Farm to School
GRANT PROGRAM

* Please read this document thoroughly as failure to comply with any of these instructions could disqualify your application.

Completing the Application

Carefully read the entire application and instructions documents to ensure you understand all the requirements and which ones specifically apply to your project.

Example: If your project entails training for staff to execute agricultural curriculum, then "a list of farmers that have agreed to supply local product" will not apply to your project.

In all parts of your application, keep in mind that someone will be reading this and judging the merits of your proposal. Ask yourself, "If I were reading this for the first time, would I fully understand the intent? Have I painted a clear picture of what I plan to accomplish with this grant money?" Remember that writing more words does not necessarily provide a clearer picture. Tell the story, be specific, and state how you will measure success toward your project goals.

Application Format

Your project application is limited to three (3) pages and must include a Summary, Narrative, Budget Narrative, and Required Information.

* Applicants are required to follow the format outlined in this section. Failure to follow the prescribed format could disqualify your application.

Budget is not part of the three-page limit, but must be submitted on the template downloaded with these instructions from the Single Application system.

Summary: This is a shortened description of the proposed activities that highlight the important aspects and goals of your project. Include all relevant identifying and contact information just before the summary.

Narrative: This is an extended and detailed look at the work you are proposing. The dialogue should include methodology and conclude with expected outcomes that you will focus on in your reporting.

Example: It is not enough to say, "Students will receive nutritional instruction and gain an understanding of how fresher vegetables are better." It is better to state, "Our district will purchase the "Good Food Is Good For You" curriculum and implement 3.5 hours per week of instruction for all 125 third graders. This curriculum has been shown to increase students' awareness of fresh vegetables and the correlation to nutrition by 95%."

Budget: It is important to budget only for things that you can document and are discussed in your narrative. If you want to fund equipment, then you must demonstrate that not having the equipment would jeopardize the viability of the project. This program is meant to fund things that are integral to the project.

Along with these instructions, in the addenda section of the [Single Application](#) system, you will find the PAF2S Budget Template. Here you will have the ability to create a budget that meets the requirements of the program. You may add or delete rows to create new budget categories, but the main categories listed cannot be removed, even if they do not apply to you. Regarding the *In-Kind* section of the budget, you may add or delete any items or information that pertain to your project.

Budget Narrative: Here you will describe, to the reviewer, how the funds will be leveraged to accomplish the goals of your proposal. Be specific but do not get deep into details.

> *Example: $500 will cover transportation and meal costs for 50 first-grade students to visit the Smith Farm. This trip is vital in providing context for the classroom instruction during phase two of our project.*

Required Information: All proposals must state their project sites, free and reduced lunch rate (FRLR), and impacted population.

> *Example:*
>
> Site 1: Great County Elementary School – 73% FRLR – 203 students – 7 staff – 0 community members.
>
> Site 2: Great County Pre-K Program – 77% FRLR – 50 students – 3 staff – 100 community members.

Also include: Types and quantities of products, dollars spent on local products (currently but state the intended increase), percentage of school food budget spent on local products (currently but state the intended increase).

- **If you are procuring local food, you must also provide a list of farmers with whom you will do business.**
    - This is a list of farmers whom you have actually contacted, and who have agreed to participate. We may verify their agreement as part of the scoring process, so please provide the best contact information for them as well.
    - It is allowable for these farmers to be sourced through a distributor, if they are verifiable, and the origin farm is clearly identified on the delivered packaging.

Helpful to Know

Matching Funds: The money you are requesting can fund up to 75% of your project. You must provide the other 25%. So, if you request $15,000, it will look like this:

> ** Please read this section carefully as there are tips that could help prevent an error in your application.*

- $15,000 requested grant funds (75%)
- $5,000 match (25%)
- $20,000 project total

Another way to think about this is in fractions. Let's use an award of $10,000.

- $10,000 requested grant funds (¾)
- $3,333 match (¼)
- $13,333 project total

The match may consist of the following:

- **In-Kind Cash**
- **In-Kind Labor**
  - In-kind labor is hours worked by someone at a predetermined rate ($/hour) toward your project, which we then monetize. Farmer Julie comes to the school and provides technical assistance for 10 hours setting up and managing the new school garden. Julie states that she values her time at $35/hour. You are not paying Julie so you may value her time at $350 toward your match requirement.

- **In-Kind Materials**
  - In-kind materials are donated materials of which we know, or can discover, the value. If the school donates a ream of paper for printing booklets, the business manager for the district then can show that the district pays $8 per ream, and you may use that $8 value toward your match.
  - All in-kind items must be included in your budget spreadsheet AND in your budget narrative.

Procurement Projects:

- The Department will reimburse 75% of any invoice for local purchases (or local items on an invoice with mixed local and non-local items) up to $15,000.
- You must include marketing activities to inform the students of where the product came from and the benefits of sourcing it locally, fulfilling the requirement of paragraph 2.b.1. of the solicitation and guidelines.

Notes on Procurement of Food:

- Funds received through the Pennsylvania Farm to School Grant Program are state funds; if state and federal funds are co-mingled, procurement regulations for federal child nutrition programs apply.
- The threshold for micro-purchases has increased from $3,500 to $10,000.
  - The micro-purchase method may be used for noncompetitive procurement when the total purchase amount is less than $10,000 and the price is deemed reasonable (by the bid reviewer).
  - Micro-purchases must be documented and equitably distributed among qualified vendors.
  - Purchases cannot be split arbitrarily to fall below the micro-purchase threshold.
  - Program operators should utilize the procurement method that is most economical.

- The federal informal procurement (simplified acquisitions) threshold has also increased from $150,000 to $250,000.
  - Procurement Resources:
    - [Informal Procurement Webinar](#)
    - [Leveraging Geographic Preference Webinar](#)
    - [Procuring Local Foods Guide](#)

Questions?

For more program information, contact Patrick Andrews at the PA Department of Agriculture Bureau of Market Development: 717-772-1429, or RA-AGFARMTOSCHOOL@pa.gov.

For assistance with the Single Application system, contact the help desk at the Department of Community and Economic Development: 800-379-7448, or RA-dcedcs@pa.gov.