

CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program

Statute

Sec. 6. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2021)

(a) The Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the advisory committee described in subsection (c) of this section, shall administer the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program. Such program shall assist local and regional boards of education to develop farm-to-school programs that will increase the availability of local foods in child nutrition programs, allow educators to use hands-on educational techniques to teach students about nutrition and farm-to-school connections, sustain relationships with local farmers and producers, enrich the educational experience of students, improve the health of children in the state and enhance the state's economy.

(b) A local or regional board of education, regional educational service center, cooperative arrangement pursuant to section 10-158a of the general statutes, child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes, as such terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, or any organization or entity administering or assisting in the development of a farm-to-school program, may apply, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, for a grant under this section.

Such grant shall be used to develop or implement a school to-farm program, which may include

(1) the purchase of equipment, resources or materials, including, but not limited to, local food products, gardening supplies, field trips to farms, gleaning on farms and stipends to visiting farmers,

(2) the provision of professional development and skills training for educators, school nutrition professionals, parents, caregivers, child care providers, and employees and volunteers of organizations administering or assisting in the development and implementation of farm-to-school programs, and

(3) piloting new purchasing systems and programs.

(c) The department shall convene an advisory committee to assist in sHB6618 File No. 648 sHB6618 / File No. 648 13 the administration of the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program. The advisory committee shall consist of the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, and individuals representing stakeholder groups that reflect the demographic and geographic diversity of the state, selected by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The advisory committee shall (1) assist the department in reviewing applications and awarding grants under this section, and (2) provide technical assistance to grant recipients in the development and implementation of farm-to-school programs.

(d) In awarding grants under this section, the department shall (1) give priority to applicants (A) located in alliance districts, as defined in section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or who are providers of school readiness programs, as defined in section 10-16p of the general statutes, and (B) who demonstrate broad commitment from school administrators, school nutrition professionals, educators and community stakeholders, and (2) not award a grant that is in an amount greater than ten per cent of the total amount available for the fiscal year.

(e) The department may accept gifts, grants and donations, including in-kind donations, for the administration of the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program and to implement the provisions of this section.

(f) Not later than January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit a report on the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, an accounting of the funds appropriated and received by the department for the program, descriptions of each grant awarded under the program and how such grant was expended by the recipient, and an evaluation of the program and the success of local farm-to-school programs that have received grant awards under this section.