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## **Vermont Education Agency Receives USDA Funding to Support Child Nutrition Program Training**

**BARRE** – The Vermont Agency of Education’s Child Nutrition Program has received \$32,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to pay for travel costs for local school food service program staff associated with USDA’s Team Up for School Nutrition Success training. Training will take place in Concord, NH in December 2016 in collaboration with Child Nutrition Programs from the states of Maine and New Hampshire.

This training pairs new and in-experienced school food service managers with seasoned managers and directors as mentors to create and implement action plans with continued support and training over a two-year period. The travel funds will be used to pay for mileage, lodging, per diems and substitute staff coverage for approximately 18 Vermont school food service managers. These expenses often prevent school food service staff from attending training and professional development. All attendees are nominated by the Vermont Child Nutrition Program staff members who will also participate in the training in a supportive role.

“As a state agency, we are very excited that we are able to provide this financial support to local schools for this high caliber training event, said Laurie Colgan, director of the AOE’s Child Nutrition Program. “With budget constraints and limited personnel, it is often very difficult for food service staff to take a day or two for professional development and training.”

These USDA travel grant funds are meant to cover all travel costs for school program staff to travel to the training, which will take place in Concord, New Hampshire. Without these funds, travel costs will be prohibitively expensive for the school food service programs who are in need of the training.

New USDA regulations (effective July 1, 2015) require that all school food service staff receive training and professional development each year; the regulations set specific requirements for the number of hours of professional development that SFA staff must individually receive each year. The new professional standards are one piece of the many new requirements for school food service programs implemented by the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA).

USDA contacted Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine to ask if they would be willing to work together and share their local expertise to provide this training to food service managers from all three states in December 2016. The Institute for Child Nutrition will facilitate the training at no cost to the states and the participants.

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