

May 1, 2012

Attention: Gregory Walton, Grants Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 732
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail: Farm2School2013@fns.usda.gov

This letter serves to inform you of our intent to submit a farm to school planning grant application. We will be submitting as an eligible school district.

We intend to submit a planning grant proposal, on behalf of:

Local Public Schools
1234 Professor Avenue
Example, State
54321

Contact Information:

Mrs. Jane Director, Food Service Director
Local Public Schools
1234 Professor Avenue
Example, State
54321

Phone: (555) 555-1234
Email: j.director@email.edu

Thank you,

Mrs. Jane Director, Food Service Director
Local Public Schools

Please note: This example grant proposal is offered as a courtesy to farm to school grant applicants. It should not be interpreted as an example of what a successful application includes or must include. Applicant proposals will be unique to applicant needs and context. The concepts included here are illustrative only and should not be interpreted as specific recommendations for program activities. The concepts and activities described herein should also not be interpreted as preferred, accepted, or otherwise endorsed by USDA or farm to school grant program reviewers.

**FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT CFDA#10.575
APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

Name of Organization: Local Public Schools (LPS)

Address: 1234 Professor Avenue

City: Local

State: State

Zip: 54321

Contact:

Name: Jane Director

Title: Food Service Director

Phone: (555) 555-1234

e-mail: jane.director@email.edu

Project Title: The Local Public Schools Farm to School Project: Planning for Success

Type of Request

- Planning Grant
- Implementation Grant: Schools
- Implementation Grant: All Other

Type of (Lead) Entity

- School
- State/Local Organization
- ITO
- Ag Producer or Producer Group
- Non-Profit Organization

(For Schools Submissions) Type of Submission:

- Individual SFA Submission
(One district or school)
- "Cluster" SFA Application
(One lead SFA working with multiple SFA's)
- "Linked" Application
(A submission that relates to other individual submission(s))

If this is a "Linked" Application (an application that relates to other applications), please list the name of the other applications to which your project is related.

For Individual SFA Submission (2010-11)		# Schools in District: 6	# Served by this Proposal: 6	Total Enrollment: 1,400
Avg % Free/Reduced: 66	Avg % Full Pay: 34	Highest % Free/Reduced: 71	Lowest % Free/Reduced: 59	
Avg # Meals Served/Day: (Complete boxes at right.)	Breakfast: 700	Lunch: 1,000	Dinner: 0	

For "Cluster" Submissions (2010-11):

For All others Applicants:	Name of SFA(s) this project is connected to: (Detail Free/Reduced for this SFA below.)		
Avg % Free/Reduced:	Avg % Full Pay:	Total Enrollment:	

Brief Project Description (200 words or less): In an effort to plan a new farm to school program in the Local Public Schools district, we will build upon our current work to provide nutritious and enjoyable meals to students during lunchtime by integrating fresh, local fruits and vegetables into our menus. We believe that Local Public Schools has potential to become a role model for how meals should be served. We plan to accomplish this goal by: connecting with local farmers, Extension office(s) and other local resources; learning of and increasing access to fresh, local produce; preparing kitchens and staff to meet the demands of serving fresh, local produce; and educating our students about the importance of developing healthy eating habits.

Total Project Cost: \$49,495	Grant Request: Note \$ amount and % of total \$36,515/74%	Match: Note \$ amount and % of total \$12,980/26%
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School District & Farm to School Background Information

In 2011, Jane Director, Food Service Director (FSD), Local Public Schools (LPS) attended a State Department of Education workshop, which included a breakout session on farm to school (F2S). Inspired by the session, Ms. Director hosted preliminary farm to school discussions with the Superintendent and several other teachers and administrators. They were all very excited about the concept and stand ready to help plan and implement farm to school activities.

To date, our farm to school activities have been limited to preliminary discussions. We have reviewed case studies and discussed that building relationships with local farmers is crucial to the integration of local food onto our school menus. We want to create a plan that fosters and sustains those relationships. We know some local foods products available in our area include apples, plums, pears, peaches, lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers. We would like to incorporate most of these products fresh in salad bars with little processing. However, we would also be interested in cooking with a few of these items as well.

To plan a new farm to school program, we will build upon our current work to provide nutritious and enjoyable meals to students during lunchtime by integrating fresh, local fruits and vegetables into our menus. We believe that Local Public Schools has potential to become a role model for how meals should be served. We plan to accomplish this goal by:

- Connecting with local farmers, Extension office(s) and other local resources
- Learning of and increasing access to fresh, local produce; preparing kitchens and staff to meet the demands of serving fresh, local produce
- Educating our students about the importance of developing healthy eating habits

Need & Readiness

Our district has numerous systems in place that will help us plan and implement farm to school initiatives. Currently, our school cafeterias have salad bars, but students have not been as receptive to them as we would like. We want to encourage our students to choose healthier foods, and to do this we need to provide even more healthy options, including local fruits and vegetables. We see the salad bars as a great asset and a means to incorporating fresh, minimally processed regional products into our daily offerings.

Over the years, LPS has built strong connections with the community, and we plan to include the school community in the planning stages. Additionally, there are numerous local farms in our county and a local farmer's market nearby. We plan to leverage our strong relationships with the community and take advantage of the existing local food infrastructure. .

Although the farm to school concept is new at LPS, the timing is right to implement a strategic planning process. First, inspired by last year's farm to school breakout session at the Department of Education conference, staff and administrators are excited to explore new, innovative ways to improve student health and student academic achievement. Second, we have collected and reviewed numerous case studies about schools using local food and how this can be tied into both classroom and experiential learning opportunities. Third, we have commitments from key personnel to serve on our planning committee, including our Food Service Director and Education Director (ED). Finally, the Superintendent of LPS fully supports this effort and has

committed to providing ongoing guidance and feedback. Should LPS be awarded USDA grant funds, the FSD and ED have permission to dedicate 10% of their time to the farm to school planning process.

One challenge we anticipate is being able to connect with regional producers. We hope to use our local Extension office and other local organizations to help us make the necessary connections and to learn about tapping into other resources available in our community that we may not be aware of. In addition, we will encourage students, teachers, parents and any other interested community members to become engaged in the planning process, in the hopes that this will help us build a stronger program and connect with more regional resources.

A second anticipated challenge is our lack of experience with scratch cooking and using fresh, minimally processed food items. To address this challenge, we will prepare our staff with training in both food safety/handling and how to use fresh produce. These trainings will be provided through lessons offered by local resources including local chefs, etc. Then, new menu ideas that utilize more fresh produce will be explored and identified.

Finally, we anticipate a challenge in introducing new and different products to students. Conducting taste tests in selected school buildings will help us determine local foods that our students prefer. We expect that fresher, local produce will be more appealing to our students, who will ultimately be encouraged to develop healthier eating habits and make healthy food choices.

Objectives, Activities and Timeline

Based on best practices reported by schools from around the country, a key first step in planning for this program is to identify and bring together key players within the community including local farmers, local distributors, community stakeholders (parents, teachers, etc.), food service program staff, Extension Educators and any others interested in planning for and later implementing a farm to school program. To get these individuals together to discuss school food procurement issues and form stronger relationships, regular meetings will be planned and invitations sent. Once potential farm sources have been identified, we hope to hold our planning meetings at local farms. This way, we can reinforce the importance of relationship(s) between the school and local farmers. Together these stakeholders will be essential to developing a successful farm to school action plan, and hopefully a long-term farm to school program.

After taking the necessary steps to learning the ins and outs of local food procurement, we hope to prepare schools for incorporating local food into school meals. Our overall goals are to educate and train our food service staff to be prepared to utilize local food in the school kitchen, and to request quotes for local food and accept at least one quote from a local farmer before the end of this school year to kick-start implementation of farm to school the next year.

Specifically, we will:

Objective 1: By June 2013, identify resources within the community that will expand our network, and develop relationship with key players to be involved in a farm to school program in our district.

Activities:

- Identify a local partner with F2S expertise to serve on the planning committee
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: November 2012)
- Identify local farmers and stakeholders
 - Who: Planning Committee (By: January 2013)
- Hold two initial planning meetings at central kitchen
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: November 2012)
- Plan and hold four stakeholder meetings at farms (By: June 2013)
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: February 2013)

Objective 2: By June 2013, develop education and outreach strategy and materials to use in school cafeterias and stakeholder meetings

Activities:

- Identify meetings and school events with high parent/guardian participation to promote planning efforts; develop informational and promotional materials to share at these events
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: January 2013)
- Identify, purchase and post education/marketing materials to use in school cafeterias
 - Who: Food Service Director and Education Director (By: June 2013)

Objective 3: By February 2013, conduct a needs assessment and examine existing infrastructure for farm to school activities.

Activities:

- Identify food available to purchase locally and farmers/vendors who could provide them
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: December 2012)
- Identify professional development and training opportunities for food service staff
 - Who: Planning Committee (By: January 2013)
- Identify menu options in which local foods could be substituted
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: January 2013)
- Identify infrastructure and processes already in place to help develop our farm to school program
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: February 2013)

Objective 4: By June 2013, identify healthful menu options to use fresh, local products in school meals.

Activities:

- Using local foods identified during needs assessment, conduct student taste tests
 - Who: Cafeteria Managers (By: April 2013)
- Request and accept quotes from local farmers for local, fresh foods
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: May 2013)

Objective 5: By September 2013, create a Farm to School Action Plan

Activities:

- Contact local and state organizations to discuss technical assistance option for planning a farm to school program (funds set aside for consultation fees)
 - Who: Food Service Director (By: January 2013)
- Develop Farm to School Action Plan for implementation program
 - Who: Planning Committee (By: August 2013)

Evaluation

Local Public Schools currently tracks the number of daily meals served and ala cart sales. These systems will be adjusted to collect additional information pertaining to our farm to school efforts with an eye toward gathering data that might yield information about economic and health impacts. As a starting point, we imagine our evaluation will focus on (1) procurement, (2) meal service, and (3) education and outreach. The project director will track the following data:

1. Procurement

- Quantities of food items and the number of local vendors utilized
- Variety and value of local food items purchased
- Lessons learned, including barriers and successes

2. Meal Service

- Student acceptability of local food items/dishes through taste tests and observation
- Number of meals served with local food item
- Number of meals served on local food days, as compared to non-local food days
- Lessons learned, including barriers and successes

3. Education and Outreach

- Student response to marketing materials, i.e., do they notice and like the new posters.
- Growth in the number of Farm to school Partners, such as farmers, community organizations, etc.
- Lessons learned, including barriers and successes.

Project Management & Quality Assurance

To ensure the project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results, LPS will establish a Farm to School Planning Committee (Committee). The Committee will consist of the Food Service Director, Education Director and a community partner representative. The team will meet on a bi-monthly basis to review program progress, develop new relationships and engage community partners.

Staffing

Food Service Director, Local Public Schools: Jane Director is the project lead and will oversee all program implementation, evaluation and reporting requirements. In her role as project lead, Ms. Director will also oversee all planning meetings. She will be responsible for building excitement and garnering support from food service staff throughout the district, as well as, for instituting menu changes and adjusting procurement schedules to accommodate greater volume and variety of local food items. Jane has been the APS Food Service Director for twelve years and is passionate about farm to school initiatives.

Education Director, Local Public Schools: Mr. Education will be an active member of the Planning Committee and assist Jane Director in all aspects of the planning process. Since joining LPS in 2006, Mr. Education has overseen curriculum development and integration throughout the District. His accomplishments include helping to implement new nutrition curriculum in grades 6th-8th and a professional mentoring program for 11th and 12th grade students. He has also implemented and managed a highly regarded district-wide worksite wellness program for teachers and staff.

Community Partner: TBD (See Objectives, Activities and Timeline)

Dispersed Benefit

To ensure that our efforts have a dispersed benefit, LPS will share with other schools and farm to school stakeholders the lessons we learn during the planning process. This will include best practices, challenges, action items, planning resources and more. To reach a wide audience, LPS staff will present the findings at a minimum of one State or regional farm to school related event.

Sustainability

A primary goal of our planning process is to develop a sustainability plan. Once our goals and activities are identified and a timeline is created, the planning committee will determine the necessary resources to implement the plan. This will include the short-term (year 1), mid-term (year 2-3) and long-term (year 4+) needs. As noted throughout this proposal, LPS aims to integrate F2S into existing programs, with the idea that this will reduce the need for outside funding. However, as part of the planning process, the Committee will identify funding opportunities that align with the short-, mid-, and long-term goals.