



2023-24 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program

Questions and Answers

Application Period: February 13 – April 4, 2024

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RFA SECTION: 1.2 Definitions

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Do you consider women owned farmer or rancher to be considered socially disadvantaged, and/or limited-resource food producers?

A: Per [pages 10-11 of the RFA](#):

- Yes, the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program includes women as socially disadvantaged groups. 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.

RFA SECTION: 1.3 Four Funding Tracks

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 4] I am a small scale farm with a Farm Track Number and LLC status. Under Track 4, would we be able to provide free produce to partner schools? Or would they be required to purchase the produce?

A: Per [page 13 of the RFA](#), Track 4 will fund California food producers 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. Increasing capacity to sell foods to partner schools is thus a required element of Track 4. Donating California grown food to partner schools could potentially be a complementary component of a Track 4 project if the applicant demonstrates in the Track 4 application how these food donations will complement the project

goal to increase capacity to **sell** California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to the California school food market.

Q: [All Tracks] I think this grant is going to be worth applying for. Do you guys have any thoughts about it? I am implementing community gardens, ideally in every public institution in the community. The first one is slated to the library but the schools, including pre-k through college are not going to be far behind.

Education will be a major part of the process, but I would like to produce enough in the gardens to at least partially supply the cafeterias. It looks like the grants require some different things that could probably be worked in.

A: If an entity meets the following definition of a food producer from [page 9 of the RFA](#), then they would be eligible to apply to Track 4.

- **Food Producer:** This grant program defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, nonprofit 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 nonprofit organizations) that operate a farm on school property.

We suggest reviewing the description of Track 4 on [page 13 of the RFA](#), as well as the [Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#), to see if Track 4 feels like a fit for the project you have in mind. Please note that per [page 21 of the RFA](#), Track 4 applicants may not apply to fund start-up costs for a new food production operation. Applicants must currently produce food to be eligible to apply as a California food producer.

Or, if an entity is a farm to school technical assistance (TA) organization (see list of eligible organizations on [page 9 of the RFA](#)) that has an established history (a) supporting California School Food Authorities with implementing farm to school procurement programs; (b) supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings; or (c) supporting California food producers and institutional food procurement, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 2. We suggest reviewing the description of Track 2 on [page 12 of the RFA](#), as well as the [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#), to see if Track 2 feels like a fit for the project you have in mind. Please note that per [page 12 of the RFA](#), providing technical assistance and building capacity in Track 2 refer to activities like coaching, training, and supporting California School Food Authorities, California educators, or California food producers to implement farm to school activities themselves. Track 2 does not intend to fund organizations to directly implement procurement, education, or food sales for project partners.

February 24th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] Can you please tell me what this grant would help with? Is this to help put healthier food choices on the table?

A: Track 3 will fund child care centers in California and farm to ECE technical assistance organizations to establish new or expand existing farm to ECE programs that:

- 1) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into meals/snacks and/or food boxes for young children, 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 young children in hands-on food education opportunities – especially standards-aligned and culturally relevant opportunities led by educators with a Child Development Teacher Permit – that complement the meal program's and/or food box program's California food procurement efforts; **and**
 - 3) **OPTIONAL:** if desired, employ farm to ECE staff and/or offer farm to ECE professional development for staff.

Q: [All Tracks] Over the last five years, I have been working on a program to implement a systems approach to connecting schools to our food sources as well as many other of our basic needs such as shelter and transportation. The program is to be implemented by Career Technical Education (CTE) instructors within our local high schools...

The pilot program would involve three to five high school CTE construction classes each building a "tiny home" or bunkhouse for farm hut to hut trekking over the course of a school year to then place on farms near the schools...

The three pillars of learning in this program are land literacy, design literacy and practical skills literacy. It is a dense program with a lot of learning, but I believe if we are to truly teach from a systems approach we need to have real, hands-on experiences that entail the complexity of these interrelated systems. My approach does not directly involve the school meal program, but is supportive of the learning involved in understanding where our food comes from, the importance of local farms and builds authentic and meaningful relationships with farms and food. Thus, I am wondering if this project is a viable contender for the Farm to School Grant program. Please let me know if it is worth my time to apply and if so, to which track I should apply.

A: If your organization meets any of the organization types listed under the definition of Farm to School Technical Assistance Organizations on [page 9 of the RFA](#), **and** your organization has an established history supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 2 (Education category). The grant program's definition of hands-on food education is also on [page 9 of the RFA](#).

Please note that [per page 12 of the RFA](#), the Track 2 Education category will fund Farm to School Technical Assistance Organizations to build capacity of educators employed in California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, or Tribal schools that are a School Food Authority to implement hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings, especially programs that are standards-aligned, culturally relevant, incorporate credentialed public school educators, and complement the school meal program. Building capacity refers to activities like coaching, training, and supporting California educators employed in these entities to implement hands-on food education programs themselves. Track 2 does not intend to fund organizations to directly implement hands-on food education for project partners.

We suggest reviewing the [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#) to see if the Track 2 Education category feels like a fit for the project you have in mind.

RFA SECTION: 1.4 Funding and Duration

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 1] I have started looking into the grant application for Track 1 for the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant. I have watched the recorded webinar and have started compiling my thoughts. My question is about the funding amounts. In one location I see I can apply for up to \$350,000, and on another slide I am seeing that it says \$15 per ADA. We are a small district with approximately 700 ADA. Will this limit me on the amount I can apply for? I am extremely interested in this grant opportunity, but I would need more than \$10,000 to make my idea work.

A: The funding range for Track 1 of the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is \$200,000 - \$1 million.

Per [page 14 of the RFA](#), Track 1 includes the following funding formula: total number of students your project will serve multiplied by \$15. However, the award amount requested must fall between \$200,000 and \$1 million, so if the product of your multiplication is less than \$200,000, please apply for \$200,000.

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Will applicants receive all the funding that is requested in their application? Or, if the requested amount is deemed not necessary, will partial requested funding be granted?

A: It depends. Track 2, 3, and 4 applicants may apply for any award amount between the applicable track's minimum and maximum award amounts, which are listed on [page 14 of the RFA](#). Track 1 applicants may apply for an award amount based on the funding formula described on [page 14 of the RFA](#). All line items in an applicant's proposed budget should align with the applicant's proposed project work plan. In terms of award notification and announcement, per [page 14 of the RFA](#), "the CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested." In this case, the applicant would have an opportunity following award notification to adjust their project work plan and project budget to align with the award amount that the CDFA offered, while still aligning with the originally proposed project that received the award.

March 5th–12th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] If it ends October 2026 can we put funding to support garden education for the entire 2026-2027 SY?

A: No; if the grant term end date is in October 2026, then the grant could not fund activities that occur after that end date.

Q: [Track 1] If [a] district chooses to focus their application on a select number of school sites, would the funding formula only take into account the specific students served, or the entire district?

A: The Track 1 funding formula includes the total K-12 students enrolled at [the school sites that the project will serve](#). Please refer to School Year 2022-23 Census Day Enrollment in column R of [this spreadsheet](#) in order to calculate your response.

[Page 3 of the Track 1 Application Questions and Review Criteria:](#)

5. Schools Project Will Serve: How many school sites will your project serve?

6. **List the name of each school site** your project will serve and note if it is a Title I school.
7. **Number of Students Project Will Serve:** How many total K-12 students are enrolled at the school sites that you listed in #6? Please refer to School Year 2022-23 Census Day Enrollment in column R of this spreadsheet in order to calculate your response:
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/documents/frpm2223.xlsx>
8. **Funding Formula:**
 - **Step 1:** Take your response to #7 (Number of Students Project Will Serve)
 - **Step 2:** Multiply that number by \$15
 - **Step 3:** Write down the product of your multiplication

RFA SECTION: 1.5 Cost Share

February 24th–27th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] The only other question I have is I do not see anything about matching funds. I just want to make sure these grant awards do not need to have a matching dollar figure by local business partners or the school. If awarded this grant, it would just be money for the school to spend on the proposed project.

A: Per [page 15 of the RFA](#), the 2023-24 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program requires no matching dollars. The CDFA will fund up to 100% of the total project cost.

However, applicants must be able to show a commitment to farm to school programming in the Project Team and Organizational Commitment section of the application.

RFA SECTION: 1.6 Eligibility and Exclusions

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 2] I see that the Farm to School Technical Assistance Organizations listed in the application are primarily non-profits or government agencies. Is there a scenario in which a for-profit organization might be able to apply to support farm to school initiatives? The long-term goal would be to develop a framework that can be modeled at other school districts.

I previously served as the Co-founder and Co-CEO of XXX, and have experience with farm to school, procurement, and meal pattern regulations and have started a social business, XXX, in which a portion of profits will be donated to feeding kids through organizations such as No Kid Hungry. I would love to help XXX School District expand their Food Lab pilot and develop a model that can be implemented at other districts throughout California. Please let me know if we may be eligible to apply for Track 2.

A: The CDFA acknowledges that other types of organizations not listed in the list of Farm to School Technical Assistance (TA) Organizations on [pages 8-9 of the RFA](#) may operate as farm to school TA organizations. Beyond this list, the CDFA will determine eligibility of farm to school TA organizations on an individual basis.

Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your business. Yes, this business may apply to Track 2.

Q: [Track 1] I had one of our FFA advisors contact me about the newest grant and she was wondering if the grant was for only food related farming or if their floral dept could join in on our grant application to expand to growing cut flowers for their projects

A: The education component of the Track 1 grant will fund projects to engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts. This grant program's definition of hands-on food education is on [page 9 of the RFA](#). If an applicant can demonstrate how the floral department growing cut flowers for their projects is part of the proposed project's effort to engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts, then it would be an allowable project activity.

Q: [Track 3] Can private for profit preschool programs apply for the CA Farm to school incubator grant program? Or is this for Public School Districts only?

A: Yes, a private, for-profit preschool program may apply to Track 3 if it is a child care center that meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#).

Please note that while private child care centers are eligible to apply to Track 3, private schools are not (per [page 19 of the RFA](#)). [The California Department of Education defines a private school as](#): "a private business or nonprofit entity that offers or conducts full-time instruction with a full complement of subjects at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Private schools function outside the jurisdiction of the California Department of Education (CDE) and most state education regulations. Private schools do not participate in California's educational accountability system and are directly accountable to students and their parents or guardians, based on the terms of the private school enrollment contract."

Q: [All Tracks] We are an Early Childhood Center through Grade 12 Independent School with over 700 students. We have a Garden which is utilized by all our students promoting healing habits, using the outdoor classroom as a wonderful educational space where we grow herbs, flowers and vegetables, as well as have over a dozen roosters. The students joyfully spend time in the Garden and recently created birdfeeders with toilet paper inserts, sun butter and bird seeds as well as wind chimes to help beautify the garden space.

I just learned of your California Farm to School Grant Program and wondering if our school, the XXX, is eligible for funding. Looking forward to hearing back from you and learning more about this amazing funding opportunity that would really impact our school and our students.

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your school. Per pages [17](#), [18](#), and [19](#) of the RFA, private schools are unfortunately not eligible to apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. [The California Department of Education defines a private school as](#): "a private business or nonprofit entity that offers or conducts full-time instruction with a full complement of subjects at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Private schools function outside the jurisdiction of the California Department of Education (CDE) and most state education regulations. Private schools do not participate in California's educational accountability system and are directly accountable to students and their parents or guardians, based on the terms of the private school enrollment contract."

However, private child care centers are eligible to apply. If the early childhood center is a child care center that meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then the child care center entity itself would be eligible to apply to Track 3.

Q: [Track 4] Thank you for your presentation today on the Farm to School Grant program. I am following up to verify if we are eligible to apply for Track 4. We are not a farm or grower. We are a small local food manufacturer producing farm-to-table curry products. We source fresh ingredients from small family farms to make our products which are in turn supplied to our communities through channels like farmers markets, universities and local distributors. Our products really fit into the movement to bring local, fresh, healthy, minimally processed foods to our schools. We recently started outreach to school districts and gaining good traction. Our company website is XXX. I have also attached a products profile sheet which will give you a better idea how they fit into the farm-to-school supply chain and how we can support our schools in bringing healthy local foods to students. I appreciate your guidance.

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your company. Unfortunately, this entity is not eligible to apply to Track 4, as it does not quite meet the definition of public serving aggregation and distribution enterprise on [page 10 of the RFA](#). However, we have reviewed the product profile sheet for the curry paste, which states that fresh herbs and toasted whole spices are the only ingredients. As long as these ingredients are 100% California grown and the curry paste is 100% processed and manufactured in California, then this curry paste would be an allowable cost for grantees in Track 1 and Track 3 to purchase with grant funds for school meals.

Q: [Track 4] I work for a non-profit called XXX in Nevada county. I am the farm and garden educational manager. Today I attended q&a regarding the farm to school grants. I asked this question and I was advised to ask the question here. I'm interested in applying for track 4. Because I work for XXX I want to make sure that I'm knowledgeable whether I qualify to apply. I have three School gardens and run the educational farm. I am using all the space that I can for educational purposes and would like to expand into growing for school food. I would like to partner with my mentor on his farm (XXX farm) his name is XXX as well with a few other farms that would like to grow for school food as well. This venture would be something that I'm doing outside of my regular work hours. In 2020/21 my students and I seeded cherry tomatoes that were featured in free lunches at our local libraries, as well as in our school lunches. At this time I had my own space to grow them in and I did it again outside of my regular work hours. I have the support of the Central kitchen that provides School food to the majority of schools in our county so we're looking to do it on a bigger scale. This grant would help me expand the farm and aid me in creating a facility to pack and store our produce to align us with our food safety plan. I would absolutely love if someone can help me answer some of these questions.

A: If you or your mentor or the other farms that you work with meet the following definition from [page 9 of the RFA](#), then any one of these entities may apply to Track 4:

- **Food Producer:** This grant program defines a California food producer as a person, group of individuals, nonprofit 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 nonprofit organizations) that operate a farm on school property.

The non-profit organization that you work for may only submit one application to one funding track. For example, if they apply to Track 2 to propose a technical assistance project, then they would not be able to apply to Track 4. However, if they apply to Track 2 to propose a technical assistance project, and you or your mentor or the other farms independently apply to Track 4 (i.e., not under the umbrella of the non-profit organization) to propose a producer project, then

that would be allowable. Please note that per [page 16 of the RFA](#), 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.

Additionally, please note that Track 4 applicants may not apply to fund start-up costs for a new food production operation. Applicants must currently produce food to be eligible to apply to Track 4.

Q: [Track 3] I am the founder and Director of XXX in the city of Garden Grove Ca, Orange County. I have a few questions in regards to the new grant that opened up on February 13, 2024, CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

I wanted to know if I was eligible as a preschool after school center to apply for this grant, and help me gain a little more knowledge of the grant.

A: If the preschool is a child care center that meets the criteria listed under the definition of child care centers on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then yes, it may apply to Track 3. Please note that child care centers must *primarily* serve young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers) to be eligible.

To learn more about the grant program, here are a few resources:

- [CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Webpage](#)
- [2023-24 Request for Applications](#)
- **Grant Info Session [Slide Deck](#) and [Recording](#):** include an overview of the program and of each funding track, including Track 3
- **Questions?** Please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov or join us at weekly Q&A sessions via Zoom throughout the application period. The dates and registration links for these Q&A sessions can be found under the “Grant Info Session & Weekly Q&A Sessions” dropdown on the [grant program webpage](#).

Q: [All Tracks] My name is XXX, and I am the Owner at XXX, a permaculture-focused educational facility dedicated to fostering connections between children, educators, and the natural world through immersive gardening and food production programs. Our ranch, located in Castaic, CA, serves as a vibrant learning environment where participants of all ages can engage deeply with the principles of sustainable agriculture, nutrition, and environmental stewardship.

I am reaching out to seek guidance regarding the 2023-24 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and to explore potential alignments for our organization within the available tracks. While reviewing the application criteria, we noticed that the eligible organization types listed do not explicitly include for-profit entities such as ours. XXX operates as an LLC, focusing on educational outreach and hands-on learning experiences that we believe align closely with the goals of the Farm to School initiative. Our key programs include:

- **Garden Wonders:** A sensory-based nature study program that engages children with seasonal plants in our food forest, from field to table.
- **Parent-Child Nature Explorer:** A program designed for young children and their caregivers to explore and connect with nature together.
- **Educational and Therapeutic Programs:** Tailored to expand children's senses and support their motor skills and sensory development through guided nature exploration.

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your organization. There are a few ways that this LLC may be able to participate in the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program:

- **Track 1:** This LLC is not eligible to apply to Track 1. However, if an entity that is applying to Track 1 (such as a public school district) would like to include your organization in their proposed project budget as a contractor, then that would be an allowable cost.
- **Track 2:** This LLC may apply to Track 2 (Education category) as a farm to school technical assistance (TA) organization if it has an established history supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings. Per [page 12 of the RFA](#), technical assistance projects in the Education category must focus on building capacity of educators employed in California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, or Tribal schools that are a School Food Authority to implement hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings. Please note that building capacity refers to activities like coaching, training, and supporting California educators employed in these entities to implement hands-on food education programs themselves. Track 2 does not intend to fund organizations to directly implement hands-on food education for project partners.
- **Track 3:** There would be two possible ways for this LLC to participate in Track 3: (1) This LLC may apply to Track 3 as a farm to early care and education (ECE) technical assistance (TA) organization if it provides support to ECE providers in California. Please note that farm to ECE TA organizations must apply in partnership with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings). (2) If an entity that is applying to Track 3 (such as a child care center) would like to include your organization in their proposed project budget as a contractor, then that would be an allowable cost.

Q: [Track 3] My name is XXX and I am a family child care provider and also a board member/treasurer for a local non-profit organization that supports Spanish speaking family child care providers here in the Coachella Valley in Riverside County. I was looking over the requirements for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and I wanted to ask if I, as a family child care provider, could apply for this grant? I am licensed, I run a preschool program for children ages 3-5, and in the program we have a curriculum where we can incorporate the Track 3 requirements in our program.

Since I am also part of the non-profit organization that helps support local Spanish speaking family child care providers, could we apply as an organization in order to procure local produce for food boxes for young children AND have the providers engage in hands-on food education opportunities? We would structure a program based on those requirements and could implement it with over 60 family child care providers who are licensed here in the Coachella Valley AND who work with families of diverse populations of low income/farm workers.

A: Family child care homes are unfortunately not eligible to apply to Track 3. However, the non-profit organization you described may apply to Track 3 as a farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization. The non-profit must apply in partnership with at least two ECE sites in California. For example, the non-profit could apply in partnership with at least two (or over 60) family child care homes in California. One of these partner sites could be your own family child care home if it is located in California.

Q: [Track 4] XXX operates a food distribution and food services program throughout Fresno County and within the agency's contracted Head Start locations.

Food Services procures food commodities to provide meals for the agency's Head Start locations and other school contracts. Food Distribution procures food commodities along with food donations (XXX Food bank and other donations) to distribute to rural

communities. The main goals of funding will be to 1. Purchase equipment to increase production capacity, 2. Hire more staff for increased food outreach and distribution, and 3. Increase procurement of California food commodities.

Based on the information provided, which Track is most aligned to the agency's current initiatives and expansion plans? Is XXX eligible to apply to Track 3 as a Child Care Center and if yes can an interagency collaboration between Food Services and Head Start be acceptable or can the Food Service program apply independently? Is XXX eligible to apply to Track 4 funding as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise?

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your organization.

- **Track 3:** Per [page 8 of the RFA](#), 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) and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply to Track 3 as farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organizations. Please note that farm to ECE TA organizations must apply in partnership with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings). The agency's contracted Head Start centers would be eligible partner ECE sites. Each center that the organization includes in the proposed project as a partner ECE site would need to provide a letter of support in the application. Please review the goals of Track 3 on [page 13 of the RFA](#) to see if this funding track aligns with your organization's goal's. Any division within the organization may take the lead on the application; however, per [page 16 of the RFA](#), please note that the organization must select **one** funding track and may submit **one** application.
- **Track 4:** The grant program's definition of public serving aggregation and distribution enterprise is on [page 10 of the RFA](#). Per this definition, does your organization aggregate and distribute foods from local or regional farms or ranches in California? Is your organization able to farm identify sourcing for 100% of products it sells? Do the other components of the definition align with your organization? If yes, then the organization may apply to Track 4. Please review the Track 4 Eligibility and Exclusions on [pages 19-20 of the RFA](#) for additional details about Track 4 eligibility criteria. Please also review the goals of Track 4 on [page 13 of the RFA](#) to see if this funding track aligns with your organization's goal's. Please note that per [page 16 of the RFA](#), eligible entities must select **one** funding track and may submit **one** application.

Q: [Track 1] I am reaching out on behalf of XXX the operator of XXX, a public charter school.

[Question A] In terms of eligibility, we are a Charter School that is also a School Food Authority but we are not listed on the School Year 2022-23 Census Day Enrollment that is listed as the source to indicate student enrollment (We are currently at approximately XXX students). Please let us know if we can proceed and best measures to do so on this point.

[Question B] Guidelines question: We plan target Track 1 and part of our work will involve obtaining CA grown food from a Native American tribal food producer. Are there any requirements around how much of the school's food will be coming from CA producers (e.g., is it expected that all of the school's food program will come from these producers or is there any percentage expectation such as 50% of food will be from CA producers)?

A: [Response A] Row XXX of the spreadsheet that the Track 1 application references (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/documents/frpm2223.xlsx>) includes a school named XXX. It is spelled differently but appears to be the school that you described. If this row reflects your

school, please refer to the enrollment number in column R when responding to question #7 in the Track 1 application.

[Response B] This grant program does not include a requirement that a certain percentage of a school's food comes from California food producers. However, per [page 22 of the RFA](#), when using these grant funds to purchase food for school meals, only California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods are allowable.

Q: [Track 3] I am interested in applying for Track 3 of the Farm to School Grant Program, as the program director for XXX USD's preschool program. I found out that our district is applying for Track 1. Are the grant tracks considered separate? Does applying for two from the same district (Track 1 and Track 3) hurt our chances of getting both?

A: Track 1 and Track 3 are separate funding tracks. Per [page 16 of the RFA](#), eligible entities must select one funding track and may submit one application. The school district would be eligible to apply to Track 1, but not to Track 3. However, the school district may include its preschool program in its Track 1 proposed project.

Q: [Track 4] We are a large group of neighbors in the XXX Community in Weed, CA, Siskiyou County, who want to establish a community farm on land available in our neighborhood, to provide local, organic produce to our community and provide a complete educational learning experience to the importance of safe, local, organic produce in our lives. Including the local schools with fresh produce and the ability to educate our young people on growing food would be very impactful for this community. We will need greenhouses to accomplish this.

Question~ we are not an established farm yet, would we qualify to apply for the CA Farm to School grant as a start up that is open now for applicants?

If not, is there something else we might be able to apply for?

A: Per [page 21 of the RFA](#), Track 4 applicants may not apply to fund start-up costs for a new food production operation. Applicants must currently produce food to be eligible to apply as a California food producer. However, the CDFA Farm to School Team offers free, non-competitive technical assistance to California communities that are interested in getting involved with farm to school. We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving Siskiyou County and they will be able to provide technical assistance.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 3] In the solicitation it mentions that eligible entities must select one funding track and may submit one application. In the definition of TA Organizations it mentions "University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county office". Given the reference to the county offices, is CDFA viewing each UCCE county location as a separate entity for submission eligibility purposes? Or is the submission cap limited to one application for all of UC ANR statewide?

A: Per [pages 8-9 of the RFA](#), eligible Track 2 farm to school TA organizations and eligible Track 3 farm to ECE TA organizations include, "University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) and Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices." Based on this language, this grant program considers each individual UCCE county office to be a separate eligible entity. Please note that each individual UCCE county office must select one funding track and may submit one application.

Q: [Track 1] I am an ag teacher and run a school farm in bishop ca. we already produce beef, lamb, and pork in the facility. most of this is sold to students to sell at our local fair. But I think it would be a great idea to be able to sell meat and produce we raise locally to the school lunch programs in our and other schools. We can produce the meat

and some fruit produce, our problem is storage and transportation 450 miles round trip to USDA meat plants. I would like to know if we would be eligible to apply for grant funding to better our feedlot facility, but frozen storage and vehicles to transport animals the long distance. We could not only produce enough for our school but others in the community.

A: XXX, the school district in which your school is located, would be eligible to apply to Track 1. Per [page 12 of the RFA](#), Track 1 funds public school districts in California that are a School Food Authority to establish new or expand existing farm to school programs that both procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals AND engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts. School farm to cafeteria activities that engage students would be allowable in the hands-on food education work plan of the Track 1 application. If the school district procures California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food from the school farm for school meals, then this would be allowable under goal 1 of the procurement work plan in the Track 1 application. Proposing to use funds to improve the school farm's feedlot facility, buy frozen storage, and buy vehicles to transport animals would be allowable as long as these purchases are for the farm to school project.

Q: [Track 3] I was wondering after reading the information you provide. Does Childcare Center that are Title 22 For Profit Schools can apply for this Grant?

A: Yes, for-profit child care centers are eligible to apply to Track 3 if they meet the criteria listed under the definition of child care centers on [page 7 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 4] I work for a local, sustainable seafood company who is currently selling seafood products, both plain & value-added, to the XXX School District in Ventura County. We are also working to produce a fish based soil amendment with the scraps from our processing that we will sell to home gardeners, school gardens & local farmers in the future.

I am wondering if we would qualify to submit a grant for the Track 4 funding in order to help us produce & sell more to local school districts. I know a few local farmers who received grants during the last round & am curious if seafood would fall under this track as a producer or if we're in a weird gray area.

A: Per [page 9 of the RFA](#), this grant program's definition of food producer includes California seafood harvesters. If the seafood company is a California seafood harvester, then the company would be eligible to apply to Track 4 as a California food producer. If instead, the seafood company serves as a supply chain intermediary that aggregates and distributes seafood from local or regional California seafood harvesters, in alignment with the definition of public serving aggregation and distribution enterprises on [page 10 of the RFA](#), then the company would be eligible to apply to Track 4 as a public serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.

Q: [Track 4] I am with the XXX School District and currently in the process of deciding what California Farm to School Incubator Grant track option to apply for.

We are a school district that is currently developing a ten acre farm. Under the multiplication chart- we qualify to apply for the 200,000 in track one. However, I was wondering if since the grant will mainly be funding operations on the farm as well as a Farm Operations Assistant, if we would qualify for track 4 and potentially more funding that way?

A: Per [page 20 of the RFA](#), school-operated gardens and school-operated farms are not eligible to apply to Track 4. However, third parties (such as individual contractors or non-profit organizations) that operate a farm on school property may apply to Track 4.

Q: [Track 3] I am a family home day care provider. I am working with Beanstalk (Child Care Food Program). I just wanted to ask if the Beanstalk organization can be considered as a partner? Please let me know if I can apply to Track 3: The California Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grant through the Beanstalk organization?

A: Yes; [per page 8 of the RFA](#), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors of Day Care Homes in CA are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization. While family child care homes are not eligible to apply to Track 3 directly, they may be included as a project partner in a CACFP sponsor's Track 3 application.

Q: [All Tracks] I am a member of a Women's Organization in La Habra. We help children by donating winter coats, organizing art projects, etc., in our community. We strongly feel if we can get some financial assistance, we can accomplish a lot. Can we apply for this grant program as we are a not-for-profit organization that actively helps and is involved in helping children in our community?

A: Non-profit organizations are eligible to apply to this grant program. For example:

- In Track 2, Farm to School Technical Assistance Organizations (which include non-profit organizations) are eligible to apply. Please note that per [page 17 of the RFA](#), the organization must have an established history supporting California School Food Authorities with implementing farm to school procurement programs **or** supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings **or** supporting California food producers and institutional food procurement.
- In Track 3, Farm to ECE Technical Assistance Organizations (which include non-profit organizations) are eligible to apply. Please note that per [page 19 of the RFA](#), the organization must partner with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings) in order to apply.

To learn more about Tracks 2 and 3, we encourage you to review the goals of each funding track on [pages 12-13 of the RFA](#), as well as the full review criteria on [pages 17-19 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 3] I have a Family Child Care Home, do I need to be in partnership with a farmers market?

A: If the farmers market is a non-profit organization and it provides support to ECE providers in California, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance Organization. It could include your family child care home as a partner ECE site in the application. There are also other types of organizations that are eligible to apply to Track 3 as Farm to ECE Technical Assistance Organizations. The list is on [page 8 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 3] Would I need to be registered as a nonprofit farm to do this on my own for Track 3?

A: If a California farm, whether for-profit or non-profit, is interested in applying to this grant program, then they would be eligible to apply to Track 4: The California Farm to School Producer Grant. Per [page 13 of the RFA](#), Track 4 will fund California food producers 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. Per [pages 19-20 of the RFA](#), California food producers must apply in collaboration with at least one of the following entities and must provide a letter of intent from the director of each partner entity's school meal program:

- 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)

- California child care center currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Q: [Track 2] Can a nonprofit submit a Track 2 project in one of the categories, while being a fiscal sponsor for another Track 2 project in a different category?

The goal would be to establish an organization similar to _____ to provide the technical assistance to farmers... XXX has a background in food hubs and food systems, and has been an invaluable resource. XXX doesn't currently have [their] own business or organization, but we thought this next grant could be an opportunity to expand [their] work with our small farmers in the food hub. XXX has an LLC but isn't a nonprofit organization.

A: Based on this information, XXX's LLC could apply on its own to Track 2 in the producer training category without a fiscal sponsor.

February 24th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] I just want to get clarification on Track #2 eligibility. Can an LEA such as XXX apply for TA track? We have applied for track 1 in the past but we feel we are at a disadvantage because of our current FNS director vacancy to facilitate procurement requirements. Currently our department (health programs) encompasses all activities listed under education in track 2.

A: School districts are not eligible to apply to Track 2. However, California school districts that are a School Food Authority (SFA) currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to apply to Track 1.

Q: [Track 3] Hi, I currently own a large family childcare home since 2010, I am now transitioning to a childcare center. My program is science and nature based, and I believe we would be a great fit for the grant. Would my new childcare center program be eligible to receive the grant? It would be amazing to have funding to help establish the food growing aspect of our program as it is set up this summer.

A: If the child care center is established before the end of the application period, and it meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then the child care center would be eligible to apply to Track 3.

Q: [Track 3] If our school would like to develop a school garden where the school staff and our young students can learn about farming through working on the school garden together and then they would be able to include the produce generated from the school garden in their school meals. In this case, is our school eligible to apply for the farm to school incubator grant program under track 3?

A: If the school is a child care center that meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then the child care center would be eligible to apply to Track 3.

However, if the school serves TK-12 students and is part of a 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), then the school itself would not be eligible to apply.

However, the public school district, county office of education, charter school, or Tribal school (of which the school is a part) would be eligible to apply to Track 1 and could include your school in its proposed project.

Q: [Track 3] I was reading your grant and thought we might want to apply for the Track 3 to serve our local ECE providers. We are a County Office of Education and we have a farm to school grant. We are not in the list of example providers, would we be considered?

A: Yes; per [page 8 of the RFA](#), county agencies (such as a county office of education) are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance Organization if they provide support to ECE providers in California.

Q: [Track 2] If the grant applicant works with a school district, do they need to provide support to every school within the district, or could they choose 2 or 3 schools to support?

A: Per [page 18 of the RFA](#), Track 2 applicants may identify in the application that their proposed project will focus on one or more specific school sites within each California School Food Authority that is part of the project partnership.

Q: [Track 4] Would it be required to have a SAM number or any other id number that could limit the eligibility of farmers in our community?

A: This grant program does not require Track 4 applicants to have a SAM number.

Please note that per [page 21 of the RFA](#), applicants are limited to one Track 4 grant application per unique tax/business identification number.

Q: [Track 3] I am an early learning consultant working with the City of XXX program that provides training and coaching to early learning programs throughout the city. In reviewing page 8 of the RFQ, it looks as if the City of XXX could be an eligible T&TA site as a local government that could partner with up to two ECE sites.

Do you mind clarifying whether this could be a possible option. Additionally, if the City of XXX is an eligible local government agency, is it possible for the City to include more than two sites as partners, potentially including center-based and family child care early learning (ECE) programs?

A: Yes; per [page 8 of the RFA](#), local governments in CA that provide support to ECE providers in California are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization. The City of XXX would be considered a local government in CA. Per [page 19 of the RFA](#), Farm to ECE TA Organizations must partner with at least two ECE sites in California in order to apply. An organization could absolutely include more than two ECE sites in California as project partners if desired. Both child care centers and family child care homes are eligible partner ECE sites in Track 3.

Q: [Track 3] XXX is a licensed non profit school age child care that has been operating on school campuses for 38 years in the Tri-Valley, CA.

We have recently bought a farm to educate our 1000+ students on sustainable farming and exposing our students to a way of life and livestock that most don't have the ability to experience...

We currently need help funding our summer program that already has 500 kids that have signed up through our summer enrollment. We are working on outdoor classroom build outs as well as many line items we would be applying for a grant to help with such as a green house and farm equipment.

Please let us know the any next steps necessary beyond applying here.

A: Please note: To apply for Track 3 of the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, child care center applicants must primarily serve young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers). More details about this can be found on [page 7](#) and the bottom of [page 18](#) of the RFA.

To learn more about eligibility criteria and how to apply, please view the “Apply to the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program!” dropdown of the [grant program webpage](#) – which includes the Request for Applications, links to the online application portals, and the application questions/review criteria.

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] I currently supply to a public-servicing aggregation/distributor that supplies to school districts in the most northern counties of Shasta. Must I have a more direct relationship with the school district than this in order to be eligible for Track 4?

A: Per [pages 19-20 of the RFA](#), Track 4 applicants must apply in collaboration with at least 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)
- California child care center currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Per [page 20 of the RFA](#), each of these entities that the applicant includes as a project partner must provide a letter of intent (using [this template](#)) 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 California grown or produced food for school meals (does not need to be a commitment to purchase).

However, there is no requirement in Track 4 that the food sales to these partner entities be direct sales; the food sales could be through an intermediary such as a distributor or food hub as long as the producer knows that the partner entities are the ones purchasing the food. The partner entities could state in the letter of intent that they intend to purchase the producer’s food through a distributor or food hub.

Q: [Track 4] For track 4, does an applicant have to have a SSN or is an ITIN ok?

A: A Track 4 applicant would need a Social Security Number (SSN), Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN), or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). Please note that the Track 4 application does not ask applicants to provide this number. However, if awarded, the grant recipient will receive a Payee Data Record form to complete.

Q: [Track 4] I have a question about the first question in track 4 regarding the business tax ID. Since I am a small farm, do I need an actual business tax number or can I just use my personal tax id number?

A: Please see [this response](#).

Q: [Track 1] I would like to apply for farm to school incubator program, track 1. we would fall under option C in the eligibility section of the application; however we are still in the process of becoming an independent SFA. We have applied to become a SFA and we have a confirmation number for our account, but it is my understanding that we will not be approved until after the deadline for the grant application. Would you recommend that we apply using the information that we currently have, or do we need to wait another year?

A: If the charter school meets the following eligibility criteria before the end of the application period, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 1.

- *California charter school that is a School Food Authority (SFA) currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)*

Please note that even if an entity is not eligible to apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, the CDFA Farm to School Team offers free, non-competitive technical assistance to California communities that are interested in getting involved with farm to school. We will introduce you to the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff in your region in case you would like to connect.

Q: [Track 2] I have found a potential charter school partner for our Track 2 Producer Training grant. I am a bit unsure about the charter schools. This charter school is: XXX - My question is:

Would this charter school be eligible to be our school partner? The way I read the RFA, just having this one charter school as our partners will be sufficient (assuming we don't have other schools partnering with us).

A: If this charter school is a California School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), then yes, it would be eligible to be a Track 2 school partner.

Per [page 17 of the RFA](#), Track 2 proposed projects must include a partnership with **at least one** 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 California School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). So as long as the charter school meets this criteria of being a California School Food Authority currently operating the NSLP, then it would satisfy this school partnership requirement.

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] I really want to apply for our small non-profit faith based preschool program. A few questions, we are not part of a food program? Does that matter?

A: [Response A] If the preschool is a child care center that meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then the child care center would be eligible to apply to Track 3. Per [page 19 of the RFA](#), participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is not a requirement to apply to Track 3.

Q: [All Tracks] I am the XXX at XXX School in Monterey, and we are developing a sustainable XXX garden to supply food for school lunches, and also partner with local produce companies to establish a leading edge agtech program. We are an independent school, and looking through your documentation I only see grants for public or charter schools. Could you let me know if you think there are any grants we could apply for.

A: Per pages [17](#), [18](#), and [19](#) of the RFA, private schools are unfortunately not eligible to apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, the CDFA Farm to School Team offers free, non-competitive technical assistance to California communities that are interested in getting involved with farm to school. We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving Monterey County and they will be able to provide technical assistance.

Q: [Track 4] XXX and I own a small business, XXX. We build and deliver large chicken coops throughout Southern California off of my family's working cow-calf cattle ranch. I came across this CDFA program and wanted to inquire about it.

My XXX has been building our same style coops in Northern California for over 15 years now and has delivered to a few schools. Recently we were contacted by a school and are now building a coop for an elementary school that will be implementing a chicken keeping program. I was intrigued and think these kinds of programs are absolutely wonderful to help kids connect where their food comes through hands-on experience. Do you think building chicken coops for schools would be something that would work for this grant program?

A: It depends. Track 4 – the California Farm to School Producer Grant – will fund California food producers 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.

In order to apply to Track 4:

- **Eligibility:** Does your business meet the definition of a food producer on [page 9 of the RFA](#)? (Additionally, please note that producer applicants must currently produce food to be eligible to apply to Track 4 as a food producer)
- **Purpose:** Does the project you have in mind align with the description of Track 4 on [page 13 of the RFA](#)?
- **Partnership:** Do you have an eligible project partner that is able to submit a letter of intent?
 - Per [pages 19-20 of the RFA](#), California food producers must apply in collaboration with at least one of the following entities and must provide a [letter of intent](#) from the director of each partner entity's school meal program:
 - 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)
 - California child care center currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
 - The letter must indicate a "good faith" intention to purchase the producer'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 or enterprise to implement hands-on food education opportunities for students and/or staff that complement the producer's or enterprise's California food sales to their organization.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions about eligibility and we'd be happy to help! We also wanted to note that in addition to the grant program, the CDFA Farm to School Team offers free, non-competitive technical assistance to food producers, schools, communities, and other organizations that are interested in getting involved with farm to school.

Q: [Track 4] If a Farm is owned by a Family Trust and a member of the family independently, as another business, runs the farm, and then pays the trust a percentage of the income who should be the farm listed on the application? The Family Trust or the family member independently running the farm as a sole proprietor.

A: It is up to the applicant regarding which Legal Business Name they choose to enter in the application in question #2.

Please note that per question #2 of the Track 4 application, the name you provide is the entity to which the CDFA will extend a grant agreement if your project receives a grant award. All other responses in the Foundational Information section of the application should correspond with the Legal Business Name you provide.

A Track 4 applicant would need a Social Security Number (SSN), Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN), or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). Please note that the Track 4 application does not ask applicants to provide this number. However, if awarded, the grant recipient will receive a Payee Data Record form to complete.

Q: [Track 3] An Early Childhood Education Center/Day Care is applying under Track 3 to purchase beef and agricultural education from my company, XXX. Does this ECE have to have two ECE's or can they apply alone?

Looking for guidance on question 5. ECE Sites Project Will Serve: How many ECE sites will your proposed project serve? NOTE: if you are a farm to ECE technical assistance organization, at least two total ECE sites required.

A: If the applicant is a child care center that meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then it may apply to Track 3. The child care center may be a single-site or multi-site center.

The requirement to partner with at least two ECE sites in CA only applies to farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organizations that apply to Track 3. It does not apply to child care centers that apply to Track 3.

Q: [Track 4] Do you think it would be feasible to apply for track 4 for the XXX Food Hub AND include 2 producers? I know XXX and XXX are both interested in applying and was curious if you think it could pass for [our food hub] to apply for infrastructure, equipment, and staff funds for our Food Hub but also for each of the farms and apply as one unit?

A: If a food hub that meets the definition of public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise on [page 10 of the RFA](#) is applying to Track 4, then:

- Proposing to use grant funds to directly purchase infrastructure and equipment for California food producers would be allowable as long as the purpose of these costs is to achieve the grant project goals. Please review the details regarding infrastructure/equipment costs on [pages 32-33 of the RFA](#).
- Proposing to use grant funds to provide mini grants to California food producers would be allowable as long as the purpose of these mini grants is to achieve the grant project goals. Please review the details regarding mini grants on [page 35 of the RFA](#).
- Proposing to use grant funds to cover staff costs for California food producers would be allowable as long as the purpose of these costs is to achieve the grant project goals. Staffing/labor costs must be dedicated to farm to school activities. Please review the details regarding contractual costs (i.e., contractor or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives) and other costs (which may include stipends for individual project participants who are **not** employed by the grant recipient) on [pages 34-35 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 1] Hi, we have 4 sites in our high school district... Since multiple applications are not allowable, would we do 4 different budgets per site?

A: You would submit one budget in your application and include the proposed project costs for all school sites that the project will serve. It is up to you for how you would like to break down the costs per site in the budget itself.

Q: [All Tracks] Would love to see if my program works for this. Our Boys & Girls Club has 5 locations and over 500 kids each day. Interested in working with our migrant farm workers, many of them have kids that come here, and doing hands on at gardens at all 5 of my locations! Guess I'm curious where a Boys & Girls Club fits in with this funding opportunity.

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your organization. There are a few ways that a Boys & Girls Club may be able to participate in the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program:

- **Track 1:** A Boys & Girls Club is not eligible to apply to Track 1. However, if an entity that is applying to Track 1 (such as a public school district) would like to include your organization in their proposed project budget as a contractor for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives, then that would be an allowable cost. [Page 12 of the RFA](#) outlines the goals of Track 1.
- **Track 2:** A Boys & Girls Club may apply to Track 2 as a farm to school technical assistance (TA) organization if it has an established history: (a) supporting California School Food Authorities with implementing farm to school procurement programs, (b) supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings, or (c) supporting California food producers and institutional food procurement.
 - Per [page 12 of the RFA](#), technical assistance (TA) projects must focus technical assistance in **one** of the following categories:
 - **School Food:** building capacity of California School Food Authorities to implement farm to school procurement programs; **or**
 - **Education:** building capacity of educators employed in California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, or Tribal schools that are a School Food Authority to implement hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings, especially programs that are

- standards-aligned, culturally relevant, incorporate credentialed public school educators, and complement the school meal program; **or**
- **Producer Training:** building capacity of California food producers to sell products to California School Food Authorities.
- Please note that building capacity refers to activities like coaching, training, and supporting California School Food Authorities, California educators, or California food producers to implement farm to school activities themselves. Track 2 does not intend to fund organizations to directly implement procurement, education, or food sales for project partners.
- Please review the partnership requirements for Track 2 at the bottom of [page 17 of the RFA](#).
- **Track 3:** There would be two possible ways for a Boys & Girls Club to participate in Track 3: (1) A Boys & Girls Club may apply to Track 3 as a farm to early care and education (ECE) technical assistance (TA) organization if it provides support to ECE providers in California. Please note that farm to ECE TA organizations must apply in partnership with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings). (2) If an entity that is applying to Track 3 (such as a child care center) would like to include your organization in their proposed project budget as a contractor for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives, then that would be an allowable cost. [Page 13 of the RFA](#) outlines the goals of Track 3.

Q: [Track 2] Our team is currently applying to the Track 2 CDFA Farm to School grant, and had a few questions.

For letters of support, is it okay for us to include:

- **SFAs who are also applying to Track 1**
- **Non-profit partners who are also applying to Track 2**
- **Farmers who are applying to Track 4**
- **SFAs who are supporting other Track 2 or Track 4 partners**

Likewise, if we are applying for a Track 2 grant, would we be able to give letters of support to other Track 1, 2 or 4 applicants?

A: Per [page 16 of the RFA](#):

- Eligible entities may be a project partner in multiple funding tracks.
- 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.

Q: [Track 4] We are a group of small farmers who would like to work in the spirit of cooperation and support each other but apply individually, supplying the same schools with a variety of healthy locally grown whole or minimally processed food choices.

[Question A] We have a couple schools already on board waiting to sign our letters of intent, we assume that each farm should individually get a letter of intent signed by each

school? And if so, should each farm in our group use the same project title in their letters of intent since the projects will be a collaborative effort? ...

~ [Question B] The question is, would it be considered a duplicate project cost if for example multiple farms needed fencing, compost, greenhouses or even something like packing, washing and storage facilities? (These all seem to be necessities to our individual farm needs while other project costs such as large farm equipment and delivery trucks or freeze dryers would definitely be purchases that one farm could get and share with the group.)

~ [Question C] Should we list the other farms that will be project partners on our individual applications?

~ [Question D] Does there need to be one applicant that is the project lead?

~ [Question E] All of our coalition of farmers own their land, have many years experience and currently farm and or raise livestock on their land, but some have not been selling commercially. Would they be eligible to apply?

~ [Question F] We currently work with our small rural towns farmers market that has been operating for a good many years now serving the local community as well as developing a program to get more healthy food to WIC and senior nutrition program participants. We would like to help this organization expand into a food hub to service the local schools as well. Would they be eligible to apply being that they are an existing public serving aggregation or do farmers markets not qualify?

A: [Response A] Each food producer that submits an application to Track 4 must individually submit a letter of intent (using [this template](#)) from each of the School Food Authority or child care center entities that it includes as a project partner in the application. The project title is up to the applicant.

[Response B] If, for example, one food producer proposes a greenhouse for their site in their Track 4 application, and another food producer proposes a greenhouse for their separate site in a separate Track 4 application, then this would not be considered a duplicative cost because the greenhouses are for different farms. However, if one food producer proposes a greenhouse for their site in their Track 4 application, and another food producer proposes the same greenhouse for the same site in a separate Track 4 application, then this would be considered a duplicative cost because the exact same item for the exact same purpose could not be billed to the grant program twice.

[Response C] Question #23 of the Project Team section of the Track 4 application says, "If your project team includes additional team members, please include them in this section. Please share name, title, and a two-sentence description of each additional team member's involvement in the project. Additional team members may include school site partners, non-profit organization partners, proposed contractors, or other key members of your farm to school team." If other farms are key members of your farm to school team, then you may include them in this section.

[Response D] If a collaborative of farms is submitting one Track 4 application together, then yes, there would need to be one lead applicant. For example:

- If the collaborative is its own entity with its own tax/business identification number, then the collaborative itself could apply to Track 4 as the lead applicant. Each of the CA food producers within the collaborative would also be eligible to apply individually to Track 4 as food producers if they each have a unique tax ID number that differs from the collaborative's number.

- If the collaborative is not its own entity with its own tax ID number, then one or more of the CA food producers could apply individually to Track 4 as the lead applicant and could include the other food producers as contractors or mini grant recipients in their proposed project if they wish. Per [page 16 of the RFA](#), applicants 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.

[Response E] Yes. Applicants must currently produce food in order to apply to Track 4 as a food producer. However, there is no requirement that food producers already sell their food in order to apply to Track 4.

[Response F] If the farmers market meets the definition of a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise on [page 9 of the RFA](#), and the farmers market currently aggregates and distributes food, and the farmers market is able to show evidence (via a letter of intent) of an established relationship with each California School Food Authority or child care center operator of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to which they intend to sell food, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 4.

March 5th–12th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] I am reaching out on behalf of UC XXX Early Education Services for guidance on the Farm to ECE Grant. XXX is expanding our child care services in Fall 2025 with the opening of a new Early Education Services Center. Construction is starting in early spring (April 2024) and is estimated to be completed by June 2025.

Our aim is to apply for a project to establish a new Farm to ECE program that will be ready to serve this new, expanded center when it opens in Fall 2025.

Our current UCSC Child Care Center is fully licensed, and will apply for the expanded center licenses once construction is completed in June 2025. Please will you advise if there is an opportunity for our project to be considered eligible for application in this current 2023-24 grant cycle?

A: Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria by the end of the application period (i.e., by April 4, 2024 at 5pm PT) in order to be eligible to apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

- If your current child care center meets the definition of a child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then it would be eligible to apply to Track 3. If you anticipate that enrollment in the center will increase during the grant term and this will be something that impacts your proposed project work plan and proposed project budget, then please note this in the application.
- If instead, the university is applying to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization, then please note that per [page 19 of the RFA](#), the proposed project would need to include a partnership with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings).

Q: [Track 1] Can two schools in the same LEA apply separately for the grant? Or do they have to apply together?

A: No, two schools in the same SFA cannot apply separately to Track 1. The following entities are eligible to apply to Track 1:

- California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and Tribal schools (such as those administered through the Bureau of Indian Education) that are a School Food Authority (SFA) currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

If, for example, two public schools within the same California public school district (that is a School Food Authority currently operating the NSLP) would like to participate in Track 1, then the school district itself would be eligible to submit one application to Track 1 and could include both school sites in the proposed project. However, the two schools would not be eligible to each individually submit a Track 1 application.

Q: [Track 3] XXX is one school with three beautiful campuses in Santa Monica serving young children and families. Each campus serves approximately 90 children. We will be applying for [___ campus] (90 students)...

Know the minimum amount for the grant is \$50,000 – does that need to be used within a certain time period?

A: Thanks for reaching out and sharing about your school!

XXX child care center would be eligible to apply to Track 3 as long as it meets this eligibility criteria on [page 7 of the RFA](#):

- Is located in CA
- Provides care all or part of the day
- Is single-site or multi-site
- 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)

If awarded, grant recipients will have up to 24 months to spend their grant funds.

Grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before the grant term start date or after the grant term end date (the estimated grant term is November 2024 – October 2026).

When developing a proposed project work plan and proposed project budget for the Track 3 application, it is up to the applicant to determine the estimated timeline (within the grant term) for spending grant funds and implementing project activities if awarded.

Q: [Track 2] If we are a nonprofit and we lease space on school property for our farm and our farm sells its crops to the district, can we apply for track 2 section 3 and include some salary for our farmer to train the students and district on how to grow food?

A: The goal of the Producer Training project category within Track 2 is to build capacity of California food producers to sell products to California School Food Authorities (SFAs).

Training an SFA's students and staff to grow food would be an allowable hands-on food education activity in Track 4 if it complements the producer's existing or project-related California food sales to California schools. Staffing/labor dedicated to farm to school activities,

(e.g., staff/labor costs to implement hands-on food education opportunities that engage students and/or staff from partner schools) is an allowable cost in Track 4.

Q: [Track 2] I intend to apply through track 2 in partnership with schools that are in multiple counties. As a University of California Cooperative Extension Advisor, I operate in 5 counties but am "housed" in the XXX County office.

If my application includes partnerships with schools in Butte, Colusa, and Glenn counties, can I still submit the grant through one UCCE office? I checked with the County Director's in each office, and I am the only applicant for this grant in each county.

A: Yes, this would be allowable in the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

Q: [All Tracks] We are XXX, Bakersfield, CA, a private school in Kern County, serving children 18months -9 years old.

Are you supporting any private school in the 2023-24 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program? Can we apply for the Grant this time?

A: Per pages [17](#), [18](#), and [19](#) of the RFA, private schools are unfortunately not eligible to apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, the CDFA Farm to School Team offers free, non-competitive technical assistance to California communities that are interested in farm to school. We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving Kern County and they will be able to provide technical assistance.

Q: [Track 3] XXX is a tribal organization that will open XXX Academy on our 8-acre ranch in June 2024. We have a small farm growing vegetables, fruits, and herbs for the preschool. We also have animals such as chickens, ducks, pigs, horses, donkeys, and cows that will enhance the children's learning experience.

We are registered with CDE... The preschool will be licensed through community care licensing. We are open to all (tribal and non-tribal members) but are not funded by a public source.

We believe we are eligible for funding under Track 3 as a tribal organization/ tribal non-profit located on the reservation. Could you please confirm if we are, in fact, eligible? The eligibility for Track 3 states that "private schools are not eligible to apply to Track 3." Does this apply to us, a tribal organization forming a pre-school that is open to all (though not receiving public funding)?

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing about your organization! It is correct that Tribal-based non-profit organizations are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization if they provide support to ECE providers in California. Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organizations must apply in partnership with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and/or license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings)

- For example, the preschool your organization is opening could be one of these partners if it is a child care center by the end of the application period.
- Note: If the Tribal-based non-profit organization operates a private school as one element of its work, but the proposed project is focused on serving ECE sites, then that would be okay.

An alternative option would be for the preschool itself to apply to Track 3 as a child care center if it meets the definition of child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#) by the end of the application period.

Q: [Track 4] The food Bank of XXX is interested in the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and are trying to determine our eligibility to apply as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise (Track 4). We meet the below definitions in section 1.2 of the RFA:

- **We serve as a supply chain intermediary for local or regional farms or ranches, particularly those optimizing climate smart agriculture production practices or production systems, like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, and following state labor practices. *This is true. We source produce from local/regional farms, some of which are organic and/or use climate smart agriculture***
- **An eligible enterprise must prioritize to the greatest extent possible, but is not limited to, serving California farms or ranches that are 500 acres or less; cooperatively owned; or owned by farmers who are socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, veterans, or disabled. *Yes, we have relationships with small farms owned by farmers from historically disadvantaged communities***
- **Additionally, within this grant program, an eligible enterprise must be able to farm identify sourcing for 100% of products it sells to ensure state dollars support California farms and ranches. *Yes we can do this we would restrict funding to only local/regional farmers.***

I can see from the RFA that CDFA is willing to provide an individual eligibility assessment. Can you please advise on how to assess and confirm our eligibility to apply as this type of enterprise?

A: Please note that the component of the definition that says “an eligible enterprise must be able to farm identify sourcing for 100% of products it sells to ensure state dollars support California farms and ranches” applies to the operation as a whole and not just the proposed project.

If this component of the definition aligns with your operation as a whole, then based on the other descriptions provided, the Food Bank of XXX meets the definition of a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise and would be eligible to apply to Track 4.

Question #14 in the Track 4 application is based on the above component of the public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise definition:

- **14. Type(s) of food aggregated/distributed:** If you are applying as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise, what type(s) of food do you aggregate and distribute? Please check all that apply.
 - Source-identified Fruits
 - Source-identified Vegetables
 - Source-identified Herbs
 - Source-identified Poultry
 - Source-identified Meat
 - Source-identified Seafood
 - Source-identified Legumes
 - Source-identified Nuts

- Source-identified Seeds
- Source-identified Eggs
- Source-identified Dairy
- Source-identified Whole grains
- Source-identified Foraged or wild-harvested food
- We do not currently aggregate and distribute source-identified food (in this case, the operation is not eligible to apply as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise)
- We aggregate and distribute foods that we are not able to source-identify (in this case, the operation is not eligible to apply as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise)
- Other, please describe

Q: [Track 3] we are already following and using farm to school techniques to make our pre-school aware of things, and the resources and support from here will greatly enhance our efforts.

Question: we are in process of change in ownership of another center. The take over process might not close before the grant last day, which is April-4-24. Would be great to have some guidance on this. so that we can use the time frame and work accordingly. Is that a possibility, we apply under the existing school name/license and pass the grant money as 1099 to new business entity, and later show all the receipts, plan and execution with the new entity and new license number?

A: An applicant must meet the eligibility criteria by the end of the grant application period in order to be eligible to apply. The organization name an eligible applicant provides in the application is the entity to which the CDFA will extend a grant agreement if the project receives a grant award.

For example, if your current preschool is a child care center that meets the definition of child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then it would be eligible to apply to Track 3. That is the entity to which the CDFA will extend a grant agreement if the project receives a grant award.

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](#). Mini grants for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are also allowable. It would be allowable to propose such costs in the proposed budget section of the application. Please note that grant recipients distributing funds to contractors/mini grant recipients must ensure that contractors/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.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] I've watched the CDFA F2F Info Session and attended the Q&A Session last week, but I still have questions around eligibility regarding XXX, a nonprofit based in Los Angeles and serving LA County.

[Question A] XXX does hands-on farm/nutrition learning with farm-adjacent grade schools in Compton and San Pedro, however both of these schools are Catholic, private schools. They do operate the Federal National School Lunch Program, but I think the

school partners for Track 4 need to be public or charter schools in the district, is that correct?

Now for Track 2:

For several years, XXX has offered farm to school and school-age programming under the umbrella of Peas-In-A-Pod... XXX runs a similar program tailored for students (K-5) at two farm-adjacent schools (private, Catholic parish schools, run by the LA Archdiocese) that teaches healthy lifestyles and integrates experiential, multi-sensory learning as part of their curriculum.

That said, there is much room for expansion of these programs including:

- 1) Bringing in students from public, district schools (focus on South and East Los Angeles, and areas disproportionately affected by dis-investment and incarceration) for Peas-In-A-Pod lessons (monthly or quarterly); and/or**
- 2) Increasing fresh food production and food storage to become a supplier for local school meal programs; and/or**
- 3) XXX offers training for educators employed in California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, or Tribal schools that are a School Food Authority to implement hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings. and/or**
- 4) Expanding the Peas program to include toddlers and preschool children as well as junior and high school kids.**

[Question B] With these goals on the horizon, with regard to Track 2, I can imagine XXX might fall under either Technical Assistance Focus Categories 1) School Food -or- 2) Education?

[Question C] As such, does it seem like XXX would be a good fit for Track 2 or do the schools served by the school food market also need to be public or charter?

A: [Response A] Track 4 applicants must apply in collaboration with at least 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)**
- California child care center currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**

Track 4 will fund California food producers to increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to these entities. To be eligible, an applicant must show evidence of an established relationship with each California School Food Authority or child care center operator of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to which they intend to sell food (via a [letter of intent](#) from the director of the entity's school meal program). However, there is no requirement that the applicant has already made food sales to that entity prior to submitting the application.

Here are the [Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#) if you would like to explore to see if this track aligns with your project goals.

[Response B] A non-profit organization that has an established history supporting California School Food Authorities with implementing farm to school procurement programs would be eligible to apply to Track 2 in the School Food project category. If this established history is with California School Food Authorities that are private schools, that would be ok.

A non-profit organization that has an established history supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings would be eligible to apply to Track 2 – Education project category. If this established history is with California educators in TK-12 settings in private schools, that would be ok.

[Response C] In both the School Food and Education project categories within Track 2, the proposed project must include a partnership with at least one 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 California School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). If XXX is able to meet this partnership requirement, and it also meets either of the established history requirements above, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 2 in the applicable project category as a farm to school technical assistance (TA) organization. Here are the [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#) if you would like to explore to see if this track aligns with your project goals.

Please note that per [page 18 of the RFA](#), private schools are not eligible to be a California School Food Authority project partner in Track 2. However, private schools may participate in a Track 2 project as a contractor that provides technical assistance to the project partnership.

Q: [Track 2] I'm inquiring to see if our organization will qualify as a "Technical Assistance (TA) Organization" for the Track 2 application.

Within our Rotary District XXX, which will include participating Rotary Clubs within Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties, we are collaborating with multiple school districts to facilitate a program called "Earthwise Education".

This program connects Rotarians with their local schools to educate students and parents on SB 1383 and the importance of food waste reduction in California. We will be bringing electric food composters into selected participating schools with cafeterias and school gardens (for the compost).

This program is new and connects with a new Rotary Area of Focus, which is Protecting the Environment. While this program pertains to food waste reduction education is new for Rotary, working with schools on numerous projects has been happening for decades within our organization.

All funds raised will go through our Foundation Account, which is a 501 (c) 3 organization. Please let me know if we are qualified to apply for this grant as a TA Organization.

A: A non-profit organization – such as the one you described – would be eligible to apply to Track 2's Education project category as a farm to school technical assistance (TA) organization

if it has an established history supporting California educators with implementing hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings.

Here are the [Track 2 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#) if you would like to explore to see if this track aligns with your project goals.

Please note that the goal of the Track 2 Education project category is to build capacity of educators employed in California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, or Tribal schools that are a School Food Authority to implement hands-on food education programs in TK-12 settings, especially programs that are standards-aligned, culturally relevant, incorporate credentialed public school educators, and complement the school meal program. Per [page 12 of the RFA](#), building capacity refers to activities like coaching, training, and supporting California School Food Authorities, California educators, or California food producers to implement farm to school activities themselves. Track 2 does not intend to fund organizations to directly implement procurement, education, or food sales for project partners.

Q: [Track 3] County Offices of Education were not specifically mentioned as an eligible applicant under Track Three, but we are the affiliate agency under the XXX County Early Head Start Partners Grant and the lead agency overseeing the Help Me Grow initiative for XXX County. Would we be eligible to apply?

A: County agencies in CA – such as county offices of education – that provide support to ECE providers in California are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization.

Q: [Track 3] I am from the XXX County Office of Education’s Early Learning Department. We are applying for Track 3 on behalf of our Early Head Start (EHS) Home Based Visiting Program. Our goal with the project is to incorporate family engagement and healthy family eating habits into our program which serves low-income families with children ages 0-3.

We have 77 families participating in our Early Head Start Home Visiting program. The children’s ages range from age zero to three, and many families have more than one child participating in the program.

QUESTIONS: Can these enrolled families be considered to meet the “ECE sites” requirement (RFA page 19 of 46)? If so, will all 77 need to be listed as an ECE site on application or can we just include our grantee, SETA Head Start?

A: If at least two of the participants in the Early Head Start Home Visiting program are a family, friend, or neighbor (FFN) setting, then they would meet the Track 3 partnership requirement in which farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organizations must partner with at least two ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings). A letter of support would be required from each FFN setting that the proposed project will serve.

If, in addition, the TA organization would like the project to serve young children of families that participate in the Early Head Start Home Visiting program but are not FFN settings, then it

would be allowable to propose this in the application. The application would not require letters of support from these families.

Here is the definition of family, friend, or neighbor care [from the CA Department of Social Services](#): “Family, Friend, or Neighbor Care (also known as License-Exempt Child Care) is care provided in the child’s or child care provider’s home by a person who is a relative, friend, neighbor, or other license-exempt provider. This type of care is not required to be licensed by the State of California. Families who choose this type of care may know and trust the caregiver. Families may choose this type of care for linguistic or cultural reasons, or for flexibility in scheduling, and transportation reasons.”

Q: [Track 2] [Entity A] has been fiscally sponsored by [Entity B] the last two years. In previous grant cycles, [Entity A] has written the Track 1 grants for XX USD and provided contract farm to school services through the Track 1 grant. This year, [Entity A] plans to apply for a Track 2 grant. We just spoke to [Entity B] and they also plan to submit a Track 2 grant. Can [Entity A] still submit a Track 2 CDFA grant as a fiscally sponsored entity of [Entity B] if they are also submitting? We are incorporating as our own 501c3 this Spring, so are moving out of fiscal sponsorship, just not by the time the grant is due.

A: It depends. If the two entities are distinct (e.g., based in different areas, serving different partners, and/or proposing distinctly different projects), then the two entities would each be eligible to apply to Track 2 – one as a non-profit organization and the other as a project with a non-profit fiscal sponsor.

However, if the two entities are very closely linked (e.g., based in the same area, serving the same partners, and/or proposing similar projects), then it may make more sense for one of the entities to apply as the lead applicant and include the other entity as a proposed contractor.

Q: [Track 3] I am writing on behalf of XXX, an Early Childhood Education (ECE) site licensed by CDSS, dedicated to providing high-quality child and educational care for young children from birth through age 5.

We are eager to apply for the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program under Track 3. Despite encountering challenges in our initial attempt to apply through the Farm to ECE Technical Assistance organization, we remain steadfast in our commitment to fostering healthy eating habits and sustainable food practices within our center. Therefore, we want to pursue this grant independently, with confidence in our understanding and knowledge of the grant application process.

We are eager to commence the application process for Track 3 and kindly request your approval to proceed accordingly.

A: Can you please provide additional clarification about the entity type of XXX?

If XXX is a California child care center that meets the criteria outlined below, then it would be eligible to apply to Track 3.

- 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)

However, if XXX is a family child care home, then it would not be eligible to apply directly. We recently posted some FAQs on our website regarding Family Child Care Homes – these can be found halfway down the FAQs page linked [here](#).

We are a Family Child Care Home, which meets all the criteria mentioned for California Child Care Center.

We have already tried to apply through the our Farm to ECE Technical Assistance organization (Food Assistant), but they do NOT want to help us in this case.

Now we are left to apply by ourselves only. Please advise.

A: Unfortunately, individual Family Child Care Homes are not eligible to apply to the grant program directly.

However, we will introduce you to the CDFA Regional Farm to School Network Lead serving your region, if you are interested in connecting. One of the ways our team can help during the application period is to introduce ECE sites and support orgs.

Q: [Track 1] I have a question regarding the upcoming grant applications that are due in April. We are planning on applying for track 1 under XXX High School District. We are planning on utilizing the grants similar to how we have been using the incubator grant and partnering with XXX Elementary school district in implementing their school gardens and educating students on California grown or farm to school produce and procuring California grown produce and/or farm to school produce for our school meals.

As you know, our district also has a farm at one of our high schools that we regularly purchase produce from. The farm's coordinator reached out to me, as she is also interested in applying for the grant. Our purposes and functions for applying for the grant are separate and we will be working on different projects using the grant funds (if we are awarded). Is this allowable since we are applying for the same district?

A: Eligible entities must select one funding track and may only submit one application. Please note:

- If XXX High School District (XX HSD) is a School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), then it would be eligible to apply to Track 1.
- If XXX Elementary School District (XX ESD) is also a School Food Authority currently operating the NSLP, then it would also be eligible to apply to Track 1.
- If XX ESD is not an SFA itself, but instead XX HSD serves as the School Food Authority for XX ESD, then XX ESD would not be eligible to apply to Track 1; however, XX HSD could include XX ESD in its own proposed project (Note: XX HSD would still be limited to submitting one application).

Regarding school-operated farms:

- School-operated gardens and school-operated farms are not eligible to apply to Track 4.

- School-operated gardens and school-operated farms may be an element of a Track 1 project (i.e., for hands-on food education activities or as a food source for CA grown food procurement). However, they would not qualify as a food producer partner in Track 1, 2, or 3.
- Third parties (such as individual contractors or non-profit organizations) that operate a farm on school property (rather than the school operating it) are eligible to apply to Track 4 as a CA food producer. They are also eligible food producer partners in Track 1, 2, and 3.

Q: [Track 4] I operate an educational farm in my community and offer farm tours and take animals to schools for educational presentations .

I do not sell food products to schools, would I still be eligible to apply?

A: Track 4 will fund California food producers 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.

In addition (but not instead of), Track 4 applicants may propose to use funds 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.

Per [pages 19-20 of the RFA](#), California food producers must apply in collaboration with at least one of the following entities and must provide a letter of intent from the director of each partner entity's school meal program:

- 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)
- California child care center currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The letter must indicate a "good faith" intention to purchase the producer'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 to implement hands-on food education opportunities for students and/or staff that complement the producer's California food sales to their organization.

Q: [All Tracks] I am reaching out to learn if there are any analogous opportunities that support community colleges? I provide fresh local produce to XXX Community College students each Monday in a program we call Farm Fresh Mondays and also work to continually offer minimally-processed, nutritionally-dense food provisions to students. These are food security equity initiatives. About 1/3 of our population is dual enrollment from area high schools.

Just checking with you and the CDFA to see if there are funding opportunities that may support our work.

A: Public universities in CA such as University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and community colleges are eligible to apply to Track 2 as a Farm to School Technical Assistance (TA) Organization, as long as they:

- (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

Please note the proposed project must include a partnership with at least one 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 California School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

The goal of Track 2 is to fund farm to school technical assistance organizations to help California School Food Authorities and California food producers implement resilient and sustainable farm to school programming. The CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program currently focuses on students age 0 through 12th grade, and the early care and education (ECE) sites, public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and Tribal schools that they attend.

Additionally, the CDFA Regional Farm to School Network Lead in your region may be able to identify if there are other farm to school related funding opportunities available for community colleges.

Q: [Track 3] XXX is a franchisor that helps franchisees with opening their own childcare businesses. There are currently 37 sites in CA and more throughout the US and more to open.

My questions are, who should be submitting the application? The corporate office or each individual site? Could XXX complete the application and if selected, the corporate office distributes the funds accordingly? Each site is different in location and capacity.

A: If XXX meets one of the following grant program criteria of a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization that provides support to ECE providers in California, then XXX would be eligible to apply to Track 3 and could distribute funds to ECE sites via contracts or mini grants if desired:

- 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.

If each site is a California child care center that meets the following grant program criteria, then each site would be eligible to apply on its own to Track 3:

- 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)

Q: [Track 4] ...if we have a farmer who has sold into XXX USD but not direct, rather through XXX are we good to write a letter of support for him?

A: Please see [this response](#).

Q: [Track 3] My name is XXX and I am the child development Director. Our center is within XXX Community College. We serve children 18 months – 5 years old.

[Question A] The plan for this grant is to create a school garden, educate children through a hands-on approach. Is this project plan something we can pursue in track 3?

[Question B] Our ECE program is in a community college facility and operates as a training facility for college students while servicing young children.

My question is can we apply to the grant opportunity to use funds to implement a school garden that will provide an education component for children, their families, as well as for future educators? This will also include implementation of a green house.

[Question C] Additionally with these funds can we purchase monthly fruits and vegetables from local vendors that participate at the on-site farmers market? Would this be an example of procurement?

A: [Response A] If you are a child care center that meets the definition of child care center on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then you would be eligible to apply to Track 3.

[Response B] Yes, school gardens would be an allowable project activity under the hands-on food education component of Track 3.

- Per [page 9 of the RFA](#), hands-on food education is defined as 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.

[Response C] Yes, purchasing CA grown or produced, whole or minimally processed fruit and vegetables from a farmers market would be allowable under the procurement component of Track 3.

- Per [page 28 of the RFA](#), 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, (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)), snacks, and/or food boxes is an allowable cost. Grant recipients must follow procurement and food safety regulations applicable to their programs.

Q: [Track 3] To give more information on me, I run a family child care and I'm thinking about participating in this grant specifically on Track 3, which I am applying with a project partner with UC __ EXTENSIONS: DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE TRAINING.

Now onto my questions regarding the grants:

[Question A] When working in partnership, would the UC __ EXTENSIONS: DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE TRAINING be my partner or would I be theirs when applying?

[Question B] Do I need to apply for grant under a project I came up with or one that UC __ EXTENSIONS: DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE TRAINING invented?

[Question C] If we are to be accepted, who would receive the funds? UC __ EXTENSIONS: DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE TRAINING or me, or would both parties receive a portion?

[Question D] If the funds are received, would they be considered guarantors/cosigners?

[Question E] Depending on who is the partner, whether it is UC __ EXTENSIONS: DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE TRAINING or me, who is responsible for handling the grant?

For example: say the funds are given to UC __ EXTENSIONS: DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY CHILD CARE TRAINING, and they then provide me part of those funds for my project, would they then be responsible for the grant and vice-versa.

A: [Response A] Public universities in California that provide support to ECE providers in California are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization. UC __ Extension would be eligible to apply and your family child care home could be listed as a project partner within the application.

[Response B] The grant project can establish a new or expand an existing farm to ECE program. We suggest collaborating with your farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization partner on the Track 3 application and working together to develop a proposed project work plan and budget that would support your family child care home to: (1) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into meals/snacks and/or food boxes for young children; and (2) engage young children in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the meal program's and/or food box program's California food procurement efforts.

[Response C] If awarded, the applicant, for example UC __ Extension, would be the grant recipient and would be responsible for executing the grant agreement and coordinating the awarded funds.

[Response D] If awarded, the applicant, for example UC __ Extension, would be the grant recipient. There are no co-signers for a grant award in this program. In the application it would be allowable for the applicant to propose to distribute funds to project partners (such as family child care homes) via contracts and/or mini-grants for the purpose of achieving grant project goals.

[Response E] If awarded, the applicant, for example UC __ Extension, would be the grant recipient and would be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all grant activities and costs follow grant requirements. Please note that grant recipients distributing funds to contractors and/or mini grant recipients must ensure that contractors and 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.

Q: [Track 3] I am hoping to apply for the Track 3 ECE grant but have an eligibility question. From what I understand, it said that ECE teachers had to have a teacher permit to be eligible. I am in the process of working on my site supervisor permit at the moment, would I be eligible if the permit is still in progress?

A: The 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program does not require that hands-on food education be led by educators with a Child Development Teacher Permit. While it is not a requirement, Track 3 projects that incorporate educators with a Child Development Teacher

Permit are eligible for additional points in the review criteria (please see scoring clarification below for details). To clarify the scoring:

- (a) not all educators involved in a Track 3 proposed project need to have a Child Development Teacher Permit, and
- (b) educators that do not have a Child Development Teacher Permit may participate in a proposed project.

In the Track 3 application, if applicants select the following optional education project goal ("Our proposed project will increase opportunities for young children to engage in hands-on food education that is led by educators with a Child Development Teacher Permit"), then they will have the opportunity to receive up to 5 points in the Hands-on Food Education Activities & Timeline section for describing how they will achieve this goal. Pursuing a Child Development Teacher Permit during the grant term as part of the process of achieving this goal would be allowable.

RFA SECTION: 1.7 Allowable and Unallowable Costs

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 3] The XXX, a California child care center that participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), is located in a highly urbanized area in South Los Angeles. We serve economically disadvantaged children and their families through various subsidized programs.

Is the procurement of produce from Certified Farmers Markets (CFM) an allowable use of CDFA Farm to School Grant funds?

A: Yes; per [page 28 of the RFA](#), 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, (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)), snacks, and/or food boxes is an allowable cost. Grant recipients must follow procurement and food safety regulations applicable to their programs.

Q: [Track 4] Can land purchases be included as an expense for the grant?

A: Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), purchase of agricultural land (farmland), or monthly/annual lease payments is allowable for up to 75% of total grant funding requested and requires prior written approval by the CDFA.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Can a vehicle (used to transport produce to schools) be included as an expense for the grant? [Question B] Can vehicle fuel expenses be included as an expense for the grant (if it's a gasoline or diesel vehicle)? [Question C] Can we get solar panels to power an electric vehicle that we purchase to transport produce to schools? [Question D] Can we bill electrical costs for an electric vehicle if we don't get solar panels?

A: [Response A] Yes; per [page 33 of the RFA](#), distribution vehicles, refrigerated vehicles, or other equipment necessary for transporting whole or minimally processed foods to school districts are an allowable cost.

[Response B] Vehicle fuel expenses are unallowable. However, mileage reimbursement for using a privately owned vehicle for travel necessary for project implementation is allowable at the standard mileage rate indicated on [this CalHR travel reimbursements page](#).

[Response C] Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to increase distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools are allowable. Solar panels to power an electric vehicle to distribute California grown produce to schools are an allowable cost.

[Response D] It depends on the purpose of the electricity. Per [page 35 of the RFA](#), consumables related to food production that are not reusable are unallowable. For example, feed for animals or water for irrigation. If the electricity is for farm to school food production, then it would be an unallowable cost. If the electricity is for farm to school food distribution (such as powering an electric vehicle to distribute California grown produce to schools), then it would be an allowable cost. Alternatively, if the electricity is an indirect cost rather than a direct cost, it would be allowable under the Indirect Costs section of the budget. Here is the distinction between direct and indirect costs from the [CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#):

- Direct costs: Costs that can be identified specifically with a particular grant award and can be directly attributable to grant award activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.
- Indirect costs: Costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. 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.

Q: [Track 4] Can a walk-in refrigeration unit be included as an expense for the grant?

A: Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), coolers, cooler walls, refrigeration units, and freezers to increase capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools are an allowable cost.

Q: [Track 4] Can building a greenhouse be included as an expense for the grant? Can these expenses include: engineering plans, site permitting, electrical and plumbing, construction expenses, equipment costs?

A: Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), greenhouses to increase capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for schools are an allowable cost. Engineering plans, site permitting, electrical and plumbing systems, and equipment for the greenhouse would be allowable costs if necessary for project implementation. Please note that if these costs involve contractors (for example, if the cost of engineering plans refers to paying a contractor to develop an engineering plan), then contractor 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 solar panels be included as an expense for the grant? (to power a walk-in refrigeration unit, greenhouse, and/or electric vehicle)?

A: Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), 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 are allowable. Solar panels to power a walk-in refrigeration unit, greenhouse, or electric vehicle to increase capacity to sell California grown produce to schools are an allowable cost.

Q: [Track 4] Can employee salary and benefits be included as an expense for the grant? (we would like to hire 1-2 additional workers to increase production for schools)

A: Yes; per [page 33 of the RFA](#), staff/labor costs (salaries/wages and fringe benefits) to produce and/or process whole or minimally processed food for schools are allowable.

Q: [Track 4] Are payroll taxes for staff allowable?

A: Yes, this is allowable under the fringe benefits section of staff/labor costs.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Can products such as olive oil or grape juice be sold to schools as part of the program if the olives/grapes are grown on-site? [Question B] Can they be bottled off-site by another entity that we pay to bottle them for us?

A: [Response A] Yes, as long as the products meet the following criteria: the olives and grapes are grown in California, the olive oil and grape juice are processed in California, and there are no additional ingredients beyond olives in the olive oil or beyond grapes in the grape juice. Per [page 7 of the RFA](#), if a minimally processed 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.

[Response B] Yes, the olive oil or grape juice could be bottled off-site by another entity as long as that site is in California.

Q: [Track 1] [Question A] I'd like to clarify the indirect cost rate. Is the rate 30%? That seems higher than I am used to. [Question B] Is back up required at all? [Question C] Also, is food used for NSLP meals an allowable cost?

A: [Response A] The indirect cost rate for the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is up to 30% of direct costs. Please note that local educational agencies (LEAs) such as school districts that apply to Track 1 should also follow the California Department of Education's (CDE's) procedures for indirect cost rates.

[Response B] Per [Section 325\(a\)\(3\) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#), grantees shall maintain documentation supporting calculation or methodology for determining indirect costs.

[Response C] Yes; per [page 22 of the RFA](#), 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 an allowable cost. Grant recipients must follow USDA procurement and food safety regulations.

Q: [All Tracks] I have read the application and I don't see if we have to submit bids? This is my second grant I am interested in and I see that it does not read that I need bids from two different companies for one item? I am not sure if this is correct? If someone can please help me with this question, would I need bids for this project?

A: If awarded a grant, [Section 319 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) outlines the following regulations for grantees to follow regarding the procurement of goods or services:

- 319 Procurement of goods or services; requirement for competitive process
 - (a) The Recipient shall follow its own written procurement policy and procedures when procuring goods or services.
 - (b) In the absence of a written policy and procedures, procurement transactions for goods or services of \$5,000 or more shall be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition, consistent with the following:
 - (1) The contract opportunity shall be advertised or bids or proposals solicited.
 - (2) At least three bids or proposals shall be obtained.

- (3) If three bids or proposals are not obtained, the following must be documented:
 - a. The manner of advertising, including the names of any publications in which the contract opportunity was advertised, if applicable.
 - b. The names and addresses of the firms or individuals solicited for bids or proposals.
 - c. The names and addresses of the firms or individuals that submitted a bid or proposal, and the bid or proposal amount for each.
- (4) An invitation to bid or request for proposal shall not be drafted in a manner that limits the bidding directly or indirectly to one bidder. Any contract awarded in violation of this section may be disallowed.
- (c) All documents related to the procurement of goods or services shall be maintained pursuant to section 325, and provided to the Department or designee upon request.

Q: [Track 2] For Track 2, it is clear that grant funding can't pay applicant employees for implementation. However can funding pay for school employees to implement Farm to School activities including school garden education?

A: Per [page 26 of the RFA](#), farm to school staff costs for project planning, coordination, facilitation, and/or implementation are allowable in Track 2. For example, an applicant could propose that, if awarded, they would use grant funds to compensate staff employed by their organization for their time implementing the project goal of building project partners' capacity to implement farm to school activities.

Also per [page 26 of the RFA](#), 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](#). Track 2 contractors may include school employees.

Q: [Track 4] We just finished with the Q&A Session for Farm-to-School Grant. I had a question on Track 4 about land purchase and the prior approval that is noted in the RFA linked here on page 32.

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/caf2sgrant/docs/2023-24_RFA_CA_Farm_to_School_IGP.pdf
Nick asked during this time for us to submit some information prior to the applications about the ask and need state for the land purchase so it could be sent to the legal department. Can we please get some specific clarification on what information exactly that is requested in order to send on to CDFA legal? If it is submitting answers to questions from the grant we could share right away.

We don't want to over complicate or simplify the process; however, this is key to our application.

We would like to be able to pivot the grant focus/expenses pending this further clarification.

A: After looking into this further, we would like to clarify: prior written approval is not required to include a proposed land purchase in the application but would be required for a land purchase to be an allowable cost in the grant project if the project is awarded. If awarded, the prior written approval process occurs later, following the application period and award announcement. Beyond completing the grant application, no additional information about a proposed land purchase is needed during the application period.

The prior written approval requirement is based on #8 of the [CDFA List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost](#).

February 24th–27th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] We have a Farm at the XXX in Garberville Ca. Last year I met with the XXX Superintendent of public schools to explore educational opportunities surrounding local organic agriculture. I also started a working relationship with the director of the school lunch program and sold them some tomatoes from our greenhouse. I am writing this email regarding a question concerning use of funds that will help me to complete a budget for our application. One of our biggest hurdles as a new farm besides some equipment needs and infrastructure upgrades is farm labor. How much of the budget can I use for that purpose? I noticed I could use some funds to cover staffing costs dedicated to farm to school activities but general farm labor does not fall into this category.

A: Per [page 33 of the RFA](#), staff/labor costs dedicated to farm to school activities are allowable in Track 4. This includes farm labor if it is for the purpose of the farm to school project. There is no cap on the percentage of the project budget that may be used for farm labor.

Q: [Track 4] Is it allowable to hire someone to handle food safety issues?

A: Per [page 21 of the RFA](#), the CDFA will expect Track 4 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. Track 4 grant recipients may use grant funds for costs to meet necessary food safety requirements for their projects and should work with their school nutrition partners to determine what level of food safety they must meet to sell food to these partners.

If these staff/labor costs or contractual costs for handling food safety topics are directly related to the farm to school project, then this would be an allowable cost. Please see [page 34 of the RFA](#) (and below) for more details about allowable costs pertaining to food safety.

- Costs related to pursuing and attaining certification, licensure, or insurance that the producer needs to sell whole or minimally processed food to schools are allowable.
 - Examples: food safety certification or licensing fees, trainings related to pursuing food safety certification/licensure, organic certification fees, liability insurance policy fees
- Utilizing grant funds to develop a food safety plan if it directly relates to the farm to school project is an allowable cost.
- Producer grant recipients that do not currently have a food safety plan in place must complete a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training through Cornell University as a component of their Track 4 grant project. The training is approximately \$80. The cost of this training is an allowable cost.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Can the grant pay for worker housing? I see that the grant allows “improvements to existing buildings or facilities.” Would our grant cover improvements for worker housing or new building for worker housing?

[Question B] Can the grant pay for solar power with battery backup?

[Question C] If these proposed projects fall under the scope of this grant

How in depth do you need my request for said projects?

Estimated Lump sum estimated price for solar from a licensed supplier?

For worker housing would it be acceptable to simply give estimated price per square foot?

In other words, I would like to keep my request as simple as possible, but still get across the relevance of the projects

A: [Response A] Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), “improvements to existing buildings or facilities” and “capital expenditures for buildings, with prior written approval from the CDFA” are allowable costs in Track 4. Improving worker housing or building new worker housing would be allowable as long as the housing is for workers who will be directly working on the farm to school project and as long as the worker housing is a necessary part of your grant project to enable you to meet the grant project goals. Additionally, please note:

- Per [page 22 of the RFA](#), the cost of improving worker housing or building new worker housing must be reasonable. The RFA states that, “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.”
- In accordance with the [CDFA Grant Administration Regulations, Section 330.1\(c\)\(1\)](#), if an infrastructure cost will benefit both grant project activities and non-grant project activities, then please approximate the proportion that is for proposed grant project activities as the proportion that may be charged to the grant award. Funds can be divided proportionally based on a reasonable system, such as square footage for construction projects, etc.

[Response B] Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), 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 are allowable. Solar panels with battery backup to power equipment/infrastructure to increase capacity to sell California grown produce to schools are an allowable cost.

[Response C] The budget section of the Track 4 application asks the following questions about proposed supplies, equipment, and infrastructure costs. The [online Track 4 application](#) includes examples of how to respond to the Itemization and Description questions (we have also included these examples below).

- (40a) Enter Total Dollar Amount: supplies ____
 - (40b) Itemization and Description: Please list the supplies and briefly describe each item’s purpose in the project.
 - *Example formatting for (40b):*
 - *Food production supplies (seeds, vegetable starts, fruit trees): The purpose of the food production supplies is to complete Goal __, Activity #__ from our work plan, which states that we will _____.*
- (40c) Enter Total Dollar Amount: equipment ____
 - (40d) Itemization and Description: Please list the equipment, estimate the cost of each item, and briefly describe each item’s purpose in the project.
 - *Example formatting for (40d):*
 - *2 Commercial Food Processors: \$30,000 total*
 - *Estimated cost is \$15,000 per commercial food processor. The purpose of the commercial food processors is to complete Goal __, Activity #__ from our work plan, which states that we will _____.*
 - *1 Refrigerated Delivery Truck: \$50,000*

- *Estimated cost of the truck is \$60,000. We are requesting to use about \$50,000 in grant funds and will use another funding source for the remaining \$10,000. The purpose of the truck is to complete Goal __, Activity #__ from our work plan, which states that we will _____.*
- (40e) Enter Total Dollar Amount: infrastructure ____
 - (40f) Itemization and Description: Please list the infrastructure, estimate the cost of each item, and briefly describe each item's purpose in the project.
 - Example formatting for (40f):
 - *Greenhouse Electrical System: \$4,000*
 - *Estimated cost is \$4,000. The purpose of the greenhouse electrical system is to complete Goal __, Activity #__ from our work plan, which states that we will _____.*
- (40g) Timeline: In what months will the project spend these funds on supplies, equipment, and infrastructure?

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] We have some questions RE track 3:

[Question A] We are a little unsure of the purpose of the grant. Are we allowed to create an area in our program to farm ourselves or do we need to work with another approved farm from a specific list of qualified farmers? Or are both acceptable?

[Question B] Can the grant money be used to expand our kitchen so we can have more room to store and make food from scratch?

[Question C] If we would like to partner with a farm to provide the produce to us, would the farm charge us for the produce or would the farm already be part of your grant program and need to receive funds from you directly by apply on their own, then they can supply us with produce?

A: [Response A] [Page 13 of the RFA](#) describes the purpose of Track 3:

- Track 3 will fund child care centers in California and farm to ECE technical assistance organizations to establish new or expand existing farm to ECE programs that:
 - (1) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into meals/snacks and/or food boxes for young children, 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 young children in hands-on food education opportunities – especially standards-aligned and culturally relevant opportunities led by educators with a Child Development Teacher Permit – that complement the meal program's and/or food box program's California food procurement efforts; **and**
 - (3) OPTIONAL: if desired, employ farm to ECE staff and/or offer farm to ECE professional development for staff.

Creating a garden or farm area at your child care center would be an allowable project activity if it will engage young children in hands-on food education opportunities (e.g., gardening).

Creating a garden or farm area at your child care center would also be an allowable project activity if the child care center will procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food from the on-site garden/farm for incorporation into ECE meals/snacks and/or food boxes for young children. Additionally, procuring California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food from California food producers (defined toward the bottom of [page 9](#)

[of the RFA](#)) for incorporation into ECE meals/snacks and/or food boxes for young children would be an allowable project activity. Please note that per [page 9 of the Track 3 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#), under the Procurement Work Plan section of the application, if a proposed project will procure CA grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for meals/snacks/food boxes from school-operated gardens/farms only, then you would be eligible to check goal 1, but not goals 2, 3, or 4.

[Response B] Yes; per [page 29 of the RFA](#), ECE kitchen infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to support utilization of California grown or produced foods in meals, snacks, and/or food boxes are allowable costs.

[Response C] Farms neither need to apply on their own nor need to be a grantee of the program to be an eligible partner in Track 3. Additionally, per [page 28 of the RFA](#), procuring California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods (e.g., from farmers) for utilization in meals, snacks, and/or food boxes is an allowable cost for Track 3 grant recipients.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Can producers purchase both new and/or used equipment with incubator grant funding?

[Question B] Can producers subsidize food to make it more affordable for schools through Track 4 of the grant?

A: [Response A] Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), farm to school equipment costs are allowable. Equipment could be new or used.

[Response B] [Pages 32-35 of the RFA](#) list the allowable costs for Track 4. Can you please clarify what the proposed use of grant funds would be in this scenario? This will assist us in providing a more specific response.

Q: [Track 4] I'm working with a potential applicant who is looking for clarification about using the funds to, among other program goals, offset any of the costs of food production. For example, if the farmer provided food during a field trip, can funds be used to cover the costs of this food as part of the field trip? I suppose an addition to the question, or clarification, is if any of the Track 4 funding can be used to subsidize costs of food, to bring the cost down lower for the school to purchase - or if that cost assistance would come from the school side through another track.

A: First, if the farmer is purchasing food to provide a meal to the students/adults during the field trip, then the cost must be reasonable and necessary to achieve the grant project objectives. For example, while it may be necessary to include a meal at a day-long field trip, it may not be necessary to include a meal at a short field trip. Please note that grant recipients utilizing grant funds to purchase meals for field trips must ensure that the food costs are in alignment with [the California Department of Human Resources' per diem meal reimbursement rates](#) (i.e., currently, no more than \$13 per person per day for breakfast, no more than \$15 per person per day for lunch, and no more than \$26 per person per day for dinner). If the farm is purchasing food to provide

Second, if the farmer is not purchasing food but is rather growing and preparing its own food to provide a meal or snack to the students/adults during the field trip, then please note that (per [pages 32-33 of the RFA](#)) Track 4 allowable costs include:

- 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

- Farm to school infrastructure, equipment, and supplies costs 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
- Staff/labor costs dedicated to farm to school activities (e.g., staff/labor costs to produce and/or process whole or minimally processed food for schools or to implement hands-on food education opportunities that engage students and/or staff from partner schools)

Third, if the farm's partner school district is a grant recipient in Track 1, then please note that (per [pages 22-24 of the RFA](#)) Track 1 allowable costs include:

- Procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for utilization in school meals
- Procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for hands-on food education opportunities that engage students
- Costs for travel necessary for the performance of the grant award (allowable subject to [Section 322 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#)), including but not limited to: field trips to farms that grow or produce food for the school meal program
- Registration fees (e.g., for a farm field trip)

Q: [Track 4] We have a small family ranch...we serve schools and food banks our beef and sausages...

I know the grant said indirect costs are allowed so I am wondering if processing costs at the butcher and further processing into value added products like sausage at the sausage factory would be considered as indirect costs.

And I am wondering if paying our electrician to wire in a walk in freezer would be considered an indirect and approved cost.

A: According to [Section 303 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#), here are the definitions of direct vs. indirect costs:

- **Direct costs:** Costs that can be identified specifically with a particular grant award and can be directly attributable to grant award activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typical direct costs include but are not limited to compensation (salaries and fringe benefits) of employees who work directly on the award, travel that is necessary to further the objectives of the grant award, and equipment and supplies used solely to further the objectives of the grant award.
- **Indirect costs:** Costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. 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.

If the processing costs are for increasing capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods (defined on [page 6 of the RFA](#)) to California schools as part of the farm to school project, then that would be considered an allowable direct cost.

If the cost of paying an electrician to wire a walk-in freezer is for increasing capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to California schools as part of the farm to school project, then that would also be considered an allowable direct cost.

Indirect costs, as defined above, are allowable up to 30% of direct costs (i.e., up to 30% of the sum of budget categories #1-6 in the Track 4 application).

Q: [Track 3] I own a private preschool in CA that educates students from age 2-5. I am interested in using grant money for food education and food nutrition...

[Question A] Do I need to partner with a farm in order to get funds to provide nutritious snacks?

[Question B] I plan to use funds for the following:

- developing the gardens we currently have
- food education manipulatives and curriculum
- food for snacks purchased by a local farmer
- food prep employee
- workshops for kids to learn gardening skills and cooking skills

Would these areas qualify as valid use of funds?

A: [Response A] Per [pages 28-29 of the RFA](#), allowable costs in Track 3 include the following:

- 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, (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)), snacks, and/or food boxes. Grant recipients must follow procurement and food safety regulations applicable to their programs.
- Procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for hands-on food education opportunities that engage young children.

In Track 3, a direct partnership with a farm is not required for the procurement component of the application. However, we suggest reviewing the application questions and review criteria within the Procurement Work Plan section of the Track 3 application, which can be found on [pages 8 to 13 of this document](#).

[Response B] Per [pages 28-31 of the RFA](#), allowable costs in Track 3 include the following:

- Infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to engage young children in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the meal program's and/or food box program's California food procurement efforts.
 - This could include preschool garden supplies, hands-on food education curricula, and supplies for cooking and gardening workshops with the preschool students.
- 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, (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)), snacks, and/or food boxes. Grant recipients must follow procurement and food safety regulations applicable to their programs.
 - This could include procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods from a farmer.
- Labor costs associated with procuring, processing, and serving California grown or produced foods for utilization in ECE meals, snacks, food boxes, and/or student education.
 - This could include staff time that a food prep employee spends procuring, processing, and serving California grown or produced foods for utilization in ECE meals, snacks, food boxes, and/or student education.

Q: [Tracks 1, 2, & 3] Our team is preparing to submit a grant application for CDFA's Farm to School program...

We have a farm partner, XXX, that produces high quality compost.

This is a product that is in demand by San Diego County's numerous school garden programs...

[Would it be allowable to] include XXX as a contractor to support the program[?]

A: In all four funding tracks, 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](#).

In Tracks 1, 2, and 3, the cost of a contractor to supply compost would be allowable as long as the cost is for the purpose of achieving the grant project goals within the applicable funding track.

Q: [Track 3] A couple of line-item Budget questions:

[Question A] Under Contractual Costs, are student and parent/family hands-on, nutrition education workshop stipends to presenters like XXX (operator of 8, local farmers' markets), University of CA Cooperative Extension, etc. allowable expenses?

[Question B] Under Other Costs, to incentivize the participation of children's parents and families, would farmers' market gift cards for parents' food purchases, e.g., holidays, emergency food boxes, etc., be allowable expenses?

A: [Response A] Yes; per [page 30 of the RFA](#), 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](#).

[Response B] Gift cards *may* be an allowable cost, depending on the specific purpose and context of the gift cards. In Track 3, providing farmers' market gift cards to students' families for participating in farm to ECE grant project activities would be allowable if this is for the purpose of achieving the grant project goals. If the project is awarded and gift cards are an approved cost in the agreement, then when invoicing for the gift cards, the grant recipient would be required to:

- Submit the receipts for the gift cards,
- Ensure that each gift card is itemized on the receipt(s), and
- Itemize/list who is receiving each gift card, along with the date(s) given and the amount of each gift card

Q: [Track 4] Can Track 4 applicants apply for fodder supplies (e.g. seeds), equipment, and infrastructure? Fodder will be fed to cattle that will be sold to schools.

A: Yes; per [page 32 of the RFA](#), 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 are allowable.

However, please note that per [page 35 of the RFA](#), consumables related to food production that are not reusable are unallowable; for example, feed for animals or water for irrigation.

March 5th–12th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] Is liability insurance required to apply for a Track 4 grant?

A: Liability insurance is not a requirement to be eligible to apply for Track 4. Liability insurance policy fees are an allowable cost if a Track 4 applicant needs liability insurance to be able to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food to schools.

Q: [Track 4] Can a producer use the grant to:

[Question A] Pay for part of the cost of produce/product to bring costs down for schools?

[Question B] Pay for distribution/storage of product so that the school only pays for the cost of the product?

A: [Response A] [Pages 32-35 of the RFA](#) list the allowable costs for Track 4. It would not be allowable for a producer to pay itself for its own produce.

[Response B] Per [page 32 of the RFA](#), 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 are allowable.

- In terms of distribution, this can include distribution vehicles, refrigerated vehicles, or other equipment necessary for transporting whole or minimally processed foods to school districts.
- In terms of storage, this can also include coolers, cooler walls, refrigeration units, and freezers.

Additionally, per [page 33 of the RFA](#), staff/labor costs directly related to farm to school activities are an allowable cost in Track 4.

- Examples may include: staff/labor costs to aggregate and distribute whole or minimally processed food to schools; staff/labor costs to install infrastructure or equipment that will increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell whole or minimally processed food to schools

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] is it allowable to budget for a consultant to do outreach to school districts to increase the number of districts purchasing from a grower?

[Question B] is it allowable to budget for website costs (design, hosting fees) to establish an online presence to recruit more school districts to participate, and as an informational resource as a component of the farm education activities?

A: [Response A] Yes.

[Response B] Yes, website costs for farm to school outreach/education would be allowable as long as this is directly related to the project goals and necessary to achieve the project goals. However, please note that per Item (24) of [the CDFA List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost](#), costs of selling and marketing any products or services, other than as specified in Item (1) Advertising and Public Relations, are unallowable.

Q: [Track 4] I am reading through the allowable expenses and I noticed that infrastructure requires advance written approval from CDFA:

- Capital expenditures for buildings, with prior written approval from the CDFA

How would I go about getting approval from CDFA for a grain storage and processing facility?

A: Prior written approval is not required to include capital expenditures for buildings in the application but would be required for capital expenditures for buildings to be an allowable cost in the grant project if the project is awarded. If awarded, the prior written approval process occurs later, following the application period and award announcement. Beyond completing the grant application, no additional information about proposed capital expenditures for buildings is needed during the application period.

The prior written approval requirement is based on #8 of the [CDFA List of Allowable and Unallowable Items of Cost](#).

Q: [Track 4] My question is on the labor piece, are we able to submit a % labor cost for team members who support our work with schools, but also have other responsibilities?

A couple examples:

- I work with XXX directly for 25% of my time on schools
- Graphic designer who creates sales/marketing materials for schools 10% of his time

Would we be able to submit for the above portions (25% of my salary, 10% of designers etc), or is the labor piece ONLY for roles and staffing that's fully dedicated to schools?

A: Staff/labor costs must be dedicated to farm to school activities. This means that while farm to school does not need to be a staff member's sole role, only staff time that is dedicated to the farm to school grant project would be allowable under the Staff/Labor Costs section of the project budget. For example, if a staff member will spend a portion of their time during the grant term working on the farm to school project (e.g., 25% FTE or 100 hours), then that portion of their time would be an allowable cost.

When completing the budget section of your application, you will be able to list each staff position that the proposed cost amount will fund, the % of their FTE or # of hours that this amount will fund, and their rate of pay.

Q: [Track 4] We would like to know if we can apply for two different topics:

- to get funds to pay our staff to harvest and process produce to send to the schools in our region (we will have mostly berries, salad, and tomatoes)
- to get funds to pay our staff to tend the garden at XXX?

We did include the second topic in the grant we applied for last year, but it would be nice to have a back-up plan.

Also, I haven't ever written a grant before. Can you connect me with someone who can give me some guidance on that?

A: [Response A] Yes, staffing/labor directly dedicated to farm to school activities is an allowable cost.

- Examples may include 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 (page 33 of RFA).

[Response B] We don't have any specific grant writers to recommend, but we have the following resources for grant support:

- [CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Webpage](#)
- [2023-24 FAQs](#)
- [Recording of our Grant Info Session](#) – this provides an overview of the grant program
- [Info Session Slides](#)
- Weekly Q+A sessions via Zoom

- Recordings and registration links for these can be found under the “Grant Info Session & Weekly Q&A Sessions” dropdown on the [grant program webpage](#)
- Email inbox – cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov – please continue sending any questions you may have!

RFA SECTION: 1.8 Reporting and Evaluation

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 1] We are looking at applying for track one of the Farm to School Incubator Grant. Could you tell me a little bit more about the reporting requirements? We want to make sure we have appropriate capacity for the scope of reporting.

A: [Pages 36-37 of the RFA](#) list the reporting requirements for this grant program.

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Hello, I have a question regarding program evaluation. Should applicants include time for our own staff to collect data to evaluate program success in the program budget, or will CDFA be evaluating the awarded programs themselves?

Text from RFA that spurred my question:

All Tracks:

- 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.
- Please note that a CDFA representative or external designee may invite applicants who do not receive a grant to participate in a working group as part of the external evaluation for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

A: This grant program does not require applicants to include program evaluation costs in their proposed project budget. This is because an independent team of researchers – the Evaluation Team – is evaluating the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. Information about their evaluation plan can be found [here](#).

Program evaluation costs that duplicate the evaluation that the Evaluation Team is already conducting would be unallowable. However, program evaluation costs in addition to the evaluation that the Evaluation Team is already conducting would be allowable. Additionally, staff time spent working with the Evaluation Team during the grant term, if not already covered by other funding sources, would be allowable.

RFA SECTION: 2.1 Tribal Communities

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 4] How much funding is set aside specifically for tribes and tribal entities in Track 4?

A: Per [page 38 of the RFA](#), the 2023-24 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program will set aside up to 10% of all available grant funding (i.e., up to \$5.28 million) for awards across the four 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. Per [page 14 of the RFA](#), 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.

RFA SECTION: 2.2 Previous Grant Recipients

March 5th–12th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] For this new application may we use the same name for the project that we used on our current grant?

A: The project title for your proposed project is up to you. The same title, a variation on the same title, or a different title would all be fine.

RFA SECTION: 3.1 How to Apply

March 5th–12th Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] I am looking into applying for the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program and just had a quick question regarding the application itself through Amplifund. When filling out the application and saving, is there an option to go back and revise saved answers?

A: Yes, you will be able to navigate back and forth to any page in the application by clicking the icon above the page's name in the progress bar. Your information will not be shared with the CDFA until you click Submit on the Submit page. Once your application has been submitted, you cannot add, edit, or delete any application information.

RFA SECTION: 3.2 Grant Application and Review Criteria

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [Track 1] For Track 1, if programming through a school district serves District early childhood sites (PreK) and District special education young adults as part of your programming, can we include those students in our enrollment numbers to figure out our funding allocation or do we have to only include TK-12 students?

A: In the Track 1 application, please only include the student enrollment numbers from Column R of the below spreadsheet in your funding formula. For question #7 in the Track 1 application, "Number of Students Project will Serve," the question asks:

- Number of Students Project Will Serve: How many total K-12 students are enrolled at the school sites that you listed in #6? (based on 2022-23 Census Day Enrollment)
 - Step 1: Refer to this spreadsheet: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/documents/frpm2223.xlsx>
 - Step 2: Navigate to the "FRPM School-Level Data" tab
 - Step 3: Find the school sites that you listed in #6 in column G ("School Name")

- Step 4: Add the K-12 enrollment (column R) for each of those school sites together
- Step 5: Enter the total below

We greatly appreciate this note that column R may not reflect the total number of students a Track 1 project will serve, and will consider this for the future.

Q: [Track 4] The application scorecard asks for “average annual gross cash farm income during the previous three-year period”. Am I correct that we will just take the mean of line 9 on the Schedule F from 2020, 2021, and 2022?

A: This grant program does not specify a formula for calculating this metric; please calculate it as accurately as possible based on your operations.

Q: [Track 4] The socially disadvantaged portion of the application asks if the farmers belong to “low-income farm households” which is determined based on “direct or indirect gross farm sales” and “total household income”. Am I correct that the direct/indirect farm sales is a sum of line 1a and line 2 on the schedule F and total household income can be found on line 11 on the form 1040?

A: 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](#). Regarding the question in the USDA tool that asks about gross farm sales, this grant program does not specify a formula for calculating this metric; please calculate it as accurately as possible based on your operations. Regarding the question in the USDA tool that asks about total household income, the tool includes instructions for calculating this metric.

Q: [Track 4] [Regarding question #16] For XXX Farms (the company that I work for, a company that is owned by the XXX tribe), we operate a small farm... Do we have discretion to delineate our income how we see fit, as long as it falls within our business operations for produce that we will sell to schools? What I mean is, if we choose to only sell produce from XXX Farms, we might get 5 points for the scoring criteria for small to mid sized producers. If we want to sell oranges and avocados from the orchards' owned by the tribe, then we might fall into a different revenue category. Since the question specifies 'farm income', I don't see any reason why we would have to include casino income, correct?

Or is it defined based on the entity that we write in on the application? For example, if we write in "XXX Tribe", that includes XXX Farms as well as the orchards, vs. "XXX Farms" only includes "XXX Farms"?

A: Per question #2 (Legal Business Name) in the Track 4 application, all other responses in the Foundational Information section of the application (including question #16) should correspond with the Legal Business Name that the applicant provides. So, when responding to question #16, please calculate the average annual gross cash farm income during the previous three-year period of the Legal Business Name named in question #2. This grant program does not specify a formula for calculating this metric; please calculate it as accurately as possible based on your operations.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Letters of Intent are required as part of the program. Is there anything in particular that you want to see in that letter? [Question B] Does the school district/entity need to mention us in their grant as well? [Question C] Additionally, do we need to have a contract in hand with the school district/entity, or just a letter of intent?

A: [Response A] Please use the [Letter of Intent Template](#). Per [page 20 of the RFA](#), each of the School Food Authority or child care center 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 public serving aggregation and distribution 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 or enterprise to implement hands-on food education opportunities for students and/or staff that complement the producer's or enterprise's California food sales to their organization.

[Response B] No, the school district or child care center partner that signs a letter of intent for a Track 4 applicant's proposed project does not need to mention that operation in their own grant application.

[Response C] The Track 4 application requires a letter of intent; it does not require an existing contract with the school district or child care center partner entity.

Q: [Track 4] Will grant proposals be judged on how eco-friendly the agriculture practices are? (ex. no till or reduced till, drip irrigation)

A: The Track 4 application does include points for climate smart agriculture in the following questions: #38a (Current Climate Smart Agriculture Practices – Description), #38b (Current Climate Smart Agriculture Practices – Verification), and #39b (Looking Forward – Climate Smart Agriculture Activities and Timeline). Each question offers up to five points.

Q: [Track 4] Will grant proposals be judged on how eco-friendly they are from a carbon emissions standpoint? (ex. buying a gasoline vehicle vs. an electric vehicle to transport produce)?

A: No.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] This question pertains to both track 1 and track 2. It states that the education must be done by a California credentialed teacher. Does this mean that if a school district applies for track one or a nonprofit applies for track two we must hire a credential teacher for all of the education pieces? Our district won't apply because they cannot afford to hire a union credential teacher to do the education piece. Same question if a nonprofit applies for track 2- do they have to hire a certified teacher as well?

A: The 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program does not require that hands-on food education be led by credentialed educators. While it is not a requirement, Track 1 and 2 projects that incorporate credentialed public school educators are eligible for priority points in the review criteria (please see scoring clarification below for details). The intention is to promote the institutionalization of hands-on food education in school districts' education programs by encouraging projects to collaborate with credentialed public school educators.

To clarify the scoring: (a) not all educators involved in a Track 1 or 2 proposed project need to have a credential, and (b) educators that do not have a credential may participate in a proposed project. In the Track 1 application, if applicants select the following optional education project goal ("Our proposed project will increase opportunities for students to engage in hands-on food education that is led by credentialed public school educators"), then they will have the opportunity to receive up to 5 points in the Hands-on Food Education Activities & Timeline section for describing how they will achieve this goal. In the Track 2 application, if applicants in the Education project category select the following optional project element ("Work with credentialed public school educators"), then they will have the opportunity to receive up to 2 points in the Technical Assistance Activities & Timeline section for describing how they will achieve this project element.

Q: [Track 2] For Track 2, it is clear that we need to select only one funding category to apply for. However during the kickoff webinar I thought I heard that we can include activities from other funding categories in our application. Is that true? And if so, is there a threshold for what percentage of activities need to be in the primary funding category?

A: It is correct that Track 2 applicants must focus their proposed project on one of the following project categories: School Food, Education, or Producer Training. The Track 2 application also includes an opportunity for applicants to build connections with the other two project categories. In the Technical Assistance Work Plan section of the Track 2 application, the School Food project category includes three optional project elements that relate to producers (i.e., support climate smart agriculture and CA food producers who utilize climate smart agriculture practices; support veteran, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited-resource CA food producers; support small to midsize CA food producers) and one optional project element that relates to education (i.e., engage students and credentialed public school educators in school food transformation). The Education project category includes one optional project element that relates to school food (i.e., incorporate hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program) and one optional project element that relates to producers (i.e., expand the incorporation of CA food producers in hands-on food education opportunities for students). The Producer Training project category includes one optional project element that relates to school food (i.e., facilitate collaboration and coordination between CA food producers and CA School Food Authorities) and one optional project element that relates to education (i.e., train producers to provide hands-on food education opportunities to students and staff from CA School Food Authorities).

There is not a requirement that a certain percentage of the proposed project activities be in the project goal portion of the Track 2 work plan. However, the required project goal portion of the Track 2 work plan (in which applicants describe how they will achieve the School Food **or** Education **or** Producer Training project goal) offers up to 19 points. Each of the 8 optional project element portions of the Track 2 work plan (in which applicants describe how they will achieve each project element) offer up to 2 points.

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] In the application it asks for other partners. Is this where I would list XXX as a possible partner?

[Question B] There is also a place for letters of support that are to come from the sites to be served but I am the director of all 7 sites and would normally write those letters. Since I am applying with my name do I write one letter for all sites or do I get separate letters from each site?

A: [Response A] Question #14 in the Track 3 application says, "If your project team includes additional team members, please include them in this section." Additional team members may include ECE site partners, non-profit organization partners, local farmers/producers, proposed contractors, or other key members of your farm to ECE team. So, if XXX is a project partner and/or if they are a proposed contractor in your proposed project budget, then yes, please include them in your response to this question.

[Response B] Please submit a letter of support from each ECE site that the project will serve. If you as the person writing the application are the director of each site, one option could be for the on-site coordinator of each site to sign their site's letter of support.

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] XXX are planning to apply to the Farm to ECE grant. I attended the last session and while listening to the various examples of funded projects, it felt like to me

that the organizations that have had previous funding were center focused with collaboration with community organizations such as school districts, local businesses and city agencies such as libraries. Our last submittal focused on family childcare sites and partnering with a local urban farm nonprofit organization. We used a train the trainer (in this case, child care provider) model. Should we include more centers in our SOW? Can we schedule a time to talk next week about our submittal and areas of focus?

A: Per [page 19 of the RFA](#), Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organizations are eligible to apply if their proposed project includes a partnership with **at least two** ECE sites in California (i.e., child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings). The 2023-24 Track 3 review criteria does not include extra points for partnering with child care centers rather than family child care homes or vice versa, or for partnering with more than two ECE sites. Please note that while there are no extra points for partnering with more than two ECE sites, partnering with more than two ECE sites is allowable. Here is the [Track 3 review criteria](#).

If you have any additional questions, please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov or join us at weekly Q&A sessions via Zoom throughout the application period. The dates and registration links for these Q&A sessions can be found under the “Grant Info Session & Weekly Q&A Sessions” dropdown on the [grant program webpage](#).

Q: [Track 2] Our current project provides TA under all three of the [project categories]. We have been approached by several school districts, including the city of XXX School District to share our project as a model for their own schools. I see that the solicitation under Track 2 now only allows us to focus on one of the three categories...Is that correct?

A: Please see [this response](#).

Q: [Track 1] When scoring our grant applications, will free and reduced percentage of the district play a role in scoring? If so, what weight of the scoring will that impact?

A: Yes; question #18 in the Track 1 application says:

- **18. CDFA Data Look-up from the CDE (School Year 2022-23):** The CDFA will look up the following data from the CDE. Applicants may skip this question.
 - Average free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) eligibility rate (%) across the school sites the project will serve. The CDFA will refer to the school sites listed above in #6 and to column V of this spreadsheet to calculate this metric:
https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/documents/frpm22_23.xlsx

There are 100 points available total in the Track 1 application. Per [page 6 of the Track 1 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#), the review criteria for question #18 is as follows:

- Average free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) eligibility rate (%):
 - 20 points: 90.1 to 100%
 - 18 points: 80.1 to 90%
 - 16 points: 70.1 to 80%
 - 14 points: 60.1 to 70%
 - 12 points: 50.1 to 60%
 - 10 points: 40.1 to 50%
 - 8 points: 30.1 to 40%
 - 6 points: 20.1 to 30%
 - 4 points: 10.1 to 20%
 - 2 points: 1 to 10%
 - 0 points: less than 1%

Q: [Track 2] I know the choices are procurement TA, education TA, and producer TA. Do you have to choose only 1 TA? Could we apply for TA in multiple categories?

A: Please see [this response](#).

Additionally, please note that per [page 16 of the RFA](#), eligible entities must select **one** funding track and may submit **one** application.

March 5th–12th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] I was wondering where I could find information to determine if we would qualify for an advance payment option?

[Question B] Does the food safety plan need to be through an official organization, or can we submit one we've created that has been in use on the farm?

[Question C] Just clarifying that the SFA we partner with MUST be currently operating with the National School Lunch Program?

A: [Response A] Track 4 grant recipients are eligible to request advance payment during the grant term and must include a justification for the request. Here is an example of the [advance payment request form](#) from the 2022 CA Farm to School Grant Program. If approved, recipients must follow the advance payment regulations (located in [Section 316.1 on pages 12-13 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#)). Additionally, please note that [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 590](#) applies to recipients that are non-profit organizations.

[Response B] While the Track 4 application asks applicants, "Do you have a food safety plan?" it does not ask applicants to submit a food safety plan. This question does not specify the type of plan. Please respond to this question as best as you can based on your operations. Producer grant recipients that do not currently have a food safety plan in place must complete a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training through Cornell University as a component of their Track 4 grant project. The training is approximately \$80. Track 4 grant recipients may use grant funds for costs to meet necessary food safety requirements for their projects and should work with their school nutrition partners to determine what level of food safety they must meet to sell food to these partners.

[Response C] Yes. Per [pages 19-20 of the RFA](#), Track 4 applicants must apply in collaboration with at least 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)
- California child care center currently participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] For Track 4 Letters of Intent, who should write letters of intent on behalf of Tribal entities? This producer would provide food for tribal education opportunities.

[Question B] For Track 4 Letters of Intent, should letters come from and be signed by the Food Service Director for the School District?

A: [Response A] The letter of intent must be from the director of the entity's school meal program.

[Response B] Typically, yes. Since the letter of intent must be from the director of the school district's school meal program, this role is often filled by a districtwide Food Service Director.

Q: [Track 4] For Track #4 Budget Category #1 can you please elaborate on how to properly approximate and document the proportion of the budget item costs for grant vs non-grant activities? Below is the excerpt from the Grant Draft from Track #4 that I am referring to.

"NOTE: In accordance with the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations, Section 330.1(c)(1), if an equipment or infrastructure cost will benefit both grant project activities and non-grant project activities, then please approximate (using reasonable and properly documented methods) the proportion that is for proposed grant project activities as the proportion that may be charged to the grant award."

A: Approximating a proportion of an equipment or infrastructure cost that can be charged to the grant refers to estimating the percentage of time that the organization would, if awarded, use the item for grant project activities (versus for non-grant project activities). For example, perhaps a Track 4 producer applicant proposes to purchase a refrigerated delivery truck, which they plan to sometimes use for food deliveries to schools (as part of their proposed grant project activities) and other times use for food deliveries to restaurants (which would be considered non-grant project activities). In this case, the referenced excerpt from the grant application is asking the producer applicant to approximate (using reasonable and properly documented methods) the proportion of the truck that is for proposed grant project activities (i.e., the estimated percentage of time that the producer would, if awarded, use the truck for food deliveries to schools) as the proportion of the truck's total cost that they may propose to charge to the grant award. Please let us know if you have any additional questions about this topic.

Q: [Track 4] in the form on question #37 it asks for visual representation of your ability to carry out the project....does that mean pictures of our pastures? cattle? maybe some photos of our current invoices from the butcher? not really sure how to answer this question correctly since we process beef.

A: For Track 4 food producer applicants, any visuals of your production space (e.g., photos, diagrams, crop plans, etc.) that you feel highlight your ability to implement the proposed project would be acceptable in question #37. The visuals you choose are up to you. Reviewers will use the following review criteria when scoring this question:

- Did applicant upload up to 5 photos, diagrams, crop plans, etc. of their production space that highlight their ability to implement the project?
 - **3 points:** Yes
 - **0 points:** No

Q: [Track 4] My question is regarding the letter of intent: If I am a farm that is planning on working with a Food Hub that has contracts with the school districts for distribution, how would I go about the letter of intent?

Just to clarify, I will provide some context: There are school districts that do plan on buying produce, but since they have multiple schools they are purchasing for, they would prefer to buy all of their products from multiple farms through a specific food hub. So as a farm, if we are planning on supplying the food hub with produce with the intent to sell to the school programs, how does that work?

A: Please see [this response](#).

Q: [All Tracks] I'm pulling together our application materials and didn't see a budget and work plan template. Is there one available on the website that I'm missing? Or has it changed from the last application?

A: This year the budget and work plan sections are built into the application and will not require uploads.

A budget worksheet for the application can be found [here](#) or under the "Application Resources & Track 4 Letter of Intent Template" dropdown of the [grant program webpage](#).

- Please note that this worksheet is optional and intended to be a resource to visualize your grant budget. You will not be able to attach this worksheet as part of your grant application.

There is not a work plan template for this year's application. However, there is an Application Questions and Review Criteria document for each funding track (linked under the "Apply to the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program!" dropdown on the [grant program webpage](#)), which provide a preview of the activities & timeline questions that the application asks in the work plan section(s).

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] For the members 1,2,3 and 4 would that be considered myself, my admin team and any teachers involved? [Question B] Also, for the letters of recommendation do you propose we get in touch with the businesses we want to work with and have them write the letters? I am thinking local farms, Food donation banks and or other community groups such as the senior center that is close to us.

A: [Response A] For the Project Team section of the Track 3 application, the individuals who fill each role may differ from one organization to another. It is up to the applicant to determine which person will fill each role, in alignment with the following descriptions:

- Member 1: CA Food Procurement Lead - this person should ensure collaboration and coordination across the nutrition program, including procuring CA foods. This role is typically filled by a nutrition services director or similar leadership position within the nutrition services program.
- Member 2: ECE Administration Lead - this leader should ensure collaboration and coordination for the overarching farm to ECE project and should show that the applicant is committed to farm to ECE implementation. This role is typically filled by an administrator or similar leadership position.
- Member 3: Food Education Lead - this person should ensure teachers and educators are engaged in the farm to ECE project across the ECE sites and that students (and families if desired) are engaged in hands-on food education activities. For larger organizations, this role is typically filled by a chief education officer. For smaller organizations, this role is often filled by an Early Childhood Educator with a Child Development Teacher Permit.
- Member 4: Farm to ECE Project Lead - this person will be the main point of contact for the grant. Please explain what percentage of this person's time will be dedicated to the project, as well as what other projects they oversee.

[Response B] In the Track 3 application:

- If the applicant is a child care center, then no letters of support are required.

- If the applicant is a farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization, then it is required to upload a letter of support from each ECE site that the project will serve, but letters of support from other project partners are not required.

Q: [All Tracks] I don't know if you can answer this, but we are completing the grant application and have a question about the project title. Should this be a creative name for the project or simply identifying our district?

A: The project title for your application is at your discretion – it can be a creative name that exemplifies the proposed project's goals or could be as simple as "XXX School District Farm to School Project". Please note that the project title is required, but there are no related points in the scoring process.

Q: [Track 2] I'm preparing a grant for a farm to school organization in Yolo County for Track 2. For the partnership component, do we need to submit an MOU? Is a letter of support sufficient? There are two board members directly involved with local School Food Authorities, and they have an impressive track record with F2S programs.

A: An MOU is not required for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program application. For Track 2, a letter of support is required from each of the School Food Authority project representatives and Food Producer project representatives listed in the Farm to School Project Team section of the application.

Q: [Track 1] [Question A] For question #49, Previous Grant Recipient, do you only answer yes if you were the applying agency? We were named as a partner in a previous grant (XXX). Do I say yes or no?

[Question B] For question #9, Dollar Amount Requested, it states "If the product of your multiplication is less than \$200,000, then please apply for \$200,000." Does that mean we cannot exceed \$200,000? I thought \$200k was the minimum. If we can exceed, does it decrease our chance of award? Our Business Office would like a little Indirect and that will push us over.

[Question C] Last question... would sinks that will be installed be considered Infrastructure or Equipment?

A: [Response A] For question #49 regarding previous grant recipients, you would only answer yes if you were the direct recipient of the grant award. Project partners of a previous grant award may answer no to this question.

[Response B] If the product of your multiplication is less than \$200,000, then you are eligible to apply for \$200,000 and cannot exceed that amount.

- If the product of your multiplication is between \$200,000 and \$1 million, then the product of your multiplication is the maximum award amount for which you may apply.
- Requests for more than the maximum award amount for the applicable funding track or less than the minimum award amount for the applicable funding track may result in disqualification of a grant application.

[Response C] Sinks for the purpose of achieving the grant project goals would be an allowable cost in Track 1. If you are unsure whether to categorize an item as supplies, equipment, or infrastructure, it is ok. Please include the item in the category that seems to fit best.

Q: [Track 4] We operate production farms and do education/training, but we also do aggregation and sales/distribution in school communities (direct to consumer - students'

households & staff). The activities we will be including in the work plan focus exclusively on production and education.

Since we have to choose from the 2 options, should we just check "producer" and not mention the aggregation/sales program in this application?

A: For Track 4, please select the entity type that best describes your operation and that best aligns with your proposed project. Please include any activities that are a part of your proposed project in the application – this can include increasing distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to the California school food market, if it is part of your proposed producer project.

For questions #8 and #9, please select all that apply to your organization.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] In the track 4 application portal, I can't seem to find a place to upload the 5 photos / diagrams / crop plans as mentioned in the scorecard. Is there a separate place to upload these image files?

[Question B] Related - is there a place to upload other supporting documents not required in the grant, such as letters of support from people that are not members of the project team?

A: [Response A] The 5 photos, diagrams, crop plans, etc. to upload in your Track 4 application are part of question #37. Note: In the online Track 4 application portal, question #37 will appear based on the Applicant Type that the applicant selects in question #12.

[Response B] Regarding other supporting documents, there is not a place in the grant application to upload other documents not required by the grant. However, the following optional question is at the end of the grant application – "Is there anything else you would like to share with us?" – if you have additional information to share. Please note that answering this question or leaving it blank will not impact scoring.

Q: [Track 3] I work with a nonprofit TA org that's partnering with three local daycares on this funding opportunity. Is a letter of support required from each daycare partner? If so, how do we submit those letters? I didn't see a field for them in the online application.

A: Yes, if the applicant is a farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization, then a letter of support is required from each ECE site that the project will serve. There is an upload field for letters of support at the end of the Project Team section of the Track 3 application.

Please note that in order for the Letters of Support question to appear, the applicant must first select their organization type in question #4.

Q: [Track 4] On #38, the Climate Smart Ag Practices, it looks like the only way to verify whether farms use those practices is if they also have received funding from one of these other programs- Healthy Soils, SWEEP, NRCS, etc.

Some of those grants require matching funding, and none of our farmers have ever participated in those before. Yet they do implement some climate smart practices, such as composting, cover cropping, crop rotations, minimal till, drip irrigation, composting, etc.

Is there another way we can document their practices that would be accepted by CDFA?

A: Per [pages 21-22 of the Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#), #38(b) in the Track 4 application includes 5 options for producer applicants to receive points for verification of current climate smart agriculture practices. One of these options is participation in the CDFA Healthy Soils Program (HSP), CDFA Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), CDFA Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP), and/or CDFA State Water

Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP); however, there are also a few other options as well (please see below).

- **(38b) Verification – Producer Applicants:** If you are applying as a producer, please respond “Yes” to all that apply and, if applicable, provide the requested documentation. Please note that only one “Yes” that the CDFA can verify is needed to receive points for this verification section. If you prefer not to answer, please check, “Prefer not to answer.” NOTE: Please do not include any confidential information, such as social security number, on any of the documentation uploaded with your application.
 - Is your operation currently registered as organic with the CDFA or currently certified organic? If yes, the CDFA will verify organic registration through the State Organic Program and will verify organic certification through the USDA Organic Integrity Database.
 - Is your operation currently participating in a transitional organic program? If yes – please upload documentation to demonstrate this from your organic certifier.
 - Has your operation participated in the CDFA Healthy Soils Program (HSP), CDFA Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), CDFA Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP), and/or CDFA State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP)? If yes – the CDFA will verify this through the CDFA Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation.
 - Has your operation participated in the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG), and/or NRCS Conservation Incentives Contract (CIC)? If yes – please upload documentation of your contract with NRCS for any one of these programs.
 - Within the past 12 months, has your operation received conservation technical assistance (CTA) from a CTA provider (including but not limited to a UC Cooperative Extension, Resource Conservation District, NRCS office, or other CTA provider) to implement climate smart agriculture practices , climate smart agriculture production systems – like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies? If yes – please upload a signed letter, stamped letter, or your intake form from your CTA provider to demonstrate the relationship.
 - Prefer not to answer

Per [pages 20-21 of the Track 4 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#), #38(a) in the Track 4 application is an opportunity for producer applicants to describe their current climate smart agriculture practices:

- **(38a) Description: Producer Applicants:** Within the past 12 months at your operation, have you utilized: 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? Yes/No
 - If yes, please describe. [Character Limit = 2000]

This grant program’s definition of climate smart agriculture practices, climate smart agriculture production systems, or other regenerative strategies is on [page 7 of the RFA](#).

There are 5 points available for #38(a) and 5 points available for #38(b).

RFA SECTION: 4.0 Assistance and Questions

February 13th–23rd Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Will any of the grant webinars be offered in Spanish or Hmong?

A: The CDFA Farm to School Team is looking into this and will include an update here as soon as possible.

Update: The CDFA Farm to School Team has posted the following resources on the [grant program webpage](#):

- [Grant Info Session Slide Deck – in Spanish](#)
- [Grant Info Session Recordings – in Spanish](#)
 - [Introduction](#)
 - [Track 1](#)
 - [Track 2](#)
 - [Track 3](#)
 - [Track 4](#)
 - [Resources and how to apply](#)

Q: [Track 4] Are there any other school districts/entities in San Diego County that you know of that have reached out in anticipation of applying for the grant this year (ie. they are not currently a part of the grant program, but are interested in applying for it)?

A: We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff in Southern California to provide support with this question.

Q: [Track 4] For the San Diego Area (where we are located), Fallbrook Union High School District, San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego Unified School District, and Sweetwater Union High School District are the four school districts/entities that are currently funded in Track 1. Can you introduce [our farm] to these groups in an effort to work with them?

A: We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff in Southern California to provide support with this question.

Q: [Track 3] I was wondering if you could send us contacts for organic farmers in our area as well as current centers in our area that are using the Farm to ECE.

A: We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff in your region to provide support with this question. In the previous round of the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, one child care center received a Track 3 Farm to ECE Grant award: McCarthy Family Child Development & Training Center in Riverside County. Their project summary is on [page 14 of the 2022 Grant Program Project Summaries document](#).

Q: [Track 3] We are a licensed child care center participating in CACFP. We are applying for the f2s grant. Items that we purchase regularly are beef, ground beef, chicken, fish fillets, eggs, cheese, milk, cucumbers, Romaine lettuce, carrots, potatoes, buckwheat, rice and oats. It would be great to be able to purchase those items from CA producers. We do use bagels, pasta and sandwich bread as well. Perhaps we could make our own if we purchase flour from CA grown grain producer. Please provide contact information for

producers that would be able to provide us with above mentioned food items, so we can partner with them and include in our project application.

A: We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff in your region to provide support with this question.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] We are a TA provider organization that is currently helping farmers/producers with business technical assistance. We are planning to apply for track 2, in the application it is asking for letter of support from School Food Authority, we are having a hard time trying to talk to the school district that we are in, Fresno, Central, Clovis-

[Question A] Is there a way we can connect with some of the smaller district and charter schools that were on the call to establish communication?

[Question B] Another question that may be out of scope:

We have a grab/raisin farmer, he informed us that he is not able to sell directly:

1. Should this be something that we partner with the farmers distributor?

2 What are some ways we can assist the farmer?

A: [Response A] We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving Fresno County to provide support with Question A.

[Response B] California farmers are eligible to apply to Track 4. Per [page 13 of the RFA](#), Track 4 will fund California food producers and public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprises 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 show evidence of an established relationship with each California School Food Authority or child care center operator of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to which they intend to sell food (via a letter of intent from these entities). However, there is no requirement in Track 4 that the food sales to these partner entities be direct sales; the food sales could be through an intermediary such as a distributor or food hub as long as the producer knows that the partner entities are the ones purchasing the food. The partner entities could state in the letter of intent that they intend to purchase the producer's food through a distributor or food hub.

A farm to school TA organization could apply to Track 2 (Producer Training category) and include the California food producer as a partner in their proposed project in order to build the capacity of the producer to sell products to California School Food Authorities.

Q: [Track 3] I work with XXX, a socioeconomically diverse, high quality preschool in eastern Menlo Park. They/we are very interested in the great grant funding opportunity you are offering to potentially increase the quality and sustainability of the food the children in our program consume.

XXX facilitates programming with extensive outdoor learning and is committed to providing a healthy environment. Each year when the farm to school program is announced, we revisit the opportunity and haven't been able to determine a path to implement better food sourcing.

Are you aware of any preschools in our area who've been able to navigate better food sourcing?

A: We are not, but we suggest reaching out to the CA Department of Social Services (CDSS) Farm to CACFP Team by email at Farm2CACFP@dss.ca.gov. They operate a program called [Preschools SHINE](#), which is a voluntary, statewide recognition program that showcases the outstanding work of early care and education (ECE) sites (i.e., child care centers and family child care homes) in California that support the health and well-being of young children.

February 28th–March 4th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] My name is XXX and I am the Student Meals Program Coordinator for XXX School District. Our school had applied for the Farm to School Grant in 2022 and did not get selected... I am potentially interested in applying for the grant this year and would love the opportunity to discuss the application with you and even possibly go over our previous application that was submitted in 2022. Any help would be greatly appreciated!

A: During the application period, we are unfortunately unable to meet with previous applicants to go over previously submitted applications. However, please let us know if you would like to see the scores for your 2022 application and we would be happy to send those.

Regarding the current application, we would be happy to talk with you and answer your questions at the weekly Q&A sessions that we are hosting via Zoom. The dates, times, and registration links are on the [grant program webpage](#) under the “Grant Info Session and Weekly Q&A Sessions” dropdown. Or please email us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

Additionally, we will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff for your region. They can chat with you about the California Farm to School Network, how to get involved, and the types of support our team offers if you are interested in learning more!

Q: [Track 3] Is there a list of farms that are already exist and are looking to support ECE programs?

A: We are not aware of one. However, we will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Producer Engagement Specialist serving your region to provide support with facilitating introductions to farms.

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] Can you share the list of food producers in Kings County that meet the goals outlined in the grant? [Question B] Also, we currently have curriculum ideas, but we are interested in other resources your consultants can provide that would enhance what we are currently doing.

A: [Response A] The requested list does not exist. In the future, please submit requests for records to the CDFA Legal Office (CDFA.legaloffice@cdfa.ca.gov). Thank you!

Additionally, we will introduce you to the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving Kings County in case you would like to connect. One of the ways our team can help during the grant application period is to introduce producers and schools/support orgs.

[Response B] Our team is not able to provide specific curriculum recommendations during the application period. However, if you are interested in connecting with other organizations in California that implement farm to ECE activities, please let us know and our team would be happy to facilitate introductions. Additionally, outside of the application period, CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff will be available to provide technical assistance with farm to ECE activity implementation.

Q: [Track 4] I represent a small nonprofit in Pomona that needs help with establishing a connection with our school food director of school meals. Currently, we created and are maintaining a school garden for XXX School. Could you convince this person to give us a letter of intent prior to the due date for this grant?

A: We cannot convince anyone to write a letter of intent. However, we will introduce you to the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving LA County in case you would like to connect. One

of the ways our team can help during the grant application period is to introduce producers and schools/support orgs.

Q: [Track 4] I'm a producer with a small farm located in Valley Center. I am interested in connecting with local schools in my area and participate in the farm to school program. I was hoping you could get me in touch with the producer engagement specialist for San Diego region. I am working on an application for the farm to school incubator grant.

A: Yes, we will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Producer Engagement Specialist serving the San Diego region.

Q: [Track 4] Do you have the grant application guidelines in Spanish? Thank you so much for any help you can give.

A: Thank you for reaching out! The CDFA Farm to School Team is looking into this and will provide an update as soon as possible.

In the meantime, we will connect you with one of the CDFA Farm to School Team's bilingual team members, who can provide bilingual support.

Update: The CDFA Farm to School Team has posted the following resources on the [grant program webpage](#):

- [Grant Info Session Slide Deck – in Spanish](#)
- [Grant Info Session Recordings – in Spanish](#)
 - [Introduction](#)
 - [Track 1](#)
 - [Track 2](#)
 - [Track 3](#)
 - [Track 4](#)
 - [Resources and how to apply](#)

March 5th – 12th Q&A

Q: [Track 2] As part of our proposal, we would be include hosting a regional meeting/professional development day for the Greater LA F2S region. If we were hosting educators, technical assistance providers, early childhood, and producers, about how many people would that be? Need at least a ballpark figure to help planning.

A: Thanks so much for reaching out. Please do your best to estimate based on your proposed project and organization's capacity.

Q: [Track 4] Do you have any advice about establishing a relationship with any of the local schools? I've emailed a few and they either weren't interested or couldn't provide me a letter of intent because they don't purchase from small farms in the area. How are these relationships with the schools usually initiated for the farm to fork programs? Should I be focusing on other schools?

A: We will introduce you to the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving your region in case you would like to connect. One of the ways our team can help during the grant application period is to introduce producers and schools.

Additionally, beyond the grant application period, food producers in California 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 let your regional staff members know if you are interested in this type of support.

Q: [Track 3] I am trying to contact local farms and other businesses in our area to connect with so I can add it to our list. I'm having a hard time with that and wanted to see if you guys had examples or sources.

A: We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving your region to provide support with this question. One of the ways our team can help during the grant application period is to introduce producers and schools.

Q: [Track 1] Do you possibly have a copy of this document (Track 1 App Review Criteria) in a Word format or Google doc that I can use as a worksheet for drafting our grant writing?

I am not able to use that document in a PDF format.

A: The [Track 1 Application Questions and Review Criteria](#) resource is intended to provide a preview of the application questions and scoring. Applicants may use this resource before filling out the online application; however, questions in the online application may slightly differ.

Please note that you are able to save your progress in the application as you go and can navigate back and forth to different sections by clicking the icon above the section's name in the progress bar. Your information will not be shared with the CDFA until you click Submit on the Submit page.

Also, if you would like to invite others to also have access to your account, please follow the instructions on pages 6-7 of this [AmpliFund applicant portal user guide](#).