

**ARKANSAS  
FISCAL YEAR 2016 NSLP EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE  
GRANT INSTRUCTIONS**

Authorized by the  
FY 2016 Agriculture Appropriations Act

Funded through the  
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
for Any Local Education Agency (LEA) Participating in the  
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE  
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ADE),  
CHILD NUTRITION UNIT (CNU) BY**

**4:30 P.M., FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016**

***NO FAXED COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED***

## Table of Contents

### Instructions

Grant Application Cover Page .....	Page 1 of 7
Table of Contents .....	Page 2 of 7
Grant Description .....	Page 3 of 7
Focus Areas of Grant .....	Page 3 of 7
Eligibility.....	Page 3 of 7
Funding and Reporting, Distribution of Funds .....	Page 4 of 7
Procurement .....	Page 5 of 7
Equipment Definition, Allowable & Non-Allowable Expenses .....	Page 5 of 7
Grant Submission Award and Report Timeline .....	Page 6 of 7
USDA Nondiscrimination Statement .....	Page 7 of 7

### Application

**(Submit ONE original application)**

Application Checklist .....	Page 1 of 7
Local Education Agency (LEA) Information.....	Page 2 of 7
LEA Equipment Grant Assurances.....	Page 3 of 7
Applicant Authorization and Certification.....	Page 4 of 7
Summary of Grant Funds Requested & ORIGINAL SIGNATURES.....	Page 5 of 7
Scoring Criteria Form .....	Page 6 of 7
USDA Nondiscrimination Statement .....	Page 7 of 7

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

**GRANT DESCRIPTION:** The FY 2016 Agriculture Appropriations Act authorized \$30M for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to provide grants to States agencies (SA) for providing equipment assistance to school food authorities (SFA) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Arkansas has received FY 2016 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds in the amount of \$349,937. These funds will assist SFAs in purchasing equipment needed to serve healthier meals that meet the updated meal patterns, with emphasis on serving more fruits and vegetables in school meals, including items purchased locally, improving food safety, and expanding access.

The equipment purchased with the NSLP equipment assistance grant must be used to support the NSLP of the Local Education Agency (LEA). Equipment may not be purchased exclusively for programs outside of the NSLP. If a school participates in other programs such as, the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack, and Summer Feeding Programs, in addition to the NSLP, those other meal services may benefit from the NSLP grant purchased equipment. Equipment for which funds have already been obligated is not eligible for this grant, e.g. bond money or equipment purchased prior to grant award.

The primary goal of the equipment assistance grants authorized by the NSLP will be to improve the infrastructure in the NSLP. Priority (more weight) will be given to LEAs for equipment for individual schools in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced price meals, however, schools with less than 50 percent can receive grants based on other criteria. District-wide percentages will not be used.

**FOCUS AREAS OF THE GRANT:** In order to make the most effective use of the grant funds, the grant application must address at least one or more of the focus areas:

- *Food Quality:* Equipment that improves the quality of school nutrition meals in ways that support the nutritional standards (e.g. purchasing an equipment alternative to a deep fryer).
- *Healthy Meals:* Equipment that lends itself to improving the quality of school foodservice meals that meet the nutritional standards with emphasis on more fresh fruits and vegetables.
- *Food Safety:* Equipment that improves the safety of food served in the school nutrition programs (e.g., cold/hot holding equipment, dishwashing equipment, refrigeration, milk coolers, freezers, blast chillers, etc.).
- *Energy Efficiency:* Equipment that improves the overall energy efficiency of the school nutrition operations (e.g., purchase of an energy-efficient walk-in freezer replacing an outdated, energy-demanding freezer).
- *Expand Participation:* Equipment that supports improved and/or expanded participation in a school nutrition program and/or School Breakfast Program (e.g., equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting or to better utilize cafeteria space).
- *Smarter Lunchroom:* Lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population, highlighting healthier choices.

**ELIGIBILITY:** LEAs who participate in the National School Lunch Program are eligible to apply for the grant. Priority will be given to those LEAs who have not received a grant previously.

**FUNDING AND REPORTING:** Criteria established by USDA to award this funding and allocation are as follows:

- Funding is to be awarded based on a competitive grant process that is fair and equitable.
- Competitive grants will be awarded based on the need for equipment assistance in participating schools with priority given to schools in which not less than 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Equipment purchase MUST comply with Federal and State procurement regulations.
- Funds must be tracked separately from other Child Nutrition funds.
- No administrative funds are available from these grants.
- Grants will only be awarded to an LEA if the total request for the expenditure is \$5000 or greater.
- Funds received through this grant cannot be combined with other school nutrition funds and must be tracked and reported separately.
- LEAs must submit obligation (purchase order), expenditure (invoice) and documentation (copy of payment/warrant) before funds will be released by ADE/CNU for reimbursement of equipment purchase.

\*\*\*\*Although one USDA criterion for award of the competitive equipment grants will be the percentage of free and reduced eligible students by school as of October 1, 2015, USDA has confirmed that schools with less than 50% of free and reduced-priced students may apply for these equipment funds.

Other factors will be considered including, but not limited to the following:

- Strategies for adopting smarter lunchrooms (e.g. lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population, highlighting healthier choices, redesigning menus that target healthier entrees/options)
- The availability of existing State and local funding for equipment purchases
- Age of food service equipment

**DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS:** After the LEA applies for and receives a grant award for the estimated cost of a piece of equipment, the LEA will first need to pay the full cost of the equipment and installation at each kitchen/serving site receiving the award. After installation and equipment is deemed operational, the District/LEA will submit an equipment invoice for reimbursement.

ONLY ACTUAL COSTS OF APPROVED EQUIPMENT WILL BE REIMBURSED, NOT TO EXCEED THE NSLP EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE COMPETITIVE GRANTS AWARD.

If the invoice total is more than the original grant award for that piece of equipment, the LEA will have to pay the difference.

**PROCUREMENT:** It is suggested that LEAs considering applying for equipment funding, identify the school's kitchen/serving site equipment needs focusing on the areas identified by USDA Focus Areas for Equipment listed above. DO NOT SOLICIT OR PURCHASE any equipment prior to written obligation notification of award from the Arkansas Department of Education, Child Nutrition Unit (ADE/CNU) that the district has received a NSLP equipment competitive grant award. **All federal, state and local procurement regulations MUST BE FOLLOWED with regard to open and free competitive procurements for the expenditure of federal grant funds.**

**BID PRODUCT OR CONTRACT SPECIFICATION DEVELOPMENT:** Vendor, broker, manufacturer, contractor, distributor, etc. of a product cannot have input into the development of product specifications or procurement specifications and/or advance review of the completed procurement documents, Requests for Proposal (RFP)/Contracts. Such activities would compromise open and free competition [2 CFR 200.319(a)].

**EQUIPMENT DEFINITION:** The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) defines equipment for the purpose of the NSLP equipment assistance grant as "articles of nonexpendable, tangible property with a useful life of more than one year and per unit acquisition cost of \$5000 or more".

**ALLOWABLE EXPENSE:** as with all Federal funds, the equipment purchased must be allowable, e.g. using these funds to purchase a walk-in freezer for school nutrition programs would be an allowable cost. Allowable expenses are determined in accordance with cost principles of federal regulation 2 CFR 200. All expenditures should be adequately documented and should be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

- Renovation of the school nutrition area would fall under the category of construction costs that must be charged to the LEA's general fund. LEAs are required to follow all Federal, State, and Local procurement regulations which require open and free competition.
- Assume financial obligation for appropriate utilities, (e.g. gas, water, electricity) within three feet of equipment. Installation costs within three feet are reimbursable as part of grant award, with documentation.

**NON-ALLOWABLE EXPENSE:** Reimbursement will not be provided for purchases of deep fat fryers or transport vehicles. Costs that are not allowable in the National School Lunch, Afterschool Snack and Breakfast Programs are:

- Equipment depreciation costs for non-expendable equipment items which become fully depreciated or non-expendable equipment in storage for future use.
- Capital expenditures for land or construction, facilities, other capital asset purchases (including passenger automobiles and other equipment).
- Any capital expenditure, which materially increases the value of capital assets, must be approved by the ADE/CNU.
- Renovation of the school nutrition area would fall under the category of construction costs that must be charged to the LEA's general fund. LEAs are required to follow all Federal, State, and Local procurement regulations which require open and free competition.
- Facility or land occupancy by contractual agreements (which are classified as rental/purchase or leased with an option to purchase).
- Cost associated with sales or service to adults, contract meals, other a la carte sales, and summer food service programs funded through the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

**GRANT SUBMISSION AWARD AND REPORT TIMELINE:**

(Subject to change based on USDA requirements and data requests)

1. Grant Application Deadline----- **4:30 p.m., Friday, May 27, 2016**
2. Grant Awards Announced On or Before ----- **Friday, June 10, 2016**
3. Notification by fax, with original letter mailed to LEA ----- **Friday, June 10, 2016**
4. Deadline for Submission - OBLIGATION (commit to purchase)\*-- **Friday, July 15, 2016**
5. Quarterly Progress Report\*----- **Friday, September 2, 2016**
6. Quarterly Progress Report\*----- **Wednesday, December 14, 2016**
7. LEA Final Deadline for Submission of Equipment  
Invoices for payment by ADE CNU\*----- **Wednesday, December 14, 2016**
8. All Grant Funds EXPENDED (reimbursement  
received from ADE CNU)\*----- **Friday, May 12, 2017**

\*only required for the districts who receive a grant

## Nondiscrimination Statement for Arkansas Child Nutrition Programs:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and United States 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, audiotape, 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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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