NEW YORK STATE | Department of Agriculture and Markets

New York State Farm to School Grant Program 2026

(RFP #0378)

SFS Event ID# AGM-FTS26

Farm-to-School Team
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AGENDA

- **Program Description** – Background and available funding
- **Projects Overview** – Eligible projects, applicants, and costs
- **Evaluation of Projects**
- **Award Process**
- **Timeline**
- **How to Apply** – Accessing the RFP, SFS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- The objective of the New York State Farm-to-School Competitive Grants Program is to increase K-12 school purchases of New York farm and food products by building relationships between schools and suppliers. Secondary goals of the program include increasing agricultural education opportunities for students, improving nutrition, and exposing students to new, locally-based culinary experiences.

FUNDING

- A total of $1,500,000 is available for the Farm-to-School Competitive Grants Program. This year, $450,000 will be set aside for first-time recipients. Grant awards may range from $50,000 to $150,000. Applicants may apply for only one grant per funding period. Applicants must apply for $50,000 to $150,000. Contract terms will be September 1, 2026, to August 31, 2028.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- The required objective of Farm-to-School projects for this program is to increase the volume and variety of New York State farm products purchased by K-12 schooldistricts and served in school meal programs. The target for these increased purchases should be focused towards meeting the qualifications of the State's New York State 30% Initiative, which enhances the viability of districts in the Farm-to-School Program by increasing school food reimbursement eligibility by New York State.

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS

- Seasonality of local produce
- Navigating a variety of procurement requirements
- Maintaining quality, quantity, and sizing
- Requesting and reviewing bids
- Delivery/pick up of local food procurement
- Equipment and skills to store and prepare unprocessed foods
- Connecting diverse populations with culturally appropriate foods
- Training and workforce development for culinary staff

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- K-12 School Food Authorities receiving National School Lunch Program funds
- Not-for-profit K-12 Schools not participating in the National School Lunch Program, but still operating a school food program
- Charter schools
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Indian tribal organizations

Ineligible applicants include:

- For-profit organizations
- Individuals

PROJECT COSTS

Eligible Costs
Salaries and wages, including fringe benefits
Contractor services
Staff training
Permanent physical/structural improvements
Insurance and permits (excluding permit to operate a farmers' market at proposed location)
Transportation costs within New York State (including the leasing of a vehicle within the contract period)
Supplies and equipment (eligible equipment costs must be directly related to the project)

PROJECT COSTS

Ineligible Costs	
Expenses not related to the grant	Salaries and wages unrelated to the proposal
Food purchases	Purchase of vehicles
Purchase of cell phones	Rent or lease of property or space
Purchase of computer hardware and office equipment	Food purchased for any USDA Child Nutrition Program, including NSLP, SBP and SFSP
Costs associated with preparing an application	Costs incurred prior to the award of a grant
Costs supported in whole, or in part, by other State funding (for example, Cornell Cooperative Extensions receiving Regional Farm-to-School Coordinator awards may not include budget items also in the Regional Coordinator grant)	Out-of-state travel

COMPETITIVE GRANT EVALUATION PROCESS

- The Department will screen each proposal for minimum qualifications and completeness.
- A team of technical evaluators will score each project.
  - The scoring threshold is set at **65 out of 100 points.**
  - All projects scoring at or above this threshold and meeting the other eligibility requirements will be considered for funding.

PROJECT SCORING

- All eligible proposals will be competitively rated. A total of one hundred (100) points can be achieved from the following criteria:

Project Description	Maximum of 20 points
Plan of Work	Maximum of 25 points
Reasonableness of Cost	Maximum of 20 points
Quantification of Project Benefits	Maximum of 25 points
Personnel	Maximum of 5 points
Outside Support	Maximum of 5 points

NOTE: The technical review criteria can be viewed **in full** on the RFP.

AWARD PROCESS

- Those proposals receiving the highest numerical scores at or above the scoring threshold of 65 will be awarded funding from the $1,050,000 pool of funds until available funds from that pool are exhausted, or until all proposals are funded – whichever occurs first.

- After the $1,050,000 pool of funds is exhausted, proposals from first-time awardees that score above the scoring threshold will be awarded funding from the separate $450,000 pool of funds, in ranked order until such time as that separate pool is exhausted, or until all proposals from first time-awardees are funded – whichever occurs first.

CONTRACT AND PAYMENT

- Award letters will be issued to top-ranking projects.
- A contract defining all terms, conditions, and responsibilities of the successful applicant will be developed.
  - The contract will incorporate the work plan and budget included in the awardee's project proposal.

- **Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis, only after the execution of the contract.**
  - Awardees may request an advance of up to 25% at the discretion of the Department when the contract is executed.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Quarterly progress reports

2. Reimbursement reports
   - The Department will monitor contract performance

3. Final report
   - Required within sixty (60) days following completion of the project

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

- All questions must be submitted by 4:00 pm on **February 6, 2026**.
- A list of questions about the program that are received from potential applicants; answers to those questions; and any changes, additions, or deletions to the RFP will be posted on the New York State Contract Reporter Website (nyscr.ny.gov) on or before **February 20, 2026.**

- All questions about this RFP **must be submitted in writing via email** to:

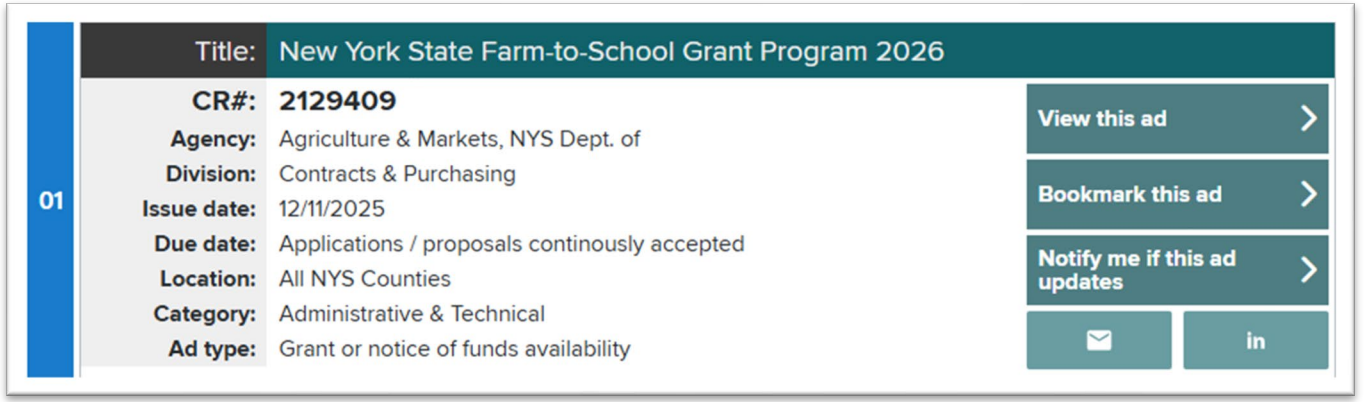
Matthew Wilson
Program Manager
farmtoschool@agriculture.ny.gov

TIMELINE

Release Request for Proposals (RFP)	December 11, 2025
Question and Answer Period	December 11, 2025 – February 6, 2026
Final Questions and Answers Posted	February 20, 2026
Deadline for Applications	March 12, 2026, 3:00 pm
Announcement of Grant Awards	July 2026

ACCESSING THE RFP

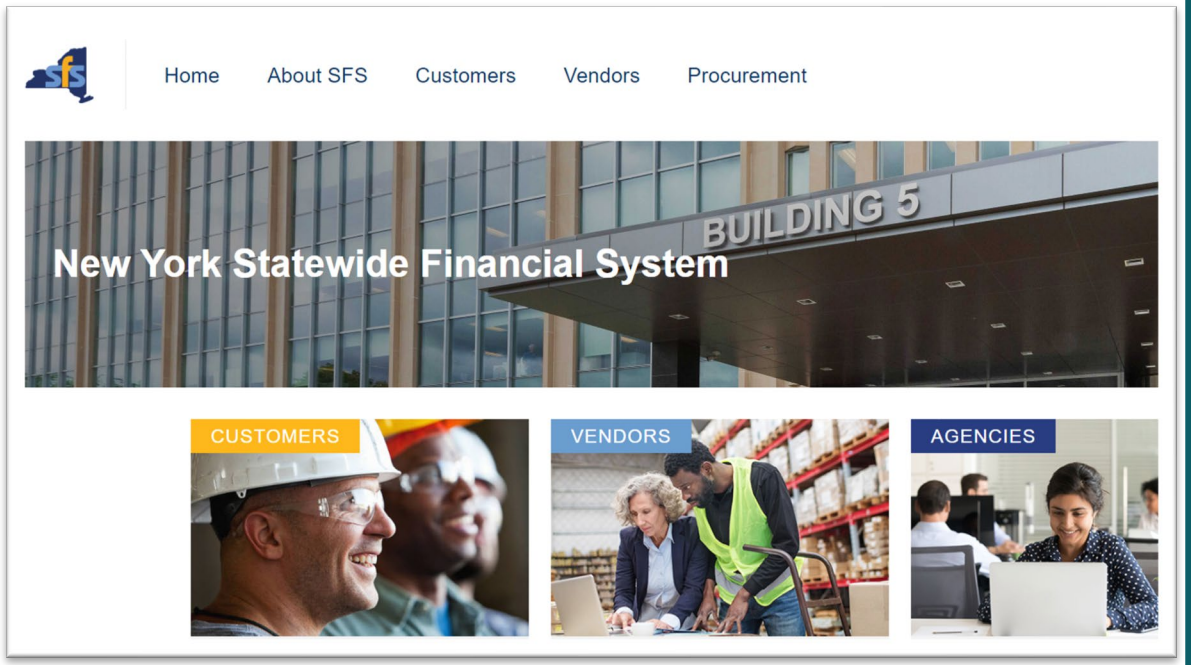
- Visit the New York State Contract Reporter at nyscr.ny.gov.
- Create a free account.
- Search for the opportunity:
  - NYS Farm-to-School Grant Program 2026
- Click on the Documents tab to download the RFP document.
- The Question and Answers document will be posted here and frequently updated.



SFS (STATEWIDE FINANCIAL SYSTEM)

- Visit the Statewide Financial System (SFS) at www.sfs.ny.gov
- You must first be registered and pre-qualified in SFS to apply for grants.*

***We highly recommended that you register and pre-qualify on SFS as soon as possible.**



VENDOR REGISTRATION IN SFS

- To prequalify, apply for a grant opportunity, and do business with a New York State (NYS) agency, you need to be registered as a NYS Vendor.
- Organizations registered as a NYS Vendor receive a Vendor ID and can use the SFS Vendor Portal.
- If your organization previously registered with the Grants Gateway, then you already have a Vendor ID and your organization was granted access to the SFS Vendor Portal.
  - The Vendor ID is not your Taxpayer ID or Employee Identification Number (EIN).
  - The Vendor ID is a number that was assigned to your organization when you completed the registration process.
  - If you do not know your Vendor ID, contact the SFS Help Desk at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or (855) 233-8363.
- If your organization was not previously registered with the Grants Gateway, you will need to initiate the registration process.
  - Instructions on how to register your organization are available on the Grants Management website, grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization-sfs.

VENDOR PREQUALIFICATION IN SFS

- Not-for-profit organizations must prequalify to do business with New York State agencies before they can compete for State grants.
- The process allows not-for-profits to address questions and concerns prior to entering a competitive bid process.
- Not-for-profit organizations are strongly encouraged to begin the prequalification process as soon as possible.
- Once prequalified, it is the responsibility of not-for-profits to maintain prequalification.
- The IRS990, Financial Statement, and Charities Bureau filing expire on an annual basis.
- A not-for-profit must upload current versions of these documents and submit an updated Prequalification Application for review and approval each year to maintain prequalification.

VENDOR DOCUMENTS

Forms/templates that must be completed:

- Organizational Capacity
- Organizational Compliance
- Organizational Integrity
- Service Descriptors
- Service Capacity

Documents that must be uploaded:

- Certificate of Incorporation or equivalent document
- IRS 501(c) Determination Letter
- IRS 990
- Audit/Reviews and Findings
- CHAR500 or CHAR410
- Board of Directors' Profile
- Senior Leadership Resumes
- Corporate Bylaws

PREQUALIFICATION RESOURCES

- A variety of resources are available to assist with prequalification
  - A complete overview of the policy, questions, and required documents can be found in the Grantee Prequalification Manual
  - Additional helpful documents (e.g., organization chart examples, sample board of directors profile, senior management CV templates, etc.) to assist you with completing your Prequalification Application are available on the Grants Management Website
  - Step-by-step guidance focused on entering a Prequalification Application in the SFS Vendor Portal is available in the Enter and Submit a Prequalification Application topic in the Grantee Processing in SFS Handbook
  - Webinar recordings are available in SFS Coach

HOW TO APPLY

- Applications **must** be submitted through the Statewide Financial System
- You must be logged in as Bid Response Initiator or Bid Response Submitter
- Navigation:
  - Click the Grant Management – State tile
  - Alternative Navigation: From the NavBar navigate to: Menu > Manage Events and Place Bids > View Events and Place Bids
  - Click the Bid Event Search tile
  - Enter the applicable search criteria in the Search Criteria fields
  - Click the Search button
  - Select the interested Bid Event

HOW TO APPLY

- As part of a response to a bid event, you will be:
  - reviewing key dates, information, and instructions provided by the agency,
  - providing general information such as contact information and an address for where the funds will be used or spent,
  - responding to application questions setup by the agency,
  - entering the budget and work plan information, and
  - submitting your total bid amount.

- Review trainings and job aids for step-by-step instructions on how to apply.

SFS HELP DESK

- Questions regarding SFS functionality can be submitted to the SFS Help Desk.
  - Email: helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov
  - Phone: (518) 457-7717 or (855) 233-8363 (toll free)
  - Through the SFS Support Tile in the SFS Vendor Portal
- Please include as many details as possible when contacting the Help Desk:
  - A detailed description of the issue
  - The SFS User ID you were using when you encountered the issue
  - The date and time you encountered the issue
  - The name of the training or reference material that you were following when you encountered the issue (if applicable)
  - The name of the page you were on when encountering the issue
  - Impacted transaction IDs (if applicable)
  - Screenshots of the entire page where you are experiencing trouble, including the URL and any error messages you are receiving (if applicable)
- As a reminder, the Troubleshooting Tips for SFS Users guide provides a list of basic troubleshooting tips, reminders, and contact information for users who are unable to log in to the system or need assistance with the system.
- Note: Help Desk ticket responses will come from nyoscprod@service-now.com

QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Matthew Wilson
Program Manager
farmtoschool@agriculture.ny.gov

NEW YORK STATE FARM-TO-SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

More information on the RFP0378 (2026 New York State Farm-To-School Program) can be found at the below links.

- **New York State Contract Reporter - nyscr.ny.gov**

- **AGM Funding Opportunities Page - agriculture.ny.gov/funding-opportunities**

Thank you!

Department of Agriculture and Markets