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MEMORANDUM

TO: Business Managers, Food Service Managers/Directors & School Principals
FROM: Rosie Krueger, State Director of Child Nutrition Programs
SUBJECT: Fall 2019 Federal NSLP Equipment Grant Request for Application (RFA)
DATE: September 6, 2019

Overview

A total of \$40,055 in federal funding for school food service equipment grants are available to Vermont School Food Authorities through the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2018 to provide assistance to high need schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). For this round of grants, Congress has specified that the threshold for the purchase of equipment has been lowered from \$5,000 to \$1,000. This means that school food authorities may apply for the grants to cover equipment purchases costing \$1,000 or more. There are no cost-sharing or matching fund requirements for this grant. To ensure that funds can be spread among multiple applicants, the maximum grant award will be for \$15,000.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, with priority going to School Food Authorities (SFAs) for schools (sites within a SFA) in which at least 50 percent of the students are free and reduced price eligible and a high level of need can be clearly demonstrated. SFAs may apply for sites that have previously received federal NSLP Equipment grants, but those applications will receive lower priority than sites who have never received a federal NSLP Equipment grant. Previous grants include funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and federal equipment grant funds for FYs 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. School Food Authorities may submit grant applications for multiple sites within the SFA. A separate application should be submitted for each site.

Equipment Definition

Equipment requests may include new equipment, renovation of equipment, or replacement of equipment. Federal regulations at 2 CFR 200 define equipment as tangible, nonexpendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. However, for the purpose of this grant cycle, the definition is extended to include items with a per unit acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more.

As with all Federal grant funds, equipment procured using NSLP equipment assistance funds must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable for the school meals program. Construction and renovation costs are not an allowable use of grant funds or non-profit school food service account funds. However, equipment to be installed in newly renovated or constructed facilities is an allowable cost. More information on allowable costs may be found starting on page 12 of [USDA's Indirect Cost Guidance](#).

In expending these award funds, grantees and sub-grantees must comply with the Buy American Act, 41 U.S.C.10 a-c.

Funding Goals

To make the most effective use of the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds, applications should include the following as key focus areas:

- Equipment that improves the quality and nutrition of school meals;
- Equipment that improves the safety of the food served in the school meal programs. (For example: Cold/hot holding equipment, dish washing equipment, refrigeration, milk coolers, freezers, etc.)
- Equipment that improves the overall energy efficiency of the school food service operations. (For example: Purchase of an energy-efficient walk in freezer replacing an outdated, energy-demanding freezer)
- Equipment used to improve or expand participation in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. (For example: Equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting or to better utilize cafeteria space, cooler for grab and go salads and sandwiches)
- Equipment used to create program efficiencies and ensure program integrity. (For example: Computer hardware, software, and peripherals used for recordkeeping, menu planning, free and reduced meal application processing, and point of sale systems).

Criteria for the Award of the Grants

The following factors will be considered in scoring grant applications:

- Schools with the highest demonstrated need based on free and reduced percentages will be given the highest priority. Grants will be awarded first to schools in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible free and reduced price meals, as determined by the [2019 Free and Reduced Eligibility Report](#).
- Schools who have previously received a Federal Equipment Grant will only be considered after all other grant applications have been awarded.
- How the school plans to use the equipment to meet the five funding goals above. Applications that demonstrate the equipment will help meet multiple funding goals will receive a higher score.
- Age of current food service equipment or current lack of appropriate equipment.
- The ability of the school to purchase the equipment and submit the reimbursement request during the required timeframe.
- Applicants that demonstrate they have obtained multiple bids for the equipment (instead of using the micro-purchase method) will receive a higher score, as this shows the applicant will obtain the best possible price for the item.

Procurement Requirements

SFAs are required to follow all Federal, State and Local procurement laws when purchasing equipment under these grants. The small purchase threshold for school food authorities in Vermont for non-food purchases is \$25,000. The micro-purchase threshold is \$10,000. Local policies may specify a lower small purchase and micro purchase threshold. Applicants should write clear and detailed specifications for the equipment to be purchased and request bid pricing be fixed for 3 months when obtaining bids or quotes to ensure that the pricing will still be available once the grant is awarded and grant agreement documents are executed.

When determining equipment needs and specifications, we recommend reviewing the school food service equipment purchasing resources provided by the [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#).

Award Timeline & Reimbursement Information

Applications are due by 4:30 pm on Monday, September 30, 2019. Complete applications should be mailed or delivered to:

Child Nutrition Programs
Vermont Agency of Education
219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641

Supporting documentation and grant narratives may be submitted by email to cheryl.rogers@vermont.gov, however a hard copy of the front signature page with original signatures must be mailed or delivered. All parts of the application must be received by the deadline.

Awards will be announced by Thursday, October 31, 2019.

Equipment purchases may not be made until the grant agreement is fully executed (signed by both the School Food Authority and the Secretary of Education). Once the grant agreement is fully executed the School Food Authority has until March 31, 2020 to make the purchase. Final requests reimbursement, including invoices and receipts along with the AOE 3.0, must be submitted no later than May 30, 2020. The AOE 3.0 is a reporting document that shows the disbursements made for activities under the grant and requests reimbursement for those activities. It should be submitted for a month end period anytime in the succeeding month, and at the completion of the grant, no later than 60 days after the close of the grant period.

This is a reimbursement grant, so no funds will be released until these items have been submitted.

If the SFA determines they will not be utilizing the full award, they should notify AOE right away so that funds can be made available to additional applicants.

Invoices will be checked to ensure that purchases were not made prior to execution of the grant agreement.

Grant Reporting Requirements

If grant funds are received, SFAs will be required to submit quarterly and annual activity progress reports to the VT AOE on the progress and any challenges experienced by the SFA in the expenditure of funds until all funds are expended.

Questions

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rosie Krueger at 802-479-1246, or mary.krueger@vermont.gov.

Federal Regulations, Principals and Assurances

Grant recipients chosen for an award from this request for applications must comply with the following regulations, principals, and assurances.

GOVERNMENT-WIDE REGULATIONS

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and System for Award Management”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR Part 200: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA Implementing regulations” Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 2 CFR Part 418 USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 41 USC Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”
- Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417
- Sections 738 and 739 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (Public Law 112-55)
- “The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), dated September 26, 2006”

COST PRINCIPALS

- 2 CFR, Part 200: Subpart E, Cost Principles

USDA REGULATIONS

- 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”

- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552).

ASSURANCE OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d-et seq.), USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15, Nondiscrimination, and Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 42, Nondiscrimination; Equal Employment Opportunity: Policies And Procedures
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15a, Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15a, Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance, and Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 41, Implementation of Executive Order 12250, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap In Federally Assisted Programs
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) The Grantee assures that it will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate the requirements in these laws, regulations, and directives. The Grantee gives this assurance inconsideration of and for the purpose of obtaining the funds provided under this agreement.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I), state & local government services (Title II), places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (Title III). (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213)

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To

request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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