Local School Food Purchasing Program
RFP for Producer Technical Assistance

2021 Request for Proposals

Funded by the CDE Local Food Program

DATE ISSUED: DECEMBER 1st, 2021

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: DECEMBER 17th, 2021

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jessica@nourishcolorado.org
561-512-1378
Local School Food Purchasing Program
RFP for Producer Technical Assistance
COVER PAGE

Organization Name:

Address:

Phone:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Contact Email:

Total Proposal Budget:
Local School Food Purchasing Program
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Background
In May 2019, Governor Polis signed into Law House Bill 1132, the Local School Food Purchasing Program. The program was created within the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to reimburse participating providers (school districts) for the purchase of Colorado grown, raised, or processed products.

The Act also established a separate program in CDE, the Local Food Program Technical Assistance and Education Grant, to make a grant to a nonprofit organization that would in turn: 1) make small grants to entities (e.g., food hubs) that promote the sale of Colorado food to schools; 2) make small grants to eligible providers (districts) to encourage the purchase of Colorado food; and, 3) provide training and technical assistance to both participating districts and producers hoping to sell to school districts to ensure growth and sustainability of local food procurement.

Now housed within CDE and called the Local Food Program, the program will offer selected School Food Authorities (SFAs) a reimbursement for the purchase of Colorado grown, raised, or processed products. This program encourages SFAs to procure local products, foster nutrition education, bolster farm to child nutrition activities, and support Colorado producers and farmers.

In its first year, SY 20-21, close to $500,000 was distributed as a reimbursement to SFAs that were selected during the application process. CDE prioritizes SFAs that:

- Demonstrate a commitment to local purchasing or food and agricultural education;
- Have a kitchen with the ability to store, prepare, and serve local food products;
- Have greater than 25% of its students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

The amount of reimbursement received is contingent on the number of SFAs that are selected and the total number of lunches served the previous year. Reimbursements must accrue to the SFA’s nonprofit school food service account.

In July 2021, the Local Food Program was re-funded with an annual appropriation.

Project Overview
The goal of the Local Food Program training and technical assistance component is to connect school districts that are interested in participating in farm to school with farmers and producers, as well as to provide specific trainings and technical assistance that will enable both groups to effectively create sustainable farm to school programs.

Through the Local Food Program, Nourish will provide a combination of 1) working with school districts on creating sustainable processes and plans for procuring and preparing local food
through mini workshops and 2) through contractor/s, supporting local and regional food hubs with trainings on how to best meet the procurement needs of schools.

Training and technical assistance will be offered to participating providers (school districts) based on their needs, the capacity of Nourish CO and its contractor/s, and overall budget. For a current list of participating providers and to see what regions we are currently supporting, go here.

This RFP seeks responses for a contractor/s (such as a value-chain coordinator, producer association, food hub, etc) to lead and implement the training and technical assistance portion for producers and other suppliers.

A percentage of the total grant will be distributed to one or more organizations for subcontracts, based on identified need. The areas identified for possible subcontracting include:

- Support group GAP/GHP certification
- Building and sustaining a business
- Food safety: What safety regulations are required of schools
- Time-to-value: how farmers can expand their businesses to sell products locally
- Water-wise planning: Intersections between water-wise with what districts want and what chefs know how to prepare
- Understanding school food lingo and timing: What is the bid process, school procurement, school regulations, tailoring products for schools/value-added, and how to be responsive
- Collaborate with local food hubs to assist in value-chain coordination and build capacity to prepare products for schools to use safely
- Attend and/or present at more farmer-focused events and conferences to recruit more participation in the Local Food Program

Additionally, Nourish’s marketing contractor who works primarily with districts on promoting school meals will also support farmers and food hubs to create language to promote their products to schools. Approximately 25% of this contractor’s time will assist grower associations and growers communicate to schools and communities about the benefits of using local products.

**Contracting Opportunity**
Nourish Colorado will be contracting with one to three organizations that have a proven track record with working with, supporting, and providing technical assistance to farmers and ranchers. Nourish will accept applications from single organizations as well as collaborative applications. The contract/s will be offered for a total of $50,000 for a 9-month period. Nourish also will accept multiple applications, each for a portion of the contract. The contract may be renewed based on state appropriations and assessment of contractor’s services.
Primary Deliverables
The agriculture training/TA contractors will provide the following deliverables over a 9-month period:

- A plan for identifying, understanding, and addressing producer needs and opportunities to increase sales to the school districts involved in the pilot
- A comprehensive set of training approaches that will address marketing, business planning and operations, skill development and farm food safety that could increase relationships and sale to participating school districts
- Regular communication and training with producers in the regions serving all participating school districts
- Monthly planning/coordination calls with Nourish staff
- Annual report on services offered, and degree of impact based on qualitative and quantitative feedback. Due by October 15th
- Proposal for the following year’s services. Due by September 30th.

Request for Proposals
Please address the following narrative questions (not to exceed 3.5 pages):

1. Organizational overview: Please provide a brief overview of your organization and its primary areas of focus (max length: ½ page).
2. Knowledge of CO agriculture: Describe your awareness of and connections to Colorado farmers, ranchers, processors, and distributors across the state (max length: ½ page)
3. Training and technical assistance experience: Please describe your experience in providing training and technical assistance regarding market development, food safety, business and sales to agricultural operations (max length: one page)
4. Knowledge related to school food: Describe any relevant experiences in selling to or working with K-12 purchasers and/or other institutional buyers (max length: ½ page)
5. Role in Advancing Equity: Tell us about how you/your firm centers your work around racial and social equity. Please describe how you integrate equity and inclusion in your processes (such as training and technical assistance) and in to your work products. (max length: ½ page)
6. Bios of those who will be working on the project: Please provide 4-5 sentence bios for each individual who will support this project, and 2-3 sentences on their proposed role in the project.

Required Documents
1. Cover Page
2. Completed Narrative (3.5 pages total)
3. Up to three references. Provide three references from clients of past projects. If entities are partnering on this proposal, at least one reference must represent a client for whom the partnering entities collaborated on previous work. Each reference should include:
   a. First and last name of the appropriate contact person; Title and organization; Email; Phone; Project name
# Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1, 2021</td>
<td>RFP issued</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 17th, 2021</strong></td>
<td>RFP due</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 17th – December 31st 2021</td>
<td>RFP reviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 7th 2022</td>
<td>Applicants notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 10th 2022</td>
<td>Contract begins; 50% of contract dispersed</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30th 2022</td>
<td>Contract must be completed; Remaining 50% dispersed</td>
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**Submission Information**

Please submit your completed application in PDF format (not to exceed 3.5 pages total, excluding cover page and attachments) to:

jessica@nourishcolorado.org

**The deadline for applications is December 17th 11:59pm.**

Written inquiries regarding the RFP will be accepted through December 15th. Please email Jessica Wright at jessica@nourishcolorado.org with questions.