



United States Department of Agriculture

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The Dirt

News and Notes from FNS's  Office of Community Food Systems



Farm to School Grant Program Schedule

Exciting change is underway with the USDA Farm to School Grant Program! The Child Nutrition Act, the authorizing legislation for the grant program, is currently in the reauthorization process in Congress. The most recent version passed by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry includes changes that impact the scope of the grant program.

In anticipation of change, there will be a delay in the release of the FY2017 request for applications from February to September. In addition to preparing for the potential changes in the authorizing legislation, a schedule adjustment will allow time to review the program's current policies and procedures, taking into account feedback from past applicants and grantees, and program evaluation results.

We will continue to keep you updated on the USDA Farm to School Grant Program through *The Dirt* and our [website](#). Thank you for your understanding during this time of exciting change!

Below is the anticipated schedule:

- September 2016: Release FY2017 request for Farm to School Grant applications
- November 2016: FY2017 Farm to School Grant applications due
- May 2017: Announce awards

Interested in learning more about the most recent version of the Child Nutrition Act? The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition breaks it down in this [blog post](#).

Webinars: Planning for Farm to School Success

Don't miss the upcoming webinars in our *Planning for Farm to School Success* webinar series! You can find the entire menu of topics on our [website](#). Missed a webinar? Don't worry! All webinars are recorded and posted on our website.

Farm to School Menu Planning: February 18, 2:00 PM EST

Bring local products to life on your school menus! Chef Kent Getzin, Director of Food Services in Wenatchee, WA will share a variety of ways to incorporate local products into your school recipes, salad bars, and cycle menus so they become permanent items in your kitchen inventory. Prepare for the presentation by drooling over the local food featured in [The Lunch Room: Wenatchee's Farm to School Movement](#).

Register now >

Food Safety: March 3, 2:00 PM EST

How can we ensure the safety of farm fresh food? We'll share local food safety best practices, including identifying safety measures for school gardens and school salad bars.

[Register now >](#)

Funding Announcements

USDA Grants Available for Food Service Equipment

Can your farm to school program benefit from new kitchen equipment? There's a grant for that!

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the availability of \$35 million in grants to help schools upgrade kitchen equipment and infrastructure. These grants provide schools with funds to purchase equipment to help meet [national nutrition standards](#) and serve healthy meals with more whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean protein and low-fat dairy, and less sodium and fat. Through a public-private partnership with [Fuel Up to Play 60](#), this \$35 million investment will help ensure that children are greeted by healthier school environments.

Schools can apply for USDA funding through their state or for funds from [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) directly. In both cases, funding will support the purchase of new equipment and/or the renovation/replacement of equipment. Equipment may include large and small items including utility carts, utensils, large-capacity food processors, industrial scales, steamers, freezers etc. Infrastructure elements may include building needs related to physical space, electricity, plumbing, ventilation and other remodeling needs.

[Read more >](#)

Funding Opportunities for Education, Training, and Technical Assistance under the Food Safety Modernization Act

Last week the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) announced opportunities for funding to enhance food safety under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

Funding opportunities are for [Native American Tribes Outreach, Education and Training](#) and for [Local Food Producer Outreach, Education, and Training](#).

Applications are due April 21, 2016. Projects will research and identify outreach, education, training, and technical assistance needs; develop and adapt materials; and deliver trainings that facilitate the integration and understanding of federal food safety regulations and guidance.



Through education, training, and technical assistance, funded projects will improve the integration and understanding of federal food safety regulations and guidance among Native American tribes involved in agricultural produce production and food manufacturing, and among owners and operators of small and mid-size farms and businesses involved in local food production and processing.

Eligible entities include community-based organizations; grassroots organizations that advance tribal historical, cultural, and regional agricultural production and processing practices; state, county, local, and Indian/Native American Tribal Governments; and higher education institutions.

[Read more >](#)

Learn more at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool> or contact us at farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).