

Minnesota Farm to School Grant Program 2017

2017 Request for Proposals

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All proposals must be received by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) no later than **4:00 pm CST on Wednesday, November 2, 2016.**

Grant applications are submitted through our online system. The application is accessed through a link on the MDA Farm to School Grant website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/mnfarmtoschool.aspx.

If you cannot apply using this process, you may submit an application by email. An application must be received by the MDA staff by 4:00 pm CST on Wednesday, November 2, 2016 to be included in this round of applications.

The MDA anticipates awarding up to \$500,000 through the Minnesota Farm to School Grant Program.

The Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) has committed up to \$125,000 to help schools and child care providers meet the requirement for matching funds for equipment or physical improvement projects.

For questions about the grant program or completing the application, please contact:

Ashley Bress

Ashley.Bress@state.mn.us | 651-201-6648

MN Department of Agriculture, Marketing and Development Division

625 Robert Street North, St Paul, MN 55155

MDA Grant Line: 651-201-6500

Background

The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program (AGRI) was established to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries (MS 41A.12). This program focuses on areas of greatest opportunity and potential economic impact to create agricultural jobs and profitable businesses in the areas of livestock investment, value-added business and market development, and renewable energy. The AGRI Farm to School Grant Program targets schools and child care centers that are interested in increasing the amount of Minnesota grown and raised foods they serve.

Program Goals

The goal of the Farm to School Grant Program is to increase sales of Minnesota agricultural products to elementary schools, secondary schools, and child care providers, thereby increasing access to fresh, local foods for Minnesota students. The MDA is providing competitive grants to stimulate purchases of locally grown and raised food products by:

- creating plans that identify product availability and cost, specific equipment, tools, training or policies that a school or school district needs in order to increase the amount of Minnesota grown or raised food being purchased
- purchasing equipment to allow schools to purchase, prepare and serve more Minnesota grown and raised food

Eligible Applicants and Required Letters of Support

- Public or private schools or school districts that are a part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and serve food to preschool and/or K-12 students. Multi-district proposals are welcome but not required. Applicants are required to submit at least one letter of support from a Minnesota farmer who currently sells to the school, or would sell to the school after the grant is received.
- Child care providers that are enrolled in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and serve, on average, at least 40 lunches or 40 suppers daily, based on average daily participation rates in October 2016. Examples of child care providers include, but are not limited to, Head Start, Early Head Start, preschool programs, and private providers. Applicants are required to submit at least one letter of support from a Minnesota farmer who currently sells to the provider, or would sell to the provider after the grant is received.
- Economic development organizations, non-profit organizations and educational service cooperatives may apply on behalf of and act as fiscal agents for eligible entities, but need to clearly identify those entities and provide letters of support from those entities. Economic development organizations, non-profit organizations and educational service cooperatives also need to submit at least one letter of support from a Minnesota farmer who currently sells to the identified school(s), or would sell to the school(s) after the grant is received.
- Previous Farm to School Grant recipients are eligible to apply for and receive funding in future grant cycles. There is no lifetime cap on how much a grantee may be awarded.

Eligible Projects

Projects must be completed by December 31, 2018.

Two categories of grants will be considered:

1) Planning Grants

Up to 75% of the total project cost may be covered by the grant, with a maximum grant award of \$30,000 and a minimum grant award of \$1,000. Recipients must contribute the remaining 25% of the project cost as a cash match. Blue Cross funds may NOT be used for planning grants.

Planning grant projects must involve school and/or child care center sites, or central facilities, that participate in NSLP or CACFP.

Project Examples Include, But Are Not Limited To:

- Determine which Minnesota farmers could sell to the school or child care center, what products they produce, how foods would be delivered, how many pounds can be purchased, etc.
- Determine how a school or child care center could establish a Farm to School program by identifying product availability and cost, and necessary equipment, tools, training, or policies. Please note, training and workshop fees cannot be covered by grant dollars.
- Additional uses may be proposed, but applicants are encouraged to contact the program administrator to confirm eligibility.

2) Equipment Purchases And Physical Improvement Grants

Up to 50% of the total project cost may be covered by the grant, with a maximum grant award of \$50,000 and a minimum grant award of \$1,000. Recipients must contribute the remaining 50% of the project cost as a cash match.

Equipment purchases and physical improvements may only be made in school and/or child care center sites that participate in NSLP or CACFP, or in central facilities that service participating sites.

Blue Cross has provided the MDA up to \$125,000 to help schools meet the requirement for matching funds, and will consider matching fund requests of up to \$15,000 per applicant. These matching funds cannot be used toward feasibility studies. This funding is part of Blue Cross' long-term commitment to improve the health of all Minnesotans by tackling the leading root causes of preventable disease: tobacco use, lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating. Please call the MDA Grants Line at 651-201-6500 with questions about matching funds.

Project Examples Include, But Are Not Limited To:

- Food processing equipment
- Food preparation equipment
- Corers, slicers, wedgers, knives, or other tools
- Salad bars
- Steamers
- Storage containers
- Coolers/refrigeration units
- Additional equipment purchases and physical improvements may be proposed

Cash Match and Ineligible Expenses

Sources of the cash-match may include: non-state funds (funds that were NOT obtained through the budgeting process of the Minnesota Legislature or granted by a State agency) in the form of cash, loans, other grants or liquid capital assets dedicated to the project.

If the proposed project has been submitted to or funded by a Federal grant program, please specify the grantor, the funding amount and the purpose of that grant funding.

Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) Funding: Applicants who receive SHIP funding to pursue a Farm to School project, may not use SHIP funds as cash match for a Minnesota Farm to School Grant. SHIP funds are state funds, and only non-state funds are eligible sources of the cash-match. Please contact Ashley Bress at 651-201-6500 or Ashley.Bress@state.mn.us with questions about matching funds.

Ineligible Expenses

- School gardens, greenhouses
- Food used in school cafeterias
- Costs incurred prior to award
- Training and workshop fees
- Advertising and public relations
- Bad debts - Including uncollectible accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs
- Donated or volunteer (in-kind) services. While these may be furnished to an applicant by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor, the value of these services is not reimbursable either as a direct or indirect cost
- Donations, in kind contributions, including property, and services, made by the applicant, regardless of the recipient
- Entertainment, amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, alcohol and gratuities)
- Fines, penalties and other settlement expense resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the applicant to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations
- Fundraising including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used
- Indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified within the project, but are necessary for the general

operation of the organization and the implementation proposal related activities)

- Investment management costs, including costs of investment counsel and staff, and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments
- Land purchases
- Lobbying - including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying
- Political activities

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of MDA staff and external reviewers. Applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, will be notified in writing approximately six weeks following the proposal deadline. Unsuccessful applicants may receive reviewer comments upon request. Reviewers may recommend the partial funding of a project.

Applicants with grant requests in excess of \$25,000 may be required to submit financial documentation, such as an internal financial statement, an IRS Form 990, or a certified financial audit, to ensure that the applicant is finally stable to be able to carry out the work plan.

Grantee Responsibilities And Record Keeping

Grant Award Agreement And Payment

Upon approval of an application, the applicant is required to:

- Register as a vendor in SWIFT, the State's accounting system; and
- Sign a Grant Award Agreement indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks. The agreement also authorizes the MDA to monitor the progress of the project.

Grant Award Agreements must be signed by the applicant's Authorized Representative and returned to the MDA within 60 days of receipt. Failure to submit the signed agreement may result in loss of the grant award.

To receive grant payments, grantees must provide a progress report, proof that grant project work has been done by submitting details of each purchase on receipts or invoices, and proof that the vendors have been paid. Upon completion of the grant project, submission and approval of a final progress report will be required to receive the final payment. The MDA will also perform monitoring visits of all grantees with awards of at least \$25,000 before a final payment is approved; other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA. Follow-up surveys are required to help us determine the long-term impacts of the grant.

Reporting Requirements

The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report will be a public record. Grantees will be asked to provide follow-up reports at 12 and 24 months following the award.

Data Collection

The data collected from this proposal will only be used in support of the 2017 Minnesota Farm to School Grant Program. You are not required to provide the MDA with the data requested in this grant proposal application; however, failure to do so will result in the MDA's inability to process your 2017 Minnesota Farm to School Grant Program proposal.

While the proposals are being received and reviewed, only people with a need to access your data in support of your 2017 Minnesota Farm to School Grant Program proposal will have the authority to access the data you provide here unless you give the MDA informed consent to release the data, a court orders the release of the data, or a legislative auditor requests to review the data.

After all the proposals have been reviewed and the grantees determined, all the information in the proposal will become public data except for trade secret data, if present.

Proposal Instructions

Assistance and Support

Applicants may submit questions regarding the RFP to Ashley Bress using the contact information below. Responses to all questions will be posted on the Minnesota Farm to School Grant website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/mnfarmtoschool.aspx.

Applicants may request to receive copies of previously funded applications. A sample application is available on the Minnesota Farm to School Grant website.

Submission Procedures

All proposals must be received by the MDA no later than **4:00 pm CST on Wednesday, November 2, 2016**.

Grant applications are submitted through our online system. The application is accessed through a link on the MDA Farm to School Grant website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/mnfarmtoschool.aspx.

If you cannot apply using this process, you may submit an application by email. The MDA is not responsible for any email problems resulting in the MDA not receiving a proposal on time. It is the responsibility of the responder to ensure that any email submittals are received by the MDA before the deadline.

Answer all questions completely within specified character or page limits. Use 12 point font, single space, within one inch page margins.

Submit to:

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Attn: Ashley Bress
625 North Robert St.
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538
Email: Ashley.Bress@state.mn.us

All proposals will receive confirmation of receipt via email within one week. If you have questions concerning the proposal process, please email Ashley.Bress@state.mn.us or call the MDA Grants Line at 651-201-6500.

Agricultural Marketing and Development

Farm to School Grant Program Proposal

Farm to School Grant Evaluation Profile	
Demonstrates that the proposed project will increase the sales of Minnesota agricultural products	35
Work plan is thorough and realistic, and all required deliverables will be completed by December 31, 2017	25
Budget narrative clearly explains source and amount of cash match	10
Budget is cost effective and appropriate for the estimated change in use of Minnesota grown or raised products	15
Includes strong letter(s) of support for the project	10
Proposal is clear, concise, and complete	5
Total	100



Agricultural Marketing and Development

Farm to School Grant Program Proposal

Applicant Information

Category (check one): Planning Study Equipment/Improvements

Name of Applicant(s) and Contact Person _____

Name of School(s) or Child Care Provider(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

Counties Served _____

State House District(s) your institution serves _____

This information can be found at www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/districtfinder.aspx

Eligibility

Please answer each of the following questions. You must respond “Yes” to at least one of the first three questions to be eligible to apply for this grant.

- 1. Applicant is a Minnesota school or school district serving preschool and/or K-12 students and participates in the NSLP. Yes No
- 2. Applicant is a child care provider serving, on average, at least 40 lunches or 40 suppers daily, based on average daily participation rates in October 2016 and is enrolled in the CACFP. Yes No
- 3. Applicant is an economic development organization, non-profit organization, or educational service cooperative applying on behalf of one or more eligible awardees. Yes No
- 4. I have authority to apply for this grant. Yes No
- 5. I agree that no work has started on the proposed project. Yes No

How did you hear about the Farm to School Grant Program? Please check all that apply:

MDA Website

Word of Mouth

Notification from another organization (Please list organization name) _____

Tradeshow (Please list which tradeshow) _____

I applied last year

Other _____

Agricultural Marketing and Development**Farm to School Grant Program Proposal**

Have you previously been awarded an Minnesota Farm to School Grant? Yes No

*If yes, then briefly describe your previous grant project. Include how the project has impacted students.
(1800 characters, including spaces)*

Is the project completed and final payment request submitted to the MDA? Yes No

If no, then please write an update on the progress of your current grant project. (600 characters, including spaces)

Executive Summary

Include a description of the project and goals to be accomplished. The executive summary of this proposed project must be suitable for dissemination to the public. *(1,200 characters, including spaces)*

Project Start Date _____

Project End Date _____

Agricultural Marketing and Development

Farm to School Grant Program Proposal

	Amount
Amount of MDA Grant Request (maximum: \$50,000)	\$ _____
Blue Cross Request (maximum: \$15,000)	\$ _____
Applicant's Cash Match	\$ _____
Total Project Cost	\$ _____

Overview of Applicant

Describe the school(s) or child care provider(s) use of Minnesota grown and raised foods, including current sources of Minnesota foods. (2,400 characters, including spaces)

Complete the following table. Include all the school/child care sites that will benefit from this project. If the project is district-wide (e.g., at a central kitchen), you may provide data for the district as a whole). You may attach an additional page if necessary.

Site Name	Number of Students in 2015-2016	Average Number of Meals Served Daily in October 2015

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Farm to School Grant Program Proposal

Challenges: Describe the challenges that prevent your food service program from currently purchasing and serving more Minnesota grown and raised foods. (2,400 characters, including spaces)

Project Outcomes

Complete the following table. We recommend that you review invoices from the 2015-2016 school year. If you purchase Minnesota grown or raised foods via a distributor, please work with your distributor to get an estimate of the number of Minnesota producers from whom you receive food.

	2015-2016 (Most recently completed school year)		Projected School Year 2017-2018 (Generally the first full year after project completion)	
	\$ Value	# of Minnesota Farmers	\$ Value	# of Minnesota Farmers
Fruits				
Vegetables				
Grains/Flour				
Meat/Poultry				
Seafood				
Plant-based protein items such as beans, seeds, and nuts				
Eggs				
Fluid Milk				
Other Dairy				
Other Products				

If you purchase Minnesota grown or raised foods via a distributor, we recommend that you have the distributor write an additional letter of support identifying those farms/farmers.

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How many unduplicated Minnesota farmers do you purchase from currently? _____

List the name(s) of the farmer(s), farm(s), and distributor(s) from whom you currently purchase Minnesota foods. Write "none" if you currently do not purchase from a Minnesota farmer.

How will the proposed project lead to continued increased purchases of Minnesota grown or raised foods in the future?
(2,000 characters, including spaces)

What do you anticipate will change as a result of this project? (2,000 characters, including spaces)

Farm to School Grant Program Proposal

Work Plan

Complete the following table. You should include the steps that you will take to successfully complete your project. For example, you might include target dates for requesting quotes, selecting a contractor, installing and testing equipment, connecting with farmers, and publicizing your increased use of Minnesota grown and raised foods. Not all areas will be apply to all projects.

You may add additional lines or pages as necessary.

Example	Timeline	Description of Task/Action Item	Who is Responsible?
	March 2016	Obtain school board approval for the purchase of the cooler	Food Service Director and Business Manager

Timeline	Description of Task/Action Item	Who is Responsible?

If you will hire consultants or subcontractors, please describe their qualifications. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

Agricultural Marketing and Development

Farm to School Grant Program Proposal

Budget Table

Complete the following table. You may add additional lines or pages as necessary.

Item	Quantity	Cost Per Unit	Total Amount	Source of Estimate

Total Expenses

Budget Narrative

Respond to the following prompts. (3,000 characters, including spaces)

- Detail how the funds will be used and justify each expense listed in the Budget Table.
- Explain how the expenses outlined in the Budget Table will enable your school to use more Minnesota grown or raised foods.
- Discuss the source of the school's contribution to the project (e.g., fundraising, school general funds, food service accounts, bonds).
- If you are requesting Blue Cross matching funding, justify your request for these funds in terms of the availability of non-state funds you are able to dedicate to the project, such as cash, loans, other grants or liquid capital assets.
- Explain sources of funds for any ongoing maintenance of equipment.

Letters of Support

Eligible entities (public or private schools or school districts that are a part of the NSLP and serve food to preschool and/or K-12 students or child care providers serving, on average, at least 40 meals and snacks each day and are enrolled in CACFP) *must provide at least one letter of support from a Minnesota farmer who currently sells to the school, or would sell to the school after the grant is received.*

If you purchase Minnesota grown or raised foods from a distributor, we recommend having an additional letter of support from the distributor that includes the names of the farms/farmers they source from.

Submit Applications to:

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Attn: Ashley Bress
625 North Robert St.
St. Paul, MN 55155
Email: Ashley.Bress@state.mn.us