



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

Q: [Track 4] If awarded grant funds, are there special taxes that need to be paid for the amount distributed?

A: If awarded, the CDFA reimburses recipients for their costs; therefore, the CDFA does not treat reimbursements as taxable income. If you have additional questions, we suggest reaching out to your tax accountant.

March 23rd–28th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Can I request \$200K for local food plus all other costs?

A: Per [page 14 of the RFA](#), Track 1 includes the following funding formula: total number of students your project will serve multiplied by \$15. The award amount requested must fall between \$200,000 and \$1 million. Please note:

- 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.
- If the product of your multiplication is less than \$200,000, then please apply for \$200,000.
- If the product of your multiplication is more than \$1 million, then please apply for \$1 million.

Of the total award amount requested, Track 1 applicants may propose to allocate as much as they would like to the CA Food Procurement Costs budget category.

Please note that while Track 1 projects are not required to utilize grant funds for hands-on food education costs, all Track 1 projects must both (1) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals; and (2) engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts. All Track 1 applicants must demonstrate in the application how both (1) and (2) are components of their proposed project.

Q: [Track 1] [Question A] If we're awarded the grant, could we start projects and begin spending money before the spending window (for later reimbursement)?

[Question B] Are we able to reimburse ourselves if we were to pay for something up front, rather than requesting an advance payment?

[Question C] Part of our project will be hosting on-site farmers markets at schools, where we do a brief lesson and invite students to learn from the local farmers providing produce for our school lunch programming. Are we able to write the cost of a few items of produce per student to take home, so they can share with their families and hopefully practice cooking it?

[Question D] A hypothetical question: Would we be penalized if we were to end up only spending, say, \$190K of the \$200K?

A: [Response A] No. Grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before the grant term start date or after the grant term end date.

[Response B] This is a reimbursement grant program by default. If awarded a grant, recipients will incur grant related costs and submit monthly or quarterly invoices to the CDFA to be reimbursed within 45 days after invoices are approved in most circumstances. The grant agreement must be fully executed (signed by both parties) before project activities begin.

If awarded, it is possible to request an Advance Payment for project expenditures through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

- An advance payment shall not exceed the amount necessary for project expenses for a three-month period and cannot reduce the project balance below 10% of the award amount.
- If eligible and approved for advance payment, recipients must follow the Advance Payment regulations ([Section 316.1 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#)).

[Response C] Yes; per [page 22 of the RFA](#), procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for hands-on food education opportunities that engage students is allowable. Activities may engage families of students as well.

[Response D] No; if awarded and the recipient completes the project scope of work but does not quite spend all of the grant funds by the end of the grant term, this grant program does not penalize the recipient. However, please note that grant recipients cannot expend grant funds after the grant term end date. Additionally, please note that in the application, 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. The proposed project costs should sum to the total award amount requested.

Q; [Track 4] [Question A] Our project costs has an estimate of \$250-\$300K, but since we don't have this capital to start such a big project maybe I should adjust my project to something smaller? [Question B] If I'm able to get a loan to start the project, this will permit us to move on with the project. However, if interest is charged will this grant pay for the loan and interest? In case we get this grant, can we get a loan from another source to have the money up front to begin our plans? [Question C] How long is the turnaround time to get the reimbursement?

A: [Response A] If awarded, it is possible to request an Advance Payment for project expenditures through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

- An advance payment shall not exceed the amount necessary for project expenses for a three-month period and cannot reduce the project balance below 10% of the award amount.
- If eligible and approved for advance payment, recipients must follow the Advance Payment regulations ([Section 316.1 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#)).

[Response B] If awarded, then requesting a loan for the same project being funded, and paying back that loan with grant funds is unallowable.

[Response C] The turnaround time for a reimbursement and/or advance payment is approximately 45 calendar days after invoices are approved in most circumstances.

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: [Track 3] Putting it another way, to know if you see any issue here. Apply for grant in the current pre-school name, as they are already running, and hopefully will qualify based on the set criteria. Once the transfer of ownership is done, the entity will be closing and should issue 1099 to new entity as amount receivable (so that they don't have a liability on the grant amount)

A: If an entity is awarded, and then at a certain point in the grant term would like a different entity to be the recipient of the award, then the original grant agreement must

be terminated. A new agreement would then need to be executed with the other entity. Executing a new agreement is subject to CDFA approval. It is not possible to say at this time if executing a new agreement would be possible. It will depend on the situation at that time.

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 2] [Entity A] operates quite independently from our fiscal sponsor, [Entity B]. We make all programmatic, staffing, and financial decisions on our own. We are operating in completely different geographical areas and serving different partners. We don’t know what activities [Entity B] are proposing for their CDFA Track 2 grant, since we are not coordinating at all with them on our applications. So based on your response, it sounds like [Entity A] is good to go for applying for our own Track 2 Education Partnership grant using [Entity B] as our fiscal sponsor. Does this sound right?

A: Yes.

Q: [Track 2] [Entity A] is actively in the process of applying for independent 501(c)(3) status. If we are fortunate enough to get a grant from CDFA, and our 501(c)(3) status is subsequently approved at some later time during the grant period, would CDFA be able to transfer the grant management from our fiscal sponsor to [Entity A]?

A: It depends. If a project with a non-profit fiscal sponsor is awarded, and then at a certain point in the grant term becomes a non-profit itself and would like to be the direct recipient of the award rather than the fiscal sponsor, then the original grant agreement with the fiscal sponsor must be terminated. A new agreement would then need to be executed with the new non-profit. Executing a new agreement is subject to CDFA approval. It is not possible to say at this time if executing a new agreement would be possible. It will depend on the situation at that time.

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.

Q: [Track 3] Would I need to make copies and submit my permit application with my grant application as proof?

A: No; hard copies of the permit are not required to upload into the application.

March 13th–22nd Q&A

Q: [Track 4] can any local food production companies qualify to participate? ...Could you consider adjusting the farm-to-school parameters for participating in the grants so that local food companies like ours can participate?

A: In Track 4, food producers in California (defined below) or public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprises (defined below) are eligible to apply.

- **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.
- **Public-Serving Aggregation and Distribution Enterprise:** Often called a “food hub,” a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise serves 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. 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. This definition aligns with California’s Farm to Community Food Hub Program (Assembly Bill (AB) 1009, Chapter 608, Statutes of 2021). 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.

The eligibility requirements are not able to be changed during the application period. However, we do accept feedback and can make note of your feedback for future rounds.

Q: [Track 4] I have a question from ___ at the XXX Indian Reservation... XXX runs a farm/garden that she would like to turn into a community learning and food sovereignty space... There is an after-school program that serves approximately 20 children and Childcare Providers serve approximately 30 students. There is also a culture camp that serves approximately 100 children. They are caring for 0-5 year old children and k-12th grade children. They would be reaching approximately 150 people through their project. Most events would be held at their garden site (tours from classrooms, preschool visits, childcare providers, food preservation), as well as the after-school program and culture camp.

[Question A] Is [this] project eligible for the Farm to School Incubator Grant?

[Question B] If so, what Track would [this] project best fit into? XXX is working with 0-5, k-12, and she has a farm/garden.

A: California Native American Tribes are eligible to apply to Track 2, 3, or 4.

In terms of which track funds farms (such as the XXX Indian Reservation's farm), Track 4 is the California Farm to School Producer Grant. 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. Producers may additionally, as a component of the project, provide hands-on food education opportunities for students, School Food Authority staff, and/or child care center staff from project partner sites that complement existing or project-related California food sales to California schools.

The partnership requirement for Track 4 is to 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)

Additionally, the CDFA acknowledges that Tribal governments and Tribal-based non-profit organizations may operate school meal programs outside of traditional USDA school meal programs like the NSLP. So there is also an option in Track 4 to apply in collaboration with a Tribal school that operates school meal programs outside of traditional USDA school meal programs like the NSLP. Beyond the eligibility criteria in the bullet points above, the CDFA will determine eligibility of Tribal schools as Track 4 project partners on an individual basis.

Can you please share a little bit more about the childcare providers and/or Tribal schools you work with, and the meal programs they operate? This will help us to learn if they meet the partnership criteria. Thank you!

Q: [Track 4] Are schools allowed to purchase produce from us through a Food Hub or must it be even more direct to "count"?

A: Yes; selling food to any of the following entities through a food hub would be allowable in Track 4.

- 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).

There is no requirement in Track 4 that the food sales to the 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] [Question A] If we're working with a school that is part of XX USD, do we need our collaboration letter to come from someone at the district, or can it come directly from the school staff?

[Question B] Upon reviewing your eligibility criteria, I don't see any issues with us being current recipients of other CDFA funding (in this case, CNIP, but we've also applied for a specialty crop block grant) - is that correct?

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

[Response B] Yes; you can be a recipient of other CDFA funding. However, activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot replace activities funded by another federal or state grant program. There is a question in the Track 4 application (#57) that asks applicants how the proposed project supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by other federal or state grant program(s).

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] One of my clients is interested in developing acres into a fruit tree orchard that he could then sell the produce to schools that would be educational opportunities for students to learn about fruit tree growing in Maintenance. However, the fruit trees will not be productive for about two years to five years. With the 24 month timeframe for the grant will this be a viable project?

[Question B] Also, our seedlings for trees, an allowable expense?

A: [Response A] Applicants may not apply to fund start-up costs for a new food production operation or new public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise. Applicants must currently produce food or currently aggregate and distribute food to be eligible to apply to Track 4.

[Response B] Yes; seedlings for trees are an allowable cost in Track 4.

Q: [Track 4] I have several clients who were prior awardees who are interested in applying this year. If their prior project did not include any budget for staffing or farm aids, or for taking care of chickens, and contribute to their existing project goals, would that be an allowable supplemental activity that they could apply for?

A: Yes; staff/labor costs directly related to farm to school activities are allowable.

- 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

Previous grant recipients must clearly describe how the proposed project will supplement (i.e., enhance or expand) but not replace the existing project. The proposed project budget must reflect how the 2023-24 grant funds would supplement but not replace the previous/existing grant funds.

- **Supplement:** May apply to continue funding the same project activities after completing the previous project(s), begin funding new project activities that build upon existing project activities, and/or use funding to add new elements to existing project activities.
- **Replace:** May not apply to fund the same project activities that the 2021 or 2022 award is already funding during the overlapping grant time period (i.e., no double dipping).

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] I did not see if there’s a certain square footage requirement for this grant?

[Question B] ...will they be basing it off zip code?

A: [Response A] No; this grant program does not have a certain square footage requirement.

[Response B] Regarding the zip code, Track 3 of this grant program makes up to 20 points available in question #18, based on whether proposed projects will engage students from underserved communities. The metric in question #18 is the [Healthy Places Index 3.0 Percentile Ranking](#) of ECE sites, based on census tract. The tiered scoring system allocates more points for lower percentiles.

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] It is stated that the Technical Assistance Organization can apply for Track 3. Who will submit the grant proposal, is it the Technical Assistance Organization or us the Child Care Organization?

[Question B] We have two sites operating, one from San Diego and one from Sacramento. Can we apply for both sites with only one Technical Assistance Organization?

A: [Response A] There are two types of eligible entities that may apply to Track 3:

- 1) Child care centers that meet the following criteria:
 - 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)
- 2) Farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organizations that provide support to ECE providers in CA.
 - The list of eligible farm to ECE TA organizations is on [page 8 of the RFA](#).

[Response B] Multi-site child care centers that meet the criteria noted above are eligible to apply to Track 3. Question #5 in the Track 3 application asks, “How many ECE sites will your proposed project serve?” If the child care center operates two child care center sites and the proposed project will serve both sites, that would be allowable.

Farm to ECE technical assistance organizations are eligible to apply to Track 3 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). It would be allowable for a farm to ECE TA organization to include two child care center sites as partners.

Q: [Track 2] We are the fiscal sponsor for a program called [Entity A] which does similar work to [us] but is based in the Danville area, and has a separate geographic reach. Is it possible for both [us] and our fiscally-sponsored project to apply?

A: Yes; 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'm interested in applying in the Farm to School grant program and I'm aware that I need to partner with another In-home childcare to apply, what I'd like to know is how would both applicants go on one application? The application only has room for one applicant name and organization, so I'm unaware how we would merge both businesses to one application. Also I'd like information on where to find a farm to ECE TA program.

A: Individual family child care homes are unfortunately not eligible to apply to the grant program directly.

However, family child care homes are able to receive funding through the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program if they partner with a Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organization that applies to Track 3. The Farm to ECE TA Organization would be the lead applicant, and would list its ECE project partners in question #6 of the Track 3 application. Question #6 says, "List the name of each ECE site your proposed project will serve. Identify whether each is a child care center, family child care home, or family/friend/neighbor (FFN) setting and enter the physical address of each site."

Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organizations must include at least two ECE sites in California (e.g., at least two family child care homes) as project partners in their Track 3 application.

This program defines Farm to ECE Technical Assistance (TA) Organizations as any of the following organizations that provide support to ECE providers in California:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors of Day Care Homes in CA or CACFP Sponsors of Child Care Centers in CA
- Child Care and Development Fund Tribal Lead Agencies in CA
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies in CA
- First 5 county commissions in CA
- Head Start grantees in CA (i.e., an agency that is awarded funding by the Office of Head Start to provide or subcontract Head Start services in their area)
- Non-profit organizations, including agricultural industry non-profit organizations
- Tribal-based non-profit organizations

- Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in CA
- University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) and Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices
- Public universities in CA such as University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and community colleges
- California Native American Tribes
- County agencies in CA
- Local governments in CA
- California Agricultural Marketing Programs, listed [here](#)
- Projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor
 - NOTE: Applicants must clearly identify the fiscal sponsor in the application. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor will be the grant recipient and will be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all project activities and costs follow grant requirements.
- The CDFA acknowledges that other types of organizations not listed above may operate as farm to ECE TA organizations. Beyond the list above, the CDFA will determine eligibility of farm to ECE TA organizations on an individual basis and encourages interested applicants to connect via email at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov.

If you would like to connect with the CDFA Regional Farm to School Staff serving your region, please let us know the county in which your site is located and we'd be happy to connect you. One of the ways our team can help during the grant application period is to introduce ECE sites and support orgs.

Q: [Track 3] If we are a Head Start program under a Community Action Partnership agency, would we need to submit at least two ECE sites or just one? I can't tell if we qualify as a Child Care Center or as a Farm to ECE TA Organization.

A: 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) are eligible to apply to Track 3 as a farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organization. In order to apply, farm to ECE 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).

Q: [Tracks 2 & 4] Can a non-profit be a fiscal agent for more than one track? For example, two smaller agencies want to use our agency to help manage tracks 2 and 4. Both agencies will work together collaboratively.

A: It depends. If the two fiscally sponsored projects 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.

However, if the two fiscally sponsored projects 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 4] Since these are small farms, is the food safety certification a requirement for this program?

A: 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. 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 and the cost of this training is an allowable cost. 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.

Q: [Track 1] We created a place-based ecology and regenerative ag curriculum and also train teachers and farmers on how to teach the curriculum. We also have a 120-acre ranch in TX where we apply our programs and implement regenerative agriculture and education experiences. We have a holistic approach and guide transformation with a goal to build 1000 thriving regenerative communities by 2030.

I felt there was tremendous opportunity to align with this portion of the program:

Track 1 (the CA Farm to School TK-12 Procurement and Education Grant)...

Our curriculum is being implemented at XXX School in California and XXX Ranch is also a partner.

Is there alignment here for us to participate?

A: While this organization is not eligible to apply to Track 1 directly, if an eligible entity that is applying to Track 1 would like to include your organization in their proposed project budget as a contractor to help them achieve the Track 1 project goals, then that would be an allowable cost.

Eligible Track 1 entities are: 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). Unfortunately, private schools are not eligible to apply to Track 1.

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] We are applying for the Track 3, What would be the benefits of the technical assistance group?

[Question B] Will the funding be granted to the ECE or the technical assistance group?

A: [Response A] There are two types of eligible entities that may apply to Track 3:

- Child care centers that meet the following criteria:
 - 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)
- 2) Farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organizations that provide support to ECE providers in CA.
 - The list of eligible farm to ECE TA organizations is on [page 8 of the RFA](#).
 - Farm to ECE technical assistance organizations are eligible to apply to Track 3 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).

NOTE: Eligible child care centers that apply directly to Track 3 are not required to partner with a farm to ECE technical assistance organization.

[Response B] If an eligible child care center applies to Track 3 and receives a grant award, then the child care center would be the grant recipient. If an eligible farm to ECE technical assistance organization applies to Track 3 and receives a grant award, the technical assistance organization would be the grant recipient and would collaborate with its ECE site partners to implement the project.

Q: [Track 1] I am helping prepare an application for XXX School. We are a one-school district unto ourselves, serving XXX TK-8th grade students. We meet eligibility requirements in that we are a School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program.

However, because we are so small, we receive school meals from a vendor, which is XX Unified School District. We serve breakfast and lunch from XX USD.

At present, our own school kitchen does not meet the requirements to prepare and wash food (this is a long-term goal). If awarded the grant, we can offer all students food from the garden as part of an elective class, with assurance of a nearly 100% participation rate.

So the produce from the school garden would NOT, at this point, be incorporated into school MEALS. It WOULD be a robust, opt-in part of the students' daily food options at school. Does this affect our eligibility?

A: A school district in California that is a School Food Authority (SFA) currently operating the National School Lunch Program is eligible to apply to Track 1.

Track 1 projects must both:

- (1) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals; and
- (2) engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts

SFAs that purchase school meals from a local vendor (e.g., from another SFA such as a school district) are still required to include the above procurement goal in their proposed project. This may require coordinating with the vendor to support the vendor with procuring California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to then incorporate into the school meals that the vendor provides to your school district.

Q: [Track 2] [Question A] If we apply as a fiscally sponsored project (including our sponsor's information) but obtain 501(c)3 status before the decisions are made, what do we need to do to ensure that communication and any awarded funds go to us directly rather than our previous sponsor?

[Question B] If we are still working under the umbrella of a fiscal sponsor, and our agreement with them entails a 10% portion of all donations go to them, can we include this 10% in our grant request, or do we have to come up with those funds in another manner?

A: [Response A] Projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply to Track 2. 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.

If the sponsored organization becomes a non-profit before the award announcement, please let us know by emailing cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov. We will learn how to proceed at that time.

If a project with a non-profit fiscal sponsor is awarded, and then at a certain point in the grant term becomes a non-profit itself and would like to be the direct recipient of the award rather than the fiscal sponsor, then the original grant agreement with the fiscal sponsor must be terminated. A new agreement would then need to be executed with the new non-profit. Executing a new agreement is subject to CDFA approval. It is not possible to say at this time if executing a new agreement would be possible. It will depend on the situation at that time.

[Response B] For projects with a non-profit fiscal sponsor, fiscal sponsorship fees may be allowable as an indirect cost, if charged consistent with the sponsored organization's established policies. Fiscal sponsorship fees are not allowable as a direct cost.

Q: [Track 1] [Question A] We are a new school food authority with a CNIPS number. We will not get our other number until the end of June. Currently the XX Unified School District runs our lunch program, which does not include whole foods. We are moving to run our own with a designated food service director. Can we still apply?

[Question B] The second question is about Title 1. We have 42% economically disadvantaged youth, but we have not done the paper work for title 1. Does that matter?

A: [Response 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.

California public school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, or 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) are eligible to apply to Track 1.

[Response B] Please only note that a school is a Title I school if it is known that the school is a Title I school.

- Please note that question #6 asks about Title I schools because if the project will not serve at least one Title I school, then the CDFA will first prioritize proposed projects that will serve at least one Title I school. This is due to the budget bill language for this round of funding, which states that "\$30,000,000 shall be made available to fund project applications from schools that receive funds under Title I, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.) first."

March 23rd–28th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] A Track 4 applicant asked if a food producer fiscally sponsored by a non-profit church could apply for Track 4.

A: The food producer itself would be eligible to apply to Track 4 if it is a California food producer. Please note that Track 4 contractual costs may include accounting consultation during the grant term for funding received through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant.

Q: [Track 4] in working through the proposal and LOI specifically, noticing that one of the requirements for track 4 is that a school district is purchasing directly from us. Our Community Produce Stands, which operate at schools, do not require school districts to purchase from us, but rather we bring the produce and sell directly to students and their families. Is there any flexibility in this requirement, or is our program ineligible for these funds?

A: 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.

Increasing capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to the school food market in this case refers to selling food to any of the following entities (sales may be either direct or through an intermediary like a food hub or distributor).

- 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 of intent is then an opportunity for the director of the partner entity's school meal program to describe how the Track 4 applicant's proposed project will contribute to the entity's effort to source California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for their school meal program(s), as well as to identify which California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food product(s) they intend to purchase from the applicant.

Operating Community Produce Stands at the partner entity's school sites could potentially be an allowable additional component of a Track 4 project if this directly relates to achieving the following optional Track 4 project goal:

- Provide hands-on food education opportunities for students, School Food Authority staff, and/or child care center staff from project partner sites that complement the applicant's existing or project-related California food sales to California schools.

Q: [Track 3] I was wondering if our program would qualify for track 3? We are a state licensed program that serve children in grades TK-6th.

A: Child care centers in California (defined [on page 7 of the RFA](#)) or Farm to ECE technical assistance (TA) organizations (defined [on page 8 of the RFA](#)) are eligible to apply to Track 3 of the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

Additionally, [per page 18 of the RFA](#), at least 51% of the students that each Track 3 project serves must be young children birth through age five (i.e., infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers). Projects may also include school-age children if they attend the ECE sites that the project will serve.

More information about Track 3 eligibility can be found on [pages 18-19 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 3] I am the owner of a large Family Childcare and founder/CEO of a non-profit organization called XXX. I wanted to know if one of my entities previously stated qualify for one of the tracks for the grant.

A: Non-profit organizations that provide support to ECE providers in CA are eligible to apply as a Technical Assistance (TA) Organization in Track 3 of the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.

- Farm to ECE technical assistance 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).

Individual family child care homes are unfortunately not eligible to apply to the grant program directly.

Q: [Track 2] [Question A] I have attached a short, broad overview of my project plan idea. The details and scope of work are still in progress, but here is the basic premise of the idea. Would this type of project qualify under the eligibility criteria to apply? [Question B] If my business was awarded funding for the project idea, could I bill hours from before the grant start date?

A: [Response A] During the grant application period, the CDFA Farm to School Team is unfortunately not able to provide specific feedback on grant project ideas. That said, based on your business type (sole proprietorship) and your interest in the Track 2 producer training category: A sole proprietorship may be eligible to apply to the Track 2 producer training category as a farm to school technical assistance (TA) organization if it has an established history supporting California food producers and institutional food procurement. 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.

[Response B] No; if awarded, grant recipients cannot expend grant funds before the grant term start date or after the grant term end date.

Q; [Track 4] We have two farm locations...

Can we apply for track 4 funding from each location as long as they have a different EIN number for each application?

A: Applicants are limited to one Track 4 grant application per unique tax/business identification number. Applicants who operate more than one business entity may submit separate Track 4 grant applications on behalf of each entity that has a unique tax identification number.

If submitting one application – question #6 in the Track 4 application asks in what county or counties in CA is your operation located where your proposed project will take place? If an operation has two farm locations in different counties, and would like to include both locations in the proposed project, this is where they could identify the two counties.

Q: [Track 3] Given our multi-location setup, we are unsure whether we should submit separate applications for each site or if it's acceptable to consolidate our proposal into a single application, while clearly delineating funding needs for each location. Could you kindly advise us on the best approach to ensure that our project receives due consideration while aligning with the guidelines of the Track 3 grant program?

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

Multi-site child care centers that meet the child care center criteria on [page 7 of the RFA](#) are eligible to apply to Track 3. Delineating funds in the proposed project budget for each site would be allowable.

If each child care center location is a separate stand-alone entity that meets the child care center criteria on [page 7 of the RFA](#), then each site would be eligible to apply to Track 3.

Q: [Tracks 2 & 3] We have worked with the XXX... Are they eligible for the grant?

A: There are a couple ways that a non-profit organization, such as this one, may be able to apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program:

- **Track 2:** A non-profit organization 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.
 - Here are the [Track 2 application questions and review criteria](#) if they would like to explore to see if this track aligns with their project goals.
- **Track 3:** A non-profit organization 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).
 - Here are the [Track 3 application questions and review criteria](#) if they would like to explore to see if this track aligns with their project goals.

Q: [Track 4] We currently own and operate a ranch and business that produces meat products to our local community. We are currently in the process of opening a USDA inspected butcher shop in our area to help support our current business and many other ranchers in our community expand operations. Our goal is to also bring a larger presence of locally sourced meat to our school system. My question of eligibility is this; our butcher shop will be its own separate new business, owned by myself and my husband just like our ranch. Even though it is a new business, it is considered an extension of our ranching business that we currently operate. Would the butcher shop be eligible to receive the grant?

A: Applicants are limited to one Track 4 grant application per unique tax/business identification number. Applicants who operate more than one business entity may submit separate Track 4 grant applications on behalf of each entity that has a unique tax identification number.

If the butcher shop:

- is a business entity with a unique tax identification number, and
- meets the definition of public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise on [page 10 of the RFA](#), and
- currently aggregates and distributes food, and
- 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 it intends to sell food,

then it would be eligible to apply to Track 4.

If the butcher shop does not currently aggregate and distribute food, then it would unfortunately not be eligible to apply as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.

Q: [Track 2] I'm the Founder of XXX - Our mission is to provide education and support to K-12, College students, and underserved communities about the benefits of healthy eating and how it links to mental health...

We are partnered with 4 farms and 3 schools. I was thinking of applying for track 2. Do you think I am qualified for Track 2?

A: Track 2 will 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. Technical assistance (TA) projects must focus technical assistance in one of the following categories:

- (1) School Food:** building capacity of California School Food Authorities to implement farm to school procurement programs; **or**
- (2) 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**
- (3) Producer Training:** building capacity of California food producers to sell products to California School Food Authorities

Please note the following:

- Providing technical assistance and building capacity 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.

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.

To learn more about eligibility, please view the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program's definition of Farm to School Technical Assistance (TA) Organizations on the [bottom of page 8 – page 9 of the RFA](#).

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.

Q: [Track 4] The seeds will not be reusable since they will be grown and fed to cattle. However, seeds are listed as an allowable cost in the supplies section. How should I advise?

A: The seeds themselves are an allowable cost in this scenario. However, purchasing feed for animals is an unallowable cost.

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? [Question C] is it allowable to include tax preparation as part of the suggested accounting consultant (p. 34 of RFA)?

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.

[Response C] No, tax preparation is not allowable as a direct cost. However, Track 4 contractual costs may include accounting consultation during the grant term for funding received through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant. This contractual cost must be limited to accounting consultation for grant administration necessary to the grant project, rather than your overall tax preparation.

Please note that if awarded, the CDFA reimburses recipients for their costs; therefore, the CDFA does not treat reimbursements as taxable income. If you have additional questions, we suggest reaching out to your tax accountant.

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!

March 13th–22nd Q&A

Q: [Track 4] We have an existing relationship with our local school district, and I want to ensure we are eligible to apply for Track 4 to cover costs of growing this relationship. Is this an appropriate use of funds? For reference, we plan to double the total contract value with XX USD in 2024 compared to 2023.

A: Yes; 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.

Track 4 applicants may propose to use funds to:

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

Q: [Track 1] In completing the California Farm to School Incubator Grant application, I would like to know if it is acceptable to ask in what section would the cost of busing for field trips be included.

A: Bussing for field trips could be included in your proposed project budget as a Travel Cost.

Q: [Track 4] Under track 4, is the owner of an LLC who is the primary grower allowed to charge salary/fringe to the Farm to School grant for their time spent on direct Farm to School production and distribution activities?

A: Yes; staff/labor costs directly related to farm to school activities are allowable.

- 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.

Q: [Track 4] In addition to expanding our food sales to schools, we are excited to expand our educational programming. Can the grant (if applying through Track 4) cover the cost of Career and Technical Education (CTE) credentials for our farmers that would be in charge of expanding our programming? And if so, where would that cost be written in?

A: Yes; as long as these costs are necessary to achieve the grant project goals. These costs could be included under the "Other Costs" category in the proposed budget.

Q: [Track 4] There is only one outstanding question I have around equipment and supplies: it says “Tractors” are an allowable expense but as a beekeeper we use forklifts and not tractors. Would that be an allowable expense? These are part of the production and harvesting.

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.

Q: [Track 2] For Track 2 and as part of our producer technical assistance project: [Question A] If we would like to organize an educational (workshops, hands-on training, facilitated discussions, etc.) and network building event for farmers and school food authorities, could we use grant funds to do this event?

[Question B] Also, doing my research about community events, I was told that charging even a small fee for the registration fee helps to increase attendance, are we allowed to charge a fee for this event that will circle back to pay for some expenses for this event?

A: [Response A] Educational workshops, hands-on trainings, and network building events for farmers and School Food Authorities are allowable if necessary for achieving the grant project goals and if they follow the allowable and unallowable cost parameters of the grant program.

[Response B] Charging a registration fee for a grant-funded event would be considered program income. There is a question about program income in #39 of the Track 2 grant application.

- Program income is gross income earned as a result of the grant award during the grant duration.
- Program income includes but is not limited to income from fees for services performed and income from the sale of commodities or items fabricated under the grant award.
- Program income must be reinvested into the project for which the grant was awarded, and expended on allowable project costs

Q: [Track 4] I had a question regarding the wording in the application question - specific to the Budget Category #1. There is some language there about approximating how much the infrastructure cost will benefit both grant funded and non-grant funded activities and approximating how much in proportion would be charged to the grant award.

Does this mean that we can only ask for a % of the cost of something like a wash station upgrade if we will be using it for our CSA as well? My concern is that there are things like this that the farm couldn't spend a large percentage on and would have to scrap that budget line.

A: Yes; in accordance with the [CDFA Grant Administration Regulations, Section 330.1\(c\)\(1\)](#) – a cost is only allocable to the grant if the cost is incurred specifically for the award.

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.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Is installation of the permanent restroom facility allowed for the farm that’s involved with school field trips? If so, is construction allowed or does it have to be a purchase of the prefabricated building and converted into a restroom facility?

[Question B] Contractors that are included in the budget must also be included in the Project Team. What if we have not determined which contractor will be selected (no bidding took place yet)? Can we list TBD (to be determined)?

[Question C] If we list one contractor in the budget and as a project team, but after final bidding decide to hire someone else, would it be acceptable to make these changes after the grant is approved?

A: [Response A] Infrastructure, equipment, or supplies to establish new or expand existing hands-on food education opportunities for students, School Food Authority staff, and/or child care center staff that complement the applicant's existing or project-related California food sales to California schools, such as field trips, producer visits to the cafeteria or classroom, etc. are allowable.

The construction and/or purchase of a prefabricated building for a restroom facility for school field trips is allowable as long as the cost aligns with the description above and is necessary to achieve the grant project goals.

[Response B] Yes; a contractor can be listed as To Be Determined in your proposed project budget and project team section of the application.

[Response C] Yes; if awarded, the CDFA team will consider budget revision requests for a change in contractor during the grant term.

Q: [Track 1] XXX Charter School in Thousand Oaks is applying for Track 1 of the CDFA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. We act as our own SFA, but do not have a cafeteria or kitchen. We purchase meals from the local XX School District for our students. We currently have culinary, nutritional, and gardening classes for our TK-8 grades, that are standards-aligned, culturally/historically sensitive, and are a part of our Farm to Table/Outdoor Classroom curriculum. We have student taste-testings, edible garden beds, seasonal farm stands, student lead recipe creations, and agricultural-focused field trips. However, we would like clarification that our efforts to foster this education for our students is enough to be considered for the Track 1 funding, as we do not have an onsite kitchen. Would renting a commercial kitchen to prepare meals that supplement school meals be an approved expense for funding under this grant?

A: A charter school in California that is a School Food Authority (SFA) currently operating the National School Lunch Program is eligible to apply to Track 1.

Track 1 projects must both:

- (3) procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into school meals; and
- (4) engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts

Renting a commercial kitchen would be an allowable cost if this is for the purpose of achieving the above grant project goals.

SFAs that purchase school meals from a local vendor (e.g., from another SFA such as a school district) are still required to include the above procurement goal in their proposed project. This may require coordinating with the vendor to support the vendor with procuring California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to then incorporate into the school meals that the vendor provides to the charter school.

Q: [Track 4] Can a producer use grant funding to pay for their time to help develop recipes in the school cafeteria? Essentially, they would be working for the school.

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](#)).

If the producer is essentially working for the school, please include a reasoning in the budget section of the application as to why the school partner itself is not covering the staff time with its own funds.

Q: [Track 4] A farmer is looking into getting a couple of forklifts for distribution purposes. Do we have to turn in any estimates or competing quotes or the like as part of the grant application?

A: No; the grant application does not ask applicants to upload estimates or quotes for proposed equipment purchases. However, the application does ask applicants to list the proposed equipment, estimate the cost of each item, and briefly describe each item's purpose in the project.

If awarded, please note that [Section 319 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) includes the regulations for grant recipients to follow regarding procurement of goods or services.

Q: [Track 4] say I am wanting to purchase a compost spreader, do they need a make and model and exact price locked in, or is an "approximate" price acceptable?

A: The grant application does not require applicants to identify the make and model and exact price of proposed supplies or equipment purchases.

For proposed supplies, the application asks applicants to enter the total dollar amount they are proposing to allocate to supplies and to then list the supplies and briefly describe each item's purpose in the project. For proposed equipment purchases, the application asks applicants to enter the total dollar amount they are proposing to allocate to equipment and to then list the proposed equipment, estimate the cost of each item, and briefly describe each item's purpose in the project.

Q: [Track 4] Can grant funds be used for a portion of the total cost of a land purchase and the grantee pays off the remaining balance out of pocket?

A: Yes. Per [page 32 of the RFA](#), purchase of agricultural land (farmland), or monthly/annual lease payments is allowable in Track 4 for up to 75% of total grant funding requested and

requires prior written approval by the CDFA. Please note that grant recipients may not use grant funds to lease-to-own agricultural land. If a grant recipient is using grant funds to cover the partial cost of an agricultural land purchase, then they may not finance or take out a loan for the remaining cost of that land. However, it would be allowable for a grant recipient to cover the remaining cost of the agricultural land out of pocket.

Regarding the prior written approval requirement noted above, please note that 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.

Q: [All Tracks] We cannot find detailed information regarding the requirements around contractors. If we have a sole source contractor, how do we denote this in the application so as to not require multiple bids as typically required for contracts over \$5,000. Can you direct me to this detail or let me know the answer.

A: The regulations for this grant program regarding contractors are located in [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#) (pages 14-16).

Q: [Track 3] We are considering bringing our Food Bank to offer CA-grown produce for our participating Head Start center/s for this grant. Would this fit the food producer/procurement requirement?

A: The procurement component of Track 3 requires that grant recipients procure California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for incorporation into meals/snacks and/or food boxes for young children. Per the bottom of [page 28 of the RFA](#), procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods may be from vendors including but not limited to producers, distributors, food hubs, Community Supported Agriculture providers, and farmers markets. A food bank would also be an allowable vendor. Grant recipients must follow procurement and food safety regulations applicable to their programs.

Q: [Track 1] Currently we work with our Adult Transition Program in a variety of ways. We are working with them to provide support for our school gardens i.e., maintenance, seed starting, planting etc. We would like to write them into the grant to give them hands-on education. ATP currently offers paid internships to support our school gardens in the district. We would like to support their work by acquiring supplies and equipment so ATP student interns can grow seedlings that will be disseminated at other school sites. Please let me know if this is possible.

A: Yes, school districts may include their Adult Transition Program in their Track 1 application. The component of Track 1 that requires projects to “engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program’s California food procurement efforts” may include engaging Adult Transition Program students in hands-on food education opportunities. In Track 1, infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program’s California food procurement efforts are an allowable cost.

Q: [Track 4] Does all the income generated from the project (sales to the school, proceeds from farm field trips) have to be reinvested into the farm in a way that's approved?

A: Program income is gross income earned as a result of the grant award during the grant duration. Program income includes but is not limited to income from fees for services performed and income from the sale of commodities or items fabricated under the grant award.

Within the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, in alignment with [Section 318 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#), program income must be reinvested into the project for which the grant was awarded, and expended on allowable project costs. The list of Track 4 allowable costs is on [pages 32-25 of the RFA](#).

Q: [Track 4] We've gotten a lot of requests from school groups to come to our property this year and we think in order to do that well we need some sort of an educational space for hosting those groups.

We'd like to build a 20x20 pergola, cover it with shade cloth, put down some decomposed granite, and add some picnic tables. This would give groups a place to do activities, eat their lunch, and we could teach without needing to bring students into our home.

Is something like that an allowable expense?

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

Q: [Track 1] Is it allowable to build an outdoor kitchen with this grant? We are looking into the possibility of upgrading a portable classroom but much prefer the idea of an outdoor kitchen--could we build one as long as it is not a full building but made up of a shade covering and an outdoor demonstration table, seating, counters and cooktops.

A: Yes; per [page 22 of the RFA](#), infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to engage students in hands-on food education opportunities that complement the school meal program's California food procurement efforts are allowable.

Q: [Track 1] I'm working with a few school districts in San Luis Obispo County who are looking to fund the XXX garden education program with CDFA Farm to School funding from Track 1. Funding for 2024-25 and for 2025-26 is simple because the grant term covers that period already. Funding for 2026-27 is presenting a challenge because the grant term ends part-way during the school year (ending in October of 2026). So, we are looking at ways that they could still utilize CDFA funding during the 2026-27 school year.

A: If the garden education program fee is \$___ for services occurring throughout the 2026-27 school year and the grant term ends October 2026, then a school district could propose to allocate grant funds for the percentage of the year-long services that are implemented as part of the grant project during the grant term.

March 23rd–28th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] If funds are received, can they be moved around within the grant categories?

[Question B] If it may be more cost effective to contract services, for example hire a full-service nursery service to deliver and plant crops, can this be done? Or a company to do irrigation installation?

A: [Response A] If awarded, there is a revision request process that is available to grant recipients during the grant term. Recipients may submit budget and/or scope of work revision requests to the CDFA. Revision requests require justification and are subject to CDFA approval. The CDFA Farm to School Team understands that things may evolve over the course of the grant term; however, in the application, please do your best to develop a proposed project budget that accurately reflects your project plan at this time.

[Response B] Regarding contracting, yes, contractor or consultant services for the purpose of achieving the grant project objectives are allowable subject to [Sections 319, 320.1, 320.2, and 320.3 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#).

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] I am hoping to include a greenhouse in my proposal. I am wondering if it is permissible to build it ourselves? With lumber and other more durable and sustainable materials?

[Question B] If the greenhouse construction I mentioned in my previous email is permissible, how do I deal with it in my budget?

[Question C] When I add up my budget it is about \$154 over the \$350k cap. Will that tiny bit just be overlooked or should I go through it again and see to it that is exactly \$350k?

A: [Response A] Per [page 32 of the RFA](#), farm to school infrastructure, equipment, and supplies costs to do any of the following are allowable in Track 4:

- increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity to sell California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods to schools;
- establish or enhance the use of climate smart agriculture practices, production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, and/or other regenerative strategies when producing California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food to sell to schools; and/or
- establish new or expand existing hands-on food education opportunities for students, School Food Authority staff, and/or child care center staff that complement the applicant's existing or project-related California food sales to California schools, such as field trips, producer visits to the cafeteria or classroom, etc.

Building the greenhouse yourself would be allowable if it is necessary to achieve the grant project goals.

[Response B] It is up to the applicant how to categorize costs in the proposed project budget. If you are unsure how to categorize a cost, it is ok. Please include the item in the category that seems to fit best.

[Response C] The proposed budget needs to exactly match the amount that you are requesting and cannot exceed \$350,000. 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 the grant application.

Q: [Track 3] I am assuming the cost for construction of garden boxes, tools and implements for planting and harvesting, irrigation supplies, etc. would be listed under Infrastructure costs. Is this correct? If not, where would we include these costs?

A: It is up to the applicant how to categorize costs in the proposed project budget. 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] XXX is applying for Track 4 and would like to pay a contractor for a concrete slab and had two questions:

[Question A] Should he list the slab under contractual or infrastructure?

[Question B] Does he need to proportion the slab for farm to school and non-farm to school activities?

A: [Response A] It is up to the applicant how to categorize costs in the proposed project budget. If you are unsure whether to categorize an item as contractual or infrastructure, it is ok. Please include the item in the category that seems to fit best.

For details about Contractual Costs, please see the [bottom of page 34 – page 35 of the RFA](#). For details about Infrastructure Costs, please see [page 32 of the RFA](#).

[Response B] 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 yes, 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.

Q: [Track 4] A track 4 applicant had two questions on how to list contractor expenses. Do they need to provide 3 bids? Can they add inflationary costs?

A: 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](#).

Applicants are not required to submit 3 bids in the application for proposed contractual costs. However, if awarded, Section 319 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.

The dollar amount that an applicant proposes to allocate for contractual costs may reflect the applicant’s best estimate of what this component of the proposed project will reasonably cost during the grant term, if awarded. Please note that all proposed project costs in the budget section of the application should sum to the total award amount requested in question #20.

Q: [Track 3] Can we purchase the following on this grant to help use grow fresh fruits and vegetables, use to add an irrigation system, soil, vegetable plants, full grown fruit trees, hydroponic gardens with vegetable pods, chicken coops.

A: 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.

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.

March 13th –22nd Q&A

Q: [Track 4] XXX is working on an application for the current grant round... Of the 4 main aspects of our 2022 grant we will be able to complete 2 of them. Additional funds will be necessary to complete the remaining 2 items. In the text boxes on application question #56, I am explaining that in better detail. Any guidance?

A: Per [page 39 of the RFA](#), previous grant recipients that meet the eligibility criteria may apply to enhance or expand the existing project – i.e., to:

- continue funding the same project activities after completing the previous project,
- begin funding new project activities that build upon existing project activities, and/or
- use funding to add new elements to existing project activities.

However, previous grant recipients may not apply to fund the same project activities that the 2022 award is already funding during the overlapping grant time period. (Note: the 2022 grant term ends March 31, 2025 and the estimated 2023-24 grant term is November 2024 – October 2026).

Previous grant recipients must clearly describe in question #56 of the Track 4 application how the 2023-24 proposed project will supplement (i.e., enhance or expand) but not replace the existing project, so it sounds like you are in the right place!

March 23rd–28th Q&A

Q: [Track 1] Last year we included FoodCorps in our application and I just want to make sure that we could charge that this year as well?

A: Including FoodCorps in your Track 1 grant application would be allowable if the cost is necessary to achieve the grant project goals, as long as the requested funding does not occur during the time when the two grant terms overlap (i.e., no double dipping).

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).

March 13th–22nd Q&A

Q: [Track 4] For letter of intent does it make a difference if SFA is already purchasing? Or does it need to be new business?

A: The letter of intent can be from an SFA to which you are already selling food, or one to which you are not yet selling food. The letter of intent 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.

Q: [Track 1] If we choose to not apply for this grant as a [food services] department, what actions can I take to assist one of our schools to strengthen their application?

A: The Food Services Department does not need to be the lead on the grant application. One of the ways you can support your school district’s application is as a School Nutrition Services Representative, which is one of the project team member roles required in the Track 1 grant application.

- **[Project Team Section of the Track 1 Application: Member 1: School Nutrition Services Representative](#)** – this person should ensure collaboration and coordination across the school nutrition services department, including procuring CA foods and engaging students in farm to school activities. This role is typically filled by a school nutrition services director or similar leadership position within the school nutrition services department.

One of the components of a Track 1 application is to develop a CA Food Procurement Work Plan that supports Goal 1 below and can additionally include the optional Goals 2-4 below, if desired. These goals align with the Member 1 role above.

- **Required Goal 1:** Our proposed project will increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for incorporation into school meals
- **Optional Goal 2:** Our proposed project will increase procurement of whole or minimally processed food (for school meals) from small to midsize food producers in CA
- **Optional Goal 3:** Our proposed project will increase procurement of whole or minimally processed food (for school meals) from veteran, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited-resource food producers in CA
- **Optional Goal 4:** Our proposed project will increase procurement of whole or minimally processed food (for school meals) from food producers in CA that utilize climate smart agriculture practices or production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic

Q: [Track 4] For the letters of intent, I was thinking to tap a district superintendent, an assistant superintendent of XXX and a school principal (each of whom would make the educational piece stronger). But the letter of intent asks for a signature from “Director of the school meal program”. Do I really need the letter to come from the nutrition director level?

A: Yes; the letter of intent must be from the director of the entity’s school meal program.

Q: [Track 4] Can a farmer and/or distributor use their own letter of intent instead of the given template?

If so, what is the minimum amount of information required to make the letter of intent eligible for the grant?

A: No; applicants must use the [Letter of Intent template](#) provided by the CDFA.

Q: [Track 1] I have a question about the CDFA T1 Application that my team and I are currently working on, in the section, 27. CA Food Procurement Activities and Timeline. While I am filling it out, my responses feel very repetitive because my activities are not changing for each goal. The activity I have listed for Goal 1, are the same activities for Goals 1-4.

The farm partnerships that we are looking to expand (using these funds) are from farms that are small to midsize, from socially disadvantaged or limited-resource food producers, and that practice climate smart agriculture. So our one Activity meets all the goals.

Is this OK?

A: It is okay for the activities in each goal of the procurement work plan to overlap. When developing the activities for your proposed project work plan, please refer to the scoring criteria below that the technical reviewers will use when scoring goals 1-4 of the procurement work plan section of the application.

- CA Food Procurement Activities & Timeline: /20 points
 - **Goal 1:** Applicant's description of how they will increase procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed food for incorporation into school meals is:
 - 5 points: clear
 - 3 points: somewhat clear
 - 0 points: unclear
 - **Goal 2:** Applicant's description of how they will increase procurement of whole or minimally processed food (for school meals) from small to midsize food producers in CA is:
 - 5 points: clear
 - 3 points: somewhat clear
 - 0 points: unclear OR applicant did not complete Goal 2
 - **Goal 3:** Applicant's description of how they will increase procurement of whole or minimally processed food (for school meals) from veteran, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited-resource food producers in CA is:
 - 5 points: clear
 - 3 points: somewhat clear
 - 0 points: unclear OR applicant did not complete Goal 3
 - **Goal 4:** Applicant's description of how they will increase procurement of whole or minimally processed food (for school meals) from food producers in CA that utilize climate smart agriculture practices or production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic is:
 - 5 points: clear
 - 3 points: somewhat clear
 - 0 points: unclear OR applicant did not complete Goal 4

Q: [Track 3] Are there any documents required such as CA license or any business documents that are to be submitted along with the application?

A: In Track 3, business documents are not required to be submitted; however, the Track 3 application includes the following questions:

- Question #6: List the name of each ECE site your proposed project will serve. Identify whether each is a child care center, family child care home, or family/friend/neighbor (FFN) setting and enter the physical address of each site
 - ECE Site 1 – Name:
 - ECE Site 1 – Type:
 - ECE Site 1 – Address:
 - ECE Site 2 – Name:
 - ECE Site 2 – Type:
 - ECE Site 2 – Address:
- Question #6a: Licensing: If you checked child care center in Question #4, please provide the nine-digit facility number from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division for each site that your project will serve so that the CDFA can verify that each site is licensed. If you are a child care center that meets appropriate criteria for a license exemption, please indicate that here in lieu of providing a facility number.

These questions, as well as additional questions and review criteria for Track 3, can be found [here](#).

Q: [Track 1] I wanted to chat with you about how best to write this (taking into account the community schools implementation grant I applied for, which seems to overlap this in many ways). While I expect to be awarded that grant, I'm not sure what's best to do in writing this when we haven't been officially "won" that other grant. Make sense?

A: Eligible applicants that have applied to other grant programs may still apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, please note that activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot replace activities funded by another federal or state grant program. There is a question in the Track 1 application (#50) that asks applicants, "Have you submitted your project proposal to another federal or state grant program or has another federal or state grant program funded your project proposal?" If yes, then question #50 asks applicants to describe how the proposed project in this application supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by other federal or state grant program(s).

Q: [Track 2] [Question A] I am planning to apply for Track 2, Producer Technical Assistance of the Incubator grant this year. My SOW includes working with a small nonprofit farm, XXX, to offer technical assistance to their farm, as well as the other farmers that participate in our farm to school program.

... I am wondering how we should structure the grant application budget. Costs would include: XXX staff time & fringe benefits, infrastructure costs, supplies and insurance costs.

I think this would be best budgeted as a mini-grant, since it encompasses multiple budget categories, but please let me know if it would be better to budget it under contractual costs.

[Question B] My second question is about Letters of Support. Our producer letter of support would be from XXX and I will gather SFA letters from several supporting districts. Is the XXX support letter sufficient and is there a Template for these letters that CDFA would like us to use?

A: [Response A] It is up to the applicant how to categorize costs in the proposed project budget. Proposed contractor costs would fit under Contractual Costs. Proposed mini grants would fit under either Other Costs or Contractual Costs, depending on an organization's internal procedures. Please note that grant recipients distributing funds to contractors 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.

[Response B] There is no template for the Track 2 letters of support. Track 2 applicants in the producer training category must upload a letter of support from each of the School Food Authority project representatives and Food Producer project representatives listed in the Project Team section of the application. If the proposed project includes multiple CA School Food Authority partners and one CA food producer partner, then uploading a letter of support from each of the School Food Authorities' project representatives and from the food producer's project representative would be sufficient.

Q: [Track 1] [Question A] Question number 6: we are not sure what school sites are considered title I schools in the district, and we cannot find the number from managements in the other department. XX USD is a CEP-eligible district. Can I just put the total number of sites for this question?

[Question B] Our census is XXXX during the school year 2022-2023. Can we apply for more than \$200,000?

[Question C] We are planning to bring bulk milk program (purchasing bulk milk from local dairy companies) to the district, can we make it part of this grant proposal?

A: [Response A] Question #6 in the Track 1 application asks applicants to list the name of each school site your project will serve and note if it is a Title I school. Please only note that a school is a Title I school if it is known that the school is a Title I school.

Please note that question #6 asks about Title I schools because if the project will not serve at least one Title I school, then the CDFA will first prioritize proposed projects that will serve at least one Title I school. This is due to the budget bill language for this round of funding, which states that "\$30,000,000 shall be made available to fund project applications from schools that receive funds under Title I, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.) first."

[Response B] No. If, in question #7 of the Track 1 application, the number of students the project will serve is XXXX, then based on the funding formula (\$15 per student), the product of the multiplication would be less than \$200,000, which means the school district would be eligible to apply for the minimum award amount of \$200,000. The district would not be eligible to apply for more than \$200,000.

[Response C] Per [page 25 of the RFA](#), California produced fluid milk, including fluid milk substitutes, are an unallowable cost. However, in Track 1, purchasing bulk milk dispensers for

school cafeterias would be an allowable cost if this is for the purpose of achieving the grant project goals and if the dispensers are for serving California-produced milk.

Q: [Track 4] XXX is the name of my business. I file a class C tax form for a business, does that make me a legal business? ...Is my farm name still considered a Legal Business Name with these things in mind? Is my farm name a good application name?

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

Please note that per question #2 of the Track 4 application, the Legal Business Name you provide should match the name on the tax return that you file with the federal Internal Revenue Service for your operation. Additionally, the Legal Business 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 2] For the Track 2 budget, we are contracting with a partner organization under Category 5 (Contractual Costs). If the contractor has to travel, should we include that in contractual costs or in the Travel category?

A: It is up to the applicant how to categorize costs in the proposed project budget. If you feel that this cost would fit best under Contractual Costs, then you would include it in the dollar amount in #29a and include a description of the cost in #29b. Or, if you feel that this cost would fit best under Travel Costs, then you would include it in the dollar amount in #28a and include a description of the cost in #28b.

Please note that grant recipients distributing funds to contractors must ensure that contractors follow all allowable and unallowable cost parameters of this program as well as financial reporting requirements such as documenting how they used the funds.

Q: [All Tracks] In the Incubator Grant Budget, what category would the following items be placed under:

Greenhouse base - having a concrete foundation installed by a contractor (Infrastructure or Contractual)

Greenhouse - purchasing a teaching greenhouse to be assembled by the Ag students (Equipment or Infrastructure)

A: It is up to the applicant how to categorize costs in the proposed project budget. If you are unsure whether to categorize an item as contractual, equipment, or infrastructure, it is ok. Please include the item in the category that seems to fit best.

Q: [Track 4] We are applying to track 4 for the Farmers Marketplace and we have a food safety plan that we created based on a sample that was put out by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program from UC Davis. We are wondering if this

will 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. The document does state that the development of this material was supported by the National Institute of Food and Agricultural, U.S. Department of Agriculture... We are just wanting to ensure that we are in compliance with the protocols needed?

A: 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 and the cost of this training is an allowable cost. 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.

The CDFA Farm to School Team is not able to determine whether or not a producer is in compliance with applicable food safety requirements. However, this grant program does expect that Track 4 grant recipients will meet a level of food safety consistent with their farm or business operations in accordance with USDA requirements and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requirements, as applicable.

Here are a few resources:

- Information about the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service can be found [here](#).
- Information about the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) can be found [here](#).
- If you have questions about the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, please contact the CDFA Produce Safety Program at producesafety@cdfa.ca.gov.
- More information about food safety can be found on the [CDFA Inspection Services webpage](#) under the “Feed & Food Safety” dropdown.

Q: [Track 3] I am applying for Strand 3, Farm to ECE as a local government agency that provides training and technical assistance to early learning and care sites, and I have a couple of questions:

[Question A] We believe that about 10 total early learning and care sites, 6-8 Family Childcare Homes and 2-3 childcare centers will be interested in participating, but we have 4 that are solid on participation, so we are including letters of support from those 4 only. Will it be a problem to add other sites after we receive notice of funding?

[Question B] We plan to support and assist our ECE sites, mostly Family Childcare Homes, in procurement of California grown, whole foods for incorporation into meals and snacks, and connect them with food boxes for young children. We also plan to provide early learning specialists (who they already receive training and coaching from) to engage young children in hands-on food education opportunities and food growing experiences. As we prepare the budget, we are consulting with them to determine the amount needed for these activities, so want to be sure we are correct in compiling the cost that each site would need for these activities, as well as any procurement we would need to do as the training and technical assistance lead, into the various budget areas?

So for instance, if sites A, B, C and D will each need \$200/month, and we will additionally need \$900/month for procurement, we would add the \$800/month for the sites, and the \$900 for us for a total of \$1,700/month?

[Question C] We are including a letter of support for each site that is actively planning for implementation along with us, and want to be sure we do not need letters of support from each farm we plan to work with?

A: [Response A] 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/or license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor settings). Farm to ECE TA organizations must submit a letter of support from each ECE site that the proposed project will serve (i.e., from each ECE site that you list as a project partner in question #6 of the Track 3 application). If the project is awarded and during the grant term there are other ECE sites that you would like to add as project partners, then you would be able to submit a scope of work revision request and, if applicable, budget revision request to the CDFA for consideration. Revision requests are subject to CDFA approval.

[Response B] In budget category #1a (CA Food Procurement for meals/snacks/food boxes), please enter the total dollar amount that you are requesting to allocate toward California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for ECE meals/snacks and/or ECE food boxes for young children. This amount could include procurement you would implement for each specific partner site as well as procurement you would implement for all the partner sites listed in your application. Similarly, in budget category #1b (CA Food Procurement for student education), please enter the total dollar amount that you are requesting to allocate toward California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for hands-on food education opportunities that engage young children. This amount could include procurement you would implement for each specific partner site as well as procurement you would implement for all the partner sites listed in your application.

[Response C] In Track 3, letters of support from farms are not required.

Q: [Track 2] one of the boxes to fill in the application is the following: Each California Food Producer project partner listed in the Audience section of the application must provide a project representative from their business/organization. Step 2: Underneath the name of the first California Food Producer project partner, write:

- **their project representative's first and last name**
- **their project representative's position title**
- **one sentence describing the project representative's role within the project**
- **one sentence clearly describing why the project representative thinks this project is important'**

The problem for us is that we will serve 45 farmer/producers on-site and another 20 or so off-site. Are we expected to provide the above information for each of 65-70 farmers? Or should we only do this for 3 or 4?

A: In the Audience section of the Producer Training Track 2 application, the applicant should include all CA Food Producer project partners. If 70 CA food producers will be project partners, then the rest of the application must align – e.g., the Project Team + Letters of Support section would need to include all 70 producers and the work plan, budget, and other application materials would need to align. If instead the applicant plans to use grant funds to support a smaller group of 4 CA Food producers, rather than a larger group of 70, then the rest of the

application must align – e.g., the Project Team + Letters of Support section would need to include the 4 producers and the work plan, budget, and other application materials would need to align. Ultimately, it is up to the applicant to determine the partners for their Track 2 proposed project and then align the rest of the application accordingly.

Q: [Track 4] To clarify, do I need a letter from each producer we assist?

A: Each CA food producer project partner that a Track 2 producer training applicant lists in #7 of the application must provide a letter of support for question #12 in the application.

Q: [Track 1] [Question A] I am currently applying for the CA Farm to School Grant, Track 1, on behalf of several schools in our district. Is it allowable to include XX Elementary in the application? Grades at this school include preschool and Transitional Kindergarten (TK = elementary) only.

[Question B] If yes, to answer question #7 of track 1, may I use student enrollment from our district database? This school became an elementary school this school year and is not listed on the 22/23 Census Day Enrollment List.

A: [Response A] Yes, it is allowable to include XX Elementary in the application.

[Response B] No. 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] [Question A] I took an in depth food safety training through CAFF and will have my food safety plan in place before the grant period but not before I submit the grant. Can I say yes to that question or do I have to submit the plan with the application?

[Question B] How do I get advance dept approval for building projects? I have a building project I would like to do that is already permitted but hasn't begun. (We currently have no indoor facilities at the farm as they burned down in a fire. We would like to build a wash/pack/processing/cooler barn to replace what was there and allow us to scale up to serve schools in a bigger way)

[Question C] Can the wages be for overseeing the building project and producing the food that goes to schools or is it only for our hands-on food education activities?

[Question D] How many letters from schools can I have? I work with several schools. I have letters from two but wondering if it is worth getting letters from all of them.

A: [Response A] If an applicant has a food safety plan at the time they submit the application, then they may respond yes to question #36 in the Track 4 application. Please note that while #36 asks applicants, “Do you have a food safety plan?” it does not ask applicants to submit a food safety plan.

[Response B] Prior written approval is not required in order 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](#).

[Response C] 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 D] Track 4 applicants may submit multiple letters of intent. Please note that all 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)

Each of these 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.

For example, if a food producer applicant listed one of these entities in the application as a project partner and then submitted the required letter of intent from that entity, then this would meet the Track 4 minimum partnership requirement for food producer applicants. If a food producer applicant listed more than one of these entities in the application as a project partner (which is allowable but not required), then the applicant would need to submit a letter of intent from each of these entities. It is up to the applicant whether they would like to include one of the eligible partner entities above or multiple in their application.

Q: [Track 1] Our project for our district includes expanding school gardens and developing microfarms on campus to provide food for our cafeterias, student-run farm stands to provide produce to the community, and farm to table cooking classes in our culinary programs. So, this means we only checked goal 1 (and not 2,3,4) in number 22. So now we are curious how to approach question 24. If we are growing the food on campus, and not planning on getting produce from other local farms, what dollar amount do we enter for 24a? "Enter Total Dollar Amount: CA Food Procurement for school meals"

A: If you are proposing to use grant funds for the school nutrition services department to purchase California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods for school meals from your school district's school gardens and microfarms, then you would enter the total dollar amount you're requesting to use for this purpose in #24a.

- Note: 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 allowable. Grant recipients must follow USDA procurement and food safety regulations.

However, if you are proposing to use \$0 in grant funds for this purpose, then there is a follow-up question that asks, "If \$0, please describe the other source(s) of funding that you will be using for CA food procurement for school meals during the project."

Q: [Track 4] Should a school partner that operates both ECE and K-12 meal programs send two separate letters of intent or only one?

A: If the project partner is one entity – e.g., a single school district or a single charter school in CA that is a School Food Authority currently operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – then only one letter of intent from the director of the entity's school meal program is required. If the entity operates additional meal programs beyond the NSLP, then in question #2 of the letter of intent template, they may list both the NSLP and the additional meal programs that they operate.

Q: [Track 4] Does [the] program have a specific recommendation for determining proportion of equipment used for grant activities and non-grant activities? (e.g. labor hours, volume of product, etc.)

A: The grant application says: "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."

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] Will awardees have to provide documents to our team to verify equipment usage proportion during grant implementation?

A: This is not something that this grant program requests from grant recipients as part of the standard invoicing process for project costs. However, please note that per [Section 325 of the Cdfa Grant Administration Regulations](#), recipients shall maintain all records relating to the grant award.

Q: [Track 4] If I have a letter of intent from school A, in question 22, can I have a different school and school district, school B, be an additional team member in my answer to question 23, if I do not have a letter of intent from them?

I am not sure if I will receive school B's letter of intent in time.

A: Yes; additional team members may include school site partners, non-profit organization partners, proposed contractors, or other key members of your farm to school team. The additional team members listed in #23 do not need to provide a letter of intent.

March 23rd–28th Q&A

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] We applied for the RSFI grant program and are waiting to see if we've been approved for funding. Are we allowed to have overlaps in our funding requests between the two grant programs? And if so, is there a protocol of how to do that?

[Question B] Additionally, we are requesting funding for infrastructure and equipment that will benefit both Farm to School activities and non-Farm to School activities. Does the funding cover just the portion of the price of equipment and infrastructure that will go toward Farm to School activities? And do we put that estimated price in our budget or do we use the full price?

A: [Response A] Eligible applicants that have applied to other grant programs, such as the RFSI, may still apply to the 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. However, please note that activities funded under the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program cannot replace activities funded by another federal or state grant program. There is a question in the Track 4 application (#57) that asks applicants, "Have you submitted your project proposal to another federal or state grant program or has another federal or state grant program funded your project proposal?" If yes, then question #57 asks applicants to describe how the proposed project in this application supplements rather than replaces efforts funded by other federal or state grant program(s).

After checking in with the RFSI program, we learned the following information:

If the RFSI project proposal is selected for submission to the USDA, the applicant would be required to disclose their submission to any other grant programs at that time. RFSI would ask

them to remove any items they had requested from both grant programs from their RFSI budget at that time.

[Response B] The grant application says: "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." The amount requested in the application would be the proportional amount that is for proposed grant project activities. If you would like to specify the full cost of the item for context, you may include this information in the Itemization and Description question for the applicable budget category.

Q: [Track 4] [Regarding question #54, program income] I understand it as, will the applicant sell goods (fruit) or get paid for services, such as pay himself for services, from grant money? If so, what will that earned amount be AND how will that income be used for the grant project? Seem accurate?

A: If awarded, and the project generates income as a result of the grant award during the grant term, for example through income from the sale of goods or fees for services performed, these would need to be reinvested into the grant project and spent on allowable costs ([pages 32-35 of the RFA](#)).

The grant funds themselves would not be considered program income to the recipient. The definition of program income is in [Section 303\(a\)\(49\) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#).

Q: [All Tracks] Can signatures on letters of intent/letters of support be electronic, or do they have to be wet signatures?

A: Signatures on the letters of intent/support can be electronic or a wet signature.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] If distribution coordination would occur anyways, regardless of if the grant is awarded, then such costs can be covered as indirect expense...eg. In this case, it is the time spent by the team member who will be coordinating delivery of beef products to local schools during this grant project.

[Question B] Is it necessary to provide a food safety plan for if we are not going to be handling food? (We can procure the food safety plan from the processor and distributor that is directly handling, packaging, and distributing the beef products).

[Question C] Of the schools we will be planning field trips with, one of them was included in our previous FY22 grant project. This round we will do field trips with different students, and updated curriculum - not covering costs for previously planned field trips. Is this an acceptable activity?

[Question D] If a producer marked "Transitioning to organic" does the plan for doing so need to be reflected in the workplan? Or since it is not a budget item and not directly related to the primary grant activities, is it not necessary?

A: [Response A] Staffing/labor dedicated to farm to school activities is allowable as a direct cost in Track 4, under the Farm to School Staff/Labor Costs budget category. Per [page 33 of the RFA](#), allowable staff/labor costs in this category include aggregating and distributing whole or

minimally processed food to schools, as well as managing administration related to selling whole or minimally processed food to schools.

[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 and the cost of this training is an allowable cost. 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] Per [page 39 of the RFA](#), previous grant recipients that meet the eligibility criteria may apply to continue funding the same project activities after completing the previous project(s), begin funding new project activities that build upon existing project activities, and/or use funding to add new elements to existing project activities. However, previous grant recipients may not apply to fund the same project activities that the 2021 or 2022 award is already funding during the overlapping grant time period. Previous grant recipients must clearly describe in the application how the 2023-24 proposed project will supplement (i.e., enhance or expand) but not replace the existing project. If the proposed field trips will supplement but not replace the previously funded field trips, then they would be allowable.

[Response D] No; if a Track 4 applicant responds yes to the question in #38b that asks, “Is your operation currently participating in a transitional organic program?” then they do not need to include this as an activity in their proposed project work plan unless it is part of their proposed project.

Q: [Track 1] We are applying as Option B, a County Office of Education. For the question about State Representatives should we include the state representatives for the school site where the project will be implemented or for our business offices?

A: For the state representative question, please use the business office where your organization is headquartered.

Q: [Track 1] I would like to apply for funds that will pay for an elementary school garden/nutrition education program (K-5 specific), but I also want to apply for local procurement funds which would benefit the meal program for the entire district (K-12). When the application asks how many school sites my project will serve, can I include the entire district?

A: Yes, if the proposed project will serve all school sites in the district through the procurement and/or education components of the project, then you may include all school sites in the district in question #5.

Q: [Track 2] Can XXX be listed as a California producer partner on our own track 2 grant?

A: No, a Track 2 applicant may not list its own entity as a California food producer partner in the Track 2 application.

Q: [Track 4] My question on number 35 is: As Track 4 do we complete Activities and Timeline sections for all three Goals, or combine #2 and #3 together under goal #2, etc. (Asking because the directive in small print in goal box #3 says to skip if section 2 is checked).

A: At minimum, Track 4 applicants must select Option 1 in question #33, and complete Goal – Part 1 and Goal – Part 2 in question #35. It is optional to select Option 2. If Option 2 is selected, then completing Goal – Part 3 in question #35 is also required.

Q: [Track 3] We are in the process of preparing our application and have a question regarding the HPI point system. Our child care center operates three locations... each with different zip codes. However, all three locations are within the same county. Could you please clarify how the HPI point system will work in this scenario, considering the locations span two cities but are within the same county?

A: For question #18 in the Track 3 application, the CDFA will utilize the [Healthy Places Index \(HPI\) map](#) to determine the HPI 3.0 score for each ECE site that the project will serve (based on census tract of the ECE sites listed in question #6). If the project will serve multiple ECE sites, the CDFA will calculate the average HPI 3.0 score across those sites.

The review criteria for question #18 is:

- Healthy Places Index (HPI) 3.0 Score (percentile):
 - 20 points: less than 5 percentile
 - 18 points: 5.1 to 10 percentile
 - 16 points: 10.1 to 20 percentile
 - 14 points: 20.1 to 30 percentile
 - 12 points: 30.1 to 40 percentile
 - 10 points: 40.1 to 50 percentile
 - 8 points: 50.1 to 60 percentile
 - 6 points: 60.1 to 70 percentile
 - 4 points: 70.1 to 80 percentile
 - 2 points: 80.1 to 90 percentile
 - 0 points: 90.1 to 100 percentile

Q: [Track 1] Please provide information on how Track 1 applicants can submit letters of support or affirmation of commitment from partners and/or the school leadership team associated with a grant.

A: There is not a place to upload letters of support in Track 1.

The Project Team section of the Track 1 application asks applicants to share the name, title, and a two-sentence description of each team member's involvement in the proposed project. The first sentence should describe the person's role within the project, and the second sentence should clearly describe why they think the proposed project is important.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] on the Track #4 Application Questions and Review Criteria on page 16 under review criteria under Business History it says "Applicant _____ that they have _____ farming/producing food..." Can you please explain what those blanks are meant to include for the reviewer so we can be sure to be clear in our question for #29?

[Question B] will the Food Safety Plan need to be submitted during the application or award process?

[Question C] For question 23 in Track #4 it says to list additional team members including contractors. If our project includes infrastructure development, can the applicant be the contractor and then they hire subcontractors to do the work under the owner-build code?

[Question D] For the applicant name in question #1 track #4, if we are applying as a partnership, do we just choose one of our names or do we put both?

A: [Response A] Here is the review criteria for question #29 in the Track 4 application:

- Business History: /10 points
Applicant _____ that they have _____ farming / producing food or as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.
 - 10 points: clearly demonstrates; significant experience
 - 7 points: clearly demonstrates; some experience
 - 4 points: somewhat clearly demonstrates; some experience
 - 0 points: unclearly demonstrates experience OR does not demonstrate experience

- To clarify, the point breakdown is:
 - 10 points: Applicant clearly demonstrates that they have significant experience farming / producing food or as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.
 - 7 points: Applicant clearly demonstrates that they have some experience farming / producing food or as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.
 - 4 points: Applicant somewhat clearly demonstrates that they have some experience farming / producing food or as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.
 - 0 points: Applicant unclearly demonstrates experience OR does not demonstrate experience farming / producing food or as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise.

[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.

[Response C] Per [page 34 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](#).

[Response D] It is up to the applicant how to fill out question #1. If you are unsure how to respond to this question, it is ok. Please respond however seems to fit best.

Q: [Track 3] For Track 3 Letter of Support, we are hoping to recruit 20 Family Child Care Home educators for our proposed program. Is it acceptable to have 1 letter of support that all educators co-sign or would they need to submit separate letters?

A: For the Track 3 letter of support, it is acceptable to have one letter with all Family Child Care Home educators’ signatures, or a separate letter from each educator.

Q: [Track 4] One of the school districts we are working with has a situation with the letter of intent. ...it turns out that the director went on leave...

Could the nutrition manager complete the letter on the director’s behalf in this situation?

A: If the director is unavailable to sign the letter of intent, the acting/interim director may sign the letter of intent. If the Nutrition Manager is currently filling the director’s role while they are on leave, the manager can sign the letter of intent.

Q: [Track 4] [Question A] Is there a difference or requirement for “Application Name” Vs “Project Title”? Can they be the same/do they have to be the same?

[Question B] Question 16. “Cash Income”, is this only cash sales?

[Question C] If we have a contractor in place but are not sure of the specific person can we just put in the company name into our application?

[Question D] Are utilities and allowable expense?

A: [Response A] The Application Name and Project Title are up to the applicant. They can be the same or different.

[Response B] Question #16 in the Track 4 application asks: If you are applying as a producer, what was your operation’s average annual gross cash farm income during the previous three-year period? If you are applying as a public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprise, what was your operation’s average annual gross cash income during the previous three-year period? If you prefer not to answer, please check, “Prefer not to answer.”

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

[Response C] Yes. Please note that 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](#). Per the bottom of [page 34 of the RFA](#), applicants who include contractors in their Budget must also include those contractors in the Project Team section of the application.

[Response D] Yes; indirect costs, as defined in [Section 303\(a\)\(36\) of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#), are allowable. Section 303(a)(36) defines indirect costs as, “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.” Please note that in this grant program, the cap on indirect costs is up to 30% of direct costs.

Q: [Track 4] I just want to clarify: if a track 4 applicant does not use the letter of intent template provided by the CDFA, will their project be considered ineligible/their application incomplete?

A: Track 4 applicants must use the CDFA provided [letter of intent template](#). An application may be considered incomplete without the CDFA provided letter of intent.

Q: [Track 4] I was sent over an LOI as a word document and I reformatted it into a pdf and it has all the correct information, but looks slightly different. Is this allowed for the LOI?

A: If the LOI is still the completed version of the CDFA provided [letter of intent template](#) with all of the information included, this would be acceptable.

Q: [Track 4] Can a food safety plan be attached for Question 37: Visualization?

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] [Question A] Q 13 asks for the number of people who work at the farm. Does that refer to the total number of FTE workers? Should I include volunteers?

[Question B] Q 18c If I have two partners at the same school district, one for food and one for education, should I include it twice with each individual being listed separately?

[Question C] Is attending a conference on farm to school best practices required or strongly required?

A: [Response A] In Track 4, question #13, you may respond in whichever way you would prefer to interpret this question. Question #13 will not impact your score, but is required so that we can learn more about the background of your organization/farm. Then, in the optional last question at the end of the application, we welcome you to share additional information if you would like.

[Response B] For Track 4, question #18c, this response is meant to be the name of the school district, rather than the individual staff names.

[Response C] Attending a conference is not a requirement of this grant program.

QL [Track 4] Is CDFA only looking for Letters of Intent from districts who might purchase or order product from producers? I'm talking with both contract growers and project partners like XXX who would be collaborators, but not end-users. The LOI is worded so it looks relevant to buyers only. Am I interpreting that correctly?

If that's the case, is it sufficient for me to list proposed project collaborators in the application narrative, or should I be trying to get formal letters of support from them?

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.

The Track 4 application does not ask for letters of intent from distributors or food hubs. A space in the application for listing proposed project collaborators beyond the required project team members is in question #23:

- 23. Additional Team Members, including proposed contractors – 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.

Q: [Track 1] We have another question, for the Activities section under the goals, is there a word limit or suggestion for each activity?

We are wondering how descriptive we should be, or can be when writing these out.

A: For the activities section, there is not a word count or a limit to the number of activities. It is up to you to determine how much to include in your descriptions. When developing the activities for your proposed project work plan, please refer to the scoring criteria.

Q: [Track 4] A producer asked if they should list all addresses associated with the farm or only just their primary address. Can you please confirm? They will grow carrots for schools at all addresses and keep a walk-in cooler at the primary address.

A: For question #5 (“Physical Business/Organization Address”), applicants may respond however seems to fit best. If an applicant would like to share additional information beyond what fits in the text boxes of the application, then there is an optional question at the very end of the application that asks, “Is there anything else you would like to share with us? Please note that answering this question or leaving it blank will not impact scoring. [Character Limit = 1000]”

Please note that per [page 20 of the RFA](#), the applicant’s operation (where the proposed project will take place), physical business address, and business mailing address must be in California. Additionally, the owner(s)/leader(s) of the operation must be California residents.

Q: [Track 4] we got a letter of support from one of our current distributors, that is working with schools. Should the letter of support go in the same section as the letter of intents should I upload it there as well?

A: In question #25 of the Track 4 application, please only upload a letter of intent from each of the California school district, county office of education, charter school, Tribal school, and child care center project representatives listed in #22. There is no need to upload letters of support from distributors.

Please note that a space in the application for listing proposed project collaborators (such as distributors, if applicable) beyond the required project team members is in question #23:

- 23. Additional Team Members, including proposed contractors – 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.

Q: [Tracks 1 & 2] Are we able to attach letters of support in addition to the template in the grants for T-1 and T-2?

A: There is not a place to upload letters of support in Track 1.

In Track 2 – question #12, applicants must upload a letter of support from each of the School Food Authority project representatives and Food Producer project representatives listed in the Project Team section of the application. There is not a place to upload other letters of support in the Track 2 application.

Q: [Track 4] Would it be acceptable if we ended up working with a different school than our original application? (Presuming the school fits the same criteria.)

A: If awarded, there is a revision request process that is available to grant recipients during the grant term. Recipients may submit budget and/or scope of work revision requests to the CDFA. A recipient may request a change in project partner via a scope of work revision request and, if applicable, a budget revision request. Revision requests require justification and are subject to CDFA approval. The CDFA Farm to School Team understands that things may evolve over the course of the grant term; however, in the application, please do your best to identify the project partner(s), develop a proposed project work plan, and develop a proposed project budget that accurately reflect your project plan at this time.

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](#).

March 13th–22nd Q&A

Q: [All Tracks] Who do I contact for technical support with the AmpliFund web portal?

A: For technical support with the Amplifund web portal, please contact AmpliFund by emailing support@amplifund.zendesk.com or calling the help desk at (216) 377-5500 ext. 2. Phone support is available from 8:00am – 8:00pm ET, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Q: [All Tracks] I want to allow my team members to access our grant application and add information that I have pre-approved. Is this possible?

A: 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](#).

Additionally, for technical support with the AmpliFund portal, please contact AmpliFund by emailing support@amplifund.zendesk.com or (216) 377-5500 ext. 2. Phone support is available from 8:00am – 8:00pm ET, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Q: [Track 3] We attended a webinar and found out that you could help put us in touch with some local farm/food/food box suppliers?

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

Q: [Track 2] I'm writing to ask if we can talk for 15-20 mins in the next week or so. We are applying in track 2 for the incubator grant program. I'd like to run the project by you to see if you have any questions or suggestions.

A: During the application period, our team is unfortunately not able to provide specific feedback on grant project ideas.

However, if you have questions about Track 2, 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 upcoming dates, times, and registration links are listed on the [grant program webpage](#) under the “Grant Info Session and Weekly Q&A Sessions” dropdown. Or please email your questions to us at cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Q: [Track 4] My team is interested in partnering with a local school district to help provide a healthy source of nutrition to students. I know we are reaching the deadline for the grant funding however I would like to plant the seed to get connected. Are there any resources you could provide me with in finding a school district or education organization I can reach out to?

A: Thanks for reaching out! We will connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff for your region to provide support with connecting to school districts. One of the ways our team can help during the grant application period is to introduce producers and schools.

Q: [Track 3] I am currently filling out the application and had a question about how I would find farmers that utilize climate smart ag practices, or small farmers, or disadvantaged or veteran farmers? We are willing to purchase produce from them but don't have connections to them.

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

Q: [Track 4] can you please let me know if the committee is going to ask for Tax Records/Statements, and if so, which years? My company was founded in 2022, and still fairly young, not a huge profit margin.

A: The 2023-24 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program application/application process does not ask applicants to submit tax records/statements.

March 23rd–28th Q&A

Q: [Track 3] I am filling out the grant for the Farm to ECE Community Grant and I am wanting to know if there are videos or anything posted on your site of past grantees and how they are doing and how it has worked out for them?

A: Here are a few resources regarding past Track 3 grantees:

- [2022 CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Project Summaries](#): the project summaries of the 6 farm to ECE awarded projects from the 2022 grant round begin on page 14
- [Archive of previous CA Farm to School Network e-newsletters](#): these e-newsletters often include highlights about grant projects funded through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program
 - For example, the [January 2024 newsletter](#) highlighted a farm to ECE grant project
 - Here is the [sign-up link](#) for the newsletter if you are interested in receiving it in the future
- [@cafarmtoschool Instagram](#): sometimes includes highlights about grant projects funded through the CA Farm to School Incubator Grant Program

Q: [All Tracks] Is it likely that the deadline will be extended, or another application period will open in 2024?

A: Unfortunately, we are not able to extend the application deadline past April 4, 2024. There is not an additional application period planned in 2024.

Please note 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, whether or not they are part of the grant program. If you are interested, we can connect you with the CDFA Farm to School Regional Staff serving your region and they will be able to provide technical assistance.

Q: [Track 3] [Question A] Where can we buy food like meats, milk, eggs, butter, etc.? [Question B] Where can we find a list of vendors or stores where we can buy the groceries from that are under the qualifying criteria of California farm grown foods in San Diego?

[Question C] How often do we have to send receipts for proof of purchases? For how long do we need to keep records of the receipts for proof of purchase?

A: [Response A] Per [page 28 of the RFA](#), procurement of California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods with grant funds may be from vendors including but not limited to producers, distributors, food hubs, Community Supported Agriculture providers, and farmers markets.

[Response B] We do not have the specific requested list. However, we will introduce you to the CDFA Farm to School Regional Producer Engagement Specialist currently serving your region in case you would like to connect. One of the ways our team can help during the application period is to introduce producers and ECE sites. Please note that because we are nearing the

end of the application period, these introductions may not be possible by the time the application is due.

Additionally, beyond the grant application period, CDFA Regional Farm to School Staff are available to provide free, non-competitive technical assistance to ECE sites to facilitate introductions with producers.

[Response C] Per [page 36 of the RFA](#), financial reporting consists of: submitting monthly or quarterly invoices to the CDFA (utilizing a template that the CDFA will provide) along with documentation to demonstrate proof of payment, detailing spending to be reimbursed for actual allowable costs incurred.

Per [Section 325 of the CDFA Grant Administration Regulations](#), recipients shall retain all records relating to the grant award for a period of three years from the date of the close out notification pursuant to section 329.

Q: [All Tracks] I wonder if you could suggest any farms that would be good to work with.

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