



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Agriculture

635 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-2532



May 1, 2015

The Honorable Richard Devlin, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Peter Buckley, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

### Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) requests permission to apply for a federal grant with the United States Department of Agriculture. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Farm to School Program (F2S) anticipates awarding approximately \$6,000,000 in grant funding to support efforts that improve access to local foods in schools. This funding has been allocated under the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFA) of 2010. It is anticipated by USDA that they will grant approximately 90 awards nationally.

The purpose of the USDA F2S grant program is to advance efforts in urban, rural and tribal communities to circulate dollars in local agricultural economies by assisting schools in sourcing local food products and serving a high proportion of children eligible for free and reduced price meal programs and consequently those at risk of poor nutritional and health outcomes.

The application deadline is May 20, 2015 and the grant awards are expected to be between \$65,000-\$100,000 for 12 to 24 months. A 25 percent match of the total budget is required in the form of cash or in-kind contributions including facilities, equipment, or services provided by state and local governments, non-profit organizations and private sources. The match contribution will come primarily from Food Corps and ODA will contribute in-kind staff time.

### Background

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has a long history of working cooperatively with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in assuring that Oregon producers, processors, ranchers and fishers have opportunities for growth expansion in both domestic and international markets. In 2014, Oregon was one of eight states selected to participate in the USDA Pilot for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables. Under this project, School Food Authorities (SFAs) in selected states are permitted to competitively solicit a USDA-approved vendor (Oregon agribusiness) using USDA Foods National School Lunch Program (NSLP) entitlement funds. SFAs are able

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to use pre-existing commercial distribution channels and relationships with growers, produce wholesalers, and distributors. While the pilot is a tremendous opportunity for Oregon agribusinesses and schools who are approved to participate, no resources exist to ensure its successful implementation at the state level. The USDA F2S grant would provide resources to support vendor approval and provide schools with supply chain information to assist them in identifying and purchasing Oregon grown and/or processed foods.

#### Agency Action

Over the next five years the ODA intends to make investments in regional food system infrastructure and development to strengthen rural agricultural economies and create jobs, two strategic goals that align with many agricultural action plans from Regional Solutions Centers across the state. The Farm to School program is one of the ODA's core domestic programs available to help achieve these goals. By application of the following three strategies the ODA will be able to ensure successful implementation of the USDA Pilot for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables and Farm to School programming across the state: 1) Develop an agribusiness recognition campaign with the Agribusiness Council of Oregon (ABC) for companies participating in Farm to School, 2) Strengthen the relationship between Oregon agribusiness and the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network; and 3) Improve coordination of agricultural career programs at primary and secondary education levels through FoodCorps, a national service program hosted by the ODA and the ABC's Adopt - a - Farmer program. ODA will be requesting approximately \$35,000 for the first year to support staff to carry out the work and \$65,000 in year two to support partners and cover costs of FoodCorps programming. Subsequent years funding will be dependent upon federal appropriations. Total grant award could be up to \$100,000 over two years.

#### Action Requested

The ODA respectfully requests permission to apply for the federal grant opportunity from the USDA Farm to School Program.

#### Legislation Affected

If the grant applications are successful, ODA may need to return to the Legislature to request additional federal funds expenditure limitation.

Sincerely,



Katy Coba  
Director