

Facilitator's Guide

# Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs



OFFICE *of*  
COMMUNITY  
FOOD SYSTEMS



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# PREFACE

## About This Guide

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*Note: The background information section is not intended to be presented as part of the lesson.*

Across the country, an increasing number of schools have begun to source more foods locally and provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming and nutrition. In the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) vision, school cafeterias championing U.S. agriculture and proudly promoting regionally sourced foods that meet or exceed school nutrition standards will one day be the norm, not the exception.

### Facilitator's Guide Overview

This training guide contains several distinct sections:

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Defining Local and Where to Find Local Foods
3. Procurement Principles and Regulations
4. Procurement Methods – The Informal Methods (micro- and small purchase procedures)
5. Procurement Methods – Formal Method
6. Quiz: Procurement Basics
7. USDA Foods and DoD Fresh
8. Other Topics
9. The Geographic Preference Option
10. How to Use the Geographic Preference Option
11. Incorporating Local Foods into School Meals
12. Farm to School Resources
13. Handouts and Activities

Each section concludes with a summary of the content that was covered and reiterates the key points that were hopefully conveyed.

### Using This Guide

This guide provides information for each slide along with prompts for engaging your audience. While the script might *seem* rigid, the tone of the presentation should be conversational, and it will be difficult to achieve such a tone if you read the script word for word. There are suggested questions listed throughout the guide that you may want to pose to your audience. Pick and choose to include or omit these as you see fit. Feel free to jump in with your own discussion questions, conduct informal polls by hand-raise, or ask audience members about their experiences. The more that you are willing to tailor this presentation to your audience, the more effective it will be. Consider adding examples from your state or region wherever possible. If audience members are experienced in procurement, ask them to share information about their procurement efforts.

Also sprinkled throughout this guide are ideas and worksheets to create interactive sessions. Depending on the amount of time you have, consider including some of these activities in your session. Even if you do not have time to run through an exercise during the session, the handouts may still be useful to audience members long after the training.

## Training Options

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This guide is written as though the presentation was to be given in its entirety and in the order presented. At USDA we have found that covering all the content presented in this guide can take up to two full days. There are, however, many options for shortening and even lengthening the presentation to suit various needs. Along with time limitations, your intended audience will be a driving factor in your presentation. For smaller groups, consider using more activities and allowing more time for feedback or questions. With a large gathering, engaging the audience may prove more challenging and you may need to allocate more time for an activity.

Be aware of your audience, and tailor your presentation to their needs. Is the audience new to the world of school food or are they old pros at basic procurements looking to introduce local products? Are you speaking to state agencies or school nutrition directors? Are you presenting at a conference? If so, will other sessions on procurement be offered and how will yours complement the other sessions?

There are several options for tailoring the presentation to different topics, audiences, and time constraints. For each of these options, remember to remove any slides that do not pertain to your focused topic. Practicing the presentation ahead of time will help you find any material that needs to be added or removed.

### USDA's Local Procurement Webinar Series

In 2014, the USDA Farm to School Program hosted a 12-part webinar series to showcase the variety of ways school districts can purchase local foods. Each of the webinars listed below is available for viewing on-line at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/videos-and-webinars>. You might consider having participants watch one or two of the webinars in advance of your training so that you can move through content more quickly. Alternatively, you might have participants continue their education by watching additional content after your training.

1. Introduction to Procurement
2. Conducting a Local Procurement Baseline Assessment
3. Finding Local Producers
4. Using the Informal Procurement Method
5. Using Specifications to Target Local Products
6. Working with Distributors
7. Using a Forward Contract
8. Introduction to Geographic Preference
9. Using Geographic Preference
10. Using USDA Foods as Resource to Purchase Local
11. Using DoD Fresh to Purchase Local
12. Tying It All Together and Digging In

## ½ Day, Full-Day, Two-Day Face-to-Face Training

With four hours, you will have time to cover the basics, but not enough time to offer as many in depth examples or activities. You will also need to be selective in which discussion questions you choose to cover. During a day-long session, you will be able to cover the majority of the presentation, conduct several activities, and have discussions with the audience. With a sixteen hour presentation, you will have time to go through the entire presentation and conduct all the suggested activities and discussions.

## No Set Standard

There is no rule regarding how the content in this guide is delivered. You might elect to use the slides as the basis for your own webinar series. Alternatively, you might spread delivery of this content out over several months. The content is yours to tailor and adjust; you can add slides, delete slides or modify slides at will.

What does your audience need and what is the best way you can help them get the information they are seeking? Remember too, participants might want to be in touch with you and/or one another long after the training is over to share examples of ways in which they are buying local products, ask questions, etc. You could design a training protocol that invests as much time and energy in facilitating learning *after* the training activity as during it.

## Before the Event

Preparation before a presentation is as important to running a quality workshop as knowing the content. There are many aspects to facilitating a presentation that you may not consider until you have conducted a training. This worksheet will help you work through many important details.

### Presentation Details

Be sure you know all of the basics about the presentation you'll be giving:

- Training location, date, and time
- Estimated number of participants
- Presentation length
- Audience
- Focus topics
- Activities and handouts

### Preparation Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for the training session. Track your progress as you complete tasks. Remember to make note of any new questions or issues that arise.

Task	Person Responsible	Date Completed	Notes
Two Weeks Before the Session			
Contact the site to check whether you will have access to a projector, a screen, the internet, a microphone, or any other equipment.			
Ask the venue about the size and layout of the room in which you will be presenting.			
If you require white boards or flip charts, either purchase these or ask if the venue is able to provide them.			
Ask the venue if there is an appropriate place to set or hang any additional materials that you intend to bring.			
Promote the event. This can be done several ways (e.g., email, social media, flyers, or any other way that you may contact your audience).			
One Week Before the Session			

Task	Person Responsible	Date Completed	Notes
If snacks will be provided, decide when and where to purchase them from.			
Send confirmation messages to participants that include directions to the training venue.			
Determine if there will be assigned seating. If so, lay out the seating arrangements.			
Determine if you will have a sign-in sheet. If so, prepare it so that you can print it out.			
Practice your presentation in full, with slides and materials if possible.			

Task	Person Responsible	Date Completed	Notes
<b>One Day Before the Session</b>			
If you have access to the venue beforehand, examine the space that you will be using for the session.			
If you have arranged with the venue to have a microphone, ask if you may test the set up and have the staff show you how to use it.			
Ensure that all the materials that the venue agreed to provide are present, and if necessary, test them (especially any computers or projectors).			
Print and organize any handouts or activity materials that you intend to provide to your attendees.			
If applicable, prepare any flip chart or white board activities (e.g., the “Parking Lot” technique discussed earlier).			
Review this facilitator’s manual, all participant materials, and each PowerPoint slide.			
If you intend to provide nametags to the attendees, print and prepare these.			
If you intend to offer electronic copies of the session materials in advance, email these documents to all attendees.			
<b>The Day of the Session</b>			
Before participants’ arrival, recheck equipment, set up the room and post any necessary information.			
Ensure the projector, computer and PowerPoint are working by having the Welcome slide visible as guests arrive.			
Acquire a glass or bottle of water for each presenter to have during the session.			
If the room is difficult to find within your venue, ensure that there is signage leading your attendees to the proper location.			

## Suggested Supplies

- Computer with PowerPoint installed
- Projector and screen
- Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs: Facilitator's Guide
- Flip charts
- Sticky notes
- Markers, pens, or pencils
- Handouts
- Refreshments

## Reminders

Here are a few additional items to consider as you prepare for your training session. As with the above items, these may change depending on your venue, available staff and other variables.

- Consider having at least two staff people at most events, one to work the welcome or registration area, and one to help with any guest questions or troubleshoot any venue problems that arise.
- Consider using a microphone. Do not make your audience work to hear you.
- Once most attendees are settled, begin the program.
- Never start more than ten minutes after the expected start time. Encourage early arrival in your materials and/or set aside a 30-minute time period for checking-in before the meeting.
- If your session exceeds an hour, you may want to include a ten-minute break. If your session exceeds three hours, consider including multiple breaks.
- Leave plenty of time for questions, and ensure that participants know how and when questions will be answered. This will prevent the flow of your presentation from being interrupted.
- Remember to greet participants as they enter.

# Training Best Practices and Tactics to Avoid

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## Best Practices for Trainings

### Know Your Audience

- Consider surveying participants prior to the training to find out what they already know and tailor the presentation to that specific audience. In the survey consider asking what questions participants have so you can make sure to cover those topics.

### Prep Your Audience in Advance, or Send Them Off Primed to Succeed

- Are there ways your audience could prepare in advance to get the most out of your training? Perhaps you'll want to suggest advanced reading materials.
- Are there handouts or resources your participants will leave with after the training?
- Consider providing an attendee list with contact information either before or after the training so that participants can keep in touch. You might also consider establishing an on-line learning and sharing platform.

### Venue and Refreshments

- For face-to-face trainings, select a comfortable venue, preferably one with natural light.
- Try to ensure the venue is easily accessible with ample parking or public transit options.
- When setting up the room, sit in various locations. Can you see the screen from all vantage points? Have someone test the microphone. Is it audible in the back of the room?
- Offer healthy refreshments as able. If you are not able to offer light refreshments, make that clear in all materials. Participants generally expect amenities such as coffee and tea and light snacks; they should be alerted if they need to bring their own.
- Consider featuring locally sourced refreshments.

### Considerations for You in Your Role as Trainer

- Ensure you understand the content, but also have a degree of humility and check in with the audience frequently to ask for contributions.
- Be friendly and approachable throughout the training and especially as people are walking into the room.
- At the beginning of the training explain the intent of the training and conduct an icebreaker. Be an active participant in any icebreaker to help build trust and comfort among the participants.
- Provide materials to the audience so the audience can reference them during the training. Many people appreciate having printed copies of the slides to take notes on.
- If possible, always use a microphone. Do not make your audience work to hear you.

### Schedule Considerations

- Plan the training to include enough time for breaks.
- Allow for networking opportunities. Consider organizing a luncheon or an evening social event.

### Audience Engagement

- If possible, try to have a mix of presenters. It is especially useful to bring in local level leaders. Audiences often enjoy hearing from peers.
- Hold discussions throughout the training. The audience is sure to have a lot of expertise to share.
- Conduct hands-on activities, where the audience is doing the actual task that is being trained.

### Evaluation and Follow-up

- All trainings need to be evaluated to understand where the presentation can be improved and clarified. The presentation will evolve and improve over time with audience feedback. Reflect back on what worked and what did not and make changes moving forward.
- Consider asking participants to make an action plan or commitment at the end of the training.

### Pitfalls to Avoid

Some common pitfalls often include:

- Reading from slides and/or talking to your slides instead of making eye contact with the audience;
- Not allowing time for questions or not allowing questions at all;
- Trying to work through more content than there is time for;
- Not knowing/respecting the audience's knowledge base;
- Including too much text on slides; and,
- Poor venue selection or room set-up.

Do your best to avoid these pitfalls and employ as many of the best practices as possible in your trainings!

## SECTION I

### Introduction and Overview

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#### Show Slide: Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs

Notes:

- Be sure this slide is showing as participants enter the room. Make sure to add your name and date to this slide.
- As you begin the session, give a warm welcome and introduce yourself.
- Participants should also have the opportunity to introduce themselves, however this may be limited by the presentation time or the audience size. Consider one of the options below, or use your own tried and true method.

#### [Talking Notes]

To start, welcome the group and introduce yourself. Then decide how you will have participants introduce themselves. There are numerous options for introductions and icebreakers; here are just two:

**Option 1:** Ask participants to introduce themselves by sharing their name, organization and reasons for attending the session. It may also be helpful to have participants describe their experience in procurement.

**Option 2:** Ask participants to introduce themselves to two attendees that they do not know. This method works better for larger groups.

*Note: Asking for this information may help you tailor the parts of the presentation that you decide to emphasize. Additionally, asking about expectations may help shape future presentations. Make sure you note a few of the more confident and/or experienced speakers so you know whom to call on later.*

After introductions, provide housekeeping information:

- Schedule for the session, including breaks
- Location of restrooms

*Note: As mentioned, now is the time to change to the slide "Overview." Before the presentation, this slide and the section below should be tailored to the material, length and order of your presentation.*

#### Show Slide: Overview

*Note: Before the presentation, remember to modify the agenda slide as necessary, depending on what you intend to cover.*

#### [Talking Notes]

Here's an overview of what I'll be covering during this presentation.

- Defining local and where to find local foods
- Procurement principles and regulations
- Procurement methods

- Other ways to buy local products
- Geographic preference
- Resources and questions

### **Show Slide: Learning Objectives**

*Note: Before the presentation, remember to modify the learning objectives slide as necessary, depending on what you intend to cover.*

#### **[Talking Notes]**

My goal is that after this session, you will understand that:

- Local can span the school meal tray.
- Local is defined by the SFA and the definition of local can vary and be created in service to specific goals.
- Interest in serving and purchasing local products can be indicated throughout a solicitation.
- All purchases are subject to federal procurement regulations.
- Schools may apply a preference for unprocessed, locally-produced foods.

## SECTION II

### Defining Local and Where to Find Local Foods

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#### Show Slide: Defining Local and Where to Find Local Foods

##### [Talking Notes]

The first topics that we'll cover are how to define local and where to find producers that offer local products.

#### Show Slide: What Types of Products

##### [Talking Notes]

Let's discuss the types of local foods a school might procure.

Almost anything can be purchased locally in different parts of the country. Local purchasing is not just about fresh fruits and vegetables, and it is not just about farmers. Local and regional foods can also include beans, grains, flour, meat, poultry, fish, condiments, herbs, eggs and dairy. Local products can come from local farmers, ranchers, fishers, food processors and distributors of all sizes.

For many school districts, fresh fruits and vegetables are a logical starting place for local procurement. Fresh fruits are especially easy because many can be served with little to no preparation beyond washing.

And then beyond local fruits and vegetables, more comprehensive local buying programs incorporate local products in all of the food categories. Many schools, for example, adjust existing recipes and menus to accommodate local products (e.g. replacing beef with local bison in Montana or barley with local rice in California). Schools will often develop entirely new recipes and menus based on local products and local food traditions.

*Note: You may want to customize this section to include specific local examples.*

#### Show Slide: What is Produced in YOUR Area?

##### [Optional Discussion/Activity]

Ask the audience questions or form small groups to discuss one or more of the following questions:

- When kids come back to school after Labor Day, what local items might they see on the menu? How about after the winter break? After spring break?
- In general, what items are grown, harvested, produced or processed in your region?
- What local products have you seen on school menus recently?

## Show Slide: Local Production and Seasonality Resources

### [Talking Notes]

It sounds like you all have a good sense of what products are available in your region. If you need help or some of the districts you work with need help identifying products that are produced locally, here are some resources that will help you find out what types of products are available.

- Often a simple conversation with a farmer will leave you with ideas about what you might be able to procure.
- A visit to the farmers market will give you a great picture of what is currently available and you may be able to talk with several producers to find out what is available at different times throughout the year.
- Cooperative extension agents have a great sense of the agricultural landscape in every county across the country.
- The USDA Census of Agriculture provides a detailed picture of the different products that are produced in every state and all the data is publicly available on the USDA website.
- You might also consider connecting with other nearby school districts that are buying local; the USDA Farm the School Census can help you discover neighboring school districts that are involved in local buying.
- Finally, many organizations and non-profit organizations create seasonality charts that depict what products are available at different times during the year.

## Show Slide: Seasonality Charts

### [Talking Notes]

Here are two great examples of seasonality charts – one from the Washington State Department of Agriculture and one from the Office of the State Superintendent in Washington, D.C.

## Show Slide: What Does Local Mean?

### [Talking Notes]

Who defines local?

It's up to each school district to set a definition for local that works for their particular needs and goals. While oftentimes schools will adopt definitions in use by state agencies, schools can define local however they see fit.

What are you trying to accomplish?

Having specific goals for your local purchasing efforts will help you craft a definition for local that works in service to your goals.

For example, are you trying to support small producers? If so, you might adopt a definition for local that includes limitations on farm size. Are you trying to get as much local product into the school cafeteria as possible? You might consider a fairly broad definition of local that includes surrounding states in the region.

Are local livestock products abundant in your region but local fruits and vegetables scarce? You could consider different definitions of local for different product types.

What you define as local can frame who you purchase products from, how those products are grown and where your funds are going.

Remember that your definition of local can evolve and change as your program does.

## Show Slide: Defining Local: An Exercise

### [Talking Notes]

Let's take some time to think through what your goals are for bringing local food into the cafeteria and what definition of local will best serve that goal.

### [Activity]

Option 1: Ask participants to take a few minutes to think through the questions on the slide individually and be prepared to report back on what their goals are and how their definition might help meet those goals.

Option 2: Instruct participants to work with the people at their table (or 2 or 3 people near them) to develop a specific goal and then craft one definition of local for fruits and vegetables and one for animal-based proteins.

*Note: Allow about 10-15 minutes for the groups to develop goals and at least one definition of local. Have the small groups come together as a group and ask for a few volunteers to share what their goals are and what their definitions of local are.*

## Show Slide: Defining Local

### [Talking Notes]

Now that you've talked about what your buying local goals might be and potential definitions of local, let's look at a few of the most common ways schools are defining local.

There are a lot of options for how to define local!

"Local" for one school might mean within the county, while "local" for another might include the entire state and even adjacent states.

You may even have different definitions of local depending on the season or the type of product that you are purchasing.

A district may take a more nuanced approach. While a static definition of local will make it easier to tally local products, a more fluid approach may also work. The definition of local may change with the seasons, the type of product or special events.

This slide provides examples from Pierre, South Dakota. The image on the left shows that the district is taking a regional approach to the definition of local, the center picture shows the district is defining local as within the state and the final image shows that the district is using a smaller radius as its definition of local. The district

may use one of these definitions for all of their purchases or they might choose to use all of these definitions for different purchases or at different times of the year.

*Note: Give examples of different ways that “local” is defined in your region.*

## Show Slide: Examples

### [Talking Notes]

Here are three examples of how real school districts have chosen to define local.

- Page County Public Schools in Virginia uses a tiered definition. Their first priority is to source products from within the county, if the products they are looking for are not available in the county, they look for products from within 90 miles of Luray, VA. And third, the district considers products from within the state local as well.
- Oakland Unified School District in California defines local as within a 250 mile radius of the city of Oakland.
- Hinton Public Schools in Oklahoma defines local as within the state of Oklahoma.

These are just three examples of how districts have decided to define local.

## Show Slide: Where to Get Local Foods

### [Optional Activity]

Instead of reading through this slide, you can begin by asking your audience what sources of local food they use or sources they are interested in learning more about. You may want to write each source down on a white board or post-it note in order for the audience to see the variety of local sources.

### [Talking Notes]

*Note: If you choose not to conduct the activity, explain that there are many models for getting local foods into school cafeterias, and they are not necessarily exclusive of each other.*

**Through distributors:** Many schools work with their distributors to source local products, specifying a preference for local foods when the contract is established. This approach is a very easy way to bring local products into schools without creating separate distribution channels.

**Through food service management companies:** Similarly, schools can request that their food service management company procure local foods.

**From food processors:** Schools may opt to buy local ingredients and then procure the services of a processor to convert the locally grown product to a finished product, such as salsa, apple chips, ready-to-serve chicken legs or hamburger patties.

**Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh):** Many DoD Fresh vendors offer local products through the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) catalog. As of July 2014, locally

sourced produce is marked with a “locally grown” tag in the on-line catalog and many vendors also list the state of origin of the products listed.

**From individual producers:** Some schools choose to purchase foods directly from local farmers, ranchers and fishers. Even when you are getting food straight from the source, there are many ways to go about it. Some schools set up contracts with producers well in advance of the growing season, establishing a specific volume of product they intend to buy at a specific price. Other schools solicit bids for products month-to-month based on what is affordable and available. Sometimes the solicitation allows farmers to deliver products straight to schools or central warehouse, and other times schools pick up produce at the farm or at a farmers’ market. Some schools even harvest the produce themselves at U-picks! Remember that the delivery method must be specified at the time of the solicitation.

**From producer cooperatives (co-ops) and food hubs:** In some areas, producers have organized into co-ops, aggregating their products and combining their marketing efforts. These groups are more likely than a single, small-scale producer to be able to fulfill large orders, deliver directly to schools and to provide some minimal processing.

**From school gardens:** While school gardens do not usually produce enough food to make up a significant portion of a school meal, products grown on-site such as fruit, vegetables, eggs and others can supplement salad bars, be served as snacks or offered during a taste testing. Taste testing activities are a great way to introduce a new food item to students, and allow you to gauge the students’ acceptance of the item.

#### [Optional Discussion]

Facilitate a discussion about where the audience is currently finding local products by asking questions such as:

- Are there other sources of local food that you use?
- How many attendees are already buying local products from distributors?
- What experiences have you had purchasing from DoD Fresh?

### Show Slide: Resources for Finding Local Products

#### [Talking Notes]

There are a variety of resources available to help you find local producers. We’ll talk about a few specifically, but this list provides some ideas of where to go to learn more about local producers. Producer associations like the dairy council or state agricultural groups are great resources to learn more about particular products and get connected with producers. What better place than a farmers market to build relationships with local farmers. Non-profit organizations in your area are also often well connected to area producers. Now, let’s talk more about some on-line tools and USDA resources that can help you find local producers.

### Show Slide: On-line Tools

#### [Talking Notes]

There is a variety of on-line match maker tools that help buyers find growers and vice versa. Currently, most of these on-line tools are regionalized supporting different parts of the country. Some of these tools offer real

time information allowing you to see market prices and the range of products available in the moment. Others are more basic providing a producer database and contact information. All of these tools have a slightly different business model and some have fees to use the site.

## Show Slide: State Resources

### [Talking Notes]

State agencies are increasingly supporting farm to school efforts. The National Association for State Departments of Agriculture has a listing of all state departments of agriculture and may be a good first step to connecting with personnel at the state level. Many state departments of agriculture have a listing of all the producers in the state. More and more state agencies are developing promotional programs that promote and support the agriculture in their state and you can see some of the examples on the slide.

The majority of states have dedicated farm to school coordinators housed in either the state department of agriculture or state department of education. State farm to school coordinators support a range of activities from connecting producers to schools, linking all the involved stakeholders in the state, and coordinating statewide or regional events around farm to school. All of these contacts can be found on the USDA Farm to School website.

## Show Slide: USDA Resources

### [Talking Notes]

USDA provides a variety of services that can help schools find potential suppliers:

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has county offices all over the country. FSA's role is to support producers. To this end, they often host outreach events and maintain an extensive listserv of producers.

Cooperative Extension offers support at the state and county level and Extension offices have a renewed interest in community food systems. Extension agents routinely conduct outreach with producers and are often the perfect connectors for buyers and growers. Extension offices are experts in the agricultural landscape and production in their county or state.

The USDA Farm to School Census is a great tool to find out what neighboring districts are buying local. The Census can help you find districts with similar goals and then you can connect with those schools to learn more about their supply.

## Show Slide: Requests for Information

### [Talking Notes]

Requests for information, also known as RFIs, are an important tool for finding producers and understanding the agricultural landscape in your area. An RFI is **NOT** a procurement mechanism and should **NOT** be used to select vendors and award contracts. In general, an RFI is a survey of the market to better understand the products that are available, when they are available, the quantity available, and gauge if producers are interested in working with schools. An RFI may even ask about pricing information. There is not one template

for issuing an RFI; RFIs can have different purposes and take on different looks. An RFI may be as simple as emailing a listserv of producers in the state and asking if they are interested in selling to schools and if so, what products are available when, or a school might place an ad in the paper encouraging producers in the area to be in touch. A more sophisticated RFI might look like almost like a solicitation that outlines the intent of the school, what products the school is looking for, and asks vendors to respond with the quantity they have available and the price point.

The responses to an RFI can be used in many different ways. Some schools may use the tool just as a basic survey to understand what is readily available in their area. Other schools might use the responses to develop a list of vendors from which they can later request bids.

Developing an RFI does add time to the procurement process. The information gathered has potential to help multiple districts in your area, so one option is to collaborate with surrounding districts to issue one RFI and share the burden of creating the document and reviewing the responses. Another option is to partner with a community organization that supports farm to school programs or local agriculture and ask an intermediary to manage the process for you.

*Note: An RFI issued on behalf of five Midwestern districts can be found in the appendices of USDA's Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Guide.*

## Show Slide: What's Already Local on Your Menu? And What Could Be Local?

### [Talking Notes]

The characteristics of some products often make them more likely to be local, which means oftentimes schools are buying local products without even realizing it or with very little effort.

*Note: Several examples are listed below, but you will likely want to include at least one local example tailored to the audience for your presentation.*

- Fluid milk is produced in almost every state. Since fluids are expensive to transport, local milk is often cheaper than non-local milk, and therefore most schools are able to easily acquire local milk.
- California and Florida are major producers of fruits and vegetables. If an SFA in Southern California purchases avocados, the avocados will likely be from Southern California. If a Florida school chooses to purchase oranges in winter, the oranges will likely be from Florida. These examples are unique to California and Florida, but the same principle holds true for procuring products unique to any region.
- In Eugene, Oregon, the Eugene 4j district receives the majority of their produce through Duck Produce located in Portland, Oregon. Though 4j uses other mechanisms to source local foods, the district does not specifically request local products from this distributor. Depending on the season and the product, Duck often delivers Oregon grown product to Eugene 4j with the district's typical produce order without any request.
- At Bozeman Public Schools the school nutrition director decided to ask the school's distributor to label products that were produced in Montana. Just because of a simple request, the director quickly realized the potatoes and pasta they'd been routinely serving in the district were local.

Oftentimes, schools are buying local foods without even knowing it.

Once you know what products on your menu are already local, it is time to start thinking about what products *could* be local. Consider conducting a menu audit to determine if there are items that you could easily replace with local products. Other ways to start integrating local products include a harvest of the month program, salad bars and using a seasonal menu cycle that takes advantage of products available in season.

## Show Slide: Section Summary

### [Talking Notes]

Summarize and reinforce the content that has been covered:

- Local can span the school meal tray.
- Local is defined by the SFA.
- The definition of local can vary and should serve specific goals.
- There are lots of places to find/buy local products.
- RFIs are one useful tool in identifying local producers or vendors.
- Some products have characteristics that make them likely to be local (e.g. milk); many districts acquire local products with minimal effort.

*Note: You may want to pause here and ask if there are questions about any of the topics listed.*

### [Optional Handout]

On pages 108-109 a list of menu planning resources can be found which lists a variety of resources for assessing menus and finding out what is local in a particular area. Seasonality charts are listed along with ideas for integrating local foods.

## SECTION III

# Procurement Principles and Regulations

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### Show Slide: Procurement Principles and Regulations

#### [Talking Notes]

We'll start with a basic overview of procurement principles and regulations and move into a discussion of the different procurement methods. We'll cover four key concepts that govern the procurement process and identify where there is flexibility to target local products.

### Show Slide: Why Are Procurement Rules Important?

#### [Talking Notes]

Procurement rules ensure that taxpayer dollars are used effectively and efficiently without waste or abuse. Procurement regulations also ensure the program benefits are received by schools and children.

Regulations require that all purchases made with funds from the non-profit foodservice account, whether funded wholly or in part, are subject to federal procurement regulations.

It's important to understand that the rules do have a purpose and also allow for some flexibility. We'll talk more about where that flexibility exists as we move forward.

### Show Slide: What Is Procurement?

#### [Talking Notes]

Procurement is the buying of goods and/or services.

1. The procurement process begins with planning. Which goods or services do you need?  
How much do you need? When do you need them?
2. After determining your needs, document them in detail and create specifications.
3. Then, provide specifications to responders who might be able to fulfill your needs.
4. Award a contract to one of the responders to provide the needed goods and services.
5. Manage the contract to ensure that everything is provided according to your specifications.

The bulk of this presentation will focus on how to create solicitations that target local products, and to do that we need to understand that at the heart of this process are four procurement principles that come into play when spending federal funds.

*Note: Now advance the "What Is Procurement?" slide to show the heart labeled "Procurement Principles."*

### Show Slide: Four Key Concepts

#### [Talking Notes]

There are four key concepts to understand:

1. American Grown
2. Knowledge of State and Local Regulations
3. Competition
4. Responsive and Responsible

These principles guide the procurement process and it is important to abide by these principles to ensure that taxpayer money is only used to procure the best products or services at the lowest possible prices.

## Show Slide: Key Concept One: The Buy American Provision

### [Talking Notes]

The program rules contain a Buy American provision, which requires schools to purchase domestically grown and processed foods “to the maximum extent practicable.” Processed products must be processed in the United States and 51% of the ingredients must be domestically grown. This provision also applies to entities purchasing on behalf of schools.

Schools should include a Buy American clause in all product specifications, bid solicitations, requests for proposals (RFPs), purchase orders and other procurement documents issued. There are two situations that may warrant a waiver permitting the purchase of foreign products:

1. The product is not produced or manufactured in the U.S. in sufficient quantities of a satisfactory quality; bananas or pineapples are good examples.
2. Competitive bids reveal that the costs of a U.S. product are **significantly** higher than the foreign product.

*Note: Neither the regulations nor FNS guidance provide a definition for what is meant by ‘significantly.’ The Buy American Provision is not found in regulations for the Summer Food Service Program or the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

## Show Slide: Key Concept Two: State and Local Procurement Policies

### [Talking Notes]

Your state and/or school district may have additional procurement policies that you need to know. For example, some local agencies prohibit purchasing produce from a school garden, and other districts may require all vendors to hold a certain amount of liability insurance. It is important to understand procurement policies at all levels.

*Note: If time allows, this is a good moment to pause and ask the audience if they have any questions or comments. If you or audience members are familiar with relevant local and/or state requirements now would be a good time to facilitate a discussion about them, or insert a slide covering relevant policies.*

## Show Slide: State Procurement Policies

*Note: Customize this slide before you give the presentation. You might also want to note a few specific local policies or small purchase thresholds.*

### [Talking Notes]

Are there relevant state regulations you might reference at this point? Consider including information about relevant small purchase threshold and/or liability insurance requirements and whether local policies allow for both RFPs and Invitation for Bids (IFBs).

#### [Optional Discussion]

Ask questions such as:

- How many of you are already familiar with these procurement regulations?
- How many of you know where to find these regulations?
- What state policies do you have?
- What is your state's small purchase threshold?
- Does your state have legislation promoting farm to school?
- Does your state require vendors to carry liability insurance? If so, how much?
- Does your state allow both RFPs and IFBs?
- Are there other state-specific guidelines?

### Show Slide: Key Concept Three: Competition

#### [Talking Notes]

The most important principle of a sound procurement is competition.

The regulations use the term "full and open competition," which essentially means that all potential suppliers be on a level playing field. For more information, see 2 CFR 200.319. Competition helps ensure that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently and effectively.

### Show Slide: Why Is Competition Important? Price

#### [Talking Notes]

As was just noted, a competitive procurement environment ensures schools will receive the best price. Sellers may accept a smaller margin of return on a given sale rather than make no sale at all. Schools may receive more goods or services at a lower price than in a non-competitive environment.

### Show Slide: Why Is Competition Important? Quality

#### [Talking Notes]

In a competitive environment, schools will also receive the best quality, as businesses seek to differentiate themselves in terms of quality and innovation. Each new procurement offers schools an opportunity to consider different and/or better quality products and services.

### Show Slide: Competition Killers

#### [Talking Notes]

Ensuring full and open competition means that procurers **cannot**:

- Place unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business (e.g., a school cannot require that a vendor have at least 100 people on staff);
- Require unnecessary experience (e.g., a school cannot require that vendors have at least 50 years' experience serving schools);
- Give noncompetitive awards, either to consultants or to any one vendor;
- Have organizational conflicts of interest (e.g., a school cannot award a contract to a school board member);
- Specify only a brand name product instead of allowing an equal product to be offered;
- Make arbitrary decisions in the procurement process (e.g., a school cannot grant a contract because it liked one company's branding);
- Write bid specifications that are too narrow and limit competition;
- Allow potential contractors to write or otherwise influence bid specifications; or,
- Provide insufficient time for vendors to submit bids.
- **Use local as a product specification.**

With the current regulations and guidance, using local as a product specification is seen as limiting competition. Many have misinterpreted the geographic preference rule as allowing schools to use local as a specification, however the language included in the Final Rule, [Geographic Preference Option for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs](#), indicates that local cannot be used as a specification. The preamble of the Final Rule states, "A geographic preference is not a procurement set-aside for bidders located in the specified geographic area, guaranteeing them a certain level or percentage of business. In addition, including a geographic preference in a procurement does not preclude a bidder from outside the specified geographic area from competing for, and possibly being awarded, the contract subject to the geographic preference." Additionally, FNS issued a [Q&A policy memo](#) in 2011 that clarified that "the exclusion of all non-locally grown agricultural products is not a preference but rather a requirement of bidding and therefore is overly restrictive."

*Note: Advance the slide to make the last bullet appear. Not using local as a product specification may be a surprise to the group, so be prepared to answer why local cannot be used a product specification.*

## Show Slide: Imaginary Public School District Solicitation

### [Talking Notes]

Let's look at an example.

Ask audience if they see anything that is wrong.

The text in red highlights the incorrect language. Using this language indicates that the school is *only* looking for bids for locally grown products, which we just learned is considered overly restrictive.

*Note. Advance the slide for the no sign to appear.*

## Show Slide: Local as a Specification

### [Talking Notes]

Here are a few more examples that we've seen schools use in solicitations. Each of these is incorrect and considered overly restrictive.

*Note. Advance the slide for the no sign to appear. Some attendees may confuse defining local with using local as a specification. Be prepared to describe how a definition for the term local is not the same as specifying for local in a solicitation.*

## Show Slide: Key Concept Four: Responsive and Responsible

### [Talking Notes]

Now, let's turn our attention, to the last key concept we will cover before moving into procurement methods – making awards to vendors that are both responsive and responsible.

To be considered “**responsive**,” a vendor must submit a response to a solicitation that conforms to all material terms and conditions of the solicitation.

For example: If you say you want apples and the vendor comes back with a bid for peaches, they are not responsive. Or if you require delivery to five sites and the vendor can only service two, they are not responsive.

To be considered “**responsible**,” a vendor must be capable of performing successfully under the terms and conditions of the contract.

For example: If you require that responders provide references that can attest to their past success at meeting delivery times, but their references explain that the vendor has a *poor* track record, the vendor could be deemed not responsible.

Regardless of which procurement method is used, awards must be made only to responsive and responsible bidders.

## Show Slide: Potential Specifications, Requirements, and Evaluation Criteria to Target Local Products

### [Talking Notes]

In order for a vendor to be considered responsive and responsible, the bidder must meet any product specifications and other requirements that are outlined in your solicitation.

*Note: We'll look at requests for proposals more specifically a bit later, but these elements could also be used as evaluation criteria instead of specifications or vendor requirements.*

Each of the elements listed on this slide could be used as product specifications or technical requirements as long as they do not overly limit competition. Let's look at a few examples:

- » Particular varieties unique to the region – So, if I’m in Sonoma County in CA and I issue a solicitation for a Gravenstein apple, chances are it’s going to come from a local vendor, because Sonoma is the center of Gravenstein production in the U.S.
- » Freshness (e.g. delivered within 48 hours) – Requiring product to be delivered with 48 hours of harvest serves a dual purpose—you get really fresh produce, and you also increase the chances that the product will be local.
- » Size of farm – Include as a specification, requirement, or evaluation criterion a limit on the size of the farm you’d like the food to come from.
- » Farm Practices – You can require specific farm practices are utilized, such as crop rotation or integrated pest management practices.
- » Harvest techniques – You can require that crops be harvested by hand.
- » Crop diversity – Farms that raise a certain number of crops or livestock.
- » Origin labeling – If you’re developing a contract with a distributor, you can require that they include farm of origin or county of origin labeling.
- » Able to provide farm visits or class visits – You can also require that farmers or vendors participate in educational activities, something local vendors are more likely to be able to do than non-local vendors.

*Note: In the activities described in the Activities and Handouts Section participants will need to reference specifications that can be used to source local products. Consider preparing big sheets of paper in advance of the training on which you write several examples of specifications (such as those listed above) that can be used to help source local products. Ask participants if they have any other ideas for specifications that would target local products, noting additions as relevant.*

## Show Slide: Other Things to Consider When Writing Solicitations to Target Local Products

### [Talking Notes]

- The specifications and requirements listed on the previous slide actively work to target or identify local products. There are also more subtle considerations to keep in mind when seeking to buy local products. To the extent that it is reasonable for you, be flexible. This might mean broadening the usual requirements you use to allow for, perhaps, a little bit of cosmetic damage (especially for items that will be processed before they are served).
- Do not include unnecessary requirements that might be burdensome for a smaller operation. For example, if you usually require all produce to be delivered in a refrigerated truck but the solicitation you’re working on is just for apples, perhaps the apples do not need to be kept cold during transport, and that is something you can remove from your solicitation.
- Finally, remember to include as much detail as possible about the factors that are non-negotiable for you. For example, I have heard stories in the past of the food service director being caught off guard when a farmer delivered unwashed lettuce. If you want a washed product or uniform size, you need to be explicit about your needs. In addition, not all small farmers are familiar with the US grading system, so instead of

just saying US Grade No. 1, perhaps you can include information about what Grade 1 actually means for the particular product you are buying.

Be clear and detailed, be as flexible as is reasonable for you, and don't use jargon or include unnecessary requirements.

### **Show Slide: Additional Production Standards**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Finally, this is a list of additional production standards that do not necessarily work to target local products, but are sometimes associated with local. They are all perfectly allowable as specifications, requirements, or evaluation criteria as long as they do not overly restrict competition. Make sure you have done your market research before issuing a solicitation for grass-fed beef to ensure that there is more than one producer and that the product will be within a price-range you can afford.

### **Show Slide: Two Ways to Use Specifications and Requirements to Target Local Products**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Now that we know what type of specifications and requirements might be included when sourcing local products, let's look at two ways we can include specifications and requirements in solicitations.

The first way is to include language in product specifications that target, without specifying, local products and the second way is to use some of the elements we just talked about as technical requirements that the vendor must meet to be considered responsive.

Just by requesting a specific variety native to your area, or specifying that the product be delivered within 48 hours of harvest, you increase the likelihood that you will receive a local product because in order for the vendor to be deemed responsive, they must be able to meet the specifications that you outlined.

### **Show Slide: Sections of a Solicitation**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

We'll be coming back to this slide throughout the presentation. Listed on this slide are the sections generally found in a solicitation. The sections may be ordered differently or have different names, but in general, each of these sections will appear in some shape or form in almost every solicitation. Evaluation Criteria is the one section that will only appear in a request for proposal (RFP) solicitation.

At the very beginning, often even on the cover page, the solicitation will state the contract type, clarifying whether it is an informal procurement, a request for proposals, or invitation for bid. Then you might have a section that introduces the solicitation and provides information on the scope of the solicitation. The next section, General Descriptions, will be included in almost all solicitations. In this section you will describe the exact product and services you need. Then you will outline the timeline and procedural manners. Here you'll note when bids are due, when a contract will be awarded and perhaps note any pre-bid meetings. In the Technical Requirements section you will include criteria to determine if the vendor is responsive and

responsible. You might also include delivery and insurance requirements here. As mentioned before, in most cases, evaluation criteria will only appear in an RFP where the proposal will be evaluated on other criteria besides just price.

After deciding which procurement method to use, next you can decide where you will include your desire for local products in your solicitation.

These section names are taken directly from the Institute of Child Nutrition's *Procurement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* guide. For more information on each of the sections, please check out that resource.

## Show Slide: Sections of a Solicitation

### [Talking Notes]

You can include your desire for local in almost any part of a solicitation. Right now, we'll focus on the General Description of Goods and Services section, which is where your product specifications and description of services requested will be listed.

## Show Slide: Use Product Specifications to Target a Local Item

### [Talking Notes]

Using some of the specifications and description of services we talked about a few slides back, let's look at how you can target local products in this section. You could, for example, consider requesting a variety that is unique to your area or request that products be delivered within 48 hours of harvest. These specifications and required services clearly target products that are produced nearby, but do not explicitly require that the products be local. When using specifications related to particular varieties and freshness factors, ensure that you are not overly restricting competition; do the market research necessary to ensure there are multiple vendors that can meet your specifications.

Let's look at an example.

## Show Slide: Example: Use Product Specifications

### [Talking Notes]

Here we have a basic, relatively generic specification for fresh, whole apples. We have specified a particular variety, the grade standard, the size, quantity and time for delivery. This specification might be included in a solicitation where you are looking to buy directly from a producer or from an intermediary, like a distributor.

## Show Slide: Example: Use Product Specifications

### [Talking Notes]

In this slide, we've taken that generic specification and inserted a few elements that might target a local item. Instead of specifying just Granny Smith, the district has decided that they are also interested in varieties that are grown locally. In this example, the district would determine which varieties of apples are grown locally and request those specific varieties by name. In order to encourage more competition, they have also decided that

a US No. 1 product will meet their needs. The district has also made the decision that they are willing to accept different pack sizes, which may encourage smaller growers to bid. Additionally, since the district only needs the product between September and December, which is prime apple season in most areas of the country, they have also included a specification that the product is delivered within 48 hours of harvest.

Apples are great storage crops, so including a specification related to freshness may be unnecessary for this example, but note that including a specification related to time between harvest and delivery may be helpful in targeting other local products. Likewise, do not include unnecessary specifications that may increase the price and/or decrease the number of producers that can meet the specification. For example, if an item does not need to be stored at a specific temperature, then do not include storage temperature requirements in your specification. (Maintaining a specific temperature may require a refrigerated truck and all vendors may not have this capability.)

Remember that when writing your specifications, you must ensure that you are not unreasonably limiting competition. For example, if there is only one supplier who can provide no-spray apples, you probably need to revise your specification.

A school might also consider requesting different varieties at different times of the year. Perhaps there is a local variety only available during harvest, and a different variety that is better suited to storage. These might only be the specifications that the district uses in the fall and then it chooses to revert back to its standard specification out of season.

This example also shows that you may need to relax your specification to encourage smaller producers to participate.

## Show Slide: Sections of a Solicitation

### [Talking Notes]

As we mentioned earlier, you can include your desire for local in almost any part of a solicitation. We just covered how you might target local products in the General Description of Goods and Services section and now we will turn our attention to including your interest for local in the Technical Requirements section. The Technical Requirements section is where you determine if a vendor is responsive and responsible.

## Show Slide: Use Additional Requirements to Determine Vendor Responsiveness

### [Talking Notes]

You must always award to a vendor that is both responsive and responsible. This is true in any type of procurement, whether it is formal or informal, the vendor must be able to meet the requirements that are outlined in the solicitation.

When determining if a vendor is responsive and responsible, it is a black and white evaluation. You are not evaluating on a scale. The vendor can meet the requirements or they cannot, there is no middle ground. If you are interested in evaluating services or products on a scale, consider using an RFP, which we will talk about a little bit later.

In regards to buying local, the Technical Requirements section offers an opportunity to evaluate vendors based on requirements that may target vendors that can provide local products. For instance, the solicitation might state that to be considered responsive and responsible, the vendor must be able to provide the state of origin for all products on invoices and/or be able to visit the cafeteria twice per year. You may even require that the vendor be able to offer farm visits; however, keep in mind that transportation and other costs associated with fields trips cannot be paid for using the non-profit school food service account. Remember, you always want to encourage free and open competition, so be sure to do market research to ensure that multiple vendors are able to meet the requirements that you use.

We will discuss a few other requirements that you might include in a few minutes, but now let's look at an example.

### **Show Slide: Example: Use Criteria to Determine Responsiveness**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Here is a sample list of technical requirements that a school might include to determine if the vendor is responsive. Often, there may be several more requirements related to food safety, licenses and certifications that your district, legal counsel, school board or state requires.

You can see that in this example, if these were the only technical requirements, all three vendors would be considered responsive.

### **Show Slide: Example: Use Criteria to Determine Responsiveness**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Now let's look at that same example with a few requirements that target vendors that can provide local products.

In this instance, the school has included requirements that the vendor is able to provide food and agriculture educations, lists the state of origin on all products, and deliver the product within 24 hours of harvest.

You will notice the delivered within 24 hour requirement is the same as what we discussed a few slides earlier when we discussed product specifications to target local products. Just note that similar language that targets local products can be included in different parts of the solicitation and it is up to the SFA to decide the best place to include this language. You may notice that we are sticking with the same product specification to illustrate that language targeting local products can be included throughout the solicitation or placed strategically in one place.

With these additional requirements, only two of the vendors would be considered responsive and responsible. Apple Lane is not able to meet the additional requirements. Therefore their bid would not be evaluated and they are not eligible to receive a contract because they are not considered responsive and responsible.

### **Show Slide: Example: Use Criteria to Determine if Vendor is Responsible**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Similar to the example evaluating responsiveness, this table shows how a school may determine if a vendor is responsible. The criteria listed here are relatively basic; depending on the solicitation, there may be many more requirements that the school may list to determine if the vendor is responsible.

With these basic requirements: able to provide a 24 hour customer service line, guarantees on-time delivery and provides three references from school districts, all three of the vendors would be considered responsible.

### **Show Slide: Example: Use Criteria to Determine if Vendor is Responsible**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Now look at the same example with a new requirement added. Here the school has decided to include the requirement that the vendor must demonstrate that they have a successful track record working with local producers. The district will define what type of information they will require in order to evaluate whether the vendor has a successful track record. Similar to the previous example with responsiveness, two of the bidders are able to meet this requirement, but Apple Lane Farms is not. In this instance, Apple Lane's bid will not be considered because they do not meet the criteria for being considered responsible.

A district may choose to include one or more technical requirements that target vendors providing local products as long as competition is maintained.

### **Show Slide: Example: San Diego Unified, CA**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Let's look at a real life example from San Diego Unified School District. This slide shows several of the general technical requirements that vendors must meet in order to be eligible to bid on this particular solicitation. These requirements require everything from delivery and packaging information to food safety requirements.

### **Show Slide: Example: San Diego Unified, CA**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

In addition to those more general requirements listed on the previous slides, for this particular solicitation, San Diego requires that vendors provide products grown on farms that are less than 50 acres in size, grow more than five food crops at one time, and utilize a majority of hand harvesting.

In order to be considered responsive and responsible, vendors must be able to meet all of these requirements. Keep in mind that San Diego is in a unique area of the country where these requirements do not limit competition. There are several producers that can meet these requirements and compete for the contract. In other districts, you might include one or two of these requirements, but perhaps not all of them. In other districts, even one of these requirements might inappropriately restrict competition.

Understand as much as you can about the local market, and include specifications or requirements that target local products without limiting competition.

## Show Slide: What Specifications Would YOU Use?

### [Talking Notes]

Option 1: Do a brainstorming exercise and ask the group first for product specifications that they might use to target local products. Second, ask the group what type of vendor requirements might help target local products.

Option 2: Make two lists on different pieces of big paper that list product specifications and vendor requirements and ask if there are any missing or other specifications or requirements they might use to target local products.

#### Product Specifications

- Bulk pack
- Cage free
- Soft-skin \_\_\_\_\_ (to target a particular native variety)
- Delivered within 24 or 48 hours of harvest
- Grown on farms using a majority of hand harvesting
- Antibiotic free

#### Vendor Requirements

- Vendor will track local produce purchases separately from districts non-local purchases.
- Vendor will provide usage reports for local produce purchases.
- Vendor will list the names of the local farmers they work with and the products said farmer provides
- Vendor will facilitate experiential education opportunities for students.
- Vendor will demonstrate they work with farmers that are no larger than 500 acres and grow no less than 5 crops per 500 acres.
- Vendor delivers specific products within 24-48 hours of harvest
- References
- Delivery size/Drop offs

## Show Slide: Section Summary

### [Talking Notes]

This slide summarizes the four key concepts of procurement.

- Products served in the school meal programs must be produced and processed in the United States.
- It is essential for districts to know and understand state and local procurement regulations.
- Two of the most important procurement principles are full and open competition and vendors must be responsive and responsible.
- Remember local cannot be used as a product specification or vendor requirement.

- And finally, interest in local products can be represented in multiple sections of any solicitation, and product specifications and vendor requirements represent two powerful tools for sourcing local products.

## SECTION IV

# Procurement Methods – The Informal Methods (Micro-purchases & small purchase procedures)

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### Show Slide: Procurement Methods

#### [Talking Notes]

That was a brief overview of procurement rules and regulations. Let's now explore procurement methods.

### Show Slide: School Food Budget Breakdown (Food Costs)

#### [Talking Notes]

About 80% of the school food budget is made up of federal cash reimbursement dollars and the other 15-20% of the budget is made up of USDA Foods entitlement dollars. With that 15-20% schools have to use on USDA Foods, most schools also have the option to purchase fresh produce through the DoD Fresh Program. A little later in the presentation, we will cover USDA Foods and DoD Fresh in more detail. **(CLICK TO ADVANCE THE SLIDE)**

### Show Slide: Procurement Methods (Chart)

#### [Talking Notes]

The regulations make an important distinction between “formal” and “informal” procurements. Federal rules determine the need for a **formal** procurement based on the “simplified acquisition” or “small purchase” threshold. The current Federal Government small purchase threshold is \$150,000; for any purchase over \$150,000, a formal procurement method must be used.

Many states and localities set lower small purchase thresholds. Anytime the state or local threshold is more restrictive (i.e., lower), it must be used. Federal regulations require that all procurements are competitive, even if state or local regulations do not have such requirements.

**Formal** procurement includes procurement by sealed bids using an invitation for bids (IFB) solicitation or procurement by competitive proposals using a request for proposals (RFP) solicitation.

**Informal** procurements include small purchase procedures.

**Micro-purchases** are simple and informal methods for purchasing products and services that fall below the micro-purchase threshold, currently set at \$3,500.

## Show Slide: A Couple Things to Remember

### [Talking Notes]

Remind your audience that:

- Federal regulations require that all procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition (even if other entities do not require so).
- States and local regulations *may* set a lower small purchase threshold imposing more formal procedures. *The most restrictive threshold applies.*

## Show Slide: The Micro-purchase Process

### [Talking Notes]

Micro-purchases comprise a subset of small, or informal, purchase procedures. They are a relatively simple way for buying goods and services where the aggregate amount falls below the micro-purchase threshold.

With micro-purchases, SFAs:

1. Purchase the desired product;
2. Document the transaction; and,
3. Distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers.

Note that while micro-purchases are allowable, they are not required. There are no caps or limits to the number of micro-purchases that may be made in a given year; however, program operators can consolidate or break out purchases, as appropriate, to achieve the most economical procurement approach. This could mean that combining multiple micro-purchases into an informal or formal purchase may sometimes save the SFA or operator money or administrative work. Purchases may not, however, be split arbitrarily to fall below the micro-purchase threshold.

## Show Slide: The Micro-purchase Procedure

### [Talking Notes]

There are three key elements to a micro-purchase.

- The most significant difference between micro-purchases and other procurement methods are that purchase orders may be awarded without soliciting any quotations if the program operator considers the cost(s) reasonable. It is up to the SFA or program operator to determine whether the price is reasonable and they should document such standards in their procurement procedures.
- Another key component of micro-purchasing is the aggregate purchase amount. Program operators may utilize micro-purchasing when the aggregate cost is less than \$3,500, in a single transaction. The aggregate amount refers to the total cost of the transaction, or one occurrence in which goods, services, or money is exchanged between two or more entities.
- Lastly, program operators must distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers. In other words, operators cannot make all micro-purchases from one supplier when multiple sources are

available, nor can they make multiple micro-purchases from one supplier to avoid the use of small purchase procedures or seal bids/competitive proposals if such is not more economical. Equitably distributing micro-purchases among qualified sources creates competition.

Additionally, some states reserve micro-purchases for emergencies, such as a missed delivery due to inclement weather. Be sure to check with your state agency regarding their policy on utilizing the micro-purchase option.

*Note: Consider asking participants if their states restrict micro-purchases.*

### **Show Slide: Quiz: Micro-purchase or Not?**

*Note: To prepare for this activity make sure each participant has an auction paddle with red paper on one side and green on the other. Alternatively, you could simply hand out a sheet of red and green paper to each attendee. When showing each slide, ask the question and have the audience respond yes or no with their paddle or paper. If there is a mixed response, you might pause and explain the answer or call on audience members to explain the answer.*

#### **[Talking Notes]**

It is time for a quick quiz to make sure everyone understands the major elements of micro-purchasing. I will pose a yes or no question and you will respond by showing either green or red depending on the answer. We will pause after each question to debrief as necessary.

### **Show Slide: Micro-purchase or Not: Active Kids Afterschool Care**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Yes, as long as the Program operator has equitably distributed all previous micro-purchases, and determines the price is reasonable, this is allowable.

### **Show Slide: Micro-purchase or Not: Small Town School District**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Yes, this is allowable. Each purchase is a separate transaction made from different suppliers. Neither supplier is involved in the transaction with the other. Therefore, these transactions are separate micro-purchases. Additionally, this is not an arbitrary split since neither store could supply the entire order.

### **Show Slide: Micro-purchase or Not: Summer Fun Meals Program**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

No. In this example, we assume that the other four nearby farms are also able to meet SummerFun Meal Program's needs; therefore, this is NOT allowable since SummerFun did not equitably distribute the purchases. If Hometown Produce is the only vendor able to provide the requested items, then this *may* be allowable, assuming the price is reasonable, the transaction is below \$3,500, and previous micro-purchases were equitably distributed.

## Show Slide: Micro-purchase or Not: Farm to Everything School

### [Talking Notes]

No. Micro-purchases are allowable for emergencies, such as missed deliveries; however, the purchase amount in this example exceeds the micro-purchase threshold, deeming it unallowable.

## Show Slide: Micro-purchase or Not: Farm to Everything School

### [Talking Notes]

Yes. This is not an arbitrary split since no local farmer can meet the school's needs. Keep in mind however that it is necessary for the SFA to document the entire procurement process.

## Show Slide: Micro-purchase or Not: Growing Minds Preschool

### [Talking Notes]

While this is technically allowable according to Federal regulations, it may not be the best procurement method. Remember, Federal regulations do NOT require that micro-purchases be reserved for emergencies nor do they place limits on the number of times an operator can use micro-purchases; however, states may impose stricter regulations, so it is important operators are familiar with state and local requirements. More so, an informal or formal procurement process specifically designed for their Michigan Monday campaign may result in better budget and administrative outcomes. The center should consider utilizing a different procurement method that consolidates the purchases to achieve the most economical approach. We will delve into the small purchase procedures and formal procurement methods in the next few sections.

## Show Slide: Micro-purchase Review

### [Talking Notes]

We have spent some time reviewing the major tenants of micro-purchasing. At this point, we hope you understand when and how to use the micro-purchase method. In the next few sections, we will discuss how to target local foods through small purchase procedures and formal procurement procedures. Understanding all the procurement methods will ensure program operators are utilizing the most economical procurement process.

## Show Slide: Small Purchase Procedures

### [Talking Notes]

Small purchase procedures are less rigorous and prescriptive than sealed bid or competitive proposals; however, competition is still achieved. The following steps are required for an informal procurement:

1. Develop specifications and technical requirements that include a description of the product and/or service to be procured, delivery or pick-up requirements, billing and payment methods, contract terms and conditions, etc.;

2. Determine who might be able to provide products and gather quotes from those sources, providing the sources with the specifications developed in Step 1. This is the step that's most different from the formal procurement process, which requires that you publicly post a solicitation so that any qualified vendor can compete;
3. Evaluate the responses of each bidder, determining which are responsive and responsible;
4. Award the contract to the bidder of the best value; and
6. Manage the contract by monitoring compliance with specifications, contract terms, and conditions.

## Show Slide: Small Purchase Procedure

### [Talking Notes]

An SFA can only use small purchase procedures if the purchase amount is equal to or less than the applicable small purchase threshold. As mentioned above, the current federal threshold is \$150,000, but many states and localities set more restrictive thresholds, which must then be used.

Small purchase thresholds vary widely across states and localities. For example, in Delaware, the small purchase threshold is \$25,000, and so Delaware schools must use the formal procurement method for any purchase valued over \$25,000. Arizona's threshold is \$50,000, and California adjusts their threshold annually; in 2017, the threshold was \$88,300.

*Note: Add information about small purchase thresholds in the area where you are speaking.*

Note that even though small purchase procedures are less rigorous, full and open competition must still occur, and the regulations must be followed. Document bids regardless of whether you receive them over the phone or in person. As always, award the contract to the responsive and responsible bidder with the lowest cost.

Small purchases require that schools:

- Develop written specifications (this is true even though the process is informal);
- Acquire bids from an adequate number of responsible and responsive vendors (three is recommended); and,
- Document all bids, even though they do not need to be submitted in writing.

## Show Slide: What's Your Small Purchase Threshold?

Ask participants:

- How many of you come from an area (state or district) with a lower threshold than the federal threshold?
- Do you conduct both formal and informal procurements for different products?

*Note: You may want to phrase this question differently depending on your audience. If you are talking to all School Food Authorities (SFAs) from one state, you probably want to say "district", but if you are speaking at a regional conference, "state" may be appropriate.*

## Show Slide: Small Purchase Thresholds

### [Talking Notes]

This slide shows an example of different levels of small purchase thresholds that might apply to a school district. As we know the federal small purchase threshold is \$150,000. In this example, the state where the school is located set a lower small purchase threshold at \$40,000 and further the locality where the school is located set an even lower threshold at \$7,000. Since the local threshold is the most restrictive, the school must use the formal procurement method for any purchase over \$7,000.

## Show Slide: “Three Bids and a Buy”

### [Talking Notes]

This slide shows an example of how a district might conduct and document a purchase made using the small purchase procedures. Small purchase procedures may sometimes be referred to as “three bids and a buy” because it really can be as simple as that. Districts need to develop specifications (written specifications are best), contact vendors and gather at least three bids. As mentioned before, publicly announcing the solicitation is not required.

Before obtaining bids, write down your specifications to ensure each potential vendor is receiving the same information. Note that documentation can be as simple as the chart on this slide! Some schools may operate completely via email, in which case the school may just want to create an email folder for each quote. Others may prefer to keep physical copies of all specifications and solicitations. It is important to keep the information for each procurement organized, so that you can easily refer back to the award.

## Show Slide: “Three Bids and a Buy” (with modifications)

### [Talking Notes]

Using the same template we just saw on the previous slide, the school modified the specifications to help target vendors that provide local products. In this case, the school decided to broaden the specification to encourage as many vendors as possible to bid. By allowing more than one grade, multiple pack sizes and different varieties, the school is trying to open the solicitation up to smaller local producers in their area.

Remember, districts should try to be as specific as possible when writing a solicitation, but also be aware of when a particular piece of a specification may be limiting competition.

## Show Slide: “Three Bids and a Buy” (only approach local vendors)

### [Talking Notes]

On this variation, the district has decided to contact only local vendors for a bid. Informal procurements using small purchase procedures do not need to be publicly announced, so districts can decide from whom they will request bids. Districts may choose to request bids from only vendors supplying local products.

If there is only one local vendor, the school still must try to collect more than one quote and may need to request bids from non-local vendors. In this case, with non-local vendors submitting bids, the district might want to use some of the product specifications or vendor requirements that we talked about earlier to make

sure their solicitation targets vendors that are able to supply local products. Which brings us to the next variation...

### **Show Slide: “Three Bids and a Buy” (only approach local vendors)**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

This variation shows how a district might combine some of these tactics to not only target local products but help augment their farm to school efforts outside of the lunchroom. Here the district notes that vendors must provide educational cafeteria or classroom visits. This requirement alone will help target a local vendor, but additionally, the district decides that there are several apple orchards in the area so they are only going to request bids from producers that can offer local apples.

Informal procurements can be relatively flexible and offer several different opportunities to target local products.

If you are making a purchase that falls under the applicable small purchase threshold, you can solicit quotes from a minimum of three (or more) local farms or vendors. Call local farms, solicit bids at the farmers’ market, post your specifications on a local email list or put up a flier somewhere that local farmers will see it.

As with any informal procurement, be sure that you have written specifications and that even if you receive no written bids, you still need to document all verbal quotes. Of the bids you receive, you must choose the responsive and responsible bidder with the lowest price.

### **Show Slide: Proceed with Caution (and Document)**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

One of the most often asked questions is what happens if the district only receives one bid. The answer varies. In the instance described on the slide, Acorn Lane has emailed 14 vendors and followed up with 8, but only one bid was received. The key is understanding why only one bid was received. Was the solicitation too restrictive? If so, it should be rewritten and reissued. However, if the district has done their due diligence in determining there should have been adequate competition and actively attempted to solicit multiple bids, as in the case described in the slide, the district may award a contract to a sole bidder. In cases where the award is made to a sole bidder, the process must be documented.

The rule of thumb is to gather three quotes, but if there are valid reasons that only one or two bids were received, the district may award a contract as long as they have examined why they only received a couple bids and documented the process.

Please note it is not advisable for a district to repeatedly award sole source contracts. If awarding sole source contracts becomes a routine procedure for any district, the district should evaluate its procedures and make any necessary accommodations to encourage more competition.

### **Show Slide: Splitting Procurements**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

If the informal procurement process is so much easier, why not just split up all procurements so that they fall below the small purchase threshold? The procurement principles require that no part of the procurement process involve arbitrary decisions; this principle applies to dividing your purchases.

There *are* instances, however, in which it makes sense for schools to divide purchases. A few examples are:

- Milk and bread are commonly procured separately because there are fundamental differences between these and other food products, such as shorter shelf life, specialized pricing mechanisms and durability;
- Fresh produce may be considered a separate market because of similar characteristics as bread and milk, and that may justify a separate procurement; or
- **ADVANCE THE SLIDE** - Shelf life, delivery methods, seasonality, and other characteristics such as a seasonal menu may allow you to split purchases based on inherent differences, and are not arbitrary decisions.
- Harvest of the Month Programs, taste tests, and purchases for farm to school events are all valid reasons to divide a purchase.

Remember you still cannot use local as a product specification.

If you ever struggle to justify the division of a purchase, it likely should not be split. If you are unsure about whether to split a purchase, contact your state agency.

#### [Optional Discussion]

Attendees often have questions about this topic. If time allows, this is a good point to stop for questions.

### Show Slide: Small Purchase Procedures Activity

#### [Talking Notes]

*Note: see pages 81-82 in the Appendix for instructions on how to facilitate this activity.*

### Show Slide: Section Summary

#### [Talking Notes]

The small purchase threshold determines whether an SFA will use formal or informal procurement methods. We have just covered the informal procurement methods (micro-purchase and small purchase procedures) in some depth. At this point, we hope you understand when and how to use the informal method to purchase local foods and the importance of documentation.

Now we are going to move on to talk about the formal procurement methods.

## SECTION V

# Procurement Methods – The Formal Procurement Method

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### Show Slide: The Formal Procurement Process

#### [Talking Notes]

This slide illustrates the formal procurement process, which you would follow for any purchase above your small purchase threshold. Below are the required steps:

1. Develop a solicitation;
2. Publicly announce the solicitation by invitation for bids (IFBs) or request for proposals (RFPs) (the SFA may make the announcement in newspapers, on a website, and by mailing or emailing to known bidders);
3. Evaluate bids using the criteria established in the solicitation (which differ between sealed bids and competitive proposals);
  - a. It is recommended that you document why one proposal is better and more responsive. If you are using competitive sealed bidding, this documentation is easy. Create a chart showing each bidder's price and show that you awarded the contract to the lowest bidder.
  - b. If you are using an RFP, evaluation may be more complicated and require multiple reviewers. The RFP will list the criteria for evaluation, and each reviewer will rate the proposal against these criteria.
4. Award the contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder that is most advantageous to the program, with price as the primary factor; and,
5. Manage the contract to ensure the contractor is performing according to the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract.

### Show Slide: Competitive Sealed Bidding

#### [Talking Notes]

Sealed bidding is only feasible when the contract can be awarded on price alone, in which case you must:

- Create complete, adequate and realistic specifications;
- Publicly advertise the invitation and solicit bids from an adequate number of suppliers;
- Find two or more responsible bidders who are willing and able to compete effectively for the business; and,
- Award a firm-fixed-price contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder (the contract may include an economic price adjustment clause tied to a standard index to account for market fluctuations).

IFBs are often used for food products with detailed specifications. An SFA may include a checklist in an IFB solicitation to help evaluate the responsiveness of the bidder. This checklist should include the Buy American provision for the purchase of domestic foods, may include items like, "Be able to identify the state of origin for

all food products on invoices,” or “Host farm visits for students.” Geographic preference may also help in evaluating bids, and will be discussed in more detail later. With any type of procurement, the vendor must be responsive and responsible and be able to provide quality products that meet the specifications.

For example, several school districts use IFBs for purchasing Harvest of the Month items. They make it clear they want fresh produce delivered directly to the school on a weekly basis and they require the vendor to visit the cafeteria once a month as part of the package. With those baseline requirements easily met by most respondents, price is the driving factor in their selection so the districts use an IFB.

### **Show Slide: Invitation for Bids (IFB)**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Here you can see the general sections of an invitation for bid. We talked through what each of these sections might contain earlier in the presentation, but now we are going to come back to this outline to talk about where a district might include its desire for local products in an IFB. These sections may appear in a different order or have different names, but in general all of these sections will appear in some form in an IFB.

### **Show Slide: Invitation for Bids (with emphasis)**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

The sections highlighted in blue are the sections of the solicitation where schools have opportunities to include their desire for local products. We will talk more about including information about local products in the introduction and the idea of using product specifications and/or vendor requirements to target local products was covered in the procurement concepts section.

### **Show Slide: Include Your Desire for Local in the Introduction**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

A school’s interest in purchasing local (and the broader context of its farm to school program) can be expressed in the introduction to a solicitation. While a school cannot specify that it only wants local products, the introduction does offer an opportunity to emphasize the importance of a school’s farm to school program.

Let’s look at an example.

### **Show Slide: Introduction Language**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

This slide shows a generic introduction to a solicitation that offers basic information about the school district and their school meal programs. It is popular to include some context in the introductions so vendors understand what type of business they are undertaking.

### **Show Slide: Introduction Language with Local Emphasis**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Here you see the same introduction language from the previous slide with an added sentence about the district's farm to school program. While language in the introduction does not require or guarantee vendors will supply local products, it does offer more information about the district's goals. Stating your goals up front indicates to vendors that farm to school is a priority.

## Show Slide: Competitive Proposals

### [Talking Notes]

Request for proposals (RFP) are required when the conditions are not appropriate for a sealed bid.

The competitive proposal method includes evaluation criteria in addition to price, and it can result in either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursable contract. Some of these factors might include:

- Technical expertise
- Past experience
- Number of years in business
- Marketing
- Stating the state or farm of origin on invoices
- Providing education on farm education for school lunchroom or classrooms

The vendor who is able to provide the best overall value receives the award. Like sealed bidding, RFPs require a public solicitation. RFPs should describe all evaluation factors, their relative importance, and how the evaluation factors will be used to assess the proposals.

Awards must be made to the firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered and price as the primary factor. Geographic preference may also help in evaluating RFPs, and will be discussed in more detail later.

## Show Slide: Request for Proposals (RFP)

### [Talking Notes]

Here you can see the general sections of a request for proposal. We talked through what each of these sections might contain earlier in the presentation, but now we are going to come back to this outline to talk about where a district might include its desire for local products in an RFP. These sections may appear in a different order or have different names, but in general all of these sections will appear in some form in an RFP. You may notice that these sections are nearly identical to those found in an IFB with one exception. A request for proposal allows districts to evaluate on other criteria in addition to price and that is why the additional section, evaluation criteria is included here. Remember, though, that price must be the primary factor.

## Show Slide: Request for Proposals (with emphasis)

### [Talking Notes]

As we saw before with the IFB, the sections highlighted in blue are the sections of the solicitation where schools have opportunities to include their desire for local products. All the same sections are highlighted here as before with the IFB; all of the principles we have already covered still apply to RFPs. Additionally, an RFP offers some added flexibility in the ability to use evaluation criteria.

Let's take a closer look at how evaluation criteria in an RFP can help target local products.

## Show Slide: Use Criteria to Evaluate Vendor Proposals

### [Talking Notes]

Let's take a look at how some of the technical requirements and specifications can be used as criteria to evaluate vendor proposals. The amount of weight given determines how important the criterion is.

Think about including criteria such as:

- Able to provide food and agriculture education
- State of origin or farm origin labeling
- Provide products grown on a particular size farm

## Show Slide: Example: Use Criteria in an RFP

### [Talking Notes]

This evaluation chart shows a generic RFP evaluation. Remember all of the criteria and the weight each criterion carries must be outlined in the RFP. In this table, Fred's Fuji's would be awarded the contract because this vendor received the most points according to the evaluation criteria with price as the primary factor. Now let's look at what happens if additional evaluation criteria are added that target local products.

## Show Slide: Example: Use Criteria in an RFP (with emphasis)

### [Talking Notes]

In this evaluation, the district has decided to include a few criteria that may help target producers that can provide local products. The district decides to include 5 points if the vendor is able to provide cafeteria or classroom visits, 5 points if the state of origin is provided on all products and 10 points if products are delivered within 24 hours of harvest.

Apple Lane does not receive points for any of these additional criteria, Great Granny's scores high in all of the new criteria and has the second lowest price, and Fred's Fuji's does well but is not able to offer cafeteria or classroom visits. With the addition of these new criteria, Great Granny's would be awarded the contract.

You may notice that some of these evaluation criteria are similar to some of the product specifications and vendor requirements that we talked about earlier. A district may decide that providing the state of origin on all products is absolutely necessary, so they include this element as a vendor requirement which means the vendor must provide this information in order to be considered responsive and responsible. If the school chooses to include that element as an evaluation criterion, they may end up awarding a contract to a bidder that is unable to provide the state of origin because it was given a relatively small weight in the evaluation. The

weight of the evaluation criteria distinguishes which elements are most important, but it is valuable to note that elements included as evaluation criteria must be used as published.

Price does not need to be weighted more than 50%, but it should carry more weight than any other criterion.

## **Show Slide: Formal Procurement Exercise**

### **[Talking Notes]**

*Note: see pages 83-85 in the Appendix for instructions on how to facilitate this activity.*

## **Show Slide: Section Summary**

### **[Talking Notes]**

After this discussion and the exercise, hopefully everyone understands that there are two ways to structure a solicitation when using the formal procurement method and a district's desire for local can be included in several different sections of a solicitation.

It's important to note that we have already covered several different ways schools can target local products without using geographic preference. We will talk more about geographic preference, but do note that this option is just one way that helps schools buy local products.

## SECTION VI

### Quiz: Procurement Basics/Recap

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*Note: To prepare for this activity make sure each participant has an auction paddle with red paper on one side and green on the other. Alternatively, you could simply hand out a sheet of red and green paper to each attendee. When showing each slide, ask the question and have the audience respond yes or no with their paddle or paper. If there is a mixed response, you might pause and explain the answer or call on audience members to explain the answer.*

#### Show Slide: Quiz: Procurement Basics

##### [Talking Notes]

It is time for a quick quiz to make sure everyone is on the same page and understands the procurement basics that were embedded throughout the presentation so far. I will pose a yes or no question and you will respond by showing either red or green depending on the answer. We will pause after each question to debrief as necessary.

#### Show Slide: If a vendor cannot meet a school's specifications or requirements, is the vendor responsive?

##### [Talking Notes]

No. A vendor must be responsive to the solicitation. To be considered responsive, the vendor must submit a bid that meets all the terms and conditions of the solicitation. If a vendor cannot meet the specifications or requirements, they cannot be awarded a contract. For example, if you require delivery to five sites and one of the responding vendors can only service two, the vendor is considered NOT responsive.

#### Show Slide: Is documentation required for informal procurements?

##### [Talking Notes]

Yes. Documentation is important for all procurement methods. While, the informal procurement methods are not as rigorous as the formal methods, schools still need to document the process. For small purchases, i.e., those under \$150,000, schools need to write down their specifications so that each potential vendor is receiving the same information. Then, schools must document the responses. It does not need to be a complex system; a simple chart will do like we saw earlier. For purchases under \$3,500, specifics surrounding micro-purchases should be contained in the school's procurement plan and the transaction should be documented.

#### Show Slide: Can a school award a contract if only one bid was received?

##### [Talking Notes]

This is a tricky one. In this case, we would encourage the school to try to determine *why* it only received one response. Were its specifications too restrictive? If so, the school might consider changing its specifications to allow for greater competition. However, if the district did their due diligence, documents the market research to show that there were multiple qualified vendors, it can award to the lone bidder. Again, it is all about documentation and making sure you have not made any arbitrary decisions.

## **Show Slide: Do products served in the child nutrition programs need to be 100% American-grown?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

Yes, but with a few exceptions. The Buy American Provision requires schools to purchase domestically grown and processed foods “to the maximum extent practicable.” For processed products, 51% of ingredients must be domestically grown and the product must be processed in the U.S. There are two exceptions:

- Product is not produced in sufficient quantities in the United States, such as pineapples and bananas.
- Competitive bids reveal that the cost of a U.S. product is significantly higher than a foreign product.

Exceptions to the purchase of domestic foods must be documented as well as the domestic food alternatives considered. The documentation must be maintained for review by the State agency during procurement reviews.

## **Show Slide: Can a school require a vendor to provide references?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

Yes. Vendors are considered responsible when they are capable of performing successfully under the terms of the contract. Requiring references allows you to assess if they are a responsible vendor.

## **Show Slide: Can a school require a specific brand name product?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

No. This is considered overly restrictive. Schools can list “brand name or equivalent” products, but must also include a process for vendors to submit products for consideration and approval during the solicitation period.

## **Show Slide: Can a vendor request that a school change specifications or solicitation language after the solicitation has gone out?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

No. Competition is the most important part of a sound procurement. Allowing one vendor to request a change to the solicitation gives that vendor an unfair advantage and kills competition. All potential vendors should be on an equal playing field.

## **Show Slide: Can a school award a contract to a local vendor without conducting a procurement?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

No. All procurements using funds from the non-profit food service account must be conducted competitively, whether trying to buy local or not. However, if the aggregate purchase amount falls below the micro-purchase threshold and the school determines the price to be reasonable, they may make purchases from qualified sources without soliciting quotes or prices. Micro-purchases must be equitably distributed among qualified sources.

## Show Slide: Do you know what the federal small purchase threshold is?

### [Talking Notes]

The federal small purchase threshold is \$150,000.

## Show Slide: Should schools always use the formal procurement method when making a purchase over \$150,000?

### [Talking Notes]

Yes. All procurements must be conducted competitively and if the purchase falls over the small purchase threshold, the school must use one of the formal procurement methods. Remember, in the micro-purchase method, competition is achieved through equitable distribution of purchases.

## Show Slide: Does your state have a lower small purchase threshold?

### [Talking Notes]

*Note: This question is just meant to facilitate discussion. There is no right or wrong answer.*

States and localities can set small purchase thresholds that are lower than the federal small purchase threshold. Districts must abide by the most restrictive threshold.

## Show Slide: Are there other rules besides federal regulations that schools must follow?

### [Talking Notes]

Yes. Schools must follow all federal, state, and local procurement rules. Some states may require GAP certification for growers or a certain amount of liability insurance, or the use of an IFB over an RFP.

### [Optional Discussion]

Does your state have specific requirements that you must follow?

## Show Slide: Does your state have legislation promoting farm to school/local purchasing?

### [Optional Discussion]

Who wants to tell the group about the legislation in their state?

## Show Slide: Must schools always award to the lowest bidder?

### [Talking Notes]

No. If you are using an informal procurement method or an IFB, you should award to the lowest, responsive and responsible bidder. Developing specifications and requirements that are specific to the school's needs is very important. If you are using an RFP, price must be the primary factor among all factors that are evaluated. Schools are not required to go with the lowest bidder, rather, the lowest responsive and responsible bidder that is most advantageous to the program, with price as the primary factor.

## **Show Slide: Is price the only consideration in an IFB?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

Yes. IFBs are awarded to a responsive and responsible vendor with the lowest bid. IFBs can have a checklist of criteria to assess if the vendor is responsive and responsible. RFPs have evaluation factors other than price.

For example, an IFB for a harvest of the month program indicates that the school wants fresh produce, delivered weekly and the farm of origin listed for each product. The solicitation can have a checklist of baseline requirements to assess that the vendor is responsive and responsible, but no weight is given to the requirements, meaning in order to win the contract the vendor must be able to meet all the requirements outlined in the solicitation, including listing the farm of origin for each product.

An RFP includes other evaluation factors and each factor is given a certain amount of weight. These factors can include price (primary factor), technical expertise, past experience, ability to provide educational cafeteria or classroom visits, or listing the farm of origin, etc.

## **Show Slide: Do you know the difference between an IFB and an RFP?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

An Invitation for bid (IFB) is used when a complete, adequate, and realistic specification is available and the contract can be awarded on the basis of price.

A Request for Proposal is used when conditions are not appropriate for a sealed bid, such as when specifications or the service desired is not clear cut, or price will not necessarily be the sole basis for the award. An RFP allows you to evaluate factors other than price and give each criteria a certain weight, with price as the primary factor.

## **Show Slide: If the purchase is valued under the applicable small purchase threshold, can a school use the formal procurement method?**

### **[Talking Notes]**

Yes. A school may choose to use a formal procurement method for any purchase.

## SECTION VII

### USDA Foods and DoD Fresh

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#### Show Slide: USDA Foods and DoD Fresh

##### [Talking Notes]

Now let's look at few other options that help schools bring in local products.

#### Show Slide: Which Part of the Dollar are We Talking About?

##### [Talking Notes]

Up until now we have focused on the roughly 80% of a school's budget that is made up of cash reimbursement funds, so now let's look at the other 15-20% of the food on the plate that is made up of USDA Foods.

#### Show Slide: Four Ways USDA Foods Supports Local Purchases

##### [Talking Notes]

About 15–20% of the food served through the National School Lunch Program comes from USDA Foods. The USDA Foods catalog includes many healthful foods: brown rice, whole-wheat flour and pasta, whole apples and pears, dry beans and lentils, frozen blueberries, raisins, whole muscle meats, peanut butter—the list goes on. In the fiscal year of 2015, over \$1.5 billion in USDA foods went to schools. A state's entitlement – or the amount of money it has to purchase USDA Foods products - is calculated based on the number of meals served in the previous school year.

Here are four ways USDA Foods supports local purchases. We will take a look at each of these in a little bit more detail.

##### [Optional Handout]

Refer to the USDA Foods: A Resource for Buying Local fact sheet, which provides an overview of the different ways USDA Foods supports local purchasing.

#### Show Slide: 1) Maximizes Funds for Local Purchases

##### [Talking Notes]

Every dollar's worth of donated USDA Foods used in a school menu frees up money that a school would otherwise have to spend on commercial food purchases. As school districts face ever tightening budgets, USDA Foods have become a valuable resource to keep local food service budgets in the black. Especially important in this regard is the Federal Government's large volume purchasing power, allowing the procurement of food at a lower unit cost than if a school were purchasing it on its own.

Many school nutrition directors have begun combining USDA Foods products with local products to make a cost effective item. For instance, consider combining local lettuce with USDA Foods smoked deli turkey and

whole-wheat tortilla to make a wrap. Perhaps your school has the capacity to bake fresh rolls and you might combine USDA Foods flour with local whole-wheat flour if there is a mill near you.

### **Show Slide: Doug Davis, VT**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

This quote from the food service director from Burlington, Vermont showcases how important USDA Foods are to the district's farm to school program. By using all of the district's USDA Foods entitlement, this director frees up more food service money for local purchases.

### **Show Slide: 2) Champions American Agriculture**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

You may not think of USDA Foods as locally grown products, but remember that USDA Foods are all 100% American grown, so every available product is local to someone. Be aware of what is produced in your region and order those products. Some products are traditionally purchased from the same states each year. For example, Mississippi is the only state that produces significant, commercial quantities of catfish. This means that if you are living in the Southeast, USDA Foods catfish could be local to you. Peaches offered through USDA Foods normally come from California, and pears usually originate in the Pacific Northwest.

To find out what is purchased from your region, check out the FNS Food Distribution website for the state of origin reports. These files indicate the state where each USDA Foods product was processed and packed for the past few years. The link to this website can be found on the USDA Foods: A Resource for Buying Local fact sheet.

If you know of a vendor that produces items that USDA typically purchases, consider helping them become a USDA Foods vendor. The Agricultural Marketing Service and Farm Service Agencies are always looking for new vendors.

### **Show Slide: USDA Foods by Region**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

This slide shows products that have been purchased from each region for USDA Foods in the last few years. These lists offer a quick summary of the state of origin reports. The lists here do not guarantee that future purchases will follow the same pattern, but they do provide a snapshot of where many of the foods USDA purchases are produced.

### **Show Slide: Dollar Value of Food Purchased From Each State for the USDA Foods Program in FY2015**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

This map takes another look at the state of origin reports and color codes each state depending on the dollar value of food purchased from that state for the USDA Foods Program in FY2015. It is no surprise that California, Texas and several of the Midwest states had some of the highest values purchased from their

producers, but it is also important to note that USDA purchased at least some products from nearly every state in the country.

### **Show Slide: 3) Supports Local Processors**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Understanding what is produced in your region is not the only way to support the regional economy through USDA Foods. Most states send a portion of their USDA Foods to processors to be turned into products like burritos, burgers or rice bowls. You can look into the processors you are working with and determine if your state has agreements with companies located closer to home.

### **Show Slide: 4) Promotes Local Fruit and Vegetable Producers through DoD Fresh**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

The DoD contracts with more than 45 produce vendors across the country for fresh fruits and vegetables. In the 2014-2015 school year, states spent more than \$150 million through DoD Fresh, and about 17% of those purchases were considered local. Each DoD Fresh prime vendor updates the on-line Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) catalog for their region of service on a weekly basis and marks locally procured products.

States and SFAs can elect to spend any portion of their USDA Foods entitlement money on fresh fruits and vegetables through the DoD Fresh Program. Although DoD Fresh vendors are not required to purchase local produce, they are strongly encouraged to do so. "Local" in the DoD Fresh catalogue signifies that the product is from within the state, the contract award zone or a state adjacent to the contract award zone. As of July 2014, vendors can list the state of origin for all products listed in the DoD Fresh catalogue to provide greater transparency.

To purchase local products through DoD Fresh, discuss opportunities with the prime vendor or suggest specific producers or producer groups to the prime vendor.

#### **[Optional Handout]**

Refer to the DoD Fresh Fact Sheet, which provides an overview of the DoD Fresh program and details steps for how to connect with your vendor and ask for more locally grown produce.

### **Show Slide: Working with DoD Fresh – Texas and Connecticut**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Let's look at a couple of states that have had some great successes working with their DoD Fresh vendors to source local produce.

#### **Connecticut**

In Connecticut, the relationships between the DoD vendor and local growers have developed organically. When the USDA Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Taskforce was launched in 2009, Connecticut decided to hold their own statewide meeting. The event was held in the evening and the CT Department of Agriculture invited growers from across the country, a few school districts, and the DoD vendor.

From this meeting, the DoD vendor has developed several relationships with local producers, and now offers many local products in the DoD catalog. The meeting is now an annual event held in a different region of Connecticut each year. These events have helped cultivate relationships between the vendor, producers and school districts. A few schools have even been able to set up farm tours because of these meetings.

### **Texas**

In Texas, schools rely on the DoD distributors to provide Texas products year round. Due to the size of Texas, the state has three vendors that provide produce to schools through the DoD program. The state agency works closely with the distributors and develops a calendar of Texas-grown produce items that will be available to all schools that participate in the DoD Fresh program.

In the 2012-2013 school year, the DoD vendors offered Texas-grown watermelons, red potatoes, ruby red grapefruit, gala apples and early seeded oranges.

## **Show Slide: Section Summary**

### **[Talking Notes]**

USDA Foods and DoD Fresh support farm to school programs in many ways and are an important piece of the local purchasing puzzle.

## SECTION VIII

### Other Topics

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#### Show Slide: Other Topics

##### [Talking Notes]

Now let's cover a few miscellaneous topics such as forward contracts, donated foods, and school gardens.

#### Show Slide: Forward Contracts

##### [Talking Notes]

Technically, a forward contract is any contract established in advance of when the product is delivered. In the context of local procurement, it often refers to a contract or agreement established with a farmer in advance of the growing season. With a forward contract, a school does not pay until delivery.

Forward contracting allows producers to plan for large demand and plant according to a school district's needs. Although contract growing offers a guaranteed market for a farmer's crop, this method poses some risk to schools.

Forward contracting is permitted under federal regulations, but districts selecting this method must acknowledge the risk and prepare a contingency plan if the producer experiences crop loss (i.e., incorporate language into the contract affording meaningful substitutions or a return on the original financial investment). A forward contract may be established through an informal or formal procurement.

#### Show Slide: Do Forward Contracts Have to be between a School and a Farmer?

##### [Talking Notes]

A variety of entities may establish a forward contract. For example, districts or groups of districts, distributors, food service management companies, or even state agencies have been known to create a forward contract. Local organizations can also help facilitate these contracts.

Likewise, a variety of vendors or sellers may supply the product requested in a forward contract. Farmers, producer groups, and even food hubs have been identified as suppliers in forward contracts.

#### Show Slide: Benefits & Risks

##### [Talking Notes]

From the producer's perspective, forward contracts secure a buyer and a price, sometimes even before the crop is planted. From the buyer's view, forward contracts help ensure you will get the desired product when you need it. For example, a forward contract may be especially useful for districts that are running Harvest of the Month Programs. The forward contract assures the district that they will receive the desired local item in the appropriate month. There should always be a little flexibility within these contracts since the money usually is not exchanged until the product is exchanged. Remember, a school is not required to pay for a product that does not meet specifications or that is not received.

There are some risks associated with forward contracts. One of the largest is crop failure. There is always a possibility that due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, the harvest is not what was expected. The farmer bears this risk financially, but it is also an inconvenience for the school that may have to make last minute adjustments. Lastly, there is always a possibility that one or more party(ies) may not hold up their end of the agreement.

### **Show Slide: Forward Contracts Must Still be Competitively Procured**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Forward contracts, like any other formal or informal agreement, needs to be competitively procured. If a distributor or a food service management company is establishing the forward contract, then the district's contract with that entity must be competitively procured.

### **Show Slide: Using a Forward Contract - North Carolina**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

In North Carolina, the State Department of Agriculture solicits forward contracts for a variety of local produce. The state has an advisory board of school districts, and the group meets each spring with the department to develop a local procurement list for the next school year.

Once the calendar is put together, the Department of Agriculture develops specifications with the districts, and the state purchasing office creates the bid documents. After bids are acquired, the department shares the information with the school districts, and a bidder is chosen.

North Carolina started by only issuing one solicitation every year, but has found that they can get better pricing and more stable supply by contracting each quarter. Contracting four to six months before delivery allows the districts to plan menus with confidence and provides growers a guaranteed market for their product. North Carolina's Department of Agriculture has strong relationships with the growers in the state and works closely with school districts and producers to make the program work.

One example of these relationships is with watermelon. Traditionally, watermelon season in North Carolina is over in August, but the department's marketing team worked with local watermelon growers to plant later. By planting just a few weeks later, the growers now have a stable market for watermelons in September by selling to the state's schools.

### **Show Slide: Using a Forward Contract - Oregon and Oklahoma**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

The state farm to school coordinators in Oregon and Oklahoma work directly with producers and produce distributors to develop forward contracts for products that will go to schools.

In these cases, the districts have already competitively procured the produce distributor and the farm to school coordinators help the distributors find local producers for the contracted items and set up forward contracts.

## Show Slide: Targeting Local with Food Service Management Companies

### [Talking Notes]

Using food service management companies is a common way districts manage their school meals programs. In the next few slides, we will discuss how districts who utilize these companies can still target local foods.

## Show Slide: Food Service Management Company (FSMC)

### [Talking Notes]

A food service management company (FSMC) is any organization, whether commercial or non-profit, that contracts with the school food authority to manage any aspect of the school meals program. Contracts for food items only, such as those for produce, dairy, and milk, are not FSMCs since they are not managing any aspect of the district's nutrition program.

State agencies are required to provide additional oversight for FSMC contracts. School food authorities must obtain the state agency review and approval of all FSMC contracts, contract amendments and renewals prior to execution. Utilizing an FSMC does not relieve the school food authority of its responsibilities; the district is still responsible for ensuring program accountability, including fiscal accountability, and the overall quality of its school nutrition program as outlined in 7 CFR 210.16(a)(1-10).

## Show Slide: Targeting Local with an FSMC

### [Talking Notes]

Districts issue either an IFB or a RFP to procure a FSMC. As with a distributor, a district may include preferences for local products in the solicitation for an FSMC. That way, the company's responsiveness to the request for local products can be evaluated during the selection process. It is necessary for schools to include in their solicitation details about how and when they wish to have local foods purchased and how local foods should be used in the provided meals.

FSMCs are seeking strategies to distinguish themselves from their competitors as a way to garner new business in a highly competitive market. Offering a diverse array of local suppliers in their purchasing profile is one way these companies can stand out from their peers. Districts should keep in mind that while an FSMC may be willing to source locally, they may not be aware of all the local growers and producers. Districts may help companies connect with local growers, producers, associations, and partners who may be able to help identify local suppliers.

## Show Slide: Example: Using an FSMC Rhode Island Department of Education

### [Talking Notes]

The Rhode Island Department of Education created a prototype RFP districts may follow when soliciting bids from FSMCs. The Department inserted the desire for local throughout the prototype.

This slide highlights each section of that prototype, as well as particular subsections where the desire for local is included. In the introduction, similar to what we discussed earlier, the SFA provides background information on the district and its programs, such as the enrollment data for each school type and the average daily

participation by eligibility type. Here districts can choose to include additional information, such as their commitment to local as evidenced by the percent of products they currently, or aim to, procure locally. Additionally, the background section also includes the basic conditions the FSMC must meet, including extensive experience purchasing local foods.

In the next section, the prototype outlines the district's goals and objectives, including their farm to school goals. In this solicitation, the SFA has identified two farm to school goals, as well as other nutrition and wellness awareness goals that could relate back to their farm to school program. Specifically, the district aims:

- To engage in USDA's Farm to School initiative in an effort to connect schools (K-12) with RI/local farms in order to serve healthy meals using locally produced foods; and,
- To maximize the use of RI-grown/locally-grown products, including but not limited to fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, whenever possible.

The following section mirrors the last except it identifies the expectations of the FSMC. The aforementioned farm to school objectives are repeated in this section.

In addition to other quality and nutrition requirements, the Nutrition Criteria section details the district's preference for local products, including local product availability and pricing data that will be necessary to monitor the quantity of local products purchased.

The Proposal Format and Content section includes two subsections that specifically target local items: *Innovation and Promotion of the School Food Service Program* and *Menu Selection, Uses of Commodities, Food Quality and Portion Size*. In the Innovation subsection, bidders are asked how they would propose to expand the district's participation in the farm to school program. In the Menu Selection section, the FSMC must describe their philosophy regarding the procurement and use of locally grown produce.

The Evaluation section clearly identifies how each company will be evaluated for final selection. Included in this section are criteria regarding their answers to the previous questions regarding the use of locally grown products and the company's commitment to the farm to school program.

Finally, the district attaches supporting documents, such as sample menus and wellness policies that also indicate their commitment to purchasing local and farm to school principles.

## Show Slide: Example: Using an FSMC Rhode Island

### [Talking Notes]

Adopt-a-farm is the anchor of Sodexo's farm to school program. It originated in Rhode Island in 2012 with the help of Farm Fresh Rhode Island and Roch's Produce. Sodexo Providence and a local farmer developed a forward contract through which Sodexo guaranteed they would purchase all the produce grown on certain acres of the farm. The farm worked with Farm Fresh and school-level Sodexo staff to develop a growing plan for the varieties of produce the school would need. Roch's Produce, a regional distributor, picks up produce from the farm, processes the items to the school's specifications, and delivers the final product directly to the schools. The intermediary role played by Roch's Produce allows small and mid-size farms that lack processing

equipment, to gain entry into the farm-to-school market. The Adopt-a-Farm Program has been so successful that it has spread into Massachusetts!

### **Show Slide: Activity: FSMC Solicitation Activity**

*Note: This activity requires sample FSMC solicitations for each group to review. If available solicitations are limited, you could give everyone the same solicitation and have each group work on a different section of the contract.*

#### **[Talking Notes]**

On the center of each table is a sample FSMC solicitation. As a group, work together to strengthen the contract's preference for local products. If the solicitation already targets local, discuss the contract's strengths, limitations, and areas for improvement.

### **Show Slide: Donated Foods**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Schools may receive donated foods from a variety of places.

Suppliers may donate extra produce at the end of a harvest, or the SFA may partner with a company that donates food on a specific day. Donated foods must conform to the same food safety standards as purchased products. Remember to inquire about the freshness, shelf life and refrigeration before accepting the product. The SFA should also be sure to record the amount of donated food in your accounts to ensure transparency and avoid any possible accusations of impropriety.

The same principles apply to gleaned products. Some producers collect leftover crops after the fields have been harvested; this process is referred to as gleaning. Schools can use acceptable gleaned products at their discretion. It is recommended that schools review and document food safety practices, such as Good Agricultural Practices of producers, before accepting gleaned products.

### **Show Slide: Procuring and Using School Garden Produce**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

While school gardens do not usually produce enough food to make up a significant portion of a school meal, on-site products such as fruit, vegetables, eggs and others can supplement salad bars, be served as snacks or offered during a taste testing.

There are no federal regulations, neither procurement nor food safety ones, that prohibit schools from using garden produce in the school meal programs. Districts are encouraged to connect with their local health departments to ensure the garden meets any local food safety regulations.

### **Show Slide: Garden Procurement Options**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

To procure garden products, schools typically have three main options: donations, intergovernmental agreements, or purchasing. Garden produce may be donated to the food service; in this instance, no procurement would need to take place. Sometimes, schools purchase the inputs for the garden, such as seeds and tools, using applicable procurement methods (micro-purchase, small purchase procedures, or sealed bids/competitive proposals), and then the produce is donated to the cafeteria at harvest.

Many districts have begun developing interdepartmental agreements with the school garden or school farm to purchase products from the garden. The agreement may outline the price for the produce, relative timelines, and expectations of both parties. This option is most relevant when the school or district itself, a department within the district, or another state or local government agency that wishes to sell produce, operates the school garden.

Lastly, schools can purchase garden produce, most likely using micro-purchase or small purchase procedures. In many cases, the purchase may be below the micro-purchase threshold, enabling food service to make a relatively quick purchase. In other cases, the purchase may be above the micro-purchase threshold, but below the small purchase threshold, so the school food authority may request a quote from the garden manager and other entities. Geographic preference may also be applied. This option is most relevant when the school garden is operated by a non-governmental entity, such as a local non-profit organization, that wishes to sell to the school meal programs.

### Show Slide: Example: Garden Donations

#### [Talking Notes]

Great Valley School District in Malvern, Pennsylvania has an extensive garden with raised beds, hydroponic beds, and a high tunnel. The produce from the garden is donated back to the cafeteria and is used to make homemade vegetable soup, morning glory muffins, roasted broccoli and carrots, and many other items. The food service department has ownership over the garden and the garden coordinator is the department's dietitian who plans the district's menus and manages their Summer Nutrition Programs. The school garden coordinator position is partially funded by the food service department. Currently, the garden is funded through grants, state money, local partnerships, and the non-profit food service account.

### Show Slide: Example: Purchasing Garden Products

#### [Talking Notes]

Denver Public Schools' food service department purchases product from 18 different school gardens. Since the gardens are run collaboratively with a variety of local partners, and since the purchases fall under the small purchase threshold, the food service department uses an informal procurement method to purchase garden product. For the school farms, the district hires, through a formal procurement process, a farming services contractor to grow and harvest vegetables.

#### [Optional Handout]

SP 32-2009, *School Garden Q&As* and SP 06 -2015, [\*Farm to School and School Garden Expenses\*](#)

#### [Optional Discussion]

How many of you have school gardens? Do you use the produce in the cafeteria or is it separate from the food service program?

### **Show Slide: Buying Local Meat**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Increasingly, school districts across the country are serving local meat. While the same procurement regulations and practices apply, some confusion remains regarding acceptable meat sources and inspection requirements. Over the next few slides, we will discuss ways districts can source local meat for their nutrition programs.

### **Show Slide: Inspection Facilities**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulates the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products to ensure that it is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled. The FDA also manages some aspects of meat processing and sales. The Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act are the two main regulations governing meat and poultry inspection.

Child nutrition programs are not restricted to using only meats slaughtered or processed at USDA inspected facilities. Other acceptable sources of local meat include state-inspected facilities that operate under the Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (MPI) and cooperative interstate shipment facilities. State programs must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the Federal Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Acts and the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978.

### **Show Slide: Introductory Language Targeting Local Meat**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

As with a solicitation for any type of product, a solicitation for meat products enables districts to outline exactly the type of products they are seeking and ensure that the products meet specific requirements regarding safety, labeling, and packaging. Clear and specific solicitations ensure that bidders are aware of the district's needs and requirements.

The introduction of a solicitation offers districts an opportunity to identify its goals, without requiring that bids come from local sources. This slide shows sample introductory language for a solicitation targeting local meat.

### **Show Slide: Product Specifications**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

As discussed earlier, there are multiple specifications that a district might use to target local products. For example, they may target meats produced within the state by allowing products from state-inspected facilities. Specifications that target quality, rather than location of supplier, may also support the goals of your

farm to school program. In one example, the district has decided that it will only purchase chicken drumsticks that adhere to School Food Focus' and the Agricultural Marketing Service's Certified Responsible Antibiotic Use standard (CRAU). This standard prohibits the administration of antibiotics pre-hatch and for uses such as disease prevention, growth promotion, feed efficiency, or weight gain. The standard restricts antibiotic use in poultry to therapeutic uses, such as treating or controlling bacterial disease. For more information on the CRAU Standard, visit [schoolfoodfocus.org](http://schoolfoodfocus.org) or the AMS website (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/crau>).

Having flexible specifications may also increase local suppliers' ability to bid. For instance, if a district usually purchases pre-cooked beef patties, but has the ability to prepare hamburgers from raw ground beef, they may omit the pre-cooked, patty requirement from their ground beef specification. Doing so may increase the likelihood that a local beef supplier, who lacks processing capabilities, bids on the solicitation.

### **Show Slide: Technical Requirements & Bid Evaluations**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

As with produce, districts utilize technical requirements to evaluate vendors' responsiveness. Requiring a vendor to provide origin reports may help districts identify and track local meat sources. Likewise, a district may require that meat suppliers provide farm, cafeteria, or classroom visits, a requirement that is more feasible for a local supplier.

Geographic preference can be applied to solicitations targeting local meat sources. The Geographic Preference Option is discussed in detail later in the presentation; however, for now, geographic preference allows districts to offer a defined advantage towards locally grown, unprocessed products when evaluating bids. The district's definition of local, as well as how the preference will be applied, must be clearly identified in the solicitation and must leave an adequate number of qualified sources available to respond to ensure full and open competition is maximized. Additionally, it is important to note that while a preference is given for evaluation purposes, the buyer pays the actual bid price.

### **Show Slide: Local Sourcing for the Summer Meals Programs**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

In many places across the country, summer's agricultural abundance makes the meal programs ripe for serving local foods. Regardless of whether a sponsor is operating the Seamless Summer Option or the Summer Food Service Program, the same procurement regulations apply and sponsors can use the same tactics we have already discussed to purchase local products.

### **Show Slide: Factors to Consider**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

The procurement method used by schools and sponsoring organizations in the summer months will vary depending on sponsor type, size, and the number of children served. A school district sponsor may write their needs for summer foods into their school year contract, or they may create a solicitation that is unique to

their summer program. A key difference in procurement for the summer programs is whether the sponsor's food service will be self-operated or vended.

## Show Slide: Many Sources for Local Foods

### [Talking Notes]

Self-operated sponsors are responsible for procuring and assembling all the food items required for the meal service. Targeting local in self-operated sponsors is the same as was previously described in the formal, informal, and micro-purchasing procedures. Simply put, self-operated sponsors draft specifications, solicit bids, and award contracts to responsive and responsible vendors. Self-operated sponsors may purchase local foods directly from farmers or producers, through produce distributors, or via food hubs. Additionally, we see some summer sponsors purchasing from farmers' markets and even school and community gardens.

## Show Slide: Using an FSMC in Summer

### [Talking Notes]

In the Summer Food Service Program, the term "food service management company" is defined slightly different from previously described. For summer meals programs, a FSMC is:

- any commercial enterprise or nonprofit organization a sponsor may contract for preparing unitized meals, with or without milk, for use in the Program; or,
- any company responsible for managing a sponsor's food service operations in accordance with the limitations set forth in the Program regulations.

Sponsors that decide to contract with a FSMC are called "vended sponsors". Several factors can influence a sponsor's decision to use an FSMC, or vendor. These factors may include the sponsor's lack of food preparation facilities or personnel, a site that is unsuited for meal preparation, or a large number of sites spread over a wide geographical area.

Vended sponsors would target local in the same way as a school using an FSMC. They can integrate their preference for local throughout the solicitation, including local-preference language in the background; objectives, responsibilities, and expectations; nutrition and menu requirements; evaluation criteria; and supporting documents.

## Show Slide: Example: Kalispell, Montana

### [Talking Notes]

Summer meal menus at Kalispell Public Schools are tailored to include local fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, greens, and squash that come from several area co-ops, greenhouses, and local farms. Kalispell plans for their summer program ahead of time and extends their relationship with vendors from the school year into the summer months. In doing so, they are able to serve local hamburgers and polish dogs. The district provides

breakfast and lunch at three sites throughout the community. In addition to stocking up on local produce, they offer agriculture-based activities to keep kids engaged in learning.

### **Show Slide: Local Sourcing for the Child and Adult Care Food Program**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Farm to school isn't just for K-12 schools. An increasing number of early child care and education providers are engaging in farm to preschool efforts. The Child and Adult Care Food Program, or CACFP for short, is a federally-funded program that provides aid to child care institutions and facilities for the provision of nutritious meals and snacks that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children.

### **Show Slide: Institution versus Facility**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

When buying food for CACFP, the federal procurement rules differ for "institutions" versus "facilities". An institution is a sponsoring organization, which enters into an agreement with the state agency to assume final administrative and financial responsibility for the program. Facilities, however, are a sponsored center or family day care home that does not enter into a direct agreement with a state agency.

With regard to procurement, institutions must follow federal regulations, even when using non-program funds to purchase meals. Facilities are not required to follow federal procurement regulations; however, conducting competitive procurements is encouraged.

### **Show Slide: Many Sources for Local**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

As with the summer meals programs, there are many sources of local products CACFP providers may utilize when bringing the farm to the preschool. Also like summer meals, CACFP programs can vary widely in size and daily attendance; therefore, purchasing behaviors will also vary from child care centers to day care homes. That being said, CACFP providers can purchase local products from a number of different sources.

If the volume of product the center purchases is large enough, they should employ the same formal procurement practices described earlier to target local. They may issue an IFB or a RFP for certain products, or they may contract with a distributor.

In many early child care settings, purchasing volumes are small, allowing providers to purchase local items directly from a farmer's market or through community supported agriculture (CSA) programs. Providers can follow the informal procurement process, or possibly even utilize micro-purchasing, to buy local foods. CSAs may be a particularly useful option for facilities that are not required to use competitive procurement methods. CSAs typically provide boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis throughout the year or during harvest season. Not only does this option supply hyper-local foods, but it may also serve as an opportunity to teach children about the local growing season.

Edible gardens are perfect for smaller amounts of produce and offer endless opportunities for hands-on education for children and family engagement. Fun, kid-friendly foods to start with include snap peas, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, herbs, and cucumbers.

### **Show Slide: Example: Bozeman, Montana**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

In Bozeman, Montana, the MSU Child Development Center at Montana State University serves approximately 50% local foods in CACFP through thoughtful and flexible menu planning with a focus on providing Montana-sourced meals. The preschool has several raised beds that provide up to 25% of the vegetables for the meal program at peak season. The preschool also participates in Towne's Harvest Garden, a campus-based community supported agriculture program that provides small quantities of fresh produce to the preschool that are incorporated into pastas and salads or used for taste-tests. For other food needs, with just over 30 children enrolled daily in the program, staff compare prices at local grocers and bulk stores, as purchases fall below the small purchase threshold. With several sources for local foods, the four-week cycle menu highlights local offerings and allows for seasonal substitutions.

### **Show Slide: Example: Minneapolis, Minnesota**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and their child care partner, New Horizon Academy (NHA), launched a Farm to Child Care pilot in Minnesota in the summer of 2012. With 62 centers and a centralized food distribution system, IATP and NHA worked with the existing distributor to identify local suppliers for fruits, vegetables, and wild rice. NHA was then able to order these local items directly from their distributor, tapping into their existing delivery system.

## SECTION IX

### The Geographic Preference Option

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#### Show Slide: The Geographic Preference Option

##### [Talking Notes]

We will end the session by talking about one of the most powerful local procurement tools: geographic preference. When we say geographic preference, we are referring to a specific provision in the 2008 Farm Bill that allowed schools, for the first time, to include a preference for local products in their solicitations for certain foods.

#### Show Slide: Why Geographic Preference?

##### [Talking Notes]

Why was this necessary? Title 2, CFR 200, in the Code of Federal Regulations, is where the Uniform Requirements and Cost Principles for Federal Awards are outlined. 2 CFR 200 establishes the rules for federal grants, cooperative agreements, and sub-awards to state, local and Indian tribal governments.

Essentially, the Code of Federal Regulations makes clear that unless there's a specific exemption, a geographic preference can't be used.

#### Show Slide: What the Legislation Says

##### [Talking Notes]

In the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act, also called "the Farm Bill," Congress directed the Secretary of Agriculture to "encourage institutions receiving funds under this Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to purchase unprocessed agricultural products, both locally grown and locally raised, to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate," effectively creating the needed exemption.

The Act also directed the Secretary to "allow institutions receiving funds under this Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966... to use a geographic preference for the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products, both locally grown and locally raised." This provision applies to operators of all of the Child Nutrition Programs.

#### Show Slide: The Process

##### [Talking Notes]

After the act was passed, it was up to USDA to create regulations that further clarified the language in the Act. Just reading the language, you can probably see that questions that needed to be answered by the regulations were "what's unprocessed?" and "what's local?"

Of course, FNS also has an ongoing need to provide guidance and technical assistance regarding its regulations. For geographic preference, this has come in the form of Q&A documents as well as lots of technical assistance, presentations, and a procurement manual.

It's at the local level where everything plays out, and where districts use rules and their discretion to actually implement geographic preferences. Any SFA/institution/sponsor participating in the federal CNPs has the option to apply a geographic preference when procuring unprocessed, locally grown or raised agricultural products.

While the geographic preference option can be used in any procurement method, it is not the only way to purchase local products

## Show Slide: Geographic Preference Option Final Rule

### [Talking Notes]

On April 22, 2011, the Federal Register published the final rule for the Geographic Preference Option for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs. The rule:

1. Clarified who can define "local;"
2. Defined the term "unprocessed;" and,
3. It also made clear that a preference is not the same as a specification.

## Show Slide: Who Defines Local?

### [Talking Notes]

The final geographic preference rule clarifies that "the school food authority making the purchase or the state agency making purchases on behalf of such school food authorities has the discretion to determine the local area to which the geographic preference option will be applied." Schools define what they mean by local. While many state and/or local governments define local as within the state or county, schools using a geographic preference are under no obligation to adopt these definitions.

As shown in the example images, there are many options for defining local. Definitions vary widely depending on the unique geography and climate of a school's location, as well as on the abundance of local food producers and manufacturers. Many schools' definitions require a specific distance from the school, county or state. Definitions might include more than one state (e.g., Georgia, Alabama and Florida) or discrete parts of several states (e.g., specific adjacent counties in Washington, Oregon and Idaho). Other schools use different definitions of local depending on the product or season.

Please note that geographic preference follows the agricultural product, not the location of the respondent, so it is irrelevant where the respondent's business is incorporated or whether it has a principal place of business.

*Note: You can leave out this slide if you have covered the topic of defining local earlier in the session, but do make sure to emphasize that the authority to define local sits with the SFA.*

## Show Slide: What is “Unprocessed?”

### [Talking Notes]

The regulations clearly define what qualifies as an unprocessed agricultural product. Specifically, the regulations say “unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products,” which means only those agricultural products that retain their inherent character. The effects of the following food handling and preservation techniques are not considered to have changed the character of the product:

- Refrigerating
- Freezing
- Size adjustment made by
  - Peeling
  - Slicing
  - Dicing
  - Cutting
  - Chopping
  - Shucking
  - Grinding
- Forming ground products into patties without any additives or fillers
- Drying or dehydration
- Washing
- Packaging (such as placing eggs in cartons)
- Vacuum packing and bagging (such as placing vegetables in bags or combining two or more types of vegetables or fruits in a single package)
- Adding of ascorbic acid or other preservatives to prevent oxidation
- Butchering livestock and poultry
- Cleaning fish
- Pasteurizing milk

Unallowable food handling and preservation techniques include heating and canning—the inherent character of the product is not retained because the heating process involved in canning changes the agricultural product.

## Show Slide: Quiz: Which of the following products qualify as “unprocessed?”

### [Talking Notes]

Let’s look more closely at what types of products you can use geographic preference to procure.

## Show Slide: Dried Beans

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and a check mark will appear.

Yes, you can use geographic preference when procuring dried beans. The final rule specifies that drying is allowed.

## Show Slide: Canned Beans

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and an “X” will appear.

Products that have been canned or cooked are not considered unprocessed.

## Show Slide: Hummus

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and an “X” will appear.

Again, hummus is cooked, and it also includes things like spices, which are considered additives and are not allowed when procuring a product using geographic preference.

## Show Slide: Mixed Color Carrots

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and a check mark will appear.

Yes, you can use geographic preference when procuring raw carrots.

## Show Slide: Mixed Frozen Peas and Carrots

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and a check mark will appear.

Freezing is allowed, cutting is allowed, and it’s okay to combine products in the packaging stage.

## Show Slide: Whole Apples

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and a check mark will appear.

Yes, whole, raw apples definitely qualify.

## Show Slide: Tortillas

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience. Once you have sufficient input from the audience advance the slide and an “X” will appear.

You cannot use geographic preference when purchasing tortillas because they have multiple ingredients and they are also cooked.

## Show Slide: Raw Beef Patties

### [Talking Notes]

Could you use the geographic preference option to purchase this product?

**DO:** Solicit input from the audience.

Grinding is okay, as is forming them into patties, but you would not be able to use geographic preference if the patties contained any additives like salt and pepper.

## Show Slide: How to Use the Geographic Preference Option

### [Talking Notes]

Now that we know why the geographic preference option exists and what types of products it applies to, let's look at how to use it.

## Show Slide: Where Geographic Preference Applies

### [Talking Notes]

Geographic preference applies to a large percent of the overall school food budget. Around 80% of foods are sourced with cash assistance, including federal reimbursement, student payments, and in some cases, state and/or local funding.

A geographic preference can be applied to the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products made with reimbursement funds. The decision to apply a geographic preference rests with the SFA.

## Show Slide: How to Incorporate a Geographic Preference

### [Talking Notes]

To incorporate a geographic preference into your procurement process, you need first to settle on a definition of local. This decision is important because the statute only applies to local agricultural products. You also need to determine how much preference to apply to these products. Usually, that preference will show up in your solicitation as a fixed preference or a percentage preference.

You can also consider using a tiered approach wherein vendors with products grown within the state are awarded five extra points, while vendors with products grown within 150 miles of your district are given eight extra points. Furthermore, you could indicate that vendors who are able to supply 80% or greater local products will receive a 5% advantage while vendors who can supply 50–79% local products will receive a 3% advantage. There are many ways to structure a tiered approach depending on your goals, and there will be some examples and exercises to help you.

Remember an RFP or IFB cannot contain language stating that only agricultural products grown within a certain state will be accepted. Language like that is considered overly restrictive because it is stated as a *requirement*, not a *preference*. It is overly restrictive to indicate a preference for products grown within five miles of your school district when only one farm exists within five miles of your district, because such a requirement would be considered an unreasonable limit on competition. If 100 farms existed within five miles of your school district, it would not be considered an unreasonable limit on competition. You have to use your best judgment.

Now we are going to look at a few examples of how to use geographic preference.

## Show Slide: Example 1: 1 Point = 1 Penny

### [Talking Notes]

Here is an example of how to incorporate preference points in an IFB:

1. A school district issues an IFB for apples and states a preference for apples grown within 100 miles of the school. IFBs are generally used when a firm-fixed-price contract will be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.
2. The solicitation makes it clear that any respondent able to provide local apples will be awarded ten additional points in the evaluation process.
3. In this example, the ten preference points are equivalent to a 10¢ reduction in price for the purposes of evaluating the lowest bidder.
4. Apple Lane Farms meets the stated preference for local products and receives the ten additional points (equivalent to if the farm had offered a price 10¢ less).
5. These extra points make Apple Lane Farms the “lowest bidder,” even though the school still pays Apple Lane Farms \$2.05 for its product.

The equivalent price deduction for geographic preference only applies to the evaluation process and does not affect the actual price paid. This technique applies to informal procurements, as well as IFBs and RFPs.

## Show Slide: Example 2: Tiered Preference

### [Talking Notes]

A school district issues an RFP for its produce contract and indicates a preference for fresh fruits and vegetables produced within 100 miles or within the state. For the purposes of evaluating bids, 10% price preference will be awarded to any bidder that can source products from within 100 miles and 7% price preference will be awarded to any bidder able to source product from within the state.

Ray's Produce is the only firm that is able to supply products from within 100 miles and F&V Distribution is able to supply products from within the state. Each of these vendors receives the geographic preference. Even with the preference Ray's Produce and F&V Distribution received, Produce Express has the lowest price. If price were the determining factor, Produce Express would be awarded the contract.

## Show Slide: Geographic Preference Sliding Scale

### [Talking Notes]

A preference for local products does not need to be calculated with absolute values; sliding scales may be appropriate. This chart assigns a certain number of points depending on how many items on the product list can be sourced from within the stated geographic preference area.

Ten preference points will be awarded to vendors able to provide over 70% of the requested items from within the state, seven points for 50–69%, and five points for 25–49%. Points for local sourcing will be included along with other evaluation factors.

Points are awarded based on the percentage of total listed products that can be sourced from within the geographic preference area. Based on responses from potential vendors, determine the amount of points the vendor receives. Using this chart ensures that points are assigned by a clear method and not arbitrarily given. The chart along with a description would be sent to potential vendors as part of the solicitation.

## Show Slide: Example 3: Geographic Preference in an RFP

### [Talking Notes]

RFPs may include evaluation criteria that allow for consideration of factors in addition to price and can result in either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursable contract. Reductions in price are not the only way to confer preference to local products. Additional factors to consider include technical expertise, past experience, years in business, marketing, etc. School districts may include requirements such as farm visits, showing the state or farm of origin on the invoice, or providing farm information for education in the lunchroom as part of the selection criteria. When factors other than price are included in the selection criteria, awards must be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered.

For example, a school district issues an RFP for beans and grains and makes it clear that bids will be evaluated using a 100-point system. Using a rubric like the chart on the previous slide, ten preference points will be awarded when over 70% of the requested items come from within the state, 7 points for 50–69%, and 5 points for 25–49%. Points for local sourcing will be evaluated with other factors.

In this example, Paula’s Pulses is able to source 75% of their products from within the state, earning them ten points in the scoring process in the local products' category. Gary’s Grains can source 55%, earning them seven points, and Laurie’s Legumes is unable to guarantee any products from within the state, so they receive zero points in the local preference category. After evaluation, Gary’s Grains wins the contract.

**[Optional Handout]**

Ask the audience how they are using geographic preference. You can refer to the handout, Geographic Preference Language, and have the audience complete the Geographic Preference Worksheet.

**Show Slide: Geographic Preference Exercise**

**[Talking Notes]**

*Note: see pages 86-89 in the Appendix for instructions on how to facilitate this activity.*

**Show Slide: Section Summary**

**[Talking Notes]**

In this portion of the training we’ve covered what geographic preference is and a few ways that geographic preference might be applied. It is also important to remember that a preference is not a specification. Geographic preference is just one tool for purchasing local products.

## SECTION X

### Incorporating Local Foods

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*Note: The next eight slides illustrate a week of typical school lunch menus. As you progress through the slides, the different illustrations will pop up demonstrating how one school may start small, plan to procure a local item and expand as they are ready. Depending on the type of presentation, you may want to insert these slides at the beginning of the Local Purchasing section or at either end of the Procurement Basics presentation, so the audience can get an idea of what they could be working toward. You may want to exclude these slides if you have limited time.*

#### Show Slide: Example: Incorporating Local Foods into School Meals

##### [Talking Notes]

You have heard about all the ways to buy local and know that local products come in many different shapes and sizes—everything from fruits and vegetables to wheat and meat and dairy.

Let's take a look at how all of this, over time, can come together to create a school menu full of local foods.

#### Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step One

##### [Talking Notes]

This menu illustrates what a typical week of lunches might look like under the new meal pattern. In and of itself, this is an historic accomplishment—look at all of those fruits, vegetables, and whole grains! So, how might a school start incorporating local foods into a menu like this?

#### Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Two

##### [Talking Notes]

“Harvest of the Month” programs are a great starting place for schools and districts that want to start sourcing locally. In this scenario, the school buys three types of strawberries from a local farmer. Students get to try two of each variety and then vote on the one they like the best. In the classroom, kids learn about how strawberries are grown and harvested. “Harvest of the Month” materials produced by the state department of agriculture or education are given to parents, teachers, and the community.

#### Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Three

##### [Talking Notes]

The strawberries served through the “Harvest of the Month” program are so well received that the school starts sourcing strawberries from two different local farmers through their main produce distributor and adds them to the menu for the two months that they are in season. The school also realizes that all of its milk and cheese is sourced locally. The school contacts the local dairy to ask if they are open to field trips. The dairy is thrilled and accepts all fourth graders for a half-day tour of their operations.

## Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Four

### [Talking Notes]

Then, the school realizes that they can source local foods through the DoD Fresh Program, and that all local fruits and vegetables are labeled as such in the on-line DoD Fresh catalog, FFAVORS. They start replacing some non-local items with some local items.

## Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Five

### [Talking Notes]

School nutrition staff start to connect with local agricultural extension agents and learn about a cooperative of beef producers from whom they can source local beef. Together they have developed an IFB that will target the local beef products by including specific technical requirements.

## Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Six

### [Talking Notes]

Perhaps the school is in a big grain-producing state and it uses the informal procurement method to purchase whole grain rolls for a local baker that uses regionally produced wheat and oats.

## Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Seven

### [Talking Notes]

The school begins replacing some of their standard items with seasonally available foods, and they even begin using a non-profit food processing facility to preserve some of the local harvest.

## Show Slide: Evolution of a Local Menu: Step Eight

### [Talking Notes]

Finally, the school begins serving custom hot menu items developed with locally available ingredients. Kids and staff love the new items, and school lunch participation increases.

Before they know it, school nutrition staff is serving local foods every day of the week!

This is obviously a hypothetical situation, but the point is that with the tactics we have talked about, serving local foods is feasible and it is ok to start small.

### [Optional Activity]

Facilitate a discussion about how the participants will incorporate some of the tactics they have learned about. With what frequency are the schools sourcing local products? What plans do they have for next year?

## SECTION XI

### Farm to School Resources

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#### Show Slide: Farm to School Resources

##### [Talking Notes]

Now that we have covered all of the mechanisms to buy local products, let's look at a few places you can go to find more information.

#### Show Slide: Procurement Resources

##### [Talking Notes]

This slide lists some of the most helpful procurement and geographic preference resources. The Transition to and Implementation of 2 CFR Part 200, Q&A memo answers questions regarding general requirements and procurement standards, while also addressing common questions related to appropriate micro-purchase procedures. The geographic preference Q&A memos are valuable in answering some specific questions FNS has received on the final rule.

Although the regulations may be dry, the procurement standards are the foundation of this entire training. In order to apply these principles, it is important to have an understanding of the regulations.

As mentioned throughout the training, the federal regulations are just one piece of the rules that govern the school meals program. Schools need to be aware of state and local procurement regulations and guidance. You can start by working with your district's procurement office or state agency.

If you are looking for more geographic preference examples, the Washington State Department of Agriculture published a guide specifically for schools in Washington. Though some of the information is state specific, much of the guidance is applicable to all schools especially many of the geographic preference examples.

FNS worked with the Institute of Child Nutrition to create an on-line training focused on procurement. It is quite a comprehensive course and if you are interested in learning more about procurement regulations, it is a good first stop.

##### [Optional Discussion]

Ask the audience about any other procurement resources they have found especially helpful in procuring local products.

##### [Handout]

Procurement Resources

## Show Slide: State Resources

*Note: Customize and insert state resources, including National Farm to School Network contacts, contacts at state departments of agriculture or education, Cooperative Extension agents and any other relevant resources. Think about including relevant state materials, information about upcoming trainings and events, etc.*

## Show Slide: USDA Farm to School Fact Sheets

### [Talking Notes]

USDA has developed a variety of fact sheets on a host of topics. Several of the fact sheets are focused on procurement topics. Some of these we have already mentioned throughout the training and all of them are available on the USDA Farm to School Website. The fact sheets most relevant to local procurement are:

- [10 Facts About Local Food in Schools](#)
- [Using DOD Fresh to Buy Local](#)
- [Geographic Preference: What It Is and How To Use It](#)
- [Selling Local Food to Schools: A Resource for Producers](#)
- [USDA Foods: A Resource for Buying Local](#)
- [Local Meat in Child Nutrition Programs: Increasing Opportunities for Small and Mid-Sized Livestock Ranchers and Fisherman](#)
- [School Gardens: Using Gardens to Grow Healthy Habits in Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Communities](#)
- [Farm to Summer: Why Summer Meal Programs are Ripe for Local Foods and Agriculture-Based Activities](#)
- [Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Childcare and Education Settings](#)
- [Bringing Tribal Foods and Traditions into Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Gardens](#)
- [Decision Tree: How Will You Bring Local Foods into the Cafeteria with Your Next Food Purchase](#)
- [Integrating Local Foods into Child Nutrition Programs](#)

*Note: Advance slide to make each fact sheet appear.*

## Show Slide: Buying Local Guide

### [Talking Notes]

We have referenced this guide throughout the training as it is one of the most comprehensive resources on buying local products for school meals. The guide covers all of the information covered in this training and offers some great examples and excerpts from real solicitations.

The guide along with the fact sheets are available on the Procuring Local Foods page of the USDA Farm to School website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/procuring-local-foods>

Additionally, in 2014, the USDA Farm to School Program hosted a 12-part webinar series to showcase the variety of ways school districts can purchase local foods and all of the webinar recordings are also available on the USDA Farm to School website.

## Show Slide: FNS Staff Are Here to Help!

### [Talking Notes]

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is the lead agency for the USDA Farm to School Team. Each of the seven regional offices has one full time staff member that acts as the Farm to School Regional Lead.

Regional Leads are available to provide farm to school-related policy guidance and interpretation, and to help state and local agencies in their region integrate local products into the child nutrition programs that they already operate.

### **Show Slide: Thank you! Questions?**

#### **[Talking Notes]**

Thank you for your time and interest. We are excited that more and more schools are buying local products and now you can bring this knowledge back to your community to help schools buy even more local items!

Are there any questions?

## SECTION XII

### Activities and Handouts

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#### Activities

Giving participants a chance to put their learning to immediate use through group activities and exercises helps reinforce key lessons. Consider using the activities outlined below in your trainings. Customize these to suit your audience, location, or any other determining factors.

- Informal Procurement Activity
- Formal Procurement Activity
- Geographic Preference Activity
- Procurement Scenarios: Optional Activities

#### Handouts

Offering participants additional resources before, during, or after your training is another good method for reinforcing key concepts. Consider use of the following handouts.

- Local Procurement Step-by-Step
- Using Geographic Preference in Four Steps
- Sample Geographic Preference Language
- Federal Procurement Regulations Resources
- Procurement Resources
- Menu Planning and Seasonality Resources

#### Sample Evaluation Template

Don't forget to conduct an evaluation at the end of your training. Here we've included two sample evaluation templates for you to modify as appropriate and distribute as a handout or via an electronic tool such as SurveyMonkey.

# Small Purchase Procedures Activity

---

## Basic Scenario:

Small groups will modify, as they see fit, the basic specification on the screen to purchase local carrots using the informal procurement method. Each group will gather quotes by calling on three fake vendors. The groups will document the bids, select a vendor, and report back to the larger group on their decision. After the exercise, you will debrief with the group how the scenario worked for each group.

## Exercise Preparation:

- You need to identify three people willing to act as vendors. Consider assigning this role to any co-presenters or to several participants. Get a cell phone number for each of the three fake vendors.
- Give each fake vendor a script so that they know what to say when their phone rings.
- Divide the participants into groups of 3-5.
- Give each group acting as a school district a list of the vendor phone numbers.

*Note: the scripts can be modified as you see fit and especially in response to any specifications or requirements the customer groups come up with.*

## Vendor Scripts

*Note: Here are three vendor scripts, but feel free to get creative. You may also choose to have more than three vendors.*

### The Crazy Carrot Company Script

- Tell the first group who calls your price for the carrots is \$1/lb.
- Tell the second group who calls that you have beets but not carrots.
- Do not answer the third call.

### Radical Roots Script

- Tell the first group who calls your prices for the carrots is \$0.97/lb.
- Tell the second group who calls your prices for the carrots is \$0.97/lb.
- Tell the third group who calls your prices for the carrots is \$0.97/lb.

### Very Veg Script

- Tell the first group who calls your price for carrots is \$1.03/lb.
- Tell the second group who calls your price for carrots is \$1.03/lb but you cannot deliver the product – it must be picked up from the farm.
- Tell the third group who calls your price for carrots is \$1.03/lb.

## Participant Instructions

- Your task is to buy local carrots using the informal procurement method.
- Modify the basic specifications on the screen as you deem necessary.
- Gather quotes by calling the numbers given to you.
- Document the bids you receive and decide which vendor will be awarded a contract.

Each group will have a different scenario based on the vendor responses. After most groups are finished gathering quotes, do a quick recap of the exercise. Ask a volunteer from each group which vendor will receive a contract for the carrots and how the process worked the group.

The activity will take 20-25 minutes and about 15 minutes to summarize each group's experience.

# Formal Procurement Activity

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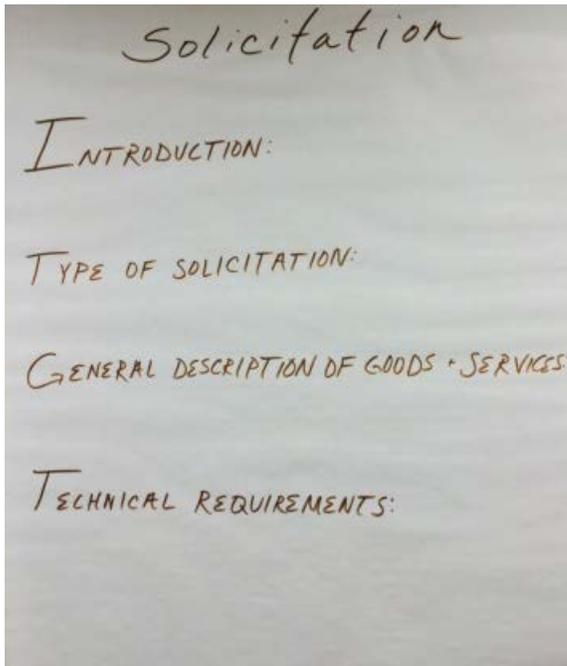
## Basic Scenario:

In teams, participants will construct an outline of a solicitation that targets local products using some of the techniques that have been mentioned in the training.

The activity will take at least 30 minutes depending on the size of your group; budget for another 15 minutes to recap the exercise and go over each group's solicitation. When most groups are finished, ask for a volunteer from each group to summarize their group's solicitation.

## Exercise Preparation:

- Hang big pieces of paper around the room that have product specifications and vendor requirements that the teams might pull from. For example, on a big sheet of paper labeled "Product Specifications" write: unique varieties or harvested within 24 hours of delivery. On a big sheet of paper labeled "Vendor Requirements" write: must be able to provide farm tours or previous track record of sourcing local products required.
- Provide a big sheet of paper to each group with headings for the sections of a solicitation, like the one below:



- Distribute the Formal Procurement Scenarios Handouts found on pages 90-95
  - Four to six people in a group is ideal and depending on the size of your group you may use all three of the scenarios or you may choose to use just one or two. If your group is larger, consider having two groups use the same scenario. This tactic offers a great opportunity to see how two groups approach the exercise differently. You will give the same scenario to each person in a particular group.

## Participant Instructions

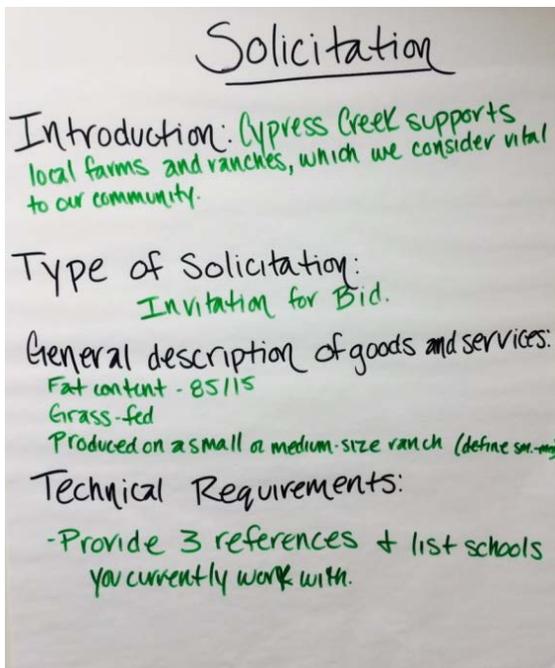
Using the solicitation scenarios given to you, develop pieces of a formal procurement that will target local products. Here are a few questions to consider as a group:

- Will you use an RFP or IFB?
- Where will you insert your desire for local?
  - Introduction
  - General Descriptions of Goods and Services
  - Technical Requirements
  - Evaluation Criteria (Note: this section is not included on your piece of paper but feel free to include it if your group decides to use an RFP.)

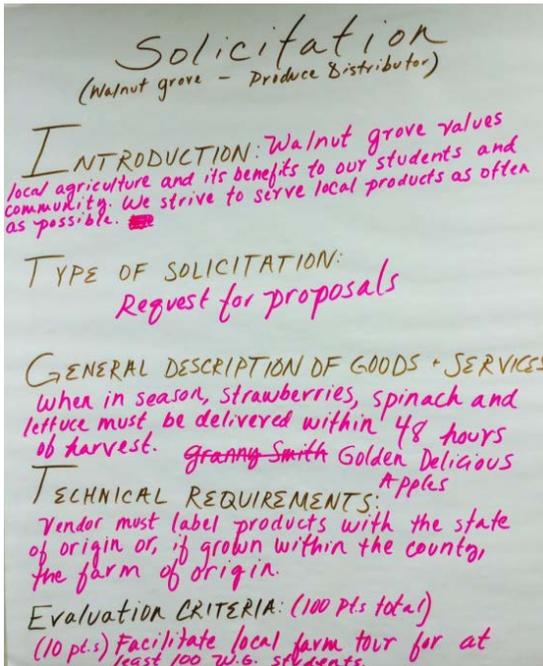
Work with your teams to develop an outline of a solicitation, write your ideas under the relevant heading, and then we will reconvene as a group to see how each group plans to target local products.

Here are examples of how one group of participants approached the exercise:

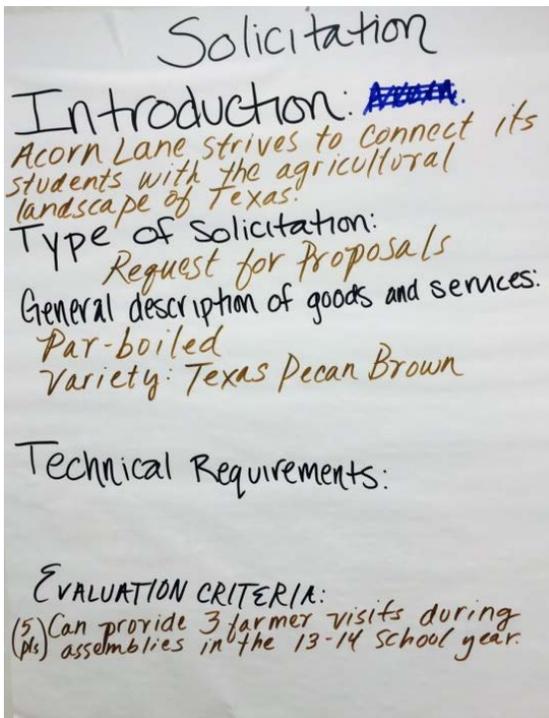
### Scenario 1



Scenario 2



Scenario 3



# Geographic Preference Exercise

---

## Basic Scenario:

This exercise builds on the formal procurement exercise. Participants will modify the solicitation they created during the formal procurement exercise to include geographic preference.

The activity will take at least 20 minutes depending on the size of your group; budget for another 15 minutes to recap the exercise and go over each group's solicitation. When most groups are finished, ask for a volunteer from each group to summarize their group's changes.

## Exercise Preparation:

- Make sure each group has access to the big sheets of paper they used for the formal procurement exercise.
- Distribute copies of the Formal Procurement Scenarios found on pages 90-95
  - Four to six people in a group is ideal and depending on the size of your group you may use all three of the scenarios or you may choose to use just one or two. If your group is larger, consider having two groups use the same scenario. This tactic offers a great opportunity to see how two groups approach the exercise differently. You will give the same scenario to each person in a particular group.

## Participant Instructions

Using the formal solicitation you created earlier, rework the document to include geographic preference. How will using geographic preference affect the rest of your solicitation? Are there specifications or requirements you might remove with the addition of geographic preference? Cross out and make additions to the solicitation in a different color marker and we will reconvene as a group to see how each group plans to use geographic preference.

### [Optional Handout]

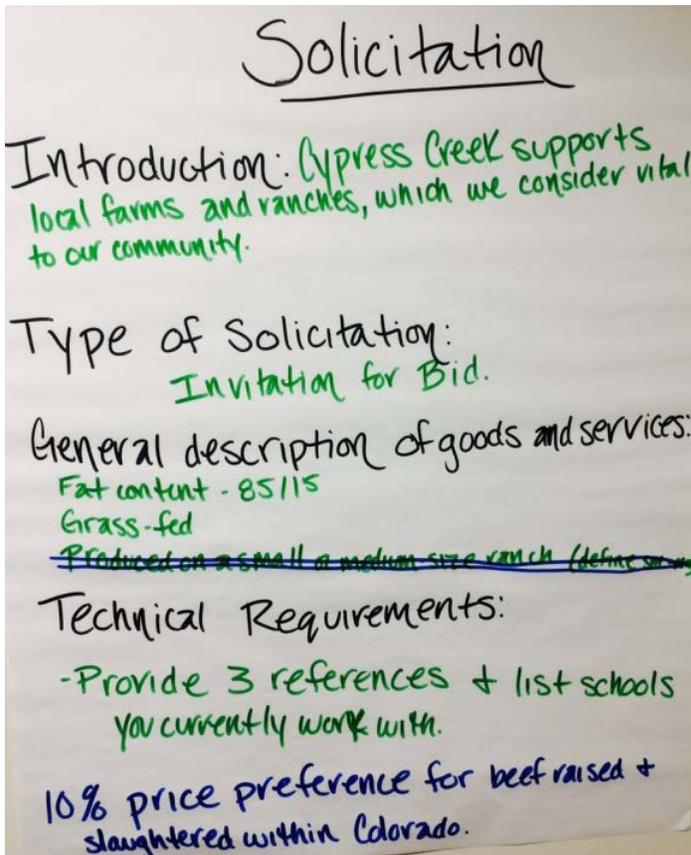
Consider handing out Using Geographic Preference in Four Steps (page 101) and Sample Geographic Preference Language (pages 102-103). These documents offer ideas for how to structure geographic preference and a systematic approach for deciding how to include geographic preference which may be useful to the participants.

### [Optional Variation]

If time is limited, consider combining the formal procurement and geographic preference exercises. If you choose this route, do not conduct the formal procurement exercise and change the framing of the geographic preference exercise. When it comes time for the geographic preference exercise, ask the groups to design a solicitation that targets local products. Encourage participants to use any of the tools that have been discussed, including product specifications, vendor requirements, evaluation criteria and geographic preference.

Here are examples of how one group of participants approached the exercise:

Scenario 1



Scenario 2

**Solicitation**  
(Walnut grove - Produce Distributor)

**INTRODUCTION:** Walnut grove values local agriculture and its benefits to our students and community. We strive to serve local products as often as possible. "LOCAL" means within the county of Walnut, W. Virginia.

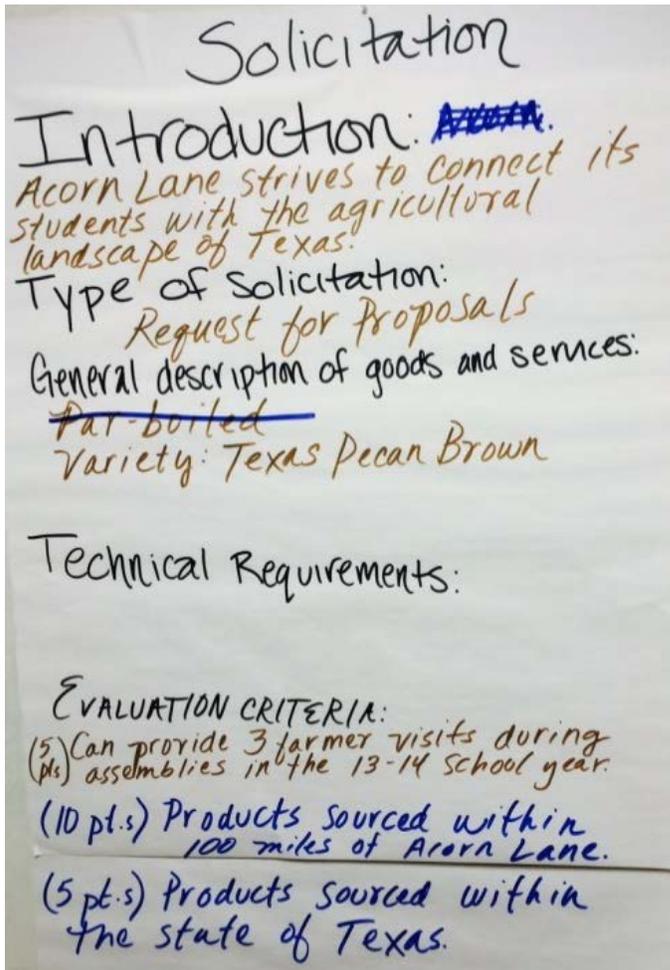
**TYPE OF SOLICITATION:**  
Request for proposals

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF GOODS + SERVICES**  
When in season, strawberries, spinach and lettuce must be delivered within 48 hours of harvest. ~~Granny Smith~~ Golden Delicious Apples

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**  
Vendor must label products with the state of origin or, if grown within the county, the farm of origin.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA: (100 pts total)**

- (10 pts) Facilitate local farm tour for at least 100 W.V. students.
- (5 pts) 2-3 products are sourced locally.
- (7 pts) 4-5 products are sourced locally.



# Formal Procurement Activity HANDOUT – Scenario 1

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Use this worksheet to create a formal solicitation. Work through each section and discuss with your group how and where a school might include their desire for local product.

## Introduction

The Food Service Department (The Department) at the Cypress Creek District in Colorado works to provide the highest quality meals to its students. The Department views school meals as an essential component to student health, well-being and future success. Cypress Creek serves about 15,400 school lunches every day and the free and reduced price rate is 73%. The Department is seeking bids for ground beef to be used for hamburgers. The Department serves hamburgers once per week throughout the school year.

- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Type of Solicitation

- Will you use an Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposal
  - » Will your purchase be based on price alone?
  - » Why are you choosing one type of solicitation over the other?

## General Descriptions of Goods and Services

The Department seeks bids for 80,000 lbs. of ground beef to be delivered throughout the school year. The ground beef will be:

- Packaged in 10 pound vacuum sealed bags and packed four (4) bags per case (maximum of 40 pounds per case)
- Free of any fillers
- 85/15 lean to fat ratio
- From cattle slaughtered and processed in a USDA inspected facility

- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Timelines and Procedures

Bids are due May 1, 2015.

Awards will be made on May 15, 2015.

Deliveries will occur between August 2015 and June 2016.

## Technical Requirements

To be considered responsive and responsible, the vendor must:

- Be able to deliver product monthly from August-May to Mr. Freeze Storage in Cypress Creek, CO.
  - Hold liability insurance with up to \$1,000,000 of coverage.
  - Provide at least three recent references.
- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Evaluation Criteria

- » If you're using an RFP, what evaluation criteria would you use?

*Tip: Including references and requirements regarding your desire for local throughout the bid documents may help illustrate how important getting local product is to you, but be sure that you are not using criteria that restrict competition.*

# Formal Procurement Activity HANDOUT – Scenario 2

---

Use this worksheet to create a formal solicitation. Work through each section and discuss with your group how and where a school might include their desire for local product.

## Introduction

The Food Service Department (The Department) at the Walnut Grove School District in West Virginia strives to prepare the best quality meals to its students. The Department views school meals as an essential component to student health, well-being and future success. Walnut Grove serves about 8,700 school lunches every day and the free and reduced price rate is 64%. The Department serves fresh fruits and vegetables daily and is seeking bids for a full service produce distributor.

- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Type of Solicitation

- Will you use an Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposal?
  - » Will your purchase be based on price alone?
  - » Why are you choosing one type of solicitation over the other?

## General Descriptions of Goods and Services

The Department seeks bids for a full service produce distributor to deliver fresh produce to 11 schools twice per week. The Department seeks bids for:

- Apples, Granny Smith, U.S. No. 1
  - Strawberries, U.S. 1
  - Pears, Bartlett, U.S. No. 1
  - Carrots, U.S. No. 1 or U.S. No. 1 Jumbo
  - Romaine Lettuce
  - Cucumber, U.S. Extra No. 1
  - Broccoli, U.S. No.
  - Cabbage, Green, U.S. No. 1, 12-16 count per carton
  - Peppers, Bell, Sweet, Green, U.S. No. 1
  - Celery, U.S. No. 1, 24-36 count per carton
  - Spinach, Prewashed, U.S. No. 14-2.5lb bags per case
  - Potatoes, Russet, U.S. No. 1
  - Onions, Dry, Yellow, U.S. No. 1
- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Timelines and Procedures

Bids are due May 1, 2015.

Awards will be made on May 15, 2015.

Deliveries will occur between August 2015 and June 2016.

## Technical Requirements

To be considered responsive and responsible, the vendor must:

- Be able to deliver product twice per week from August-June to 11 schools in Walnut Grove, WV.
  - Hold liability insurance with up to \$1,000,000 of coverage.
  - Provide at least three recent references.
- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Evaluation Criteria

- » If you're using an RFP, what evaluation criteria would you use?

*Tip: Including references and requirements regarding your desire for local throughout the bid documents may help illustrate how important getting local product is to you, but be sure that you are not using criteria that restrict competition.*

# Formal Procurement Activity HANDOUT – Scenario 3

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Use this worksheet to create a formal solicitation. Work through each section and discuss with your table how and where a school might include their desire for local product.

## Introduction

The Food Service Department (The Department) at the Acorn Lane School District in Texas strives to prepare the best quality meals to its students. The Department views school meals as an essential component to student health, wellbeing and future success. Acorn Lane serves about 53,000 school lunches every day and the free and reduced price rate is 81%.

- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Type of Solicitation

- Will you use an Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposal?
  - » Will your purchase be based on price alone?
  - » Why are you choosing one type of solicitation over the other?

## General Descriptions of Goods and Services

The Department serves brown rice twice per week at all 75 of the district's schools. The vendor must be able to deliver product to three locations located in Acorn Lane, TX. The Department seeks bids for brown rice (U.S. medium grain brown). The product must be delivered in 10lb bags.

- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Timelines and Procedures

Bids are due May 1, 2015.

Awards will be made on May 15, 2015.

Deliveries will occur between August 2015 and June 2016.

## Technical Requirements

To be considered responsive and responsible, the vendor must:

- Be able to deliver product once per month from August-June to 3 sites in Acorn Lane, TX.
- Hold liability insurance with up to \$1,000,000 of coverage.
- Provide at least three recent references.

- » What, if anything, would you add or change?

## Evaluation Criteria

- » If you're using an RFP, what evaluation criteria would you use?

*Tip: Including references and requirements regarding your desire for local throughout the bid documents may help illustrate how important getting local product is to you, but be sure that you are not using criteria that restrict competition.*

## Procurement Scenarios: Optional ACTIVITIES

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Any one of the scenarios described below could be used to reinforce key lessons throughout your training. Consider creating slides that outline these or other scenarios and ask participants to respond to the prompts. Below we've provided answers as well as sample scenarios. Feel free to create your own scenarios and customize them to the particular needs of the group you are training.

### **Scenario One**

A school district wants to purchase apples for a special fall harvest week. The SFA estimates the cost of the apples will be \$200,000. The SFA assumes that, since the procurement is only for one product for one week, they can use the informal procurement method. The SFA calls three suppliers on the phone for quotes and goes with the vendor with the apple variety he likes best. Do you notice anything wrong with this situation?

*Answer:* The formal procurement method must be used for all procurements over the federal small purchase threshold of \$150,000. Additionally, the SFA made arbitrary decision regarding the apple variety. The SFA should outline all specifications before soliciting bids.

### **Scenario Two**

A farmer that the school food service director normally purchases lettuce from shows up at the district's central kitchen with 100 pounds of lettuce that he is going to throw away and wants to give to the school district. What should the director do?

*Answer:* Federal procurement regulations do not come into play with donated foods, however donated foods must conform to the same food safety standards as purchased products. The school should ask about the freshness, shelf life and refrigeration before accepting the product. The SFA should also be sure to record the amount of donated food in its accounts to ensure transparency and avoid any possible accusations of impropriety.

### **Scenario Three**

An SFA issues a solicitation for canned applesauce and uses geographic preference when evaluating the bids. Do you notice anything wrong with this situation? What other mechanisms could the SFA use to source local applesauce?

*Answer:* Applesauce is considered a processed product and therefore cannot be procured using geographic preference (which is restricted to unprocessed products as defined in the final geographic preference rule). The SFA could use geographic preference to purchase whole, fresh apples and procure the services of a processor to make applesauce. The SFA could include technical requirements or product specifications that target applesauce made with local apples.

### **Scenario Four**

A state agency defines local as from within the state and requires SFAs to use the state definition when using a geographic preference. A district near the state border would rather get foods from a neighboring county than from the other side of the state. What options does the district have?

*Answer:* The decision regarding how to define local rests with the SFA, regardless of any other definitions in use within the state. In this scenario, the state agency may not mandate the use of any definitions for local, even if a specific state definition had been enacted by state legislation.

#### **Scenario Five**

An SFA wants to procure about 65,000 pounds of local carrots for one school for the whole year and estimates that the product will cost about \$100,000. What are the SFA's options for procuring the carrots?

*Answer:* Depending on the applicable small purchase threshold, the SFA could use any of the procurement methods, informal or formal. The SFA may choose to use the informal method if it knows of three producers of local carrots. The SFA could simply call these producers for quotes and award to the lowest, responsive and responsible bidder. Alternatively, the SFA may choose to use technical requirements, product specifications or evaluation criteria to target the local carrots. Since the product is unprocessed, the SFA may also choose to use geographic preference.

#### **Scenario Six**

An SFA works directly with a local grower to source fresh herbs. The value of the products is less than \$1,000. What are the SFA's options for purchasing the herbs?

*Answer:* No matter how small the purchase is all purchases made with funds from the non-profit food service account are subject to Federal procurement regulations. The SFA may choose to use any procurement method, but with a purchase this small, the micro-purchase or small purchase method may be the most practical. Remember, if using the micro-purchase method, the SFA must ensure the price is reasonable and that micro-purchases are equitably distributed among qualified suppliers. For the small purchase method, the SFA can gather quotes from all local suppliers or perhaps the local grower along with a distributor. If using the informal method, the SFA should award to the lowest price, responsive and responsible vendor. The SFA may also choose to use geographic preference.

#### **Scenario Seven**

An SFA wants to purchase beef from a neighboring county, but the school district is not able to process raw meat in their facilities. What are some options that the SFA could look into for purchasing local beef?

*Answer:* The SFA could purchase the beef and then procure the services of a processor. Alternatively, the SFA could solicit bids for the finished beef product it needs and include technical requirements or product specifications that target a processor that uses local suppliers. For example, the SFA may require that each case of ground beef be labeled with the farm of origin.

#### **Scenario Eight**

An SFA wants to serve plums as part of a "Harvest of the Month" program. The SFA issues a solicitation for local plums and specifies that the product be delivered within 48 hours of harvest. Only one grower submits a bid. What are the SFA's options?

*Answer:* The key is understanding why only one bid was received. Was the solicitation too restrictive? If so, it should be rewritten and reissued. However, if the district has done their due diligence in determining there

should have been adequate competition and actively attempted to solicit multiple bids, the district may award a contract to a sole bidder. In cases where the award is made to a sole bidder, the process must be documented.

### **Scenario Nine**

A school district is interested in purchasing grains grown in their state, but does not know where to start. How can the district learn more about and connect with grain farmers in their region?

*Answer:* The district might begin by connecting with their state department of agriculture and asking about grain producers. By using the USDA Farm to School Census, the SFA may be able to find nearby districts that are sourcing grains. In addition, the SFA may want to explore on-line matchmaker sites like marketmaker.

### **Scenario Ten**

An SFA has worked with the same dairy in their state for over five years. The district loves the product, but the contract will expire at the end of school year. What are some strategies the SFA might use to target the same dairy or similar operations in the state?

*Answer:* The point of competition is to allow any eligible vendor the ability compete. The SFA should write its solicitation and specifications as it would normally, possibly including product specifications, technical requirements or geographic preference that target local producers, but the SFA cannot include requirements that favor one particular dairy.

### **Scenario Eleven**

A school district is eager to begin sourcing local products, but does not have any scratch cooking facilities. How can the district start serving local foods?

*Answer:* One of the easiest ways districts start sourcing local foods is by buying fresh, whole fruit that needs little preparation. Milk is often local due to the perishable nature and high shipping costs. Additionally, distributors may carry ready to serve local items like bagged lettuce and cut fruit and vegetables. Additionally, local products are not always fresh or unprocessed. The school should work with their suppliers to find out if any of the products they are already receiving are local.

### **Scenario Twelve**

It is springtime and a school food service director is at the farmers' market shopping for her own family. She sees that one of the farmers has an amazing deal on cherries, which her district will be serving for a "Harvest of the Month" celebration in two weeks. She tries a sample and the cherries are delicious! How can the school food service director purchase these cherries (or cherries that are at least as cheap and delicious) for the harvest celebration? She will need about 1,000 lbs. of cherries, and her small purchase threshold is \$50,000.

*Answer:* The school district has several options. If the purchase falls under the applicable small purchase threshold, the district can gather quotes from several local cherry growers and award a contract to the lowest, responsive and responsible bidder. The district may also choose to use a formal procurement method and use some product specifications or technical requirements that target local cherries. For example, the district may specify that the cherries be delivered within 48 hours of harvest, as long as this does not restrict competition.

The school could also use an RFP and include evaluation factors such as ability to list the farm of origin or provide farm field trips. In any of these options, the district could also use geographic preference.

# HANDOUT: Local Procurement Step-by-Step

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## Starting the procurement process:

1. Identify the products and quantities you will be purchasing, and estimate the total cost of the purchase (forecasting).
2. Depending on the dollar amount of the purchase, determine whether to use a formal or informal procurement method.
3. Plan your procurement procedure, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and school district requirements.
4. Decide how you wish to define "local."
5. As relevant, determine the criteria and method of evaluation for how you will apply a geographic preference.
6. Where appropriate, incorporate these decisions into school district policy to guide food purchases.

## Putting together the procurement:

7. Clearly communicate your intent to purchase local products and explain how you define local. As relevant, apply a geographic preference to your solicitations.
8. Clearly define and communicate the evaluation criteria that will be used to select successful vendors, regardless of which method you use. (Price must be the primary factor.)
9. Identify vendor qualifications that meet your needs.
10. Write specifications to clearly identify the products you want, the level of processing you require and any other quality, customer service, or performance criteria.
11. State preferences and how they will be weighted in the evaluation process.
12. Develop and commit to a plan for reviewing and selecting the successful bid, proposal or quote.

## Implementing the procurement process:

13. Publicize the procurement opportunity to ensure adequate competition and maximize the likelihood of reaching qualified vendors who can supply food from your geographic preference area.
14. Fairly evaluate based on the vendor qualifications, specifications, and preferences in your procurement request, and award the contract.
15. Execute a contract that matches your specifications and preferences from the procurement request.
16. Manage the procurement. Monitor and keep documentation on service, product quality price, and compliance with the contract.

Adapted from the *A School's Guide to Purchasing Washington-Grown Food*, developed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Accessed April 2013. <http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Content/Documents/SchoolGuideFlowResGuideNoResources-1.pdf>

## HANDOUT: Using Geographic Preference in Four Steps

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This worksheet is meant to help you work with school districts to use geographic preference for purchasing local, unprocessed agricultural products. While you (or the district) may not be able to answer every question on this sheet, the prompts will help you think through the applications of the geographic preference option.

With a specific district and a product you know is available in that area in mind, have participants work through these questions with a partner.

### 1. Define local

- How has your school or district chosen to define “local” or “regional”?
- How did you establish this definition?

### 2. Determine whether the procurement is informal or formal

- What is the value of the purchase?
- What is the applicable small purchase threshold?
- If the purchase amount is over the small purchase threshold, will you use an RFP or IFB?

### 3. Decide how much preference to give

- How much more are you willing to pay for local?
- How many local vendors are there?
- What is the market price?

*Tip: Remember that the stronger the preference you give to local products, the more those products might cost you. Think carefully about how much preference you can afford to award. You may also consider using a Request for Information (RFI).*

### 4. Determine how the preference will be applied

- Outline how geographic preference will be applied:
  - Dollar value
  - Point system
  - Percentage
  - Other

*Tip: Check out the examples on the next page for ideas on how to apply geographic preference.*

## HANDOUT: Sample Geographic Preference Language

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### Example One: State Grown Definition of Local, Price Preference:

\_\_\_\_\_ School District seeks to serve \_\_\_\_\_ state-grown products to its students. We are currently seeking quotes for the following items for our [Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program or other special event or project] for the months of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

We hope to purchase produce items that are grown and packed or processed in \_\_\_\_\_ state, and will apply a 10% price preference to such products as we review the quotes.

### Example Two: Two-tiered, Price Preference:

The Public Schools Food Service Program desires to serve fresh, locally grown products to its students. To this end, the Food Services Department is seeking to develop a list of vendors that meet all procurement requirements from which quotes may be requested.

This district defines “locally grown products” eligible for this geographic preference at two levels. These levels are:

1. Grown in the counties of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Grown in \_\_\_\_\_ state.

As allowed under federal law, the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools will provide a price percentage preference during evaluation of quotes to “locally grown products” purchased for school food procurement as defined under this geographic preference.

The price percentage is as follows:

1. Grown in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ counties: 5%.
2. Grown in \_\_\_\_\_ state: 3%.

The price percentage preference means that for the purposes of comparison, prices for product grown in one of the three counties will be adjusted to a price 5% lower than the price quoted for the product by the vendor or 3% for product grown outside these counties and still within the state. The price percentage preference affects the quoted price only for awarding of the quote, not the actual price paid to the vendor.

### Example Three: One Point = One Penny

School District seeks to serve products from \_\_\_\_\_ county to its students. We are currently seeking quotes for our [Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program or other special event or project] for the months of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

We hope to purchase produce items that are grown and packed or processed in \_\_\_\_\_ county, and will apply ten preference points to any bidder able to supply product from \_\_\_\_\_ county. For this solicitation, ten preference points are equivalent to a 10 cent reduction in price for the purposes of evaluating the lowest bidder.

### Example Four: Percentage Preference for a Minimum Percentage Local

School District seeks to serve regionally grown produce from within 400 miles of county. We are currently seeking quotes for a variety of fruit and vegetable products. For the purposes of evaluating bids, respondents who can supply at least 60% of the requested items from within 400 miles of county will receive a 20% price reduction.

Adapted from the *A School's Guide to Purchasing Washington-Grown Food*, developed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Accessed April 2013. <http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Content/Documents/SchoolGuideFlowResGuideNoResources-1.pdf>

# HANDOUT: Federal Procurement Regulations Resources

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The federal procurement regulations are found in the Program and government-wide regulations at 7 CFR 210.21 and 2 CFR 200.318-.326, respectively, for all SFAs. In the Program regulations, the procurement standards include: general requirements requiring school food authorities to have written procurement procedures and a code of conduct, prohibited expenditures, the Buy American provision, required contract provisions when cost-reimbursable contracts including contracts with cost-reimbursable provisions, and the geographic preference option. In the government-wide regulations, the procurement standards include: general procurement standards, competition, procurement methods, small, minority, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus firms, contract cost and price, and required contract provisions.

The regulations lay out the basic procurement requirements that school food authorities must comply with for the procurement of food, and other goods and services, when using school food service funds. Program-specific rules can be found in the regulations governing each federal nutrition program.

Having a strong understanding of these regulations is key to being able to procure goods and services for the Child Nutrition Programs with confidence that SFAs are in compliance and, equally important, that they are getting the best products at the best prices.

In general, school food authorities are expected to comply with all requirements as the school food authority alone must be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgment, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues concerning procurements for the Child Nutrition Programs.

## Program Regulations for Procurement

- 7 CFR 210.21 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol4/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol4-sec210-21.xml>) (*National School Lunch Program*)
- 7 CFR 220.16 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title7-vol4/xml/CFR-2011-title7-vol4-sec220-16.xml>) (*School Breakfast Program*)
- 7 CFR 225.17 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title7-vol4/xml/CFR-2011-title7-vol4-sec225-17.xml>) (*Summer Food Service Program*)
- 7 CFR 226.22 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-1999-title7-vol4/xml/CFR-1999-title7-vol4-sec226-22.xml>) (*Child and Adult Care Food Program*)

# HANDOUT: Procurement Resources

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## Procurement Regulations

### Uniform Administrative Requirements for Procurement

- 2 CFR 200 (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/xml/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200.xml>)(State and local governments)

### Program Regulations for Procurement

- [7 CFR 210.21](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol4/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol4-sec210-21.xml) (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol4/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol4-sec210-21.xml>) (National School Lunch Program)

## General Procurement Resources

- [State Agency Guidance on Procurement](http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?q=cEIEPEzNQ) (<http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?q=cEIEPEzNQ>), from FNS in partnership with the Institute of Child Nutrition – An on-line procurement training geared towards state agencies that focuses on federal procurement requirements.
- [Procurement in the 21st Century](http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20130820034348.pdf) (<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20130820034348.pdf>), from the Institute of Child Nutrition – Covers all the basics of school nutrition procurement and includes a section on local foods.
- [The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs>), from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service - A guide (updated to reflect the new meal patterns) meant to help schools determine how much food to purchase and how to prepare it.
- [Fruits and Vegetables Galore](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fruits-vegetables-galore-helping-kids-eat-more) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fruits-vegetables-galore-helping-kids-eat-more>), from the Food and Nutrition Service – Contains helpful fact sheets on fruit and vegetable forms, sizes, grades, and varieties.

## Geographic Preference Option and Local Procurement Guidance

- [Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Guide](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_Procuring_Local_Foods_Child_Nutrition_Prog_Guide.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S\\_Procuring\\_Local\\_Foods\\_Child\\_Nutrition\\_Prog\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_Procuring_Local_Foods_Child_Nutrition_Prog_Guide.pdf)), from FNS – Covers procurement basics, defining local, where to find local products, and the variety of ways schools can purchase locally in accordance with regulations. Throughout the guide, examples illustrate the many mechanisms available for districts to procure local food. A comprehensive resource list, along with a few sample solicitations, is available in the appendices.
- [Final Rule: Geographic Preference Option](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/2011-04-22.pdf) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/2011-04-22.pdf>), from FNS – The final rule, published in the Federal Register, includes a summary, background, and final regulatory language, by program, for the geographic preference option.
- [Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As Part I](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011_os.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011\\_os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011_os.pdf)), from FNS – A memo published in February 2011 addressing questions regarding application of the geographic preference option.
- [Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As Part II](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2013/SP03-2013os.pdf) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2013/SP03-2013os.pdf>), from FNS – A memo published in October 2012 addressing additional questions regarding application of the geographic preference option and other mechanisms for local procurement.

- [Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP01_CACFP%2001_SFSP01-2016os.pdf) ([https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP01\\_CACFP%2001\\_SFSP01-2016os.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP01_CACFP%2001_SFSP01-2016os.pdf)), from FNS – A memo published in October 2015, addressing questions related to purchasing local meat products and outlines the food safety requirements for purchasing and serving poultry, livestock, game, and eggs in child nutrition programs.
- [USDA Farm to School Fact Sheets](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fact-sheets) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fact-sheets>), from FNS – Topics include geographic preference, selling local food to schools and the USDA Farm to School Grant Program. Relevant fact sheets include:
  - [10 Facts About Local Food in Schools](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_10Facts_March2014.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S\\_10Facts\\_March2014.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_10Facts_March2014.pdf)) – Debunks a few myths about local items and offers a brief summary of the many ways schools can buy local products.
  - [Geographic Preference: What It Is and How to Use It](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_GeographicPreference_March2014.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S\\_GeographicPreference\\_March2014.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_GeographicPreference_March2014.pdf)) – Offers a summary of the geographic preference option and three examples of how to apply it.
  - [Selling Local Food to Schools : A Resource for Producers](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_SellingLocal_March2014.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S\\_SellingLocal\\_March2014.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_SellingLocal_March2014.pdf)) – Explains four ways producers can work with schools.
  - [USDA Foods: A Resource for Buying Local](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_BuyingLocal_March2014.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S\\_BuyingLocal\\_March2014.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_BuyingLocal_March2014.pdf)) – Describes four ways USDA Foods can help schools buy local foods.
  - [Using DoD Fresh to Buy Local Produce](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_DoDFresh_March2014.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S\\_DoDFresh\\_March2014.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_DoDFresh_March2014.pdf)) – Provides a summary of the DoD Fresh Program and how schools can work with DoD vendors to receive more local products.

## Local Purchasing Guidance from Other Organizations

- [A School's Guide to Purchasing Washington-Grown Food](http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Page/74/procurement-guide) (<http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Page/74/procurement-guide>), from the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network and Washington Environmental Council – This straightforward, clearly worded, resource-filled guide provides information on using the geographic preference option to source local foods in Washington State; however, much of the content is broadly applicable.
- [Geographic Preference Primer](http://www.schoolfoodfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/FOCUS_GP_Primer_July-2013.pdf) ([http://www.schoolfoodfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/FOCUS\\_GP\\_Primer\\_July-2013.pdf](http://www.schoolfoodfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/FOCUS_GP_Primer_July-2013.pdf)), from School Food FOCUS – This primer summarizes state and federal law and provides guidance for setting a preference that complies with both. It also provides step-by-step guidance on how a school district can implement a geographic preference policy starting with articulating the legal authority and rationale for buying local.

## Other Useful Resources

- [Procurement Questions Relevant to the Buy American Provision](https://www.fns.usda.gov/compliance-and-enforcement-buy-american-provision-nslp) (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/compliance-and-enforcement-buy-american-provision-nslp>), from FNS – A memo published in February 2016 outlines the Buy American requirements and recommendations for compliance and monitoring.

- [Market News](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/marketnews) (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/marketnews>), from the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) – Market News provides current, unbiased price and sales information. Reports include information on prices, volume and condition of farm products in specific markets.
- [Food Hubs: Building Stronger Infrastructure for Small and Mid-Size Producers Building Stronger Infrastructure for Small and Mid-Size Producers](http://www.ams.usda.gov/foodhubs) ([www.ams.usda.gov/foodhubs](http://www.ams.usda.gov/foodhubs)), from the Agricultural Marketing Service – This site houses a working list of food hubs around the country and the Regional Food Hub Resource Guide, which describes the concept, regional impacts and economic viability of food hubs.
- [School Garden Q&As](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP_32-2009_os.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP\\_32-2009\\_os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP_32-2009_os.pdf)), from FNS’s Child Nutrition Division – A memo published in July 2009 addressing questions regarding food safety in school gardens and purchasing products from and for school gardens.
- [Farm to School and School Garden Expenses](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP06-2015os.pdf) (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP06-2015os.pdf>), from FNS – Published in November 2014, this memo clarifies the flexibility schools have in spending funds on school garden and farm to school efforts.

# HANDOUT: Menu Planning Resources

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## Assessing Production and Seasonality

- [Census of Agriculture](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/index.php) (<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/index.php>), from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) – NASS surveys all U.S. farmers every five years and produces county profiles that detail agricultural production in every county. Think about using this data to find out what is produced in your area.
- [The Farm to School Census](https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/) (<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/>), from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service – The Census surveyed over 18,000 school districts about their farm to school efforts. Think about using this data to find out what districts nearby are sourcing locally.
- [Cooperative Extension](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/) (<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>), from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture – Cooperative Extension agents staff offices in each state and are experts in many agricultural topics, including local food systems. Most counties have an Extension office and these agents can help connect you with producers in your region.

## Seasonal Menu Tools and Examples

- [Current Menus](http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/current_menus) ([http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/current\\_menus](http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/current_menus)), from Minneapolis Public Schools – These beautiful menus and information-rich promotional pages show that local foods can be incorporated into delicious menus throughout the year, even as far north as Minneapolis.
- [Healthy Cycle Menus Booklet](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Idaho/NSLP%20Healthy%20menus%20Booklet%20Final.pdf) (<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Idaho/NSLP%20Healthy%20menus%20Booklet%20Final.pdf>), from the Idaho State Department of Education – Guidance on creating exceptional cycle menus that adhere to nutrition standards, including sample menus.
- [Menus that Move](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Food-and-Nutrition/Resources-and-Tools-for-Food-and-Nutrition/Menus-that-Move) (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Food-and-Nutrition/Resources-and-Tools-for-Food-and-Nutrition/Menus-that-Move>), from the Ohio Department of Education – Seasonal menus that meet USDA's new meal requirements.
- [The Lunchbox](http://www.thelunchbox.org/) (<http://www.thelunchbox.org/>), from the Food Family Farming Foundation – Recipes, tips, tools, and tutorials on incorporating healthful foods into school meals.

## Seasonality Chart Examples

- [Washington Grown Vegetable Seasonality Chart](http://agr.wa.gov/AgInWa/docs/SeasonalityChartHUSSCVegetablefinal.pdf) (<http://agr.wa.gov/AgInWa/docs/SeasonalityChartHUSSCVegetablefinal.pdf>), from the Washington State Department of Agriculture.
- [What's Growing Around Here?](http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/service_content/attachments/DCF2S%20seasonality%20chart%202013-web.pdf) ([http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/service\\_content/attachments/DCF2S%20seasonality%20chart%202013-web.pdf](http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/service_content/attachments/DCF2S%20seasonality%20chart%202013-web.pdf)), from the Office of the State Superintendent in the District of Columbia.
- [Pride from A\(pples\) to Z\(ucchini\)](http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/f2s/documents/HarvestChart.pdf) (<http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/f2s/documents/HarvestChart.pdf>), from the New York State Department of Agriculture.

## Integrating Local Foods

- [Pecks to Pounds](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Pecks_for_Pounds.pdf) ([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Pecks\\_for\\_Pounds.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Pecks_for_Pounds.pdf)), from the Maryland Department of Agriculture – Translates the typical farm measurements (pecks, bushels, crates, etc.) to pounds. This chart is useful for both farmers and school food service staff to communicate effectively with each other and enables school food service staff to convert farm measurements into serving sizes.
- [Great Trays™ Toolkit for School Foodservice](http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/health-and-nutrition/school-foodservice-training-and-resources/great-trays/menu-planning/) (<http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/health-and-nutrition/school-foodservice-training-and-resources/great-trays/menu-planning/>), from Great Trays™ partnership in Minnesota – A host of menu planning resources including worksheets, sample menus, and recipes.

## Menu Planning and Forecasting

- [The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/foodbuying-guide-child-nutrition-programs) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/foodbuying-guide-child-nutrition-programs>), from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service – A guide (updated to reflect the new meal patterns) meant to help SFAs determine how much food to purchase and how to prepare it.
- [Menu Planning Resources](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/menu-planning/menu-planning-tools) (<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/menu-planning/menu-planning-tools>), from the Food and Nutrition Service's Healthy Meals Resource System – A compilation of menu planning tools, fact sheets, guides, and more.
- [Kidchen Expedition](http://www.kidchenexpedition.com/) (<http://www.kidchenexpedition.com/>), from the Oklahoma Farm to School Program – Full of time and cost efficient, healthful, and local recipes that use Oklahoma-grown produce; recipes are relevant wherever similar foods are grown!

# Sample Evaluation Template 1

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Date | Location

*Note: Please be as candid and constructive with your responses as possible!*

## Content

Please circle your response to the statements listed below. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 4 scale. (1 = Strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)

1. Overall you were satisfied with the training. 1 2 3 4
2. You learned something new in the training. 1 2 3 4
3. The speakers were knowledgeable. 1 2 3 4
4. The material was presented clearly and in an engaging way. 1 2 3 4
5. The training was paced appropriately. 1 2 3 4
6. The procurement quiz was useful. 1 2 3 4
7. The informal procurement exercise was useful. 1 2 3 4
8. The formal procurement exercise was useful. 1 2 3 4
9. The geographic preference exercise was useful. 1 2 3 4
10. On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend this training to a colleague?  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Additional Feedback

11. What questions do you still have about local procurement?
  
12. Do you have other comments, concerns or questions?

## Sample Evaluation Template 2

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Date | Location

We're interested in receiving your feedback about our training to help schools purchase local foods for school meal programs. Please complete the short survey below.

1. As a result of this training/presentation, did you gain any new knowledge about purchasing local foods for school meal programs?

Yes

No

Please share any comments:

2. Do you feel more comfortable/better equipped to use federal funds to purchase local foods for school meal programs?

Yes

No

Please share any comments:

3. Which exercises or activities within the training/presentation did you find most useful?

The informal procurement activity

The formal procurement activity

The geographic preference activity

Discussion of various hypothetical scenarios

Other

Please share any comments:

4. Was the presenter knowledgeable, engaging and pacing appropriately?

Yes

No

Please share any comments:

5. Would you recommend this training/presentation to a colleague?

- Yes
- No

Please share any comments:

6. Do you have any additional questions that were *not* answered by the presenter about purchasing local foods for school meal programs?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, please list your questions?

7. What topics related to purchasing local foods for school meal programs would you like additional training on? (*Check all that apply*)

- Finding local producers/farmers
- Food safety regulations
- Menu planning using local foods
- Promotions and outreach
- Developing school gardens
- Other

Please share any comments:

*Thank you for completing this survey.  
Please return this survey to [fill in the blank].*



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