



THE USDA FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM



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EVERY YEAR, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awards grants to help connect students to the sources of their food through education, taste tests, school gardens, field trips, and local food sourcing for school meals.

Eligible Entities

Grantees include schools and districts (large and small, rural and urban, public, private, and charter), Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, nonprofit entities, and State and local agencies.

Types of Grants

Designed to increase the availability of local foods in schools, grants can launch new farm to school programs or expand existing efforts. Funds support a wide range of activities, including: training, planning, creating new menu items to serve local foods, establishing supply chains, taste tests, purchasing equipment, planting school gardens, and organizing field trips to agricultural operations. Applicants can apply to one of three available grant tracks:

- * **Planning grants** are for applicants who want to develop a farm to school action plan by collecting data and identifying challenges and existing farm to school activities, partners, and community stakeholders. This track is also for applicants who are just starting their farm to school efforts or do not have prior experience.
- * **Implementation grants** are for applicants who want to launch and expand farm to school activities for a school or school district.
- * **Training grants** are for applicants who want to host national, State, or regional training in order to disseminate and encourage farm to school best practices.

Award Amounts

Grants range from \$20,000 up to \$100,000 for grant periods of 12 or 24 months in length. Applicants are required to provide matching support of at least 25 percent of the total project budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include volunteers, staff, non-Federal grants, and other existing resources such as classrooms and tools.

Priorities

The USDA strives to ensure geographical diversity and highly encourages Indian tribal organizations and other entities serving Native communities to apply to the Farm to School Grant Program. The USDA also encourages State agencies to apply, as they are able to efficiently coordinate farm to school efforts among schools and other States.

Timeline

The USDA plans to release a request for applications (RFA) in the fall. After the RFA is released, applicants will have at least 60 days to complete and submit applications. Applications are reviewed throughout the winter, and awards are announced in the early summer.



Past Grantee Projects

Here are just a few examples of the types of projects USDA has funded through its Farm to School Grant Program:

- * **Indian Tribal Organization** - The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin developed an aquaponics system capable of producing fish and fresh produce year-round. The system will serve as an educational tool and provide nutritious food for students.
- * **State Agency** - The Washington State Department of Agriculture conducted regional “mobile tours” in which agricultural producers and school food service directors toured the State together, learning about agricultural specialties, identifying opportunities for partnership, and solidifying regional networks.

- * **School District** - The Lawrence County School District in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, worked with other districts to pool their food dollars and aggregate buying power to attract new local producers to the school food service market.
- * **School District** - Chicago Public Schools in Chicago, Illinois, implemented a school garden food safety program.
- * **Nonprofit Organization** - The New York Botanical Garden in New York, New York tested a holistic school gardening model that integrated gardening activities with hands-on workshops. The project, benefitting 12 charter schools, also piloted and evaluated efforts to bring more local foods into school cafeterias.

FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY MATRIX

Use this tool to determine which grant type you may be eligible to apply for and to ensure you apply to the correct grant type. Applicants are highly encouraged to review the RFA for additional information.

		APPLICANT					
		School/School District	State/Local Agency	Indian Tribal Organization	Nonprofit Organization	Agricultural Producer	Cooperative Extension
ELIGIBLE FOR:	Planning Grant	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
	Implementaion Grant	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
	Training Grant	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO

Learn More

Find complete information on the USDA Farm to School Grant Program’s website www.usda.gov/farmtoschool including information about past awardees, webinars, submission deadlines and details on how to apply.



For more information, and to sign up for the biweekly e-letter from the Food and Nutrition Service’s Office of Community Food Systems, please visit www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool.

Questions? Email us at farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov.

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