



CDFA OFFICE OF
FARM to FORK

2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program

Questions and Answers

Application Period: May 9, 2022 – July 6, 2022

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RFA SECTION: 1.3 FOUR FUNDING TRACKS

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Can Track 1 projects include preschool and transitional kindergarten students?

A: Yes. The CDFA encourages public school districts, county offices of education, and directly funded charter schools with preschool, transitional kindergarten, and/or Head Start programs to include those programs in their Track 1 project, and to explore the Track 3 grant opportunity if interested in maximizing funding for farm to early care and education.

Q: [Track 2] Do Track 2 projects need to focus on both farm to school procurement and farm to school education?

A: No. Track 2 will fund projects that do **one or more of the following**: (1) implement farm to school procurement and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; **and/or** (2) increase collaboration and coordination regionally or statewide between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals, especially foods that are culturally relevant, climate smart, and from small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, socially disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California; **and/or** (3) provide farm to school procurement and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school.

Q: [All Tracks] Can you describe the process for applying to multiple funding tracks?

A: Eligible entities may apply to multiple funding tracks. Tracks 1, 3, and 4 limit eligible entities to one application in each track. For Track 2, eligible entities may apply once as the lead applicant and multiple times as a supporting project partner. Eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are **not** duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application. Please refer to the Eligibility and Exclusions section in the RFA and the Eligibility Decision Tree on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#) for eligibility details. To apply, there is an online grant application portal for each funding track (see links to each portal below). Once an applicant creates a user account for one of the application portals, they may use the same user account for the other three application portals.

- Track 1: The California Farm to School K-12 Procurement and Education Grant: https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track1_k12-procurement-and-ed_2022
- Track 2: The California Farm to School Partnership Grant: https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track2_partnership_2022
- Track 3: The California Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grant: https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track3_farm2ece_2022
- Track 4: The California Farm to School Producer Grant: https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track4_producers_2022

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Track 1 indicates that it is the Farm to School K-12 Procurement and Education Grant. Our school district is a TK-12 District. May we include the Transitional Kindergarten students in our Track 1 project?

A: Yes. [See this response](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Can two different departments within our public school district that serve different populations of underserved students (K-12 and early childhood) apply for two different funding tracks without disqualifying the other department's application?

A: Yes. [See this response](#) and [this response](#). We recommend that all applicants take a look at the review criteria while developing their project proposal(s) in order to submit a competitive application. You can find the review criteria for each funding track on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

May 21st–24th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Would you consider funding two projects from the same area in the same funding track?

A: It is hard to say how likely it is that two projects from the same area will receive funding in the same funding track until we know how many competitive applications we receive in each funding track and the geographic areas each application represents. Therefore, we encourage collaboration among partners in the same geographic area, particularly in Track 2 and in Track 3. Please note that the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program aims to distribute awards geographically across California to the extent possible. To explore the full review criteria for each funding track, you can visit the links below:

- [Track 1 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 3 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)

May 25th–31st Q&A

Q: [Track 1] We would like to expand our school garden classroom for the education component of this grant. For the “coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities” piece of Track 1, do we need to coordinate with our school nutrition services program to incorporate crops [from our garden] into our cafeteria meals? Or is it sufficient that the crops in our garden are being used in the recipes students try in our cooking/nutrition lessons?

A: First, school garden programming is an eligible educational opportunity in Track 1. Second, no, you do not necessarily need to incorporate the school garden crops into your cafeteria meals to achieve the required component of Track 1 to, “coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces.” However, it is important that this coordination occurs in some form.

Applicants do need to demonstrate in the application how they will coordinate the educational opportunities in the project with the school nutrition services program so that the nutrition services program and education program are not occurring in two separate silos. Utilizing school garden crops in the garden during cooking and nutrition lessons with students, on its own, would not demonstrate coordination with the school nutrition services program.

Q: [All Tracks] If we apply to multiple funding tracks, does that reduce our chances of receiving a grant award in either track?

A: If an applicant submits competitive applications in multiple tracks, it is possible to receive a grant award in multiple tracks. Please note that eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are *not* duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application. When thinking about how to complete a competitive application and improve your chances of receiving a grant award in any funding track, we recommend thoroughly reviewing the review criteria for the applicable funding track, as this is how the external reviewers will score the applications. You can find the review criteria for each funding track on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] I see on the applications it is okay to apply for both tracks. I want to be aware of any potential cross over complications and wonder if you have any details you can provide for a support organization looking to aid a school with Track 1 application while applying for Track 2?

A: Yes, eligible entities may apply to multiple funding tracks. Eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are not duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application. If a farm to school support organization is partnering with a certain farm to school implementing organization on a Track 2 application, that same farm to school implementing organization may apply to Track 1. If desired, the farm to school implementing organization may write the farm to school support organization into their proposed Track 1 project budget as a contractor for their proposed project.

Please note that individual schools are not eligible to apply to Track 1, unless they are a single-site public school district or a single-site directly funded charter school. However, farm to school implementing organizations (i.e., public school districts, county offices of education, and directly funded charter schools) that apply to Track 1 may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within their organization. Please note that all Track 1 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decisionmaker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at their organization. Similarly, please note that individual schools are not eligible to apply to Track 2, unless they are a single-site public school district or a single-site directly funded charter school. However, farm to school support organizations or farm to school implementing organizations (as defined above) that apply to Track 2 may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership. Please note that all Track 2 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership.

June 12th–14th Q&A

Q: [Tracks 2 & 3] Our non-profit provides nutrition and food sustainability education to elementary classrooms in various regions throughout California. Could you suggest the best funding track for us to apply to? I believe we match with either Track 2 or 3.

A: As a non-profit, you may be eligible for Track 2 as a farm to school support organization and/or Track 3 as a farm to ECE support organization.

- You are eligible for Track 2 if your project partnership includes either of the following combinations: (1) at least one farm to school support organization and at least one California farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school); or (2) at least two California farm to school implementing organizations (i.e., at least two public school districts, county offices of education, and/or directly funded charter schools). The CDFA encourages (but does not require) partnerships described in combination (1) to include at least two California farm to school implementing organizations. Please note that Track 2 project partnerships **must** focus on *regional or statewide* food system impact that *meaningfully* supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., more than one public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school).
 - We recommend reviewing the goals of Track 2 on [page 8 of the RFA](#), the Track 2 eligibility criteria on [pages 13-15 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#) before deciding whether or not to apply to Track 2.
- You are eligible for Track 3 if you provide support to California ECE providers, if at least 50% of the students that your project will serve are young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers), and if you want to establish or expand a farm to ECE program. Farm to ECE support organizations may support ECE providers in child care centers, family child care homes, and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings. Please note that when making award determinations, the CDFA will seek to maximize impact by considering relative project reach (i.e., number of young children served, number of ECE providers engaged) among child center applicants and, separately, among farm to ECE support organization applicants.
 - We recommend reviewing the goals of Track 3 on [page 9 of the RFA](#), the Track 3 eligibility criteria on [pages 16-17 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 3 application questions and review criteria](#) before deciding whether or not to apply to Track 3.

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Would you please give me a little bit more information regarding the educational component of Track 1? I want to know what the minimum requirement is to qualify for the grant. Could I, for example, invite a Health Education Specialist from the county public health department to talk about nutrition and making good meal choices to meet the minimum requirement or does it require classroom instruction from teachers adding it to their curriculum?

A: For the educational component of Track 1, applicants must demonstrate how they will coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces. Farm to school educational opportunities may include but are not limited to: school gardens/farms/greenhouses, culinary classes, agriculture education programs, food production education programs, nutrition education programs, lessons celebrating traditional foodways, hands-on cooking and tasting activities, hands-on food-based student internships, farm tours or field trips, school visits from producers, curriculum development related to nutrition/agriculture/food production/cooking, student-run farm/food stands featuring produce from school gardens/farms, or other

transformative opportunities for students to better understand the relationships between food and the world around them.

The educational component of Track 1 does not require classroom instruction from teachers, but may include this if desired. Nutrition education like you described would be an allowable farm to school education cost in Track 1. However, in the application, you would need to demonstrate how your project is coordinating this educational opportunity with the school nutrition services program in order to meet the educational component of Track 1. We recommend referencing questions 15 and 19 and the review criteria for these questions in the [Track 1 application questions and review criteria PDF](#).

Q: [Track 2] We recently met with the nutrition director for one of the school districts we partner with, to solicit the necessary letter of support. The director was interested in writing the letter. However, he mentioned that the district is also applying for the same grant, under a different track, and wondered if endorsing a separate application would impact the district's application.

A: See [this response](#) and [this response](#).

Q: [Track 4] We are a food producer/farm in CA and we currently have a relationship with a local charter school. If we apply to Track 4, does the food we are growing to provide for the school have to be used in classes/cafeteria or can it go directly to the school's families through a school-organized free food distribution program?

A: There would need to be a connection to the school meal program. Here are the two overarching goals of Track 4 ([page 9 of the RFA](#)). Track 4 projects must do one or both of these goals.

- 1) **Goal 1:** Track 4 will fund California food producers to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market.
 - This means that if a food producer would like to use grant funds to increase, production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods, they would need to be doing so for the school food market (i.e., for the school nutrition services department to incorporate into school meals). In addition but not instead of, the food producer could use grant funds to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for a school-organized free food distribution program at the school.
- 2) **Goal 2:** Track 4 will also fund California food producers to provide hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement their food sales or donations to schools.
 - This means that if a food producer is already or, as part of their grant project will be, producing, processing, and/or distributing whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market (i.e., for the school nutrition services department to incorporate into school meals), then they can use grant funds to provide hands-on educational opportunities for students that complement these existing food sales or donations to schools.

Please also note that the local charter school would need to be a directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority and operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to be an eligible Track 4 partner entity.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Can our public school district apply to two different tracks of the grant? For example, our Garden Coordinator applies to Track 1 and my nutrition services department does a regional grant via Track 2. Is that allowable?

A: Yes, eligible entities may apply to multiple funding tracks. Tracks 1, 3, and 4 limit eligible entities to one application in each track. For Track 2, eligible entities may apply once as the lead applicant and multiple times as a supporting project partner. Eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are not duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application.

- For applicants interested in applying to Track 1, we recommend reviewing the [goals of Track 1 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the [Track 1 eligibility criteria on pages 12-13 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 1 application questions and review criteria](#) to see if Track 1 is a good fit.
- For applicants interested in applying to Track 2, we recommend reviewing the [goals of Track 2 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the [Track 2 eligibility criteria on pages 13-15 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#) to see if Track 2 is a good fit.

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 4] We are looking to expand our high school garden in a district-wide school garden program/farm stand CSA where we can grow food on campus, and provide local produce to community members through farm stand/CSA programs. We are also looking into the logistics of partnering with a local farm to see if they can provide food to our campuses. Which funding track is most appropriate? Also, if we apply to Track 2, can we use funds for our school-site farms to expand our on-site food production, AND local farm-to-school produce purchasing? Or do you suggest we apply for Track 1 for our school farm, and tell our farmer/producer partner to apply for Track 4 separately?

A: Track 1 sounds like a good fit for your school district. If you are an individual public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority and operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program AND you would like to establish or expand a farm to school program for your *individual* school community that integrates the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students and procures California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for school meals, then Track 1 is a good fit.

In contrast to Track 1, Track 2 is for projects that will make regional or statewide food system impact and meaningfully support more than one school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school. Track 2 can fund on-campus food production and procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for utilization in farm to school educational activities that engage students if these activities are part of a regional or statewide farm to school initiative. However, Track 2 cannot fund procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for utilization in school meals (that is part of what Track 1 is for). Track 2 is not a good fit for projects that will focus on one public school district community, but Track 1 is.

Your farmer/producer partner could apply to Track 4 separately if they meet the Track 4 eligibility criteria (see [pages 18-19 of the RFA](#)), and the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at your school district could write the letter of intent that is a required component of the Track 4 application.

RFA SECTION: 1.4 FUNDING & DURATION

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Regarding the funding formula, it says that the minimum award amount is \$150k and the maximum is \$1M. There is also a part that says \$10 per student enrolled. My district is small, so \$10 per student would be less than \$10,000. Does this mean that if we reapply, we will only receive \$10 per student or \$150,000?

A: You could apply for up to \$150,000. For Track 1, the funding formula is: Total project award amount for which applicants may apply = Number of students enrolled in School Year 2019-2020 multiplied by \$10. However, if an applicant's formula produces a number LESS THAN \$150,000, the applicant may apply for *up to* \$150,000. If an applicant's formula produces a number that is BETWEEN \$150,000 and 1 million, the applicant may apply for *no more than* the result of their funding formula. If an applicant's formula produces a number GREATER THAN \$1 million, the applicant may apply for *no more than* \$1 million.

Q: [Tracks 2, 3, & 4] It looks like there is no funding formula for Tracks 2 – 4. Can applicants request the maximum amount? How does the CDFA determine how much to award each applicant?

A: Correct; applicants to Tracks 2, 3, and 4 may request up to the maximum award amount for each track. All applications that pass the CDFA's initial administrative review by meeting all eligibility and application requirements will receive an external technical review according to the review criteria on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). Competitive applications will be those that receive high scores during external technical review relative to other applications. Final award amounts may depend upon how many competitive applications the CDFA receives in each funding track. The CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

Q: [All Tracks] How long is the grant term?

A: The grant term is up to 24 months (or 2 years). Grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024.

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Can you please clarify the funding formula for Track 1?

A: First, use [ed-data.org](#) to find your Census Day Enrollment in School Year 2019-2020. Then, multiply this number by \$10. Third, please note that if the funding formula produces a number LESS THAN \$150,000, you may apply for up to \$150,000. If the funding formula produces a number that is BETWEEN \$150,000 and \$1 million, you may apply for no more than the result of the formula. If the funding formula produces a number GREATER THAN \$1 million, you may apply for no more than \$1 million.

May 25th–31st Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] If we are awarded a grant, do we receive the award amount per year or for the entire two-year grant cycle?

A: The award amount would be for the entire two-year grant cycle. The grant term is up to 24 months, from December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024. Your proposed grant project timeline needs to occur within this time period, but it does *not* need to fill the entire length of the grant term. Please note that grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024.

June 12th–14th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] I just wanted to confirm that all activities involved with [a school district's] Incubator project must be completed within 24 months of the grant period beginning?

A: Yes. The grant term is up to 24 months and if awarded, all project activities must occur between December 1, 2022 and November 30, 2024. Grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024.

Q: [All Tracks] Are grant opportunities for this program posted on a yearly basis or do opportunities coincide with cycle terms (i.e., 2022 applicants are funded through 2024 so next applications begin 2024/2025).

A: Currently, CDFA has one-time funding to conduct the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program for two more grant cycles:

- 1) A grant cycle in 2022 (which is the application cycle that is open now with a grant term from December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024)
- 2) A grant cycle in 2023 (we are not yet sure exactly when the application cycle will open or when the grant term will be, but we encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) if you haven't already for updates about farm to school grant funding)

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] I work for the school district that is the lead applicant for our Track 2 project partnership. If we receive a Track 2 grant, would all purchasing for the project go through the lead district? For example, if we are building new school garden beds for our partner districts and supplying them with curriculum, our district (as the lead district) would be purchasing the supplies?

A: Yes, this is one option: scenario 1 (below). There could also be another option: scenario 2 (also below). First, please note that this grant program is a reimbursement grant program, which means that if awarded a grant, recipients will fund the project and submit monthly or quarterly invoices to the CDFA to be reimbursed within 45 days after invoices are approved in most circumstances. Reimbursement goes to the grant recipient. The grant agreement must be fully executed (signed by both parties) before project activities begin. When grant recipients submit invoices to the CDFA for reimbursement, they must demonstrate "proof of payment" for the grant expenses they are billing to the grant. Second, in terms of the specific situation you described, here are two possible scenarios:

- **Scenario 1:** If your district, as the lead applicant in your project partnership, becomes a grant recipient of a Track 2 grant and then buys school garden materials (for your own organization and/or for a project partner) during the grant term as outlined in your approved budget, then you would need to provide receipts with your invoice to demonstrate proof of payment.
- **Scenario 2:** If your district, as the lead applicant in your project partnership, becomes a grant recipient of a Track 2 grant and then your project partners buy their own school garden materials during the grant term as outlined in your approved budget, then you would need to provide receipts from your project partners with your invoice to demonstrate proof of payment.

In both scenarios, you could propose these school garden materials under the Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies category of the Track 2 budget worksheet and then explain them in the reasoning section. Please note that in both scenarios, approved reimbursements

would go to the grant recipient directly. If you go with scenario 2, then the grant recipient would be responsible for repaying its project partners.

Q: [Track 4] Do grant recipients need to achieve all outcomes within the grant period?

A: The grant term is up to 24 months, from December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024. Grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024. In question 13, "Timeline," in the Track 4 application, applicants must list their project activities and when they plan to implement them. Within this timeline, applicants must include their estimated time frame for implementing food sales/donations to schools and/or hands-on educational opportunities for youth in partnership with schools. However, the actual implementation of food sales/donations and/or educational opportunities does not need to occur during the grant term as long as all spending of grant funds occurs during the grant term. For all other project activities listed in the project timeline, Track 4 grant recipients should complete them by the end of the grant term.

Q: [Track 4] Regarding equipment purchases – if awarded a grant, can we place a purchase order for the equipment prior to Dec 1 (the start of the grant term) if it may take several weeks/months to receive, with the idea that we would pay for the equipment after the grant period begins?

A: No. Please note that we estimate the grant term will be between December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024, which means that grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024. Purchase orders for grant expenses cannot occur before the grant term begins. The grant agreement must be fully executed (signed by both parties) before project activities begin.

Q: [All Tracks] If we get selected, when should we expect first payment?

A: For your question about payments – the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is a Reimbursement Grant Program. If awarded a grant, recipients will fund the project and submit monthly or quarterly invoices to CDFA to be reimbursed within 45 days after invoices are approved in most circumstances. The grant agreement must be fully executed (signed by both parties) before project activities begin. Please note that we estimate the grant term will be between December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024, which means that grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024.

Please note that grant recipients may be eligible to receive Advance Payments for project expenditures. Advance payments shall not exceed the amount necessary for project expenses for a three-month period and cannot reduce the project balance below 10% of the award amount. If eligible and approved for advance payment, recipients must follow the [Advance Payment regulations](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Once awarded, is this a grant program where money will be given upfront or do the awardees need to spend their own money and then submit for reimbursement from the grant?

A: [See this response](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Will there be future funding opportunities through this grant program?

A: [See this response](#).

RFA SECTION: 1.5 COST SHARE

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Are there matching funds requirements?

A: No. This grant program does NOT require matching funds. The CDFA will fund up to 100% of the total project cost. See the Cost Share section in the RFA for additional details.

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] What is the cost for the entire program?

A: There is no cost to participate in the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. This grant program does NOT require matching funds and the CDFA will fund up to 100% of the total project cost. See [Cost Share on page 11 of the RFA](#) for more details. Please note that this is a reimbursement grant program but that grant recipients may be eligible to receive Advance Payments for project expenditures (see [Payment Process on page 11 of the RFA](#) for details). There is a requirement that grant applicants must include a Sustainability Plan in their application in which they must respond to this prompt: “In what ways will your district/organization sustain this project beyond the duration of the grant term? Also, if your Budget includes staffing costs, please acknowledge these investments in staffing here and discuss any plans to sustain those roles after the grant term ends.” Please note that the grant term is up to 24 months, estimated to be between December 1, 2022 and November 30, 2024.

RFA SECTION: 1.6 ELIGIBILITY & EXCLUSIONS

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Are there specific parameters to determine if a school is eligible to apply? For instance, is there a required percentage of students that must be eligible for free/reduced-price meals in order to apply?

A: Farm to school implementing organizations, i.e., public school districts, county offices of education, and directly funded charter schools, including those located on Indian Reservations, in California are eligible to apply to Track 1. Farm to school implementing organizations must serve as a School Food Authority (SFA) and operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) to be eligible. Please note that farm to school implementing organizations that typically operate the NSLP or SBP but currently operate the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during the school year instead are still eligible to apply. Please also note that farm to school implementing organizations that do not yet operate the NSLP or SBP but have a written agreement with the California Department of Education to start in School Year 2022-2023 are eligible to apply. There is *no* requirement that a certain percentage of students be eligible for free/reduced-price lunch in order to apply. However, 40% of the score for Track 1 applications is based on community need, which includes factors such as free/reduced-price lunch eligibility rate as well as other factors. Please note that individual schools are *not* eligible to apply to Track 1, unless they are a single-site public school district or a single-site directly funded charter school.

Q: [Track 1] Can a mega school district like Los Angeles Unified be considered as “multiple” school districts and apply multiple times to Track 1?

A: No. A large school districts is still a single school district. Each public school district in California that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch

Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) may submit one application to Track 1.

Q: [Track 1] We are a directly funded charter school. We procure food from local farms, would like to produce most of our own food for our students and local community members, and do nutrition education and gardening. Which funding track would be a good fit for us?

A: Track 1 sounds like a good fit. If you are an individual public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school that operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and you would like to establish or expand a farm to school program for your individual school community that integrates the school nutrition services program with education and procures California grown food, then Track 1 is a good fit.

Q: [Track 1] Our school district would like to educate our students about wheat and whole grains and tie that in with cooking and serving whole grains for school lunch. Which funding track would be a good fit for us? Could we work with a local partner organization? Could we use grant funds to pay for a parent's time to teach the students, for educational materials, and for indirect costs?

A: Track 1 sounds like a good fit. If you are an individual public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school that operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and you would like to establish or expand a farm to school program for your individual school community that integrates the school nutrition services program with education and procures California grown food, then Track 1 is a good fit. Track 1 grant recipients may work with local partner organizations and may write these partners into their proposed project budget under the Contractual Costs category. Another option, if the project will make regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school, could be for the school district and local partner organization to apply together to Track 2 as a project partnership. Please refer to the RFA for full eligibility criteria for Track 2. In Tracks 1 and 2, grant funds could pay for a parent's time to teach the students, educational materials, and indirect costs.

Q: [Track 1] Can school districts apply to Track 1 to develop and/or sustain a school district farm?

A: Yes. School districts looking to develop and/or sustain a farm on their own school district property may be eligible to apply to Tracks 1, 2, and 3. For example, Track 1 may be a good fit if the school district is a School Food Authority and is looking to incorporate the farm into procurement and education efforts to serve their individual school district community. Track 2 may be a good fit if the school district is looking to incorporate the farm into a larger regional or statewide farm to school project that will engage multiple school districts. And Track 3 may be a good fit if the school district operates a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program and is looking to incorporate the farm into procurement and education efforts to serve their early care and education (ECE) population.

Q: [Track 1] Can I submit two Track 1 grant applications from my school district – one to support a school garden so that the school nutrition services department can purchase their produce and one to support our district's production farm?

A: No. There is a limit of one Track 1 application per eligible entity. Your school district would need to find a way to combine both of these elements into one Track 1 project proposal.

Q: [Track 2] How do you define regional impact?

A: Applicants may determine what regional means to them. The Track 2 review criteria does not have a specific definition of “regional,” but rather will evaluate whether an applicant clearly demonstrates how the project will make regional or statewide food system impact that *meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization* (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) and what the scale of that impact will be.

Q: [Track 2] Can you be a partner on multiple Track 2 applications?

A: Yes. Tracks 1, 3, and 4 limit eligible entities to one application in each track. For Track 2, eligible entities may apply once as the lead applicant and multiple times as a supporting project partner. Please note that an entity may be written into an unlimited number of applications as a partner/contractor in any of the funding tracks. However, please note that project costs cannot be duplicative (i.e., if an entity is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a contractor, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs).

Q: [Track 2] If you are a partner on another organization's Track 2 application, do you need to write their organization into your own Track 2 application as a partner?

A: No. If Entity A and Entity B are each applying to Track 2 as lead applicants, and Entity A includes Entity B as a supporting project partner in their application, there is no requirement that Entity B also includes Entity A as a supporting project partner in their application. However, if Entity A's and Entity B's proposed projects overlap and intersect, then it would make sense to touch on that in the Project Description section of the application and describe how the projects are complementary but not duplicative.

Q: [Track 2] Can anyone write you into their Track 2 grant application as a partner or do you have to agree first?

A: When Track 2 applicants name supporting project partners in their application, they must submit a letter of support from each supporting project partner for the CDFA to consider their application complete.

Q: [Track 2] Are non-profits that partner with public school systems to implement activities such as garden construction, garden education, garden/farm field trips, farm to school recipe kit distribution, and/or other garden-related programming such as cafeteria-to-compost eligible to apply? Which funding track would be a good fit?

A: Yes; Track 2 sounds like it could be a good fit. Non-profit organizations are eligible to apply to Track 2 as farm to school support organizations. A non-profit organization like the one described in this question could apply to provide farm to school procurement and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school. Please note that farm to school support organizations must partner with at least one farm to school implementing organization in order to apply to Track 2 and the project partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization.

Q: [Track 2] We are a non-profit that works with eight schools within a larger school district. Can we apply to Track 2 in partnership with these 8 schools?

A: Yes and no; please read on for clarification. Non-profit organizations are eligible to apply to Track 2 as farm to school support organizations. However, please note that farm to school support organizations must partner with at least one farm to school implementing organization

(i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school) in order to apply to Track 2 and the project partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. This means that the non-profit would need to apply in partnership with the school district itself by submitting a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at the district. The non-profit may then identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within that school district. Additionally, the non-profit would need to demonstrate in the application how their proposed project will make regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. Proposing a Track 2 project that impacts eight schools within one school district would not demonstrate regional or statewide impact.

Q: [Track 2] Can a national non-profit organization that has a team of staff dedicated specifically to expanding farm to school work in California apply to Track 2?

A: Yes. For Track 2, farm to school support organizations, whether the lead applicant or a supporting project partner, may be organizations that are based outside of California but serve California farm to school programs (unless otherwise indicated in the list of eligible Track 2 farm to school support organizations in the RFA). Such organizations must use any funding they may receive through Track 2 for project activities that support California farm to school programs and that make regional or statewide food system impact in California.

Q: [Track 2] We are a non-profit organization with a small team and a fairly small operating budget. Will our small size decrease the competitiveness of our application?

A: No. The Track 2 application does not ask applicants for the number of employees or operating budget at their organization. Please refer to the Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria document on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#) to see how the external technical review committee will score applications.

Q: [Track 2] We work with the local Boys and Girls Club. Can they get involved in this grant program?

A: As a non-profit organization, a Boys and Girls Club would be eligible to apply to Track 2 if they are a farm to school support organization, meaning they provide support to California farm to school programs. They would need to partner with at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school) to apply. Their proposed project would need to align with the goals of Track 2 (see the Four Funding Tracks section in the RFA) and would need to make regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. Alternatively, a Boys and Girls Club could be a supporting project partner on a Track 2 project rather than the lead applicant and would need to provide a letter of support.

Q: [Track 2] Can a new school site, opening in Fall 2022, apply to Track 2?

A: Please note that individual schools are *not* eligible to apply to Track 2, unless they are a single-site public school district or a single-site directly funded charter school. However, farm to school implementing organizations (i.e., public school districts, county offices of education, and/or directly funded charter schools) are eligible to apply to Track 2 and if they apply, they may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership. Please see the Eligibility and Exclusions section in the RFA for additional details about Track 2 eligibility criteria.

Q: [Track 2] Can school districts apply to Track 2 to develop and/or sustain a school district farm?

A: Public school districts are eligible to apply to Track 2. They must partner with at least one other public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school to apply or with at least one farm to school support organization to apply. Please note that Track 2 projects must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school). If the farm you are proposing is going to support farm to school across the region, beyond your individual school district, then it could fit in Track 2 and you would have to explain in the application how it will make regional impact.

Q: [Track 3] Are elementary schools or non-profits who serve them eligible for Track 3?

A: For Track 3, the individual elementary schools themselves would *not* be able to apply. However, if the school district operates a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program, the district could apply to Track 3 to implement a farm to early care and education (ECE) program at one or more of its ECE sites. Additionally, a non-profit organization that provides support to California ECE providers would be able to apply to Track 3. California ECE providers include public school districts in California that operate preschool, transitional kindergarten, and/or Head Start.

Q: [Track 4] Can school districts apply to Track 4 to develop and/or sustain a school district farm?

A: No. School districts are *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district property may apply to Track 4.

Q: [Track 4] How do I know if a certain school district is an eligible partner for this program?

A: The public school district must be in California and must be a School Food Authority (SFA) that operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program to be an eligible partner for Track 4 of this program. We suggest that Track 4 applicants ask the school district(s) with which they would like to collaborate for this project if they are a School Food Authority that operates any of these school meal programs. If yes, then they are an eligible partner.

Q: [Track 4] If a school is not set up to receive and prepare whole foods, are they simply not a good school for a food producer to work with in Track 4?

A: Any public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school in California that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program is an eligible partner for Track 4 of this program. When working with schools as a producer, a promising practice is to coordinate with your partner school districts to see what their individual requirements and capacities are and then customize your solution to meet their needs. For example, some school districts may prefer to start with one item that is simple to prepare while others may have seasonal needs that a producer can fulfill.

Q: [Track 4] In order for a food producer to be eligible to apply to Track 4, does the producer's school district partner have to have existing farm to school programming?

A: No. The school district(s), county office(s) of education, and/or directly funded charter school(s) that a food producer is partnering with for their Track 4 project do not need to have an existing farm to school program. However, they will need to be a School Food Authority (SFA) that operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program to be eligible partners.

Q: [Track 4] Can a food producer selling food to a farm to school food hub apply to Track 4?

A: Yes, if the food producer can get a letter of intent from a school nutrition services director at one of the school districts that the food hub is selling the producer's food to, in which the school nutrition services director expresses their intent to purchase the producer's food through the food hub. There is a letter of intent template in the application that producers can use.

Q: [Track 4] Can a small farm that operates as a non-profit organization apply as a food producer even though it is a non-profit?

A: Yes. A non-profit organization that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land is eligible to apply to Track 4. Please see the Eligibility and Exclusions section in the RFA for additional Track 4 eligibility details.

Q: [Track 4] Can a local bakery apply to Track 4 to use local wheat to make minimally processed products for schools?

A: No. Track 4 is for food producers to apply. A food producer could apply to Track 4 to grow the wheat for schools. The food producer could use grant funds to mill and process the wheat into a minimally processed product for schools if they would like. A public school district applying to Track 1 could use grant funds to procure the wheat and/or minimally processed wheat products from the food producer and could also use grant funds to procure minimally processed whole grain-rich products from a local bakery that uses 100% California grown wheat.

Q: [Track 4] Can a food producer support organization apply to Track 4 on behalf of food producers and then distribute the funds to them?

A: No. Track 4 is for food producers to apply directly. Farm to school producer support organizations are *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. However, food producer support organizations may be eligible to apply to Track 2 as a farm to school support organization in partnership with food producers. They may propose projects that will increase collaboration and coordination between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods. The maximum award amount for Track 2 is \$500,000, which is higher than Track 4 to allow for farm to school support organizations to scale up the award by, for example, scaling up their food producer partners and thus make broader impact beyond an individual food producer. The proposed project budget for Track 2 may incorporate mini grants to individual food producers. Please note that farm to school support organizations that apply to Track 2 must partner with at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school) and their partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. The individual food producers with whom a farm to school support organization partners for the Track 2 application may also be eligible to apply individually to

Track 4. Please see the list of eligible farm to school support organizations for Track 2 in the Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA to see if your food producer support organization fits any of these eligible entity types (e.g., non-profit organization, resource conservation district, regional farmers' market association, etc.).

Q: [Track 4] Can I apply to sell blueberries to schools?

A: Yes. If you are a food producer in California and would like to sell blueberries (or any other California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods) to public schools, you may apply to Track 4. Please note that in the application, food producers must be able to demonstrate an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department through at least one letter of intent from a school nutrition director at any of the entities with which the producer intends to collaborate. Please refer to the letter of intent template on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). If you would prefer not to apply for a grant but would still like to sell food to schools, please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov for free, non-competitive technical assistance to connect with the school food market in California.

Q: [Track 4] What does “Indigenous food production practices” mean?

A: This refers to any food production practices that a Tribe and/or Indigenous food producer may use to produce food, particularly those that are not otherwise included in the phrases “cultivating crops” or “raising livestock.”

Q: [Track 4] Can I apply to do vertical farming and/or aquaponics?

A: Yes. Food producers who utilize vertical farming and/or aquaponics and meet the other eligibility requirements in the Track 4 Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA are eligible to apply to Track 4.

Q: [Track 4] Can I apply to fund start-up costs for new food production projects?

A: Yes. Track 4 applicants may apply to fund start-up costs for their food production operation if the costs follow the Allowable and Unallowable Costs for Track 4. However, please note that all Track 4 applicants must be able to demonstrate an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department in the application and that the CDFA will prioritize Track 4 applicants who can demonstrate an ability to produce food for schools in the application.

Q: [Track 4] Are California food manufacturers that use California ingredients eligible to apply?

A: No; California food manufacturers are *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. Track 4 is for California food producers to apply. This program defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.

Q: [Track 4] Does the sale of produce to schools need to occur during the grant term?

A: No. The Track 4 application asks applicants to provide a timeline that includes their estimated time frame for implementing food sales/donations to schools and/or hands-on educational opportunities for youth in partnership with schools. However, in Track 4, the actual

implementation of food sales/donations and/or educational opportunities does not need to occur during the grant term as long as all spending of grant funds occurs during the grant term.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 3] Can a school district apply to both Track 1 and Track 3?

A: Yes. A public school district may apply to Track 1 to establish or expand a farm to school program if it is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP). If a public school district operates a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program and is interested in maximizing funding for farm to early care and education (ECE), it may also apply to Track 3 to establish or expand a farm to ECE program. If a public school district submits competitive applications in both tracks, it is possible to receive a grant award in both tracks. Please note that eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are *not* duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] We run a food hub consisting of several local producers. We hope to apply to Track 2 as the food hub to sell locally sourced foods from many producers directly to the school. Could a producer outside of the food hub apply individually for the same track in the same county?

A: Food hubs and individual food producers in California are eligible to apply to Track 2 as farm to school support organizations. A food hub or individual food producer would need to partner with at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school in California) to apply. Additionally, please note that Track 2 projects need to focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. Because of the regional or statewide focus of Track 2, we encourage partners within the same region to collaborate on a single Track 2 application in order to maximize project impact. One strategy could be for a food hub, individual food producers, and at least one farm to school implementing organization to apply to Track 2 collectively through one Track 2 application and then for the individual food producers to submit individual applications to Track 4, which is the California Farm to School Producer Grant.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] Is this type of entity eligible to apply: a 3rd party that a school district sponsors to provide summer school/enrichment activities and meals?

A: For Track 2, two types of entities may apply as the lead applicant: farm to school implementing organizations and farm to school support organizations. First, farm to school implementing organizations are public school districts, county offices of education, and/or directly funded charter schools in California. A third party that a public school district sponsors to provide summer school enrichment activities and summer meals is *not* an eligible farm to school implementing organization, but the public school district itself is. Second, farm to school support organizations are those that support California farm to school programs, such as non-profit organizations, local or Tribal government entities in California, county agencies in California, UC Cooperative Extension offices, and others. See the Track 2 Eligibility and Exclusions section in the RFA for a complete list of eligible farm to school support organizations. If the third party's organization type qualifies as a farm to school support organization, then it may be eligible to apply to Track 2. Please note that Track 2 project partnerships must include either of the following combinations: (1) at least one farm to school support organization and at least one California farm to school implementing organization; or (2) at least two California farm to school

implementing organizations. Additionally, Track 2 project partnerships must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. For Track 4, only California food producers are eligible to apply.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] We are a food producer and a food hub. Our farm and our food hub have the same tax identification number. Can we apply to this grant program?

A: Yes; food producers in California may apply to Track 4. Food producers and food hubs in California may apply to Track 2. For Tracks 2 and 4, food producers may submit one application in each track per unique tax identification number. For example, if your farm and food hub have the same tax identification number, then you could apply once in Track 4 as a food producer, and you could apply once in Track 2 as either a food producer or a food hub. Your farm and/or food hub could also participate in an unlimited number of Track 2 applications as a supporting project partner.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] We are a non-profit organization that operates on-farm youth education programs. We are interested in increasing food production to sell into local schools, increasing farm/garden/culinary programming for children throughout the region, and providing trainings and professional development for educators and parents. Which funding track would be a good fit for us?

A: Tracks 2 and/or 4 may be a good fit. Food producers that are eligible to apply to Track 4 include non-profit organizations that lease, rent, or own land in California and cultivate crops, raise livestock, and/or use Indigenous food production practices on this land. Track 4 can fund production, processing, and distribution of whole or minimally processed food for the school food market as well as hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the food producer's food sales or donations to schools. Please note that in order to apply to Track 4, food producers must show evidence of an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department (see the RFA for more details). Non-profit organizations are also eligible to apply to Track 2 if they apply in partnership with at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) to implement a farm to school project that will have regional or statewide food system impact and meaningfully support more than one farm to school implementing organization. [Explore Track 2 projects from the 2021 grant cycle](#) for examples.

Q: [All Tracks] If we are currently receiving a USDA Farm to School Grant, can we apply for these funds from the CDFA to expand what we're already doing?

A: Yes. USDA Farm to School Grant recipients *and* previous grant recipients of this program may apply in 2022 if they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA. Please note that activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot *replace* activities funded by another federal or state grant program. In the application, USDA Farm to School Grant recipients and previous grant recipients of this program must address how their proposed project *supplements* rather than *replaces* efforts funded by the USDA and/or by the 2021 grant cycle of this program.

Q: [All Tracks] Are applicants eligible to apply to multiple funding tracks and receive a grant award in multiple funding tracks?

A: Yes. Applicants may apply to multiple tracks based on eligibility and project type. See the Eligibility and Exclusions section in the RFA for details about eligibility and see the Four Funding

Tracks section for descriptions of the four funding tracks. If an applicant submits competitive applications in multiple tracks, it is possible to receive a grant award in multiple tracks. Please note that eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are *not* duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application.

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Our organization is hoping to receive funding for a project about school garden programming. Would Track 1 be a suitable track for this project if we get our charter school partner to submit the application?

A: If the directly funded charter school with which you partner is a School Food Authority and operates the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, then yes, they may apply to Track 1 (see full Track 1 eligibility on [pages 12-13 of the RFA](#)). Their project must both (1) coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces; and (2) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals. Educational opportunities may include school gardens and Track 1 grant recipients may use grant funds for infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces. Track 1 grant recipients may also use grant funds for Contractual Costs (e.g., to contract with a community partner such as yours for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives).

Q: [Track 2] How do we know if a partner organization counts as an eligible farm to school support organization for Track 2?

A: For Track 2, an organization is an eligible farm to school support organization if they support California farm to school programs and if their organization type is one of the types listed on [pages 13-14 of the RFA](#). If you consider an organization a farm to school support organization but do not see their organization type in this list, please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov to see if they might be eligible before proceeding.

Q: [Track 2] How do I know if my organization qualifies as a state-established commission that is eligible to apply to Track 2?

A: In general, this grant program considers a “state-established commission in California” to be a commission or council in California that a California state agency or department oversees and that California Code establishes. For example, the [California Food and Agricultural Code, Division 22, Part 2](#) lists a number of Marketing Advisory and Promotional Councils and Commissions that the California Department of Food and Agriculture oversees.

Q: [Track 2] Does this seem like a viable Track 2 project? Our project partnership consists of a non-profit organization in California, a public school district in California, and a food producer in California. For our project, we would like to increase nutrition knowledge, food access, and procurement.

A: In terms of project partners, the partnership you outlined meets the Track 2 requirements for project partnerships (see Combination 1). Track 2 requires project partnerships to include either of the following combinations: (1) at least one farm to school support organization and at least

one California farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, directly funded charter school, or county office of education); **or** (2) at least two California farm to school implementing organizations, as defined above.

While we cannot provide specific feedback on grant project ideas, the project activities you mentioned appear allowable as long as you can describe in your application how the proposed project activities/costs relate to one or more of the goals of Track 2, which are to:

- (1) implement farm to school procurement and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; **and/or**
- (2) increase collaboration and coordination regionally or statewide between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals, especially foods that are culturally relevant, climate smart, and from small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, socially disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California; **and/or**
- (3) provide farm to school procurement and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school.

An important thing to keep in mind for Track 2 is that projects must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, directly funded charter school, and/or county office of education). So, you would need to demonstrate how your Track 2 project would meaningfully support at least one other public school district, directly funded charter school, and/or county office of education in addition to the public school district that is already part of your project partnership.

Q: [Track 2] We are a small farm and mill facility in California that delivers our flour throughout the surrounding counties; we have established relationships with several bakeries and have spoken with a few schools. We would like to expand our capacity to grow and mill California grown wheat and then provide the milled wheat to partner bakeries in California who will bake breads/tortillas with it and then sell the products to schools for their school meals and school food pantries. Can we apply and if so, how should we go about pursuing a grant award?

A: Yes, as a food producer in California, you may apply to Track 2 and/or Track 4. Due to the many partners involved and the regional reach of your project, Track 2 sounds like a good fit. Please note that if you as the food producer are the lead applicant, you will need to ensure that your project partnership includes at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, directly funded charter school, or county office of education) as well. Your Track 2 project must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. In the application, it will be important to clearly describe each project partner's role in the project and to include a letter of support from each supporting project partner. The project activities described in the question all appear allowable in Track 2 as long as you can describe in your application how the proposed project activities/costs relate to one or more of the goals of Track 2, which are to:

- (1) implement farm to school procurement and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; **and/or**

- (2) increase collaboration and coordination regionally or statewide between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals, especially foods that are culturally relevant, climate smart, and from small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, socially disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California; **and/or**
- (3) provide farm to school procurement and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school.

Q: [Track 2] Can you please share the CDFA farm to school regional map?

A: In terms of the California Farm to School Network, below is the regional map that we currently use. Please note that for the purposes of this grant program, applicants applying to Track 2 may determine what regional means to them. The Track 2 review criteria does not have a specific definition of “regional,” but rather will evaluate whether an applicant clearly demonstrates how the project will make regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) and what the scale of that impact will be.



Q: [Track 4] Can a producer support organization apply for / on behalf of a farmer who wants to collaborate with schools but does not want to apply himself?

A: No. [See this response](#). Please note that producer support organizations are welcome to assist California food producers with developing and writing their application, but the application and submission themselves need to come from the food producer.

Q: [Track 4] Would you consider a block grant approach? That is, an organization applying for funding to pass through to many local producer networks throughout the state?

A: Not for Track 4, but this may be a fit for Track 2; read on for details. Track 4 is for food producers to apply directly. Farm to school producer support organizations are not eligible to apply to Track 4. However, food producer support organizations may be eligible to apply to

Track 2 as a farm to school support organization. They may propose projects that will: (1) implement farm to school procurement and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; and/or (2) increase collaboration and coordination between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals; and/or (3) provide farm to school procurement and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school). The maximum award amount for Track 2 is \$500,000, which is higher than Track 4 to allow for farm to school support organizations to scale up the award by scaling up their partners and project reach. The proposed project budget for Track 2 may incorporate contractual costs for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives, subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Please note that farm to school support organizations that apply to Track 2 must partner with at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school) and their partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization.

Q: [Track 4] Can charter schools apply to Track 4 to develop and/or sustain an on-campus farm?

A: No. Charter schools are *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on charter school property may apply to Track 4. Also, [see this response](#).

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Our local food hub and public school district are partners in Farm to School. We are wondering if it is stronger to each apply separately or apply together?

A: You can do both. If the public school district is a School Food Authority that operates the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP), then it can apply individually to Track 1 (The CA Farm to School K-12 Procurement and Education Grant). Additionally, the school district and food hub can apply together to Track 2 (The CA Farm to School Partnership Grant). Furthermore, individual food producers that have an established relationship with the school district can apply to Track 4 (The CA Farm to School Producer Grant). Also, if the school district operates a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program, it may be eligible to apply to Track 3 (The California Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grant). The [Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA](#) discusses eligibility for each of these tracks in further detail. The grant program will score each application based on the review criteria on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#); there is specific review criteria for each funding track. We recommend taking a look at that review criteria to help develop a strong application. Please note that if you are applying to multiple funding tracks, you must ensure that projects are not duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Our local food hub and public school district are partners in Farm to School. The school district is interested in applying to Track 1. If our food hub and the school district would also like to apply to Track 2 together, can our food hub be the lead

applicant for Track 2 with a public school district as the partner or does the public school district need to be the lead on both Tracks 1 and 2?

A: Either the public school district or the food hub can be the lead applicant for Track 2, regardless of whether or not the school district is applying to Track 1. Please note that for Track 2, the lead applicant is the entity that submits the application, and if awarded, is ultimately responsible for implementing the project and coordinating implementation with the other entities in the project partnership (supporting project partners). Supporting project partners must provide letters of support in the application for Track 2.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Our local food hub and public school district are partners in Farm to School. If the school district applies to Track 1 and the food hub, in partnership with the school district, applies to Track 2, we will write the grant applications so that the projects can be executed independently of the other regardless of whether or not the other gets funded but together they will have that much more impact on our community. For that reason, should we instead just submit one big grant application to Track 1?

A: It depends on how much funding you are looking for and the work you are hoping to fund, as well as your grant administration capacity.

- **Track 1:** If you are looking to fund the school district to procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for incorporation into school meals and to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students, then Track 1 is a good fit and the school district could apply. The funding amount for Track 1 is based on a funding formula (i.e., \$10 per student enrolled in the 2019-20 school year), but please note that any eligible school district can apply for up to \$150,000 in Track 1 even if their funding formula equals less.
- **Track 2:** If you are looking to do any of the following, then Track 2 is a good fit and the school district or food hub could apply as the lead applicant: (1) implement farm to school procurement and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; and/or (2) increase collaboration and coordination regionally or statewide between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals; and/or (3) provide farm to school procurement and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school. Please note that Track 2 projects must focus on making regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization. The funding amount for Track 2 is between \$100,000 to \$500,000 and applicants may apply for any amount within this range.
- **Applying to both Tracks 1 and 2:** An example from last year is the partnership between the California Wheat Commission, San Miguel Joint Union School District, and Shandon Joint Unified School District. The California Wheat Commission received a Track 2 grant for their project in partnership with these two districts. Each individual district also received a Track 1 grant. You can read the [project summaries](#) here on pages 10 and 14.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 3] Is a non-profit that does agriculture education able to apply for the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, or is it only open to schools?

A: As you will see in the [Eligibility Decision Tree](#):

- Farm to school support organizations (which include non-profits) are eligible to apply to Track 2 if they partner with at least one public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school in California and want to make a regional or statewide food system impact. We recommend reviewing the full eligibility criteria for Track 2 on [pages 13-15 of the RFA](#) before applying.
- Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) support organizations (which include non-profits) are eligible to apply to Track 3 if they provide support to ECE providers in California and want to establish or expand a farm to ECE program. We recommend reviewing the full eligibility criteria for Track 3 on [pages 16-17 of the RFA](#) before applying.

Q: [All Tracks] How can public school districts and directly funded charter schools apply to develop, sustain, and/or expand their school farms through this grant program?

A: Public school districts and directly funded charter schools that themselves operate a farm on their own school property may be eligible to apply to Tracks 1, 2, and 3. For example, Track 1 may be a good fit if the public school district or directly funded charter school is a School Food Authority that operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and is looking to incorporate the farm into procurement and education efforts to serve their individual school district or charter school community. Track 2 may be a good fit if the public school district or directly funded charter school is partnering with at least one farm to school support organization or at least one other public school district, directly funded charter school, and/or county office of education **and** is looking to incorporate the farm into a larger regional or statewide farm to school project that focuses on regional or statewide food system impact and meaningfully supports more than one public school district, directly funded charter school, and/or county office of education. And Track 3 may be a good fit if the public school district or directly funded charter school operates a preschool program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program and is looking to incorporate the farm into procurement and education efforts to serve their early care and education (ECE) population.

Please note that public school districts and charter schools are *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district or charter school property may apply to Track 4. This grant program defines a California food producer as: a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester. The intent of Track 4 was not to add another funding track for charter schools and school districts but to add a funding track that would enable the grant program to fund the entire farm to school food system by funding the producer/supply side, particularly small to midsize, socially disadvantaged, veteran, limited-resource, and/or climate smart food producers. Track 4 aims to increase the capacity of local California food producers to sell or donate food to and work with schools.

Please see full eligibility guidelines for Tracks 1, 2, 3, and 4 on [pages 12-19 of the RFA](#).

May 21st–24th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Are directly funded charter schools and public school districts eligible to apply to Track 1 if they are currently submitting application documents to the California Department of Education (CDE) to become a School Food Authority that starts operating the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program in School Year 2022-2023, but do not yet have a written agreement with the CDE in place?

A: Your directly funded charter school or public school district may submit a Track 1 application (by the deadline of July 6th by 5pm PT) and would meet the Track 1 eligibility requirements if, by August 31, 2022, you can provide evidence of a written agreement with the California Department of Education (CDE) to start operating the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program in School Year 2022-2023. When you submit your Track 1 application, you may check “Yes” to question 1b and respond to question 12l as if you already have a written agreement with the CDE. However, this is very important: please note the situation in Question 30, which asks “Is there anything else you would like to share with us?” to let us know that the agreement is not yet in place and that you plan to provide us evidence of the agreement by August 31, 2022. Please provide evidence of your written agreement with the CDE by emailing it to us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov when you are ready, any time before August 31, 2022, so that we can confirm your eligibility. We plan to make award announcements in September 2022.

Q: [Track 2] We are an elementary school TK-6th grade. We would like to develop our school garden into a learning garden for our students and school community. Would Track 2 be the area for us to apply?

A: We recommend using the [Eligibility Decision Tree](#) to determine the best track for your project. Based on your organization type, it directs you to which track fits with the goal of your project. Please note that Track 2 funds *regional and statewide* farm to school partnerships in California to establish new or expand existing farm to school initiatives, rather than funding individual schools. Eligible entities in Track 2 are farm to school support organizations and public school districts, county offices of education, or directly funded charter schools in California. Please see [pages 13-15 of the RFA](#) for full Track 2 eligibility guidelines.

Q: [Track 3] How do I know if my child care center is eligible to apply in Track 3?

A: If your child care center meets the following requirements, you would be eligible to apply in Track 3:

- Provides care all or part of the day
- Primarily serves young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers); may also serve school-age children
- Is licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) OR meets appropriate criteria for a license exemption (e.g., a license-exempt Tribal child care center located on an Indian reservation)

Please note:

- Child care centers include single-site and multi-site child care centers.
- Child care centers also include public school districts that operate a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program. For public school districts, their preschool

program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program (as opposed to their entire district) must primarily serve young children birth through age five to be eligible.

You can find more information about eligibility for Track 3 on [page 16 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 3] We work with a preschool located on a California State University campus; the preschool is part of the Associated Students auxiliary, a 501(c)(3) non-profit. So they are considered a preschool, Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education, and non-profit. Could you please let me know if we are eligible to apply, and if so, which track would be the best fit?

A: If the preschool is in California; provides care all or part of the day; primarily serves young children birth through age five; and is either licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) or meets appropriate criteria for a license exemption, then the preschool is eligible to apply to Track 3 as a child care center. Alternatively, the Associated Students auxiliary, as a non-profit organization, or the California State University, as an institution of higher education, could apply to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE support organization that provides support to California ECE providers (i.e., The Children's School).

Please note that when making award determinations in Track 3, the CDFA will seek to maximize impact by considering relative project reach (i.e., number of young children served, number of ECE providers engaged) among child center applicants and, separately, among farm to ECE support organization applicants. Child care centers may apply in partnership with other ECE providers (e.g., other child care centers, family child care homes, or family, friend, or neighbor settings) if they would like to increase their project reach. Additionally, among farm to ECE support organization applicants, the CDFA will prioritize projects that will ensure funds reach small, under-resourced providers and that will utilize a mixed-delivery lens (i.e., serve a range of ECE types such as child care centers; family child care homes; and family, friend, or neighbor settings) when determining how to support ECE providers with project funds.

Q: [Track 3] Can you provide a resource list of Farm to ECE support organizations in our area?

A: We don't have a specific resource list of Farm to ECE support organizations. However, the following Farm to ECE support organizations that provide support to California ECE providers are eligible for Track 3 ([page 16 of the RFA](#)). We have included links to some of their listings below:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors of Day Care Homes in California and/or CACFP Sponsors of Child Care Centers in California
- Child Care and Development Fund Tribal Lead Agencies in California
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies in California
 - [This resource](#) may be helpful to find CCR&R agencies by county
- First 5 county commissions in California
 - [This resource](#) may be helpful to find a First 5 by zip code
- Alternative Payment Programs (APPs) in California
 - [This resource](#) may be helpful to find APPs by county

- Head Start grantees in California (i.e., an agency that is awarded funding by the Office of Head Start to provide or subcontract Head Start services in their area)
- Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils (LPCs) in California
 - [This resource](#) may be helpful to find LPCs by county
- Non-profit organizations
- State-established commissions in California
- Local or Tribal government entities in California
- County agencies or regional authorities in California
- Institutions of higher education
- UC Cooperative Extension offices
- Projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor
 - NOTE: Applicants must clearly identify the fiscal sponsor in the application. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor will be the grant recipient and will be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all project activities and costs follow grant requirements.
- Philanthropic organizations

Q: [All Tracks] We are a private school in California. Are we eligible to apply?

A: Private schools are *not* eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, private schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership. If you haven't already, we encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) - we send out monthly updates with farm to school related opportunities and highlights, as well as related funding opportunities.

May 25th–31st Q&A

Q: [Track 2] Would we be able to be a contractor on another organization's grant application, if we are also submitting our own application as a lead applicant?

A: Yes. [See this response](#).

Q: [Track 2] We would like to confirm whether or not a school district can be a farm to school implementing organization partner in more than one Track 2 application as long as the project activities funded are not duplicative. For example, District A could work with two different non-profits on two distinctive projects and both non-profits can submit Track 2 applications as lead applicants with letters of support from District A.

A: That is correct. For Track 2, eligible entities may apply once as the lead applicant and multiple times as a supporting project partner. Eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are *not* duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application ([page 12 of the RFA](#)).

Q: [Track 4] We are a small non-profit farm in California and are beginning to grow produce. We would like to apply for Track 4 but are concerned we will be at a disadvantage because we cannot yet show that we have harvested produce. Can we still apply for the grant?

A: Yes, you may still apply to Track 4. Please note that [question #9 in the Track 4 application](#) asks you to please briefly describe your history with food production. The review criteria does

not score this question, but notes that the CDFA will prioritize applicants who demonstrate an ability to produce food for schools.

Q: [Track 4] My farm in California would like to apply for Track 4 of the CDFA grant. Would a non-public school in our region qualify as a school that we could collaborate with under the grant guidelines?

A: No. A private school is *not* an eligible school partner entity for Track 4. Here are the eligible school partner entities in CA for Track 4:

- Public school district that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program
- County office of education that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Center-based program for children participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Please note that private schools are *not* eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, private schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership.

Q: [Track 4] Can a school district with a school farm apply to Track 4 as a producer for another school district and for a food hub such as a food bank?

A: No; schools and school districts cannot apply to Track 4, whether it's to serve their own district or another school district or a food hub. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district property may apply to Track 4. Track 4 defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.

Q: [Track 4] We are a non-profit that has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a school district to operate their high school farm. Can we apply to Track 4?

A: This question requires a two-part response:

- First, for context, [page 19 of the RFA](#) states that school districts are *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district property may apply to Track 4. Track 4 defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.
- Second, in response to your question and based on this context, we ask you three questions:

- 1) Does your non-profit organization lease or rent school-owned land in California (or alternatively, have a written agreement such as an MOU for school-owned land in California)?
 - 2) Do your non-profit organization and the school district consider your organization to be the operator of that land (rather than considering the school or district to be the operator of the land)?
 - 3) Does your non-profit organization cultivate crops, raise livestock, and/or use Indigenous food production practices on this land?
- If you answer yes to all three questions, then your non-profit organization is eligible to apply to Track 4. Please make sure to very clearly describe the relationship between the school district and your non-profit organization in question 7b in the Track 4 application, and please ensure that the school district very clearly describes the relationship in the Letter of Intent, question 2.
 - If you *do not* answer yes to all three questions, and/or if your non-profit organization plays a supporting role to co-operate the land but the school considers itself to be the operator of the land, then your non-profit organization is *not* eligible to apply to Track 4. However, the school district may be eligible to apply to Track 1 (and write your non-profit organization in as a contractor if desired) and/or your non-profit organization and the school district may be eligible to apply together to Track 2. We recommend communicating with your school district and local partners about these options and reviewing the Track 1 and 2 eligibility criteria on [pages 12–15 of the RFA](#).

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] We are in a rural area and many of our school districts are fairly small with low average daily attendance (ADA). Can two separate districts collaborate and apply under one application? If not, how heavily, if at all is ADA weighted in the scoring of the overall plan?

A: Public school districts that serve as the School Food Authority (SFA) for multiple school districts, for a county office of education's school sites, and/or for directly funded charter schools may include those entities in their proposed Track 1 project if desired by including those sites' student enrollment numbers in the funding formula, their data in the Community Need section of the application, and how the project will serve them in the Project Description section of the application.

Please note that a public school district that serves as the SFA for multiple entities and would like to include those entities in their proposed project is still limited to submitting one application in Track 1. Additionally, the entities that are not SFAs themselves are not eligible to submit their own separate Track 1 applications. ([Page 13 of the RFA](#))

School size (i.e., number of students enrolled) does not affect a Track 1 applicant's chances of receiving a grant award. However, school size does affect the amount of funds for which a Track 1 applicant may apply, as the funding formula is based on number of students enrolled in School Year 2019-20 multiplied by \$10. Please note that if an applicant's formula produces a number LESS THAN \$150,000, the applicant may apply for up to \$150,000.

Q: [Track 2] I am looking to apply for Track 2 as a Small Business. Currently I am the owner of XX and am registered as a sole proprietor. It seems that in order to certify with California's Small Business Certification program I need to be an LLC or SCorp. Do you know if this is true? Or, am I able to apply for the grant as a Sole Proprietor?

A: It is correct that small businesses in California that are in the process of getting certified through [California's Small Business Certification Program](#) may apply to Track 2 as a farm to school support organization. Please note that if awarded, receipt of the award is contingent upon confirmation of this certification. We recommend exploring [this webpage](#) and exploring the relevant links and information on the webpage to learn more. If you still have questions about becoming certified, we recommend reaching out to the Department of General Services at (916) 375-4940 or OSDSHelp@dgs.ca.gov. If a sole proprietor is certified through California's Small Business Certification Program and listed in the [Cal eProcure database](#) or is in the process of getting certified through this program, they may apply to Track 2.

Q: [Track 2] We work with a non-profit fiscal sponsor, but we are hoping that our organization could serve to administer the Grant Spending and Accounting. If we apply as a project with a non-profit fiscal sponsor, is it possible for funding to come to our business registered as a sole proprietor or will it need to be administered through the non-profit?

A: Projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply to Track 2 as a farm to school support organization. Please note that applicants must clearly identify the fiscal sponsor in the application. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor will be the grant recipient and will be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all project activities and costs follow grant requirements. This means that the grant funds will go directly to the fiscal sponsor and then the sponsored organization and fiscal sponsor work together from there to distribute grant funds to the sponsored organization for allowable project expenses.

Q: [Track 2] Can I include a small district (less than 100 students) as a farm to school implementing organization partner that is only 11% free and reduced but is rural?

A: Yes, any public school district in California is an eligible farm to school implementing organization partner for Track 2. Please note that the highest scoring category in the Track 2 Review Criteria is Community Need (40/100 points) – this category essentially asks who your project will serve and if it will serve communities with the greatest need. You can [review the Track 2 Review Criteria here](#). The Community Need category starts on page 8.

Q: [Track 2] We are a farm to school support organization working on a Track 2 application. Our education implementation partner is XXX Charter School which is a local education agency (LEA). Does that meet the criteria for a farm to school implementing organization?

A: Are they a directly funded charter school? If yes, they are eligible to be a farm to school implementing organization partner for Track 2.

Q: [Track 2] For question 1.b in the Track 2 application, we are answering "At least one farm to school support organization and at least one farm to school implementing organization" because we will have multiple support organizations and one implementing organization in our project partnership. It is noted that is an eligible answer, but question 1.c asks if our project "...supports more than one farm to school implementing

organization." That appears to be a contradiction. I want to confirm that we are eligible and can answer yes to question 1.c if we have multiple support organizations and one implementing organization.

A: For Track 2, if you have multiple farm to school support organizations and one California farm to school implementing organization in your project partnership, then you can answer yes to question 1b. A Track 2 project partnership must include either of the following combinations:

- (1) at least one farm to school support organization and at least one California farm to school implementing organization; or
- (2) at least two California farm to school implementing organizations.

The CDFA encourages (but does not require) partnerships described in combination (1) to include at least two California farm to school implementing organizations. ([page 14 of the RFA](#))

However, what question 1c is addressing is this ([page 14 of the RFA](#)): "A project partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization." While a farm to school support organization only needs to formally partner with one California farm to school implementing organization and upload a letter of support from one California farm to school implementing organization for the purpose of the application, Track 2 projects **must** have a regional or statewide focus that meaningfully impacts more than one California farm to school implementing organization. The [Track 2 review criteria](#) will score this in question 17. You can [explore Track 2 projects from the 2021 grant cycle for examples](#). If the project you have in mind will focus on impacting one individual farm to school implementing organization (vs. more than one), then the project is likely better suited for Track 1 in which the farm to school implementing organization would need to be the lead applicant and would need to be a School Food Authority that operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program in order to apply.

Q: [Track 2] We are a farm to school support organization applying to Track 2 and one of our food producer partners wants to apply to Track 4 – does this preclude us from working together on our separate projects and complementing each other by supporting each other's projects?

A: If two separate entities are submitting their own separate applications as lead applicants, they may also support each other's projects. Please note that an entity may be written into an unlimited number of applications as a partner/contractor in any of the funding tracks. However, project costs cannot be duplicative (i.e., if an entity is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a contractor, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs). Additionally, proposed projects may complement each other but should be able to stand on their own in case one of the complementary projects receives funding but another does not.

Q: [Track 3] I own a for-profit daycare and wanted to know if daycare qualifies for the grant.

A: Is your for-profit daycare a child care center or a family child care home? If it is a child care center, does your for-profit daycare meet the following criteria? If your for-profit daycare is a child care center and meets the following criteria, then you are eligible to apply to Track 3.

- Provides care all or part of the day
- Primarily serves young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers); may also serve school-age children

- Is licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) OR meets appropriate criteria for a license exemption (e.g., a license-exempt Tribal child care center located on an Indian reservation)
- Please note:
 - Child care centers include single-site and multi-site child care centers.
 - Child care centers also include public school districts that operate a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program. For public school districts, their preschool program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program (as opposed to their entire district) must primarily serve young children birth through age five to be eligible

Q: [Track 3] I see that Track 3 is for ECE support organizations and Child Care Centers. Is this track also available to 'Family In Home Daycares'?

A: Family child care homes are **not** eligible to apply directly to Track 3. However, we encourage family child care homes to partner with a farm to ECE support organization or child care center that *is* eligible to be included in their application.

Q: [Track 4] I work with a nonprofit that is applying to the CDFA F2S grant. We work with a school district to operate their school farm. However, we do not rent, lease, or own the school's farmland. Are we still eligible to apply for funding through Track 4? If not, could we arrange to rent or lease the school's land before submitting to make ourselves eligible?

A: [See this response](#). Please note that the lease, rental agreement, or written agreement must be in place by the time of submitting the application.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] We are a farm to school support organization and plan to write a Track 2 application to provide our school garden program (garden nutrition lessons during school) at a number of schools. We are working with a school district that is also applying to Track 1 themselves. Part of their Track 1 application would pay us for supplemental programming that we offer to enhance our baseline programming (e.g., family cooking nights, after-school programs, lunch garden clubs, afterschool farm stands). None of the Track 1 grant enhanced programming would be covered in our Track 2 baseline programming request. Would this be allowable or would this appear as redundancy/overlap?

A: The scenario described is allowable as long as the applications demonstrate that the costs are distinct. If a farm to school support organization is partnering with a certain farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) on a Track 2 application, that same farm to school implementing organization may apply to Track 1.

If desired, the farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) may write the farm to school support organization into their proposed Track 1 project budget as a contractor for their proposed project.

Please note that project costs cannot be duplicative in order for the CDFA to consider each application. So, if an entity is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a contractor, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] I wanted to ask about if it is allowable and meets the requirements of Tracks 2 & 4 to have homeschooling groups be the farm to school implementing org. What are the guidelines there?

A: Are the homeschooling groups you are referring to part of a public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school? Homeschooling groups are **not** eligible farm to school implementing organizations for this grant program. For this grant program, farm to school implementing organizations are defined as public school districts, county offices of education, and directly funded charter schools in California.

For Track 2 – project partnerships must include at least one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school) and must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization.

- Please note that private schools are **not** eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, private schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership.

For Track 4 – this track is for CA food producers to apply. As part of their application, they must submit a signed letter of intent from any one or more of the following entities in California:

- Public school district that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program
- County office of education that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Center-based program for children participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Q: [All Tracks] I have submitted my project proposal to a federal grant program but have not received a response yet. I don't want to duplicate the needs but if I don't get that one, would hope that the project proposal could receive funding through the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. Any advice on how to apply?

A: Question #2b in the application asks, "Have you submitted your project proposal to another federal or state grant program or has another federal or state grant program funded your project proposal? If yes, please:

- Identify the federal or state grant program(s) and the agency administering the program(s).
- List the amount of grant funds requested or awarded by the program(s).
- Describe how the proposed project supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by the other federal or state grant program(s).

If you apply to the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, this is where you would share about the other federal grant for which you have applied. Your answer to this question will not impact your score, but you must respond to this question for the CDFA to consider your application complete. For the third part of this question, “Describe how the proposed project supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by the other federal or state grant program(s)” you can either explain how this proposed project differs from and supplements the one in your federal grant application, or if they are the same, explain how you are hoping for funding from one source but not both.

Follow-up Questions:

Q: [All Tracks] I do have things to supplement the other [federal] funding if I do get it, but if I don't [get the federal funding] I would like to request from this grant. From my understanding this is okay, but I just wanted to make sure I understood correctly.

A: Yes, if you have submitted your project proposal to another state or federal grant program but have not yet heard back from them, you may still apply to the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. And then Question #2b in the application is where you would explain these circumstances.

Q: [All Tracks] Could I just mark on the budget worksheet which proposed costs are duplicates waiting on a federal grant and which ones are supplemental? I will make clear that I'm hoping to receive funding from one source, but not both in my answers to the questions.

A: Yes, in the budget worksheet you are welcome to mark which proposed line items duplicate costs you applied to fund through the federal grant and which proposed line items would supplement those costs. Since activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot replace activities funded by another federal or state grant program, a project proposal would be ineligible for an award if the applicant received a federal grant to fund the same activities.

Q: [All Tracks] I would like to know if we qualify for a grant? We have a non-profit farm and animal rescue. Also, I would like to know if home schooling families qualify for a grant. If either of these do qualify please let me know how to go about receiving one and which of the 4 funding tracks I need to apply under.

A: We recommend reviewing the [Eligibility Decision Tree](#) to explore eligibility for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. As a non-profit farm, you may be eligible to apply to Track 2 and/or Track 4. We recommend reviewing pages [13-15 of the RFA](#) for Track 2 eligibility criteria and [pages 18-19 of the RFA](#) for Track 4 eligibility criteria.

Private schools, non-public schools, and homeschools are *not* eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and may not participate as partners on an application, with one exception: these schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership, if applicable.

In order to apply to the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, please see [page 40 of the RFA](#). You can find the links to the online application portal and review criteria for each funding track on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

June 12th–14th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] As long as we have met the requirement to partner with one of the eligible school entity types for Track 4 (e.g., a school district that is a School Food Authority and operates NSLP, SSO, and/or SBP), are we also allowed to use grant funding to incorporate other groups into our project like a non-profit youth rehab facility that serves students who attend the school district?

A: Track 4 grant recipients may use grant funds to serve these eligible school entity types:

- Public school district that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program
- County office of education that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Center-based program for children participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

A Track 4 grant recipient would only be able to serve other entities with grant funds if those entities are under the umbrella of one of the above entity types with which the producer is partnering for their project (e.g., under the umbrella of the producer's partner school district).

Please note that private schools, non-public schools, and homeschools are not eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and may not participate as partners on an application, with one exception: these schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership, if applicable.

Q: [All Tracks] My family raises chickens and grows our own food. We are passionate about helping children have access to locally grown organic foods and learn about food. We are currently in the process of buying land in California. Can you possibly point me in the right direction of which funding track to apply for?

A: It sounds like Track 4: The California Farm to School Producer Grant might be a good fit. Track 4 will fund California food producers to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market. Track 4 will also fund California food producers to provide hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement their food sales or donations to schools.

To be eligible for Track 4, you must be a food producer in California, which this program defines as: a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester. If you meet this definition, then we

recommend that you review the rest of the Track 4 eligibility criteria on [pages 18-19 of the RFA](#) to see if you are eligible to apply.

Please note that a required element of Track 4 is that applicants must be able to demonstrate an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department. If you do not yet have established relationships with school nutrition services departments, you are not eligible to apply to Track 4. However, you are eligible for free, non-competitive technical assistance from the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork and the California Farm to School Network; you can email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov and our Farm to School Marketplace Specialist would be happy to provide support.

If you meet the eligibility criteria for Track 4 and decide to apply, here is the [Track 4 online application portal](#) and here is the [Track 4 review criteria](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Previously you said that, “Since activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot replace activities funded by another federal or state grant program, a project proposal would be ineligible for an award if the applicant received a federal grant to fund the same activities.” If we submit a farm to school incubator grant application to fund *some* of the same activities from our federal grant application and some supplemental activities, and then we receive the federal grant, would our entire farm to school incubator grant application be ineligible for funding or only the parts that duplicate the federal funding?

A: The entire farm to school incubator grant application would be ineligible for funding *unless* the proposed supplemental activities, on their own, directly contribute to the goals of Track 4 (i.e., to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market and/or to provide hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the producer’s food sales or donations to schools). In this case, the proposal would be eligible for funding for the supplemental activities only, but not for the duplicate activities that the federal grant is already funding.

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] We are a project with a non-profit fiscal sponsor. We will be paying our fiscal sponsor a fiscal sponsorship fee of 10% as part of our project. I was wondering if this needs to be included as a separate line item in the 2022 CDFA grant budget worksheet or if it would just come out of the allocated contractual costs?

A: Projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply to Track 2 and/or Track 3. Applicants must clearly identify the fiscal sponsor in the application. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor will be the grant recipient and will be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all project activities and costs follow grant requirements. Please note that for projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor, fiscal sponsorship fees may be allowable as an indirect cost, if charged consistent with the sponsored organization’s established policies. Fiscal sponsorship fees are not allowable as a direct cost. Applicants should list proposed fiscal sponsorship fees under the Indirect Costs line item in the proposed project budget.

Projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor are not eligible to apply to Track 1. Farm to school implementing organizations in California (i.e., public school districts, county offices of education,

and directly funded charter schools) that serve as a School Food Authority and operate the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program are eligible to apply to Track 1. A project with a non-profit fiscal sponsor may participate as a project partner and/or contractor and/or subcontractor in a farm to school implementing organization's Track 1 project. For example, if a public school district applies to Track 1, it seems like there are a couple possible scenarios:

- 1) Does the school district contract directly with the non-profit fiscal sponsor of your sponsored organization? If so, then the school district could propose the fiscal sponsor as a contractor in the Contractual Costs spending category of the budget worksheet. Then, the budget could propose your sponsored organization as a subcontractor of the fiscal sponsor. Any direct costs that the school district is proposing to contract out to the fiscal sponsor for the project would fit under Contractual Costs.
- 2) Does the school district contract directly with your sponsored organization? If so, the school district could propose your sponsored organization as a contractor in the Contractual Costs spending category of the budget worksheet. Any direct costs that the school district is proposing to contract out to your sponsored organization for the project would fit under Contractual Costs.

Fiscal sponsorship fees may be allowable as an indirect cost, if charged consistent with the sponsored organization's established policies. The school district should include all of its proposed project's indirect costs – including fiscal sponsorship fees – in the Indirect Costs spending category of the budget worksheet as a single line item that is a percentage of all direct project costs. Applicants who plan to pass some funds for indirect costs through to a contractor or subcontractor should explain this somewhere in the budget worksheet.

Q: [Track 1] In the application, I am allocating funding for an organization to come in to our school district and provide garden education. That organization is also applying for a different funding track and allocating funding to support and provide garden education in the school district. We do not want to double dip funding, so in the event that both of our applications receive a grant award, can the duplicate funds be returned to the CDFA or allocated elsewhere?

A: Eligible entities that submit applications in multiple tracks must ensure that projects are **not** duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application. Please note that if an entity is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a partner or contractor, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs. If the applications are duplicative, then this may be grounds for disqualification of the applications during the initial administrative review of applications. Therefore, we recommend that eligible entities participating in multiple applications ensure that the proposed project costs in each application are distinct. Additionally, proposed projects may complement each other but should be able to stand on their own in case one of the complementary projects receives funding but another does not.

Q: [Track 2] We are a directly funded charter school but we are not a School Food Authority. We incorporate gardening into our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade curriculum. However, there is a need to improve our facilities to support these subjects and we'd like to use this grant to build a central garden to accommodate the various grades and projects. Does this sound like something that would be eligible under Track 2 of your program?

A: A directly funded charter school that is not a School Food Authority is not eligible to apply to Track 1 but is eligible to apply to Track 2. However, please note that while Track 1 funds projects to establish new or expand existing farm to school programs for an individual school district community or directly funded charter school community, Track 2 funds regional or statewide farm to school partnerships in California to establish new or expand existing farm to school initiatives. Track 2 project partnerships must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., more than one public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school). A project proposal that aims to support one directly funded charter school would not align with the goals of Track 2. Before deciding whether or not to apply to Track 2 as a directly funded charter school, we recommend reviewing the [goals of Track 2 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the [Track 2 eligibility criteria on pages 13-15 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#).

There may be another option. Does your charter school participate in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program under the umbrella of a public school district that is a School Food Authority? Public school districts that serve as the School Food Authority (SFA) for multiple school districts, for a county office of education's school sites, and/or for directly funded charter schools may include those entities in their proposed Track 1 project if desired by including those sites' student enrollment numbers in the funding formula, their data in the Community Need section of the application, and how the project will serve them in the Project Description section of the application. Please note that a public school district that serves as the SFA for multiple entities and would like to include those entities in their proposed project is still limited to submitting one application in Track 1. Additionally, the entities that are not SFAs themselves are not eligible to submit their own separate Track 1 applications.

Q: [Track 2] For Track 2, are you looking for something unique and different, or could it be as simple as funneling bulk produce to the schools? My vision is a food box to the students. The budget would be a deconstructed food box and show the funds that go into every box for a student. We can deliver produce to the schools and deliver it from the farm. It's not for a school meal program, it's for the students to take home.

A: The CDFA welcomes projects that propose implementing new ideas and/or established ideas as long as projects align with the goals of the applicable funding track. In Track 2, producing, processing, and/or distributing whole or minimally processed foods for students to take home through a food box program would not, on its own, meet the goals of Track 2. A food producer could use grant funds for this purpose in Track 2, but would need to demonstrate in the application how they will conduct this activity as part of other activities that meet at least one of the following goals of Track 2:

- 1) **Goal 1:** Implement farm to school procurement [i.e., CA-grown food procurement for school meals] and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; and/or
- 2) **Goal 2:** Increase collaboration and coordination regionally or statewide between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals, especially foods that are culturally relevant, climate smart, and from small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, socially

disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California; and/or

- 3) **Goal 3:** Provide farm to school procurement [i.e., CA-grown food procurement for school meals] and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school.

Q: [Track 3] We think our farm to ECE support organization is well-positioned to help child care centers across the state. But for us to keep to our inclusion and equity values, we think it is necessary to conduct elaborate outreach to our ECE partners. There is just no way to equitably identify ECE sites before the project begins without us choosing friends and those with the greatest resources. Therefore, we cannot name who we will work with but we can tell you our process for identifying our ECE partners. This also impacts our ability to answer some of the questions around location and absolute number of kids impacted – but we can come up with estimates. That said, do you think our application would still be in the running or is it an absolute no?

A: Thank you for sharing this context and these important considerations about project equity with us. In the Track 3 application, there are several questions in the Community Need section that specifically request information from farm to ECE support organizations about the ECE communities your project will serve: #8, 9, 10e, 10g, 10h, 10i, 10j, 11a, 12, 13, and 14.

Applicants can earn up to 40 out of 100 points in the application for demonstrating that their project will serve high-need communities.

If an applicant has not yet identified which ECE communities and ECE providers their project will serve, it may be difficult to earn competitive points for some questions in the Community Need section (e.g., questions 8, 9, 13, and 14) and perhaps also difficult to accurately respond to other questions (e.g., 10e, 10g, 10h, 10i, 10j, 11a, and 12). Questions like 10e about county location, 11a about ECE provider partners, and 12 about the children the project will serve are important in part because the CDFA will consider county location when making award determinations to distribute grant awards geographically across California to the extent possible; will seek to maximize impact when making award determinations by considering relative project reach (i.e., number of young children served, number of ECE providers engaged) among child center applicants and, separately, among farm to ECE support organization applicants; and will need to ensure applicants demonstrated that at least 50% of the students the project will serve are young children birth through age five for the application to be eligible and complete.

Additionally, question 31 in the Letters of Support section requires farm to ECE support organization applicants to upload letters of support from at least two ECE providers that the project will serve, which means that you would need to identify at least two ECE providers that the project will serve in question 11a.

We recommend taking a look at the [Track 3 review criteria](#) to inform your decision about whether to apply or not. If you decide to apply and would like to include outreach to additional ECE provider partners in your project proposal, you are welcome to incorporate your process for identifying these partners into your application.

If you have recommendations for how we could potentially restructure the Track 3 application in the future to further promote equity and inclusion, please let us know by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Track 3] We are a “private school,” but we are also a non-profit 501(c)(3) Montessori School serving 190 ECE students and 168 elementary/middle school students. We do charge tuition with financial aid opportunities. Are we eligible to apply to Track 3?

A: Child care centers that meet the eligibility requirements in the RFA ([pages 16-17](#)) may apply to Track 3, including those that are private entities. However, if a private child care center is under the umbrella of a private school that conducts private school instruction at the elementary, middle, and/or high school level for students between the ages of six and eighteen years, then the private school may not apply. Private schools are **not** eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program (see [page 15 of the RFA](#)), in accordance with Article IX – Education, Section 8 of the California Constitution. However, private schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership.

Q: [Track 3] We are a small preschool organization and operate as a hybrid program. Our own organization consists of three licensed preschool sites, one after-school enrichment program for K-5th grade students, and an educational/demonstration farm and garden program that focuses on youth programming. We would like to a) expand our farm & garden and greenhouse operations; and b) pilot a free farm to table culinary program for children & ECE educators countywide, including those who attend our own schools, using our own produce. Is it most appropriate for us to apply as an ECE Support Organization, and then list our own preschools and school-age sites alongside the other local schools as the ECE sites we intend to serve?

A: Ultimately is up to you to determine whether you identify more as a child care center or farm to ECE support organization for this application. Here are some guiding thoughts:

- Do you provide support to California ECE providers and does your organization type match any of the farm to ECE support organization types listed on [page 16 of the RFA](#)? Will at least 50% of the students that the project will serve be young children birth through age five? Will the *primary* focus of your project be to provide farm to ECE support to other California ECE providers?
 - If yes to all three, then applying to Track 3 as a farm to ECE support organization makes sense.
 - Please note that if applying as a farm to ECE support organization, you may include your own sites in the project in addition to the other California ECE providers that your project will serve and would need to demonstrate in question 10f that your own sites the project will serve are either licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) OR meet appropriate criteria for a license exemption.
- Are you a child care center in California that provides care all or part of the day; primarily serves young children birth through age five; and is licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) OR meets appropriate criteria for a license exemption? Will the *primary* focus of your project be to establish or expand a farm to ECE program for your own sites?
 - If yes to both, then applying to Track 3 as a child care center makes sense.

- Please note that if applying as a child care center, you could partner with other ECE providers to serve their students through this project in addition to your own students. At least 50% of the students that the project will serve must be young children birth through age five

We recommend taking a look at the [Track 3 review criteria](#), particularly for question 11, to help inform your decision.

Q: [Track 4] How do you define a center-based program? We directly partner with a Continuation High School Program.

A: For Track 4, we define a center-based program as a child care center in California that:

- Provides care all or part of the day
- Primarily serves young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers); may also serve school-age children
- Please note:
 - Child care centers include single-site and multi-site child care centers.
 - Child care centers also include public school districts that operate a district-based preschool program, California State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program. For public school districts, their preschool program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program (as opposed to their entire district) must primarily serve young children birth through age five to be an eligible center-based program partner.

The center-based program must participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program to be an eligible partner entity in Track 4.

A continuation high school program would not be an eligible partner entity in Track 4. However, if this continuation high school is part of a public school district that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and that operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program, then the school district as a whole would be an eligible partner entity in Track 4 and you could serve the continuation high school site within that school district partner entity as part of your project. You would need to upload a letter of intent from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decisionmaker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at that school district as part of your application.

Q: [Track 4] Can schools that sign on as partners to our Track 4 producer grant be partners to others applying in different tracks? We work with lots of districts and want to include some of them but don't want that to limit their ability to partner with others on other grants.

A: Yes. Tracks 1, 3, and 4 limit eligible entities to one application (as the lead applicant) in each track. For Track 2, eligible entities may apply once as the lead applicant and multiple times as a supporting project partner. Please note that an entity (such as a school district) may be written into an unlimited number of applications as a partner/contractor in any of the funding tracks. However, please note that project costs cannot be duplicative (i.e., if an entity (such as a school district) is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a partner or contractor, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs).

Q: [Track 4] I manage a production farm for a post-secondary community college in northern California. Would we be eligible to apply as a producer for funding in track 4? I was unsure if "school district" was K-12 specific or if we fell into that category as well.

A: Does your production farm meet this definition of a California food producer from [page 18 of the Request for Applications](#)?

- A California food producer is: A person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.

If yes, do you intend to sell or donate California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food to any one or more of the following entities in California and/or intend to implement hands-on educational opportunities for youth (that complement your food sales or donations to schools) in partnership with any one or more of the following entities in California? (Please note that this grant program will not fund a farm to produce food or implement educational opportunities for post-secondary community college students.)

- Public school district that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program
 - A public school district may serve students from pre-k through 12th grade
- County office of education that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Center-based program for children participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

If yes, do you have an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department at any of the above entities in California with which you intend to collaborate?

If yes to all three of the above questions, then your farm is eligible to apply to Track 4.

If you do not yet have established relationships with school nutrition services departments, you are not eligible to apply. However, if you would like to explore the possibility of collaborating with K-12 schools and/or child care centers in California, please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov for free, non-competitive technical assistance from our office.

Q: [Track 4] We have a fiscal sponsor, a non-profit which allows us to work under their 501c3 status. They are located in Oregon. All operations of our farm and all our farmers and volunteers live in California. However, in the grant application it asks for our legal name and mailing address, and the 501c3 that is our fiscal sponsor is located in Oregon. Does that make us ineligible for this grant opportunity?

A: [Page 18 of the RFA](#) says that for Track 4, the applicant's operation (where the proposed project will take place), physical business address, and business mailing address must be in California. Additionally, the owner(s)/leader(s) of the operation must be California residents. However, we did not foresee this situation you described. In this specific case, yes, you may apply to Track 4 if your farm operation (where the proposed project will take place) is located in

California and the leaders of the farm operation are California residents, even if your fiscal sponsor is not located in California. Please describe this situation in question 24 of the Track 4 application, which asks, “Is there anything else you would like to share with us?”

Q: [Track 4] We have a farmer who is employed as a contractor to our school district and does not sell the produce to us. Would he be eligible to apply to Track 4?

A: This question requires a two-part response:

- First, for context, [page 19 of the RFA](#) states that school districts are **not** eligible to apply to Track 4. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district property may apply to Track 4. Track 4 defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.
- Second, in response to your question and based on this context, we ask the farmer three questions:
 - 1) Do you lease or rent school-owned land in California (or alternatively, have a written agreement such as an MOU for school-owned land in California)?
 - 2) Do you and the school district consider you to be the operator of that land (rather than considering the school or district to be the operator of the land)?
 - 3) Do you cultivate crops, raise livestock, and/or use Indigenous food production practices on this land?

If the farmer answers yes to all three questions, then they are eligible to apply to Track 4. They should please make sure to very clearly describe their relationship with the school district in question 7b in the Track 4 application, and should please ensure that their school district partner very clearly describes the relationship in the Letter of Intent, question 2.

If the farmer does **not** answer yes to all three questions, and/or if the farmer plays a supporting role to co-operate the land but the school considers itself to be the operator of the land, then the farmer is not eligible to apply to Track 4. However, the school district may be eligible to apply to Track 1 (and write the farmer in as a contractor if desired) and/or the farmer and the school district may be eligible to apply together to Track 2. We recommend communicating with your partners about these options and reviewing the Track 1 and 2 eligibility criteria on [pages 12–15 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 4] We are looking to donate CSA farm boxes to in-need families of our school district partner. We are not sure if we are applying to the correct track. Would this qualify for Track 4 or would the food donated need to go directly to on-site school meal use?

A: There would need to be a connection to the school meal program in Track 4. Here are the two overarching goals of Track 4 ([page 9 of the RFA](#)). Track 4 projects must do one or both of these goals.

- 1) **Goal 1:** Track 4 will fund California food producers to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market.
 - This means that if a food producer would like to use grant funds to increase, production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed

foods, then they would need to be doing so for the school food market (i.e., for the school nutrition services department to incorporate into school meals). In addition but not instead of, the food producer could use grant funds to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for in-need families of the school district through CSA food boxes.

- 2) **Goal 2:** Track 4 will also fund California food producers to provide hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement their food sales or donations to schools.
- This means that if a food producer is already, or, as part of their grant project will be, producing, processing, and/or distributing whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market (i.e., for the school nutrition services department to incorporate into school meals), then they can use grant funds to provide hands-on educational opportunities for students that complement these existing food sales or donations to schools.

The other funding track for which food producers in California are eligible to apply is Track 2. Before deciding whether or not to apply to Track 2, we recommend reviewing the [goals of Track 2 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the [Track 2 eligibility criteria on pages 13-15 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#).

- Please note that in Track 2, producing, processing, and/or distributing whole or minimally processed foods to in-need families of a school district through CSA food boxes would not, on its own, meet the goals of Track 2. A food producer could use grant funds for this purpose in Track 2, but would need to demonstrate in the application how they will conduct this activity as part of other activities that meet at least one of the following goals of Track 2:
 - 1) **Goal 1:** Implement farm to school procurement [i.e., CA-grown food procurement for school meals] and/or education strategies as part of larger regional or statewide food system development plans in California; and/or
 - 2) **Goal 2:** Increase collaboration and coordination regionally or statewide between California food producers and school nutrition services departments to increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals, especially foods that are culturally relevant, climate smart, and from small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, socially disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California; and/or
 - 3) **Goal 3:** Provide farm to school procurement [i.e., CA-grown food procurement for school meals] and/or education technical assistance or capacity-building support regionally or statewide to more than one farm to school implementing organization, i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school.

Q: [Track 4] Would a farm apprenticeship/internship program for high school students, as a collaboration between an urban farm and a charter school, qualify for this track?

A: Track 4 may be a good fit.

- First, does the urban farm meet this definition of a California food producer from the RFA? “A person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses

Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.”

- If yes, is the charter school a directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program?
- If yes, then the urban farm may apply to Track 4 and would need to ensure that their proposed project addresses at least one of the following goals of Track 4:
 - 1) **Goal 1:** Increases production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market (i.e., for the school nutrition services department to incorporate into school meals).
 - 2) **Goal 2:** Provides hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement their food sales or donations to schools
 - Under this component, the urban farm could implement a farm apprenticeship/internship program for high school students at the charter school, but it would EITHER need to complement existing food sales or donations that the urban farm is making to the charter school for school meals AND/OR need to complement food sales or donations that the urban farm plans to make to the charter school for school meals as part of their proposed project.

Please also note that in order to apply to Track 4, the urban farm would need to be able to submit a letter of intent from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at the charter school, indicating a “good faith” intention to purchase or accept the farm’s California grown or produced food for school meals (does not need to be a commitment to purchase or accept) and/or a “good faith” effort to collaborate with the farm to implement hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the farm’s food sales or donations to their school.

Q: [Track 4] Our farm is a sole proprietorship. Our tax ID number is attached to my husband. Can I apply on behalf of our farm under my name and social security number? We would only be submitting one application on behalf of our farm.

A: Yes, if your sole proprietorship farm has a tax ID number that is associated with the legal business name of the farm, but you would prefer to submit an application on behalf of your farm under your first and last name and social security number (rather than under your farm’s name and tax ID number), then you may do so. Please note that the business name provided in the application (in this case, your first and last name) is the entity to which the CDFA will extend a grant agreement if the project receives a grant award. You may include the farm’s name in the Project Title, Project Summary, and/or Project Description if you would like, but you would not be able to put the farm’s name as the legal business name. Please note that applicants are limited to one Track 4 grant application per unique tax/business identification number. Applicants who operate more than one business entity may submit separate Track 4 grant applications on behalf of each entity that has a unique tax identification number.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Can an individual school apply or does it need to be the school district that applies?

A: Individual schools are **not** eligible to apply to Track 1, unless they are a single-site public school district or a single-site directly funded charter school. However, farm to school implementing organizations (i.e., public school districts, county offices of education, and directly funded charter schools) that apply to Track 1 may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within their organization. Please note that all Track 1 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decisionmaker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at their organization.

Similarly, please note that individual schools are **not** eligible to apply to Track 2, unless they are a single-site public school district or a single-site directly funded charter school. However, farm to school support organizations or farm to school implementing organizations (as defined above) that apply to Track 2 may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership. Please note that all Track 2 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decisionmaker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership.

Q: [All Tracks] Our organization runs a school garden program at a private school in California. We're expanding our program to other schools and are wondering if we would qualify to apply for the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program?

A: Private schools are **not** eligible to apply to any funding track of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, private schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership.

You also mentioned another entity, your organization. Without knowing the entity type of your organization, we cannot speak to whether or not your organization would be eligible to apply. However, we recommend reviewing the [Track 2 eligibility criteria on pages 13-15 of the RFA](#) to see if your organization fits any of the eligible entity types under farm to school support organizations. If so, then we recommend thoroughly reviewing the [goals of Track 2 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the [Track 2 eligibility criteria on pages 13-15 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Can a Bureau of Indian Affairs-run school apply to any of the funding tracks?

A: We are researching this question and plan to update the eligibility criteria for this grant program in the future.

June 28th–30th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] We have a non-profit fiscal sponsor and just wanted to make sure we are still eligible. We are a farm site at a high school in a public school district in California. We already produce food and have been established as a food producer for other smaller grants in the past.

A: This question requires a two-part response:

- First, for context, [page 19 of the RFA](#) states that school districts are **not** eligible to apply to Track 4. Please note that individual schools are not either. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district property may apply to Track 4. Track 4 defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester.
- Second, in response to your question and based on this context, we ask you three questions:
 - 1) Are you a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases or rents school-owned land in California (or alternatively, has a written agreement such as an MOU for school-owned land in California)?
 - If you are a project that has a non-profit fiscal sponsor and you lease or rent school-owned land in California (or alternatively, have a written agreement such as an MOU for school-owned land in California), then you may answer yes to this question.
 - 2) Do you and the school district consider your project that has a non-profit fiscal sponsor to be the operator of that land (rather than considering the school or district to be the operator of the land)?
 - 3) Does your project that has a non-profit fiscal sponsor cultivate crops, raise livestock, and/or use Indigenous food production practices on this land?
- If you answer yes to all three questions, then you are eligible to apply to Track 4 as a food producer. Please make sure to very clearly describe the relationship between the school district and your project that has a non-profit fiscal sponsor in question 7b in the Track 4 application, and please ensure that the school district very clearly describes the relationship in the Letter of Intent, question 2. Additionally, please make sure to clearly identify the fiscal sponsor in the application. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor will be the grant recipient and will be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all project activities and costs follow grant requirements.
- If you do not answer yes to all three questions, and/or if your project that has a non-profit fiscal sponsor plays a supporting role to co-operate the land but the school considers itself to be the operator of the land, then you are not eligible to apply to Track 4. However, the school district may be eligible to apply to Track 1 (and could write your farm site in as part of the project). We recommend communicating with your school district about this option and reviewing the Track 1 eligibility criteria on [pages 12–13 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 4] We are a school district that has a farm; we used to partner with an external entity to do the farming but we are now independently farming. Track 4 is most in alignment with our farm to school grant needs. Is there a way to get approval to apply to Track 4? Or is there a way to make Track 1 work for farming expenses like farming staff?

A: Public school districts that themselves operate a farm on their own school property, and are working independently rather than with partners, may be eligible to apply to Track 1 and/or Track 3. For example:

- Track 1 may be a good fit if the public school district is a School Food Authority that operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and is looking to incorporate the farm into procurement and education efforts to serve their individual school district community.

- In this scenario, the public school district could use funds to cover staffing costs on their school district farm as long as the costs are directly related to their farm to school project.
- Track 3 may be a good fit if the public school district operates a preschool program, transitional kindergarten program, and/or Head Start program and is looking to incorporate the farm into procurement and education efforts to serve their early care and education (ECE) population.
 - In this scenario, the public school district could use funds to cover staffing costs on their school district farm as long as the costs are directly related to their farm to ECE project.

You can find more details about Allowable and Unallowable Costs starting on [page 20 of the RFA](#).

Please note that public school districts are **not** eligible to apply to Track 4. However, a food producer, including an individual or non-profit organization, that operates a farm on school district property may apply to Track 4. This grant program defines a California food producer as: a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity that leases, rents, or owns land in California (whether the land is publicly owned, privately owned, or Tribal land) and cultivates crops, raises livestock, and/or uses Indigenous food production practices on this land, and/or a California seafood harvester. The [FAQs](#) go into more detail about this (see the question: “[Track 4] Can a food producer that operates a farm on school district property apply to Track 4?”). The intent of Track 4 was not to add another funding track for school districts but to add a funding track that would enable the grant program to fund the entire farm to school food system by funding the producer/supply side, particularly small to midsize, socially disadvantaged, veteran, limited-resource, and/or climate smart food producers. Track 4 aims to increase the capacity of local California food producers to sell or donate food to and work with schools. Please see full eligibility guidelines for Tracks 1, 2, 3, and 4 on [pages 12-19 of the RFA](#).

Q: [All Tracks] We are a Title 1 elementary school in a suburban school district in California. Could we apply, and if so, to which track? Also, I do lots of work with my local farm bureau and with California Ag in the Classroom. Do either of those count as "farm to school partners?"

A: An individual school within a public school district is not eligible to apply to any funding track of this grant program, unless it is a directly funded charter school or a single-site public school district. However, the public school district as a whole may be eligible to apply to Track 1 and/or Track 2 and could identify in the application that its proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within the district. Directly funded charter schools may also be eligible to apply to Tracks 1 and/or 2. Additionally, public school districts may be eligible to apply to Track 3 but that is for farm to early care and education (ECE) and is not focused on K-12. You can find the [eligibility criteria for Tracks 1 and 2 on pages 12-15 of the RFA](#), the [goals of Tracks 1 and 2 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the application questions and review criteria for Track 1 [here](#), and the application questions and review criteria for Track 2 [here](#).

The two organizations you mentioned may be eligible farm to school support organizations that could apply to Track 2 if they meet any of the farm to school support organization entity types listed on [pages 13-14 of the RFA](#).

RFA SECTION: 1.7 ALLOWABLE & UNALLOWABLE COSTS

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Am I reading the RFA correctly that we are not required to allocate a minimum percentage in the budget to particular activities (e.g., to procurement, education, salaries, etc.) So, we could write a grant for 95% education and 5% for the rest?

A: This is correct. Track 1 applicants have the flexibility to determine which of the allowable costs they would like to incorporate into their proposed project. Track 1 projects are **not** required to utilize grant funds for California food procurement costs and/or farm to school education costs. However, even if not utilizing grant funds for these costs, all Track 1 projects must **both** (1) coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces; **and** (2) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals. All Track 1 applicants must demonstrate in the Project Description section of the application how both (1) and (2) are components of their proposed project.

Q: [Track 1] Can we use grant funds to pay for personnel to serve fresh produce in the salad bar if we are purchasing fresh produce with grant funds?

A: Yes. In Track 1, labor costs associated with procuring, processing, and serving California grown or produced foods for utilization in school meals are allowable. Please note that applicants should acknowledge investments in labor in the Sustainability Plan section of the application.

Q: [Track 1] Can we use grant funds to cover an existing farm to school liaison position in our school district if we're looking at budget cuts for next year?

A: Yes. Staff time associated with managing and implementing the farm to school project is an allowable cost in Track 1. Please note that applicants should acknowledge investments in staffing in the Sustainability Plan section of the application.

Q: [Track 1] Can we use grant funds to pay teachers in our After School Program stipends for adding farm to school nutrition education programming to their roles? Their existing after school program roles are covered with other state and federal grant funds.

A: Yes, as long as the stipend is for teachers to expand/enhance what they're already doing, then we would consider this supplementing existing work, rather than replacing existing work that is already funded through other state/federal sources. Paying teachers stipends to add new farm to school programming to their existing after school program roles sounds like expanding/enhancing their existing work. However, please keep these considerations in mind: You could *not* use the stipend to cover hours that another grant is already funding. The stipend would need to be for additional hours that the teacher is working for the new farm to school programming (i.e., additional hours to attend a farm to school training/workshop, to develop, prep, and/or implement farm to school activities, etc.). If the teachers won't be adding additional hours to their roles for this new farm to school programming, then the stipend would need to be for something other than their time – e.g., farm to school materials, supplies, and/or equipment.

Q: [Track 1] Can we use grant funds to reimburse our school district for California grown produce that we purchase through DoD Fresh?

A: No. This was allowable in the 2021 grant cycle but is *not* allowable in this 2022 grant cycle.

Q: [Track 1] Would student and/or parent cooking lessons be an allowable cost?

A: Yes. Infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces are allowable. Educational opportunities may include culinary classes and hands-on cooking and tasting activities. Grant recipients may engage families of students in farm to school educational opportunities.

Q: [Track 1] Would the purchase and use of a hydroponic school garden be an allowable expense? Students would consume the food produced and participate in lessons to grow the produce.

A: Yes, a hydroponic school garden is an allowable expense. Please note that Track 1 applicants should demonstrate in the application how farm to school education costs they propose in their project budget will help to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces.

Q: [Track 1] If we already purchase brown rice but want to use grant funds to purchase a new locally grown brown rice, is this allowable?

A: Yes, using grant funds to purchase California grown brown rice is allowable. Please note that in the 2021 grant cycle, there was a requirement that grant recipients may only procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for school meals that are “new” to their organization (i.e., that their organization did not previously purchase). However, in this 2022 grant cycle, there is no requirement that the foods be “new.” The CDFA recognizes that school entities that already feature California grown items on their menus may require funding to expand their offerings of these same items, continue offering these same items, or even switch to California grown items that are more local than before.

Q: [Track 1] Can we use grant funds to partner with a local food business that procures local grains and uses the grains to make a 100% whole wheat product for my school district?

A: Yes. Purchasing whole grain-rich flours and other whole grain-rich products that are 100% grown, milled, processed, and manufactured in California is allowable. In alignment with the USDA, whole grain-rich means that at least 50 to 100% of the grains in the product are whole grains, and the remaining grain, if any, must be enriched. The CDFA will collaborate with a working group to determine if there should be any additional parameters around whole grain foods for this grant program. Contractual Costs to partner with the local food business are also allowable.

Q: [Track 1] Can we use grant funds to help a local bakery buy a mill that they will use to mill 100% California grown wheat into flour and then make bread for our school district?

A: Yes, as long as the contractual costs are in alignment with [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). In Track 1, a public school district may partner with a contractor (e.g., a local bakery) and include this contractor in their proposed project budget under Contractual Costs if the contractor’s services will help the school district to achieve their grant project objectives. Please note that grant recipients distributing grant funds to contractors must ensure that contractors follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds. For example, a mill would be an allowable purchase for a Track 1 grant recipient

under School Kitchen Infrastructure Costs, so it would be an allowable cost for a contractor that is part of a Track 1 project.

Q: [Track 2] We will need to hire people to help us get estimates for infrastructure related to our project proposal. Getting these estimates is necessary for creating an accurate proposal budget. Is it possible to get these services reimbursed (as a line item included in our budget) if we are awarded the grant funds?

A: No. Pre-award costs, i.e., costs incurred prior to the grant term, are *not* allowable. This is based on the CDFA's [List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost](#), #19.

Q: [Track 2] Are costs associated with building and maintaining a farm that our non-profit organization will use as a model and training center (as well as to source food for our own preschool program) allowed?

A: Yes, these costs are allowable if the farm as a model and training center is part of a regional or statewide farm to school project that will have regional or statewide food system impact and meaningfully support more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school). Using the farm's food in your organization's preschool program, whether for education or meals/snacks, would also be allowable.

Q: [Track 2] We are a non-profit organization – can we apply to use grant funds for staffing and programming related to our school garden and school farmers' market work with schools?

A: Yes; these are allowable costs. For a full list of allowable costs, see the Allowable and Unallowable Costs section in the RFA. Please note the goals of Track 2 in the Four Funding Tracks section of the RFA to ensure that your project is in alignment. Please also review the Track 2 project partnership requirements in the Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA to ensure that you meet those requirements.

Q: [Track 3] Could a farmers' market operator that assists with procurement strategies be an allowable Contractual Cost?

A: Yes. Contractor or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#).

Q: [Track 4] Can a food producer use grant funds to purchase the bulk milk bags or other equipment/supplies that they need to be able to supply their fluid milk to a school district that has a bulk milk dispenser?

A: Yes, as long as the fluid milk is 100% produced, processed, and manufactured in California.

Q: [Track 4] Can a food producer use grant funds for equipment, materials, and training costs for climate smart agriculture practices, including regenerative agriculture practices?

A: Yes. In Track 4, food producers may use grant funds to upgrade infrastructure and equipment and purchase materials and supplies to establish or enhance the use of climate smart agriculture practices, production systems, and/or other regenerative strategies when producing whole or minimally processed food to sell or donate to schools. Producers may also

use grant funds to participate in professional development (e.g., trainings, workshops, conferences) related to implementing climate smart agriculture practices, production systems, and other regenerative strategies when producing whole or minimally processed food to sell or donate to schools.

Q: [Track 4] Can a food producer write a non-profit organization into their proposed project budget as a contractor to help with the grant management work and to provide other project support?

A: Yes. Contractual Costs for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable in all four funding tracks, subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Food producers applying to Track 4 may write a non-profit organization into their proposed project budget as a contractor if they so choose.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Is this an allowable cost: a healthy food truck that a school district and partner farm to school support organization can use to go to schools and promote healthy food?

A: Yes, a healthy food truck is an allowable cost. If it's for a Track 1 project, the public school district would just need to show how it ties in to coordinating the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students. If it's for a Track 2 project, the project partnership would just need to show how it ties in to the goals of that funding track (see the Four Funding Tracks section in the RFA) and how it will help make regional or statewide food system impact.

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 3] Can we use grant funds for staff salaries and staff fringe benefits for teaching cooking and gardening?

A: Yes. In Tracks 1, 2, and 3, staff time associated with managing and implementing the project is allowable. Both salaries and fringe benefits for staff are allowable costs. Please note that any costs proposed in the project budget must align with the Project Description section of the application and must align with the goals of the applicable funding track (see the Four Funding Tracks section in the RFA). Please also note that applicants should acknowledge investments in staffing in the Sustainability Plan section of the application.

Q: [All Tracks] Can we use grant funds to buy a bus or van or pay for bus transportation fees to transport students?

A: If you are going to implement farm field trips or other types of educational opportunities related to farm to school that require transportation, then you may use grant funds to purchase or rent a vehicle or pay for bus transportation fees to transport students. Please note that any costs proposed in the project budget must align with the Project Description section of the application and must align with the goals of the applicable funding track (see the Four Funding Tracks section in the RFA).

Q: [All Tracks] Can we use grant funds to pay stipends to students?

A: Yes. If the students are not employees of the grant recipient's organization, then this would fall under Other Costs. Other Costs include stipends for individual project participants who are *not* employed by the grant recipient. If the students are employees of the grant recipient's organization, then this would fall under Staff/Labor Costs.

Q: [All Tracks] Can we use grant funds to buy bulk milk dispensers?

~~A: In Tracks 1, 2, and 3, grant recipients may use grant funds to buy bulk milk dispensers for school cafeterias or ECE eating settings if this will support their project goal and if the dispensers are for serving California-produced milk. In Track 4, grant recipients may *not* use grant funds to buy bulk milk dispensers because they are not serving school or ECE meals. However, Track 4 grant recipients may use grant funds to purchase the bulk milk bags or other equipment/supplies that they need to be able to supply their fluid milk to a school district that has a bulk milk dispenser. Please note that in Tracks 1, 2, and 3, purchasing fluid milk with grant funds is unallowable.~~

Revised Response (May 24, 2022):

A: In Tracks 1, 2, and 3, grant recipients may use grant funds to buy bulk milk dispensers for school cafeterias or ECE eating settings if this will support their project goal and if the dispensers are for serving California-produced milk. Please note that in Tracks 1, 2, and 3, purchasing fluid milk with grant funds is unallowable. In Track 4, grant recipients may use grant funds to purchase the bulk milk bags or other equipment/supplies that *they need* to be able to *supply* their fluid milk to a school district that has a bulk milk dispenser. Additionally, Track 4 grant recipients may use grant funds to buy bulk milk dispensers (and other equipment) that *their school partners need* to be able to serve the producer's California grown or produced food in school meals. If a producer writes bulk milk dispensers (or other equipment that their school partners need) into their proposed project budget, they **must** provide a detailed reasoning in the budget worksheet as to *why* the school partners themselves are not investing in the equipment with their own funds. Please note that when purchasing *equipment* with grant funds (see the definition of equipment at the [bottom of page 2 in the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#)), grant recipients must follow [Sections 324.1 and 324.2 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) regarding equipment property records and disposition.

Q: [All Tracks] Can we use grant funds to provide food for school food pantries?

A: Yes, using grant funds to provide California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for school food pantries is allowable. Applicants must be able to justify in their Project Description and Budget how this will help to meet the goals of the applicable funding track as well as their project objectives.

Q: [All Tracks] Do applicants and grant recipients need to go out to bid for contractors if using grant funds for Contractual Costs?

A: Contractor or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Please reference Section 319 for guidance about procuring contractor services, as the answer to whether or not a grant recipient needs to go out to bid depends on a few factors that this section outlines.

Q: [All Tracks] Can contractors be located outside of California?

A: Yes. Please note that their services must be for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives.

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] There is no "Farm to School Education costs" category in the budget worksheet for Track 2. Does this mean I should list those items under "Other" and hope they are allowable in Track 2?

A: For Track 2, you can list infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies that support farm to school education under the "Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies" category. Also, under the "CA Food Procurement" category, you can list procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for utilization in farm to school educational activities that engage students.

Q: [Track 3] If an organization such as a CACFP Sponsor of Day Care Homes applies to support numerous day care home providers, can the sponsor receive a financial incentive such as administrative funding to oversee the project? Or is the money strictly for benefitting the end user/participants?

A: Track 3 applicants have the flexibility to determine how they would like to design their proposed project budget, as long as it is in alignment with the [Track 3 Allowable Costs \(pages 28-32 of the RFA\)](#) and will achieve the [goals of Track 3 \(top of page 9 in the RFA\)](#). Please note that in all four funding tracks of this grant program, indirect costs up to 30% of direct costs are allowable. Typical indirect costs include but are not limited to administrative or clerical staff costs, rent, utilities and internet service, cellular and land-line telephone service, general office supplies, and insurance. A Farm to ECE Support Organization applying to Track 3 may include indirect costs in their proposed project budget for expenses such as administrative or clerical staff costs related to the project. Additional allowable costs include Farm to ECE staff costs, i.e., staff time associated with managing and implementing the farm to ECE project such as a farm to ECE coordinator.

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 3] Can we use a portion of the grant funds to help subsidize the cost of higher priced local food?

A: This is allowable. In Tracks 1 and 3, procuring California grown or produced food for school meals and/or student education is an allowable cost and there is no cap on the amount of funds a grant recipient can use for this purpose. In Track 2, procuring California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for student education only (but not for school meals) is an allowable cost and there is no cap on the amount of funds a grant recipient can use for this purpose. Please note that while there are no caps on how many grant funds a grant recipient may use for food procurement, and regardless of how an applicant proposes to allocate grant funds for their project, all proposed projects must align with the goals of the applicable funding track and address those goals (see the [Four Funding Tracks section of the RFA](#)).

Q: [All Tracks] I have a question about purchasing equipment (e.g., a refrigerated van for a producer) with grant funds. Given that a refrigerated van will be more than \$5,000 at the end of the grant period, does the van then become property of the state? Or does the producer need to file appropriate paperwork to retain the van?

A: The van does not need to become property of the state; however, when purchasing equipment with grant funds, grant recipients will need to follow [sections 324.1 and 324.2 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) regarding equipment property records and disposition. According to section 303(26), equipment is defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. The

acquisition cost includes the cost of any necessary accessories and all incidental costs incurred to put the asset into place and ready for its intended use.

May 21st–24th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] We are considering applying under Track 3 for an ECE setting. Would a subscription to a local food box meet the requirement to procure CA food?

A: Yes; you may procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods through a subscription to a local food box program for incorporation into meals, snacks, taste tests, and/or food boxes for young children to meet the procurement component of Track 3. The following CA Food Procurement Costs are allowable in Track 3: Procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods (from vendors including but not limited to producers, distributors, food hubs, Community Supported Agriculture providers, and farmers markets) for utilization in meals and snacks (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)), taste tests, and/or food boxes for young children. You may also use these foods to support hands-on learning and play activities as well as technical assistance and peer learning spaces. Please note that grant recipients must follow procurement and food safety regulations applicable to their programs.

You can find more information about Track 3 allowable and unallowable procurement costs on [page 28 of the RFA](#).

May 25th–31st Q&A

Q: [Track 2] We are a food producer that works with a farm to school non-profit organization, a food processing/distribution business, and schools. Could Track 2 be a good option? Also, I am wondering if the Track 2 grant money could be used to cover costs like cattle, storage, infrastructure, and hiring employees to help grow the schools' farm to school programs?

A: Yes; Track 2 is a good option if you have a regional or statewide project partnership that includes either of the following combinations: (1) at least one farm to school support organization and at least one California farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school); or (2) at least two California farm to school implementing organizations, as defined above. Farm to school support organizations may include non-profit organizations, California food producers, and certified small businesses in California. You can see the full list of eligible farm to school support organizations on [pages 13–14 of the Request for Applications](#). The CDFA encourages (but does not require) partnerships described in combination (1) to include at least two California farm to school implementing organizations. Please note that Track 2 project partnerships may include other types of entities in addition to farm to school support organizations and farm to school implementing organizations. Only farm to school support organizations or farm to school implementing organizations can be the lead applicant in Track 2. Additionally, Track 2 projects must do at least one of the three Track 2 goals listed on [page 8 of the Request for Applications](#) and a Track 2 project partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports *more than one* farm to school implementing organization, as defined above.

Allowable costs in Track 2 include infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives (e.g., storage, infrastructure, and cattle to help grow farm to school programs). Allowable costs in Track 2 also include farm to school staff costs for project planning, coordination, facilitation, and/or implementation.

Q: [Track 4] Can we use Track 4 grant funds to purchase cold/freezer storage at our ranch to help distribute food to local schools and businesses? This could be a new building, restructuring an old building, or buying a cold/freezer unit. We could also use some of the storage space to host educational classes for schools and educational centers.

A: Yes. Farm to School Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Costs to increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell or donate whole or minimally processed food to schools are allowable. Farm to School Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Costs to increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell or donate whole or minimally processed food to businesses are allowable *if it relates to farm to school* (but using grant funds to sell to businesses that are unrelated to your farm to school project is unallowable). Farm to School Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Costs to establish new or expand existing hands-on educational opportunities that engage students from partner schools are also allowable. This may include cold/freezer storage such as a cold/freezer unit, capital expenditures for a new building (with prior written approval from the CDFA), or restructuring an old building.

Q: [Track 4] Can I use this Track 4 grant to create contracts to buy cattle as part of our effort to sell beef to schools?

A: Yes. In all four funding tracks, contractual costs are allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Please refer to [page 35 of the Request for Applications](#) for more details about contractual costs. In Track 4, livestock to produce food products like meat, eggs, and dairy is also an allowable cost.

Q: [Track 4] Could I apply for the beginning infrastructure of a farm? Things like grading, greenhouses, fencing, refrigerated truck, etc.

A: Grading, greenhouses, fencing, and refrigerated trucks are allowable in Track 4 under Farm to School Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Costs. [Page 19 of the RFA](#) says, “Note about start-up costs: Applicants may apply to fund start-up costs for their food production operation if the costs follow the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs - Track 4](#). However, please note that Track 4 applicants must be able to demonstrate an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department in the application and that the CDFA will prioritize Track 4 applicants who can demonstrate an ability to produce food for schools in the application.”

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] If Nutrition Service is buying food from campus Farm Labs, do we need 3 quotes?

A: For the Track 1 application, the review criteria will *not* score applicants based on the procurement method they are using to procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food (e.g., whether the procurement method is a micropurchase, small purchase, or formal purchase). [Page 20 of the RFA](#), under CA Food Procurement Costs, states that

procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods (from vendors including but not limited to food producers, distributors, food hubs, **and school gardens/farms**) for utilization in school meals (including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)) is allowable. This section also states that **grant recipients must follow USDA procurement and food safety regulations**. While the review criteria will *not* score whether grant recipients are following USDA procurement and food safety regulations, Track 1 grant recipients must make sure to follow these regulations when using grant funds to procure food. To learn more about USDA procurement regulations, you can explore [this webpage](#). [These FAQs](#) include some specific information about micropurchases. To learn more about using products grown in a school garden or farm in school food service programs, you can visit [this webpage](#) and scroll down to the “Using products grown in the school garden or school farm” section.

Q: [Track 2] For the indirect expenses, it looks like we can bill for 30% of direct costs. Is this all direct costs, not Modified Total Direct Costs?

A: Yes, this grant program allows for an indirect cost rate of up to 30% of all direct costs. Indirect costs are defined in [Section 303\(a\)\(36\) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Applicants from the University of California or California State University must follow their established policy.

Q: [Track 2] In our project budget, we are proposing to allocate a large portion of funds to a contractor, which means they will bear a significant portion of the indirect costs of the project. Should we budget all indirect costs as a percentage of the total direct project costs, or should we separately budget indirect costs as a percentage of our organization's total direct project costs and then as a percentage of our contractor's total direct project costs?

A: Please include all of your proposed project's indirect costs in the Indirect Costs spending category of the budget worksheet as a single line item that is a percentage of all direct project costs, even if you plan to pass some funds for indirect costs through to a contractor. If you plan to pass some funds for indirect costs through to a contractor, please explain this somewhere in the budget worksheet. Please note that this grant program allows for an indirect cost rate of up to 30% of all direct costs. Indirect costs are defined in [Section 303\(a\)\(36\) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#).

Q: [Track 2] Could you please let me know if a state-established council that is affiliated with the CDFA would be allowed to bill indirect costs at the maximum rate of 30% of direct costs?

A: Eligible entities regardless of their affiliation to CDFA are subject to the same maximum allowable indirect cost rate specified in the RFA.

June 12th–14th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] If we propose to use grant funds to purchase locally procured food that we will make available to all students K-12 in the school district, would the educational opportunities in our project need to be for all of K-12 too? I was hoping to have the educational opportunities just for elementary school grades, K-5.

A: The farm to school educational opportunities that you propose do *not* need to serve all students in the school district. Track 1 applicants may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within their organization. If the food procurement aspect of your project will serve all schools in the school district but the educational opportunities will serve some schools (which is allowable), you should describe this in Question #8, “Schools Project Will Serve.” There are no points associated with Question #8, but it enables the CDFA to understand the scope of your proposed project. Please note that regardless of which school sites the project will serve, all Track 1 applicants must address how their project will coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces in Question #15.

Q: [Track 2] Is food provided at trainings and meetings an allowable cost for Track 2?

A: This may be an allowable cost in Track 2 if it is directly related to the purpose of the grant program (see [page 5 of the RFA](#)), is directly related to the goals of the applicable funding track (see [page 8 of the RFA](#)), is necessary to achieve the grant project objectives, and is reasonable. For example, while it may be necessary to include food at a day-long training that is an important element of the project, it may not be necessary to include food at a 2-hour meeting.

If an applicant would like to apply to spend grant funds on food for trainings and meetings, they should include these proposed costs in the budget worksheet section of their application. Proposed food for trainings and meetings would fit under Spending Category 2: Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies in the Track 2 budget worksheet as materials or supplies. Additionally, applicants should include a description of these costs and a description of how these costs are related to the implementation of the project to demonstrate why these costs are necessary for meeting the grant project objectives. The budget should clearly align with the Project Description section of the application. The CDFA will review budget worksheets from submitted applications during the review process to ensure that proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and necessary. If the application receives a grant award, the project budget in the executed grant agreement will reflect the proposed project costs that the CDFA approved.

Please note that grant recipients utilizing grant funds to purchase food for trainings and meetings must ensure that the food costs are in alignment with [the California Department of Human Resources’ per diem meal reimbursement rates](#) (i.e., no more than \$7 per person per day for breakfast, no more than \$11 per person per day for lunch, and no more than \$23 per person per day for dinner).

Q: [Track 4] Would it be allowable for a food producer to lease space from an entity to build infrastructure on and build this into the grant budget? We don’t have to go this route but wanted to check if it was 1) allowable and or 2) desirable?

A: Yes, this would be allowable. Rental costs of real property, which includes rental costs to rent land through a leasing agreement, are allowable in Track 4. Please note that lease-to-own costs are unallowable, per [the CDFA List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost, #22](#). Infrastructure costs, such as the list of Infrastructure Examples on [page 33 of the RFA](#) are also allowable. We cannot provide feedback on the desirability of this project idea in order to ensure a competitive grant application process for all. However, we recommend reviewing the [Track 4 review criteria](#) to see how to develop a competitive Track 4 application.

Q: [Track 4] The application says that capital expenditures for buildings and land are allowable with prior written approval from the CDFA. Can you let me know more about the approval process if we would like to use grant funds to build a new building?

A: [See this response](#).

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] I was wondering if purchasing bread products from a local bakery would be an allowable purchase for the Farm to School Incubator grant? Would there be any further requirements? I.e., ensure the wheat used in the bread was CA grown, etc.

A: In Track 1, whole grain-rich flours and other whole grain-rich products that are 100% grown, milled, processed, and manufactured in California are allowable costs for utilization in school meals and/or in educational opportunities that engage students. In alignment with the USDA, whole grain-rich means that at least 50 to 100% of the grains in the product are whole grains, and the remaining grain, if any, must be enriched.

Q: [Track 1] We would like to get a small tractor. We want to include funding for insurance. Is this allowable?

A: In the 2022 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, a tractor is an allowable cost if it is for the purpose of meeting the grant project objectives. Please refer to [Sections 303\(26\), 324.1, and 324.2 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) for a definition of equipment and guidance regarding equipment property records and disposition. Costs associated with insurance are allowable as an indirect cost to the grant award. Insurance costs may be allowable as a direct cost to the grant award if necessary to the performance of the grant award, and with prior written approval of the Department.

Q: [Track 2] The CDFA List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost indicates that “Costs of communicating with the public, industry, and press pertaining to grant award activities and results if outreach efforts are required by the grant award” are allowable. We just want to verify that the work of a contractor to manage a public relations campaign would be allowable by this definition.

A: Yes, allocating grant funds to a contractor to manage a public relations campaign that communicates with the public, industry, and press pertaining to grant award activities and results would be allowable if it is directly related to the purpose of the grant program (see [page 5 of the RFA](#)), is directly related to the goals of the applicable funding track (see [page 8 of the RFA](#)), is necessary to achieve the grant project objectives, and is reasonable.

Please note that costs of promotional items, memorabilia, gifts, souvenirs, and similar items are unallowable; costs associated with fundraising are unallowable; and costs of advertising and public relations that are not directly related to the purpose or objectives of the grant program or grant award are unallowable.

Q: [Track 3] Are we able to partner with a local municipality under a Track 3 application? For example, to conduct outreach and help us develop and promote revenue-generating activities such as ECE summer camps, farm dinners, and ticketed fundraising events that will fund the program beyond the life of this grant?

A: Yes, you may partner with a local municipality under a Track 3 application. Contractual Costs for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Please note that at least 50% of the students that each Track 3 project serves must be young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers). Track 3 projects may also include school-age children if they attend the ECE sites that the project will serve. Please also note that costs associated with fundraising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts, donations, and bequests, and similar endeavors to raise capital or obtain contributions, are unallowable.

Q: [Track 3] Am I right in reading Section 319(a) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations that since our preferred contractor is listed in our property management manual, we can move forward with using them for this project without following a 3-bid competitive process?

A: If you have your own written procurement policy and procedures for procuring a contractor, then you may follow that and would not need to follow 319(b) of the [CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). However, you would still need to follow 319(c), 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3.

Q: [Track 3] Section 319(b) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations requires contract opportunities to be advertised or 3 bids to be provided. Are these 3 bids to be included with our application? What if we have a partner that is simply volunteering their efforts?

A: If, in the absence of your own written procurement policy and procedures, you are following 319(b) of the [CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) for procuring a contractor, then no, you do not need to include the three bids in the application. However, you would need to maintain the documents related to that procurement process, in accordance with 319(c).

If you will be collaborating with a partner to implement your proposed project but will not be paying them with grant funds as part of your project, then you would not need to include them as a contractor (and would not need to follow Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations) and could simply include them as a Project Team Member in the application.

Q: [Track 3] Regarding Section 320.2 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations (written agreement required), are we to enter into a contingent agreement with contractors at the time of our grant application? Or can we enter into this agreement if we receive an award?

A: No, you do not need a written agreement with contractors at the time of your grant application. You may enter into a written agreement with a contractor after you receive a grant award and if contractual costs are an approved cost in your project budget.

Q: [Track 4] The RFA describes an allowable cost of Track 4 as, "Capital expenditures for buildings and land (with prior written approval from the CDFA)." Can you please advise on the process to seek prior written approval for capital expenditures for buildings?

A: In Track 4, capital expenditures for buildings and land (with prior written approval from the CDFA) are an allowable cost. If a Track 4 applicant would like to apply to spend grant funds on capital expenditures for buildings and land, they should include these proposed costs in the

budget worksheet section of their application. They should include a description of these costs and a description of how these costs are related to the implementation of the project to demonstrate why these costs are necessary for meeting the grant project objectives. The budget should clearly align with the Project Description section of the application. The CDFA will review budget worksheets from submitted applications during the review process to ensure that proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and necessary. If the application receives a grant award, the project budget in the executed grant agreement will reflect the proposed project costs that the CDFA approved.

Q: [Track 4] Are equipment, (supplemental lighting in the greenhouse to increase production during months with reduced daylight hours) and associated fees (tax, shipping and installation fees) allowable costs?

A: Yes, equipment taxes and installation costs for approved equipment that a grant recipient purchases with grant funds are allowable, if reasonable and necessary. Costs incurred for freight charges, postage, and other transportation services relating to goods purchased with grant funds are also allowable. Please refer to [Sections 303\(26\), 324.1, and 324.2 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) for a definition of equipment and guidance regarding equipment property records and disposition. Please see [pages 32–34 in the RFA](#) for additional details about equipment costs.

Q: [Track 4] My Track 4 application involves farming on three properties that I own. Can I include in my budget the installation of a bathroom with a sink for farm laborers?

A: Yes, a bathroom and sink would be allowable as long as they are for farm laborers who will be helping you to meet your farm to school grant project objectives and you can clearly demonstrate in the application that the bathroom and sink are a necessary part of your grant project to enable you to meet your grant project objectives. Installation costs for approved purchases that a grant recipient makes with grant funds are allowable, if reasonable and necessary. Alternatively, there may be other options such as proposing to use grant funds to rent porta potties during the grant term that farm laborers who are helping you to meet your farm to school grant project objectives can use while the project is occurring.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Would kitchen equipment for an elementary school teaching/instructional kitchen (not the school's kitchen) be an allowable cost? And if we have already purchased these items can the grant cover those costs? Installation will happen in July/August.

A: In Track 1, infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces are allowable costs under the Farm to School Education Costs spending category (see [pages 21-22 of the RFA](#)). In Track 2, infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable costs under the Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies spending category (see [page 25 of the RFA](#)).

Pre-award costs are unallowable. The grant agreement must be fully executed (signed by both parties) before project activities begin. Please note that we estimate the grant term will be between December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024, which means that grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 4] Is it possible to use funding for student internships in Track 1 or Track 4?

A: Yes, as long as this use of grant funds is in alignment with goals of the applicable funding track (see [pages 8-9 of the RFA](#)) and is for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives.

June 28th–30th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] We are planning to purchase 100% whole wheat bread and pizza dough from a local bakery that procures from CA grain farmers. The goal is to contract with the bakery to produce these products. Is this an allowable cost? If yes, where should we put this in the budget worksheet and what records you would like us to keep?

A: In Track 1, using grant funds to purchase whole grain-rich flours and other whole grain-rich products that are 100% grown, milled, processed, and manufactured in California is allowable. In alignment with the USDA, whole grain-rich means that at least 50 to 100% of the grains in the product are whole grains, and the remaining grain, if any, must be enriched. Proposed California food procurement costs should go under Spending Category 1: CA Food Procurement Costs in the Track 1 budget worksheet. If awarded, then as part of the invoicing process for the grant program, when invoicing for California grown or produced food procurement costs, the CDFA will require Track 1 grant recipients to submit a food procurement worksheet that includes a range of procurement metrics such as item name, item amount and cost, market channel, vendor name, name of farm or producer (if known), etc.

Contractual Costs for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are also allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). This may include contracting with a local bakery if their services will help the school district to achieve its grant project objectives. Proposed contractual costs should go under Spending Category 6: Contractual Costs in the Track 1 budget worksheet. Please note that grant recipients distributing grant funds to contractors must ensure that contractors follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds.

Q: [Track 1] Am I allowed to include the price of electrical work and installation for equipment? If yes, where should we put this in the budget worksheet?

A: Yes, costs of installation and electrical work for approved equipment that a grant recipient purchases with grant funds are allowable, if reasonable and necessary. Please refer to [Sections 303\(26\), 324.1, and 324.2 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) for a definition of equipment and guidance regarding equipment property records and disposition.

Please note that in Track 1, equipment to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces is allowable (and would fit under Spending Category 2: Farm to School Education Costs in the Track 1 budget worksheet). Also in Track 1, school kitchen equipment to support utilization of California grown or produced foods in school meals is allowable (and would fit under Spending Category 4: School Kitchen Costs in the Track 1 budget worksheet). If you are proposing costs of installation and electrical work to accompany your proposed equipment costs, then we

recommend including this in the same spending category where you include your proposed equipment costs, and explaining the costs in the reasoning section as well as why the costs are reasonable and necessary.

Q: [Track 1] Our school district hopes to improve the gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium space and make it conducive to supporting educational activities for students. Specifically, we would like to refloor and seal the space so that it is hygienic and conducive for food classes and demonstrations; remodel the bathroom and install adequate hand-washing stations; and purchase additional portable, pull-down benches and tables to support hands-on food demonstration classes. Are these allowable costs?

A: Yes, in Track 1, infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces are allowable costs (under Spending Category 2: Farm to School Education Costs in the Track 1 budget worksheet). Please note that in the Reasoning section of the budget worksheet, applicants should include a description of these costs and a description of how these costs are related to the implementation of the project to demonstrate why these costs are necessary for meeting the grant project objectives. The budget should clearly align with the Project Description section of the application.

Also in Track 1, contractor or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). Applicants who include contractors in their Budget must also include those contractors in their Project Work Plan. Please note that grant recipients distributing funds to contractors must ensure that contractors follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds.

Q: [Track 1] Are construction costs for a school garden that will be used for food and educational purposes allowable costs?

A: Yes, construction costs for a school garden that will be used for food and educational purposes are allowable in Track 1. Specifically, in Track 1, infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces are allowable costs. Staff time associated with managing and implementing the farm to school project is also allowable. Contractor or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are also allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#).

So, applicants could propose to work with a contractor to construct a school garden if this is for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives. Applicants could propose costs of infrastructure, equipment, materials, and/or supplies for the school garden if this will help to coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students. Applicants could also propose staff costs to help construct the school garden if this is for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives.

Q: [Track 1] Would field trip fees for farm to school educational field trips be an allowable cost? If yes, where should we put this in the budget worksheet?

A: Yes, if this is related to coordinating the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces. Applicants can propose field trip fees under the Other Costs spending category in the Track 1 budget worksheet. If the field trip fees are essentially registration fees to enable individuals or a group to attend the field trip, then field trip fees could fit under the “Registration Fees” item type in this spending category.

Q: [Track 1] Can you distinguish between supplies and materials?

A: We don’t have separate definitions for materials and supplies. However, we have definitions to distinguish supplies and equipment:

- **Supplies:** Tangible personal property having a useful life of less than one year or a per-unit value of less than \$5,000.
- **Equipment:** Tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. The acquisition cost includes the cost of any necessary accessories and all incidental costs incurred to put the asset into place and ready for its intended use.

Q: [Track 2] Would an event be eligible for funding?

A: The allowable costs for Track 2 are on [pages 24-27 of the RFA](#). If the event is for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives, then costs for the event including but not limited to procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for utilization in farm to school educational activities that engage students; materials and supplies; and staffing for planning, coordination, facilitation, and/or implementation would be allowable.

Q: [Track 4] Our proposed budget includes equipment costs only. If we need to pay for all equipment at once to save money, rather than pay a higher price for smaller quantities, are we allowed to get a loan to pay for the project and then have the CDFA grant reimburse our loan up to the grant award amount we may receive? Or would this be a case for an advance payment, in which case, 100% of the grant would be used within a very short period?

A: For a grant recipient, a possible option could be to deposit the loan amount in your name and then make the purchase and then provide the purchase receipts as proof of payment when you request reimbursement from the CDFA. If you receive a loan for grant project expenses, we would not be responsible for the loan repayment or any interest payments, so you could not bill the CDFA for the loan. Please note that grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before December 1, 2022 or after November 30, 2024.

Please also note that grant recipients may be eligible to receive Advance Payments for project expenditures (e.g., if the grant recipient can demonstrate low-to-no cash flow). Advance payments shall not exceed the amount necessary for project expenses for a three-month period and cannot reduce the project balance below 10% of the award amount (meaning an advance payment for 100% of the grant award would not be possible). If eligible and approved for advance payment, recipients must follow the [Advance Payment regulations](#).

RFA SECTION: 2.2 PREVIOUS GRANT RECIPIENTS

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] If we previously received a grant award through this grant program, can we reapply in 2022?

A: Yes. Please refer to the Previous Grant Recipients section of the RFA and the Previous Grant Recipients Decision Tree on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#) for details.

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] My school district is a previous grant recipient and we have experienced ongoing delays with our project due to a variety of factors. Will the CDFA consider our application if we apply to the 2022 grant cycle or will the delays in our current project affect us negatively during grant review?

A: The Review Criteria that the external technical reviewers will use for this grant program does not allocate any points to past grant performance. However, as noted in the [Review Process section of the RFA](#), during the CDFA's initial administrative review of applications (which occurs before the external technical review), the following may result in disqualification of a grant application: ...The entity previously received a grant award through this program and their past performance is not acceptable. Please note that we understand that the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors beyond grant recipients' control may present challenges for project implementation and cause project delays.

Q: [All Tracks] Are we able to apply for another round of funding if we haven't spent all the funds from our first grant award?

A: Yes, previous grant recipients may apply in 2022. Please refer to the [Previous Grant Recipients section on page 39 of the RFA](#) and the [Previous Grant Recipients Decision Tree](#) on the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website for additional information and for details about spending funds from both grants if awarded.

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] One idea we have for this track is to xxx. We want to make sure this scope of work would qualify under Track 3, since we are current grantees under Track 2.

A: Previous grant recipients may apply to any funding track of the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program for which they are eligible. This means that as a current Track 2 grant recipient, you may apply to Track 3 in the 2022 grant cycle if you meet the Track 3 eligibility criteria ([pages 16-17 of the RFA](#)). We recommend reviewing [page 39 of the RFA](#) and the [Previous Grant Recipients Decision Tree](#) for additional details about applying as a previous grant recipient.

In terms of project scope for Track 3, we recommend reviewing the [goals of Track 3 on page 9 of the RFA](#) and reviewing the [Track 3 review criteria](#) (particularly for questions 17 and 21) to see if the project ideas you have in mind align with this funding track.

June 28th–30th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] We are a previous grant recipient. How explicit should we be in the project narrative (or anywhere else in the grant application) about reapplying this cycle as an "extension" or "expansion" of the current cycle of funding we are receiving?

A: If an applicant is a previous grant recipient through this grant program, then they should address this in question 2a in the application, which asks: Has your organization previously received a California Farm to School Incubator Grant? If yes – please provide the agreement number and describe how the proposed project supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by the 2021 grant as well as how additional grant funding will ensure project sustainability after the 2021 and 2022 grant terms end.

Q: [Track 2] Given the overlap in the 2021 and 2022 grant cycles, do you recommend that, if awarded in 2022, we complete and close out the current grant project before beginning work in the upcoming cycle (thus pushing back the start date of the 2022 project)? Related to this, how explicit should we be in the project work plan about timelines for overlap or not between the two grant cycles?

A: Overlapping the funds from each grant cycle, or not overlapping the funds, is up to you. If a previous grant recipient also receives a grant award in 2022, they may *choose* to do either or both of the following options and should make their choice clear when completing the project timeline portion of the application:

- **Overlap Spending:** Spend grant funds from the 2021 and 2022 awards simultaneously, during the time when the grant terms overlap, given that the organization is able to account for and report on both grant awards simultaneously and ensure that there is clear delineation between and nonduplication of the use of funds for each project; and/or
- **Stagger Spending:** Spend grant funds from the 2022 award after spending all 2021 grant funds and completing the 2021 project, with the understanding that the grant term for the 2022 award will still end on November 30, 2024.

Please be very explicit about your choice in the timeline column of the Project Work Plan. For example, in addition to writing the Month/Year when each activity will occur in the timeline column, you could explicitly state that the activity will or will not overlap with your current grant project.

For more information, please see the [Previous Grant Recipients section of the RFA](#) and the [Previous Grant Recipients Decision Tree](#).

Q: [Track 2] Would we be eligible in this grant new period if we seek and receive approval for an extension of our current grant project term?

A: Yes. If a previous grant recipient meets the eligibility criteria (see the [Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA](#)) and has an acceptable performance history in the program, then it is eligible to apply. Please note that the CDFA will consider past performance in the grant program when reviewing applications. Please also note that the CDFA understands that the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors beyond 2021 grant recipients' control may present challenges for project implementation and cause project delays. For more information, please see the [Previous Grant Recipients section of the RFA](#) and the [Previous Grant Recipients Decision Tree](#).

RFA SECTION: 3.1 HOW TO APPLY

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] How do I access the online application?

A: Please access the 2022 WizeHive grant application portal for each funding track by following the links below:

- Track 1: The California Farm to School K-12 Procurement and Education Grant:
https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track1_k12-procurement-and-ed_2022
- Track 2: The California Farm to School Partnership Grant:
https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track2_partnership_2022
- Track 3: The California Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grant:
https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track3_farm2ece_2022
- Track 4: The California Farm to School Producer Grant:
https://webportalapp.com/sp/cdfa_track4_producers_2022

For guidance on how to navigate the online application, you can view our [WizeHive Video Tutorial](#), which demonstrates how to create a WizeHive account and get started on your application.

Q: [All Tracks] We are currently building our grant in the Wizehive portal. We are not ready to finalize and submit but would like to know if there is a way to print out our responses before we submit?

A: It doesn't look like there is a print button for the application form, but if you press CTRL+P (Windows) or COMMAND+P (Mac) on your keyboard, you should be able to print your draft application. If there are text boxes in which your text extended beyond the size of the box, you can click and drag the bottom right corner of the text box before printing to expand the box. Then, your full response should appear in your printed version.

RFA SECTION: 3.2 GRANT APPLICATION & REVIEW CRITERIA

Pre-application period Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Will school size (i.e., number of students enrolled) affect the chances of a school district or directly funded charter school to receive a grant award?

A: School size does *not* affect a Track 1 applicant's chances of receiving a grant award. However, school size does affect the amount of funds for which a Track 1 applicant may apply, as the funding formula is based on number of students enrolled in School Year 2019-20 multiplied by \$10. Please note that if an applicant's formula produces a number LESS THAN \$150,000, the applicant may apply for *up to* \$150,000.

Q: [Track 1] The priority populations map does not identify our area as a low-income community. However, a different map of low-income communities that I found does. Can I answer "yes" to the priority populations question?

A: No; if the priority populations map does not identify any schools that your project will serve as being located among a priority population, then you must respond "no" to this question. We selected this map because it is California-specific and shows disadvantaged and low-income communities, as defined for California Climate Investments, that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. However, please note that the Track 1 application asks a variety of questions about community need to make sure that applicants have the opportunity to demonstrate their school community's need. For example, there is also a question called "Making the Case," which asks why the project is important and if there are any needs, gaps, or challenges your school community has experienced that this grant will help address. This is a

great place for applicants to provide data that may not otherwise be reflected in the application to demonstrate community need.

Q: [Track 1] Is the grant meant to serve every school within our school district or can we specify certain schools we intend to serve through the grant?

A: Track 1 grant projects do *not* need to serve every school within the applicant's organization. For Track 1, public school districts, county offices of education, and directly funded charter schools that apply will have the opportunity to identify in the application whether the proposed project will serve all schools or target one or more specific school sites within their organization. If the proposed project will target specific school sites, applicants must name them and briefly describe why they are targeting those sites. Certain questions in the application (e.g., about community need) will also direct applicants to tailor their responses to only the schools that the project will serve. Please note that *all* Track 1 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at their organization. In addition, applicants are welcome to submit a letter of support from the decision-maker at the specific school site(s) with which they are partnering for their project, if applicable.

Q: [Track 2] Can we partner with specific school sites in various school districts rather than with every school site within those districts?

A: Track 2 grant projects do *not* need to serve every school within the lead applicant's organization or within supporting project partners' organizations. For Track 2, applicants will have the opportunity to identify in the application whether the proposed project will serve all schools or target one or more specific school sites within the farm to school implementing organizations (i.e., public school districts, county offices of education, and/or directly funded charter schools) that are part of their project partnership. If the proposed project will target specific school sites, applicants must name them and briefly describe why they are targeting those sites. Certain questions in the application (e.g., about community need) will also direct applicants to tailor their responses to only the schools that the project will serve. Please note that *all* Track 2 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership. In addition, applicants are welcome to submit a letter of support from the decision-maker at the specific school site(s) with which they are partnering for their project, if applicable.

Q: [Track 2] We are partnering with a very large school district and it might be a hurdle to get a letter of support from the district's school nutrition services director. Is there anyone else we could submit a letter of support from?

A: All Track 2 applicants need to submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker) who ultimately oversees and coordinates the school meal program at each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership. In addition, applicants are welcome to submit a letter of support from the decision-maker at the specific school site(s) with which they are partnering for their project, if applicable.

Q: [Track 4] How will scoring for the Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Food System section of the application work regarding small to midsize food producers and veteran, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited-resource food producers?

A: For the small to midsize food producer funding priority, applicants will receive 7 points if their average annual gross cash farm income during the previous three-year period is no more than

\$750,000 and 0 points if it is more than \$750,000 or if they check “Prefer not to answer.” For the veteran, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited resource food producer funding priority, applicants will receive 7 points if their operation is at least 50% owned by producer(s) who belong to one or more of the following groups and 0 points if it is not or if they check “Prefer not to answer”: veterans (as defined in the RFA), African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, women, LGBTQ+ people, limited-resource farm households (according to [this tool](#)).

Q: [Track 4] How will scoring for the Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Food System section of the application work regarding climate smart agriculture?

A: The climate smart agriculture funding priority consists of three questions: Description (worth 2 points), Verification (worth 4 points), and Looking Forward (worth 1 point). Please refer to questions 18a, 18b, and 18c in the Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria document for additional details, which you can find on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 3] How do I find out if schools that my project will serve are located among priority populations?

A: You can find out if any of the schools that your project would serve are located among priority populations by using this [map](#). To use the map, follow these steps: (1) Type in the addresses of school sites within your district/organization that your project will serve; (2) Look at the color of the map – pink and blue stripes, solid pink, solid blue, solid yellow, or yellow stripes indicate a priority population.

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 3] How do I know if my project will engage students from underserved communities?

A: For the funding priority about engaging students from underserved communities, applicants will receive the maximum points if their project will clearly engage a significant number of students from underserved communities. Per [Executive Order 13985](#) on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, “underserved communities” refers to populations such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. Applicants will have the opportunity to describe the students their project will engage in the application and may use whatever data sources they prefer to respond to this question.

Q: [All Tracks] How will this grant program determine if a food producer is small to midsize?

A: This grant programs defines small to midsize food producers as those for which the average annual gross cash farm income during the previous three-year period is no more than \$750,000. For applicants to Tracks 1, 2, and 3, we suggest asking the food producer(s) you plan to work with if they meet this criterion.

Q: [All Tracks] What if applicants do not have access to Microsoft applications (for downloading and uploading the budget template)?

A: Applicants may email the CDFA for support at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov if they are unable to utilize the Microsoft Excel format of the budget worksheet.

Q: [All Tracks] Do you have any tips for how to write a successful grant application?

A: The CDFA cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. We recommend that you thoroughly read the review criteria for the funding track to which you are applying, as this is what the external technical review committee will use to score applications. You can find the review criteria for each funding track on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] Does serving a broader geographic area and reaching a larger number of students necessarily increase the competitiveness of a Track 2 proposal?

A: When thinking about how to make a grant application competitive, we recommend looking at the review criteria, which you can find on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). The highest scoring category for Track 2 is Community Need (worth up to 40 out of 100 points); this category essentially asks who your project will serve and if it will serve communities with the greatest need. In this scoring category, a larger geographic area and larger number of students doesn't necessarily increase the competitiveness of a Track 2 proposal but serving students with the greatest need does. The next highest scoring category is Project Description. The third highest scoring category is Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Food System. In terms of geographic reach, part of Question 17 in the Project Description section of the Track 2 application asks, "How will your project make regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization [i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school] and what will the scale of that impact be?" Please note that for the purposes of this grant program, applicants applying to Track 2 may determine what regional means to them. The Track 2 review criteria does not have a specific definition of "regional," but rather will evaluate whether an applicant clearly demonstrates how the project will make regional or statewide food system impact that *meaningfully* supports *more than one* farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) and what the scale of that impact will be.

Q: [Track 2] In the Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria PDF on the website, it looks like questions 12g and 12h are the same?

A: Thank you for bringing this to our attention – that is a typo. Question 12g should read, "Current *number* of school sites under Community Eligibility Provision" and question 12h should read, "Current *percentage* of school sites under Community Eligibility Provision." We have corrected this in the Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria PDF on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). Questions 12g and 12h were already correct in the Track 2 online application portal, so the portal questions remain the same.

Q: [Track 4] What counts as showing evidence of an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department?

A: See questions 7a, 7b, and 8 on pages 6-7 of the [Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#) to view the detailed criteria regarding relationships with school nutrition services departments. To demonstrate an established relationship in Question 8, Track 4 applicants must upload at least one complete letter of intent (using this [letter of intent template](#)) from a school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decisionmaker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at any of the eligible entities described in question 7a with which the producer intends to collaborate. The school nutrition services director does not need to commit to working with the producer in the letter, but rather needs to indicate a "good faith" intention either to purchase/accept the producer's whole or minimally

processed food for school meals and/or to collaborate with the producer to implement hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the producer's food sales/donations to their organization.

Q: [All Tracks] Is there a way to print the application to review before filling it out?

A: On [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#), under "Application Questions and Review Criteria," you can access a PDF of the application questions and review criteria for each funding track (see links below). Please note that questions in the online application portals may slightly differ. Applicants may use the questions in the below documents to draft application responses before filling out the online application, but please note that all applicants must submit their responses through the online application portal.

- [Track 1 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 3 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)

May 21st–24th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] In the Track 1 application, questions 12h and 12i ask for the number of school sites and % of school sites currently under the Community Eligibility Provision. While the majority of our high needs schools are CEP, we also have a number of schools under Provision 2 that are also considered high need; can we include those as part of our CEP number?

A: No; please only include Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) sites in questions 12h and 12i in the Track 1 application. However, if you also have schools under Provision 2 that are considered high need, you may include this information in question 11, "Making the Case" to further demonstrate community need.

Q: [Track 1] Can you clarify question 13, "Is farm to school new to your district/organization?" Does having a history of farm to school include having a "garden to school" program? We currently run a school garden and use produce for cooking classes and tastings and donate excess produce to families.

A: For question 13, yes, having a history of farm to school can include garden to school programs. The CDFA broadly considers farm to school programs as combining: (1) schools and early care and education programs buying California grown or produced foods from California food producers for school meal programs, (2) educational activities that connect classroom learning with cafeteria meals, and (3) hands-on food education opportunities in school gardens, on farms, in culinary classes, in settings that celebrate traditional foodways and cultivate food sovereignty, and through other experiential learning pathways. Please note that while answering "yes" or "no" to question 13 will not impact scoring, question 14 will allocate 3 points to Track 1 applications in which the applicant clearly describes past and/or current work that connects to school nutrition, student engagement, and/or farm to school and demonstrates significant motivation to engage with farm to school.

Q: [Track 2] Would it be okay to have multiple people sign the letter of support from the farm to school implementing organization(s) in our project partnership? For example, the

nutrition services director AND the Superintendent? Or is there another way you would prefer us to handle this?

A: For Track 2, the minimum requirement for letters of support from farm to school implementing organizations is to upload a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in your project partnership. Beyond that, if desired, you are welcome to upload separate letters of support from others within each farm to school implementing organization that is a part of your project partnership. We recommend uploading separate letters rather than asking multiple people to sign the same letter so that it is clear which aspect(s) of the project each individual endorses and what their role will be in supporting the project. If you can make this clear in one letter of support that multiple people sign, then you can do it that way if you prefer.

Q: [Track 2] In Track 2, we are a nonprofit applying as the implementing organization, but a significant portion of the funds would be pass-through to fund salaries for a Local Educational Agency preparing to take over school food service for our area. Should those dollars be reflected in our budget in the "Contractors" section?

A: Yes. If a grant recipient is "passing through" significant funds to a partner such as a school district or other organization, this likely fits best under Contractual Costs in the budget worksheet. Contractual or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable in all four funding tracks subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#). A contractor is an entity that undertakes a contract to perform an activity. Please note that applicants who include contractors in their Budget must also include those contractors in their Project Work Plan. Additionally, grant recipients distributing funds to contractors must ensure that contractors follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds. Salaries are an allowable cost for grant recipients, so they are also an allowable cost for contractors.

May 25th–31st Q&A

Q: [Track 1] One of the questions asks how many Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) sites we have. Currently, we have XX sites but as of the start of the fall school year, all of our school sites will be CEP. What should I put as the answer?

A: Please include the number and percentage of CEP sites that you have *at the time of* submitting your application.

Q: [Track 1] In question 20, it asks if we are going to procure food from food producers in California. Is our school garden considered a "food producer?"

A: First, we would like to note that in question 15, it is allowable for a Track 1 applicant to propose to procure whole or minimally processed food from their school garden or school farm for school meals in order to meet the required component of Track 1 to "procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals." Please see [page 20 of the RFA](#) > Track 1 Allowable and Unallowable Costs > CA Food Procurement Costs.

Then, for questions 20, 21, and 22, there are two scenarios:

- 1) If your own district/school operates the school garden/farm, then you should *not* include the school garden/farm in your response to question 20.

- 2) If a food producer (including a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or Tribal government entity) leases, rents, or has a written agreement for the school land AND operates the land as its own farm and that is who you are procuring food from, then you *may* include that food producer in your response to question 20.

Q: [All Tracks] Do you have the application available in Spanish?

A: No, the applications are available in English only.

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] What is “Community Eligibility Provision”?

A: The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provides School Nutrition Program (SNP) sponsors an alternative method for claiming student meals in high poverty schools. More information about CEP can be found on the CA Department of Education’s website here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/cep.asp>. We also recommend contacting your organization’s school nutrition services director (or equivalent organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) to ask if your school site(s) are under Community Eligibility Provision.

Q: [Track 1] At 27%, we have a relatively low Unduplicated Pupil Count of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals, English Learners & Foster Youth. This usually prohibits us from receiving most grant funding. How much of a factor does that play in the awarding of these grants?

A: The Track 1 application is out of 100 points total. The Community Need section of the application is out of 40 points. Within the Community Need section, the 2019-20 Unduplicated Pupil Count of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals, English Learners & Foster Youth is worth up to 8 points. We recognize that the unduplicated pupil count may not tell the whole story of a school community’s need and so the Community Need section includes additional opportunities to demonstrate need, such as the “Making the Case” question (#10), also worth up to 8 points. The external reviewers will score Track 1 applications according to this [Track 1 review criteria](#).

Q: [Track 1] I’m most concerned about the 40% weight of points for community need; our school district’s free and reduced-price meal eligibility rate sits just below 40%.

A: [See this response](#).

Q: [Track 1] Our district office is located in an opportunity zone on the opportunity zone map, but the schools we serve are adjacent to the opportunity zone. Would the district office meet the opportunity zone designation for question 12k?

A: Based on the way the question is worded, “Are any of the schools that your project will serve (see question 8) located in an Opportunity Zone?” please **do not** include the district office in your response to question 12k. However, if your district office is located in an Opportunity Zone and schools your project will serve are adjacent to it, you may include this information in question 11, “Making the Case” to help demonstrate community need.

Q: [Track 1] If we are a school district working with a non-profit and high school students to grow food on campus Farm Labs, who is the food producer?

A: [See this response](#).

Q: [Track 1] Our school district is applying to expand production at our school farm, increase classroom nutrition education, and purchase the school farm produce for school meals. Our population is primarily Hispanic. Does the school farm qualify as a small-to-midsize food producer OR socially disadvantaged food producer in question 20? The school district owns and operates the school farm.

A: While it is allowable for a Track 1 applicant to procure whole or minimally processed food from their school garden or school farm for school meals, if the district/school operates the school garden/farm, then the school garden/farm itself is not considered a food producer and would *not* qualify for questions 20, 21, or 22.

Q: [Track 1] Do we need to itemize every food item/ingredient we need to purchase for our recipes or can we group it together as one overall cost?

A: No, you do not need to itemize every food item/ingredient you need for your recipes in your proposed budget. Please see the Example tab of the [Budget Worksheet](#), under “Spending Category 1: CA Food Procurement Costs,” for an example of how to outline your proposed CA food procurement costs. However, we do recommend that when developing the proposed project budget, applicants calculate out the food items/ingredients they anticipate needing so that when they go to fill out the budget worksheet, the estimated dollar amounts in the worksheet are as accurate as possible.

Q: [Track 1] We would like to procure as many items as possible from local farms for our cooking classes, but we currently don't have that relationship established. Can we wait to see if we get the grant before establishing that relationship or does that need to happen prior to submitting?

A: Establishing relationships with local farms does *not* need to happen prior to submitting your Track 1 application. However, please note that in the Track 1 application, question 15, applicants must address how they will procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals. Additionally, in the Track 1 application, question 20 asks, “As part of your grant project, do you plan to procure from food producers in California who are any of the following? Please check all that apply.” This can include food procurement for either school meals and/or student education. Then, if you check any of the options in question 20 but have not yet identified producers who meet the criteria, question 21 will ask you to please describe your plan for seeking out and establishing partnerships with food producers in California who meet the criteria. You will need to clearly describe a detailed plan to partner with producers who meet the criteria in order to receive competitive points in this section of the application. For question 22, “Do you currently procure from producers who meet any of the criteria described in question 20?” you would answer no if you have not yet established relationships with producers in the areas that question 20 outlines.

Q: [Track 2] Our food hub serves many school districts and many students. In order to minimize the administrative burden on our school district customers, we would like to select two of our neediest districts as our project partners. However, if our overall score is stronger by tapping multiple districts (beyond the two required), we are happy to do so. Are we correct in understanding that there is no additional points-incentive in doing so?

A: Correct, a larger geographic area and larger number of students doesn't necessarily increase the competitiveness of a Track 2 proposal but serving students with the greatest need does. [See this response](#) for details.

Q: [Track 2] There are no points associated with Letters of Support. Does this mean that two letters of support (in our case, from the two farm to school implementing

organizations in our project partnership) carry the same weight as five letters of support?

A: Correct, there are no points attached to the letters of support and submitting more than the required letters of support carries the same weight as submitting the required letters of support. The requirement for letters of support from farm to school implementing organizations in Track 2 in order for the CDFA to consider the application complete is: Track 2 applicants must include a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent districtwide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization in the project partnership; each of these letters must include an endorsement of the project and description of how the school nutrition services department (or equivalent entity that operates the school meal program) will support the project. As you identified, the part of the Track 2 review criteria that offers points for the strength of the project partnership is question #7, Collaboration History.

Q: [Track 2] We are a farm to school support organization that works with a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for school food services that represents 8 public school districts and the county office of education. For the Track 2 application, would the JPA be our farm to school implementing organization partner or would each of the 8 school districts and county office of education be separate farm to school implementing organization partners?

A: This grant program defines a farm to school implementing organization as a public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school in California. For Track 1, farm to school implementing organizations must serve as a School Food Authority (SFA) and operate the NSLP and/or SBP to be eligible. However, for Track 2, farm to school implementing organizations do not need to serve as an SFA. For Track 2, each of the 8 public school districts and the county office of education with which you are partnering and that your project will serve would be a separate farm to school implementing organization. You would include them in the Project Partners section as 9 distinct farm to school implementing organizations and then include data for each of them in the Community Need – organizational data section of the application. For question #30 in the Track 2 application, which requires a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in your project partnership, please upload a letter of support from the director of the JPA as well as from the district-wide decision-maker at each public school district and county office of education in the partnership who is liaising with the JPA and overseeing the implementation of meals at their school sites. Please also explain in the application how this is a unique situation in which the 9 distinct farm to school implementing organizations are under the umbrella of one JPA.

Q: [Track 2] Can we put a school district as a supporting project partner in Track 2 rather than a farm to school implementing organization partner if their free/reduced-price meal eligibility rate is pretty low and would bring down the Community Need scoring averages?

A: No. Please note the following clarifications about this Track 2:

- Track 2 applicants **must** include each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) that their project will serve in the Project Partners section of the application (Questions 5 & 6).

- Track 2 applicants **must** include data for each farm to school implementing organization that their project will serve in the Community Need – Organizational Data section of the application (Questions 12a–12l).

Q: [Track 3] Upon reviewing the Track 3 application, it appears there are several requests for data that include a link to the map and/or source we must use to provide that information. Furthermore, the instructions state to provide the data for your proposed County. We don't believe the County level data appropriately reflects the needs of our specific communities. How do you intend to score multiple applicants against one another based on community need if they are all applying in the same County and thus are providing you with the exact same data points? Would it be possible to provide more localized data for these questions in order to more accurately illustrate the need within our proposed communities?

A: In the Track 3 application, for questions 10g, 10h, 10i, and 10j, we linked to specific data sources so that we can ensure that the data points applicants provide in response to those questions are standardized. Because these data sources include county-level data but not city-level or child care center-level data, we decided to request county-level data. Please respond to these questions with county-level data. It is true that applicants from the same counties will have the same data for these four questions. However, questions 8, 9, 13, and 14 – worth a combined total of up to 24 points – provide an opportunity for Track 3 applicants to provide more localized data that is specific to the communities and ECE providers/sites that their proposed project will serve.

If you have recommendations of more localized data sources that we could potentially utilize in the future, please let us know by emailing us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Tracks 2, 3, & 4] In the Track 2, 3, and 4 Budget Worksheets, the Contractual Costs spending category, Column C, asks for % FTE or # of hours, but then uses a drop down menu with options "Contractor," "Mini-Grant," "Non-Staff Stipend Receipt." Is there somewhere else that we should enter information about the % FTE or # of hours for each of the staff salaries we're applying to fund for our contracted partners?

A: This is a typo. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We have updated the budget worksheet so that Column C under the Contractual Costs spending category does not have a dropdown menu. Please write the # of Hours or % FTE or N/A in this column, as applicable. You can find the updated budget worksheet on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#) under "Application Worksheets and Templates."

June 12th–14th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] Our farm to school support organization is working at specific school sites within several public school districts. We are focusing our work only at high need school sites. I am not sure how to answer question 12 to represent this, especially 12h and 12j, as the district demographics do not represent the demographics of the schools where we are working.

A: In the Track 2 application, for questions 12h and 12j, we ask for district-wide data so that we can understand the scope of a school district's community need as a whole and allocate points for school districts with higher overall community need. However, it is true that Track 2 projects do not need to serve every school within each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, or directly funded charter school) that is part of their project partnership; Track 2 applicants may identify in the application (in particular, in

question 12k) that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within each farm to school implementing organization that is part of the project partnership. We recognize that district-wide data such as the data we ask for in questions 12h and 12j may not tell the story of the needs of specific school sites that the project will serve. So, questions 10, 11, 13, and 14 – worth a combined total of up to 24 points – provide an opportunity for Track 2 applicants to provide data that is more specific to the school sites that their proposed project will serve. Track 2 applicants may include the demographic data of the specific schools their project will serve in questions 10 and/or 11.

If you have recommendations for how we could potentially improve these questions in the future, please let us know by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Track 2] Should I include our baking/kitchen lab expansion building costs (contractor's bid) under the Contractual Costs spending category in the budget worksheet or under the Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies spending category?

A: If you are proposing to purchase items through a contractor's bid as part of your project, please include these items under the Contractual Costs category of the [budget worksheet](#). Please include the items that you are proposing to purchase through the contractor in Column E: Additional Contractor Costs. In the Contractual Reasoning section of the worksheet, please make sure to explain these costs and to describe the project activities the contractor will perform to help achieve the project objectives.

Follow-up Question:

Q: [Track 2] I received our general contractor's bid with a detailed budget to the work they will be doing. Also, we have documents with diagrams of the work. Where would you like us to attach these documents? Do I need to add the detailed budgeted items the general contractor provided to the budget worksheet, or just the total and add his document somewhere else?

A: Please add the detailed budgeted items the general contractor provided under Column E: Additional Contractor Costs in the Contractual Costs category of the budget worksheet. You may add as many rows as you need. In the Contractual Reasoning section of the worksheet, please make sure to explain these costs and to describe the project activities the contractor will perform to help achieve the project objectives. There is not a place to upload additional budget documents in the application.

Q: [Track 4] We are a non-profit organization applying to Track 4. We are wondering how to respond to application question #17 regarding whether or not our non-profit fits the definition of a limited resource producer and/or if we qualify under the definition of socially disadvantaged food producer?

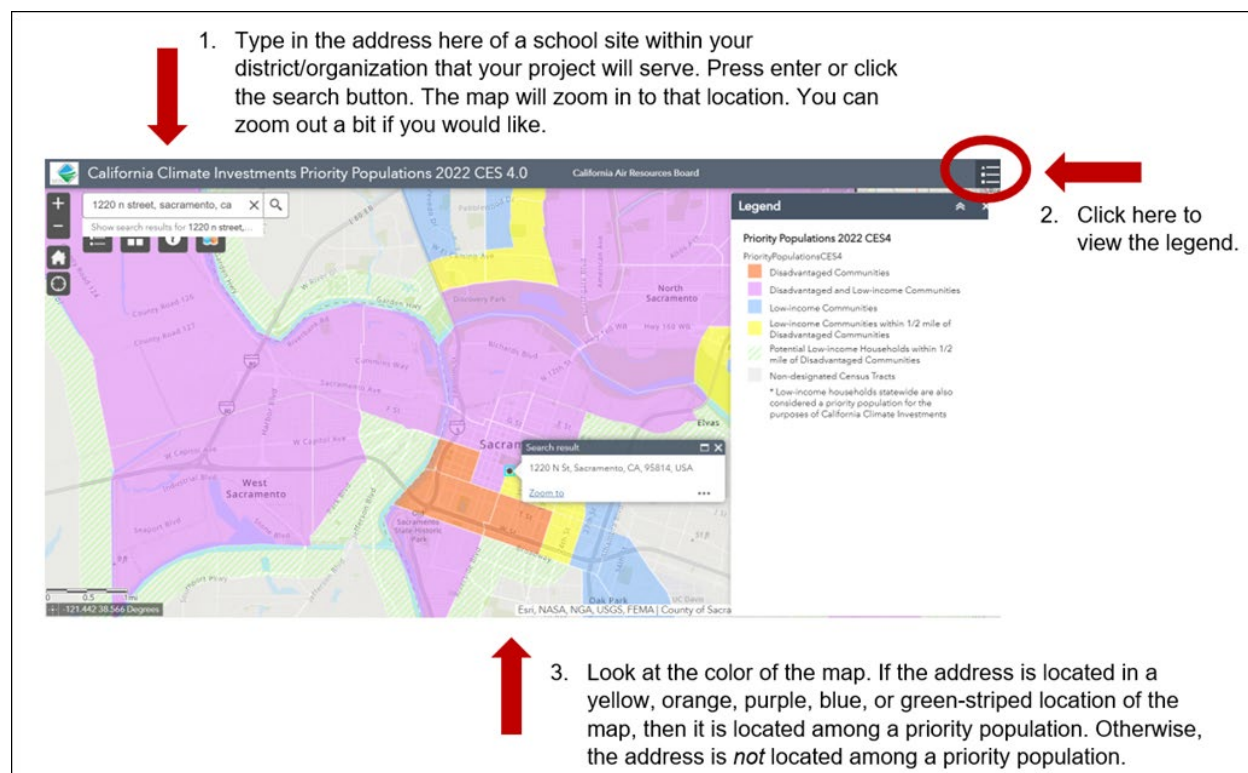
A: Question 17 in the Track 4 application asks, "Is your operation at least 50% **owned by** producer(s) who belong to one or more of the following groups? Please check all that apply." Since this question refers to operation ownership, and there is no ownership as a non-profit, a non-profit organization applying to Track 4 should respond "None of the above" or "Prefer not to answer."

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Regarding Question 11, I am having trouble locating the map and typing in our school address in order to answer this question. Upon using the link, I then go to

"search" and type in a school address, but I do not see any colored maps. What step am I missing to get this information?

A: Please see the screenshot below for an example of how to use the [priority populations map](#). Please note that the colors of the map that indicate priority populations have changed since we wrote this application question. Currently, yellow, orange, purple, blue, and green stripes indicate that the location is located among a priority population. Otherwise, the location is not located among a priority population. If you do not see any color on the map when you type in your school sites, this may indicate that those school sites are not located among priority populations.



Q: [Track 1] I have some school districts that are applying for Track 1 to purchase our products directly. For the Track 1 folks that are purchasing directly, do they need letters of support from "vendors" or since we are vendors, we aren't a "direct partner", and therefore don't need to provide a letter of support?

A: Track 1 applicants do not need to provide letters of support from vendors whose products they plan to purchase through their proposed project. The only required letter of support for Track 1 is from the district's/organization's school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program). If a Track 1 applicant would like to upload additional letters of support, they may do so in question 29; please note that this is optional.

Q: [Track 1] How should we fill out the Reasoning section in the Food Procurement spending category of the Track 1 budget worksheet?

A: For an example of the level of detail we are looking for in the CA Food Procurement spending category of the Track 1 budget worksheet, we recommend reviewing the Example tab of the [Budget Worksheet](#), which is the last tab of the worksheet, and scrolling to Spending Category 1.

Q: [Track 1] For the "Spend \$\$ when?" column of the budget worksheet, how do we respond if the spending will occur over the course of a 9-month school year or over the course of 2 school years?

A: For an example of how to fill out the "Spend \$\$ when?" column of the Track 1 budget worksheet, we recommend reviewing the Example tab of the [Budget Worksheet](#), which is the last tab of the worksheet. Lines 1a–1d, 3a–3b, 3i–3j, and 5a demonstrate examples of how to fill out this column if the spending will occur over the course of several months. Lines 2a–2c demonstrate how to fill out this column if the spending will occur during a single month.

Q: [Track 1] If a charter school applies to Track 1, how do they list a food producer they have a relationship with to procure produce from for a new salad bar program? AND is it possible for this food producer to apply to Track 4 for a completely separate program?

A: A directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority and operates the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program is eligible to apply to Track 1. In the Track 1 application, question 15 (Project Narrative), includes this question, "How will you procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals?" This is a place where the applicant could share about a California food producer from whom they plan to procure produce for a new salad bar program. If the applicant plans to use grant funds to procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods from this food producer, they should include these costs in the budget worksheet under the CA Food Procurement Costs spending category. If the food producer meets any of the priority criteria in question 20, the applicant could mark this and then share about this food producer in question 21.

Additionally, this food producer may apply to Track 4 if they meet the Track 4 eligibility criteria (see [pages 18-19 of the RFA](#)). Please note that project costs cannot be duplicative (i.e., if an entity is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a partner, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs).

Q: [Track 1] We are planning to allocate funds for starting new school gardens and for refurbishing existing gardens in our district. I'd like to award garden mini grants to interested sites. In the Grant Budget Worksheet, can I include "garden grant" as a line item and item type "supplies"? Or do I need to be more specific with supply costs – i.e., soil, seeds, planter boxes, etc.? I was hoping to keep it general as schools with existing gardens may want to spend their funds on different supplies.

A: Mini grants for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are an allowable cost. We ask that applicants include mini grants under the Other Costs spending category in the budget worksheet. For the example you provided, under the Other Costs spending category, you could include "Garden Mini Grants" as the Item, then fill in the estimated number of mini grants as the Estimated # of Units, fill in the estimated mini grant award amount as the Estimated Cost Per Unit, and select Mini Grants as the Item Type. Then, in the Other Costs Reasoning section, you should please describe the Garden Mini Grants and how they are related to the implementation of the project. You should also please describe your intended methodology for awarding and distributing mini grants, as well as the purpose of the mini grants and how recipients will use them. You do not need to specify the exact supplies that the school gardens would purchase with the mini grants, but you should outline the general idea of how the school gardens will use the mini grants.

Please note that grant recipients distributing funds via mini grants must ensure that mini grant recipients follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program (see [pages 20-](#)

[24 of the RFA](#) for Track 1 allowable costs) as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds.

Please also note that mini grants may fit under Contractual Costs depending on an organization's internal procedures.

Q: [Track 1] Regarding question 2b, we have been awarded Kitchen Infrastructure and Training (KIT) funds through the California Department of Education. Does this disqualify us from applying to the Farm to School Grant?

A: No, this does not disqualify you. As long as your organization meets the eligibility requirements outlined in the [Eligibility and Exclusions section of the RFA](#), you are eligible to apply to this grant program. Please note that activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot replace activities funded by another federal or state grant program. This means that you could not apply to this grant program to fund the same costs that your KIT funds are funding.

Question 2b is where you are able to share about the KIT funds. Your answer to this question will not impact your score, but you must respond to this question for the CDFA to consider your application complete. For the third part of this question, "Describe how the proposed project supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by the other federal or state grant program(s)" you can explain how this proposed project differs from and/or supplements the KIT funds.

Q: [Track 1] For Question 8 under Community Need, it asks if our project will target all schools in the district or one or more. For us, all sites will get the local food but only some sites will get the educational opportunities. How should we answer this question?

A: If the food procurement aspect of your project will serve all schools in the school district but the educational opportunities will serve some schools (which is allowable), you should describe this in Question 8, "Schools Project Will Serve." We recommend that you do this by marking, "Our project will target one or more specific school sites within our district/organization." A text box will then appear where you can describe the scenario. There are no points associated with Question 8, but it enables the CDFA to understand the scope of your proposed project. Please note that regardless of which school sites the project will serve, all Track 1 applicants must address how their project will coordinate the school nutrition services program with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces in Question 15.

Q: [Track 1] For questions 12f (Current number of school sites in your district/organization) and 12g (Current number of school food service sites), does this also include charters, non-public, and vended sites? All schools in our district (including charter, non-publics, and vended sites) are considered food services sites so we're unsure the distinction between the two questions as well.

A: For questions 12f and 12g in the Track 1 application, you may respond in whichever way you would prefer to interpret these questions. Questions 12f and 12g will not impact your score, but are required so that we can learn more about your school district. Then, in question 30, we welcome you to share additional information to explain and contextualize these responses if you would like. Please note that question 30 is optional and will also not impact your score.

If you have recommendations for how we could better phrase or pose these questions in the future, please let us know by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Track 1] Yesterday, when I plugged in the address of a school our project will serve, the Priority Populations map indicated our school site was outside of the blue. This did not make sense to me because I know the school is in a low-income area. But today when I plugged it in, it now shows it is in the blue. Is there a reason it would have changed overnight?

A: We are not sure why the map may have provided different results on two different days. If the map is now showing that a school your project will serve is located among a priority population, we suggest responding yes to Question 11, keeping a screenshot of the map on hand, and then briefly explaining what happened in the text box where you provide the name and address of the school so that we are aware in case the map fluctuates.

Q: [Track 1] We have 4 schools that need updating in order to accommodate scratch cooking. Do we need to state ahead of time which one, specifically, of the kitchens we will be using as our project site for the grant? Or can I address all 4 sites? Is it recommended to just pick one for the application?

A: In Track 1, applicants may apply to serve all schools within their district/organization or target one or more specific school sites within their district/organization. This is up to you. The place to indicate which option you choose is in Question 8: Schools Project will Serve. If your project will target specific school sites, Question 8 asks you to please name them and briefly describe why you are targeting those sites. Your responses to questions 9, 10, 11, and 12k should then focus on the school(s) your project will serve.

Q: [Track 1] What is an “Opportunity Zone”?

A: [Opportunity Zones](#) are defined as “economically distressed communities,” many of which have experienced a lack of investment for years. State governors nominated individual census tracts to become Opportunity Zones, and the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury certified them via the Internal Revenue Service, hoping to promote public and private investment in these communities.

Q: [Track 2] We are the lead applicant and are categorized as a farm to school support organization. The instructions say that a letter of support is required from all farm to school support organizations. Does that mean we need to have a letter of support from our own organization endorsing our own application?

A: No. Track 2, question 31, requires a letter of support from each supporting project partner for your project - i.e., the other entities in the project partnership other than the lead applicant. A farm to school support organization that is the lead applicant does not need to submit a letter of support as part of their application. Please note that question 30 requires a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in your project partnership; therefore, the letters of support that you submit in question 31 from supporting project partners only need to be from supporting project partners that are not farm to school implementing organizations.

Q: [Track 2] In answering question 2b in the application, we believe our answer is “no” because our request does not include anything that is already requested or covered by other grant applications or received grants. However, we are asking for funding for school garden education hours, which would add hours to what our current grant

funding covers (it would not replace hours that our current grant funding covers). Given this, what is the best way to handle our answer to question 2b?

A: We recommend that you respond yes to question 2b so that you can share this clarification. Your response to question 2b will not impact your score, but it is an important opportunity to share and clarify how your proposed activities for this grant program are not replacing activities funded by another federal or state grant program.

Q: [Track 2] I am confused about the interaction between question 6 and questions 30/31 on the application form. We are the lead applicant, a farm to school support organization, working with five school districts. In question 6 I listed them as farm to school implementing organizations and as supporting partners. Should I submit two letters for each of the districts since they are listed as implementing organizations and supporting partners?

A: If your farm to school support organization is the lead applicant and you are working with five public school districts as your farm to school implementing organization partners for Track 2, then it is correct to list the school districts as farm to school implementing organizations and as supporting project partners in question 6.

Then, question 30 requires a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in your project partnership.

Next, question 31 requires a letter of support from each supporting project partner for your project - i.e., the other entities in the project partnership other than the lead applicant. We would like to clarify that the letters of support that you submit in question 31 from supporting project partners only need to be from supporting project partners that are not farm to school implementing organizations.

Q: [Track 2] We are applying as a farm to school support organization. Our county office of education will be part of our project partnership, not as an implementing agency, but more so in an advisory and network/relationship building capacity. Under questions 5 and 6 I would like to include them as a supporting project partner. Also under question 12, organizational data, it doesn't seem to make sense to include their data as an implementer since they will not be interacting directly with child nutrition or providing district wide education efforts in the same way as our other school district partners. What is the best way to enter this information into the grant application?

A: If your Track 2 project partnership includes a county office of education, you may identify the county office of education as EITHER a farm to school support organization (county agency) OR a farm to school implementing organization in question 6, depending on the role they will play in the project. If your organization is the lead applicant, then you would list the county office of education as a supporting project partner in question 6 as well. If you identify the county office of education as a farm to school support organization and as a supporting project partner in question 6, then:

- you DO NOT need to include them in your response to question 12, and
- you DO NOT need to include a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at the county office of education in question 30, but

- you DO need to include a letter of support from the county office of education in question 31

Q: [Track 2] Would I need to get a letter of support from a contractor that we would like to include in our project and add them as a farm to school supporting partner or would they just be listed as contractor?

A: If you are contracting with an entity as part of your proposed project budget, then you should include the contractor in question 6, Description of Project Partners, as well as in question 21, Project Work Plan. It is up to you whether or not to identify the contractor as a supporting project partner in question 6 or just as a contractor, depending on how you think of their role in the project. If you do decide to include the contractor as a supporting project partner, then you must upload a letter of support from them in question 31.

Q: [Track 2] We are applying as a farm to school support organization and our proposal aims to create a pilot education program at a charter school in CA. The school nutrition services director of XXX School District oversees the meals at this charter school, but is otherwise not involved with this project. Would we need a letter of support from the farm to school implementing organization (the charter school) AND a letter of support from the school nutrition services director? We're running into a hiccup where the XXX School District Nutrition Services Department is also applying to this grant under Track 1 – is it okay that they're applying to Track 1 while we apply to Track 2?

A: First, yes, it is ok that you are each applying to different funding tracks. If a farm to school support organization is partnering with a certain farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) on a Track 2 application, that same farm to school implementing organization (or in this case, the implementing organization that oversees your partner implementing organization's school meal program) may also apply to Track 1. However, please note that project costs cannot be duplicative in order for the CDFA to consider each application. So, if an entity is part of multiple applications, whether as a lead applicant or as a partner or contractor, then they cannot apply to get funded twice for the exact same project costs.

Second, since this is a unique situation in which your farm to school implementing organization partner shares a school nutrition services director with a different farm to school implementing organization, we ask that you submit a letter of support from the school nutrition services director at the district that oversees your partner's school meal program *and* submit a letter of support from the organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program at your partner's specific charter school site.

Also, please note that Track 2 projects must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school). A Track 2 project proposal that aims to support one directly funded charter school would not align with the goals of Track 2. Before deciding whether or not to apply to Track 2, we recommend reviewing the [goals of Track 2 on page 8 of the RFA](#), the [Track 2 eligibility criteria on pages 13-15 of the RFA](#), and the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#). Since it doesn't sound like the charter school is a School Food Authority themselves, then they wouldn't be able to apply directly to Track 1. However, the public school district that serves as the School Food Authority for your charter school partner could choose to include the charter school in their Track 1 project proposal if desired, and could include your organization as a contractor if desired. Please see the "Note about School Food Authorities" on [page 13 of the RFA](#) for details.

Q: [Track 2] For the Track 2 budget worksheet, where would school garden bed materials go?

A: For the Track 2 budget worksheet, school garden bed materials that the lead applicant is proposing to purchase with grant funds would go under Spending Category 2: Infrastructure, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies.

Q: [Track 2] Our Track 2 application will be filed by a local non-profit as the lead applicant; our directly funded charter school will be the farm to school implementing organization, along with another school. We hope to partner with a different non-profit to bring some additional skills into the project. Who within this group needs to write the letters of support? The lead applicant would not write a letter, correct?

A: Correct, in Track 2, lead applicants that are farm to school support organizations (such as a non-profit) do not need to write a letter of support for the application. In the scenario you described, the required letters of support would be:

- One letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in your project partnership. This includes your farm to school implementing organization and the other farm to school implementing organization. The lead applicant should upload these letters under question 30.
- One letter of support from the second non-profit that will bring additional skills to the project. The lead applicant should upload this letter under question 31.

Q: [Track 2] We are a non-profit farm and education center applying to Track 2. Our farm will be growing the produce used in the project's educational activities. We are wondering how to respond to application question #22c regarding whether or not our non-profit fits the definition of a socially disadvantaged food producer?

A: Question 22c in the Track 2 application defines a socially disadvantaged food producer as, "operation is at least 50% owned by individual(s) who belong to one or more of these socially disadvantaged groups: African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, women, LGBTQ+ people." Since this definition refers to operation ownership, and there is no ownership as a non-profit, a non-profit food producer would not qualify as a socially disadvantaged food producer in Question 22c.

Q: [Track 2] We are a county office of education that serves every school district and directly funded charter school in the county (and there are many). My worry is that in the Track 2 application I won't be able to provide organizational data and get letters of support from every single district and charter school in the county that we would support through the project. Would we need to do that? Could we just select a few core partners and then say we will provide additional services to school districts and charter schools in the county?

A: Track 2 applicants **must** include each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) that their project will serve in the Project Partners section of the application (Questions 5 & 6). Track 2 applicants **must** also include data for each farm to school implementing organization that their project will serve in the Community Need – Organizational Data section of the application (Questions 12a–12l) and **must** include a letter of support from each farm to school implementing organization that their project will serve in Question 30. However, if your project may *indirectly benefit* other farm to school implementing organizations in addition to the ones your project will *directly serve*, then you may state that in the Project Description section of the application and do not

necessarily need to include the *indirectly benefitting* farm to school implementing organizations in Questions 5, 6, 12, and 30. *Indirectly benefitting* farm to school implementing organizations may include ones that may benefit from general outreach that your project conducts (but won't be directly engaged in the project) or that may attend a training or event that your project implements (but won't be directly engaged in the project).

Q: [Track 3] My question is for question 10f: Licensing. We are a farm to ECE support organization. Please explain how I can complete question 10f.

A: For question 10f in the Track 3 application, if you are a farm to ECE support organization that is applying, rather than a child care center, then you may indicate that in your response in lieu of providing a facility number.

Q: [Track 3] We are a farm to ECE support organization applying to Track 3. Can our overall organization submit a letter of support for the sub-program within our organization that is leading the project proposal?

A: Here are the required letters of support for a farm to ECE support organization that is applying to Track 3:

- **Question 30:** Procurement and Hands-on Learning Project Team Members: A letter of support from a person or entity supporting the food procurement aspect of the project and a person or entity supporting the hands-on learning and play aspect of the project. This should align with the project team member(s) you identified in question 5 to fulfill these roles.
 - Please note that each of these team members may be either internal or external to the applicant organization (e.g., a staff member within your own organization, a branch or program within your own organization, a staff member with a community partner organization, or a community partner organization itself).
 - If one person or entity is fulfilling both roles, they may submit one letter of support rather than two and should include a brief explanation in the letter regarding why they are fulfilling both roles. Letters must include an endorsement of the project and description of how the project team member will support the project.
- **Question 31:** ECE Provider Partners: A letter of support from at least two ECE providers that this project will serve (see question 11a).
 - Letters from ECE provider partners must include an endorsement of the project and description of how the provider will participate.

In Question 32, you may upload additional letters of support if you would like (e.g., from your own organization if desired). Please note that this is optional.

Q: [Track 4] Can you provide a sample of a desired infrastructure cost breakdown for the budget?

A: For an example budget breakdown, please see the Example tab of the Budget Worksheet. Please note that this example uses the Track 1 budget template, rather than the Track 4 budget template. However, it can give you an idea of the level of detail we are looking for. Spending Category 2 (farm to school education costs) in the Track 1 example budget may be the most similar to Spending Category 1 (infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies) in the Track 4 budget template, with the exception of Column E, which differs.

Q: [Track 4] The XX Tribe is the umbrella applicant for our Tribal Farm. In the application, there are two questions that have vastly different answers based upon how they are interpreted, so we're wondering if there is a way to explain an answer. The questions are years in operation and number of employees.

A: For question 6h (years in operation) and question 6i (number of employees) in the Track 4 application, you may respond in whichever way you would prefer to interpret these questions. Questions 6h and 6i will not impact your score, but are required so that we can learn more about the background of your organization and farm. Then, in question 24, we welcome you to share additional information to explain and contextualize these responses if you would like. Please note that question 24 is optional and will also not impact your score.

If you have recommendations for how we could better phrase or pose these questions in the future, please let us know by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Track 4] For question 6c which asks for the tax ID number, when I plug in the number it automatically defaults to xxx,xxx,xxx, using a currency format.

A: Thank you so much for letting us know. Our apologies for that formatting error. While we are unable to change this formatting for question 6c at this time, we will keep this in mind when reviewing applications.

Q: [Track 4] There are two organizations that would like a letter of intent from me and I have questions regarding this.

A: In terms of Track 4 letters of intent:

- It is a requirement for food producers who are applying to Track 4 to include a [letter of intent](#) in their application from at least one school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at any of the eligible entities in California with which the producer intends to collaborate for their project (e.g., a public school district that operates the NSLP and/or SBP). The letter should indicate a “good faith” intention to purchase or accept the producer’s California grown or produced food for school meals (does not need to be a commitment to purchase or accept) and/or a “good faith” effort to collaborate with the producer to implement hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the producer’s food sales or donations to your organization.
- A school nutrition services director in a public school district (that is a School Food Authority and operates the NSLP and/or SBP) may provide letters of intent to multiple food producers who are submitting separate Track 4 applications, if desired. Additionally, a school nutrition services director in a public school district (that is a School Food Authority and operates the NSLP and/or SBP) who provides a letter or letters of intent for Track 4 may still submit their own application in Tracks 1, 2, and/or 3 if they meet the eligibility criteria for those tracks.

Q: [Track 4] For program income, is it a requirement or expectation that any program income from the project would be reinvested for Track 4 producers?

A: Yes. Track 4 grant recipients must reinvest grant-generated program income into the grant project and spend it on allowable project costs (see [pages 32-36 of the RFA](#) for a list of allowable costs). This can be to enhance or expand the project. There are no requirements governing the use of income earned *after* the grant duration.

Q: [Track 4] Is question 1c (“Do you have an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department?”) asking if the food producer has already made an existing relationship to the school they want to grow for? They’ve worked with a different school but would like to expand their production to reach a new school. Would they have already had to make that connection with the new school they want to target?

A: If a food producer has an established relationship with at least one school nutrition services department (e.g., the school with which they already collaborate), then they may answer yes to question 1c. Then, please note that to submit a complete Track 4 application, a food producer would need to upload a signed [letter of intent](#) from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at any of the eligible entities in California with which the producer intends to collaborate for their proposed project (see [page 18 of the RFA](#) for a list of eligible partner entities), indicating a “good faith” intention to purchase or accept the producer’s California grown or produced food for school meals (does not need to be a commitment to purchase or accept) and/or a “good faith” effort to collaborate with the producer to implement hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the producer’s food sales or donations to their organization.

If a food producer has an existing relationship with one eligible school-based partner entity (but will not reach this entity through their proposed project) and would like to begin a new relationship with another eligible school-based partner entity that they do hope to reach through their proposed project, then they would need to name that new partner entity (in question 7a), describe the ways in which they have communicated with that new partner entity thus far to demonstrate that there is clear potential for building a strong partnership (in question 7b), and upload a signed letter of intent from the school nutrition services director at that new partner entity (in question 8). The food producer could also describe the existing relationship that they have with the other partner entity in question 7b to help demonstrate the potential for building a strong partnership with the new partner entity.

Alternatively, if a food producer has an existing relationship with one eligible school-based partner entity that they will reach through their proposed project and would like to begin a new relationship with another eligible school-based partner entity that they also hope to reach through their proposed project, then they could include both entities in their responses to questions 7a and 7b and then upload a letter of intent in question 8 from the school nutrition services director at the entity with which they already collaborate. However, if the proposed project is aiming to reach just the new partner and not the existing partner, then the food producer would need a letter of intent from the new partner (as described in the paragraph above).

Q: [Track 4] For question 7b, are you looking for food producers to describe already-established relationships? The food producer already works with one school but the school the food producer wants to work with for the project would be a new relationship. How should they go about answering this question?

A: [See this response](#).

Q: [Track 4] For question 6d (physical business address), does a food producer have to put down all of the farms they lease or just the one where they will grow what they want to give to the school?

A: For physical business address, if a food producer has multiple farm sites but will use just one of the sites for their proposed project to grow what they want to give to their school partner, then

they only need to write down the address of that one site where their proposed project will take place.

Q: [Track 4] Regarding question 6i (number of employees), do you want the amount of people on payroll? Do the individuals not on payroll (e.g., volunteers, interns) count as employees? Should the food producer make a distinction on the application between how many employees vs. volunteers/interns?

A: For question 6i (number of employees) in the Track 4 application, the applicant may respond in whichever way they would prefer to interpret this question (i.e., number of paid employees only or number of paid employees plus volunteers and interns). Question 6i will not impact the applicant's score, but is required so that we can learn more about the background of the applicant's organization and farm. Then, in question 24, we welcome Track 4 applicants to share additional information to explain and contextualize their response to questions like 6i if they would like. Please note that question 24 is optional and will also not impact the score.

If you have recommendations for how we could better phrase or pose these questions in the future, please let us know by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Track 4] On the CDFA Grant Budget Worksheet for Track 4, the Total \$ amount for "Spending Category 3: Certification, Licensure, Insurance..." is not being included in the either the "Total Direct Costs" sum line or the overall "Grand Total" sum line. What should I do?

A: Our apologies; this is our error and we thank you for letting us know. Here are instructions for how to fix the formulas for the "Total Direct Costs" sum line and the "Grant Total" sum line to include costs from Spending Category 3 in the Track 4 budget worksheet:

- 1) Click on the "Total Direct Costs" dollar amount box.

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS					\$0.00
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- 2) Then, click on the formula bar at the top of the spreadsheet.

=SUM(G38,G69,G103,G122,G143)					
B	C	D	E	F	G
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS					G122,G143)

- 3) Next, type "G86" inside the parentheses.

=SUM(G38,G69,G103,G122,G143,G86)					
B	C	D	E	F	G
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS					G86)

- 4) Press Enter on your keyboard.
- 5) This should fix both the "Total Direct Costs" and the "Grant Total" sum lines.

Q: [Track 4] In question 22, does program income mean our anticipated gross income from produce sold only to schools as a result of the grant? Or our anticipated gross

income from all sales – e.g., CSA subscribers, restaurant, and new sales to schools? The clause "gross income earned as a result of the grant award" seems to limit the meaning of "program income" to grant-generated sales alone – is this correct?

A: Correct – program income refers to grant-generated income. For example, if your proposed project will utilize grant funds to help your operation generate income from the sale of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools, then you would include this as program income. However, if your operation will be generating other income during the grant duration that is not a result of the grant funds, then this would not be considered program income in question 22. Please also [see this response](#).

June 28th–30th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] We are a single-site school district with a few hundred students and as we look at Track 1 scoring, we know that we do not meet the application points for Community Need of 40 points. With that being said, we could possibly be going into the submission process with 60 points out of 100 and might not be in the competitive pool. What are your thoughts?

A: You may still be eligible for some points in the Community Need section:

- #9) Funding Priority: engage students from underserved communities: ___/6 points
- #10) Making the Case: ___/8 points
 - If you are not engaging students in underserved communities, you could still earn up to 8 points here by making the case for why the project is important and describing significant needs, gaps, or challenges, clearly demonstrating that each is significant. Needs, gaps, or challenges may include but are not limited to: food insecurity rate, obesity rate, child poverty rate, natural disasters such as wildfires, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the school community, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 percentile, Healthy Places Index, historical and/or systemic injustices, limited resources, etc.
- #11) Funding Priority: priority populations: ___/6 points
- #12) Organizational Data: ___/ 20 points
 - If you do not meet the points for Community Eligibility Provision; Unduplicated Pupil Count of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals, English Learners & Foster Youth; or Opportunity Zone designation, you may still be eligible for up to 4 points in question #12(l): School as a “nutrition hub,” depending on how many school meal programs you operate.

Regarding the competitiveness of a grant application, it is hard to tell until we know how many competitive applications we receive in each funding track. When thinking about how to make a Track 1 grant application competitive, we recommend looking at the [Track 1 review criteria](#). The highest scoring category is the Community Need section, and the next two highest categories are Project Description (25 points) and Healthy, Equitable, Resilient Food System (20 points).

Q: [Track 1] Question 28 asks for a letter of support from the school nutrition services director or equivalent. If I am writing the grant application but the school nutrition services director is listed in question 12b as the grant agreement signing authority, do they still need to write a letter of support?

A: Yes. Question 28 asks applicants to upload a letter of support from the district's/organization's school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program). If the school nutrition services director or equivalent is named in question 12b as the

Grant Agreement Signing Authority, but is **not** the Person Writing the Grant Application, then they would still need to submit a letter of support in question 28.

Q: [Track 1] In the grant application, do you want us to include all schools in the county or just schools in our school district?

A: For Track 1, if your public school district is applying, then in the application you would include schools *within your district* that your project will serve (e.g., in questions 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12k). Questions 7a, 12c, 12d, 12e, 12f, 12g, 12h, 12i, 12j, and 12l ask about *your district as a whole*.

If your school district serves as the School Food Authority (SFA) for multiple school districts, for a county office of education's school sites, and/or for directly funded charter schools, you may include those entities in your proposed project if desired by including those sites' student enrollment numbers in the funding formula, their data in the Community Need section of the application, and how the project will serve them in the Project Description section of the application. Please note that a public school district that serves as the SFA for multiple entities and would like to include those entities in their proposed project is still limited to submitting one application in Track 1. Additionally, the entities that are not SFAs themselves are not eligible to submit their own separate Track 1 applications.

Q: [Track 1] I would like to include the job descriptions for the garden educators as part of our grant application; how would you suggest I do this?

A: In the Track 1 application, applicants should list the name of each partner who is a member of their project team, as well as a one-sentence summary of their role in the project, in question 5: Project Team Members. Applicants should also include all Project Team members and contractors in the "Performed By" column of the Project Work Plan. Additionally, if applicants are proposing to use grant funds for farm to school staff costs, then they should include those proposed costs in Spending Category 3 of the Track 1 budget worksheet and should describe each staff cost and how it is related to the implementation of the project in the Reasoning section. If the job descriptions of the garden educators are an important part of the Project Description, applicants could include these descriptions in the Project Narrative section of the application.

Q: [Track 2] Our non-profit organization hopes to begin a school education outreach program in our county focused on farm to fork. Do you recommend that our application states where outreach would take place, or can we say Sacramento County school districts? Or should we list our desired school districts for outreach?

A: Specifically regarding outreach, please be as specific as possible in the Project Narrative and Project Work Plan in the Track 2 application.

Regarding eligibility for Track 2, a project partnership must include either of the following combinations: (1) at least one farm to school support organization and at least one California farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school); or (2) at least two California farm to school implementing organizations. The CDFA encourages (but does not require) partnerships described in combination (1) to include at least two California farm to school implementing organizations. A project partnership must focus on regional or statewide food system impact that meaningfully

supports more than one farm to school implementing organization (i.e., more than one public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school).

In the Track 2 application, Track 2 applicants must include each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) that their project will serve in the Project Partners section (Questions 5 & 6). Additionally, Track 2 applicants must include data for each farm to school implementing organization that their project will serve in the Community Need – Organizational Data section of the application (Questions 12a–12l). Furthermore, Track 2 applicants must upload a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in their project partnership (Question 30).

If a farm to school support organization applies to Track 2 but does not include at least one specific farm to school implementing organization partner in the application and does not upload a letter of support from them in Question 30, then the application would not be eligible.

Q: [Track 2] In our Track 2 application, we are proposing to include three non-profit preschools in our programming. Under question 6, I've listed the three non-profit ECE providers as "other types of entities" since they don't really fit the definitions of either "implementing organizations" or "support organizations". Is there a form that we should use to submit additional data on the ECE providers as part of a Track 2 application, like the licensing numbers or numbers of students?

A: There is no form for applicants to use in Track 2 to submit additional data on ECE providers that their project will serve. In Question 6, Track 2 project partnerships that will include ECE providers should include those providers as supporting project partners, should provide a one-sentence summary of their role in the project, and, as you have identified, should note that they are "other types of entities" if they don't fit the definitions of farm to school support organizations or farm to school implementing organizations. Track 2 applicants may include brief additional information about these ECE providers in Question 6 if they would like. Then, in Question 31, Track 2 applicants must upload a letter of support from each of their supporting project partners.

Q: [Track 2] For questions 5 and 6 about project partners, are companies we will hire to do some work considered partners, and will consultants be considered partners? Also, we may have a local non-profit help us with part of the project. Should we include the non-profit as a project partner?

A: If you are contracting with an entity as part of your proposed project budget, then you should include the contractor in question 6, Description of Project Partners, as well as in question 21, Project Work Plan. The term contractor includes consultants. It is up to you whether or not to identify the contractor as a supporting project partner in question 6 or just as a contractor, depending on how you think of their role in the project. If you do decide to include the contractor as a supporting project partner, then you must upload a letter of support from them in question 31.

Similarly, it is up to you whether or not to identify the local non-profit you mentioned as a Project Partner in questions 5 and 6, depending on how you think of their role in the project. If they will play a very minor role in the project, then perhaps not. If they will play a more significant role, then it would make sense to include them as a supporting project partner in question 6 and in

your project work plan in question 21. You would then need to upload a letter of support from them in question 31.

Q: [Track 2] My main farm to school implementing organization partner is a school district; we will work with them to build capacity to provide locally sourced products in school meals. We will also work with two charter schools and another school district to support their farm to school programming. Should I also include these three entities as farm to school implementing organizations or rather as farm to school support organizations in the application?

A: Public school districts and directly funded charter schools that your proposed project will serve are farm to school implementing organizations. If both school districts you mentioned are public school districts and both charter schools you mentioned are directly funded charter schools, then you would include them in the project partnership as farm to school implementing organizations. Please note the following:

- Track 2 applicants must include each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) that their project will serve in the Project Partners section of the application (Questions 5 & 6).
- Track 2 applicants must also include data for each farm to school implementing organization that their project will serve in the Community Need – Organizational Data section of the application (Questions 12a–12l).
- Additionally, Track 2 applicants must upload a letter of support from the school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at each farm to school implementing organization (i.e., public school district, county office of education, and/or directly funded charter school) in their project partnership (Question 30).

Q: [Track 3] Question 10c is about state representatives. Our office address is one address, but our partner childcare sites have other representatives depending on their address. Should we include their representatives/districts also?

A: For question 10c in the Track 3 application, applicants are only required to enter their own organization's State Assembly District(s) and Senate District(s) as well as their own organization's State Assembly and Senate Members. If Track 3 applicants would like to include this information for partner ECE sites that their project will serve in addition, they may do so and should clearly distinguish which districts and members represent which organizations/sites. If you run out of space in question 10c to enter this additional information, you may share additional information in question 33 if you would like.

Q: [Track 4] Our nutrition services department is a bit hesitant on the legality of signing off on a "Letter of Intent" for a farmer applying to Track 4. We wanted clarification on this "Letter of Intent." Is it more loose like a "pledge" stating we'll provide support or efforts towards the Track 4 applicant?

A: We completely understand. Thank you for reaching out about this. Our goal with the Track 4 letter of intent is for the letter-writer to indicate a "good faith" intention to purchase or accept the producer's California grown or produced food for school meals (does not need to be a commitment to purchase or accept) and/or a "good faith" effort to collaborate with the producer to implement hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the producer's food sales or donations to their organization. We did not intend the letter to be legally binding, but rather to demonstrate that the producer does indeed have a relationship with a school partner that they named in their application and that they will both make a good faith effort to collaborate according to the activities described in the letter if the producer receives a Track 4 grant award.

Page 3 of the [letter of intent](#) template tries to clarify this with these words, “By signing this document, the School District, County Office of Education, Directly funded Charter School, or Center-based Program for Children named above manifests its **intent** to collaborate with the Grant Applicant as described above in this letter. Both parties will make a **good faith effort** to execute the sale/donation of the food product(s) and/or the implementation of the educational opportunities as described in the terms above.”

Please let us know if you still have concerns regarding signing a Track 4 letter of intent. If there are ways you think we could improve the letter of intent template so that it feels more like a “good faith” intention to collaborate and less like a legally binding commitment, please let us know. You can reach us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Q: [Track 4] Regarding our budget, if our project may cost more than the grant award amount, can we illustrate the total cost of the project in the budget worksheet, with the understanding that our request will be capped at \$150,000?

A: In the budget worksheet, please include only the costs that you are proposing to fund through the grant award. If your project may cost more than the grant award amount you are requesting, then you are welcome to share this in question 24 (“Is there anything else you would like to share with us?”).

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 3] To whom/what should we address letters of support?

A: Please note that the entity to whom/which you address letters of support will not impact your score. Letters can be addressed to:

California Department of Food and Agriculture
California Farm to School Program Staff

Q: [All Tracks] In the grant application, is it appropriate to use possessive pronouns such as “ours” or “theirs”?

A: We recommend using third-person pronouns in the application. However, the pronouns you use will not impact your score.

Q: [All Tracks] How does the project budget influence the likelihood of getting funded? We’re submitting a regional Track 2 farm to school project proposal. The cost of the project is high, but the impact is exponential. If another organization is applying for the same track with a smaller proposed budget, do we risk not receiving any funding at all or do you give partial funding?

A: When thinking about the likelihood of a project receiving funding, we recommend that applicants look at the review criteria for the funding track to which they are applying. This will tell you how to make a grant application competitive. To explore the full review criteria for each funding track, you can visit the links below:

- [Track 1 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 3 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)
- [Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#)

Applicants can receive up to 8 points in the Budget/Narrative section of the application if their budget clearly aligns with the Project Description section, includes all requested information for each line item, and provides clear reasonings for each spending category. Applications that do not comply with the allowable and unallowable costs for the applicable funding track, as outlined in the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs section of the RFA](#), may be disqualified.

The "Total Dollar Amount Requested" is not a scored question in the application and does not impact the competitiveness of an application, but applicants must request within the applicable award range for the CDFA to consider the application complete.

Also, please [see this response](#).

RFA SECTION: 3.3 REVIEW PROCESS

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] What is the point range to qualify?

A: There is no minimum score or point range required to qualify for any of the funding tracks. All applications that pass the CDFA's initial administrative review by meeting all eligibility and application requirements will receive an external technical review according to the review criteria on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). Competitive applications will be those that receive high scores during external technical review relative to other applications in the same funding track. See the [Review Process on pages 43-44 of the RFA](#).

RFA SECTION: 3.5 NOTIFICATION AND FEEDBACK

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] After submitting an application, is there is a way to check on the status of the application?

A: To verify that you have successfully submitted your application in WizeHive, there are two places you can check. (1) When you first log in to WizeHive, you will see the Get Started page, and the box at the bottom of the page will have a status bar that is gray and says "Application Submitted." (2) After clicking that box, you will see the Welcome page, and next to the "Application Intake" section there will be a green rectangle that says, "This has been submitted." Then, if you would like to view your submitted application, you can click the "View" button under that "Application Intake" section. Please note that once you submit your application, you will no longer be able to edit. The CDFA will notify all applicants via email regarding the status of their application and estimates that award notification will occur in September 2022.

RFA SECTION: 4.0 ASSISTANCE AND QUESTIONS

May 3rd–20th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Are all the webinars covering the same or different materials? Or just a series of opportunities for folks to ask questions?

A: The Week 1 Webinar included an in-depth overview of the program, going through [these PowerPoint slides](#), and some time at the end for Q&A. The remaining weekly webinars include a briefer overview of the program so that most of the time can be for Q&A. The CDFA is recording each webinar and posting the recordings on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Can we reach out or talk to anyone once we have our idea solidified? Just to get a sounding board?

A: Our team will be most available for questions at our weekly grant webinars/Q&A sessions. We encourage you to join if you're able. The webinar registration links are available on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). You may also email questions to us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov. While we are not able to provide specific feedback on grant project ideas to ensure the competitiveness of the grant process for all, you are always welcome to ask us questions and we will do our best to answer. Also, here are a few resources that may be helpful when developing your project idea:

- [Eligibility Decision Tree](#) to determine which funding track(s) may be a good fit
- [Summaries of past projects](#) that received funding in Tracks 1 and 2. Unfortunately, since Tracks 3 and 4 are new this year, we don't yet have examples of those.
- [Q&A](#) (this document) – we'll be updating this throughout the application period with questions we've received and the answers we've provided

May 25th–31st Q&A

Q: [Track 1] I wanted to check in about connecting with local farmers to start setting up procurements of produce for our school.

A: Please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov to connect with the CDFA Farm to School Marketplace Specialist, who can help introduce schools and food producers in California.

Q: [Track 4] Could you connect us with schools that might want to partner with a producer?

A: Please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov to connect with the CDFA Farm to School Marketplace Specialist, who can help introduce food producers and schools in California.

June 1st–11th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] I work in a public school district in California and am interested to know what resources are available to bring wholesome food to our schools.

A: Here are a few resources for public school districts:

- **Track 1 of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program:** Public school districts that serve as a School Food Authority and operate the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program are eligible to apply. One of the categories of allowable costs in Track 1 is California Food Procurement Costs (for school meals and/or for student education) See more details on [page 20 of the Request for Applications](#). If you are interested in learning more about the grant program, we recommend reviewing the [Request for Applications](#), exploring [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#), and joining our weekly grant webinars where there is time for live Q&A (register on [the website](#) under "Weekly Grant Webinars").
- **CDFA Farm to School Marketplace Specialist:** Our team's Farm to School Marketplace Specialist can help introduce school nutrition services departments and California food producers. Let us know if you'd like to connect with him by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.
- **Summaries of Past Projects:** You can [read about projects that received funding through the 2021 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program here](#), which may help provide some ideas about bringing local food into schools.
- **CA Farm to School Network e-newsletter:** You can [subscribe here](#) to receive monthly farm to school updates – these newsletters often include farm to school project

highlights, resources, and funding opportunities. You can [view the archive of newsletters here](#).

Q: [Track 4] After submitting an application, the applicant realized that the Letter of Intent they uploaded from a school district to which they will sell food did not use the CDFA Letter of Intent template. Can they upload the Letter of Intent using the correct template now?

A: We can revert the applicant's application back to a draft so that they can delete the previous letter of intent they uploaded and instead upload a letter of intent using the CDFA template. We can do this on a case-by-case basis for applicants who submit far enough in advance of the application deadline. Please note that after we revert the application back to a draft, the applicant will need to resubmit the application to ensure that we receive it. If the applicant is interested in this option, they should email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov to give us permission to revert the application back to a draft.

June 12th–14th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] I have started to fill out the application but there are definitely areas (e.g., regarding school district data) that I am not familiar with. Would you be able to take some time to walk me through a few of the questions so I can take notes and complete?

A: While we are not able to set up one-on-one meetings to walk applicants through the application questions, we are happy to clarify the application questions via email or via our weekly Grant Webinars during the live Q&A. We encourage you to join one of our upcoming webinars if you're able. You can find the webinar registration links on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

If you are not able to attend the webinars, we encourage you to send your questions via email to us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Additionally, in terms of the Track 2 application questions that ask for school district data (i.e., questions 12a–12l), we recommend that farm to school support organization applicants work with their school district partners to gather the data that they need. For example, school districts will likely be able to help answer the questions about the current number of school sites in their district (12e), the current number of school food services sites (12f), the current number and percentage of school sites under Community Eligibility Provision (12g and 12h), and the school meal programs that the district operates (12l). For questions 12i and 12j, please visit <https://www.ed-data.org/> and type in the school district in the upper right search bar. Once you are on the school district's page, scroll down to the data and make sure you are in the "Student" tab. Then scroll down to Census Day Enrollment, click "View Table Data," and find the number under 2019-20 to respond to question 12i. Next, scroll down to Unduplicated Pupil Count of Free/Reduced-Price Meals, English Learners & Foster Youth, click "%" in the upper right corner of the table, click "View Table Data," and find the percentage under 2019-20 to respond to question 12j.

June 15th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] I submitted my grant application for Track 1 yesterday. I then learned that our farm partner for the project meets some of the funding priorities for question 20. So, my answers to questions 20-22 may not have reflected all of that information. Is it possible for me to edit my application?

A: We can revert an applicant's application back to a draft so that they can edit it and resubmit. We can do this on a case-by-case basis for applicants who submit far enough in advance of the application deadline. Please note that after we revert the application back to a draft, the applicant will need to resubmit the application by the application deadline to ensure that we receive it. If the applicant is interested in this option, they should email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov to give us permission to revert the application back to a draft.

Q: [Track 2] If we receive a grant award, will we able to move money around within and across budget categories as the project plays out?

A: The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program has a revision process that allows grant recipients to submit scope of work and/or budget revision requests to the CDFA during the grant term, using a template that we provide. We encourage applicants to develop a proposed budget that is as close as possible to what they intend to spend, but we understand that revisions may be necessary over the course of the grant term and will approve them on a case-by-case basis.

Q: [Track 4] Our small farm is considering applying and is well-connected with a neighborhood school; we anticipate working closely with them. However, we do not know which certifications or other requirements we, as a small farm hoping to sell produce and minimally processed foods to schools, need. We would like to apply for help with costs in obtaining the required certifications. Can you tell me what they are?

A: First, it is allowable in Track 4 to apply to use grant funds for costs related to pursuing and attaining certification, licensure, or insurance that you need to sell or donate whole or minimally processed food to schools. In terms of which certifications you may need to sell foods to schools, this varies based on the school nutrition services department to which you are selling food. We recommend that you ask the school nutrition services department that oversees the school meal program at your neighborhood school what their requirements are (e.g., if they require you to have certain certifications, licensures or insurance in order to sell food to them).

Please note that for Track 4, applicants must partner with at least one of the following entities in California:

- Public school district that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option, and/or School Breakfast Program
- County office of education that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Directly funded charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) and operates any of the above programs
- Center-based program for children participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Your project may focus on all, one, or some of the school sites within your partner entity.

Track 4 applicants also must upload at least one letter of intent from a school nutrition services director (or equivalent district-wide/organization-wide decision-maker who oversees and coordinates the school meal program) at any of the above entities in California with which you intend to collaborate for your project. When you talk with this person about the letter of intent, this could be a good time to also ask them if there are any certifications, licensures, or insurance that they require for you to sell food to them.