

OSPI Child Nutrition Services Grants Reference Sheet

Plant Based School Meals Grant

The Washington State Legislature provided \$75,000 to support grant for schools seeking to implement more plant-based meal options in school year 2024–2025. These funds will be distributed as competitive grants up to \$10,000 per school district to be spent during SY 2024–25. Only school districts that have not previously received funding for the Plant Based School Meals Grant may apply.

Why Serve Plant-Based School Meals?

There are a variety of benefits to serving plant-based school meal options, including:

Supporting Student Health: Well-planned vegetarian diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits for the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. Additionally, many students follow plant-based diets for a variety of reasons.

Serving Culturally Appropriate Meals: Providing plant-based menu offerings can make school meals more accessible to children following halal, kosher, and other specific cultural dietary practices.

Supporting Local Agriculture: Washington has a bounty of local farmers and food businesses that are growing and selling plant-based protein foods, like lentils and soy products.

Who Can Apply?

All K-12 schools, including public, private, and tribal schools, participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program in Washington state are eligible to apply. All districts interested in making more plant-based entrees, sides, and/or dairy alternatives available to students on their menu are encouraged to apply.

How the Grant May Be Used

These funds may be spent on food supplies, delivery costs, equipment purchases, education, and other expenditures to increase access to plant-based school meals that meet the meal pattern requirements of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Under this grant, plant-based foods are defined as foods that exclude eggs, dairy, meat, poultry, seafood, and animal byproducts. Priority for award will be given to districts with the greatest economic need, those with plans for student engagement in their efforts, and districts who plan to use funds in support of providing culturally appropriate meals for their student population.



Examples:

- ✓ Purchase plant-based meat alternatives to replace meat in one or more menu item.
- ✓ Standardize plant-based recipes to implement in your menu.
- ✓ Conduct student focus groups and taste tests to gather input on plant-based recipes.
- ✓ Teach students about plant-based foods through nutrition or agricultural education.
- ✓ Purchase creditable plant-based fluid cow's milk alternatives.
- ✓ Purchase additional food processing and storage equipment to prevent cross contamination for plant-based halal and kosher menu offerings.

Please review the [Plant Based Meals Grant Application Information Sheet](#) for more details.

Timeline

- ✓ November 14, 2024 – Grant application opens
- ✓ December 19, 2024 – Grant application closes (5:00 pm)
- ✓ January 10, 2025 – Awardees notified
- ✓ June 30, 2025 – Grant activities must be complete

Acronym References

- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- SY – School Year