



THE PATRICK LEAHY 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 may include schools and other institutions that operate Child Nutrition Programs, 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, hosting taste tests, purchasing equipment, planting school gardens, and organizing field trips to agricultural operations.

Award Amounts

The grant award amount and period of performance vary, so please review the latest request for applications for additional information. 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 Tribal 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 State agencies. Agriculture producers may also apply, including major agriculture groups, their State affiliates and State departments of agriculture. Connecting communities to their local farmers, ranchers, and fishers builds stronger ties between the community and those who grow our food.

Timeline

The USDA plans to release a request for applications (RFA) once per fiscal year. After the RFA is released, applicants will have at least 60 days to complete and submit applications. Once the RFA closes, applications are reviewed and awards are announced approximately 6 months later.

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 Choctaw Farm to School Program provided eight Choctaw Tribal Schools with Mississippi-grown fruits, vegetables, and meats. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians worked to source fresh vegetables from farms operated by the Choctaw Fresh Produce Enterprise, which has high tunnel greenhouses in six Choctaw communities.





- * **State Agency** – The Montana Office of Public Instruction, along with other State partners, leveraged momentum and resources at a key time for the State to expand farm to school support into more rural and remote communities, including native communities, through: a regional farm to school coaching model, facilitating four regional Montana farm to school showcase events for networking and information-sharing, and hosting a statewide Montana farm to school summit.
- * **School District** – Through their “Bigger Procurement, Smaller Bites” project, Columbus City Schools in Ohio purchased equipment to clean, slice, preserve, weigh, and bag local apples. Ohio-grown apples were a natural first choice in the district’s efforts to offer more sliced, fresh, local fruit in their cafeterias!
- * **Nonprofit Organization** – Market Umbrella, a New Orleans, Louisiana, nonprofit that operates the Crescent City Farmers Market, partnered with schools, regional farmers, school

food providers, and non-profits to implement holistic farm to school programming in Orleans Parish. Market Umbrella convened project partners to: supply and procure produce, provide training, education, and certification opportunities to farmers and teachers, and implement relevant programming in schools.

- * **Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers** – Real Good Fish’s Bay2Tray program in California connects children with locally sourced seafood as part of the school meal program while providing fishers a market for high-quality, nutritious fish lacking a consumer market. The program trained commercial fishers to deliver “fisherman in the classroom” presentations to 40 classrooms to teach students about the local fishing industry, and conducted virtual fishing trips where children experienced the open seas with a fisher at sea. Bay2Tray also worked with Child Nutrition Program staff on culinary skills to prepare local fish with new recipes such as fish tacos, ceviche, and tostadas.

Learn More

Find complete information on the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program’s website (www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program) including information about past awardees, webinars and submission deadlines. For specific details on how to apply, visit the Grant Applicants Resource Page. (www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants)

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For more information and to sign up for The Dirt, the e-letter from the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program, visit www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/e-letter-archive.

Questions? Email us at SM.FN.FarmToSchool@usda.gov.

