



GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Local Food for Schools

Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline

March 22, 2023

No later than 5:00 p.m. EST

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Program Description

This program provides funding for a Local Food for Schools (LFS) subgrant to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) during School Year 2022-2023. The goal of Maryland's LFS grant is to facilitate procurement, distribution and/or storage of local foods. This is intended to expand local markets, with an emphasis on purchasing from historically underserved producers. The LFS project will build on existing initiatives by providing support to LEAs via grants for procurement from local, small, and socially disadvantaged producers.

Grant partners include Maryland Department of Agriculture, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, University of Maryland Extension, Future Harvest, Frederick County Farm to School, and others.

NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM

Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement (LFS)

PURPOSE

The purpose of the subgrant award is to provide funding for LEAs to facilitate procurement, distribution/ and or storage of local foods. This is intended to expand local markets, with an emphasis on purchasing from historically underserved producers. The LFS project will build on existing initiatives by providing support to LEAs via grants for procurement from local, small, and socially disadvantaged producers.

DEFINITIONS

Local producers are farmers, ranchers, processors or distributors and other businesses involved in food production or distribution that are located in the state or within 400 miles of the delivery destination.

A **small business** is generally defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a business that is: a for profit-businesses of any legal structure; independently owned and operated, not nationally dominant in its field, and physically located and operated in the U.S. or its territories.

A **socially disadvantaged producer** is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

AUTHORIZATION

The Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) is authorized by section 5(c) of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 USC 714c(c)). These cooperative agreements will allow for states to procure local, domestic foods that are unique to their geographic area and meet the needs of their schools. This project is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

DISSEMINATION

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on February 22, 2023

DEADLINE

Proposals are due no later than 5pm on March 22, 2023

GRANT PERIOD

April 3, 2023 – April 15, 2024

FUNDING AMOUNT AVAILABLE

\$ 2,998,739

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GRANTS

MSDE anticipates awarding twenty (20) grants. Additional grants may be awarded if funds are available.

GRANT AMOUNT

Qualified applications will be awarded funds based on a tiered system based on LEA student enrollment. Funding may be modified based on number of qualified applicants:

1. Tier 1: 0-999 enrollment
2. Tier 2: 1,000-9,999 enrollment
3. Tier 3: 10,000-49,999 enrollment
4. Tier 4: 50,000 and up enrollment

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Grant applications must be submitted by 5:00pm March 22, 2023, via email to jill.hann@maryland.gov

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work and will provide such additional assistance when requested.

MSDE is collaborating with several partners throughout the state to create a list of producers who meet the criteria for small, local, and/or socially disadvantaged. We will be providing the list to grantees. MSDE will also be working with our partners to provide training to producers on the formal procurement processes used by most LEAs. In addition, MSDE will provide grantees with a list of resources to facilitate delivery and storage of the local foods. Some of these vendors are also considered local, small and or socially disadvantaged producers.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Jill Hann
Program Administration Specialist
Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs
Maryland State Department of Education
Phone: 410-767-0218
Email: jill.hann@maryland.gov

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is for LEAs in good standing that are participating in the NSLP for SY 2022-2023. Priority will be given to schools with greater than 50 percent free and reduced meal rates.

MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

Use of Funds

Funds may be used for:

- Procurement of unprocessed or minimally processed food
- Storage
- Distribution
- Salaries of temporary workers hired to assist with the handling, storage, transportation, or distribution of commodities.

Funds may not be used for:

- Administrative expenses
- Processed food
- Food from producers that does not meet the criteria for small, local, or socially disadvantaged
- Equipment
- Duplicating existing food procurement and food distribution activities

Program Requirements

Procurement, storage and or distribution of local, unprocessed or minimally processed food for use in the School Meals Programs utilizing local, small or socially disadvantaged producers.

APPLICATION/PROJECT NARRATIVE

The following project narrative topics must be included in the application/project narrative:

COVER PAGE

Proposals must have the Proposal Cover Sheet provided in the application for participation. The cover page should not contain any graphics nor additional information and must be signed by the head of the agency.

EXTENT OF NEED

Identify a clearly defined problem, and how the use of these funds will address the problem. Applicants should include the target audience and expected outcomes.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Utilizing your history of local foods procurement and/or Farm to School Census data, briefly describe how the proposed plan and strategies will improve the use of local foods in your school district.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Applicants are required to set overall goals for the project. The goals should address the main problem. Outcomes measure progress towards meeting the overall goals of the program. Determining the program goal(s) and outcomes is an important part of the next step of evaluating your program. Applicants must complete the chart below with program goals:

Goal 1: The quantity of locally sourced food procured will increase from _____ to _____, constituting an increase of _____% from last year.

Goal 2: The program will increase the number of socially disadvantaged producers purchased from by _____ from last year.

PLAN OF OPERATION

Interested applicants should submit a grant narrative addressing all the following questions:

- Identify how you plan to expend grant funds. Will funds be used to purchase food for lunch, breakfast, and/or special programs?
- Will you use grant funds for all schools? If funding will be for a subsection of schools, how will you determine which schools to include?
- What type of procurement (large, small, informal) are you planning on conducting?
- What is your plan to target small, local, and/or socially disadvantaged producers?
- What is your plan for delivery and storage processes?
- How will you ensure your purchases are sustainable after the end of the grant period?
- Who will be the program contact person?

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Evaluation is an important part of determining the success of the program. Applicants will be required to describe in detail what success will look like and the criteria that will be used to determine and measure success at the end of the grant period (e.g., improvement in local food procurement based upon historical LEA procurement records, or Farm to School Census data, etc.).

Quarterly Reports

Grantees are required to submit brief quarterly progress reports that are consistent with the project's goals and outcome(s) to include the following measures (a template will be provided)

- Reporting Quarter
- Name of vendors and dollar value awarded to vendors receiving contracts and type of food purchased (fruit, vegetable, dairy, seafood, other).
- Break-down of number of small businesses awarded contracts, dollar value of purchases, and type of commodity purchased (fruit, vegetable, dairy, seafood, other).
- Break-down of number of socially disadvantaged farmers/producers awarded contracts, dollar value of purchases, and type of commodity purchased (fruit, vegetable, dairy, seafood, other).

The applicant must indicate how it will ensure that reporting deadlines are met. See the Reporting Schedule herein.

Evaluation Report

Grantees are required to submit a brief evaluation report at the end of the grant period that is consistent with the project’s goals and outcome(s). Applicants must describe how the program addressed the problem identified in their application. The following evaluation table will also be completed:

Evaluation Measure	Goal	Outcome
The quantity of locally sourced food procured		
The number of socially disadvantaged producers that LEAs purchase from		

DISSEMINATION

Applicants must describe how they will communicate the improved availability of local foods within the LEA, as well as how the evaluation results will be disseminated to major stakeholders and individuals interested in the project.

MANAGEMENT PLAN AND KEY PERSONNEL

Grantees are required to include a list of the staff or personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements. Applicants are required to complete the following management plan chart as part of the proposal.

Management Plan Worksheet

Person Responsible	Title, Organization	Responsibilities	Time devoted

PROJECT TIMELINE

A project timeline tells the reader when key activities will take place during the grant period. Applicants should consider all of the key tasks or activities that need to be carried out to implement the program successfully, whether each task can realistically begin and end in the proposed time frame, and how long each task will take to complete. It should contain three sections: management, implementation, and evaluation.

Key Activities	Individual Responsible	Time Frame
Management Activity		
Sending invoices to MSDE		

Filing quarterly reports		
Communicate the increase availability of local foods to students, parents, and other stakeholders		
Implementation Activity		
Procurement, storage and/or distribution		
Incorporating local produce into school meals		
Evaluation Activity		
Tracking quantity of produce procured		
Tracking the number of socially disadvantaged producers products are procured from		

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project’s budget should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All activities described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year. Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the project activities and the budget line items.

Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. For example, “meeting expenses” can be broken down into room rental, photocopying, and refreshments. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible. See a sample budget below:

1. Salaries & wages (list separately for each position)

Note: Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits are not allowable for project staff who devote time and effort to activities that do not meet the legislated purpose of the grant program.

Line item	Calculation	In-Kind
Project Manager	\$50/hr. x 10 hrs. per week x 52 weeks	\$20,800
Total for salaries & wages:		\$20,800

2. Food and Related Expenses

Note: Indirect costs are not allowable

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
Broccoli	\$2.50/lbs. x 100 pounds	250		\$250
Storage Fees	\$200/month x 3 months	600		\$600
Delivery Fees	\$20/school x 10 schools	200		\$200
Total for food related expenses:		\$1050	\$	\$1050

APPENDIX

The following appendices must be included but do not apply to the page limit of the project narrative.

- A [signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form](#)
- A [signed recipient assurances page](#)

The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a three-part process:

1. Written applications/project narratives will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applications not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be reviewed.
2. A review committee established by MSDE will evaluate applications using a scoring rubric. The scoring rubric is tailored to the grant program, its intent, and intended impact on the target population.
3. Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.

Note: MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

The committee will be composed of three (3) representatives from the MSDE Office of School and Community Nutrition. Reviewers will assign numerical scores to each proposal based on the criteria on the scoring rubric below. Applications must receive a cut score of 35 in order to be considered for funding.

Goals (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
Goals are clearly defined, ambitious and realistic.	Goals are defined, not very ambitious or not realistic.	Goals are not or poorly defined, not ambitious and not realistic.

Expansion of Local Foods (20 total points)

Exemplary 14-20 points	Meets Standard 7-13 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
The project narrative clearly outlines a plan of operations that fully aligns to the intent of the grant program and demonstrates how foods procurement, distribution and storage will be expanded in the school district to include local, small, and socially disadvantaged producers.	The project narrative outlines a plan of operations that mostly aligns to the intent of the grant program and demonstrates how local foods procurement, distribution, and storage will be expanded in their school district to include small or socially disadvantaged producers.	The project narrative does not outline a plan of operations that aligns to the intent of the grant program or only demonstrates how local foods procurement, distribution and storage will be expanded in their school district to include local producers

Evaluation (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
There are clear evaluation measures that align to the program's goals.	There are evaluation measures that loosely align to the program's goals.	There are some evaluation measures, but several do not align to the program's goals.

Budget (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
All grant activities are present in the budget. Costs are reasonable. There are no calculation errors.	Most grant activities are present in the budget. Costs are reasonable. There are a few calculation errors.	Many grant activities are missing from in the budget. Costs are not reasonable. There are calculation errors.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

Notification of approval will be sent by email within 15 days of the deadline to submit proposals. Approved proposals may begin implementing the program as soon as the award notification letter is received. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) will be forthcoming within 3 weeks of the approval letter.

Reporting Schedule

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

Date	Reporting Requirements
June 30, 2023	Initial report. See attached report template.
September 29, 2023	Quarterly report. See attached report template.
December 29, 2023	Quarterly report. See attached report template.
March 29, 2024	Quarterly report. See attached report template.
May 15, 2024	Quarterly report. See attached report template.
May 15, 2024	Evaluation report

Notes:

Any requests for programmatic amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends and must be submitted using the C-125-B form found in the [Grant Budget Forms Workbook](#) on the [MSDE grants webpage](#).

Invoices will be processed for reimbursement bi-weekly. Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

MSDE Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
 Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Operations
 Maryland State Department of Education
 200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595 410-767-0123 - voice
 410-767-0431 - fax
 410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), Section 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by

addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8330.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Customer Service Support Sessions

MSDE will hold two customer service support sessions for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will review what applicants need to get started, the program requirements, as well as a walk-through of the application. Prospective applicants may register for one of two customer service sessions. See the dates, times, and registration links below:

- [Wednesday, March 1, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.](#)
- [Thursday, March 2, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.](#)

Questions

If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact the Program Monitor:

Jill Hann
 Program Administration Specialist
 Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs
 Maryland State Department of Education
 Phone: 410-767-0218
 Email: jill.hann@maryland.gov

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the eatsmartmaryland.org website following customer service support sessions.

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, are found on the eatsmartmaryland.org website

Date	Program Milestone
February 22, 2023	The Grant Information Guide and the application are released
March 1, 2023	MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants
March 2, 2023	MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants
March 22, 2023	The grant application period closes
March 21, 2023	MSDE begins reviewing applications for completeness and minimum requirements
March 24, 2023	MSDE Review Committee will convene and evaluate complete proposal
April 4, 2023	MSDE will notify applicants of the award status

April 4, 2023	The grant period begins
April 15, 2024	The grant period ends
May 15, 2024	Final report due

Appendix

APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION