

AGRI MINNESOTA FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

2018 REQUESTS 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 Thursday, November 16, 2017.**

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

If you cannot apply using this process, you may submit an application by email to Lisa.Sawyer@state.mn.us. An application must be received by the MDA staff by 4:00 pm CST on Thursday, November 16, 2017 to be included in this competitive round of applications.

The MDA anticipates awarding up to \$400,000 in combination through its 2018 Requests for Proposals for the AGRI Farm to School Grant Program and the AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Program.

The Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) has committed an additional allocation of up to \$125,000 to help schools and Early Care and Education (ECE) organizations meet the requirement for matching funds for equipment or physical improvement projects.

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

Lisa Sawyer
Lisa.Sawyer@state.mn.us | 651-201-6277
MN Department of Agriculture, Marketing and Development Division
625 Robert Street North
Saint 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 and AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Grant Program target schools and ECE organizations that are interested in increasing the amount of Minnesota grown and raised foods they serve

Program Goals

The goal of the AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Grant Program is to increase sales of Minnesota agricultural products to ECE organizations, thereby increasing access to fresh, local foods for Minnesota children. 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 ECE need in order to increase the amount of Minnesota grown or raised food being purchased; and
- Purchasing equipment to allow ECE organizations to purchase, prepare and serve more Minnesota grown and raised food.

Eligible Applicants and Required Letters of Support

- ECE organizations that are enrolled in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and serve, on average, at least 30 breakfasts or 30 lunches daily, based on average daily participation rates in August and/or September 2017. ECE organizations that were eligible to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in August and/or September. Examples of ECE organizations include, but are not limited to Head Start, Early Head Start, preschool programs, child care centers and child development centers. Applicants are required to submit at least one letter of support from a Minnesota farmer who currently sells to the organization or might sell to the organization after the grant is awarded and contracted.
- 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 ECE organization or might sell to the ECE organization after the grant is received.
- Previous Farm to School Grant and ECE 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, 2019.

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 child care and education provider that participate in CACFP.

Project Examples Include, But Are Not Limited To:

- Determine which Minnesota farmers could sell to the ECE organization and what products they produce, how foods would be delivered, how many pounds can be purchased, etc.
- Determine how an ECE organization could establish a farm to ECE meal program by identifying product availability and cost, and necessary equipment, tools, training, or policies. Please note, training and workshop fees cannot not 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 ECE sites that participate in CACFP and that were eligible for reimbursement in August and/or September 2017 or in central facilities that service participating sites.

Blue Cross has provided the MDA up to \$125,000 to help schools and ECE organizations 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 food production 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 Institution program, may not use SHIP funds as cash match. SHIP funds are state funds, and only non-state funds are eligible sources of the cash-match. Please contact Lisa Sawyer at 651-201-6277 with questions about matching funds.

Ineligible Expenses

- 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 financially stable to be able to carry out the work plan.

Public Data Per Minn.Stat. § 13.599

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once proposed responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed.
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process will be public data after the evaluation process is completed.

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. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports, unless the state agency has given the grantee a written extension. 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.

Bidding Requirements

Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$25,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process. Support documentation of this process must be included in the grantee's financial records.

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Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be scoped out in writing and offered to a minimum of three (3) bidders. Support documentation of this process must be included in the grantee's financial records.

Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$5,000 and \$9,000 must be competitively based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes. Support documentation of this process must be included in the grantee's financial records.

Applicants that are municipalities and plan to contract funds from this grant agreement for supplies, materials, equipment or the construction, alteration, repair or maintenance of property must adhere to the bidding and contractor requirements per **Minn. Stat. §471.345**. More information can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (#21).

Data Collection

The data collected from this proposal will only be used in support of the 2018 AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education 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 2018 AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Grant Program proposal.

While the proposals are being received and reviewed, only people with a need to access your data in support of your 2018 AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education 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 Lisa Sawyer using the contact information below. Responses to all questions will be posted on the AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Grant Program website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/mnearlycareeduc.aspx.

Applicants may request to receive copies of previously funded proposals. A sample proposal is available on the AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Grant Program website.

Submission Procedures

All proposals must be received by the MDA no later than 4:00 pm CST on Thursday, November 16, 2017.

Grant proposals are submitted through our online system. The application is accessed through a link on the MDA Early Care and Education Grant Program website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/mnearlycareeduc.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: Lisa Sawyer
625 North Robert St.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538
Email: Lisa.Sawyer@state.mn.us

AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education 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, 2019	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

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Applicant Information

Category (check one): Planning Study Equipment/Improvements

Name of Applicant(s) and Contact Person _____

Name of Early Care Organizations(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 two questions to be eligible to apply for this grant.

- 1. Applicant is a Minnesota ECE organization serving children and participates in the CACFP, meets the meal requirement, and was eligible for reimbursement in August and/or September 2017. Yes No
- 2. Applicant is an economic development organization, non-profit organization, or educational service cooperative applying on behalf of one or more eligible awardees. Yes No
- 3. I have authority to apply for this grant. . Yes No
- 4. I agree that no work has started on the proposed project. Yes No

How did you hear about the Farm to Early Care and Education 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 _____

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

*If yes, then briefly describe your previous grant project. Include how the project has impacted children.
(Maximum 1,800 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. (Maximum 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. *(Maximum 1,200 characters, including spaces)*

Project Start Date _____

Project End Date _____

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	Amount
Amount of MDA Grant Request (maximum: \$50,000)	\$ _____
Blue Cross Request (maximum: \$15,000) <i>Can go towards the applicants match and cannot be requested for a planning grant</i>	\$ _____
Applicant's Cash Match	\$ _____
Total Project Cost	\$ _____

Overview of Applicant

Describe the ECE organization that uses (or will use) of Minnesota grown and raised foods, including current sources of Minnesota foods. *(Maximum 2,400 characters, including spaces)*

Complete the following table. Include all the ECE sites that will benefit from this project. You may attach an additional page if necessary.

Site Name	Average Number of Children Enrolled in August and/or September 2017	Average Number of Lunches or Breakfasts Served Daily in August and/or September 2017

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

Project Outcomes

Complete the following table. We recommend that you review invoices from 2016-2017. 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.

	2016-2017 (Most recently completed fiscal year)		Projected School Year 2018-2019 (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.

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?
(Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces)

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

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 apply to all projects. You may add additional lines or pages as necessary.

Example	Timeline	Description of Task/Action Item	Who is Responsible?
	March 2018	Obtain ECE 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. *(Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces)*

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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. *(Maximum 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 ECE organization to use more Minnesota grown or raised foods.
- Discuss the source of the ECE organization’s contribution to the project (e.g., fundraising, other 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

Applicants must submit at least one letter of support from a farmer that they purchase from or might purchase from if awarded an AGRI Farm to Early Care and Education Grant. 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: Lisa Sawyer
625 North Robert St.
Saint Paul, MN 55155
Email: Lisa.Sawyer@state.mn.us