

Request for Information No. 2022-43

Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreements

STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

PROJECT TITLE: Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreements

RESPONSE DUE DATE: 3:00 p.m., Pacific Daylight Savings Time (PDST) on June 6, 2022

SUBMIT RESPONSE TO: CNSSupportstaff@k12.wa.us or by phone to Erica Olivera
360.725.6200

All communications concerning this RFI must be directed to the email address above or may be submitted by phone to Erica Olivera, Administrative Assistant. Should you need translation assistance, please let us know when you place your phone call.

This RFI is available at the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) website](#) and at the Department of Enterprise Services, [Washington Electronic Business Solution \(WEBS\) Procurement website](#). All RFI amendments and/or Consultant questions and OSPI answers will be posted to these sites. All interested Consultants must be registered with WEBS under the following commodity codes in order to receive automatic notifications:

962-40 Food Distribution Services

OSPI, and its contractors and subcontractors, must not discriminate in any programs or services based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, marital status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, and must comply with state and federal nondiscrimination laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162/TTY: 360-664-3631; or P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200; or equity@k12.wa.us.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Section A. INTRODUCTION

A.1. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for the purposes of this RFI include:

Agency or OSPI – The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; the entity issuing this RFI.

Amendment – A unilateral change to the Solicitation that is issued by OSPI at its sole discretion and posted on WEBS and OSPI's website.

Child Nutrition Services – A division of OSPI that administers the United States Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs. This RFI pertains to the Child Nutrition Programs, the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

Distributor- an organization or individual with the ability to organize, collect, store and deliver foods locally. For the purposes of this RFI, a Food Hub is one example of a distributor.

Domestic Food – means a product grown, processed, and otherwise prepared for sale or distribution exclusively in the United States or its territories, except with respect to minor ingredients. Minor ingredients from nondomestic sources will be allowed to be utilized as a United States product if such ingredients are not otherwise: (1) produced in the United States; and (2) commercially available in the United States at fair and reasonable prices from domestic sources.

Local or regional producers – Farmers, ranchers, fishers, producers, 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. Local or regional food.

Local or regional food - 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. For the purposes of this RFI, Olympia WA is considered the final market.

Minimally Processed – the product was processed in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the product. Minimally processed foods have been slightly altered for the main purpose of preservation but does not substantially change the nutritional content of the food. Examples include cleaning and removing inedible or unwanted parts, grinding, refrigeration, pasteurization, fermentation, freezing, and vacuum-packaging.

Proprietary Information – Information such as patents, technological information or other related information that the Bidder or Consultant does not want released or shared with the public.

RCW – The Revised Code of Washington.

Request for Information – A document issued when an agency is seeking additional information about services in the marketplace.

Respondent - Individual organization submitting a response to this RFI. For the purposes of this RFI, farmer, rancher, producer. Distributors/Food Hubs may also be considered a respondent for this RFI.

Response – A formal response submitted to OSPI regarding this RFI.

RFI Coordinator – An individual or designee who is employed by OSPI and who is responsible for conducting this Solicitation.

Small Business - As defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), a business that is a for profit-businesses of any legal structure, independently owned and operated, not nationally dominant in its field, and physically located and operated in the U.S. or its territories.

Socially Disadvantaged producers - Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Solicitation/Procurement – A formal process providing an equal and open opportunity for respondents culminating in a selection based upon predetermined criteria.

WEBS – Washington’s Electronic Business Solution, the Consultant notification system found at [Washington Electronic Business Solution \(WEBS\) Procurement website](#) and maintained by the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.

A.2. PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is initiating this Request for Information (RFI) to solicit information regarding the availability of local or regional food from socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, producers, distributors, and other small businesses involved in food production or distribution.

The information gathered from this RFI will inform OSPI CNS implementation of the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program.

A.3. BACKGROUND

Led by Superintendent Chris Reykdal, OSPI is the primary agency charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington state. Working with the state's two hundred ninety-five (295) public school districts and six (6) state-tribal education compact schools, OSPI allocates funding and provides tools, resources, and technical assistance so every student in Washington is provided a high-quality public education.

OSPI Child Nutrition Services (CNS) administers eight U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the USDA Food Distribution Program (FDP) operated by public school districts, charter schools, tribal compact schools, and select private schools.

The Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) was established by USDA Agricultural Marketing Service with funding through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

This program will allow for the OSPI CNS to procure local, domestic foods and meet the needs of their schools through the SBP and the NSLP. In addition to increasing local food consumption, funds are expected to help build and expand economic opportunity for local, small, and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers during the project period and create purchasing relationships for the future.

OSPI CNS, as the lead agency, will apply for up to \$3,644,643.00 Federal funding. The information gathered from this RFI will inform OSPI CNS implementation of the LFA. Upon award, CNS will implement the LFA and conduct a procurement process, in accordance with the Uniform Grant Guidance, of local food from socially disadvantaged farmers and small businesses.

OSPI CNS must apply for funding no later than June 17, 2022. Projects must be completed within one year of time of award. OSPI CNS anticipates the project period will be September 1, 2022, through August 30, 2023.

To read more about the LFA, access the following link:

[Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/local-food-for-schools-cooperative-agreement-program)

A.4. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF WORK

OSPI CNS administers the USDA Food Distribution Program (FDP) providing commodity food items to 295 participating school districts with an enrollment of approximately 1 million students in the state of Washington. The FDP is a supplemental food program meant to assist in reducing food costs for schools and not meant to meet 100% of schools' needs. Through this program, OSPI CNS facilitates the storage and delivery of USDA commodity foods statewide through a contracted warehouse facility. The facility has the capacity to receive dry and frozen food monthly and delivers foods according to an order placed by the school district to participating schools monthly. The plan for this project is to purchase local foods with the funds provided by this opportunity, receive the food utilizing the existing warehouse storage and delivery service, incorporate the foods into the FDP inventory system, allow schools to order the foods, and deliver the foods monthly alongside traditional USDA foods. Examples of local foods we anticipate could meet our needs include lentils, whole grain flour, frozen fruits/vegetables, beef, or poultry.

Washington state schools participating in the NSLP and SBP operate with a variety of food service models. The foods we anticipate meeting a school need must meet the definition of minimally processed and arrive at the schools in a dry or frozen state mostly ready to cook or use.

However, through the RFI process, OSPI CNS seeks to understand:

- All types of foods available, including fresh fruit and vegetables
- Ability of Food Hubs, operating as a subcontractor, to expand types of food offered supporting receiving, aggregating like products from several locations, storing and delivering product to schools especially during peak growing seasons.
- Producers' ability to minimally process their products prior to purchase by OSPI CNS.
- Contracted off-farm processors ability to source from socially disadvantaged producers, aggregate like products, minimally processes into an end product, and deliver to participating schools.

A. Objective

Identify:

- Interest
- Types of food and their specifications available during project period
- Quantities available. OSPI may look to procure a product from multiple vendors to obtain a specified quantity.
- Grower/Producer ability to minimally process foods for school convenience or to hold a contract for the service.
- Pack size

- Grower/Producer ability to transport foods to warehouse location, including frequency of deliveries.
- Understand the food safety practices on-site and practices that will be utilized from farm to OSPI CNS contracted warehouse as well as any farm food safety certifications.

B. Scope of Work

From this RFI, OSPI CNS would like respondents to submit the following information:

1. Food Type

Local or regional foods grown and minimally processed within a 400-mile radius of Olympia, Washington. Food must have the ability to be stored dry in a warehouse or held in frozen storage. Food may be a stand-alone menu item or an ingredient in a recipe produced by the school. Some examples may include:

- Raspberries, IQF, Unsweetened, Case with six, 5-pound packages
- Flour, whole grain, enriched, case with eight 5-pound bags
- Beef, ground, raw 85/15 40-pound case containing four 10-pound packages
- Beef, patties, Lean, Ground, Raw, 5% Fat, IQF, 3.1-ounce patty in 40 lb package
- Lentils, cleaned, dry, cases with twelve 2-pound packages
- Carrots, diced 3/8-1/2 inch, No Salt Added, Frozen 30 lb bulk case

2. Quantity Available for Purchase

The quantity of the food type anticipated to be available for purchase by OSPI CNS for this program throughout the project period.

3. Storage & Logistics

Ability to store foods until and provide monthly delivery to OSPI CNS contracted warehouse. Contracted warehouse locations are Spokane, Washington and Algona, Washington.

4. Food Safety

Ability to meet food safety requirements during the growing and harvesting period, processing as applicable, storage and delivery to contracted warehouse. Include food safety certifications.

A.5. TO RESPOND

There are two ways to respond:

1. Complete the template (Exhibit A) and send by email to CNSsupportstaff@k12.wa.us
2. Call in your responses to Erica Olivera, Administrative Assistant, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8-4:30 with interpretation services available. Erica can be reached at 360.725.6200.

1. Food Business Name, location, and description of how do you meet the definition of local or regional producer?
2. What products are available that meet the scope of work identified in this RFI? Include specifications, food grades as applicable.
3. If your product is beef or other meat, is it processed in a USDA inspected facility?
4. Is your product shelf stable or frozen?
5. What are your storage and delivery capacities? Indicate if you have the capacity to deliver frozen items to an east and west side of the state warehouse location.
6. What are your processing capacities? Can you contract for processing if necessary/can you minimally process foods onsite?
7. What is your current wholesale pricing structure for the food items in your response?
8. How much of the product will be available for OSPI CNS purchasing during the project period?
9. What is the package size or sizes available? Is it sold by the pallet, case, other and how many individual units per pack size?
10. What are your farm food safety certifications/food safety practices/food safety licenses?

After reviewing the responses, OSPI may contact some or all Consultants with follow up questions.

Section B. GENERAL INFORMATION

B.1. RFI COORDINATOR

Name:	Brenda Merritt
Email Address:	Brenda.Merritt@k12.wa.us

B.2. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

OSPI CNS plans a respondent conference to provide answers to your questions about this project on May 10, 2022 from 10:00-10:50 am. This meeting will use Zoom as the platform. Please join us. The meeting link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82036961994>

Meeting ID: 820 3696 1994

B.3. ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Item	Action	Date
1.	OSPI issues RFI	May 3, 2022
2.	Question and Answer period	May 4-13, 2022
3.	Respondent Q&A Meeting 10:00 -10:50 am	May 10, 2022
4.	OSPI posts final Question and Answer Addendum or Amendment (if necessary)	May 13, 2022
5.	Responses due by 3:00 pm	June 6, 2022

OSPI reserves the right to revise the above schedule.

B.4. CONSULTANT RESPONSE

Interested parties shall submit responses as an attachment to an email to the RFI Coordinator noted in Section B.1. **Responses must arrive by 3:00 p.m. in Olympia, WA, on June 6, 2022.** If submitting response by email, the RFI number must be noted in the email subject line. SPI does not assume responsibility for any problems with the electronic delivery of materials.

Responses not received by the deadline will not be reviewed. Late responses will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration. Responses must respond to the information requested. Do not respond by referring to material presented elsewhere. The response must be complete and must stand on its own merits.

OSPI can accept responses by phone including use of translation services. To initiate a phone response, please call 360.725.0433.

Information provided in the RFI will help OSPI CNS understand the options available to provide the best implementation of this project. It is our desire to obtain as much information as possible. No response does not disqualify respondents from submitting a proposal during an RFP phase of the project.

B.5. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Your entire response to this RFI is a public record and will be disclosed consistent with the Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW.

B.8.i. CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

For the purposes of this RFI, do not include confidential or proprietary information unless specifically requested by OSPI.

If OSPI requests confidential or proprietary information, you must clearly print the word "Confidential" on the lower right-hand corner of each page containing the confidential or proprietary information.

B.8.ii. PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

If a public records request seeks your response and the response contains pages clearly marked "Confidential," OSPI will take the following steps:

- i. We will notify you. We will identify the requestor and the date that OSPI will disclose the requested records.
- ii. We will give you an opportunity to seek a court order to stop OSPI from disclosing the records.
- iii. We will not evaluate or defend your claim of confidentiality. We will not withhold or redact your documents without a court order.

If you have any questions, refer to the [OSPI Public Records Office](#).

B.6. ADDENDUMS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE RFI

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFI, an addendum or an amendment will be published on the [OSPI website](#). For this purpose, the published Respondent questions and Agency answers, and any other pertinent information, shall be considered an addendum to the RFI. Additionally, all addenda referred to above will be released on WEBS under the commodity code(s) listed on the cover page of this RFI. Only respondents who have properly registered in WEBS will receive automatic notification of amendments or other correspondence

pertaining to this RFI. For those not registered in [WEBS](#), it will be the responsibility of interested respondents to check the website periodically for addenda and amendments to the RFI.

B.7. SMALL BUSINESS, MINORITY & WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (MWBE), AND VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

In accordance with the legislative findings and policies set forth in chapter [39.19 RCW](#), the State of Washington encourages participation in all of its contracts by firms certified by the Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises (OMWBE). Participation may be either on a direct basis in response to this RFI or on a subcontractor basis. For more information on certification, contact the [Washington Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises](#).

43.60A.200 encourages the participation of Veteran and Service Member Owned Businesses certified by the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs RCW [43.60A.195](#). For more information on certification, contact [Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs](#).

Additionally, per Department of Enterprise policy, agencies are encouraged to buy from in-state small business, including microbusinesses and minibusinesses.

However, no preference will be included in the evaluation of responses, no minimum level of MWBE participation shall be required as a condition for receiving an award, and response will not be rejected or considered non-responsive on that basis. Any affirmative action requirements set forth in federal regulations or statutes included or referenced in the contract documents will apply.

B.8. ETHICS, POLICIES, & LAW

This RFI and review of responses shall be made in conformance with applicable Washington State laws and Policies.

B.9. COSTS OF RESPONSE PREPARATION

OSPI will not be liable for any costs incurred by the respondent in preparation of a response submitted in response to this RFI, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFI.

B.10. NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT

This RFI does not obligate the State of Washington or OSPI to contract for services specified herein. OSPI also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFI in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract without penalty.

Any future contract that may be awarded from a subsequent procurement will comply with state procurement requirements. This document does not obligate OSPI to issue a competitive procurement, to evaluate the services of any responding organization, or to enter into any contract. OSPI has not yet determined whether it will issue a competitive procurement to procure the services described in this RFI. OSPI may utilize the results of this RFI in drafting a competitive procurement.

B.11. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

OSPI complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Consultants may contact the RFI Coordinator to receive this Request for Information in an alternative format.