



MARCY KAPTUR

REPRESENTING OHIO'S 9TH DISTRICT



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK

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Dear Friends:

As you may know, I am a strong proponent of developing our local food production systems because of the potential to improve our economy and create jobs in Ohio. From my perspective, there is no issue more important than creating American jobs and I believe there are significant opportunities for savvy entrepreneurs who wish to venture into agriculture production.

Consequently, I created this guide to help individuals and organizations understand what potential federal support may be available to undertake an agricultural production initiative. Please know that this guide was created with the intent of providing a summary of some of the major federal agricultural/small business programs. You will need to contact the respective administering agency for specific eligibility requirements, matching requirements and other relevant information.

More specifically, this guide summarizes many of the agricultural assistance programs administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its sub-agencies. In addition, brief information is provided about the programs administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Contact information is also provided for organizations that can offer guidance to prospective entrepreneurs as they consider starting or expanding an agricultural production initiative.

An entire section of the guide is devoted to explaining how the largest federal food and nutrition assistance programs are administered in an effort to help enhance entrepreneur's efforts to market their products to assistance recipients. The most recent federal data shows that the government provided over \$91 Billion in direct food and nutrition benefits to individuals. The vast majority of individuals took those funds to the supermarket. I strongly believe local producers can utilize this market and it is my sincere hope that this guide helps those efforts.

Finally, should you decide to submit an application under any of these programs, I encourage you to contact my office and discuss your proposal with my staff. I am eager to learn about and support projects that would create jobs and improve the quality of life in Northwestern Ohio. Please do not hesitate to contact Theresa Morris in my Toledo District Office at (800) 964-4699 or theresa.morris@mail.house.gov.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions about the contents of this guide. It is my sincere hope that the information enclosed proves useful and I wish you the best of luck with all your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Section I: Getting Started Resources

Licensing, Permits & Registration Resources

Nearly every business needs to register and acquire one or more federal, state or local licenses/permits to operate. In most cases, registering and licensing of agricultural initiatives is done through your state government. However, federal licenses could be required depending on the type of agricultural initiative and if your operations cross state lines.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) administers a “Incorporating & Registering Your Business” website where you can find information on Incorporating Your Business, Search for Business Licenses and Permits, Obtaining Business Licenses and Permits, 5 Steps to Registering Your Business and Registering Your Business at State Agencies. You can view this website by going to <http://www.sba.gov> or at the following address: <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/establishing-business/incorporating-registering-your->.

In addition, you should also check with the Ohio Department of Agriculture about whether you need to register, and what kind of licenses and permits you may need to acquire. You can contact the Department at the following contact information:

Ohio Department of Agriculture
8995 East Main Street
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
Phone: (614) 728-6201 / Fax: (614) 728-6310
Main Website: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov>
Licensing Website: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/apps/odalicensing/odalicensing.aspx>

Cooperative Extension System (<http://extension.osu.edu/>)

Congress provides federal funding each year to support the Cooperative Extension System administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Cooperative Extension System is a nationwide, non-credit educational network. Each U.S. state and territory has a state office at its land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices. These offices are staffed by one or more experts who provide useful, practical, and research-based information to agricultural producers, small business owners, youth, consumers, and others in rural areas and communities of all sizes.

In Ohio, the Ohio State University manages the Cooperative Extension program. You can learn more about the program by visiting the website above or at <http://extension.osu.edu/about-osu-extension>.

Through the Extension program, you will find a wide variety of resources to help entrepreneurs start or expand agricultural initiatives. The Extension Program’s County Offices administer many of the services offered through the program.

Below you will find contact information for the County Offices in your area.

<u>Erie County Office</u> 2900 S. Columbus Avenue Sandusky, OH 44870 Phone: (419) 627-7631 / Fax: (419) 627-7536 Website: http://erie.osu.edu/	<u>Lorain County Office</u> 42110 Russia Road Elyria, OH 44035 Phone: (440) 326-5851 / Fax: (440) 326-5878 Website: http://lorain.osu.edu/
<u>Lucas County Office</u> One Government Center, Suite 550 Toledo, OH 43604 Phone: (419) 213-4254 / Fax: (419) 213-4241 Website: http://lucas.osu.edu/	<u>Ottawa County Office</u> 240 W. Lake Street, Unit C Oak Harbor, OH 43449 Phone: (419) 898-3631 / Fax: (419) 898-3232 Website: http://ottawa.osu.edu/

Center for Innovative Food Technology (CIFT)

<http://www.ciftinnovation.org>

CIFT provides technical innovations and solutions to the food processing, agribusiness, and agricultural sectors. These services are designed to enhance the economic performance of the food processing and agriculture sectors and create new jobs within the industry. You can contact CIFT for guidance at:

Center for Innovative Food Technology

5555 Airport Highway, Suite 100

Toledo, OH 43615

Phone: (419) 535-6000 / Toll-Free: (877) 668-3472

Fax: (419) 531-8465

Email: info@ciftinnovation.org

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

<http://attra.ncat.org/index.php>

The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (formerly ATTRA) is managed by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and is funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Business-Cooperative Service. It provides information and other technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, Extension agents, educators, and others involved in sustainable agriculture.

You can contact the organization by visiting its website above or <http://www.ncat.org>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Resources

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) local Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD) offices can assist agricultural entrepreneurs. Contact information for your local FSA office can be found on page 07 and your local RD office on page 09.

USDA also maintains the following websites that can provide guidance on the various programs and services that are available.

USDA Outreach Programs

<http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=OUTREACH>

Ask the Expert

http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=ASK_EXPERT2

Information for Producers, Farmers, and Ranchers

<http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navtype=AU&navid=PRODUCERS>

USDA Directories

<http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=DIRECTORIES>

Section II: Federal Loan Programs

The federal government does not provide grants to individuals to start an organization. Therefore, loans and loan guarantees are the primary tool to help individuals, small businesses, and non-profit organizations start an agricultural production initiative.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service, commercial banks are the largest lenders to farmers (44% of total market), followed by the Farm Credit System (40%), individuals and others (8%), life insurance companies (6%) and the Farm Service Agency (4%-5%).

Below you will find brief information on potential financing programs administered by the Farm Credit System (FCS), USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA Rural Development (RD) and U.S. Small Business Administration. The information below is not comprehensive and you should contact your local office or visit each agencies website for more detailed information.

Farm Credit System (<http://www.farmcreditnetwork.com>)

The Farm Credit System (FCS) is a Government-sponsored enterprise created by Congress to provide American agriculture with a dependable source of credit. The FCS is a nationwide network of cooperatively organized banks and associations that are owned and controlled by their borrowers.

The FCS member institutions provide credit and other services to agricultural producers and farmer-owned agricultural and aquatic cooperatives. It also makes loans for agricultural processing and marketing activities, rural housing, farm-related businesses, rural utilities and companies involved in international agricultural trade.

Eligibility for loans will be determined by your local branch office. Generally speaking, applicants must show sufficient repayment ability and pledge enough collateral to fully secure the loan.

In order to apply for financing from the FCS, you must apply through your nearest branch office. You can locate your local branch office by visiting <http://www.farmcreditnetwork.com/about/locations> or calling (703) 883-4056.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) (<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>)

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Its mission is to contribute to the viability of American agriculture by providing efficient and equitable administration of farm commodity, farm loan, conservation and emergency programs. FSA also works to increase the participation of small or limited resource farmers/ranchers through its Outreach and Education, which is conducted by its local offices.

In order to meet its mission, FSA administers numerous farm loans programs, commodity payment programs, disaster assistance programs, conservation programs and provides environmental and cultural resource compliance. A list of all the programs that FSA administers can be found by visiting http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa_admin_prgms.pdf.

Generally speaking, FSA provides assistance to applicants who are unable to obtain credit through conventional sources. FSA is often referred to as the lender of last resort for direct loans. Applicants must show sufficient repayment ability, pledge enough collateral to fully secure the loan, have the legal capacity to incur the obligations of the loan and have an acceptable credit history.

Below you will find a brief description of some of FSA's programs. For more information including how to apply for any of FSA's programs and to determine eligibility, you should contact your local office. Contact information for your local office is also provided below.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Loan Programs

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/loans11.pdf

Direct Loan Programs

Loans are made by FSA for Farm Ownership and Operating purposes among others (see below for further details). FSA also services the loans and provides credit counseling so customers have a better chance of success.

For more information: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/flp_direct_farm_loans.pdf

Direct Ownership Loans

With a Direct Farm Ownership Loan, you can purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings and other fixtures, and promote soil and water conservation.

Direct Operating Loans

Operating Loans may be used to purchase items such as livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other operating expenses. Operating Loans can also be used to pay for minor improvements to buildings, costs associated with land and water development, family subsistence, and to refinance debts under certain conditions.

Beginning Farmer & Rancher Loans

Program provides direct and guaranteed loans to beginning farmers and ranchers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources. Each fiscal year, the Agency targets a portion of its direct and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loan (OL) funds to beginning farmers and ranchers.

For more information: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/beginningloans11.pdf

Rural Youth Loans

Program makes operating loans of up to \$5,000 to eligible individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to finance income-producing, agriculture-related projects. The project must be of modest size, educational, and initiated, developed and carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H clubs, FFA or a similar organization.

For more information: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/loanyouth.pdf.

Storage Facility Loan Program

Program provides farmers with low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

For more information: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/farmstorage_fac_loan.pdf

Guaranteed Loan Programs

Similar to Direct Ownership and Operating Loans except with the Guarantee Loan Program the FSA will guarantee a portion of the loan a commercial financial institution provides an eligible farmer.

For more information: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/guaranteed_farm_loans.pdf

<u>U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency Contacts</u>	
<u>Ohio Farm Service Agency Office</u> U.S. Department of Agriculture 200 North High Street, Room 540 Columbus, OH 43215 Phone: (614) 255-2441 Website: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/oh	<u>Farm Service Agency Service Center Office</u> Ottawa County Office (Also serving Lucas County) 240 W. Lake Street Oak Harbor, OH 43449 Phone: (419) 898-2651 Fax: (419) 898-0319
<u>Farm Service Agency Service Center Office</u> Lorain County Office 42110 Russia Road Elyria, OH 44035 Phone: (440) 326-5830 Fax: (440) 232-9035	<u>Farm Service Agency Service Center Office</u> Huron County Office (Also serving Erie County) 8 Fair Road Norwalk, OH 44857 Phone: (419) 668-4113 Fax: (419) 663-0611

Rural Development (RD) (<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>)

Rural Development (RD) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) dedicated to improving the economy and quality of life in rural America. Rural Development supports rural small businesses by guaranteeing loans to organizations through banks, credit unions and community-managed lending pools. Technical assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started is also provided.

RD administers its programs through its state and local offices. Therefore, to apply for any of RD's programs, you will need to contact your local office. Contact information for the local office in your area is provided below.

Most of RD's programs are designed to provide assistance to those living in rural areas and consequently, eligibility for its programs is partly determined by where you reside. In order to determine if you are eligible, you should contact your local office or you can visit the following website: <http://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do?pageAction=rbs>.

Below you will find a brief description and list of some of Rural Development's programs that could assist agricultural initiatives. Your local office can provide further guidance on eligibility and a list of approved lenders.

USDA Rural Development's Business and Cooperative Programs
(http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Loans.html)

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B&I)

The purpose of the B&I Guaranteed Loan Program is to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. Loan funds may be used for acquisition, construction, conversion, expansion, and repair in rural areas.

A borrower may be a cooperative organization, corporation, partnership, or other legal entity organized and operated on a profit or non-profit basis that meets certain requirements.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_gar.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Locally or Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products

The 2008 farm bill mandated that 5% of the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B&I) be reserved for providing loan guarantees to individuals and businesses for locally and regionally produced agricultural food product projects in urban areas of underserved communities. An underserved community is defined as a community (urban or rural) that has limited access to affordable, healthy food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, in grocery retail stores or farmer-to-consumer direct markets and has a high rate of hunger or food insecurity or a high poverty rate.

A locally or regionally produced food is defined as one for which the locality or region in which the final product is marketed is within 400 miles of the product's origin, or within the state in which the product is produced.

Eligibility is similar to the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program but you should contact your local office to verify the eligibility requirements.

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Energy for America Program Loans (REAP)

The REAP Guaranteed Loan Program encourages the commercial financing of renewable energy (bioenergy, geothermal, hydrogen, solar, wind and hydro power) and energy efficiency projects.

Borrowers must be an agricultural producer or rural small business. You should contact your local office to verify the eligibility requirements and to find a list of approved lenders.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapLoans.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan Program

Community Programs can make and guarantee loans to develop essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Loan funds may be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and public services. Examples of potential projects include farmers markets, school and community kitchens, food banks, community gardens and refrigerated trucks.

Eligible applicants include public entities such as municipalities, counties, as well as non-profit organizations and tribal governments.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF_Loans.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Biorefinery Assistance Loan Guarantees

Also referred to as Section 9003, loan guarantees under this program are used to fund the development, construction, and retrofitting of commercial-scale biorefineries using eligible technology.

Specific eligibility requirements for applicants and projects will vary. You should contact your local office to verify these requirements and to find a list of approved lenders.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_Biorefinery.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)

The purpose of the IRP program is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural communities. Under the IRP program, loans are provided to local organizations (intermediaries) for the establishment of revolving loan funds. These revolving loan funds are used to assist with financing business and economic development activity to create or retain jobs in disadvantaged and remote communities.

Private non-profit corporations, public agencies, Indian groups, and cooperatives with at least 51 percent rural membership aimed at increasing income for producer members or purchasing power for consumer members may apply for intermediary lender status. You should contact your local office to verify the eligibility requirements.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_irp.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found below.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development Contacts

<u>Ohio State Office</u> Federal Building, Room 507 200 North High Street Columbus, OH 43215 Phone: (614) 255-2400 Website: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/oh/	<u>Findlay Area Office</u> Counties: Lucas, Ottawa 7868 C.R. 140, Suite D Findlay, OH 45840 Phone: (419) 422-0242 Fax: (419) 422-5423
<u>Massillon Area Office</u> Counties: Erie, Lorain 2650 Richville Drive SE, Suite 102 Massillon, OH 44646 Phone: (330) 830-770 Fax: (330) 830-7701	

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) (<http://www.sba.gov>)

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is an independent agency of the federal government created to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interest of small businesses. SBA primarily provides assistance through business financing, entrepreneurial development, government contracting and advocacy. Assistance including business counseling is provided through SBA's Regional Offices, District Offices, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and SCORE resource partnerships.

SBA maintains a specific website dedicated to providing information to help agricultural initiatives. You can visit this website at <http://www.sba.gov/content/agriculture>.

SBA does not provide loans to small businesses directly. Generally speaking, SBA guarantees a portion of a loan for small businesses that cannot obtain traditional commercial loans. However, SBA's guarantee is provided through an approved commercial bank and the bank submits all the paperwork to SBA for the guarantee. Individuals do not apply directly to SBA. Therefore, you will need to visit an SBA approved lender first before seeking an SBA Loan Guarantee.

For a list of approved lenders, you should visit <http://www.sba.gov/content/cleveland-lender-list>. You can also visit the SBA Region V's Cleveland District Office website provided below and enter your zip code for a list of SBA approved lenders in your area. Your local SBA Regional Office, District Office, local SBDC or SCORE may have a more comprehensive list of approved lenders.

In addition, your local offices can answer any questions you may have about SBA and its programs as well as provide business counseling free of charge in most cases. Below you will find contact information for your local offices and a brief description of some of SBA's loan programs.

SBA Loan Programs

(<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants>)

7(a) Loan Guarantee Program

Guarantees are provided for purchasing or conversion of land or buildings, purchasing equipment, working capital, financing of start-ups or to purchase an existing business and certain refinancing.

CDC/504 Program

This program is a long-term financing tool, designed to encourage economic development within a community. A SBA approved Certified Development Company (CDC) provides loans to small businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing to acquire major fixed assets for expansion or modernization.

The Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority is an approved SBA CDC/504 Lender. You can learn more about the Authority's program at <http://www.toledoportauthority.org/Services/EconomicDevelopment.aspx> or by calling (419) 243-8251.

SBAExpress Program

Program provides small business borrowers with an accelerated turnaround time for SBA's review. You will receive a response to your application within 36 hours. Loan use is similar to the 7(a) program.

Microloan Program

This program provides small, short-term loans to small businesses. Loans may be used for working capital, purchase of inventory, supplies, machinery, furniture or fixtures. Microloans are provided through SBA approved intermediary lenders. A list of intermediary approved lenders can be found at http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/Microloan%20Intermediary%20List_4.pdf.

Patriot Express Program

Program supports veterans and members of the military community wanting to establish or expand small businesses. SBA focuses additional efforts on counseling and training for this particular program. Loan use is similar to the 7(a) Program.

<u>U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Contacts</u>	
<u>SBA Region V</u> Serving Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin 500 West Madison Street, Suite 1150 Chicago, IL 60661 Phone: (312) 353-0357 / Fax: (312) 353-3426 Website: http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/3/3074	<u>SBA Cleveland District Office</u> Serving 28 Northeastern Counties in Ohio 1350 Euclid Avenue, Suite 211 Cleveland, OH 44115 Phone: (216) 522-4180 Fax: (216) 522-2038 Website: http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/2/3137
<u>SBDC at Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce (Toledo Area)</u> Counties: Lucas, Ottawa and Erie 300 Madison Avenue Enterprise Suite 200 Toledo, OH 43604 Phone: (419) 243-8191, Ext. 224 / Fax: (419) 241-8302 Website: http://www.toledochamber.com	<u>SBDC at Lorain County Chamber of Commerce (Elyria Area)</u> Counties: Lorain 226 Middle Avenue, 5 th Floor Elyria, OH 44035 Phone: (440) 328-2550 Fax: (440) 328-2557 Website: http://www.loraincountychamber.com/sbd/
<u>SBDC at Terra Community College (Fremont Area)</u> Counties: Erie, Ottawa 2830 Napoleon Road Bldg B – General Technologies Bldg Fremont, OH 43420 Phone: (419) 559-2210 Website: https://www.terra.edu/ContinuingEducation/SmallBusinessDevelopment.html	
<u>Northwest Ohio SCORE</u> 2200 Jefferson Avenue Mercy Healthcare Bldg, 1 st Floor Toledo, OH 43606 Phone: (419) 2597598 Website: http://northwestohio.score.org/chapters/northwest-ohio-score	

Section III: Federal Grant Programs

Federal grant programs are administered by federal agencies using funds that Congress provides each year. Federal grants are primarily only awarded to governmental organizations, education organizations, public housing authorities, non-profit organizations and small businesses (usually only for research initiatives).

Below you will find a list of federal grants programs that could support certain agricultural initiatives. The information below is not comprehensive and you should contact your local office or visit each agencies website for more detailed information.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) (<http://www.ams.usda.gov>)

Additional information on AMS grants can be found by going to the website above and clicking the “Grant Programs” link under the “Browse by Subject” area on the left side of the website.

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)

The Farmers Market Promotion Program awards grants targeted to help improve and expand domestic farmers’ markets, roadside stands, community-support agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

Grants cannot exceed \$100,000 and may be used for a wide-variety of marketing initiatives including EBT deployment projects. However, funds cannot be used for the acquisition of land or the purchase, construction, rehabilitation, or repair of a building or facility.

Eligible applicants include Agricultural Cooperative, Producer Network, Producer Associations, Local Government, Non-profit Corporation, Public Benefit Corporation, Economic Development Corporation and Regional Farmers Market Authority.

For more information including how to apply, you should visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fmpp>.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program provides block grants to State departments of agriculture that in turn award these funds to eligible entities. In Ohio, the Ohio Department of Agriculture administers these federal funds.

Funds are used to support projects that enhance competitiveness of Ohio specialty crops and advance the long-term economic viability of Ohio’s specialty crop industry while increasing the marketability of specialty crops. Generally speaking, specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, honey, maple syrup, tree nuts, and nursery crops.

Eligible applicants include food and agricultural non-profit organizations, cooperatives, associations or commodity groups, and universities and research institutions.

For more information: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/SpecialtyCrops/SpecialtyCrops.aspx>

To learn how to apply: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/SpecialtyCrops/SpecialtyCrops.aspx>

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) (<http://www.nifa.usda.gov>)

More information on NIFA grants can be found by visiting <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>.

Beginning Farmers and Rancher Development Program

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program provides grants to organizations that train, educate, and provide outreach and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers on production, marketing, business management, legal strategies and other topics critical to running a successful operation.

Eligible applicants include State, local, or regionally-based networks or partnerships of public & private entities.

For more information: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html>

To learn how to apply: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html>

Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program

Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs.

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations.

For more information: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/cfp/cfp.html>

To learn how to apply: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html>

People's Garden Grant Program

The People's Garden Grant Program (PPGP) is designed to facilitate the creation of produce, recreation, and/or wildlife gardens in urban and rural areas, which will provide opportunities for science-based informal education. Grants are provided to eligible organizations that then use the majority of the funds to support local projects via a micro-subgrant.

Eligible applicants include land-grant institutions, individuals, non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and for-profit organizations other than small businesses.

For more information including how to learn to apply for funding, you should visit the following website: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/peoplesgardengrantprogram.cfm>.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

SARE is an organization of local experts, researchers, educators and government officials supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). SARE makes grants through its Farmer Rancher Grant Program, Research and Education Program, Professional Development Program, Graduate Student Program and Youth and Youth Educator Program.

Eligible applicants varies but in general include producers, researchers, non-profits and educators.

For more information about SARE, you should visit <http://www.northcentralsare.org/>.

For more information about SARE grant programs including when and how to apply, you should visit <http://www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Types-of-Grants>.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The program makes competitively awarded grants to small businesses to support high quality, advanced concepts research related to important scientific problems and opportunities in agriculture that could lead to significant public benefit if successful. SBIR program awards are based on the scientific and technical merit of investigator initiated ideas. This program does not help start-up businesses.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) administer the SBIR program for USDA. For more information about the SBIR program at NIFA including a list of eligible topic areas and instructions on how to apply, please visit <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir.html>.

For general information about the SBIR program, you should visit <http://www.sbir.gov>.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

This program awards grants for funding research, education, and extension grants and integrated research, extension, and education grants that address key problems of National, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture, including farm efficiency and profitability, ranching, renewable energy, forestry (both urban and agroforestry), aquaculture, rural communities and entrepreneurship, human nutrition, food safety, biotechnology, and conventional breeding.

Grants support research in many different program areas. You can view a complete list of the program areas by visiting http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri_program_deadline_dates.html.

For more information: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri.html>.

To learn how to apply: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/application_info.html.

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov>)

More information on FNS grants can be found by visiting <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/grants.htm>.

Hunger-Free Communities Grants

The purpose of this grant program is to establish hunger-free communities and learn more about effective strategies to reduce hunger in the United States. There are two models of grants: planning and assessment grants and implementation grants. A community may only apply for one model, however, those communities receiving a planning and assessment grant may apply for an implementation grant in a future year if funds are available.

Eligible applicants include private or non-profit organizations.

For more information: http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/grants/hfc_grants.htm

To learn how to apply: http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/grants/hfc_grants.htm

Rural Development (RD) (<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>)

More information on RD grants can be found by visiting http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Grants.html.

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Grants/Feasibility Study Grants

This program provides grants for energy audits and renewable energy development assistance. It also provides funds to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to conduct feasibility study for a renewable energy system.

Eligible applicants include farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses. All agricultural producers, including farmers and ranchers, who gain 50% or more of their gross income from the agricultural operations are eligible. Small businesses that are located in a rural area can also apply. Rural electric cooperatives may also be eligible to apply.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapGrants.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Energy for America Program Grants/Renewable Energy Systems/Energy Efficiency Improvement

This program provides grants for energy audits and renewable energy development assistance. It also provides funds to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements.

Eligible applicants include farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses that are able to demonstrate financial need. All agricultural producers, including farmers and ranchers, who gain 50% or more of their gross income from the agricultural operations are eligible. Small businesses that are located in a rural area can also apply. Rural electric cooperatives may also be eligible to apply.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapResEei.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Energy for America Program Grants/Energy Audit and Renewable Energy Development Assist

This program will provide grants for energy audits and renewable energy development assistance. Eligible projects include energy audits and renewable energy development assistance that will allow agriculture producers and rural small businesses to become more energy efficient.

Eligible applicants include a unit of State, tribal, or local government, institutions of higher education, rural electric cooperative, or a public power entity. The program is designed to assist farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapEaReda.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Community Facilities Grants

Community Programs provides grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Grant funds can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and community and public services. Examples of potential projects include farmers markets, school and community kitchens, food banks, community gardens and refrigerated trucks.

Eligible applicants include public entities such as municipalities, counties, as well as non-profit organizations and tribal governments.

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF_Grants.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Value-Added Producer Grants

Value-added processing and marketing helps farmers and ranchers receive a higher portion of the retail dollar. Value-Added Producer Grants support planning activities, such as developing a business plan, as well as working capital. Specific funds are available for projects that focus on local and regional supply networks or support beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and small or medium-sized farms or ranches.

Eligible applicants include independent producers, farmer or rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and producer-owned business ventures, including non-profit organizations.

For more information: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG)

The RBEG program funds projects that facilitate the development of small and emerging rural businesses, distance learning networks, and employment-related adult education programs.

Eligible applicants include local and state governments and authorities, Indian tribes and non-profit organizations. For the purposes of this program, a "rural community" is an area where the population does not exceed 50,000, or is next to a city or town with more than 50,000 people.

For more information: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbeg.htm>

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG)

The RBOG program promotes economic growth in rural communities by supporting training and technical assistance for business development and to assist with regional economic development planning. A specific emphasis within RBOG is support for collaborative economic planning and development through regional food systems.

Eligible applicants include local governments, economic development organizations, non-profit organizations, Indian tribes, and cooperatives are eligible to apply. For the purposes of this program, a "rural community" is an area where the population does not exceed 50,000, or is next to a city or town with more than 50,000 people.

For more information: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rbog.htm>

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDB)

Rural Cooperative Development Grants support rural economic development through the creation or improvement of cooperative development centers. Cooperative development centers in turn provide assistance for starting up, improving, or expanding rural businesses, especially cooperatives.

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations; for the purposes of this program, cooperative development centers must primarily serve "rural areas," where the population does not exceed 50,000, or is next to a city or town with more than 50,000 people.

For more information: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm>

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grants (SSDPG)

The objective of the SSDPG program is to provide technical assistance to small socially-disadvantaged agricultural producers through eligible cooperative and associations of cooperatives.

For more information: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/ssdpg/ssdpg.htm>

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)

RMAP provides direct loans and technical assistance grants to support small business development in rural areas. Loans and grants are provided to Microenterprise Development Organizations who in turn provide loans and technical assistance to microentrepreneurs - including farmers - in developing their business. Loans may be used for working capital, debt refinancing, business acquisitions, and to purchase equipment or real estate, and grants provide technical assistance and training.

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations and public institutions of higher education that serve rural areas are all considered eligible Microenterprise Development Organizations

For more information: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_RMAP.html

To learn how to apply, you will need to contact your local USDA Rural Development found on page 09.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov>

More information on ACF grants can be found by visiting <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/>.

Community and Economic Development (CED) Program

This program seeks to fund projects that implement strategies for fostering self-sufficiency for low-income families and achieving sustainable employment and business opportunities. A portion of the funds are specifically reserved for supporting projects that are located in food deserts and designed to improve access to healthy, affordable foods.

Eligible applicants include Community Development Corporations (CDC), which is defined as a private non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) or non-501(c)(3) status.

For more information: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2011-ACF-OCS-EE-0178>

To learn how to apply: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2011-ACF-OCS-EE-0178>

Section IV: Accessing Markets through Federal Food Assistance Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers 15 different domestic food and nutrition assistance programs. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is the primary agency that has direct oversight of these programs. USDA estimates that at certain points of the year one in four Americans participate in at least one of the agency's domestic food and nutrition programs.

Generally speaking, domestic food and nutrition programs provide direct benefits to eligible low-income individuals. Individuals are given some discretion on the type of foods they can purchase but the foods must be considered healthy by the appropriate federal dietary standard. USDA estimates that over \$91 Billion in benefits will be provided in FY 2010 to help individuals eat healthy meals.

There is a tremendous opportunity for savvy entrepreneurs if they can properly market their healthy foods to individuals who receive assistance through domestic food and nutrition programs. The following is a description of how the largest of the domestic food and nutrition programs work and how an entrepreneur can gain the relevant market.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/>)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SNAP (formerly food stamps) is the Nation's largest nutritional assistance program and the cornerstone of Federal Government efforts to alleviate hunger in the United States. Benefits are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). You can learn more about FNS by visiting its website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov>.

Generally speaking, households can use SNAP benefits to buy breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry; and dairy products. For more information about eligible purchases under SNAP, you can visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/eligible.htm>.

According to FNS, an average of 40.3 million people participated in FY 2010. Over \$68 Billion in federal benefits through SNAP were issued in FY 2010. In addition, nearly \$205 Million in SNAP benefits were used in counties comprising Ohio's 9th Congressional District in FY 2009.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

SNAP benefits are accessed via an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card that is processed using electronic funds transfer technology. EBT cards look and operate like bank-issued debit cards. SNAP benefits are drawn down by swiping the EBT card on a point-of-sale (POS) terminal at an FNS SNAP retailer location and entering a personal identification number.

FNS SNAP retailers can either use EBT-only machines, which look like standard commercial POS terminals and are provided free by FNS, or supply their own terminals. EBT-only machines require electricity and a phone line connection and accept only EBT cards. Many FNS SNAP retailers choose to pay for commercial POS terminals that accept EBT, debit, and credits on the same machine.

HOW CAN I ACCESS THIS MARKET

Any retailer that would like to accept SNAP benefits must be licensed to participate in SNAP. Local FNS field offices are responsible for the licensing and monitoring of participating retailers. To learn how to become a licensed retailer, you should visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/application-process.htm> or contact your local FNS field office at the contact information provided below.

Columbus FNS Field Office
200 N. High Street, Room 750
Columbus, OH 43215-2476
Phone: (888) 258-5518 / Fax: (614) 469-6849

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<p><u>General Information for Retailers</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/merchants.htm</p>
<p><u>How to Accept SNAP Benefits at Your Store</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/accepting-benefits.htm</p>
<p><u>Retail Store Eligibility Information</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/store-eligibility.htm</p>
<p><u>Store Training Information</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/store-eligibility.htm</p>
<p><u>Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Information</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/merchants.htm</p>
<p><u>How to Accept SNAP Benefits at Farmers' Markets</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm</p>

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>)
(<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ns/wicn/wic1.aspx>)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and referrals to health and other social services to participants at no charge. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the WIC program through WIC State agencies.

WIC is significantly different from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or formerly food stamps). WIC is not an entitlement program, rather Congress provides funding for WIC on a discretionary basis, and the amount available can change year-to-year. Therefore, not everyone who wants to participate will be able to.

WIC is a federal block grant program, which means FNS provides federal block grants to the Ohio Department of Health's Bureau of Nutrition Services that in turn provides benefits to individuals directly. The Department of Health has established a list of authorized foods for participants, which can be found at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ns/wicn/AuthorizedFoods.aspx>.

In FY 2010, nearly \$260 Million in WIC benefits were issued in the State of Ohio and about \$6.7 Billion were issued nationwide.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The Ohio Department of Health is responsible for determining participant eligibility and for authorizing vendors. Currently, the Ohio WIC Program does not use Electronic Benefit Technology (EBT). The decision to use EBT for the WIC Program is determined by the state government.

In Ohio, participants use WIC coupons at authorized vendors to purchase nutritious food items prescribed to improve their diet and health. Coupons have approved food items listed on them. Foods not listed on a participant's coupon cannot be purchased.

There are two types of coupons, WIC coupons for food and formula purchases, and fruit and vegetable vouchers for the purchase of fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.

The Ohio WIC Program reimburses authorized vendors for WIC coupons and fruit and vegetable vouchers. There are specific procedures that must be followed when accepting coupons, and for the payment and redemption of coupons.

HOW CAN I ACCESS THIS MARKET

The Ohio Department of Health is responsible for authorizing WIC vendors. The Ohio WIC program contracts with vendors twice a year, on a regional basis, for up to three years. Interested parties must notify the State WIC office no later than 180 days prior to the contracting begin date for their region. There are specific contracting criteria the Department has established and vendors must meet all the requirements.

The Ohio WIC program offers three types of contracts – retail, pharmacy and farmer. There are a maximum number of pharmacy and retail contracts permitted per county.

To learn how to become an authorized WIC program vendor, you should visit the Ohio WIC program's website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ns/wicn/wicVendor.aspx>. Through this website, you will also find Ohio WIC Retail Vendor Training videos, sample vendor applications, and additional information about the rules governing the Ohio WIC program.

If you would like to request an application or speak to a WIC vendor specialist, you should call the Ohio Department of Health at (800) 282-3435.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ohio Department of Health WIC Program
246 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43215
Phone: (614) 644-8006 / Fax: (614) 564-2470
Email: OHWIC@odh.ohio.gov

Website: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ns/wicn/wic1.aspx>

Ohio WIC Program Vendor Information
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ns/wicn/wicVendor.aspx>

Ohio WIC Program Vendor Specialists
Phone: (800) 282-3435

WIC At A Glance
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/wicataglance.htm>

WIC Programs Fact Sheets
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/factsheets.htm>

WIC Works Resource System
http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=12&tax_level=1&tax_subject=642

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfags.htm>)
(<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/ns/wicfm/wicfm1.aspx>)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is administered through a Federal/State partnership in which the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides grants to State agencies. Similarly to the WIC Program, funding for FMNP is provided by Congress on a discretionary basis. In Ohio, the Department of Health administers the FMNP.

FMNP provides nutritionally at-risk women and children with fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs from farmers' markets and farm stands. The Ohio Department of Health sets the guidelines on the types of food that are eligible under the program. A list of authorized foods for the Ohio FMNP can be found at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/ns/wicfm/authfood.aspx>. In addition, FMNP provides supplementary nutrition education on the importance of fruits and vegetables in their diets.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio received \$542,401 in federal funding for FMNP during fiscal year 2010. These funds allowed 34,921 participants to receive FMNP benefits.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The Ohio Department of Health sets the requirements for who is eligible to participate. Currently, only the highest risk participants of the WIC Program, those being pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women and some children are eligible to receive benefits.

Ohio FMNP participants are given coupons to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from authorized farmers at farmers' markets and farm stands. Farmers' markets and farm stands must accept and redeem FMNP coupons through processes developed by the Ohio Department of Health to be reimbursed.

HOW DO I ACCESS THIS MARKET

The Ohio Department of Health is responsible for authorizing FMNP vendors. To become an authorized FMNP vendor you must contact the Ohio Department of Health by calling (800) 282-3434.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<p>Ohio Department of Health WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program 246 North High Street, 6th Floor Columbus, OH 43215 Phone: (800) 282-3435 / Fax: (614) 564-2470 Email: OHWIC@odh.ohio.gov Website: http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/ns/wicfm/wicfm1.aspx</p>
<p>Frequently Asked Questions Concerning WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ns/wicfm/fnmpfaq.aspx</p>
<p>FNS FMNP Overview http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfaqs.htm</p>

<p><u>Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)</u> <u>(http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SeniorFMNPoverview.htm)</u> <u>(http://aging.ohio.gov/services/seniorfarmersmarketnutritionprogram/)</u></p>

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) was established to provide low-income seniors the same nutrition benefits as participants in the WIC Program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) through State Departments of Agriculture or Departments of Aging administer SFMNP. In Ohio, the Ohio Department of Aging oversees the SFMNP.

SFMNP benefits provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey from farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors. You are eligible for the Ohio SFMNP if you are 60 or older, reside in a service area that participates in the program, and meet certain household income requirements.

The specific income requirements can be found by visiting Ohio's SFMNP program website at <http://aging.ohio.gov/services/seniorfarmersmarketnutritionprogram/>. In addition, a list of approved foods can also be found at the program's website.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Eligible participants are provided coupons to be used at authorized farmers' markets and farm stands that display a SFMNP sign. The program operates through the growing season.

Farmers' markets and farm stands must accept and redeem SFMNP coupons through specific processes developed by the Ohio Department of Health to receive reimbursement.

HOW DO I ACCESS THIS MARKET

Farmers who wish to participate in the SFMNP must first be authorized by the local Area Agency on Aging. Authorization requires that the farmer attend training, provide information about his/her business and agree to have his farmland reviewed to determine what crops will be grown to be sold in the SFMNP. Farmers must also grow 51% of the produce they sell. Additional requirements may apply.

To become an authorized vendor, you must contact your local Area Office on Aging. Below you will find contact information for your local office.

<p><u>Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio</u> (Serving the Counties of Lucas, Ottawa and Erie) 2155 Arlington Avenue Toledo, OH 43609 Phone: (800) 472-7277 Email: jmoor@areaofficeonaging.com Website: http://www.areaofficeonaging.com/ & http://www.areaofficeonaging.com/aoafarm1.html</p>
<p><u>Western Reserve Area Agency On Aging</u> (Serving Lorain County) 925 Euclid Avenue, Suite 600 Cleveland, OH 44115 Phone: (800) -626-7277 or (216) 621-8010 Website: http://www.psa10a.org/ & http://www.psa10a.org/Programs/srfarmersmkt.asp</p>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<p><u>Ohio Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program</u> http://aging.ohio.gov/services/seniorfarmersmarketnutritionprogram/</p>
<p><u>Ohio Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program – Market Memo – Fresh Facts</u> http://aging.ohio.gov/resources/publications/sfmnpMarketMemo.pdf</p>
<p><u>FNS SFMNP Overview</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SeniorFMNPOverview.htm</p>

<p><u>School Meals Programs</u> http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/</p>
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PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers several child nutrition programs designed to improve the health and wellbeing of children at schools nationwide. These programs include the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

FNS estimates that the federal government will provide over \$14 Billion in benefits through federal child nutrition programs in FY 2010.

HOW THE PROGRAMS WORK

The programs provide reimbursements or cash subsidies to states to pay for the meals served. The dollar amount that can be charged per meal varies per program along with the types of foods that can be served. Generally speaking, the meals provided must meet the guidelines established in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

HOW DO I ACCESS THIS MARKET

In order for local producers to sell products to schools, producers must contact the local school district to learn about its procurement process. In Ohio, the state follows the procurement rules established by FNS but school districts may establish stricter procurement rules. Broadly speaking, FNS requires school districts follow the Informal & Formal Procurement processes when participating in one of the school meals programs.

School districts may use the Informal Procurement process if the cost of the goods or services meet or fall below the small purchases threshold, which is \$100,000. Informal Procurement requires school districts produce a written document outlining the products/services they are seeking and contact three or more potentially qualified sources. The school district must then choose the qualified source that offers the lowest price.

School districts must follow the Formal Procurement process if the cost of the goods or services exceeds the small purchase threshold. The Formal process requires school districts to publicly announce the request for goods or services and use a sealed bidding process or a competitive negotiation process.

Both bidding and negotiation have to have a formalized scoring criterion for bidders. Additional scoring preference points must be provided to locally grown or raised agricultural products. School districts must choose the qualified bidder who offers the lowest price.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Farm to School Initiative (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/Default.htm>)

The Farm to School Initiative is USDA effort to connect schools (K-12) with regional or local farms in order to serve healthy school meals using locally produced foods. The Initiative was formed to assist schools but it provides valuable information for potential producers that wish to market and sell products to schools.

The following websites provide additional information about the Farm to School Initiative:

<p>Farm to School Policy Website http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2spolicy.htm</p>	<p>Farm to School Resources Website http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2s-resources.htm</p>
<p>Farm to School Procurement Website http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/faqs_procurement.htm</p>	

Section V: Additional Funding Resources

Additional Funding Resources

Small Farm Funding Resource Website

http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm

USDA's National Agricultural Library Website on Funding Resources

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/fundguide.html>

USDA and partners' publication on Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry,
Entrepreneurship, Conservation and Community Development

<https://attra.ncat.org/guide/index.html>

Federal Government's Primary Grants Website

<http://www.grants.gov>

USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER>