



# STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
JASON E. GLASS, DIRECTOR

DATE: May 8, 2012

TO: Authorized Representative/Food Service Director  
School Meals Program

FROM: Patti Harding, Administrative Consultant  
Bureau of Nutrition, Health and Transportation Services

SUBJECT: SP 27-2012 - USDA Farm to School Grants – Spread the word

This memorandum announces the availability of Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm to school grants as part of the farm to school program established by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA). I am writing to encourage you to pass this information on to school districts in your State and region. I've attached an information sheet that provides a quick reference about the farm to school grants. For more detailed information, please visit the USDA Farm to School website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/>).

These grants support Secretary Vilsack's and Deputy Secretary Merrigan's focus on local and regional food systems and will add to the host of programs that USDA offers that support small farmers and local procurement. Beginning in fiscal year 2013, the farm to school program will provide grants to assist in the development of farm to school efforts across the country.

The term 'farm to school' is generally understood to include efforts that connect schools with local or regional producers in order to serve local or regionally produced foods in school cafeterias. USDA considers farm to school to be inclusive of many types of producers, such as farmers, ranchers, and fishermen, as well as many types of food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers, distributors and other value-added operations. In addition to procurement activities, food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts that span a host of hands-on experiential activities, such as school gardens, field trips to local farms, and cooking classes, are also included in the concept of farm to school. Standards-based curriculum centered on food, agriculture, and/or nutrition is often integrated as well.

There will be two types of grants available; planning and implementation grants.

**Planning grants** are intended primarily for K-12 school food authorities who participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program that are in the beginning phases of their farm to school efforts.

**Implementation grants** are geared towards advancing existing farm to school initiatives. K-12 school food authorities who participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program, along with State and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities working in partnership with school districts, may apply for implementation grants.

These grants offer support for school districts to scale existing programs or design new endeavors. The grants will be offered annually and require at least a 25% funding match. Applications are due June 15, 2012, and awards are expected to be made in October 2012. USDA urges you to consider these grants as farm to school initiatives that provide opportunities to serve more fresh produce, while also connecting children to agriculture and nutrition.

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