



FARM TO SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

FISCAL YEAR 2020 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) is seeking applications from Vermont early care providers and schools who want to purchase infrastructure to help them improve their food programs and/or farm to school/farm to early care programs.

KEY DATES

Request for Applications Release Date: March 12, 2020

Application Deadline: April 19, 2020 at 11.59 PM

Award Notification: Mid-May 2020

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CONTACT

PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

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Agency of Agriculture staff are available to assist you during State of Vermont business hours, Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM. Assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM PURPOSE

This grant opportunity provides Vermont schools and early care providers with financial resources to purchase infrastructure that will facilitate an organization’s progress towards the following goals:

- Sustaining relationships with local farmers and producers
- Enriching student educational experiences related to agriculture, food systems, and nutrition
- Improving the health of Vermont children
- Enhancing Vermont’s agricultural economy

ELIGIBILITY

The following entities are eligible to apply for this competitive grant:

- Vermont registered or licensed early care providers, or a consortium of early care providers
- Independent schools participating in any federal child nutrition programs
- Individual public schools
- Supervisory unions (SU) or educational districts on behalf of a public school or school consortium

AVAILABLE FUNDS & AWARD AMOUNT

A total of \$8,000 is available for this funding round. Up to 8 grants will be awarded at \$1,000 each.

PROJECT LENGTH

May 2020 – April 2021

FUNDING SOURCE

Grants are funded through a State of Vermont legislative appropriation.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The infrastructure grant opportunity is made possible by the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act, which seeks to develop and expand farm to school activities in support of the following goals:

- Encourage Vermont residents to develop healthy and lifelong habits of eating nutritious local foods
- Maximize use by Vermont schools and early care providers of fresh and locally grown, produced or processed food.
- Help educators to use hands-on educational techniques to teach children about nutrition and farm to school connections
- Assist schools and childcare providers in developing a farm to school program
- Increase the size and stability of direct sales markets available to Vermont producers
- Increase participation of Vermont children in child nutrition programs by increasing the selection of available foods
- Expand and improve child nutrition programs in schools and early childhood programs.

Infrastructure grants are intended to help schools and early care providers purchase equipment and supplies that will further the goals of the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act. Grant funds will be disbursed as reimbursement for equipment and/or supply purchases. No partial funding will be awarded, and no payment can exceed the total cost of the equipment or supplies purchased. Successful applicants will be required to submit a claim for payment containing digital copies of receipts/invoices through the WebGrants online grants management system before grant funds will be released. Grant funds will be released in full as a one-time payment upon submission of the required documents.

GRANT TIMELINE

DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

MARCH 12th, 2020	Request for Applications (RFA) released
APRIL 19th, 2020 – 11:59 PM	Applications due by midnight in WebGrants
MID-MAY 2020	Applicants notified of awards
JUNE 2020	Grant agreements finalized
JUNE 2020 – APRIL 2021	Grantees purchase equipment
APRIL 30th, 2021	Last opportunity to claim funds
MAY 31st, 2021	Final Report due

II. HOW TO APPLY

Applications will only be accepted through VAAFMs online grants management system, WebGrants, at <https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov>. For a full guide to submitting an application, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply>.

Applications must be submitted by the fiscal agent. For public schools, the fiscal agent is the supervisory union or educational district. This is a legal requirement, as the prospective grant agreement (a legal agreement with the State of Vermont) must be held with the organization bearing fiscal responsibility. Therefore, the fiscal agent is responsible for submitting the grant application, signing the grant agreement, and ensuring all terms of the grant agreement are met. Applications not submitted by the entity bearing fiscal responsibility will not be accepted.

Please see the [Vermont Farm to School Grant website](#) for more information about this grant opportunity. Any additional questions about the grant Request for Applications must be submitted to AGR.FarmToSchool@vermont.gov.

SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant's responsibility to adhere to all application instructions, including the submission dates and times included in this request for application (RFA). The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMs) will accept the last validated electronic submission through the grants management system, [WebGrants](#), prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the cut-off time.

VAAFMs will not accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances.

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When an application has successfully been submitted, the applicant will be redirected to an **Application Submitted Confirmation** page with an Application ID number (see example below) and receive a confirmation email.

Application Submitted Confirmation

You have successfully submitted your Pre-Application for Testing Process Application with Application ID [40504].
Grantor has received your application for evaluation.

III. FULL APPLICATION

Below is a complete copy of the online application, including all the required components you will need to submit online. **Applications must be completed in WebGrants by midnight on April 19th, 2020.** **Applications submitted after midnight on April 19th, 2020 will not be considered.**

a) Applicant Information

1. Name of organization submitting the application (supervisory union/educational district, early care provider, or consortium) **This organization must be the fiscal agent.*
2. Name of school(s)/early care provider(s) involved in the application
3. Name, title, e-mail, phone number for the following individuals:
 - Grant Authorizing/Financial Management Contact – the main point of contact for legal and financial grant communications, including submitting claims for grant payments **This must be the fiscal agent.*
 - Grant Management Contact – the main point of contact for all grant related communications and project management, including submitting status reports **Grantees may add secondary grant contacts if/when funds are awarded.*
4. County of organization
5. Grades served (for schools) / Ages served (for early care providers)
6. Number of students/children served
7. Which, if any, federal child nutrition programs (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Community Eligibility Provision, etc.) does your organization participate in? List all that apply.

b) Narrative Questions (each question has a character limit of 1,000, unless otherwise noted)

SCHOOLS: (each question is worth up to 5 points)

1. What percentage of your students qualify for free or reduced-price meals?
2. Describe the specific infrastructure your program intends to purchase, the estimated cost, and how you chose this make/model/type.
3. How will this infrastructure improve your food program?
4. Will this infrastructure increase your ability to purchase and use local foods, and if so, how?
5. Provide an estimate of how often this infrastructure will be used throughout a typical year (250 character limit).
6. If the cost of the infrastructure exceeds the grant award, how will your organization finance the difference?

EARLY CARE PROVIDERS: (questions 1 – 6 are worth up to 5 points)

SECTION III: FULL APPLICATION

1. Describe the meals or snacks you currently provide to your children.
2. Describe the specific infrastructure your program intends to purchase, the estimated cost, and how you chose this make/model/type.
3. How will this infrastructure improve your food program?
4. Will this infrastructure increase your ability to purchase and use local foods, and if so how?
5. Provide an estimate of how often this infrastructure will be used throughout a typical year.
6. If the cost of the infrastructure exceeds the grant award, how will your organization finance the difference?
7. Is your program currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?
(participating programs will receive 3 bonus points)
8. Are you a Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) provider? If yes, what level is your program?
(1 bonus point for each STARS level)
9. Does your program serve infants and toddlers?
(providers serving infants and toddlers will receive 3 bonus points)

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by VAAFM and farm to school and early care partners. Notification of awards will be made mid May 2020. Reviewers will be considering the following when evaluating applications:

- The degree to which the infrastructure purchase will help a grantee organization advance the goals of the Roza Mclaughlin Farm to School Act. See page 3 of this document for a list of the goals.
- How thoughtful, realistic, and compelling an applicant's responses are to the narrative questions.
- The ability and readiness of a grantee organization to utilize the proposed infrastructure purchase.
- The likelihood that the infrastructure purchase will continue to be useful and beneficial to the organization over time.

Evaluators will also be considerate of the need to disburse funds equitably throughout the state.

FOR EARLY CARE PROVIDERS: Additional weight will be given to applicants that:

- Currently participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Are 5 STAR providers
- Serve infants and toddlers in the program

V. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing VAAFAM to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any program-specific requirements. Review Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants (12/15/2017 Revised) at bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms for the most recent State of Vermont provisions.

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee must submit:

- A. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months [Not required if grantee is already a state vendor.]
- B. A completed [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Thirty days after the end of the grant period, grantees will be required to submit a grant report detailing the impact of the purchases made. **These reports must be submitted through WebGrants and will be due May 31st, 2021. The report requests the following information:**

2020 Farm to School Infrastructure Grantee Final Report

1. Please provide your own definition of what you consider to be local food*.
2. Using that definition, provide your best estimate for the following:
 - Local food purchased by your organization (in dollars) in 2019
 - Local food purchased by your organization (in dollars) in 2020
3. Have you incorporated more scratch cooking into your program since receiving the grant?
4. Have you performed more taste tests since the purchase of the new infrastructure?
5. Have you incorporated more food, farm, and nutrition activities into your programming since the purchase of the new infrastructure?
6. Has the purchase of the infrastructure resulted in any new or improved relationships with local farmers and/or agricultural producers?
7. In an effort to continually improve this program, please share any other comments or feedback you have.

*There is no standard definition for local food. Grantees are encouraged to create a definition that represents their values. Things to consider include types of food, geographic origin and production practices.