



FARM TO SCHOOL COMPETITIVE GRANTS

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act provides the most significant reforms to school feeding programs in more than 30 years. A major improvement was the establishment of a Farm to School Competitive Grants Program funded at \$5 million a year to be housed at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

WHAT is the Farm to School Competitive Grants Program?

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act establishes a Farm to School competitive grant and technical assistance program to increase the use of local foods from small and medium sized farms in schools. Grants will be available up to \$100,000 per project, and may be used for training, planning, purchasing equipment, building school gardens and developing partnerships to create new or support existing programs.

This competitive grant program is designed to:

- » Improve the nutritional health and well being of children;
- » Support experiential nutrition education activities;
- » Procure local foods from small and medium-sized farms;
- » Increase farm income by facilitating farmers' access to institutional markets including schools; and
- » Develop a sustained commitment to farm to school programs in the community

WHY Farm to School?



HEALTH: Kids Win

All kids deserve access to nutritious, high quality food. One-third of U.S. children are obese or overweight, and only 2% of children meet the Food Guide Pyramid daily serving recommendations. Schools operating a Farm to School program have shown increases in children's participation in the school meals program and consumption of fruits and vegetables.



AGRICULTURE: Farmers Win

Farm to School supports farming families by increasing market opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers. Farm to School programs can open up the expansive school food market, estimated at more than \$12 billion a year to local farmers.



ECONOMY: Communities Win

Farm to School strengthens the community. Farm to School programs create opportunities for developing meaningful community relationships between schools, parents, and local farmers. For every dollar spent on local foods in schools, one to three dollars circulate in the economy.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

WHO is eligible to receive funds under the Farm to School Competitive Grants Program?

- »» Schools or institutions that participate in a program under the National School Lunch or Breakfast program;
- »» State and Local Agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations;
- »» Agricultural Producers or groups of Agricultural Producers; and
- »» Non-profit entities.

HOW will grant recipients be chosen? The Secretary of Agriculture will give the highest priority to funding projects that:

- »» Make local food products available on the menu of the eligible school;
- »» Serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;
- »» Incorporate experiential nutrition education activities in curriculum planning that encourage the participation of school children in farm and garden-based agricultural education activities;
- »» Demonstrate collaboration between eligible schools, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, agricultural producer groups, and other community partners;
- »» Include adequate and participatory evaluation plans; and
- »» Provide a local match to ensure commitment and long-term sustainability for the project activities.

WHEN will the program begin?

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act provides \$5 million in mandatory funding each year for this program beginning October 1, 2012. Funds will be available on an annual basis for the duration of the program.

Because the Farm to School Competitive Grant Program is new to USDA, the Department will go through a rule-making process before the funds are distributed, and further definition will be needed on how the grant program will operate within USDA. Please stay tuned for further information from the Community Food Security Coalition and the National Farm to School Network on how you can participate in this federal rule-making process.



QUESTIONS?

Contact Megan Lott
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STAY INFORMED! Sign up on the Farm to School website for the latest information on the grant program: www.farmentoschool.org