



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

September 30, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EGM*
State Superintendent of Education

RE: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grants
Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has selected Alabama to receive grant funds totaling \$174,596 to competitively award subgrants to local education agencies and schools to purchase equipment through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grant Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. The purpose of the grant is to assist School Food Authorities (SFAs) in purchasing equipment needed to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and to help support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of the school meals program. It is imperative that schools make timely application for the grant funds. All proposals must be submitted electronically, via DocuSign PowerForm (link below) by Friday, November 1, 2024. The grant funds will be awarded to the school by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) by January 15, 2025. Grant funds must be expended by September 30, 2025.

Conditions for Applying for the Grant Funds

The funding will be distributed via a competitive process that is fair and equitable. The attached application must be submitted by the school district **per school, per piece of equipment**. The request may include new equipment, renovation of equipment, or replacement of equipment. Selected schools must apply for the grant funds. There are four primary focus areas of need for the grant award. Application for the grant funds should incorporate one or more of the following focus areas:

- Focus 1:** Age of food service equipment or lack of appropriate items to expand non-traditional meal service models.
- Focus 2:** Lack of existing State and local funding for equipment purchases to improve energy efficiency in the cafeteria.
- Focus 3:** Equipment that better utilizes cafeteria space and offers strategies for adopting lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the students.
- Focus 4:** Equipment that will provide opportunities to achieve significant impacts on nutrition and quality of meals, including serving more fruits and vegetables with an emphasis on increasing access to locally grown Farm to School products.

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Criteria for Award of the Grant Funds

Priority will be given to schools in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and to schools that did not receive a previous NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant or a grant through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*. Schools must submit a proposal for one or more of the four focus areas listed under the “Conditions for Applying for Grant Funds” section. Consideration will be given to the number of students that would benefit, the fund balance of the **school** as of September 30, 2023, and the age and condition of the existing equipment.

The funds must be expended for capitalized equipment having a useful life expectancy of more than one year and an initial acquisition cost of **\$1,000** or more. Equipment requests may include new equipment, renovation of equipment, or replacement of equipment. The USDA regulations at 7 CFR 3016.3 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87 define equipment as articles of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the governmental unit for financial statement purposes, or **\$1,000**. Examples include using the grant funds to purchase a walk-in freezer for school food service. A salad bar may be an allowable cost. Building an extension to a cafeteria would be a capital expense that should be borne by the school district. The funds may **not** be used for the following:

- Renovations to buildings.
- Construction of facilities or building improvements.
- Equipment that has already been acquired.
- Vending machines.
- Salaries or administrative costs.
- Projects that will take an extended period to complete.

All state and federal procurement laws must be followed when purchasing equipment under these grants. No potential supplier or representative of a supplier that writes the specifications for the equipment or bid conditions may offer a bid on the equipment. Geographical preferences are specifically prohibited in the award of these funds. **Piggybacking off previous bid awards will not be allowed.** In addition, it is recommended that SFAs use the following best practices to assist in your efforts.

- School officials and local policymakers should work collaboratively with parents, teachers, students, and funders to identify and implement strategies for meeting equipment, infrastructure, and training needs.
- Nonprofit and for-profit organizations that have an interest in improving children’s health, education, school infrastructure, and community wellness should assist schools in acquiring the necessary equipment.

Reporting Requirements

The funds awarded under this grant must be clearly distinguishable from all other funds. The expenditures must be able to be tracked separately. Source codes have not yet been determined, and strict documentation of expenditures will need to be maintained for reimbursement and audit purposes.

Grant recipients must submit semi-annual activity reports outlining the following:

1. Progress made in solicitation of bids and procuring equipment.
2. Challenges faced expending the awarded funds.
3. Impact of purchased equipment on the school nutrition operation.
4. Potential return of equipment.

If you are interested in applying for funds under the grant and have schools that meet the criteria listed above, complete and submit the application for each school on or before November 1, 2024. [Click here to access the application.](#) This process will be complete with a PowerForm within DocuSign. Please add the appropriate recipients and do not remove ALSDE recipients from the workflow. There will be an award cap of \$40,000.

If you have any questions, please contact Angelice Lowe or Julie Autrey with CNP at (334) 694-4657 or email your questions to alowe@alsde.edu or julie.autrey@alsde.edu.

EGM/AL/JC

cc: City and County Chief School Financial Officers
City and County Child Nutrition Program Directors
Private School Administrators
Residential Child Care Institution Administrators
Mrs. Lynn Shows, SDE Accounting

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