# **Child Nutrition Program**

# **2023-2025 Education Grant**

# **Q&A**

**Q1: There is a requirement for a signature(s) from Nutritional Services Directors and also School Administrators. Will letters signed by the individuals attached to the application meet the requirement or will they have to sign the document that we are sending in?**

A1: No, the Superintendent's signature does not meet the requirements of the School Administrator’s and the Nutritional Services Director’s signatures. The intent of this requirement is to ensure that key personnel at each site are aware of the project taking place. A well-designed system is one in which someone comes into the school and works with school personnel to teach kids about the food they are normally eating, especially in the cafeteria. Therefore, the best Farm to School program is one that works in the school and works in concert with the Nutrition Services Department to highlight the local items they are serving.

Note that the Application has only one place for a signature, so if you are collecting signatures for a multi-school project, you should attach a document containing the required signatures for the participating schools.

**Q2: Are we allowed to apply for both the mini grant and full grant options, or do we need to choose only one?**

A2: Per Section 1.1 of the RFA, only one Application is allowed for this RFA. Applicants must select only one of the tracks for which to apply.

**Q3: Can a district apply for both the smaller grant and the larger one if it’s different schools?**

A3: No. Only one application is allowed per eligible entity (Section 1.1). Applicants must choose only one of the grant tracks for which to apply.

Applicants must ensure that the entity listed on the application is an eligible entity as defined in Section 1.3 (see Addendum 2). Non-eligible Applicants will be disqualified.

**Q4: In the RFA, it states it is for serving students in the Child and Adult Care Food Program or Summer Food Service Program. Does this mean that it would only apply to students in these programs? Or does it also apply to the meals served in the cafeteria during the school year through the School Nutrition Programs?**

A4: Section 1.1 of the RFA states that the “...Oregon Farm to Child Nutrition Education Grant shall use the grant for costs directly associated with educational activities offered to children enrolled in either a public school or public charter school within a school district. Sponsors and programs serving students who participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (“CACFP”), or Summer Food Service Program (“SFSP”) are eligible as well.”

**Q5: We are** **a nonprofit educational farm serving an Oregon county. We currently provide farm field trip opportunities to two school districts and are planning to apply for the ODE Farm to CNP grant to support those programs. As part of the application process we need to be in contact with the Nutrition Services Director, and your contact information was provided for questions related to that section. How and who would we reach out to in order to start that process?**

A5: You can find the districts’ Child Nutrition contact information on ODE’s District Directory at <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/about-us/pages/school-directory.aspx>. If no contact is listed, reach out to the district office.

**Q6:** **Regarding the following requirements:**

* **The principal, tribal leader, or other administrators at school(s) where activities will take place has reviewed the project for this school and supports it.**
* **As the signature of Nutrition Services**

**As an organization, we will be applying for our current work with 10-11 Title 1 schools in two districts. For the first bullet point, I’m unclear if you would want the signature of all 10-11 principals or what type of administrator, especially for a large district. Our points of contact at a district level are very different between the two districts. We have strong relationships with Nutrition services in both districts so while I'm less concerned about trying to secure their signatures, I am concerned about the logistics and timing of trying to do so if I have to secure all of the above signatures on the same documents and provide enough time to get it from one person to the next prior to the deadline. Can you provide any guidance or clarification on that given our breadth of partnerships in our program?**

A6: Signatures are required for all sites with which you will be working. This ensures that all parties are aware of the project taking place. The principal for each site is an acceptable administrator. We recognize the effort the collection of signatures may take, so we recommend that you get an early start. Districts have just one Nutrition Services Director.

**Q7: Can the document that contains signatures from School Administrators and Nutrition Services be in a PDF format?**

A7: Yes. Electronic signatures are allowed, as well as PDF format.

**Q8: I just received the Free and Reduced Lunch rates for our partner schools. All have "yes" except one school. Does this mean that we may not include this school in our grant proposal?**

A8: The school will not qualify on their own for a mini grant, but they can qualify if they partner with another school and between the two of them, their numbers are above 40%.

Take all the schools and add up their numbers: (Eligible Free+ Eligible Red) /Eligible Total = %.

The total must be at least 40%.

**Q9: On the sample budget it shows "indirect costs" just as a percentage and no additional description, is this acceptable or does there need to be a description?**

A9: Indirect and administrative costs should be listed as such on the budget spreadsheet with the corresponding dollar amount. Indirect costs may include costs such as indirect rates and overhead such as internet, electricity, etcetera, not directly relating to education and not exceeding 25% of the total grant award (Section 3.2.2.1). Only costs which are overhead-type expenses can be claimed.

**Q10: Can I apply for the mini grant for each of my schools? Or is the mini grant for the entire district?**

A10: One Application can be submitted per eligible entity (Section 1.1). Eligible entities can be found in Section 1.3 (see Addendum 2 for the most recent list). Applicants must choose only one grant track – the mini or the full grant – for which to apply. A school district may choose to apply for one mini grant **or** one full grant. A school district cannot apply for both. A school, applying independently from their school district, may submit one application for the mini grant **or** for the full grant.

**Q11: Because we will be gathering at least a dozen signatures (10 school principals, 2 Nutrition Services directors) is it acceptable to create an addendum signature page to accompany the grant application?**

Q11: Yes, this is allowable so long as your addendum signature page is submitted with your application prior to closing. If received after closing, we cannot accept it.

**Q12: My school is a new school in my district, and we do not currently have a school garden program. My district does partner with a local organization and the district receives a larger grant from ODE to help with those costs. I want to make sure that I would qualify for this grant if my district is receiving other grant money. The grant money they are receiving will not be utilized at my school site. I would like to apply for this grant so we can start to develop a school garden program in conjunction with our curriculum.**

A12: Receipt of other grant money will not disqualify an eligible entity from applying.

**Q13: Define Permanent Structure more please. Are you able to purchase a greenhouse or raised garden beds?**

A13: Yes. As long as you can move them. Permanent buildings with slab foundation and stick-built are not permitted. Greenhouse kits are fine.

**Q14: Looking over some documents such as the sample grant application, there is a grant management training on 10/10/23 listed. Can you clarify please.**

A14: The dates listed in the sample grant application are incorrect and will be corrected with an Addendum. Please see Section 1.4 Schedule for the correct dates. The mandatory webinar for grant awardees is December 8, 2023.

**Q15: I have reviewed the slides posted on the website. Is there anything else we need to do besides the submission of the application?**

A15: Other than the submission of the application and application materials, there are no additional requirements prior to the close of the RFA.

**Q16: As I review the grant slides I see under Direct and Indirect Expenses, "Equipment: Permanent (capital) equipment cannot be funded. Moveable/transportable items could be."**

**Part of our project would need an irrigation/watering system. Does this mean we would have to purchase moveable sprinklers and not be allowed to use the funds to expand our current underground sprinkler system? Also, would a deer/pest fence fall under this as well? For a garden area would our fence count as a "permanent" structure or is fencing allowable? Just need to clarify to adjust the budget accordingly.**

A16: Irrigation supplies/sprinklers and fencing are allowable. The intent of the restriction of permanent capital (see Section III of Exhibit A in Attachment A) is to disallow permanent structures such as a permanent building with a slab and stick-built materials which could not be moved. However, if you are unsure if your purchase or project are allowable, please contact the SPC before submitting your application.

**Q17: Regarding the following: *“Labor: Full positions (or FTE) cannot be funded; however, broken-out labor expenses can be.”***

**Is this guideline on labor the same as in the past? Or is this a new element to decide when budgeting? We have had a garden coordinator who basically oversees the activities, scheduling, purchasing, etc. Is this no longer an allowable expense?**

A17: There have been no changes made to how CNP requests that labor be accounted for in the budget or how the Agency reimburses labor costs. Full-time equivalent positions (FTE) are not allowable. Labor costs should be broken down for how much is spent on the project as follows: hours x wage. Benefits can be listed as a percentage on the next line.

**Q18: Are the signatures from our principals and the onsite nutrition coordinators at our 18 partner schools acknowledging that they have read the "entire" grant request or have reviewed/acknowledged and support SGP's Science in the Garden Program at their school. We are submitting our grant request for support of our Science in the Garden Program.**

**Also, the first school where I approached an onsite nutrition services coordinator to request a signature their school district does not allow folks in the nutrition services department to sign "grant documents". There are several layers of upper management that need to be involved including the Chief Business Officer. However, I believe that they may provide us with an acknowledgement and support of SGP's program at their school.**

**Please let me know if I am missing something in my interpretation of the grant application.**

A18: School Administrator signatures are required for all sites with which you will be working. This ensures that all parties are aware of the project taking place. Failure to obtain all signatures for all the sites with which you will be working will be a failure to meet this requirement.

**Q19: I am looking for the application for the mini grant. I found the document which says it's a sample application, but I don't see any others posted. Is this the actual application needed to apply? Do we use the excel budget template that is used for the full grant?**

**We want to be sure we have all the necessary documents to apply for the mini grant. Finally, is the due date also November 3rd?**

A19: Attachment D is the application for the mini grant which you should fill out and submit. Attachment E is the application for the full grant. Attachment F – Budget Worksheet is the budget spreadsheet which should be used for both grant types: mini and full. All application materials must be submitted at the close of the RFA on November 3rd, 2023 at 4:00pm (Section 1.4).

**Q20: Our organization was awarded this Farm to CNP Education grant in the past. I wanted to be sure we can apply for the larger capacity sustaining full grant, since we serve students after school and in the summer months who come from throughout our school district, and from nearly every school and region in Lincoln County. Can you please confirm?**

A20: Per Section 1.1 of the RFA, the Capacity Sustaining Full Grant is intended for district, multi-site or statewide coordination, larger scale impact. Applicants should have a proven track record of sustaining successful model programs that have demonstrated capacity for managing grants over $25,000. Combined total sites that serve 40% or more free or reduced lunch are eligible.

**Q21: One of our sites qualifies (40% or more free and reduced lunch) and one does not. Does that mean we are unable to include the expenses incurred at the latter in our proposal?**

A21: If one of the site’s free and reduced lunch percentage is not 40% or more and the combined percentage of all the sites is not 40% or more, expenses incurred at the non-qualifying site(s) cannot be included in the proposal.

**Q22: Although we only have one facility in a nearby city, our organization serves students who come from throughout our school district, and from nearly every school and region in our county. So, would this qualify our organization as “district and larger scale impact”?**

A22: Yes. This would qualify an organization to apply for the full grant.

**Q23: The USDA website still lists public and state-controlled institutions of higher education as qualifying. However, on the new Addendum 2 that is not listed. Will our university program still qualify? We partner with the local school district, and each provides a different service to complete the program, but I want to confirm our eligibility.**

A23: Yes, a state-controlled institution of higher education will qualify (in Addendum 4).

**Q24: We are a small organization with only 4 employees, 2 of which won't be involved in this grant process. Can we list our ED twice under the EGMS contacts, or does each contact need to be a different person?**

A24: We require three separate people to be listed.

**Q25: We offer our programming to two of the local school districts, but do not necessarily work with every school in those districts. The schools we work with vary based on scheduled field trips. Should we list the specific schools we have worked with in the past and have already scheduled with, or list the entire districts?**

A25: The choice is up to the Applicant. However, you should list every school with whom you intend to work.

**Q26: I am wondering if shipping containers count as "capital equipment" under the ODE Farm to Child Nutrition Program Education Grant. We would like to purchase two of them. One to serve as a tool shed/equipment storage and one for holding refrigerators and produce storage.**

A26: This is allowable as long as the containers are moveable and do not involve a concrete slab. Per Section 3.2.2.2 of the RFA, this grant will not cover purchased items that are permanent structures.

**Q27: We work with multiple school districts and schools within them. For the in-grant signature from a school administrator and a nutrition director - do signatures from our main district work or do we need to add signatures from all school districts or all schools?**

A27: School Administrator signatures are required for all sites with which you will be working. This ensures that all parties are aware of the project taking place. The signature of an individual at the district level does not qualify for the School Administrator requirement. Districts have just one Nutrition Services Director.

**Q28: Can this grant be combined with another grant to fill a full-time position?**

A28: The Farm to Education grant cannot be used to fill FTE or whole “positions” – but can be used to pay for labor hours and benefits. Additionally, the Farm to Education grant funds may be combined with another grant; however, the position should be listed on the claim and budget using the hours x wage, plus benefits format, like Pre-Application Informational Materials stipulate (posted on 10/02).

**Q29: I'd like to clarify/confirm that I read in the grant RFA that we can outline the program's activities and include in the budget expenses from the start of this school year - did I read that correctly?**

A29: Per Section 1.2 of the RFA, a successful Applicant may start utilizing funds retroactive to September 01, 2023, provided they have attended the training or watched the training recording and have a fully executed agreement.

**Q30: Are there any applications that we could look at from previous grant cycles that have been successful and not successful? We would like to have some good references for writing this grant.**

A30: Past applications vary greatly in project scope such that providing examples of successful and not successful applications does not adequately reflect what types of applications may be successful in the current RFA round. Furthermore, the application questions used for this round have changed from those in the past. Answering the application questions fully and ensuring that they are well designed; promote healthy food activities; have clear education objectives; involve parents or the community; are connected to a school district’s farm-to-school procurement activities; and are culturally relevant to the students being served with grant moneys (Section 1.1) is the most effective way to increase the probability of being awarded.

**Q31: Could each school go out for a full grant technically, as their own entity?**

A31: Technically, yes. One Application can be submitted per eligible entity (Section 1.1). Eligible entities can be found in Section 1.3 (see Addendum 2 for the most recent list). Applicants must choose only one grant track – the mini or the full grant – for which to apply. A school, applying independently from their school district, may submit one application for the mini grant **or** for the full grant.

However, per Section 1.1 of the RFA, the Capacity Sustaining Full Grant should be a larger scale impact such as across a district, multi-site or statewide coordination. Applicants must have a proven track record, sustaining successful model programs that have demonstrated capacity for managing grants over $25,000. Additionally, combined total sites must serve 40% or more free or reduced lunch to be eligible.

**Q32: Would fencing be something covered under this grant?**

A32: Fencing is something that most school districts in Oregon require to establish a school garden. We do allow fencing with the thought being you could always remove said fencing and relocate it if necessary.

**Q33: I am with a public charter school with our own Charter Council/Board of Directors. Our sponsoring district provides cold meals as needed at our school under the NSLP/SBP (participating via CEP district-wide). I do not know if our sponsoring district participates in any Farm to School initiatives. I expect not.**

**Our school has a thriving school garden and students participate in gardening classes. We are considering applying for a mini grant to support & expand our garden education and hands-on program. I understand 1) charter schools qualify and 2) individual schools that serve meals under CNP (as per Addendum 2 qualify. However, because we have no control over the NSLP/SBP with our district, our projects/efforts cannot be directly tied to any child nutrition program efforts/procurement, etc.**

**I have not seen anything that would specifically exempt us, however, some language in the RFA implies a relationship between funding and CNPs (e.g., Section 1.1 General Information, Purpose - indicates preference will be given to entities that propose educational activities that: e) are connected to a school district’s farm-to-school procurement activities (p. 3)). Would we qualify?**

A33: As long as the school applying participates in the NSLP, then yes, they are eligible to apply.

**Q34: I got the Addendum from ODE that stated the request could be no more than $150,000 in funds. But in the grant request itself, it still states the following: total amount of funding requested between $15,001 to $100,000 (must match budget). Can you confirm this?**

A34: Per Section 1.2 of the RFA, an Application request must be $2,000-$15,000 for the Capacity Building Mini Grant and $15,001-$100,000 for the Capacity Sustaining Full Grant. Applicants may only submit one Application and must choose between the two grant tracks. The Agency reserves the right to redistribute unused funds after the execution of grants per 2.5 of Addendum 1; however, that amount cannot exceed $150,000.

**Q35: Regarding the 10/10/2023 mandatory grant management training, I cannot find that requirement stated anywhere in the grant’s website, or I would have attended.**

A35: The mandatory grant management training for awardees is 12/08/2023 (Addendum 3).

**Q36: Can you please clarify what "counts" for the signatures of principals and Child Nutrition Programs? What is an electronic signature.**

A36: The Agency will accept signatures in the following formats: physically signed and scanned or signing in any kind of digital format (examples include Adobe signature, signing in paint, typed signature representing the signature of the individual).

**Q37: Regarding Attachment E, section F: I don't yet know exactly which schools we will serve with these funds. We offer farm field trips to Title 1 schools. We typically serve most Title 1 schools in one district; however, we have been branching out to a few others recently. Every year our scholarship field trip calendar fills up and we have a waiting list so I have no doubt that we will serve as many students as funding will allow. Exactly who gets a trip is a matter of scheduling (i.e., which teachers request trips and when). We won't serve all schools, but the number is probably going to be around 25 schools. How do you suggest I respond to this question?**

A37: Applicants should list all schools or sites you plan to or could potentially work with. If all schools in the district(s) will be participating or will have the ability to participate, you may simply write “all schools.” If only some schools will be receiving special programming, list just those schools.

**Q38: Question 1 of the Application asks that I provide a signature from a principal or administrator. As described above, we will serve up to 25 schools, and don't yet know which schools will apply. I won't be able to get a signature from every principal or teacher that we may serve, but don't want to lose a point. I'm not sure how to handle this one. What do you suggest? Would the explanation I've provided here suffice for the Not Applicable response?**

A38: School Administrator signatures are required for all sites with which you will be working. This ensures that all parties are aware of the project taking place. Failure to obtain all signatures for all the sites with which you will be working will be a failure to meet this requirement. An explanation that you are unable to get the signatures in a timely manner cannot be used in lieu of signatures and will not be accepted under the “Not Applicable” response.

**Q39: Regarding question 1 of the Application (2 questions about school gardens). Our teaching garden is not a school garden. Do you require a school garden survey or information about who or how our garden is maintained.**

A39: Oregon considers a school garden any garden in Oregon that regularly works with scheduled groups of students from Oregon schools. If your project plan will utilize grant funds for your teaching garden or school garden, then you will need to identify who will complete the school garden survey and identify the school garden maintenance plan. If you will not use grant funds for your teaching or school garden, then you can select “Not Applicable. We are not building or revitalizing a physical school garden space with these grant funds.”

**Q40: Regarding question 5 for Nutrition Services: does ODE imagine that all grantees serving multiple schools will contact the district’s Nutrition Services Director? It seems that it could be overwhelming for Nutrition Services to review projects and sign off on every application? Because we will work with as many as 25 different schools it is extremely unlikely that we will be able to contact school-specific nutrition staff. We often try to align vegetable tastings and activities with educational materials included in question 1 of this application (Food Hero, Harvest for Schools, etc.). How would you suggest that I approach this question?**

A40: The districts have just one Nutrition Services Director and their signature is required for any Applications which plan to work within the district. This ensures that all parties are aware of the project taking place. We recognize the effort the collection of signatures may take, so we recommend that you get an early start.

**Q41: Can the removal of asphalt be funded by this competitive education grant?**

A41: No. The removal of asphalt is not an allowable expense under this grant. See Section 3.2.2.1 for Allowable Expenses.