to 24 months |
| Implementation | 12 to 24 months |
| Planning | 18 months |
| Training | 12 months |

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.

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 USDA. In addition, the final progress reports are due to USDA no later than 90 days following the end of the award period. Please see Section VI: Federal Award Administration Requirements for additional information.

E. Grant Track Descriptions and Allowable Costs

Support Service Grant

Support service grants are intended for entities providing products or services to schools and/or agricultural producers to aid in the development or expansion of farm to school activities. Applicants in the support service grant category may focus on a relatively discrete set of schools as direct recipients of project activities, or may provide products and services that have national, regional, or statewide relevance and scope.

As such, the activities that might be proposed by applicants in the support service category are expected to be varied and might span training and technical assistance, supply-chain development, evaluation activities, curriculum development, creation of promotional materials or campaigns, and formation of networks or coalitions, among other activities. Support service proposals must be responsive to the USDA Farm to School Grant Program goals as described in Section I: Legislative Authority.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include letters of support from K-12 school partners that participate in the National School Lunch Program or Breakfast Program. This is intended to ensure school districts are vested partners in and/or ready markets for any farm to school activities funded through this solicitation request.

As in past years, projects that benefit more than one school and include innovative procurement strategies are preferred. New in FY16, USDA encourages submissions that include procurement of local and regional products at school-based Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option sites. In addition, USDA is interested in supporting placement of service members (e.g. AmeriCorps, VISTA, local service corps programs, etc.) to advance farm to school initiatives. (For additional information on USDA funding priorities, see Section I.C: FY 2016 Funding Priorities.)

Activities supported by support service grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Operating service projects (e.g. AmeriCorps, VISTA, local service corps programs, etc.) that support farm to school initiatives in schools;
- Bringing local products into school-based Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option sites;
- Extending local and regional food offerings into school-based CACFP programs;
- Aggregating local food supply to more effectively meet the needs of school districts;
- Readyng producers to participate in the school food market by providing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other food safety training;
- Testing products or conducting school food market feasibility analyses;
- Developing new local food products or formulations to meet the needs of schools;
- Improving infrastructure to accommodate new ingredients or menu items;
- Forming statewide or regional networks or coalitions of varying kinds;
- Providing technical support in the form of face-to-face trainings, consultations, webinars, etc.;
- Hosting networking or other meet and greet events designed to bring school food service directors in contact with regional producers, processors, manufacturers and distributors;
- Developing promotional campaigns in support of farm to school initiatives;
- Strategic planning to expand or coordinate efforts; and,

- Conducting farm to school evaluation efforts.

Implementation Grants

Implementation grants are intended 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).

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.

As in past years, projects that benefit more than one school and include innovative procurement strategies are preferred. New in FY16, USDA encourages submissions that include procurement of local and regional products at school-based SFSP/SSO sites. (For additional information on USDA funding priorities, see Section I.C: FY 2016 Funding Priorities.)

Note: While being a past planning grant recipient does not guarantee an implementation award, FY2013 and FY2014 Planning Grantees that have completed their projects are encouraged to apply.

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;
- Bringing local products into school-based Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option sites;
- Extending local and regional food offerings into school-based CACFP programs;
- 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;
- Expanding farm to school programs beyond lunch to bring local or regional products into breakfast, snack, afterschool or dinner programs;
- 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;

- Expanding experiential or agriculture-based learning opportunities, such as creation of school gardens, support to agriculture or food clubs, or increased exposure to on-farm activities;
- Developing integrated curriculum to reinforce food and nutrition-based learning throughout the school environment;
- Creating communications and outreach efforts that promote cafeteria changes and increase participation rates; and,
- Strategic planning efforts to expand or coordinate efforts across multiple districts.

Partnerships: 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. Applications that do not include at least three (3) letters of support may be deemed ineligible or be subject to a reduced score in the review process. (See Section IV: A: Grant Application - What to Include).

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

Planning Grants

Planning grants will be awarded to school districts or schools that can demonstrate support and excitement for starting a farm to school program, but have undertaken few farm to school activities. Over the course of the grant year, planning grantees will participate in a robust training and technical assistance program led by USDA staff intended to help them 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 comprehensive Farm to School Action Plan, the submission of which will be required in final reporting documents. To assist recipients in the development of a Farm to School Action Plan, a Farm to School Planning Toolkit and corresponding technical assistance will be provided by USDA staff. To see the planning modules in the Farm to School Planning Toolkit, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census#/>.

As in past years, projects that benefit more than one school and include innovative procurement strategies are preferred. New in FY16, USDA encourages submissions that include procurement of local and regional products at school-based SFSP/SSO sites. (For additional information on USDA funding priorities, see Section I.C: FY 2016 Funding Priorities.)

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 Action 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; and,
- Develop a final Farm to School Action Plan that includes goals, specific activities, and timelines for implementation and responsible parties for each activity. (This is a required activity for all awarded planning grants, and applicants should budget ample staff time for its completion.)

Partnership: A key component of the planning process, and therefore the planning grant, will involve identifying partners and solidifying partner relationships; therefore, applicants are not required to show evidence of existing partnerships.

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

Training Grants

Training grants are intended to support state, regional and national trainings that have a specific emphasis on developing supply chain relationships by connecting local producers to school food buyers. USDA will also consider requests to support trainings that provide technical assistance or other programming in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education and/or integration of agriculture-based curriculum.

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

- Networking events that bring together stakeholders from across the supply chain, (including producers, manufacturers, distributors, buyers , educators, etc.), e.g. statewide producer-buyer meetings designed to stimulate networking and business connections;
- Technical assistance trainings that address local procurement for Federal meal programs;
- Culinary training or educational activities, e.g. a “Junior Chef” competition where local products are incorporated into school meal programs; and,

- National, state, or regional trainings to support information sharing, networking, or the professional development of farm to school practitioners.

Trainings will be funded at the following levels:

- State focused project awards will range from \$15,000 to \$25,000.
- Regionally / nationally focused project awards will range from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Note: For the purposes of the training grants, ‘regional’ is defined as projects targeting more than one state.

Allowable Costs

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, vehicles, coolers, or ovens) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors) are, with the exceptions noted below, allowable expenses for the grant projects. Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

Planning Grants and Training Grants: Equipment is NOT an allowable cost. See above for definition of equipment.

Food Expenses: 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: 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.

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 sub-grantee or line item contractor.

G. Grantee Requirements

Support Service and Implementation grant recipients will be required to:

- Participate in an orientation call, monthly webinars, and regularly scheduled training and technical assistance throughout the course of the grant period.
- Engage in periodic one-on-one consultations with USDA personnel.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, possibly 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. Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc.
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section VI:B: Evaluation and Impact.)

- Grant recipients *may* be asked to 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.

Planning grant recipients will be required to:

- Create a Farm to School Action Plan using USDA’s Farm to School Planning Toolkit.
- Collaborate with USDA personnel and/or USDA training and technical assistance providers.
- Participate in an orientation call, regular webinars, and regularly scheduled training and technical assistance throughout the course of the grant period.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, possibly 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. Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc.)
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section VI: B. Evaluation and Impact.)
- In addition, planning grant recipients *may* be asked to 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.

Training grant recipients will be required to:

- Make best faith efforts to include USDA FNS Regional Farm to School personnel in the event planning process.
- Where relevant, distribute USDA Farm to School Program fact sheets and other relevant resource materials.
- Place the USDA logo on all training materials and reference USDA as a training event sponsor in all promotional materials including websites.
- Use standardized USDA evaluation questions to monitor the effectiveness of any programming.
- Submit results from all evaluations to USDA.
- Submit meeting agendas, presentations, and other training materials to USDA.
- In addition, training grant recipients *may* be asked to register USDA officials for a site visit during the event. (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.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

The 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.

Note below the eligibility requirements specific to each grant track.

Eligible Schools Defined: Funding is available to support **school-based** programs only. Eligible schools are considered pre-K-12 school food authorities (SFAs) that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs and/or operate USDA’s Summer Food Service Program, Seamless Summer Option or Child and Adult Care Food Program on-site.

Pre-K-12 non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs, and/or operate USDA’s Summer Food Service Program, Seamless Summer Option or Child and Adult Care Food Program on-site, but are not associated with an SFA, are also eligible to apply.

Eligible SFAs may apply for funding that spans the entire SFA, for a specific group 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.

Support Service grants: Eligible entities

Only state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities are eligible to receive support service grants.

Implementation grants: Eligible entities

Only pre-K-12 SFAs, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs, and/or operate USDA’s Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option or Child and Adult Care Food Program on-site, are eligible to receive implementation grants.

Planning grants: Eligible entities

Only pre-K-12 SFAs, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs, and/or operate USDA’s Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option or Child and Adult Care Food Program on-site, are eligible to receive planning grants.

Training grants: Eligible entities

Only state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities are eligible to receive training grant funds. (Cooperative Extension programs are NOT eligible in FY 2016).

B. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grants

One grant application per entity: With the exception of training grants, only one grant application per eligible entity is permitted. Applicants must choose between submitting a planning grant request, implementation grant request or support service grant request, and in either case, may only submit one application.

Note: An applicant may submit an application for a training grant in addition to applying for one of the above grant types; however, an applicant can only submit one application for a training grant.

C. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Implementation Grants

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.

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. Applications which do not include at least three letters of support may be deemed ineligible or be subject to a reduced score in the review process.

D. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Support Service Grants

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.) Applicants that can demonstrate funded collaborations, where a USDA investment would be additive or readily leveraged, are preferred. Evidence of *school partnerships* and supply chain partnerships with regional producers, processors, manufacturers or distributors is also strongly encouraged. Applications which do not include at least three letters of support may be deemed ineligible or be subject to a reduced score in the review process.

Service Project Applications: The following criteria apply to applicants submitting a Support Service grant focused on a service project:

- Eligible applicants may include national volunteer service organizations such as AmeriCorps, local entities with like programs and/or those entities which house volunteer service program's service members such as state agencies and local non-profit organizations;
- The applicant must have experience managing a service corps or operating a member-based service project, which is defined as a project staffed by corps members and focused on providing service opportunities to meet community needs at the local, state, regional or national level; and,
- Programs that provide service member stipends are eligible.

E. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Training Grants

FNS will request applicants of selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, a SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM.

In addition, Training grant recipients *may* be asked to register USDA officials for a site visit during the event. (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.

F. Match Requirements and Cost Sharing

For all four types of grants, Federal funds should 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 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). 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.

Note: Applicants may not use Federal funds of any kind, including Federal food service funds, as a match for this grant program.

Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching, also codified in 2 CFR 215.23.

(http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2005/janqtr/pdf/2cfr215.23.pdf).

The grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which are claimed as being its contribution to participation, as well as costs paid by the Federal Government. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost share, as described in the budget, the Government's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the grantee's contribution. Below is a sample match calculation.

Sample Match Calculation

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Grant Request: | \$100,000 |
| Match Amount: | \$35,000 |
| <i>Total Project Cost:</i> | \$135,000 |
| Match Percent: | 26 % (match / total project cost) |
| USDA Percent: | 74 % (grant request / total project cost) |

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Due Dates

Training Grant Applicants

A letter of intent and required attachments must be sent via email to farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov by 11:59 PM ET on **April 23, 2015**. Applications received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. USDA may not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received.

Support Service, Implementation and Planning Grant Applicants

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), on April 30, 2015. Applications received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. USDA may not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA may not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications for planning, implementation and support service grants.

USDA strongly recommends timely completion and submission of applications in order to allow for adequate time to trouble shoot any issues, should they arise.

B. Grant Application: What to Include

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Cover Sheet on Grants.gov

Step II: Write a Proposal Narrative

Planning Grant Proposal Narrative (Maximum 5 pages)

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

1. **Farm to School Background Information.** Briefly describe the state of your farm to school efforts to date. What farm to school activities, if any, have you executed to date? Do you participate in USDA's Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option or Child and Adult Care Food Program? Are you currently procuring any local foods for service in the Federal Child Nutrition Programs? Have your efforts spanned the district or been isolated to select schools? Note any early successes, lessons learned, or challenges.

If your school or district does not have farm to school related experience, please note any experience relevant to your project, e.g. health and wellness initiatives, etc. (As noted above, if your school or district has engaged in many farm to school activities, an implementation grant may be more appropriate.)

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.** *All objectives should lead to the end goal of having a comprehensive Farm to School Action Plan in place by the end of the grant period.* Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines. Your project timeline should start no earlier than

December 1, 2015. If awards are made after the start of the fiscal year, the timeline will be shifted appropriately

(Example)

Objective: By May, 2016, identify supply chain partners we could work with to increase our procurement of regional foods by 20%.

Activities:

Identify local farmers and regional supply chain actors (Who: Bob Jones, By: Jan 2016)

Host initial meeting w/ potential supply chain partners (Who: Bob Jones, By: Feb 2016)

Follow up w/ supply chain partners one-on-one (Who: Bob Jones, By: Feb – Apr 2016)

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 quantitative and a qualitative 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. **Dissemination of Findings.** Please outline a plan to disseminate project results to other SFAs, organizations, school sites and/or community stakeholders within and beyond your community that would benefit from the expertise gained as a grantee. Outreach can be conducted beyond the timeline/terms of the grant.
8. **Sustainability.** How will you ensure your farm to school program is executed regardless of whether you receive future federal funding?

Implementation Grant Proposal Narrative (Maximum 10 pages)

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

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 2014-2015 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.
 - How do you source your local products (through your existing food service management company, a distributor, directly from the farmer, from a food cooperative, etc.)?
 - Do you participate in USDA's Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option or Child and Adult Care Food Program?
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 to the 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. Describe in detail the procurement aspect of your approach, i.e. do you plan to purchase via existing distributors, DOD Fresh, direct from farms, school garden or orchard, etc.?

Clearly explain the current need for the project and why this is the right time to implement the project.

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. Your project timeline should start no earlier than December 1, 2015. If awards are made after the start of the fiscal year, the timeline will be shifted appropriately.

(Example) Objective: By August 31, 2016, freeze at least XXX lbs of local fruit for use in lunch program.

Activities:

- Query food service staff regarding type of fruit preferred along with preferences for receipt of product (size pouch, amount of pre-cutting, etc.)
 - o *Who: Sarah Johnson, District (By: March/April 2016)*
- Identify 3-5 test products
 - o *Who: Sarah Johnson, District, and Bob Jones, MidValley Growers (By: May 2016)*

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, or any time thereafter.

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.

Support Service Grant Proposal Narrative (Maximum 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) you produce or the services you provide. As applicable, identify whether you are approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a non-profit organization with 501(c) (3) status. (If so, please include a copy of your approval letter from the IRS in your submission.)
2. **Describe Your Experience in Farm to School Initiatives.** Address any 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 partnering SFAs and the community at large. Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the objectives of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.

Clearly indicate the current need for the project and why this is the right time to implement the project.

Note: Indicate if the application is for a service project. If so, write this statement in ALL CAPS in your proposal: VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECT. Clearly indicate which type of service program you operate (e.g. AmeriCorps, VISTA, local service corps program, etc.) (See Section II. F: FY 2016 Funding Priorities)

5. **Key Project Partners.** If applicable, which school districts or schools support this project? What other partners are involved? List the organizations and businesses that will 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. Your project timeline should start no earlier than December 1, 2015. If awards are made after the start of the fiscal year, the timeline will be shifted appropriately.

(Example) Objective: By August 31, 2016, host four farm to school stakeholder meetings throughout the state.

Activities:

Identify four recruitment areas and corresponding key partners

o *Who: Sarah Johnson, Education Outreach Coordinator (By: March/April 2016)*

Recruit a minimum of 40 people to each meeting

o *Who: Sarah Johnson, Education Outreach Coordinator (By: May 2016)*

Host four meetings and distribute contact information and notes to participants

o *Who: Sarah Johnson, Education Outreach Coordinator (By Aug, 2016)*

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.)
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.

Training Grant Letter of Intent (Maximum 3 pages)

In preparing your letter of intent, please address the following:

1. Please describe the event. Where and when will it take place?
2. Is it a local, state, regional or national event?
3. Is there a planning committee? If so, who is on it? Alternatively, describe any other partners that will play a substantive role in putting on the event.
4. Is this an event you've hosted before or is this the first time the event will be held?
5. What need does the event address?
6. What are the primary goals of the event and what are the primary topics that will be addressed?
7. What types and how many people do you expect will be reached by your event?
8. If the event includes a procurement focus, has the trainer participated in USDA's train the trainer program for local procurement in federal school meal programs?
9. Please include a draft agenda.

Step III: Provide a Budget and Budget Narrative

The same budget format is used for all grant types and the pages are not counted against the proposal narrative page limits.

Budget: Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of planning grant funds and justifying costs. Your budget must be submitted using the "Budget Information and Instruction Form" (SF-424A). A link to this form is provided below.

Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project.

Reminder: USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match of the total project cost. See Section III: F: Match Requirements and Cost Sharing.

Sample Match Calculation

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Grant Request: | \$100,000 |
| Match Amount: | \$35,000 |
| <i>Total Project Cost:</i> | \$135,000 |
| Match Percent: | 26 % (match / total project cost) |
| USDA Percent: | 74 % (grant request / total project cost) |

Reminder: Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the grant

Indirect cost rate: If available, the current **indirect cost rate**, negotiated with the cognizant federal negotiating agency, should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. USDA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be used.

Budget Narrative: In addition to the budget submitted via the “Budget Information and Instruction Form” (SF-424A), you must also include a narrative line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. This narrative, like the budget form itself, is not considered part of the page limit. (See Section VIII: A Budget Narrative Checklist.)

A sample budget and budget narrative are available on the USDA [Farm to School website](#).

Step IV: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

Nonprofit Applicants: All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

All applicants: Support Service, Implementation, Planning and Training

- Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV’s) or resumes for staff managing this project.

Additional Required Attachments: Support Service applicants

- Include at least three (3) but no more than six (6) letters of support detailing the degree to which the applicant’s farm to school efforts are supported by external partners. Letters of support should be presented on letterhead. It is strongly recommended that, as relevant,

applicants include letters of support specific to the proposed project. Applicants must include a letter of support for any partner included in the 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. (Where subcontracts with more than six (6) entities are proposed, applicants may submit more than six (6) letters.)

Additional Required Attachments: Implementation applicants

- Include at least three (3) but no more than six (6) letters of support detailing the degree to which the applicant's farm to school efforts are supported by external partners. Letters of support should be presented on letterhead. It is strongly recommended that, as relevant, applicants include letters of support specific to the proposed project. Applicants must include a letter of support for any partner included in the 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. (Where subcontracts with more than six (6) entities are proposed, applicants may submit more than six (6) letters.)

Optional Attachments

Support Service applicants:

- Applicants may include evidence of previous farm to school program success and/or maturity. Relevant attachments include: media coverage, current or past planning documents related to 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 10 pages of documents.)

Implementation applicants:

- Applicants may include evidence of previous farm to school program success and/or maturity. Relevant attachments include: media coverage, current or past planning documents related to 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 10 pages of documents.)

Planning applicants:

- Applicants may also choose to include relevant newspaper articles or letters of support that demonstrate community need and interest. Letters of support should be presented on letterhead. These attachments, no more than 10 pages in total, are allowed but not required.

Training applicants:

- Applicants may include evidence of previous farm to school training success and/or participation. Relevant attachments include: media coverage, agendas from past farm to school events, event promotional materials, etc. (Attach no more than 5 pages of documents.)

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

Note: Training grant applications do NOT need to complete these forms prior to submitting a letter of intent.

All federally required forms are completed using fillable forms on grants.gov during the application process. The following forms are required of all planning, implementation and support service grant applicants:

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF424)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL):
 - a. Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities.
 - b. If your organization does not intend to lobby or otherwise performs no lobbying efforts, write “**Not Applicable**” in any data field.
 - c. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sfillin.pdf>
5. Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/FSGP-V1.0.pdf>

In review, the following federal forms are required of all planning, implementation, and support service grant applicants:

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL)
5. Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet

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

B. Application Format

Applications should meet the following formatting guidelines:

- Include a **table of contents** (not counted towards any page limit);
- **5-page** maximum length for **Planning** grant narrative response; or **10-page** maximum length for **Implementation** and **Support Service** grant narrative response; or **3-page** maximum for Training grant letters of intent.
- Page restrictions apply only to content of the narrative proposals and do not apply to other required forms, the budget, or supporting documents (however, supporting documents should be limited to no more than 10 pages for planning, implementation and

support service applications, and 5 pages for Training grant applications); Pages exceeding the stated page limits may be omitted during the review process.

- 8 ½” by 11” paper;
- 12 point Times New Roman font size (smaller font may be used in tables, charts and graphs as long as they are clearly readable);
- Single-spaced;
- At least 1 inch margins on the top and bottom of the page; and,
- Numbered pages.

C. How to Submit a Proposal

Training Grant Application

The letter of intent and required attachments must be sent via email to farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov by 11:59 PM ET on **April 30, 2015**.

Letters of Intent received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. A confirmation email will be sent from USDA staff to confirm receipt of your application and/or letter of intent within two weeks of the submission date.

FNS will request applicants of selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM.

Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grant Application

Electronic Submission via grants.gov: Complete grant applications must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), on April 30, 2015. Applications received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. USDA may not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA may not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications for planning, implementation and support service grants.

USDA strongly recommends timely completion and submission of applications in order to allow for adequate time to trouble shoot any issues, should they arise.

Grants.gov: Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team noted in SECTION VII: Federal Awarding Agency Contacts.

In order to submit your application via www.grants.gov, you must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered in both the new System for Award Management (SAM) and on grants.gov.

The applicant is strongly advised to allow ample time to initiate its grants.gov application submission. All applicants must have current SAM 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 (www.dnb.com) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

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, contact Dun and Bradstreet via the internet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm ET. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number. Obtaining a DUNS number may take several days.

SAM Overview: The System for Award Management (SAM) combines Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. For additional information regarding SAM, see the following link:

https://www.acquisition.gov/SAM_Guides/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.pdf

SAM Registration: For applicant organizations that were previously registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), relevant applicant information is already in SAM; however, you will need to set up a SAM account, as necessary, to update any information. To register in SAM, the applicant's DUNS number, Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the applicant's last tax return) are all required. SAM verifies all information submitted by the applicant using several systems. This verification can take 3-5 business days after your registration is submitted to SAM.

Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete and active after 3 days should contact SAM at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>. Applicants must have a valid SAM registration no later than 3 days prior to the application due date of this solicitation in order to upload their application in Grants.gov.

SAM Presentation/Training: The General Services Administration (GSA) has created a SAM training presentation. To view the presentation, please visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmHcKCchaiY>. This presentation will be extremely useful for SAM users that are:

- Registering for SAM for the first time; or
- Setting up user permissions from CCR into the SAM registration (called migrating); or
- Updating /renewing CCR record in SAM.

PLEASE BE AWARE: In some instances the SAM process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require **5-7 days or more**. We strongly encourage grantees to begin the process **at least 3 weeks before** grant the due date of the grant solicitation.

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. The grants.gov registration process can be accessed at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

Please ensure that if your organization has previously registered in grants.gov that the individual who is submitting the application has been designated as an Authorized Organization Representative by the E-Business Point of Contact in your organization. Generally, the registration process takes between **3-5 business days**.

Allow your organization ample time to complete the necessary steps for the submission of your grant application package on grants.gov.

NOTE: Special Characters Not Supported in Grants.gov

Filenames: All applicants **MUST** follow grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided in the grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

“Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application package?”

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &, -, *, %, /, #', -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached_File.pdf) in naming the attachments.”

Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected by grants.gov. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team listed in SECTION XVIII: Agency Contact.

Notice of Submission: Approximately three weeks after the close of the grant period, USDA will confirm receipt of all proposals via email. If you do not receive an email, please contact USDA via email. (See SECTION XVIII: Agency Contact.)

Special Instructions/Notices:

- Applications submitted without the required forms, and necessary certifications may not be considered.
- Applications not submitted by the due date and via the grants.gov portal may not be considered.
- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.

IN REVIEW:

In order to make an electronic submission, applicants must:

1. Obtain a **DUNS** number
 - a. <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or 1-888-814-1435
 - b. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number.
 - c. It may take several days to obtain a DUNS number.
2. Register in **SAM**
 - a. <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>
 - b. Must have organization’s DUNS, entity’s Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on last tax return).
 - c. It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM.
3. Register in **grants.gov**
 - a. http://grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp
 - b. Generally, the registration process takes between 3-5 business days.
 - c. Must have DUNS and be registered in SAM.

PLEASE NOTE: We strongly encourage grantees to begin the process at least **3 weeks before** the grant due date of the grant solicitation. The grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team listed in SECTION VII: Agency Contact.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Initial Screening

USDA 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 III: Eligibility Information);
2. Meet all other eligibility requirements (see Section III: Eligibility Information);
3. Submitted on or before the required deadline (see Section IV: B: How to Submit);
4. Include at least a 25 percent match of the total cost of the project (see Section III: Eligibility Information);
5. Are complete (see Section IV: A: Grant Application: What to Include); and,
6. Are in the required format (see Section IV: B: Application Format).

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

B. Panel Review

After initial screening, USDA 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:

- **District Experience and Farm to School Background Information** **20 points**
 - The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of basic farm to school principals.
 - The applicant is appropriate for a planning grant, i.e., has minimal farm to school experience and would benefit from training and the development of an action plan.
- **Need & Readiness** **20 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; school district or school's readiness to go through a planning process 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.
- **Objectives, Activities and Timelines** **25 points**
 - The planning activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable within the project timeline and measurable.
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the purpose of the planning grant, including the development of an action plan.
 - The activities clearly support:
 - i. Inclusion of local and/or regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - ii. An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education; and
 - iii. Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships.
- **Evaluation** **5 points**
 - A clear plan is in place to conduct basic evaluation activities (e.g. contracting a third party, designating a current staff member, etc.)
- **Project Management & Quality Assurance** **10 points**
 - 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 and development of the action plan.
- **Staffing** **10 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.
- **Dissemination of Findings** **5 points**
 - The applicant proposes a clear and reasonable plan to share lessons learned and best practices with peers and relevant stakeholders.
- **Sustainability** **5 points**
 - The approach to farm to school project sustainability is comprehensive in nature and includes a variety of strategies to ensure long term viability, including building organizational capacity, seeking other funding sources, building or strengthening community partnerships, reallocating existing resources, enacting policy, etc.
- **Budget Plan** **(Reviewer comments only) 0 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.

- 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 and/or a statement that you will negotiate one upon award.)

Scoring for Implementation Grant Applications:

- **Farm to School Experience, Track Record** **25 points**
 - Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place.
 - Evidence of previous experience with farm to school execution exists such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success.
 - Evidence of an integrated approach that includes procurement and other farm to school elements exists.
 - 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 Grant Program Goals** **30 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program focus areas and purpose of the implementation grant.
 - The inclusion of local and/or 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; and,
 - Substantive community partnerships are in place as evidenced by support letters and applicant's previous success in working with community partners.
- **Project Design and Management** **15 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; the applicant's capacity is evident.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the grant time frame.
 - 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.
- **Staffing** **10 points**
 - 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.
- **Evaluation** **10 points**
 - Evidence exists that the applicant has experience with evaluation methodologies, and evaluation protocols are embedded in the current request.
- **Sustainability** **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** **(Reviewer comments only) 0 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.
- 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 and/or a statement that you will negotiate one upon award.)

Scoring for Support Service Grants

- **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 school and community partnerships are in place, as evidenced by letters of support.
 - 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 Grant Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program focus areas and purpose of the support service grant.
 - The activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of local and/or 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; and,
- **Project Design and Management** **15 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; applicant's capacity is evident.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the support services grant time frame.
 - 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.
- **Staffing** **10 points**
 - 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.

- **Evaluation** **10 points**
 - Evidence exists that the applicant has experience with multiple evaluation methodologies, and evaluation protocols are embedded in the current request.
- **Sustainability** **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** **(Reviewer comments only) 0 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.
 - 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 and/or a statement that you will negotiate one upon award.)

Training Letters of Intent will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposed training to advance the priorities and goals of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program and to strengthening farm to school networks, knowledge or impact; **(5 points)**
- Qualifications of the organizing committee and appropriateness of invited speakers to topic areas being covered; **(5 points)**
- Uniqueness and timeliness of the training; and **(5 points)**
- The budget is appropriate and reasonable. **(5 points)**
- With regard to events that include a procurement focus, those that utilize trainers who have completed USDA's train the trainer programming for local procurement are preferred.

C. Selection Process

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by type (planning, implementation, support service and training) 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 selecting awards.

Other USDA or FNS priorities the Selection Official may consider include, *but are not limited to*: projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals; 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, USDA reserves the option to select one or more lower rated applications in order to achieve a diversity of projects and regional representation.

Training Grant Letters of Intent will be evaluated according to the Agency priorities listed within this RFA. FNS will request applicants of those selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. FNS will respond only to those Letters of Intent selected for award.

Projects that Include USDA Place Based Initiatives

Proposals with projects that include interventions in communities that have been designated USDA Place Based Initiatives may receive priority consideration. USDA Place Based Initiatives include but are not limited to:

- **StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity (SF)** – StrikeForce aims to create self-sustaining, long-term economic development in persistent poverty rural communities by increasing investment through intensive outreach and stronger partnership with community leaders, businesses, and foundations. StrikeForce seeks to improve food security by increasing access to safe and nutritious foods.
- **Promise Zones (PZ)** - Promise Zones are part of the President's plan where the Federal government partners with and invests in selected high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities. Promise Zones leverage Federal resources to build up existing local capacity to create jobs, increase economic security, leverage private investment, expand educational opportunities, increase access to quality affordable housing, reduce violent crime and improve public safety.

D. Determination of Award Amounts

As part of the technical review process, USDA 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, USDA reserves the right to fund applications at lesser amounts if USDA 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.

VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Federal 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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Progress Reporting

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. The award document will indicate the reporting schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. The recipient may be required to submit performance/progress reports to FNS using SF-PPR, Periodic Progress Report. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions.

Financial Reporting

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425, Financial Status Report data into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. (Planning and training grant awardees will submit bi-annual reports via email.) 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.

Evaluation and 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).

Confidentiality of an Applicant

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. Any 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.

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.

Administrative Regulations

Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other 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 a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other 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 of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

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," 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 in the new Systems for Award Management (SAM). If you were registered in the CCR, your company's information is already in SAM and you will just need to set up a SAM account. To register in SAM you will need your entity's DUNS and your entity's Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (as it appears on your

last tax return). Registration should take **3-5 days**. If you do not receive confirmation that your SAM registration is complete, please contact SAM at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>.

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. 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.

Code of Federal Regulations and Other Government Requirements

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II. Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

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 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
- 2 CFR Part 400 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
- 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”

General Terms and Conditions of the award may be obtained electronically. Please contact the Grants Officer at:

Gregg Walton
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: greg.walton@fns.usda.gov

VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact the Farm to School Team at:

E-mail: farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. RFA CHECKLIST

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Getting ready to apply | | |
| Have you read the RFA carefully, more than once? | | |
| Have you obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number at least three weeks prior to the date of submission? | | |
| Have you registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM) system at least three weeks prior to the date of submission? | | |
| Have you registered in grants.gov at least three weeks prior to the date of submission? | | |
| Preparing the application | | |
| Are you ready to complete the USDA Farm to School Cover Sheet? | | |
| Are you ready to complete the required federal forms? | | |
| Have you addressed, met, and considered any program specific requirements or restrictions? | | |
| Is the project's proposal clearly stated? | | |
| Does your application comply with any format requirements? | | |
| Does it comply with the page limitation? | | |
| Most importantly does your project directly relate to the RFA's objectives and priorities? For example: | | |
| - Is your procurement approach detailed in the narrative? | | |
| - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings is a priority; have you provided a baseline % of local food used in your school meals and your goal for increasing this? | | |
| - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education is a priority; is this addressed? | | |
| - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships is a priority; is a clear plan in place? | | |
| Have one or more persons, external to the project, read your proposal and was it 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 narrative included? | | |
| Is the table of contents included? | | |
| Does the budget agree with the calculations shown on the OMB budget form? | | |
| Is the budget in line with the project description? | | |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Submitting the application | | |
| Have you submitted the table of contents, project narrative and budget narrative? | | |
| Have you submitted all the required attachments? | | |
| If you are non-profit, have you included your IRS approval letter? | | |
| Have you submitted all your optional attachments? | | |
| Have you submitted the appropriate federal forms as shown under the Required Grant Applicant Forms section of this RFA? | | |
| Once submitted to grants.gov, have you received confirmation that your proposal was both received and accepted? | | |

B. 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. USDA reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed.

| | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| Match | | |
| Have you detailed at least a 25% match of the total project cost? | | |
| Have you detailed the source of the match funds? | | |
| | | |
| 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 an excerpt from travel regulations. | | |
| Did you include the mandatory travel to one face-to-face meeting? | | |
| | | |
| Equipment (Implementation and support service grants only) | | |
| 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: (USDA 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 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 , 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 be reflected in the budget. | | |
| If no indirect costs are requested, please write “None Requested.” | | |

C. ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

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, farm to school programs often include food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts including standards-based curriculum and a whole host of hands-on experiential activities, such as school gardens, field trips to local farms, and cooking classes. For example, students might 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.

USDA Context

In 2014, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack laid out a five-year strategic plan for USDA. Strategic Goal 4: Ensure That All of America’s Children Have Access to Safe, Nutritious, and Balanced Meals, states:

Through its farm-to-school efforts, USDA also connects schools with regional and local producers to increase producers’ market opportunities as well as young people’s access to healthy, local foods.

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.

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.

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, turkey in the sandwiches, 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.

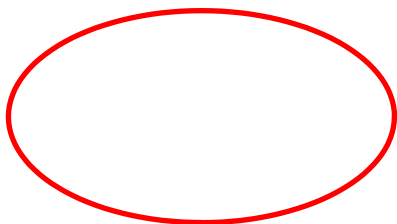
Consistent with the authorizing language referenced below, to achieve these outcomes, with this RFA, USDA intends to strategically invest in a wide variety of farm to school initiatives that improve access to local and regional foods in eligible schools.

D. URBAN/RURAL CLASSIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To determine urban/rural classification, please use the National Center for Education Statistics online tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>.

Steps

- 1) Go to the search site at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>.
- 2) Enter search criteria (*Tip: Use general search terms and then select from the results list, e.g., to search for Medina City Schools in Medina, Ohio, enter Medina in the 'district name' field and Ohio in the 'state' field. Then you can choose Medina City Schools from the search results.*)
- 3) Click 'Search'.
- 4) Choose the school/district from the search results.
- 5) Scroll down to 'Locale' and note the classification code (see screen shot).
- 6) Enter the two-digit classification code (e.g., 11, 12, 31) on the Cover Sheet.



Urban Classifications

- 11 - City, Large
- 12 - City, Midsize
- 13 - City, Small
- 21 - Suburb, Large
- 22 - Suburb, Midsize
- 23 - Suburb, Small
- 31 - Town, Fringe
- 32 - Town, Distant
- 33 - Town, Remote

Rural Classifications

- 41 - Rural, Fringe
- 42 - Rural, Distant
- 43 - Rural, Remote

For complete definitions, visit http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural_locales.asp.