Farm to School
National Food Hub Conference

Sean Monahan
March 29, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia
Access to Local Foods (Section 243 HHFKA)

The Secretary shall create a Farm to School Program to:

1. Distribute grant funding to improve access to local foods in schools.
2. Provide technical assistance and information to:
   » Facilitate the coordination and sharing of information.
   » Collect and share information on best practices.
   » Disseminate research and data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.
The term ‘farm to school’ encompasses efforts that connect schools with local food producers in order to serve their products to children in cafeterias and classrooms and beyond.
Local Food

Food Education

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer"
What is Farm to School?
Community Food Systems

- Summer Feeding
- School Gardens
- Local Procurement
- Farmer Markets
- Experiential Education
- Food & Ag Curriculum
- Adult Facilities

USDA
THE FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM
Which Types of Local Products?

- Vegetables
- Meat, Poultry, and Fish
- Beans, Grain, and Flour
- Dairy
- Fruit
- Eggs
Benefits of Community Food Systems

Support Local Food Systems, Improve Quality of Life Within a Community, and Provides Economic Balance

- Local Procurement
- Farmer Markets & Local Producers
- School Gardens
- Nutritional Meals to Seniors
- Experiential Education
- Healthier Eating Habits Early
- Summer Time Hunger
- Food & Ag Curriculum
What Does Local Mean?

Who defines local?

- School food authorities

What are you trying to accomplish?

- Is there state based legislation regarding local purchasing that you’d like to be aligned with?
- Do you want to bring as much local product as possible onto the menu as quickly as possible?
- Do you want to couple local purchases with farm visits and have personal relationships with suppliers?
What Does Local Mean?

- Within a radius
- Within a county
- Within a state
- Within a region

A district’s definition of local may change depending on the:

- Season
- Product
- Special events
The 2015 Farm to School Census
Early results from USDA’s Farm to School Census show that in school year 2013-2014

$598 MILLION WAS INVESTED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

That’s an increase of $212 million over previous results!
Selling to school districts can be a win–win

**Schools win because:**
- Receive your local product
- Food are more nutritious
- Market their food service program
- Farm Education possibilities

**Producers win because:**
- Another revenue source
- Market your farm/company
- Know where your food goes
- Feed your community
- Grow your next generation of customers
Few tips about selling to schools
School Food Service Background

Food Service Directors:
- Changes due to new regulations
- Farm to School knowledge – other priorities
- Work different positions within the district
Limited Budgets

Food cost per tray is generally between $1.25 - $1.35

Food Service Directors will pay for a perceived value to the operation

Preliminary results of the 2015 Farm to School Census report $598 million spent on local purchasing
No two districts are a like...

Large Districts

- More Personnel
- Implementation is more slow
- Larger product catalog
- Mover volume
- Logistics can be more challenging
School Food Budget Breakdown (Food Costs)

Cash Reimbursement

DoD Fresh USDA Foods
Procurement Principles and Regulations
What Is Procurement?

Procurement is the purchasing of goods and services. The procurement process involves:

1. Planning
2. Drafting Specifications
3. Procurement Principles
4. Awarding a Contract
5. Managing the Contract
Why are Procurement Rules Important?

• To ensure that program benefits (and taxpayer dollars!):
  » Are received by eligible schools and children
  » Are used effectively and efficiently, with no waste or abuse
4 Key Concepts

1) Knowledge of State and Local Regulations
2) American Grown
3) Responsive and Responsible
4) Competition
Competition

Competition is essential to ensure the best cost and quality of goods and services.
Procurement Methods

≤ Small Purchase Threshold >
(Federal Threshold = $150,000)

- **Informal**
  - Small Purchase
    (Requires price quotes from at least 3 bidders)
  - Micro Purchase
    (value of purchase may not exceed $3,500)

- **Formal**
  - Sealed Bids (IFBs)
  - & Competitive Proposals (RFPs)
    (Requires public advertising)
Micro Purchase

Use it when:
The aggregate value of your purchase falls below the micro purchase threshold of $3,500. Micro purchases enable schools:

• To purchase supplies or services without soliciting competitive quotations, if the school considers the price reasonable.

When using the micro purchase option, schools must:

• Distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers;

• Develop written specifications and required terms, conditions, and contract provisions; and,

• Document all purchases.
The Informal Procurement Process

1. Draft specifications in writing
2. Identify and notify at least 3 sources eligible, able, and willing to provide products
3. Evaluate bidders’ responses to your specifications
4. Determine most responsive and responsible bidder at lowest price and award contract
5. Manage the contract
Small Purchase Procedure

Use it when:

The estimated amount of your purchase falls below your small purchase threshold. Small purchases require that schools:

• Acquire bids from at least three responsible and responsive vendors;

• Develop written specifications; and,

• Document all bids.
The Formal Procurement Process

1. Develop solicitation
2. Publicly announce the IFB/RFP
3. Evaluate bidders’ responses to your specifications
4. Award the contract to the most responsive and responsible bidder at the lowest price
5. Manage the contract to ensure compliance
Competitive Sealed Bidding

Procurement by competitive sealed bidding is done by issuing an invitation for bid (IFB).

Use it when:
• A complete, adequate, and realistic specification is available.
• The contract can be awarded on the basis of price.
Competitive Proposals

Procurement by competitive proposal is done by issuing a request for proposal (RFP).

Use it when:

• Conditions aren’t appropriate for a sealed bid.
• Price won’t necessarily be the sole basis for the award.
Use Criteria to Evaluate Vendor Proposals

• Use those same criteria mentioned before, but assign weights to evaluate in an RFP.
• The amount of weight determines how important the criterion is.
• Think about including criteria such as:
  » Able to provide farm visits
  » State of origin or farm origin labeling
  » Provide products grown on a particular size farm
**Example: Use Criteria in an RFP**

**Product Specification**
- Green apples, US. Fancy or No. 1, prefer five 185 count boxes per week but willing to consider other pack sizes for September - December

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Apple Lane</th>
<th>Great Granny’s</th>
<th>Fred’s Fuji’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price = 40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor able to meet all specifications</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product quality = 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery = 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging and Labeling = 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three references, past history = 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to provide farm/facility tour or classroom visits = 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to provide state of origin on all products = 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivered within 24 hours of harvest = 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 possible points</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Requests for Information (RFI)

- A Request for Information (RFI) is a tool schools can use to conduct market research, design bid documents, assess local availability, and decide what products to solicit locally.
- Usually, an RFI outlines the types of products the school is looking for and seeks information from potential suppliers.
- Published by districts PRIOR to release of formal bid solicitation.
Resources and Technical Assistance
Resources for Producers

• Guide to Buying Local
  » Covers bidding and how schools can give preference for local products

• F2S Census
  » Search database by zip code of schools who responded and see what they are buying

• Buying Local Foods webinar series
  » 12 part series record in 2014 available for immediate viewing on F2S website:
    www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool
USDA Farm to School Website

Webinar Recordings
• Using the Informal Procurement Method
• Using Specifications to Target Local Products
• Working with Distributors
• Using a Forward Contract
• Using Geographic Preference
• Using DoD Fresh to Purchase Local

Resource Lists

Grant Program Information

Contact Information
Procuring Local Foods Website

» Guide
» 12 Part Webinar Series
» Policy Guidance
» Fact Sheets

www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool
USDA Farm to School Fact Sheets

- Using DOD Fresh to Buy Local
- Geographic Preference: What It Is and How To Use It
- Selling Local Food to Schools: A Resource for Producers
- USDA Foods: A Resource for Buying Local
Farm to School Grant Program
USDA Farm to School Grant Program

• Award ~ $5.0 million annually, for:
  » Training;
  » Planning;
  » Purchasing equipment;
  » Developing school gardens;
  » Developing partnerships; and
  » Implementing farm to school programs.
Who can apply?
Eligible schools (preK-12 School Food Authorities (SFA’s) that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast program);
» State and local agencies;
» Indian tribal organizations;
» Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; and
» Non-profit entities.

For what kind of project?
Funding is intended only for those projects that will ultimately benefit children in grades PreK-12 served through the National School Lunch, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program and/or Seamless Summer Option.
Program Operators

• Planning ($20,000 - $45,000 over 18 months)
  » school districts or individual schools just starting to incorporate farm to school program elements into their operations

• Implementation ($65,000 - $100,000 over 1-2 years)
  » school districts or schools to help scale or further develop existing farm to school initiatives
Partners

• **Support Service ($65,000 - $100,000 over 1-2 years)**
  » state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities working with school districts

• **Training ($15,000 - $50,000 over 1 year)**
  » State agencies, partnering orgs to support conferences, events, and trainings that strengthen farm to school supply chains, or provide technical assistance in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education, and integration of agriculture-based curriculum.
Grant Opportunities

USDA Grants and Loans that Support Farm to School Activities

Funding from the US Department of Agriculture is available to assist farms, schools, and every link in between in feeding kids healthy local meals; teaching them about food, farming and nutrition; and supporting local agricultural economies. While the programs listed below provide a good starting point for those looking to bolster farm to school efforts, other USDA grant and loan programs support local food systems work as well. Visit [www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer](http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer) for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am a Local Government</th>
<th>I am a Farmer, Rancher, or Farm Landowner</th>
<th>I am a State Agency or Tribal Government/Org.</th>
<th>I am a Non-Profit Organization</th>
<th>I am a Private Business, Public Benefits Corporation, or Ag Co-Op</th>
<th>I am a Higher Education Institution</th>
<th>I am a K-12 Public, Private, or Indian Tribal School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
<td>Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Eligibility guidelines can be quite specific, so be sure to confirm your eligibility on the webpage for the grant or loan program before applying. In addition, non-eligible entities can often partner with eligible entities to benefit from programs they might not otherwise have access to.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer"
Questions
USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usdagov/complaint filing cust.html](http://www.ascr.usdagov/complaint filing cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.