



2016 Farm to School Program

Important Information

Pre-Submission Uploads: there are two attachments we provide to you as reference in the pre-submission uploads section of the Forms Menu. One is the **Definition of Specialty Crop** and the other is the **Eligible Equipment Purchases**. Unfortunately, these uploads were made “required” in the Grants Gateway, meaning that applicants must attach a document to each of these sections. You won’t be able to submit your application unless you attach something here, so please attach a blank PDF or Word Document to both the “**Definition of Specialty Crop**” and “**Eligible Equipment Purchases**” sections.

Work Plan: While the Grants Gateway has a section for **Work Plan Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures**, we are not requiring that you enter details of your Work Plan in that section for your application. We do need you to provide your detailed Tasks and Performance Measures, but you will include them in the “**Project Summary**” section of the Work Plan Overview Form found in the Forms Menu. The suggestion is that you create your work plan in a Word (or similar) document, and copy/paste that into the Project Summary field of the Grants Gateway. The Grants Gateway will retain any bullets or numbering you would have added. Refer to the RFP and Instructions document for ideas for your program’s Tasks, but realize that you are free to come up with your own tasks and performance measures for your project.

To satisfy Grants Gateway application requirements, you will need to enter **one Objective, one Task, and one Performance Measure** in the Forms Menu. Please enter the following:

Objective: Increase the volume and variety of local specialty crops procured by schools/districts for inclusion in school meals programs.

Task: TBD

Performance Measure: TBD

Letters of Support: Letters of support are not required but are suggested. Please upload any letters of support in the Grantee Document Folder in the Forms Menu.

Questions & Answers

Q: Do you have a phone number I can call you with some questions?

A: I am unable to answer any questions relative to the Farm to School grant via phone, as it could be seen as giving you an unfair advantage over other applicants. Feel free to put your questions in an email, fax, or US mail format, and will try to respond with answers within 24 hours.

Q: I checked the link and it's not working....can you help me?

A: Please try this link:

https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/NYGG/goportal.aspx?NavItem1=3.

If that doesn't work, go to the Grants Gateway home page, and click on the search box. Where it says "search by opportunity," type in "Farm to School," and click the search button. This should bring up the link.

Alternatively, a copy of the RFP and instructions can be found on the Department's website at www.agriculture.ny.gov. Once there, click on "farms and businesses" and then "funding opportunities." This will give you an overview of the program, but you **must** apply for the grant via Grants Gateway.

Q: Are there matching funds needed for the Farm to School grant opportunity?

A: There are no match requirements for the 2016 Farm to School Program.

Q: Our SUNY community college is considering a partnership with local school districts on a Farm to School application. Is it allowable for a community college to be the lead on the proposal?

A: Yes, a community college may act as the lead on the proposal. The community college must be preregistered in the Grants Gateway in order to be awarded a grant.

Q: Our organization was awarded a 2-year, 2015 Farm to School grant. Because of a glitch, our grant will only last one year. Can we put in a new proposal for the second year of funding through this RFP?

A: Because your organization received a grant that they have not yet finished, they would not be eligible to apply for the 2016 Farm to School grant. If another group were to act as the lead agency, that group could submit a proposal to the 2016 Farm to School Program.

Q: We are partnering with several city schools to build on-site, indoor hydroponic farms that will serve as a year-round source of produce for the school cafeterias. Is our organization eligible to apply for this grant opportunity, or are grants only being provided for outdoor, farm-grown produce?

A: Yes, your organization and the project described would be eligible, provided you are prequalified in the Grants Gateway. There is no criteria that the produce be grown outside.

Q: Is this something that private schools can apply for as well?

A: Yes, private schools are eligible to apply. The schools must be not-for-profit.

Q: We are considering using one of our properties as a farm for our schools. We are meeting with our County Land Trust rep about this. Will it qualify?

A: Based on the information provided, the project described fits with the objective of the program to increase the volume and variety of local specialty crops procured by schools/districts for inclusion in the school meals programs.

Q: Are BOCES eligible to apply for Farm to School funding? Or consortiums of schools?

A: Yes, both BOCES and consortiums of school districts are eligible to apply for funding.

Q: Are honey and maple syrup considered Specialty Crops?

A: Yes, both honey and maple syrup are Specialty Crops.

Q: Our district has a low number of free and reduced students. Is precedence given to schools with free and reduced meals?

A: The number of students receiving free and reduced meals is a criteria in the evaluation factors to be considered by proposal raters. Given that it is one of many of the evaluation criteria, a low score on this part of the evaluation criteria may decrease the competitiveness of the proposal with respect to that criteria. This would not impact the proposal with respect to the rest of the evaluation criteria.

Q: I am working with a district where the elementary schools participate in the NSLP (National School Lunch Program), but the high school and middle school do not participate in the NSLP. Would the district's elementary schools be eligible for funding?

A: Yes, the elementary school would be eligible for funding on the Farm to School grant program.

Q: I am unable to attend the webinar. Is the webinar being offered any other time?

A: The PowerPoint is available on the Department's website. You can find it here: <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>. It is labeled "NYS Farm to School Grants Program."

Q: Most of the grant offerings that are available are for schools that have a high percentage of Free and Reduced population. Is there a requirement or a cut of percentage being used as a guide for applications?

A: No, there is not a set threshold of free and reduced to be eligible for the Farm to School Program.

Q: Early discussions in my district have been around producing vegetables to be used to feed our students and potentially students from local districts. We are also considering planting an apple orchard. Are these the kinds of things that a farm to school program may support?

A: Based on the information given, the project described fits with the objective of the program to increase the volume and variety of local specialty crops procured by schools/districts for inclusion in school meals programs.

Q: There is a 30 percent MWBE requirement, is MWBE paperwork required as part of the application?

A: No, MWBE paperwork is not part of the application, and would only be required should your organization be selected for an award.

Q: Are any costs excluded from the 30 percent MWBE calculation?

A: The MWBE recommendations are for non-personnel costs associated with the project.

Q: Do we need to sign and upload Attachment A-1: Program Specific Terms and Conditions?

A: The Attachment A-1 does not require a signature and would only apply should your organization be selected for an award.

Q: Do we need to find/upload Attachments A-2, B, C, or D?

A: The Attachments A-2, B, C, or D are also part of the contract, and would only apply should your organization be selected for an award.

Q: In Grants Gateway, the character limit for the program summary is 50,000 characters. The application instructions make it sound like it should be just a few lines; can you give any guidance on what type of length we should be aiming for, for the program summary?

A: The program summary is more of an area for you to give a mission statement, or background summary on your organization/project. It can be as little or as long as you like (up to 50,000 characters), and would eventually become part of the contract, should your organization be selected for an award. The content of your summary is more important than the length.

Q: I am working on the RFP with community partners, and I also noticed that there is a USDA Farm to School grant. I assume these are two separate entities and wonder if applicants can apply for both?

A: Yes, the State Farm to School and USDA Farm to School grants are separate entities, and you may apply for both grants.

Q: Can a school district participate in multiple applications, e.g. as a partner/potential beneficiary for one and as an applicant on another?

A: Yes, a school district may participate in multiple applications, such as partner/potential beneficiary for one and as an applicant on another.

Q: While the ""Eligible Costs" outlined in the grant guidelines include the salary of a Farm to School Coordinator, "Fringe Benefits" are listed as "Ineligible Costs". School districts are bound by law and by contract to pay Social Security/Medicare, Workers Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, and Retirement benefits at the very least. We are also bound by law not to use public funds - our sole source of income - for any purpose other than those directly tied to any particular funding stream. Our hands are tied and the ineligibility of the inclusion of "Fringe Benefits" in the grant budget makes it almost impossible for us to carry out the intentions of the grant, unless there is a different definition of "Fringe Benefits" which allows us to include these mandated expenses. Can you advise us on how to address this apparent conflict or what is included in the definition of "Fringe Benefits" in this instance?

A: Items related to salary including Social Security, Medicare, Workers Compensation, Unemployment Insurance and Retirement Benefits may be included as part of the "salary" listed for each position included for grant funding in the budget.

Q: Can you please tell me what this grant is for? My understanding is that we cannot use the monies for fresh produce, but can use the monies to hire someone to help with procurement of fresh produce.

A: The **Objective** of the Farm to School Competitive Grants Program is: **To increase the volume and variety of local specialty crops procured by schools/districts for inclusion in school meals programs.** School Meals Programs are defined as: **Feeding programs administered at the school or district level including school lunch and summer meals programs.**

Eligible and ineligible costs are outlined on pages 4 and 5 of the Request for Proposals (RFP), which can be found on the Department's website at: <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>.

Q: Is Farm to School defined as in cafeteria only, or can it include after school healthy snack programs?

A: Feeding programs administered at the school or district level include school lunch and summer meals programs. This does not include school snack programs.

Q: Is there a listing or description of the grantees that were awarded in 2015?

A: The link to the press release announcing the 2015 Farm to School awards can be found here: <http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-awards-six-farm-school-programs-across-new-york-state>.

Q: Can funds be used to purchase canning equipment, and/or dehydration equipment? A district I'm working with wants to preserve fresh fruits when they're in-season, so they can be served in the district throughout the year. Equipment would be used only for food that is part of the Farm to School program; is that okay?

A: Eligible and ineligible costs are outlined on pages 4 and 5 of the Request for Proposals (RFP), which can be found on the Department's website at: <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>.

Q: If a school district received funds from a previous Farm to School grant, but they were not the applicant of that grant, can they apply for funds (the district was not even a partner)?

A: Yes, a district may apply for the Farm to School grant if they received funds from a previous Farm to School grant, but were not the applicant.

Q: I was wondering if you believe the grant will be available next year?

A: The Department is hopeful to be able to fund the Farm to School program, however, we can't be certain there will be funding for the program until the State budget for 2017 is released in April.

Q: Is it the school that has to be a NYS vendor, or is it the farm? Additionally, does the school have to be "a vendor" or does the farm?

A: Both the school and the farm must be located in New York State. Should your school apply for a grant and be selected for an award, the school would be considered the vendor (or contractor) with the Department.

Q: Can grant funds support the purchase of agricultural resources for schools to produce their own crops for use in the school cafeteria?

A: Yes, grant funds can support the purchase of agricultural resources, so long as the "agricultural resources" fall under the eligible costs specified in the Request for Proposals (RFP) on pages 4-5.

Q: We plan to have a paid culinary intern assist with peeling, cleaning, cubing/cutting fresh vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, celery, kale and others along with fresh fruits. Are these eligible expenses?

A: A culinary intern would be an allowable expense. Food purchases mentioned in the narrative would not be an eligible expense.