

Request for Applications FY2023 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328) awarded the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) \$30 million to distribute to State Agencies for the purpose of awarding equipment assistance grants (EAG). Nebraska received \$179,572 for equipment assistance to eligible school food authorities (SFA) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Funds will be distributed through a competitive grant process.

The funds will allow SFAs to purchase equipment to serve healthier meals that meet the updated meal pattern requirements, with emphasis on offering more fruits and vegetables in school meals, improving food safety, and expanding access to the program.

Eligibility Requirements:

- The SFA must currently be participating in the NSLP.
- SFAs that apply must NOT have been previous EAG recipients in SY2022-23.

Equipment:

For purposes of this grant, equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost *equal to or greater than* the lesser of the capitalization level established by the SFA's School Board for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. For the FY 2023 Equipment Assistance Grant, Congress has specified that the value of the purchase of equipment cannot be lower than \$1,000.

Items like school lunch trays, utensils, etc. would not be approved, as it is unlikely these fit your SFA's definition of capital equipment.

- In the grant application, SFAs must report their equipment capitalization threshold formally set by the action of its School Board (see [page 9](#)) and submit supporting documentation with the application packet.
- Equipment requests may include new equipment, renovation of equipment or replacement of equipment. Only one piece or unit of equipment may be requested. Allowable capital equipment costs include added parts to make the equipment more functional for its purpose, costs directly related to removal of old equipment and installation of the new equipment; these costs must be included in the grant amount requested. If the SFA does the installation, employee(s) hours must be time certified as part of the required documentation submitted to NDE for payment.
- If replacing equipment, the SFA must describe the current condition of the equipment, report the age of the equipment, and what will be done with the existing equipment.
- The equipment requested must primarily be used in the NSLP. However, it may also be used in the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Summer Food Service Program.
- As with all Federal grant funds, equipment procured with these grant funds must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable. For example, purchasing a freezer or a salad bar would be an allowable cost; however, renovating the food service area would be a capital expense which must be paid with SFA general funds.

Applications must be emailed to jessica.furmanski@nebraska.gov by **October 20, 2023**. Mailed or faxed applications will **not** be accepted.

Funding:

- Equipment attachments and accessory pieces may be considered as part of the grant request if they are required for the equipment to function appropriately (e.g., stand mixer plus attachments like slicers, grinders, graters, etc. would be one unit).
- A centralized kitchen which serves multiple schools may request equipment.
- Installation, shipping, and labor costs associated with capital equipment are allowed. If the SFA does the installation, employee(s) hours must be time certified as part of the required documentation submitted to NDE for payment. If the funding for these costs is needed by an external vendor, the installation and labor costs must be included in the equipment specifications.
- Grant funds cannot be used for equipment that is currently in the process of being purchased or for previously purchased equipment. This grant awards are applicable only to equipment that is procured and purchased during the grant award period after an SFA has been notified it was approved to receive EAG funding.
- SFAs will receive reimbursement for the equipment by submitting a completed [NDE 28-003 Report of Expenditures Form](#), accompanied by a copy of the paid invoice and additional documentation indicated on the award notification letter. The expended amount must be at minimum the amount of the indicated capitalization threshold and no lower than \$1,000 to meet the Federal definition of “equipment.”
- SFAs will be expected to **fully expend their grant funds by September 30, 2024**. After awards are announced, proper procurement of the equipment must be done and SFAs are encouraged to submit documentation for payment as soon as possible.

Focus Areas:

To make the most effective use of the funding, the SFA must address how the equipment purchase will enable the school to meet one or more of the following key areas:

1. **Improved Nutritional and Food Quality:** Equipment that lends itself to improving the quality of school foodservice meals (e.g., purchasing equipment to replace a deep fat fryer).
2. **Improved Food Safety:** Equipment that improves the safety of food served in the school meal programs (e.g., hot/cold holding equipment, dish washing equipment, refrigeration, milk coolers, freezers, blast chillers).
3. **Improved or Expanded Participation in the School Breakfast Program:** Equipment that allows the school to support expanded participation in the School Breakfast Program (e.g., equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting such as Breakfast in the classroom or to better utilize cafeteria space).

Procurement:

- SFAs are required to competitively procure equipment by following all Federal procurement rules, except where State and/or local procurement policies are more restrictive.
- Informal purchase methods may be used for any purchase less than the federal small purchase threshold of \$250,000 (or your local threshold if more restrictive). Informal purchase methods require obtaining three bids and does not require a formal request for proposals.

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- *The equipment specifications and three (3) bid/price quotes must be submitted with the grant application. Applications without specifications and bids will not be considered for funding.*
- Bids/price quotes are generally only valid for a certain length of time; request the bid to be valid for **six months**.
- Equipment purchase obligations made prior to the grant award are not eligible for payment

Evaluation Criteria:

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

| SCORING CRITERIA: | POINTS: |
|--|----------------------------|
| Completed application packet | Required for consideration |
| Eligibility priority as indicated on Page 1 (determined by NDE). | 15 |
| Equipment request specifically addresses one or more of the four focus areas and narrative addresses the positive impact the purchase will have on the school meals program. | 40 |
| The application clearly and concisely explains why the SFA needs the equipment and why the equipment is appropriate for the site. | 15 |
| The application reflects effort to get the best possible value for the money including written specification and equipment selection; bid research and bid reliability. All costs associated with purchase, installation, and a timeline for expending the funds have been included. | 20 |
| TOTAL | 90 |

Timeline:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| October 20, 2023, by 5:00pm (CST) | Applications must be emailed on this date to be reviewed and considered for this funding opportunity. |
| October 23 – 27, 2023 | NDE reviews and scores all submitted applications. |
| November 3, 2023 | Notification of grant awards sent to SFAs. SFAs not awarded will be notified. |
| September 30, 2024 | All grant funds must be fully expended. |

Distribution of Funds:

Grant awards will be for a dollar amount *not to exceed* that specified in the Grant Award document. **Actual funds will be distributed through a reimbursement process, with final grant payment determined by submission of actual invoices for equipment and applicable related costs.** The related costs may include those that are reasonably required to procure new equipment and place it in service (including delivery, installation, testing, disposition of old equipment, etc.). Funds may not be used for administrative costs associated with the grant application process or costs related to the procurement and installation processes. FY 2023 equipment assistance grant funds may *not* be used for kitchen renovations.

Please note: old equipment must be disposed of in accordance with applicable Federal regulations. See 2 CFR 200.313 for information on equipment disposal.

SFAs will be financially responsible for any expenditure in excess of that specified in the Grant Award.

Funds not fully obligated or expended by June 30, 2024, are subject to withdrawal by the State agency.

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Additional Information:

This application packet also includes the following attachments for SFA review:

- Attachment A: Regulations, Principals, and Assurances

Please refer to Nutrition Services web site for more information regarding the Equipment Assistance Grant:
<https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/nslp/equipment-grants/>

Contact Information:

Questions may be directed to the Nebraska Department of Education, Nutrition Services at nde.nsweb@nebraska.gov or by contacting Jessica Furmanski: jessica.furmanski@nebraska.gov, 308-660-8755.

**Checklist for Submitting the
FY2023 National School Lunch Program
Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities**

1. Complete the *four parts* of the grant application. If any question is left unanswered, the application will be considered incomplete and will be excluded from grant award consideration.
2. If the SFA is submitting an application for more than one school building, even though some information may be common to all, a separate Equipment Assistance Grant Application must be submitted for each school building.
3. A complete application packet includes:
 - Part 1: SFA/School Building Profile
 - Part 2: Grant Criterion Justification
 - Part 3b: Equipment Specification
 - Part 3b: All obtained bids or quotes
 - Part 4: Certification and Signatures > This form must be signed by the district's Authorized Representative and the district's Food Service Manager/Director
4. Be sure to keep a copy of the application for your records.
5. Verify the application is complete and all components in #3 are included. Any application that is not complete or fails to include the necessary application components will be disqualified.
6. **Send application packet via email to:**
jessica.furmanski@nebraska.gov
7. Applications must be emailed to the above email address by **October 20, 2023**.
 - a. Faxed applications will not be accepted.
8. Recipients of the FY2023 Equipment Assistance Grants will be notified by email on November 3, 2023.

**Application for FY2023 National School Lunch Program
Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities**

*A fillable, electronic version of the Equipment Assistance Grant Application is also available online at
<https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/nslp/equipment-grants/>*

Part 1: SFA/School Building Profile

School Information:

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. School District Name: | | | |
| 2. School District Agreement Number: (6-digit agreement number) | | | |
| 3. School Building Name: (where equipment will be located) | | | |
| Physical Address of School Building: | City | State NE | Zip |
| School Building Grades: | School Building Enrollment: | | |
| 4. Type of Kitchen in this Building - check all that apply: | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Kitchen – meals are prepared and served in this location. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite or Partial-Prep Kitchen – all or some food items may be prepared at a base or central kitchen and transported to this location. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Base or Central Kitchen - meals are prepared and transported to other school buildings. How many locations receive meals from this kitchen? _____ How many meals are prepared daily in this kitchen? _____ | | | |

Contact Information:

| | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| 5. Name of Authorized Representative <i>(person designated by the SFA as ultimately responsible for all aspects of the National School Lunch Program):</i> | | | |
| 6. Title: | | | |
| 7. Email Address: | | | |
| 8. Telephone Number: | | | |
| 9. School District Mailing Address: | City | State NE | Zip |

Part 2: Grant Criterion Justification

| Criteria 1 | Equipment request meets one or more of the six focus areas. | Points 40 |
|---------------|---|--------------|
|---------------|---|--------------|

Describe how the equipment purchase will enable the school to specifically meet one or more of the following focus areas and have a positive impact on the school meals program. Select all that apply. Maximum of five points are awarded per focus area that are selected.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve Nutritional and Food Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase Efficiency of Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve Food Convenience and Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve or Expand Participation |

| | | |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| Criteria 2 | The application clearly and concisely explains why the school building needs this piece of equipment and why the equipment is appropriate for the site. | Points 15 |
|---------------|---|--------------|

Describe the site location and provide justification as to why this equipment is needed. Describe the estimated life of the equipment, the programs that will use it, and how frequently it will be used.

Part 3. Equipment Specification and Bids

| | | |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| Criteria 3a | Specifications must be written for the equipment you are applying for prior to asking for bids/quotes. | Points 5 |
|----------------|--|-------------|

The SFA’s capitalization threshold for reporting equipment as a fixed asset**:

\$

The equipment capitalization threshold is the dollar figure used by your district to distinguish between “equipment” and “small supplies” for inventory purposes. If your district has a capitalization threshold less than \$1,000, include a copy of the policy or school board meeting minutes that indicates the established value. As a reminder, for the FY2023 Equipment Assistance Grant, Congress has specified that the threshold for the purchase of equipment cannot be lower than \$1,000. If your district does not have a defined threshold amount, report no less than \$1,000 in the box.

For example, if a district has a defined threshold of \$5,000, then the piece of equipment requested must cost \$5,000 or more to meet the definition of “equipment.” However, if this same district requests a piece of equipment that costs \$3,500, the district’s grant application will not be considered; it does not meet the district’s definition of “equipment.”

(See page 1 – “Equipment” for additional information.)

****The value in this box cannot be the cost of the equipment. It must be the capitalization threshold amount set by the district or the federal government.**

Part 3. Equipment Specification and Bids (continued)

| Criteria 3b | Specifications must be written for the equipment you are applying for prior to asking for bids/quotes. | Points 5 |
|----------------|--|-------------|
|----------------|--|-------------|

List the equipment specifications in the box below. The specifications should include a general description of the equipment; size or capacity, freight and delivery details and requirements for installation including utilities, plumbing, and mechanical needs.

Brand names can be included, but “or equivalent” must also be included to ensure competition is not limited or restricted.

Note: All bids and quotes must be attached to the application packet to be considered for award.

Part 3. Equipment Specification and Bids (continued)

| | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| Criteria 3c | The application reflects effort to get the best possible value for the money including a written specification and equipment selection criteria, bid research, and bid reliability (the lowest price is not always indicative of the best value). All costs associated with purchase, installation, and a timeline for expending the funds have been included. | Points 10 |
|----------------|--|--------------|

From the three bids obtained, complete the following for the bid preferred by the SFA.

Equipment:

- New, first time purchased
- Replacement

If equipment is being replaced, describe the condition, age of equipment, and what will be done with the old equipment:

Age of existing equipment: _____

Equipment Name: _____

Vendor: _____ Make and Model: _____

Estimate of Energy Savings: _____
(if applicable)

Equipment Costs: _____ \$

Installation Costs: _____ \$
(If work is completed by SFA see page 2, third bullet under "Funding")

Labor Costs: _____ \$

Total Dollar Amount Requested: * \$

*SFA will only be reimbursed for actual costs incurred not to exceed total dollar amount requested. Applications must be emailed to jessica.furmanski@nebraska.gov by **October 20, 2023**. Mailed or faxed applications will **not** be accepted.

Part 3. Equipment Specification and Bids (continued)

Briefly describe an estimated timeline for the purchase and installation of the proposed equipment.
(The grant amount must be expended by September 30, 2024)

Part 4: Certification/Signatures

I certify that the information in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge; that the document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the named applicant; that the equipment purchased with these funds will be used as part of the National School Lunch Program; and that the applicant will fully expend the funds by September 30, 2024.

School Building Name

SFA's Authorized Representative (Print Name)

SFA's Authorized Representative (Signature)

Date

SFA's Food Service Manager/Director (Print Name)

SFA's Food Service Manager/Director (Signature)

Date

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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