

DATE: June 30, 2020

TO: Authorized Representative - Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: Barbara Shaw, Coordinator – Food and Nutrition Services

SUBJECT: 2020 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Agriculture Appropriations Act authorized \$30 million for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service to provide grants to State Agency's (SAs) for providing equipment assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) participating in the USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), has been allocated \$516,685 for the grants. These funds will allow LEAs to purchase equipment to serve healthier meals that meet the updated meal pattern with an emphasis on more fresh fruits and vegetables, including items purchased locally, improve food safety and expand access.

Notice: Due to the limited amount of funds available for the 2020 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant a cap will be set at \$25,000 per LEA. This will increase the potential to distribute the funds and increase the possibility of an LEA receiving at least a portion of the limited funds. Also, the threshold for the purchase of equipment cannot be lower than \$1,000. An LEA may submit an application for more than one building but only one piece of equipment per building is allowed.

Competitive Application Process

Criteria outlined for competitive application process:

- Provided is a list of schools that previously received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019 Equipment Assistance grant funds; therefore, are not eligible for this grant.
- Schools with the highest percentage free & reduced enrollment or individual building CEP percentage will receive top priority.
- Grant application **must be completed in its entirety**. Incomplete applications will be disqualified. All applications **must** be signed.
- The questions in the Focus Area of the grant application must address the need for equipment assistance in schools participating in the NSLP.
- Grant application must be submitted by the due date. There will be **no exceptions**.

Equipment Definition

Applications for equipment may include requests for new equipment, refurbishment of equipment, or replacement of equipment. Equipment for the purpose of NSLP equipment assistance grants is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost of at least \$1,000 (capitalization

threshold followed by DESE). Funds may also be requested for allowable costs such as delivery, installation, testing, disposal of old equipment, and labor costs associated with renovation of equipment. The total estimated equipment cost submitted on the grant application must include the anticipated equipment purchase cost and all additional allowable costs.

Focus areas of grant

USDA has established five focus areas to be addressed by grant applicants. An LEA must document how the equipment purchase will improve at least one of the five following focus areas for each item of equipment requested:

- Equipment that lends itself to improving the quality of school foodservice meals that meet the dietary guidelines (e.g., purchasing an equipment alternative to a deep fryer).
- Equipment that improves the safety of food served in the school meal programs (e.g., cold/hot holding equipment, dish washing equipment, refrigeration, milk coolers, freezers, blast chillers, etc.).
- Equipment that improves the overall energy efficiency of the school foodservice operations (e.g., purchase of an energy-efficient walk in freezer replacing an outdated, energy-demanding freezer).
- Equipment that allows for expanded participation in a school meal program (e.g., equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting or to better utilize cafeteria space).
- Equipment that promotes smarter lunchrooms (e.g. lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal, highlighting healthier meals).

Application

The application to apply for the NSLP equipment assistance grant is attached and also available at <https://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/news-and-updates>. All LEAs may apply but priority will be given to schools/meal count centers with 50% or more students eligible for free or reduced price meals as of October 2019 or if the individual building Community Eligibility Provision claiming percentage is above 50%.

Applications must be signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of the NSLP and the food service director.

Completed applications can be:

E-mailed: foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov
(Subject line: 2020 NSLP Equipment Assistant Grant Application)

OR

Mailed: Food and Nutrition Services
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
PO Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480;

to DESE, FNS, by 4:30 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020. Only one piece of equipment, per building, may be requested.

Procurement

All federal, state, and local procurement laws and regulations must be followed when purchasing equipment. Procurement rules have been updated (2 CFR Part 200: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”):

Equipment purchases anticipated to cost under \$10,000 must be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers and no solicitation is needed. For purchases between \$10,000 and \$250,000, price or rate quotes must be obtained from at least three suppliers. However, if your LEA procurement rules are more restrictive, they must be followed. Check with your LEA's business official regarding your local procurement procedures and formal/informal bidding thresholds.

Grant *awards* will be based on the submitted total estimated equipment costs obtained from informal or formal bidding procedures. Final grant *payments* will be determined by invoices/purchase orders submitted for the equipment.

Timeline

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| July 31, 2020, by 4:30 p.m. | - Application submitted to DESE, FNS |
| Approximately August 21, 2020 | - Notification of grant awards by DESE, FNS. Individual notice will NOT be sent to those who do not receive funds. The list of awardees will be posted on the FNS website. |
| September 30, 2021 | - Grant funds must be fully expended |

Resource

The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) has developed a resource for LEAs entitled “Equipment Purchasing and Facility Design for School Nutrition Programs,” which includes information on decision making for the purchase of school foodservice equipment. This resource is available on the ICN’s Web Site at <http://theicn.org/>.

Questions regarding this grant opportunity may be directed to DESE, FNS, at 573-751-3526.