



Office of P-12 Instructional Support
 Child Nutrition Program Administration
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Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) Questions and Answers

1. What are allowable uses of the LFS funds?

LFS funds are available only to School Food Authorities (SFA) operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic and local food from local or regional producers, as defined in the LFS Request for Application. SFAs may use LFS funding to pay direct costs associated with food storage and distribution of LFS purchased food.

Use the chart below to help determine what food items are considered unprocessed and/or minimally processed.

Allowable Unprocessed/Minimally Processed Food	Unallowable Foods considered to be Processed
<p>Minimal processing states and/or forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole, cut, pureed, etc. • fresh, frozen, canned, dried, etc. <p><u>Examples of allowable foods:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fluid milk (unflavored and flavored) • Other dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt (unflavored and flavored) • fruits and vegetables (including 100% juices) • grain products such as pastas and rice • meats (whole, pieces, or food items such as ground meats) • meat alternates such as beans or legumes 	<p>Significantly processed or prepared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-made/ready to eat foods <p><u>Examples of unallowable foods:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-made pizza • chicken nuggets • breads, muffins, crackers • pre-packaged sandwiches • pre-packaged/ready to eat meals

2. Can LFS funds be used for direct or indirect costs associated with administering the program?

No. SFAs may not use the LFS funds to pay direct or indirect costs associated with developing or administering the program.

Funds may be used to cover the costs of storage and distribution of agricultural products to schools however, the expectation of this program is for SFAs to spend awarded funds on food purchases.

3. Who can SFAs purchase allowable food from using LFS funds?

Eligible beneficiaries of purchases include those involved in the production and distribution of local domestic food. Contracts should be awarded to farmers, producers, processors, or distributors of local domestic product that meet the definition of a local or regional producer.

Local or regional producers are farmers, ranchers, producer, processors or distributors and other businesses involved in food production or distribution that are located in the state or within 400 miles of the delivery

destination. To be considered “local or regional”, the producer or supplier headquarters must be in the same state or within 400 miles of the delivery destination.

4. What is the definition of local and regional food?

Locally and Regionally Produced Food means food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same state or territory.

5. How can SFAs operating with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) or a meal vendor use LFS funds?

LFS funds are sub awarded directly to the SFA and must be used by the SFA to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic and local food from eligible beneficiaries.

Eligible beneficiaries of purchases include those involved in the production and distribution of local domestic food. Therefore, LFS funds may not be paid to FSMCs or to meal vendors.

SFAs that contract with a FSMC or that receive food from a meal vendor, may use LFS funds separately to procure allowable food from eligible beneficiaries for use in the school meals programs.

6. May SFAs use emergency procurement protocols to achieve their purchasing goals?

As with all Child Nutrition Program purchases, SFAs are required to follow all federal, State and local procurement requirements and regulations. As a reminder, federal regulations at 2 CFR 200 includes the provision to allow the utilization of emergency noncompetitive procurements during a public emergency.

7. Are there procurement resources available?

Yes. Information on Farm to School and proper procurement practices can be found here:

- [Procurement Information | Child Nutrition | NYSED](#)
- [Farm to School Resources | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
- [Farm to School Training & Guidance | Child Nutrition | NYSED](#)
- [Cornell Cooperative Extension Farm to School Website](#)

8. When do the LFS funds have to be spent by?

SFAs must spend the LFS funds by February 2024.

9. How will SFAs target small businesses and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers?

SFAs are required to target purchases from small business and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers to the extent practicable.

Awarded SFAs will be connected with a Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Farm to School Coordinator who will assist the SFA in targeting purchases and in finding local producers.

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