

Cohort 4 Track 3 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program

Request for Applications

Released for Applications:
October 1st, 2026

Applications Due:
by 5pm PT on December 31st, 2026
No late submissions accepted



**California Department of Food and Agriculture
Inspection Services Division
Office of Farm to Fork
California Farm to School Program**

Website: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/caf2sgrant>

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Public Input

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) sought public comments about the DRAFT Farm to School Request for Applications (RFA) in August 2026. The CDFA considered comments received before finalizing this Farm to School RFA. Visit [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#) for a summary of anonymized public comments and the CDFA's responses.

Program Timeline

Please note the **estimated** program timeline below.

Cohort 4 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Timeline	
Public Comment Period	August 20 – September 11, 2026
CDFA Track 3 Q&A Zoom Sessions	Weekly on Thursdays
Application Materials Open	October - December 2026
CDFA Grant Application Technical Assistance Sessions	Weekly Until Application Materials Due
Application Materials Due	December 31, 2026 at 5PM PST
Application Review Process	January - March 2027
Award Notification and Announcement	March 2027
Agreements Finalized	March - June 2027
Implementation Begins	July 1, 2027
Grant Term Ends	March 30, 2029

1.0 About the Program

1.1 Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Cohort 4 2026 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will award competitive grants to support projects that cultivate equity, nurture students, build climate resilience, and create scalable and sustainable change.

Funding Priorities: The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will award additional points during the grant review process for projects that:

- Engage students from [underserved communities](#)
- Have developed or are in the process of developing meal programs that prioritize scratch cooking and the elimination of ultra-processed foods.
- Include [small to midsize California food producers](#) and [small to midsize food hubs](#)
- Include [veteran California food producers](#), [socially disadvantaged California food producers](#), and/or [limited-resource farm households in California](#).

- Include California food producers who utilize [climate smart agriculture practices](#); [climate smart agriculture production systems](#) like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic; or other [regenerative strategies](#) that increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of communities and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil.

Please see the [Grant Application and Review Criteria](#) section for details about how the application and review criteria will address each of the funding priorities noted above.

Additional Priorities: The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will:

- Aim to distribute awards geographically across California to the extent possible
- Set aside up to 10% of all available grant funding for awards for California Native American Tribes, Tribal-based non-profit organizations, and eligible Tribal schools. To be eligible for set-aside funds, recipients must be listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), as stipulated in Proposition 4 California Climate Bond

The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is in alignment with California's report entitled [Planting the Seed: Farm to School Roadmap for Success](#), which highlights policy goals to advance child well-being, economic growth, environmental resilience, and racial equity through farm to school systems that connect children to locally sourced, whole foods and produce in cafeterias, classrooms, and gardens. The report and its recommendations are the result of a collaboration – led by First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom and CDFA Secretary Karen Ross – among a number of state agency leaders, education professionals, and farm to school experts and practitioners.

The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is also in alignment with the CDFA's [California Agricultural Vision](#) (Ag Vision), which serves as a roadmap for California agriculture. The goals of Ag Vision include better health and well-being, a healthier planet, ensuring thriving communities in the state, ensuring connections between farmers and the consuming public, and ensuring that a diverse set of agriculture entities are thriving.

1.2 Definitions

The definitions below are in alphabetical order.

California Grown or Produced, Whole or Minimally Processed Foods:

- **California Grown or Produced Foods:** Foods that are produced in California or harvested in its surface or sourced from U.S. waters by California-registered fishing vessels *AND* if minimally processed, then 100% processed in California.
- **Minimally Processed Foods:** Per the USDA, minimal processing may include: (a) those traditional processes used to make food edible or to preserve it or to make it safe for human consumption, e.g., smoking, roasting, freezing, drying, and fermenting, or (b) those physical processes that do not fundamentally alter the raw product or that only separate a whole, intact food into component parts, e.g., grinding meat, separating eggs into albumen and yolk, and pressing fruits to produce juices.

- CDFA staff intend to convene a working group to work out the detailed parameters for “minimally processed” food products that this grant program may fund and to collaboratively develop an allowable foods resource list for grant recipients. Please note that although the following products may not fit the USDA definition of *minimally processed*, they are allowable purchases through this grant program and the CDFA intends to collaborate with the working group mentioned above to determine if there should be any additional parameters around these foods:
 - o Yogurt and cheese dairy products that are 100% produced, processed, and manufactured in California are allowable. Please note that California produced fluid milk is unallowable.
 - o CA produced, processed, and manufactured whole or minimally processed plant-based fluid milk substitutes are allowable. Plant-based yogurt and cheese substitutes may be allowable on a case-by-case basis.
 - o Whole grain-rich flours and other whole grain-rich products that are 100% grown, milled, processed, and manufactured in California are 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.
 - o Meat, poultry and seafood products that consist of 100% California raised meat, poultry, and seafood that include no more additional ingredients than salt and pepper, and that if minimally processed (e.g., ground, frozen, dried, smoked, roasted), are 100% processed in California are allowable.
 - If the product arrives pre-cooked (e.g., a pre-cooked ground beef patty), then this *may* be allowable if the pre-cooking also occurred in California and pending a reasonable justification from the grant recipient to explain why it is necessary to purchase a pre-cooked rather than raw product; allowability is subject to CDFA approval.
 - If the product includes supplemental ingredients (e.g., spices), then the CDFA will consider such products on a case-by-case basis and allowability is subject to CDFA approval. Such products *may* be allowable if the primary ingredient is the 100% California raised meat, poultry, or seafood if the supplemental ingredients are not synthetic additives or preservatives, if the supplemental ingredients could potentially be found in a home kitchen, and if the product manufacturing occurred in California.
 - o CA produced, processed, and manufactured whole or minimally processed plant-based proteins that include no more additional ingredients than salt and pepper are allowable.
 - o NOTE: Please note that CDFA staff will work with grant recipients to identify food products that meet the grant program values of “California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed” foods and will review every food procurement purchase made with grant funds to make sure it is in alignment with these values.
- NOTE: If a minimally processed fruit or vegetable (e.g., a dried, frozen, or pressed-into-juice fruit or vegetable) includes additional ingredients, then the CDFA will consider such products on a case-by-case basis and allowability is subject to CDFA approval.

Child Care Center:

This grant program defines California child care centers as those that:

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

Climate Smart Agriculture Practices, Climate Smart Agriculture Production Systems, or Other Regenerative Strategies:

Climate smart agriculture practices include those defined by [the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\) Conservation Practice Standards \(CPS\)](#) and those identified by [The CDFA Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability \(OARS\)](#) via the [Healthy Soils Program \(HSP\)](#), [Alternative Manure Management Program \(AMMP\)](#), [Dairy Digester Research and Development Program \(DDRDP\)](#), and [State Water Enhancement and Efficiency Program \(SWEET\)](#), including but not limited to cover cropping, no or reduced till, hedgerow plantings, compost application, and prescribed grazing. Climate smart agriculture production systems include certified organic or transitioning to certified organic. Other regenerative strategies include those that also increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of communities and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil. Please note that a process is currently underway to [define regenerative agriculture for state policies and programs](#); once the definition is established, this grant program's definition of regenerative agriculture will align. Please note, while there are multiple definitions for Regenerative Agriculture, CDFA utilizes a framework approach to understand the topic. To read more, please visit [CDFA - Defining Regenerative Agriculture for State Policies and Programs](#).

ECE:

ECE is an acronym for Early Care and Education. The term ECE site refers to sites where early care and education occurs, i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings.

Educator:

A person who provides instruction or education; a teacher. A *credentialed* educator refers to a person who has a teaching credential (e.g., a California teaching credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing in order to be employed as an elementary or secondary public school teacher in a California public school).

Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization:

This program defines farm to ECE TA organizations as any of the following organizations that provide support to ECE providers in California:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors of Day Care Homes in CA or CACFP Sponsors of Child Care Centers in CA
- Child Care and Development Fund Tribal Lead Agencies in CA
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies in CA
- First 5 county commissions in CA

- Head Start grantees in CA (i.e., an agency that is awarded funding by the Office of Head Start to provide or subcontract Head Start services in their area)
- Non-profit organizations, including agricultural industry non-profit organizations
- Tribal-based non-profit organizations
- Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in CA
- University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) and Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices
- Public universities in CA such as University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and community colleges
- California Native American Tribes
- County agencies in CA
- Local governments in CA
- California Agricultural Marketing Programs, listed [here](#)
- 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.
- The CDFA acknowledges that other types of organizations not listed above may operate as farm to ECE TA organizations. Beyond the list above, the CDFA will determine eligibility of farm to ECE TA organizations on an individual basis and encourages interested applicants to connect via email at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Farm to School:

While individual farm to school programs vary based on their unique vision, community, and geographic region, the CDFA broadly considers farm to school programs as combining: (1) schools and early care and education (ECE) programs buying California grown or produced foods from California food producers for school meal programs, and (2) hands-on food education opportunities that engage students and connect the classroom with the cafeteria, such as activities in school gardens, on farms, in culinary classes, in settings that celebrate traditional foodways and cultivate food sovereignty, and through other experiential learning pathways. Programs may include forest-to-school, river-to-school, and ocean-to-school.

Farm to School Technical Assistance (TA) Organization:

This program defines farm to school TA organizations as any of the following organizations that (a) have an established history supporting California School Food Authorities with implementing farm to school procurement programs; (b) have an established history supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings; or (c) have an established history supporting California food producers and institutional food procurement:

- Non-profit organizations, including agricultural industry non-profit organizations
- Tribal-based non-profit organizations
- Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in CA
- University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) and Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices
- Public universities in CA such as University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and community colleges

- California Native American Tribes
- County agencies in CA
- Local governments in CA
- California Agricultural Marketing Programs, listed [here](#)
- 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.
- The CDFA acknowledges that other types of organizations not listed above may operate as farm to school TA organizations. Beyond the list above, the CDFA will determine eligibility of farm to school TA organizations on an individual basis and encourages interested applicants to connect via email at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Food Producer:

This grant program defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, non-profit organization, or California Native American Tribe 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. NOTE: this *does not* include school-operated gardens and school-operated farms; however, this *does* include third parties (such as individual contractors or non-profit organizations) that operate a farm on school property.

Hands-on Food Education:

Hands-on food education refers to activities in which students learn by doing and gain knowledge through experience. Hands-on food education may include but is not limited to: activities in school gardens, on school farms, in school greenhouses, in other food production environments, and in culinary classes; garden to cafeteria activities; experiential lessons celebrating traditional foodways and cultivating food sovereignty; cooking and tasting activities; food-based student internships; farm tours, field trips, or school visits from producers; student-led recipe creation; 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. Please note that posters and marketing materials are *not* considered hands-on food education.

Limited-Resource Farm Households:

Per [the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#), limited-resource farm households are those that, for two years in a row, have low farm sales and low household income, according to [this tool](#).

Food Hub

An organization or business that serves as a supply chain intermediary by purchasing food products from and providing aggregation, distribution, and/or marketing services for multiple local or regional California food producers (defined below), especially those using sustainable or climate-smart agricultural practices (defined below) and following state labor practices. The community food hub provides these services to strengthen the ability of its California food producer communities to reach sales markets with wholesale, retail, and/or institutional buyers

and identifies the source (e.g. location where food was produced) of 100% of the food products sold. These organizations or businesses may use a centrally located facility, such as a warehouse, or aggregate more informally, such as virtually coordinating supply chain activities for multiple local or regional producers. For the purposes of this grant program, community food hub projects must:

- Prioritize, to the greatest extent possible, purchasing food from and serving California food producers that meet at least one of the following criteria: (1) operate on 500 acres or less; (2) are cooperatively owned; (3) are using sustainable or climate-smart Page 5 of 32 agriculture practices or production systems (see definition below); (4) who are socially disadvantaged; (5) who are veterans; (6) who are disabled; (7) who are beginning food producers; or (8) who are limited resource food producers.
- Prioritize, to the greatest extent possible, selling food products from California food producers to public institutions and/or nonprofit organizations, with primary emphasis on public schools, food banks, and other food distribution nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities in the region. Distribution of the food products may be contracted to a value-added intermediary, such as a produce, grain, meat, or seafood processor, if the food products are ultimately provided on a prioritized basis to public institutions and/or nonprofit organizations.
- Ensure, where feasible, that the food producers are following all necessary laws, rules, and regulations, including labor and environmental requirements. This definition aligns with California's Farm to Community Food Hub Program (Assembly Bill (AB) 1009, Chapter 608, Statutes of 2021).

NOTE: The CDFA acknowledges that a variety of types of organizations may operate as food hubs. In alignment with the definition above, the CDFA will determine eligibility of public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprises on an individual basis and encourages interested applicants to connect via email at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Scratch Cooking

The California Department of Education defines scratch cooking as the process of freshly preparing school meals onsite using whole, raw, or minimally processed ingredients. If one element of the meal is freshly prepared onsite, then the whole meal is considered freshly prepared.

School Food Authority (SFA):

Per [7 CFR 210.2](#), a California School Food Authority (SFA) is the governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools in California and has the legal authority to operate the National School Lunch Program therein. An example of a School Food Authority is a public school district that operates the National School Lunch Program.

Small to Midsize Food Producers:

The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program defines small to midsize food producers as those for which the average annual gross cash farm income during the previous three-year period is less than \$1 million. The Track 3 application uses a tiered scoring system to allocate more points for operations with less average annual gross cash farm income.

Small to Midsize Food Hubs:

The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program defines small to midsize food hubs as those for which the number of employees at the time of application submission is less than 50. The Track 3 application uses a scoring system to allocate more points for operations with less than 50 employees.

Socially Disadvantaged Food Producers:

A socially disadvantaged food producer means a food producer who is a member of a “socially disadvantaged group.” Per [California's Farmer Equity Act of 2017 \(Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1348\) Food and Agricultural Code section 510 et seq.](#), a “socially disadvantaged group” is a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. In accordance with AB 1348, these groups include all of the following: African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. In addition, the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program includes women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people as socially disadvantaged groups. Many groups have been “socially disadvantaged” within the agriculture industry, and the inclusion of such groups as enumerated above in this category is a reflection of that reality, and consistent with the objective of ensuring that these groups are included in the funding priorities of this Request for Applications.

Tribal-Based Nonprofit Organization

California-based nonprofit organizations with at least 50% of the Board of Directors and/or Leadership Team identifying as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian and whose organizational mission or strategic plan expresses a commitment to serving and/or empowering California Native American Tribes or people.

Underserved Communities:

This grant program utilizes a few quantitative metrics to measure whether proposed projects will engage students from underserved communities. In the Track 1 application, the metric is the free and reduced-price meal eligibility rate of the school sites the project will serve. The tiered scoring system allocates more points for higher rates. In Track 2, applicants will propose metrics to determine need. The tiered scoring system again allocates more points for higher rates. This grant program also considers specific community needs through a question called “Making the Case” in Track 1 which prompts applicants to share specific challenges that their community faces. Specific challenges may include but are not limited to: food insecurity rate, child poverty rate, natural disasters such as wildfires and floods, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the school community, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 percentile, historical and/or systemic injustices, limited resources, limited access to affordable and nutritious food, rural locale, etc.

Veteran Food Producers:

Based on the first component of [the USDA](#) definition of a “veteran farmer or rancher,” the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program defines a veteran food producer as a producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and was released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable. Please note that the full USDA definition requires that producers not only meet the first component noted above but also meet this second

requirement: have not operated a farm or ranch, have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years, or first obtained veteran status during the most recent 10-year period. This second requirement does not apply to this program.

1.3 Three Funding Tracks

To support a systems approach to advancing farm to school throughout the state, the Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program offers three funding tracks.

Note: This document only contains detailed information regarding Track 3, the California Farm to School Producer and Food Hubs Grant. To find more information on Track 1 and Track 2, please refer to [the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

- For full eligibility guidelines, see [Eligibility and Exclusions](#).
- To view examples of projects, please review the list of funded projects from the [2021 grant cycle](#), [2022 grant cycle](#), and [2023 grant cycle](#). If you still have questions about which track may best fit your project, please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

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

Track 1: The California Farm to School TK-12 Procurement and Education Grant

Track 1 will fund individual public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and Tribal schools in California that are a School Food Authority to establish new or expand existing farm to school programs that:

- (1) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals, especially from food producers that utilize climate smart agriculture practices or production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, small to midsize food producers, veteran food producers, socially disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California; **and**
- (2) engage students in hands-on food education opportunities – especially standards-aligned and culturally relevant opportunities led by credentialed public school educators – that complement the school meal program’s California food procurement efforts; **and**
- (3) **OPTIONAL:** if desired, employ farm to school staff and/or offer farm to school professional development for staff.

Track 2: The California Farm to School Technical Assistance (TA) Subaward Grant

Track 2 will fund increased staff capacity, access, and resources by providing pass through funding for California School Food Authorities; California Early Care and Education (ECE) sites; California food producers; and California Native American Tribes, Tribal-based non-profit organizations, and eligible Tribal schools to implement resilient and sustainable farm to school programming.

Track 2 projects must have statewide reach and focus their pass-through funding in **one** of the following categories:

- Farm to School Procurement Readiness and Planning for SFAs
- Farm to School Standards Aligned Hands-on Food Education for SFAs
- Farm to School Readiness and Planning for Producers
- Tribal Farm to School
- Farm to Early Care and Education

Track 3: The California Farm to School Producer and Food Hubs Grant

Track 3 will fund California food producers and food hubs to increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to the California school food market.

To be eligible, an applicant must provide a letter of intent as evidence of an established relationship with each California School Food Authority to which they intend to sell food. Funding will prioritize small to midsize food producers and food hubs and food producers utilizing climate smart agriculture practices, climate smart agriculture production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies. Funding will also prioritize food hubs procuring from the producers above.

Applicants may propose to use funds to:

- (1) purchase infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools; **and/or**
- (2) purchase infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to establish or enhance the use of climate smart agriculture practices, production systems, and/or other regenerative strategies when producing California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to sell to schools; **and/or**
- (3) cover staffing costs dedicated to farm to school activities; **and/or**
- (4) pursue certifications, licensures, or insurance that the applicant needs to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools; **and/or**
- (5) establish new or expand existing hands-on food education opportunities for students, School Food Authority staff that complement the applicant's existing or project-related California food sales to California schools, such as field trips, producer visits to the cafeteria or classroom, etc.

1.4 Funding and Duration

The California Budget Acts of 2025 and 2026 appropriated a combined \$40 million from the General Fund to the CDFA for the Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. The CDFA will make up to \$38 million available for the three funding tracks outlined above. The amount of funds that the CDFA will award in each funding track will depend on the number of competitive applications that the CDFA receives in each funding track. Up to \$2.4million will be set aside for food hubs within Track 3.

Funding Track	Funding Formula	Award Amount	Grant Term
Track 1: The California Farm to School TK-12 Procurement and Education Grant	Project award amount for which applicants may apply = Total number of students your project will serve multiplied by \$15. NOTE: The award amount requested must fall between \$50,000 and \$1 million. If the product of your multiplication is less than \$50,000, please apply for \$50,000. If the product of your multiplication is more than \$1 million, please apply for \$1 million or less.	\$50,000 to \$750,000	Up to 18 months
Track 2: The California Farm to School Technical Assistance (TA) Subaward Grant	No funding formula. Track 2 applicants may apply for a set award amount dependent on Category. • Farm to School Procurement Readiness and Planning for SFAs: \$500k (up to 2 awards) • Farm to School Standards Aligned Hands-on Food Education: \$500k (up to 2 awards) • Farm to School Readiness and Planning for Producers: \$500k (up to 2 awards) • Early Care and Education: \$1.5 million (1 award) • Tribal Farm to School: \$1 million (1 award)	\$500k-\$1.5 million dependent on category	Up to 18 months
Track 3: The California Farm to School Producer and Food Hub Grant	No funding formula. Track 3 applicants may apply for between \$20,000 and \$200,000.	\$20,000 to \$200k	Up to 18 months

Additional Funding Details:

- The CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.
- **Grant recipients projects may expend grant funds upon receipt of signed written agreement or at grant term start date and cannot expend grant funds after the grant term end date** [see [Program Timeline](#) for the grant term dates].
- **This grant program does NOT require Matching Funds.** The CDFA will fund up to 100% of the total project cost. See [Cost Share](#) for more details.
- See [Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#) for guidance regarding use of funds.

- **Payment Process:** This is a **Reimbursement Grant Program**. If awarded a grant, recipients will incur grant related costs and submit monthly or quarterly invoices to the 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 **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](#). Please note that [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 590](#) applies to recipients that are non-profit organizations.
- **Executive Order N-6-22 – Russia Sanctions:** On March 4, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order [N-6-22](#) regarding Economic Sanctions against Russia and Russian entities and individuals. “Economic Sanctions” refers to sanctions imposed by the U.S. government in response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine, as well as any sanctions imposed under state law. By submitting a proposal or application, the Applicant represents that it is not a target of Economic Sanctions. Should the State determine Applicant is a target of Economic Sanctions or is conducting prohibited transactions with sanctioned individuals or entities, that shall be grounds for rejection of the Applicant’s proposal/application any time prior to agreement execution, or, if determined after agreement execution, shall be grounds for termination by the State

1.5 Cost Share

The Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program requires no matching dollars.

1.6 Eligibility and Exclusions

The Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is available to the entities described below. This RFA only outlines Track 3. If you have questions about eligibility or the other tracks, please email cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov or review the [Farm to School Incubator Grant Program](#) website for Track 1 and Track 2 RFAs.

Please note that eligible entities must select **one** funding track and may submit **one** application.

However, eligible entities may be a project partner in multiple funding tracks. Also, eligible entities that submit one application as a lead applicant may be a project partner in other applications. Eligible entities that are a project partner in multiple tracks, or that are a lead applicant in one application and a project partner in another, must ensure that proposed projects are **not** duplicative and there is no duplication of project costs in order for the CDFA to consider each application.

Additionally, proposed projects may complement each other but should each be able to stand on their own in case one of the complementary projects receives funding but another does not.

1.6a Eligibility and Exclusions – Track 3
The California Farm to School Producer and Food Hubs Grant

Who can apply?	Food producers in California, defined here . Or Food hubs defined here .
Additional Details	• Applicants who are current grantees of the CDFA Track 2 Farm to Community Food Hubs Grant are not eligible to apply as a food hub entity for the Track 3 Farm to School Incubator Grant. If the applicant is also a producer, they may apply as a producer applicant. • All applicants must apply in collaboration with one of the following entities: - California public school district, county office of education, charter school, or Tribal school (such as those administered through the Bureau of Indian Education) that is a School Food Authority (SFA) currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) - Producer applicants must provide at least one partner and food hub applicants must provide at least three partners. • Food hub applicants must also include in their application: - <u>At least ten</u> California food producer partner from which they will procure products as part of the proposed project. NOTE: The CDFA understands that CA food producer partners may change over the course of the project; however, this answer should be an accurate reflection of the applicant's current plan. • Note about Tribal schools: The CDFA acknowledges that Tribal governments and Tribal-based non-profit organizations may operate school meal programs outside of traditional USDA school meal programs like the NSLP. If the eligibility cannot be met, the CDFA will determine eligibility of Tribal schools on an individual basis and encourages interested entities to connect via email at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov. • Evidence of Past Sales: Applicants must provide evidence of past sales of whole or minimally processed California Grown product to School Food Authorities through submission of purchase orders, invoices, and/or sales receipts. Evidence provided must be the most recent sales and must be between the years of 2024-2026. Evidence must show a minimum of \$5,000 in sales to schools. Sales to schools through a food hub or distributor are allowable and must include a letter of proof signed by both the school and the food hub or distributor. • Letter(s) of intent: Each of the School Food Authority entities that the applicant includes as a project partner must provide a letter of intent in the application. The letter of intent must be from the director of the entity's school meal program. The letter must indicate a "good faith" intention to purchase the producer's or enterprise's California grown or produced food for school meals (does not need to be a commitment to purchase). Additionally, the letter may indicate a "good faith" effort to collaborate with the producer. - Applicants must use the Letter of Intent template. View the Letter of Intent template on the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website.

	- Producer applicants should submit at least one letter. Food hub applicant should submit at least three letters. • Food producers and public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprises in California that are not able to provide a letter of intent are <u>not</u> eligible to apply to Track 3. However, they are eligible for free, non-competitive technical assistance from the CDFA Farm to School Team to begin building relationships with the school food market. Please email cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov for support and to connect with your CDFA Farm to School Regional Producer Engagement Specialist. • School-operated gardens and school-operated farms are <u>not</u> eligible to apply to Track 3. However, third parties (such as individual contractors or non-profit organizations) that operate a farm on school property may apply to Track 3. • California-based: 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. • One application per unique tax/business identification number: Applicants must use their operation's legal business name in their application. The business name provided in the application is the entity to which the CDFA will extend a grant agreement if the project receives a grant award. Applicants are limited to one Track 3 grant application per unique tax/business identification number. Applicants who operate more than one business entity may submit separate Track 3 grant applications on behalf of each entity that has a unique tax identification number. • Note about sole proprietors: Applicants who are sole proprietors must be 18 years of age or older to apply. • Note about food safety: The CDFA requires Track 3 grant recipients to meet a level of food safety consistent with their farm or business operations and in accordance with USDA requirements and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requirements, as applicable. Applicants are required to submit a food safety plan, as outlined in the application. • Note about the funding priorities: View the detailed application questions and review criteria for Track 3 on the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website to see how the grant program will score the small to midsize food producer and food hub funding priority; veteran, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited-resource food producer funding priority; and climate smart agriculture funding priority in the Track 3 application.
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1.7 Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Please note that all costs must be **reasonable**. A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost.

This RFA outlines allowable and unallowable costs for Track 3. To find allowable and unallowable costs for other tracks, review the [Farm to School Incubator Grant Program](#) website for Track 1 and Track 2 RFAs.

1.7a Allowable and Unallowable Costs – Track 3 The California Farm to School Producer Grant

Track 3: Allowable Costs	
% of award	Description
No cap	Farm to School Infrastructure, Equipment, and Supplies Costs: - To increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools; and/or - To establish or enhance the use of climate smart agriculture practices, production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, and/or other regenerative strategies when producing California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food to sell to schools; and/or - To establish new or expand existing hands-on food education opportunities for students, School Food Authority staff, and/or child care center staff that complement the applicant's existing or project-related California food sales to California schools, such as field trips, producer visits to the cafeteria or classroom, etc. Additional Details: Fluid Milk: Please note that while California produced fluid milk is not an allowable <i>purchase</i> in the other funding tracks, using grant funds to <i>produce</i> fluid milk for schools is an allowable cost in Track 3. Infrastructure Examples: (this is not an exhaustive list; the CDFA will consider other items that align with the funding purpose) - Greenhouses, high tunnels, fencing - Improvements to existing buildings or facilities (e.g., building retrofit, adding storage/processing space) - Electrical systems - Grading or paving of roads or driveways - Plumbing, drainage, venting - Technology improvements such as fees for providing broadband or fiber-optic systems and fees for software systems - Rental costs of real property - Capital expenditures for buildings, with prior written approval from the CDFA - Other infrastructure to support sustainable production, processing, and/or distribution for school meals Equipment and Supplies Examples: (this is not an exhaustive list; the CDFA will consider other items that align with the funding purpose) - Seeds, fruit/vegetable/herb starts or seedlings, fruit trees - Seeders, transplanters, cultivators - Conveyors for moving and handling product

	- Washing stations - Blanchers, peelers - Sorting and sizing bins, product bins and totes - Coolers, cooler walls, refrigeration units, and freezers - Grading and inspection equipment - Tractors - Distribution vehicles, refrigerated vehicles, or other equipment necessary for transporting whole or minimally processed foods to school districts - Compressors - Packing, wrapping, labeling, and packaging equipment - Processing equipment to minimally process produce - Meat processing and packing equipment and supplies - Sanitation and food safety equipment such as water filtration systems and/or byproduct waste management and treatment systems - Pasteurizer equipment - Creamery or dairy product processing and packaging equipment - Plant-based fluid milk substitute and cheese processing and packaging equipment - Livestock care, feeding, or slaughter equipment (livestock to produce food products like meat, eggs, and dairy is also an allowable cost) - Seafood harvesting equipment (e.g., fishing vessels) - Aquaponics or aquaculture equipment related to processing produce or fish - Equipment that helps to maintain the identity and traceability of products - Computing equipment - Renewable energy production equipment - Marketing capacity, e.g. marketing materials and printing - Other equipment and supplies to support sustainable production, processing, and/or distribution for school meals • Consumables, ingredients, and other items for hands-on food education that are not reusable are allowable (e.g., ingredients and utensils for taste tests or lessons). • Ingredients that are <i>not</i> California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed are allowable on a case-by-case basis as supplies if used in a hands-on food education activity that <i>features</i> California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods • 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. Additionally, refer to Section 330.1(c)(1) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations if equipment or infrastructure costs will benefit both grant project activities and non-grant project activities.
No Cap	Farm to School Staff/Labor Costs: • Staffing/labor dedicated to farm to school activities. Additional Details: • Examples: staff/labor costs to produce and/or process whole or minimally processed food for schools; aggregate and distribute whole or minimally processed food to schools; manage administration related to selling whole

	or minimally processed food to schools; implement hands-on food education opportunities that engage students and/or staff from partner schools; install infrastructure or equipment that will increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell whole or minimally processed food to schools; implement climate smart agriculture practices, production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies when producing whole or minimally processed food to sell to schools; and/or participate in professional development (e.g., trainings, workshops, conferences) related to any of these activities • Please note that staff/labor costs must be directly related to farm to school activities. • Applicants should acknowledge investments in staffing/labor in the Sustainability Plan section of the application.
No cap	Farm to School Certification, Licensure, Insurance, and/or Food Safety Planning Costs: • Costs related to pursuing and attaining certification, licensure, or insurance that the producer or food hub needs to sell whole or minimally processed food to schools. Additional Details: • Examples: food safety certification or licensing fees, trainings related to pursuing food safety certification/licensure, organic certification fees, liability insurance policy fees • Please note that utilizing grant funds to expand food safety practices if it directly relates to the farm to school project is an allowable cost. • Costs such as incorporation fees, business license fees, and other costs related to organizing a business or similar entity are unallowable.
No cap	Travel Costs: • Costs for travel necessary for the performance of the grant award are allowable subject to Section 322 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations (including but not limited to: visits to or field trips from partner schools, travel related to distributing whole or minimally processed food to partner schools, travel related to project collaboration and implementation, and travel to and from trainings that are necessary for the performance of the grant award). Additional Details: • Please note that reimbursement for travel within California shall not exceed the maximum allowable rates and amounts established by the California Department of Human Resources. • Travel costs may include transportation, lodging, and meals.
No cap	Contractual Costs: • 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. - A contractor is an entity that undertakes a contract to perform an activity. The term contractor includes consultants. Additional Details:

	- Track 3 contractual costs may include accounting consultation during the grant term for funding received through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant. - Applicants who include contractors in their Budget must also include those contractors in the Project Team section of the application. - 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.
No cap	Other Costs: - Costs for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives that the previous budget categories do not cover. Additional Details: "Other Costs" include but are not limited to: - Registration fees for trainings and conferences related to the grant project - Stipends for individual project participants who are not employed by the grant recipient. - Mini grants - Publication and printing costs - Please note that mini grants may fit under Contractual Costs depending on an organization's internal procedures. Grant recipients distributing funds via mini grants must ensure that mini grant recipients follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds. - The CDFA may consider "Other Costs" not listed above that align with the funding purpose. Please email cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov to see if a cost may be allowable in this category.
Up to 30% of direct costs	Indirect Costs: As defined in Section 303(a)(36) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations.

Track 3: Unallowable Costs	
% of award	Description
0%	California produced fluid milk: The CDFA will not reimburse California produced fluid milk as part of Track 3. Although they are important components of a healthy diet for California's school children and for our state economy, these products are typically already procured from within the state.
0%	General CDFA unallowable costs: - Please refer to (1.b), (2), (3.a.iv), (6), (7), (9), (10), (13.b), (14), (17), (19), (22.b), (24), (26), and (27.a.ii) of the CDFA List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost. - Please note the purchase of land is an unallowable cost for this grant.
0%	Consumables related to food production that are not reusable: For example, feed for animals or water for irrigation.

0%	Any costs incurred before or after the grant term.
0%	Any costs outside of the project scope. Please note that prior approval from the CDFA is required for any changes to an approved project scope of work or budget once the agreement is fully executed. Failure to obtain prior written approval from the CDFA may result in disallowance of costs incurred.

1.8 Reporting and Evaluation

The CDFA will require grant applicants of the Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program to complete the following application process and recipients to complete the following reporting and evaluation components. All reporting and evaluation is a required component of the Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

Application Process	• Please see application process information in Section 3.0, Application, Review, and Notification of this document. • The CDFA Farm to School Team may hold written or in person interviews with applicants of all tracks during the application review period, January-March 2027, if requested. The entire farm to school project team listed in the application will be required to participate in in-person interview requests. Any team member may be requested to submit a response during written interviews. Interviews will be used to clarify application question responses and will be considered in the scoring of the application questions addressed during the interview.
Pre-Survey	Submit a pre-survey to the CDFA at the beginning of the grant term, after the grant agreement has been fully executed, to summarize and quantify pre-project farm to school activities. • The pre-survey may request baseline metrics including but not limited to: current California food procurement practices, current hands-on food education impacts, current food sales to schools, and use of climate smart agriculture practices.
Financial Reporting	Submit monthly or quarterly invoices to the CDFA (utilizing a template that the CDFA will provide) along with documentation to demonstrate proof of payment, detailing spending to be reimbursed for actual allowable costs incurred. If eligible and approved for an Advance Payment, submit financial reporting in accordance with Advance Payment regulations. • As part of the financial reporting process described above, when submitting California grown or produced food procurement costs, the CDFA will require grantees 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. • SFAs must verify with their vendor that each grant-funded item they include in their food procurement worksheet is California grown or produced and retain documentation on file of this verification. Verification documentation may include, but is not limited to: an indication of the food's farm origin on the invoice from the vendor or a

	written attestation from the vendor that the food is California grown or produced
Quarterly Reporting & Annual Check Ins	Submit quarterly check-in surveys to the CDFA summarizing farm to school project progress, successes, and challenges. The quarterly check-in surveys may request metrics including but not limited to: California food procurement practices and hands-on food education impacts In addition to quarterly reporting, grantees will meet with regional staff at the beginning of the grant term, at the half-way point into the grant term, and at the end of the grant term for the final interview, described below.
Final Interview	Participate in a final interview with the CDFA after the grant term concludes to discuss project successes, challenges, and other relevant information.
External Program Evaluation	Participate in external evaluation activities for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. A CDFA representative or external designee will work with grant recipients to address questions and gather necessary evaluation data. Program evaluation will demonstrate the impact of the grant program and will support efforts to develop future Farm to School Grant Programs.

2.0 Additional Program Information

2.1 Tribal Communities

Please note the following and reach out to cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov with any questions:

- The 2025 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will set aside up to 10% of all available grant funding for awards across the three funding tracks for California Native American Tribes, Tribal-based non-profit organizations, and eligible Tribal schools. Please note that the 10% set-aside is not a separate funding track. To be eligible for set-aside funds, recipients must be listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), as stipulated in Proposition 4.
- The CDFA encourages applications in all funding tracks from eligible entities in Tribal communities with projects related to forest-to-school, river-to-school, and/or ocean-to-school and projects that incorporate hands-on food education for students that revitalizes Indigenous intergenerational learning processes around traditional foodways and traditional ecological knowledge to support food security and food sovereignty for future generations.
- The CDFA encourages applications in Track 3 from eligible California food producers who use Indigenous food production practices.
- Please also see the funding priorities described in the [Purpose](#).
- For the 2025 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, the maximum indirect cost rate is up to 30% of direct costs.
- Please see the [Assistance and Questions](#) section for information about:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which will include questions and answers specifically related to applications from eligible entities in Tribal communities.
- Eligible Tribal communities may request one on one technical assistance meetings in addition to the public Q&A zoom sessions

2.2 Previous Grant Recipients

If an entity previously received a grant award and entered into a grant agreement with the CDFA through the 2021, 2022, or 2023-24 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program (view the list of [2021 grant recipients](#), [2022 grant recipients](#), and [2023-24 grant recipients](#)), please note the following:

- **Eligibility:** If the entity meets the eligibility criteria (see [Eligibility and Exclusions](#)), then it is eligible to apply. Please note that the CDFA will consider past performance in the grant program. Previous grant recipients must be up-to-date with all grant reporting requirements to be eligible for award consideration. Additionally, current grantees are required to complete their previous grant project before beginning their next grant project (i.e., no project overlap).
 - Finally, applicants must clearly describe how the proposed project will enhance or expand the existing or previous projects. The proposed project budget must reflect how the Cohort 4 grant funds will enhance or expand the existing or previous projects. Applicants may **not** apply to fund the same project activities that the 2021, 2022, and 2023 award is already funding during the overlapping grant time period (i.e., no double dipping).

Please note that all grant recipients must complete their project and spend their grant funds by the end of the grant term stated in their grant agreement.

3.0 Application, Review, and Notification

3.1 How to Apply

The CDFA will not accept late applications. Grant applicants must complete and submit via CDFA's online Grant Opportunity and Administration and Tracking System or GOATS. Creation of a new GOATS account is required [here](https://applications.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/s/login/) (applications.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/s/login/). Grant applicants must find the corresponding Funding Opportunity by searching for the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and applying to the appropriate Track. Questions regarding applications or technical issues can be directed toward cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov with the subject line "Farm to School Incubator Grant Application – Track 3 Question". Applicants are encouraged to use the resources available from CDFA described in Section 3.0 Application Assistance and Questions.

3.2 Grant Application and Review Criteria

The application process for each funding track consists of one application phase. There is a separate set of application questions and review criteria for each track.

3.2a Grant Application and Review Criteria – Track 3

The California Farm to School Producer and Food Hub Grant (100 points available total)

Applicants to Track 3 must complete an application containing the following components and may use the table below as an application checklist. Applicants must also complete a project budget and project scope of work as part of the application packet to exhibit how they plan utilize the funds if awarded. The technical review committee will score each Track 3 application as outlined below. View the detailed application questions and review criteria for Track 3 on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). The following documents must be completed for a full application package:

- Track 3 Farm to School Incubator Grant Application Question Responses
- Track 3 Project Scope of Work
- Track 3 Project Budget
- Required uploads
 - a. Evidence of School Food Authority Sales (purchase orders, invoices, and/or sales receipts)
 - b. Five photos, diagrams, crop plans, etc. of your production and/or storage space and a description of each photo
 - c. Letters of Intent (three for food hub applicants, one for producer applicants)
 - d. For Producers:
 - i. Farm/Facility Map
 - ii. Minimal Processing Standard Operating Procedures
 - iii. Food Safety Plan
 - iv. Well Water Test (Only required if using well water for post-harvest handling)
 - v. Optional: GAP Certification
 - vi. Optional: Food Safety Training
 - e. For food hubs
 - i. Operations Processes
 - ii. Facility Map
 - iii. Food Safety Plan
 - iv. List of all suppliers for farm to school sales
 - v. Food hub producer sourcing network

Track 3 – Application Sections	Points Available
Foundational Information	No points available
Proposed Project	50 points available
Producer Applicant Organizational Information	50 points available
Food Hub Applicant Organizational Information	50 points available
Additional Applicant Information	No points available
Total	100 points

The CDFA Farm to School Team may hold virtual interviews as needed with applicants of all tracks during the application review period if requested. Reviewers may request interviews with any or all application team members. Interviews will be used to clarify application question responses and will be considered in the scoring of the application questions addressed during the interview. Any team member may be requested to respond during interviews.

3.3 Review Process

The CDFA will conduct an initial administrative review of applications to determine if they meet all eligibility and application requirements. During the administrative review, the following may result in disqualification of a grant application:

- Absence of a response to one or more required questions or an incomplete response to one or more required questions (view the detailed application questions and review criteria for each funding track on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#))
- Missing, blank, or unreadable content
- Requests for more than the maximum funding amount or less than the minimum award amount
- Applications that do not comply with the eligibility requirements for the applicable funding track, outlined in [Eligibility and Exclusions](#)
- Applications that do not comply with the allowable and unallowable costs for the applicable funding track, outlined in [Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#)
- Misrepresentations in the application
- Application materials submitted past the submission deadline.
- The entity does not agree to do all of the required reporting and evaluation activities for the applicable funding track if awarded a grant (see [Reporting and Evaluation](#))
- The entity submitted multiple applications
- The proposed project is duplicative of another proposed project (e.g., they each propose to fund the same costs and project activities for the same entities)
- The entity previously received a grant award through this grant program and their past performance is not acceptable and/or they are not up-to-date with all grant reporting requirements
 - Please note that the CDFA understands that factors beyond grant recipients' control may present challenges for project implementation and cause project delays
- The entity previously received a CA Farm to School Incubator Grant award and the proposed application duplicates project activities from previous grant cycles.

Applicants who receive a notice of disqualification from the CDFA as a result of the initial administrative review may appeal the disqualification (see [Appeal Rights](#)).

Applications that pass the initial administrative review will receive a technical review to evaluate the merits of the application. The technical review will utilize the review criteria on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

The CDFA reserves the right to ask applicants clarifying questions about their applications.

The CDFA reserves the right to utilize both technical review scores and alignment with program goals to determine awards.

The CDFA reserves the right to distribute awards geographically across California to the extent possible.

3.4 Notification and Feedback

The CDFA will notify all applicants via email regarding the status of their proposals.

- **Grant Applications Due:** December 31, 2026
- **Review Process:** January - March 2027
- **Award Notification and Announcement:** March 2027

Non-selected applicants may request feedback from the CDFA to identify the strengths and weaknesses of submitted applications. This information may be useful when preparing future grant proposals. The CDFA reserves the right to provide this feedback orally or in written format. Please note that in order to receive feedback, non-selected applicants must request feedback within ten (10) calendar days of receiving a notification about their grant application status from the CDFA. The CDFA will provide additional information about feedback requests to non-selected applicants in the grant notification email

3.5 Appeal rights

Any discretionary action taken by the Office of Farm to Fork may be appealed to the CDFA Office of Hearings and Appeals within ten (10) calendar days of receiving a notice of disqualification from the CDFA. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party named on the grant application or his/her authorized agent. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the Office of Farm to Fork decision being challenged. The submission must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Suite 315, Sacramento, CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be denied.

4.0 Assistance and Questions

Language Accessibility

The Track 3 RFA, application questions and materials and public comment webinar materials will be available in both English and Spanish.

Questions

During the application period the CDFA will post Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

The CDFA cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications; however, for general assistance and questions related to the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program process, please contact the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork via email at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

The CDFA Office of Farm to Fork will anonymize and summarize the questions and answers online on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#) on a weekly basis so that all potential SFAs may benefit from submitted questions and answers. To ensure a response from the CDFA, please submit questions by December 17, 2026.

Track 3 Info Session

At the beginning of the application period, the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork will host an info session via Zoom to provide an overview of the Cohort 4 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. The CDFA Office of Farm to Fork will record this info session and post the recording on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#). To register for the info session, please follow the Zoom registration link below.

What	When	Where	Registration Link
Grant Info Session	{DATE}	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Grant Info Session (Spanish Only)	{DATE}	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon

Q&A Zoom Sessions

During the application period, the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork will conduct a series of weekly Q&A Zoom Sessions about the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Request for Applications. Eligible Tribal communities may request one on one technical assistance meetings in addition to the public Q&A zoom sessions. Each session will include time for questions and answers. They will occur on the following dates via Zoom. To register for each session, please follow the Zoom registration links below. The CDFA Office of Farm to Fork will record each session and post the recording on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

What	When	Where	Registration Link
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon
Q&A Zoom Session (Spanish Only)	[DATE]	Zoom	Registration Coming Soon

NOTE: If, during the application period, if the CDFA adds Q&A Zoom Sessions beyond those listed above, the CDFA will post the dates and registration links on [the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program website](#).

5.0 CA Public Records Act

CA Public Records Act:

All grant applications and project information submitted by farm to school grant applicants and/or grant recipients to the CDFA is subject to public disclosure. The California Public Records Act states that every citizen has the right to inspect and/or obtain a copy of any public record [Government Code section 7920.000 et seq.]. The CDFA Legal Office shall determine if the public record requested is exempt from disclosure. Public records must be disclosed unless exempt under the Government Code or other applicable law.

CDFA Privacy Policy:

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/privacy.html>

6.0 Other Grant Opportunities

For a comprehensive list of CDFA grant programs, please visit <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/>. For a complete list of California grant and loan programs, please visit the State Library's California Grants Portal: <https://www.grants.ca.gov/>.