

Plant-Based School Meals Pilot

Statutory and/or Budget Language

\$75,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$75,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for the office of the superintendent of public instruction to administer grants to school districts for a plant-based school meals pilot program. Grants may be used for food supplies, delivery costs, equipment purchases, education, and other expenditures to increase access to plant-based school meals. Grant awards to school districts may not exceed \$10,000 per district and may only be distributed to school districts that have not received funding for the pilot program previously.

Purpose

Support grant funding for schools seeking to implement more plant-based meal options.

Description of Services Provided

School districts used 2023-24 grant funds for the following:

- Developed plant-based recipes and offer plant-based sides, entrees, and/or meals to students.
- Fund additional staff to prepare plant-based meals.
- Provide taste testing of local/plan-based meals for students.
- Create or expand school gardens.
- Provide education on the benefits of plant-based foods, garden/farm-based lessons, and plant-based cooking classes.
- Offered Grab & Go plant-based meals to students.
- Purchase equipment to prepare plant-based foods for long-term menu changes.

Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

These funds will be distributed as competitive grants up to \$10,000 per school district to be spent during the 2023-2024 school year. All districts interested in serving more plant-based meals on their menu are encouraged to apply. Under this grant, plant-based meals are defined as meals made up completely of plant foods and exclude eggs, dairy, meat, poultry, seafood, and animal biproducts. Priority for awards will be given to districts with the greatest economic need and districts who plan to use funds in support of providing culturally appropriate meals for their student population.



Beneficiaries in the 2023-24 School Year

Number of School Districts	9
Number of Schools	70
Number of Students	21,800
Number of Educators	N/A
Other	0

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No.

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$75,000	\$45,397
2023	\$150,000	\$143,489

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	9 Districts; 70 Schools; 21,800 Students
2023	16 Districts; 119 Schools; 70,723 Students

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

Total funding available for this grant decreased by 50% since the previous fiscal year.

Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

Timeline – consider an additional year for grantee projects. Child Nutrition Services administers several grants that are one year in length and time sensitive. Grant funding awarded in February leaves just a few months before the end of the school year and the state fiscal year (June 30) for grantees to complete their projects and claim reimbursement for their expenses. Ensure language in proviso leaves flexibility for Child Nutrition Services to make such administrative decisions meaning competitive vs. non-competitive.

Major Challenges Faced by the Program

Recipients of the Plant Based School Meals grant funding in 2023-24 had to change their projects in some cases and some were not able to complete all purchases and grant funds prior to the June 30 state deadline. This required additional administrative time since the grant was competitive.

Future Opportunities

The application transitioned from iGrants to a new, simplified application workbook to streamline the scoring process.

Monitoring the dollar value of grants submitted. There is a potential for this grant to grow in popularity. Consistent funding levels make the grant predictable for Child Nutrition Services and for schools wishing to apply.

Other Relevant Information

None.

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)

Program Contact Information

Name	Leanne Eko
Title	Chief Nutrition Officer, Child Nutrition Services
Phone	360-725-0410
Email	leanne.eko@k12.wa.us