GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Local Food for Schools

Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline

April 30, 2024
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

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 Years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The goal of Maryland's LFS grant is to facilitate procurement, distribution, and/or storage of local foods.

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.

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant Program

Local Food for Schools (LFS)

Purpose

The purpose of the LFS is 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.

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on April 15, 2024.

Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 30, 2024.

Grant Period for Round Two

 May 15, 2024 -April 15, 2025

Funding Amount Available

$264,739

Estimated Number of Grants

MSDE anticipates awarding seven (7) grants.

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is for any LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program in good standing. LEAs that previously received funding under this grant may request additional funds.

MSDE reserves the right to consider geographic distribution when making awards.

Submission Instructions

Grant applications must be submitted by 5:00pm on April 30, 2024, via email to jill.hann@maryland.gov.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Jill Hann
Program Administration Specialist
Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs
(410) 767-0218
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 collaborated 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 socially disadvantaged producers.

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 do not meet the criteria for local

- Equipment

- Duplicating existing food procurement and food distribution activities

Application Requirements

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Proposals must include a completed Proposal Cover Page provided in the application for participation. The cover page should not contain any graphics or additional information and must be signed by the Superintendent of Schools/ Head of Grantee Agency.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The project statement should briefly describe the project's outcome(s) and strategies (i.e., what the project will do and how it will do it.) Do not exceed the 100-word limit.

EXTENT OF NEED

Identify a clearly defined problem, and how the use of these funds will address the problem. Applicants should include a brief overview of 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, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

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.

Ongoing evaluation is essential to the management of a project. Since goals and outcomes are not evaluated until the end of the year, milestones must be established to measure progress during the year. Milestones should be evaluated during the year, either quarterly or semiannually.

Applicants must complete the chart below with program goals:

Sample Goals, Measurable Outcomes, and Milestones Worksheet

Goal 1:	Increase the quantity of locally sourced foods procured for the School Meals Programs.
Outcome(s):	The amount of locally sourced food will increase from _____ to _____constituting an increase of _____% from last year.
Milestone(s):	

Goal 2:	Increase the number of socially disadvantaged producers purchased from.
Outcome(s):	_____ new socially disadvantaged producers will be included in purchasing.
Milestone(s):	

STRATEGIES

Strategies are broad approaches (methods, procedures, techniques) employed to reach milestones, realize outcomes, and accomplish goals. Include a justification as to why specific strategies were chosen and how they will help in accomplishing the stated goals, including those identified in the Evidence of Impact. The project should include strategies for each outcome, and outcomes for each strategy.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Submit a detailed and time-specific management plan with pre-assigned responsibilities to avoid the following common errors:

- Failure to submit required reports.

- Failure to regularly monitor performance of the project during implementation.

- Failure to start the project on time.

The Management Plan should be a chronological list of all key activities that will take place during the grant period. All proposed grant activities, the staff member responsible for ensuring the activities are conducted, and the timeframe for which they will occur.

Sample Management Plan Worksheet

Key Activities	Individual Responsible	Timeframe
File quarterly reports		
Send invoices to MSDE		
Communicate the increase availability of local foods to students, parents, and other stakeholders		
Procurement, storage, and/or distribution		

Key Activities	Individual Responsible	Timeframe
Incorporate local produce into school meals		
Track quantity of produce procured		
Track the number of socially disadvantaged producers that products are procured from		

EVALUATION AND 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.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Applicants must describe plans for continuing the project beyond the funding cycle. Answer questions such as how the project will be sustained after funding ends, what are the plans for maintaining the project's partnerships?

Budget and Budget Narrative

The project's budget should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. All costs 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 management plan and the budget line items.

Begin the budget with a narrative, justifying any line-item expenses that are not obvious from the project narrative. Explain how the estimated cost of each line item was derived if the rationale is not obvious.

Following the budget narrative, include a line-item description using the format in the example below. Group line items according to the following categories: Salaries and Wages, Delivery, Food Costs, and Storage. Total each category. 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. Clearly show the requested funds and in-kind contributions for each line item. Indicate the source of the in-kind contribution. Both requested and in-kind funds must be reasonable with current market prices. Show how the expense was calculated for each line item. Reviewers will use this information to determine if the budget is reasonable and cost-effective. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible.

Use the format indicated by the following excerpt from a sample Budget Narrative.

Food Costs

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
Broccoli	$2.50/pound x100 pounds	$250		$250
Apples	$36/bushel x 8 bushels	$288		$288
Total for Food Costs:		$538		$538

Appendices

The following appendices must be included but do not apply to the page limit of the Project Narrative. Include other appendices as deemed necessary.

Appendix A: A signed recipient assurances page

Appendix B: A signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form

Appendix C: GEPA Statement, if applicable

The Review Process

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

1. Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applications not meeting all pre-screen requirements may be returned to the applicant for revisions.

2. A review committee established by MSDE will evaluate applications using the 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.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

The committee will be composed of representatives from MSDE's Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs. Reviewers will assign numerical scores to each proposal based on the criteria on the scoring rubric. Each application will be reviewed and scored based on all documents submitted. Applications may be returned to the applicant if some or all criteria do not meet the criteria standard.

Local Food for Schools Scoring Rubric

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The project abstract outlines a concise and comprehensive summary of the target population, goals, strategies, and partnerships.	The project abstract addresses the required components.	The project abstract is missing or does not address the required components.

EXTENT OF NEED

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The main problem and contributing factors are clear, concise, and demonstrate considerable understanding of the issues. The proposal details who is affected by the problem, and when and where the problem exists, including historical impacts on the target population(s).	The main problem is clear and concise. The proposal identifies who is affected by the problem and when the problem exists. Applicant identifies demographics or other statistics relevant for the population(s) intended to be served.	The main problem is missing or is not clear. The proposal does not accurately identify the target population(s). Applicant does not identify demographics or other statistics of the population(s) The proposal lacks details of how the funds will address the problem.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The proposal provides two or more examples that explain the history of impact on the target population including discussion of past efforts, failures, and successes toward influencing change. The proposal clearly explains future impacts of the proposed activity/project and how the target population is expected to be influenced by the efforts of specific to implementing this grant.	The proposal provides at least one example that explains the history of impact on the target population. The proposal describes the future impact of the activity/project and how the target population will be influenced by change.	No examples that explain the history of impact on the target population. The proposal does not describe the future impact of the activity/project.

GOALS, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The goal(s) are measurable, clearly aligned to the extent of need, and ambitiously focused on effectuating change. Milestones for each intended outcome ensure continued monitoring for success.	The goal(s) are measurable and aligned to the extent of need. Outcomes are realistic and attainable. Milestones are provided for measuring progress of each intended outcome.	The goal(s) are not measurable are not clearly aligned to the extent of need. Outcomes are not realistic or attainable. Milestones are not provided or do not align to outcomes.

STRATEGIES

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The proposal provides several rationales for selecting specific strategies, and precisely how they will be implemented to ensure outcomes are achieved. Multiple broad strategies are identified with detailed and systematic plans for implementation.	The proposal provides a clear rationale for selecting a specific strategy and how it will help achieve the outcome. Applicant provides broad strategies and includes the plan for implementation.	No rationale for selecting specific strategies and how they will help achieve the outcome. Applicant only states some of the strategies but does not include the plan implementing.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
All relevant activities listed chronological indicating a comprehensive management plan throughout the grant period.	The proposal includes a time-specific management plan.	The proposal does not include a management plan that is adequate for ensuring implementation.

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
Evaluation questions are included for each goal with considerable focus toward implementation and can be effectively and meaningfully evaluated. Includes a detailed plan on how and to whom findings will be shared, including examples of how, when and through what methods.	Evaluations questions are based around the goal(s) and outcomes, provide guidance on the implementation, and can be evaluated. The dissemination plan includes how the findings will be shared to stakeholders, committee members, and the public.	Limited or no examples of evaluation questions. No evidence of evaluation strategy The dissemination plan does not clearly identify how findings will be shared.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
Applicant provides a comprehensive plan for ensuring the ongoing success of the proposal beyond the funding cycle that includes identification of additional resources. A detailed plan for maintaining partnerships and their contribution to sustainability is described	Applicant provides a continuation plan beyond the funding cycle and describes how partnerships will be maintained.	The application does not include a plan to exist after the funding cycle.

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The budget narrative is detailed and includes all activities necessary for successful implementation of proposal. There are no mathematical errors, and all expenses are allowable.	The budget narrative is complete. The budget aligns to the proposal and is free of mathematical errors. Expenses are reasonable and allowable.	Budget does not align with the proposal, includes cost that are not reasonable or allowable, or has several mathematical errors.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

Date	Reporting Requirements for Each Year
Ongoing	Fiscal and program monitoring; all invoices must be accompanied with supporting documentation.
July 10, 2024	Quarterly report and C-1-25 C due for the period of April 1 - June 20, 2024. See attached report template.
October 10, 2024	Quarterly report and C-1-25 C due for the period of July 1 – September 30, 2024. See attached report template.
January 10, 2024	Quarterly report and C-1-25 C due for the period of October 1 – December 31, 2024. See attached report template.
April 10, 2025	Quarterly report and C-1-25 C due for the period of January 1 – March 31, 2025. See attached report template.
April 30, 2025	Quarterly report and C-1-25 C due for the period of April 1 – April 15, 2025. See attached report template.
May 15, 2025	C-1-25 D Final Report due.
May 15, 2025	A final project evaluation (see evaluation section) must be received by MSDE.

Notes: Any requests for amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-1-25-B form found in the Grant Budget Forms Workbook on the MSDE grants webpage. Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website.

Date	Timeline Event
April 15, 2024	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released.
April 19, 2024 April 24, 2024	MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants.
April 30, 2024	The grant application period closes.
May 2024	MSDE Review Committee will evaluate proposals.
May 2024	MSDE will notify applicants of the award status.
May 15, 2024	The grant period begins.
April 15, 2025	The grant period ends.

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 Finance and Operations

Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595

410-767-0123 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
Deaf and hard of hearing use Relay.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

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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, audiotape, 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 provide an overview of the application process. The sessions will be on:

Friday, April 19, 2024
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Video call link: https://meet.google.com/yos-vfun-mbu
Or dial: (US) +1 724-624-8387 PIN: 965 873 266#
More phone numbers: https://tel.meet/yos-vfun-mbu?pin=7269703504164

Wednesday, April 24, 2024
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Video call link: Video call link: https://meet.google.com/rij-hiqk-ngx
Or dial: (US) +1 304-908-9059 PIN: 412 254 204#
More phone numbers: https://tel.meet/rij-hiqk-ngx?pin=5260723329055

MSDE staff will also be available to provide technical assistance throughout the grant application process. If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact:

PROGRAM CONTACT

Jill Hann
Program Administration Specialist
(410) 767-0218
jill.hann@maryland.gov

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the Office of School and Community Nutrition website following customer service support sessions.

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website.

Attachments

Application for Participation for the Local Food for Schools grant
Quarterly Report Template