



Agriculture and Markets

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

Deadline Extension for Farm to School Proposals

In order to accommodate applicants and potential applicants to the Farm to School Competitive Grants Program the application period is being reopened beginning on October 26, 2015.

All proposals must be submitted through the Grants Gateway by 4:30 pm on Monday, November 2. Late proposals cannot be accepted.

Proposals that were in process and/or proposals that were submitted after the original deadline may be submitted. New proposals that were not in process may be submitted. Proposals that were submitted may be revised and resubmitted if the applicant would like to make revisions to the proposal that was submitted.

Questions on this process may be directed to Meg.Mccabe@agriculture.ny.gov.

2015 Farm to School Program

Questions & Answers

Q: We have read the grant instructions and the RFP document, and would like to start work on the actual application document. Unfortunately, we are not able to find the application link either through the Grants Gateway portal, or through the Department's website.

A: You cannot use the Grant Opportunity portal to apply for a grant – that is only for viewing grant information. After you log in, from the home page, go to “view available opportunities.” Click on “view opportunities” and use the search boxes.

Q: What is the deadline for submission of proposals?

A: As stated on the front page of the RFP and the instructions, the deadline for submission of applications is 4:30 pm on Monday, October 19, 2015.

Q: Can you tell me what financial match requirements, if any, are needed for the Farm to School grants?

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

Q: Would you clarify how much funding is available total for the Farm to School grant for all objectives? Is \$350,000 available for objectives 1, 2 and 5 AND is \$250,000 available for objectives 3 and 4?

A: \$250,000 is available for all objectives. Additionally, \$100,000 is available for objectives 1, 2 and 5.

Q: In reviewing the FTSCP RFP and the online application, it appears that the grant objectives have been spelled out very clearly. Is there any opportunity to add objectives (that contribute to overall goals) to the ones already listed? Following that thought, can funding be requested to support objectives outside the core five of the RFP itemizes?

A: Proposals must address one or more of the five objectives outlined in the RFP. It is essential that the Department is able to compare proposals in the competitive process and that we adhere to the parameters dictated to us by the funding sources.

Q: Is the funding period for proposals 24 months? If it is a 24 month period, is the \$350,000 amount per year, or total over 24 months?

A: As stated on page 5 of the RFP under section 2.5, the funding of proposals is for a 24-month period from the date of the award, which would be the contract start date. The \$350,000 is the total for 24 months.

Q: Can individual public schools apply, or is it just school districts?

A: Individual schools may apply, but they should make sure that they are following any local protocols set by their school district.

Q: In NYC, the DOE requires that all food comes through the School Foods Program – how can this grant possibly work for NYC Public Schools?

A: Buying through an intermediary is acceptable, as long as it can be established that the specialty crops are locally grown.

Q: What format would you like the letters of support? And is there a limit to how many we can submit?

A: There is no format for the letters of support, and there is no limit on the number of letters that may be submitted.

Q: If an organization is awarded a Farm to School grant through the State, does that preclude them from applying to the USDA for a Farm to School Planning grant in the Spring?

A: Applying for the Farm to School Program through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets does not preclude an applicant from applying to the USDA's Farm to School Planning grant. The two programs are completely separate.

Q: Are Districts eligible to apply as a Consortium? If so, must all participating Districts be pre-registered under the NYS Grants Gateway System, or only the lead applicant? If a consortium is allowable, is the maximum grant amount \$100,000?

A: The lead applicant must be pre-registered and, if a not-for-profit, pre-qualified. The maximum grant amount for a single application is \$100,000.

Q: Are indirect costs allowable if they are part of a subcontract with a vendor for allowable activities of the grant, such as the training of food service directors? My concern is that the normal billable rate for these services are likely to include indirect costs. Is this acceptable if it supports allowable activities?

A: Indirect costs are allowable as part of the subcontract.

Q: Are salaries (partial FTE) for program management of the Farm to School grant an acceptable use of funds. This program manager would ensure that all deliverables and outcomes are met according to fiscal guidelines of the RFP, submit monthly briefs to the Department, etc.

A: Salaries (Partial FTE) are allowed for program management of the Farm to School grant.

Q: Student Survey: Do you want to see the results of a pre and post survey to determine attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of seasonal crops and eating habits? What percentage of students should be surveyed? Is this a required portion of the project?

A: Results of pre and post surveys should be referenced in the proposal and can be included as an attachment. There is no fixed percentage of students that must be surveyed. The survey is not required. The design and execution of the survey should be articulated in the proposal. There is no template, figurative or literal, for the survey.

Q: The Farm to School RFP delineates eight bulleted challenges to the farm to school movement. Several of those challenges are not listed as "Program Objectives," such as safety, or inconsistent quality, quantity and sizing, or processing and packaging. Can those items still be addressed by the program, or included in the scope of work for a Farm to School Coordinator? Are the eligible costs if addressed through contract services, such as educational workshops for producers?

A: Issues such as safety, or inconsistent quality, quantity and sizing, or processing and packaging, may be addressed as part of the Scope of Work of a Farm to School Coordinator. Costs associated addressing these issues in the course of the Farm to

School Coordinator’s work may be charged and subsequently reimbursed as contractual expenses.

Q: We are applying for this grant in order to purchase equipment that will enable us to increase our sliced-apple production and diversify to new products that schools are seeking out. I am wondering how we should frame the application – would this be considered a “capital improvement” or “equipment.” We are in the middle of a capital improvement project, but grant funding would enable us to get specific equipment for processing for schools.

A: Equipment purchases are an allowable expense for projects articulated in proposals submitted to the Farm to School Competitive Grants Program. For the costs to be eligible for reimbursement the equipment must be purchased after a grant award date.

Infrastructure projects generally involve transportation and/or storage of specialty crops. Only costs for infrastructure projects implemented after a grant award date are eligible for reimbursement.

Q: I am working to submit an application for this grant opportunity. We are unclear about the Fresh Connect Program in Section 5.2 of the RFP. Is this simply to help spread out the number of awards across the different regions, (i.e., it’s based on our location and previous activity of the Fresh Connect Program)? Or are these additional 1-5 points awarded based on the content of our application?

A: Please disregard the reference to FreshConnect in section 5.2. Extra points may be awarded to obtain geographic diversity, but it is not related to the FreshConnect Program.

Q: I am not entirely sure which objective to apply for with a large production equipment purchase because our organization is not a school/school district, and the project for which we are applying is not about transport and storage. Can you please advise?

A: Large-scale equipment/machinery to be used by a third party to process specialty crops to supply processed specialty crops to multiple schools/school districts is considered infrastructure.

Q: May grant fund be used to achieve Farm to School Competitive Grants Program goals by serving preschool programs?

A: Grant funds must be spent on projects that serve Kindergarten – Grade 12.

Q: May grant funds be completely applied within a single years’ budget, or must grant funds be distributed across a two year budget?

A: Grant funds may be budgeted for one year.

