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Two Recent USDA Grant Opportunities Announced

Farmers' Market Promotion Program Grants

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced recently that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking grant applicants for the [2012 Farmers' Market Promotion Program](#). Approximately \$10 million is available for marketing operations such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture and road-side stands. The grants, which are administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), are available through a competitive application process on www.grants.gov. The grants aim to increase the availability of local agricultural products in communities throughout the county. They will also help strengthen farmer-to-consumer marketing efforts.

Projects that expand healthy food choices in food deserts or low-income areas (where the percentage of the population living in poverty is 20 percent or above) will receive additional consideration. USDA, in coordination with the Departments of the Treasury and Health and Human Services, seeks to increase access to fresh, healthy and affordable food choices for all Americans, while expanding market opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

Applications will only be accepted via grants.gov and must be received by May 21, 2012. Applications that are incomplete, hand-delivered, or sent via U.S. mail will not be considered. Applicants should start the grants.gov registration process as soon as possible to meet the deadline. Contact Carmen Humphrey, Program Manager, by phone: (202) 720-8317, or e-mail: usdafmppquestions@ams.usda.gov for more information.

Authorized by the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 and amended by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (the Farm Bill), the Farmers' Market Promotion Program is in the seventh year of funding direct markets that benefit local and regional economies. The Farmers Market Promotion Program is part of USDA's commitment to support local and regional communities. These investments are highlighted in USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF) Compass. The KYF Compass is a digital guide to USDA resources related to local and regional food systems. The Compass consists of an interactive U.S. map showing local and regional food projects and an accompanying narrative documenting the results of this work through case studies, photos and video content. Get the latest AMS news at www.ams.usda.gov/news or follow us on [Twitter @USDA_AMS](#). You can also read about us on the [USDA blog](#).

Farm to School Grant Program

USDA Request for Applications (RFA) for a new farm to school grant program: The RFA is now posted on grants.gov and the [USDA Farm to School website](#).

There will be two types of grants available:

1. 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.
2. 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.

The grants require at least a 25% funding match. Applications are due June 15, 2012 and awards are expected to be made in October 2012. Planning grants are expected to range from \$20,000 - \$45,000 and represent approximately 25 percent of the total awards. Implementation grants are expected to range from \$65,000 - \$100,000 and represent approximately 75 percent of the total awards. Given the HHFKA mandate that priority consideration be given to schools serving a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals, projects that serve school districts and schools that have high free and reduced price meal enrollment will receive extra points in evaluation scoring.

Two webinars will be offered in order for applicants to learn more about this grant opportunity. More To receive additional information about webinars, please be sure to register for the Farm to School Listserve.

- Tuesday, May 15, 1:00 PM EST Implementation grants
- Thursday, May 17, 1:00 PM EST Planning grants

For more information, please visit the [USDA Farm to School](http://www.usda.gov/farmtoschool) website and the Farm to School grant program RFA.



MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish. For our ongoing list of events and workshops visit and bookmark: www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm.