

Ohio Farm to School Initiative: Connecting Ohio's Children, Families, and Specialty Crop Producers Grant

2010

Request for Proposals

Proposal Application Deadline:

4:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 29, 2010

*Ohio Department of Agriculture
Division of Sustainable Agriculture
Bromfield Administration Building, Room 217
8995 East Main Street
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
614-728-6201*

Ohio Farm-to-School Initiative: Connecting Ohio's Children, Families and Specialty Crop Producers Grant

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Proposal Application Deadline: 5:00 PM, December 29, 2010

Introduction

In an effort to increase access to fresh, healthy specialty crop produce to all Ohioans, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) established the Ohio Farm-to-School Initiative to create connections between Ohio schools, farmers and communities. Farm to School activities include a wide range of purchasing and in- and out- of the classroom educational programs. The goals of The Ohio Farm to School Initiative are to: 1) Serve healthy food from local farms to school children; 2) Teach students about the path from farm to fork, and; 3) Create new markets and opportunities for Ohio farmers. The Ohio Farm-to-School Coordinator works step by step with schools from project identification through evaluation.

The Ohio Farm to School program is expanding its program across the state to more directly target students, parents and families. The purpose of the **Connecting Ohio's Children, Families and Specialty Crop Producers Grant** is to develop sustainable and replicable models of student-family programming by offering mini-grants to schools or school districts who are interested in developing farm-to-school *programming focused on specialty crops that targets the whole family*. The Ohio Farm to School coordinator will provide technical assistance and assist with evaluating all funded projects.

ODA and ODE intends that all funding will be used to increase child and adult knowledge and consumption of specialty crops in addition to opening up new markets for producers. The funds will be used for promoting farm to school throughout the state in a way that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Ohio Farm to School Initiative.

Funding Source

Funds for the grant program have been made available through the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) Specialty Crop Ohio Farm-to-School grant. \$10,000 is available for the grant program during the 2010-2011 school year. The Ohio Department of Agriculture will award multiple grants from these funds. **Grant awards will be considered from a minimum of \$500 up to a maximum of \$2,000.** Final funding decisions will be made by The Ohio Department of Agriculture. Funds will be disbursed as a one time grant to schools or school districts.

Participant Eligibility

The Ohio Department of Agriculture will only accept proposals for consideration of grant funds from public, private, or charter schools and school districts in Ohio.

USDA defines specialty crops as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Eligible plants must be intensively cultivated and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered specialty crops. For a complete list of specialty crops see USDA web site

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgpdefinitions>

Schools may partner with educational and agricultural non-profit organizations, cooperatives, associations or commodity groups, universities and research institutions (hereinafter referred to as “eligible applicants”). Individuals and partnerships (hereinafter referred to as “partnering entities”) may participate in this grant program by developing and submitting proposals, through an eligible applicant.

If an eligible applicant is partnering with a partnering entity, the eligible applicant will be the grantee with the Ohio Department of Agriculture for the block grant funds, and be the party responsible for the completion of the grant and associated requirements.

Private individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible to apply. Employees of the State of Ohio, members of their immediate families, or business partners of the aforementioned are not eligible to receive a grant and will be immediately rejected by the department.

Agreement Duration

Projects cannot begin until ODA has made the official award announcement and the contract between ODA and the sub-grantee has been signed by all parties. Projects are expected to last one year in duration. Grants awarded prior to the expiration of the current biennium must terminate on June 30, 2011, however, the department may renew the contracts once the new biennium begins on July 1, 2011.

Proposal Process

Announcement of grant opportunity September 14, 2010

Application deadline December 29, 2010

Review panel recommendations January 5, 2010

Expected date of grant awards before January 30, 2010

Submission Directions

All applications must be submitted electronically using the [online application](#) to Cher Bland cbland@agri.ohio.gov by 4:00 pm on December 29th, 2010.

Proposal and Performance Specifications

The goal of this project is to promote the consumption and knowledge of Ohio grown specialty crops to school age children (K-12) and their families.

- A. Proposals shall be designed to improve student and family health through the increased knowledge about child and adult nutritional needs that can be met by consuming specialty crop produce from Ohio.
- B. Proposals shall be designed to improve the viability, sustainability and economic potential of Ohio's specialty crop industry.
- C. Proposals must clearly identify measures that can quantify the results or outcome of the proposed project.
- D. Project funds cannot be used for capital costs or equipment with any usefulness beyond boundaries of the project.
- E. Grant projects may focus on, but are not restricted to these areas:
 - Food and nutrition programs that also include information and resources on how to access Ohio grown specialty crops.
 - Coordinated education and marketing program for students and families focused on Ohio grown specialty crops.
 - Integrating Ohio grown specialty crops into school programs, school meals and snack programs.
 - Provide improvements in the aggregation and distribution of specialty crops.
 - Implement programs or projects that provide outreach and education on the importance of the industry with regards to Ohio's economy, food safety or the nutrition and health benefits of specialty crops.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be rated by a review panel. The following criteria will be used to review and rank proposals:

- a. **Project Purpose.** Are the need and purpose of the project clear and well defined? Is the project important and does it address the goals of the Ohio Farm-to-School Initiative?
- b. **Potential Impact.** Will the project have a positive impact on children, families and specialty crop producers?
- c. **Expected Measurable Outcomes.** Are the objectives clear and appropriate? Does the project include one or two measurable outcomes that directly support the project purpose? Is there a plan for monitoring performance toward meeting each outcome?

- d. **Work Plan** Is the work plan complete? Is the work plan feasible? Is the timeline reasonable? Do the tasks relate to the project objectives and expected measurable outcomes? Are there sufficient and qualified personnel and partnerships to accomplish this work? Does the project have adequate oversight to ensure proper administration?
- e. **Project Commitment.** Is support for the project demonstrated? Are grant recipients or partners providing matching or in-kind contributions?
- f. **Budget and Budget Detail.** Is the amount requested reasonable? Are line items reasonable and appropriate? Does the budget detail adequately explain and justify expenses?

Additional elements that make a stronger application include the following. The proposed project: brings together producers, educators, students and families in a new collaboration; capitalizes on existing resources; includes a local match, and; builds upon existing educational and/or procurements.

Applicants are not required to provide matching funds. Matches can be cash or in-kind contribution. Please note that funds can only be used for direct project costs.

Application Instructions and Proposal Format

Proposals must be typed and submitted electronically in the fillable application form. Proposals must include the following elements:

1. Application Cover Sheet

- A. Name of applicant and primary contact for all correspondence, including address, phone number, fax, e-mail, congressional district and county. The primary contact should also sign the grant agreement and will be responsible for tracking and accounting of project funds, and ensuring completion of the project and reporting requirements.
- B. Federal Tax ID number for the official entity submitting the proposal. If more than one entity is acting as joint recipient, tax ID information is required for all participants.
- C. Listing of all other individuals, entities, organizations, businesses, and/or subcontractors involved with the project.
- D. Total project cost, amount of grant funds requested and matching and/or in-kind contributions.
- E. Percentage of students in your school or school district eligible for free and reduced lunch in the 2010-2011 school year.
- F. Signature of person responsible for overall project completion.

2. Project Narrative

Address each line item below in your proposal narrative. Total narrative length is not to exceed 16,200 characters.

A. Background and Justification (Limit 4,000 characters)

This section should clearly identify the opportunity or problem to be addressed and explain how the project will impact this issue and meet the purpose of this grant program. Clearly describe the goals and objectives of the project.

B. Plan of Work (Limit 4,000 characters)

The plan of work must provide a detailed description of how the proposed project is to be carried out. It should describe the tasks or objectives to be performed, and provide a timetable illustrating projected task completion dates.

C. Key Personnel (Limit 1,500 characters)

Provide a list of project participants or subcontractors responsible for tasks and location of activities. Describe the partnerships, alliances, networks, or other collaborative efforts that will be created to implement this project, as well as the specific commitments from each (i.e., in-kind, monetary, labor, etc.).

D. Ohio Farm to School involvement. (Limit 1,000 characters)

What specific resources are needed from the Farm to School Coordinator to accomplish this proposed project? For instance, what type of expertise can the Coordinator provide or help to identify?

E. Evaluation (Limit 2,000 characters)

How will success of your project be evaluated? Tell us your technique for gathering results and deciding what the results might mean.

3. Project Budget (Narrative Limit 3,700 characters)

Include a detailed budget and narrative illustrating the exact usage of grant funds.

Project Revisions

After a proposal is accepted and a grant agreement is entered into between the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the grantee, no modifications or changes can be made to substantially change the project scope, objectives or budget, extend the project period, change key persons associated with the grant, or increase the budget amount without prior agreement by the parties in writing.

General Compliance

Grantee agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work under the grant agreement.

Furthermore, the Grantee acknowledges the application and documents submitted to the Ohio

Department of Agriculture are considered public records pursuant to R.C. 149.43(A)(1) unless the records are not releasable due to an exemption or are protected under another state or federal law. Specifically, the Grantee may claim that some of the documentation submitted is considered a trade secret, and must establish that the record qualifies as a trade secret by following the requirements set forth in 1333.61(D) of the Ohio Revised Code, including, but not limited to, indicating which documents are considered by the applicant as trade secrets, submitting a statement describing the measures the applicant has taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the information, and what value or injury would result in the release of the information. The applicant is responsible for taking the necessary steps to establish that a document is a trade secret under R.C. 1333.61 (D).

Grant Agreement

Upon notification that an applicant has been selected to receive a grant, a grant agreement is prepared and sent to the applicant for signature.

Submittal Process and Deadlines

Electronically submitted proposals must be received by the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Cher Bland on *or before* **4:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 29, 2010**. Mailed or faxed proposals will **not** be accepted.

Any entity that qualifies under the participant eligibility statement may submit more than one proposal, but only if they are for completely different projects in different schools or school districts.

All eligible applications will be reviewed and successful proposals will be chosen on the merits of the project as put forth in the official proposal and as they relate to the published criteria. **All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision to fund, modify or reject the proposal.**

Prior to beginning work on the projects or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a contract with the Ohio Department of Agriculture indicating their intentions to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing the Department to view and certify the project as complete. Disbursement of grant funds will be in accordance with the payment provisions as indicated in the grant agreement.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to recommend modifications to any project proposal.

To access the electronic application and to apply for this grant opportunity, [click here](#). For more information contact Shoshanah Inwood at (614) 728-6243 or SInwood@agri.ohio.gov