



Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Grant

The CTG4CTK Grant shall, assist schools, school districts, childcare centers and homes, and organizations 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.

FY 2025 Grant Application Guidelines

Ned Lamont, Governor

Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
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CTGrown.gov

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<u>Program</u>	<u>Tracks Eligible</u>	<u>Application Open Date</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Application Link</u> <small>(links are cAsE sEnSITive)</small>
Microgrant Application	1, 2, 3, 4	August 21, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	September 18, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/gVi35
Full Grant [ECE Providers]	4	September 25, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	October 25, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/hjupQ
Full Grant [Schools]	1, 2	September 25, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	November 8, 2024 12:00pm/ Noon	shorturl.at/3ZT4O

Changes and Updates for FY 2025

All updates noted below are highlighted in **YELLOW** for easy acknowledgement throughout this guidance document.

1. The application deadline for each grant track is unique. There are three separate application deadlines:
 - Microgrant Application [Tracks 1, 2, 3, & 4]: September 18, 2024, 12:00pm | Noon
 - Full Grant Application [Track 4]: October 25, 2024, 12:00 pm | Noon
 - Full Grant Application [Tracks 1 & 2]: November 8, 2024, 12:00pm | Noon
2. Applications must be received by 12:00pm/Noon. Applications received after 12:00pm will not be considered.
3. Grant maximum award amount has increased:
 - Applicants in Tracks 1 & 2 may apply for up to \$75,000.00 in funds.
4. Salary and Fringe cannot exceed 50% of the requested funds:
 - Combined salary and fringe expenses paid to execute and administer the project cannot exceed 50% of grant funds or up to a maximum of \$25,000.
5. Project duration changes:
 - Longer project duration for Full Grant Applications \$50,000 and over (Tracks 1 & 2) will have a 24-month timeframe.
 - Shorter project duration for Microgrants (all Tracks) will have a 12-month timeframe.
6. The cost per student will be a weighted evaluation factor:
 - Consideration shall be given to the cost per student and be a factor in the competitiveness of an application.
7. Clarification of eligible entities:
 - Private schools and institutions are eligible to apply for the grant.
8. Signed letters of support:
 - Letters of support must be signed by author and on organizational letterhead to be considered.
9. Uploading Project Narratives to the online grant portal is no longer necessary:
 - The online portal has been modified to remove the requirement for applicants to upload the Project Narrative. This will instead be filled out directly on the online grant portal form. Please follow all guidelines as outlined on the online application form.

Important Dates

<u>Program</u>	<u>Tracks Eligible</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Application Link</u> (links are cAsE sEnSITIVe)
Microgrant Application Released	1, 2, 3, 4	August 21, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/gVi35
Webinar and Q&A Session (Recorded and posted)	1, 2, 3, 4	Monday, August 26, 2024, 2:00-3:30 PM	Grant Webpage
Microgrant Application Deadline	1, 2, 3, 4	September 18, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/gVi35
Full Grant [ECE Providers] Application Released	4	September 20, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/hjupQ
Full Grant [Schools] Application Released	1, 2	September 20, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/3ZT4O
Full Grant [ECE Providers] Application Deadline	4	October 25, 2024 12:00pm/Noon	shorturl.at/hjupQ
Full Grant [Schools] Application Deadline	1, 2	November 8, 2024 12:00pm/ Noon	shorturl.at/3ZT4O

After the webinar on August 26, virtual office hours, in addition to grant coaching drop-in sessions will be held. Available times will be announced at the grant webinar and posted on the webpage.

All applications must be submitted by 12:00pm noon.

For more information, please visit the agency's [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant webpage](#).

Persons with questions may contact the Program Coordinator, Hannah Carty, at Hannah.Carty@ct.gov or 860-471-1620.

Grant Description

The Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Grant Program, hereafter referred to as the CTG4CTK Grant, provides funds to Connecticut local or regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, cooperative arrangements 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.

The CT Department of Agriculture (DoAg) has approximately \$815,000 in funds to award for CT Grown for CT Kids Grant projects in FY 2025. Of this total, we anticipate \$100,000 will be available towards Microgrant Applications [Tracks 1, 2, 3, & 4] and \$715,000 will be available towards Full Grant Applications in Tracks 1, 2, & 4.

Grant Purpose

The CTG4CTK Grant shall, “assist schools, school districts, childcare centers and homes, and organizations 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.”

These funds are intended to provide a combination of resources to build capacity for long-term Farm to School Programs in schools, school districts, childcare centers, and homes.

WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?

[According to the USDA](#), Farm to School is “a Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) change and direct education intervention designed to improve access to local foods in **Pre-K to 12th grade school settings** and provides education opportunities that encourage healthy eating behaviors.”

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites.

Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons, and farm field trips. Farm to school empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.

Awarding Priorities

1. To fund applicants 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](#).
2. To fund applicants who demonstrate a broad commitment from school administrators, school nutrition professionals, educators, and community stakeholders.
 - a. In the grant narrative, applicants are requested to both describe the support that they have for the project and detail how input was gathered to formulate the idea. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to submit up to three signed letters of support. A template is provided on the [grant webpage](#) under documents/forms.
 - i. Letters of support must be signed by author and on organizational letterhead to be considered.
3. To fund applicants whose projects are fiscally responsible and can demonstrate reasonable costs for assisting the greatest number of students.
 - a. Applicants who serve ten (10) or few students annually are encouraged to apply for a Microgrant in order to submit a competitive application.

For more information about how these priorities impact your application, please refer to the scoring rubric in [Appendix B: Evaluation Criteria and Process](#).

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply:

1. Local or regional boards of education;
2. Regional education service centers;
3. Private schools or institutions;
4. A cooperative arrangement pursuant to section 10-158a of the general statutes;
5. Childcare centers, group childcare homes and family childcare homes as such terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes; or
6. Any organization or entity, including CT farmers, administering or assisting in the development of a farm to school program.

Please note: Entities who have received CTG4CTK funds for the past two funding rounds are ineligible to apply this fiscal year. A one-round/year break in funding is required.

Expenses & Payments

The maximum amount awarded to any applicant through the Microgrant application (Tracks 1, 2, 3, & 4) shall not exceed \$5,000.

The maximum amount awarded to any applicant through the CTG4CTK Grant shall not exceed \$75,000 in Tracks 1, 2, & 4.

DoAg reserves the right to offer an amount less than the award requested.

There is no match required for this grant program.

Combined salary and fringe expenses paid to execute and administer the project cannot exceed 50% of grant funds up to a maximum allocation of \$25,000.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The following expenses are ineligible and will not be funded for all Tracks/awards:

- Any expense incurred prior to contract execution
- Land acquisition/mortgages
- Cost of borrowing (points and other fees)
- Expenses related to establishing a new organization/business
- Any portion of expense for which the applicant pays a contractor in merchandise or service in lieu of cash
- Tuition/tuition reimbursement or career-related/scholarship funds
- Routine business expenses (utilities, office supplies, etc.)
- Legal expenses related to litigation
- Indirect or contingency costs of any percentage
- Any expense related to lobbying

Payment(s) will be made to applicants using the following payment schedule for all tracks/awards:

- Grantee may request up to 50% of grant funds as an advance upon full contract execution.
- Remaining grant funds will be reimbursed after project completion and acceptance by DoAg of the final report.

Grant Track Applications & Descriptions

Each applicant may submit only one application.

MICROGRANT APPLICATION

For applicants requesting funds in the amount of less than \$5,000 for their project.

Microgrant projects have a minimum project timeframe of six months and up to 12-months to complete.

- Microgrants have a simplified application, contract, and reporting requirements. Applicants may be required to provide documentation about the fiscal structure of the organization.
 - The deadline for Microgrant Applications is September 18, 2024, at 12:00 noon.

FULL GRANT APPLICATION

For applicants requesting funds in excess of \$5,000 but less than \$75,000 for their project.

Full Grant projects have a minimum project timeframe of twelve (12) months and up to 24-months to complete depending on award amount.

- Full Grants have more significant application, contract, and reporting requirements.
 - Applicants may be required to provide documentation about the fiscal structure of the organization.
- Project Timeframes:
 - Track 4: Twelve (12) to Eighteen (18) month projects up to \$50,000.
 - Tracks 1 & 2: Twelve (12) to Twenty-four (24) month projects up to \$75,000.
- The deadlines for Full Grant Applications are:
 - Track 4: October 25, 2024, at 12:00 noon.
 - Tracks 1 & 2: November 8, 2024, at 12:00 noon.

LIST OF TRACKS AVAILABLE

- **Track 1:** Farm to School (K-12) Local Procurement Assistance Grant
- **Track 2:** Farm to School (K-12) Experiential Learning Grant
- **Track 3:** Producer Capacity Building Grant
- **Track 4:** Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grant

If you have any questions about a project qualifying for these funds or which category to apply under, please contact the Program Coordinator at CT Department of Agriculture.

TRACK DESCRIPTIONS AND GUIDE

Track 1: Connecticut Farm to School (K-12) Local Procurement Assistance Grant

Purpose: Incorporation of engaging educational and marketing activities to educate students about where food comes from and to increase exposure to agriculture. Many resources can be found on the [Put Local on your Tray website](#). Additionally, we highly encourage applications focused on equipment, training, and processing that make buying and incorporating local products more feasible.

Additionally, we highly encourage applications focused on equipment, training, and processing that make buying and incorporating local products more feasible.

Award Amounts: Up to \$5,000 for **Microgrant awards**, and between \$5,000 and \$75,000 for **Full Grant awards**. Please review the Important Dates section (page 4) to be aware of the various application deadlines.

Project Examples (projects can incorporate multiple components; you are not limited to those listed):

- Purchasing equipment that will enable the applicant to process and store produce during the height of the growing season for use during the school year such as a blast chiller, industrial chest freezer, vegetable slicing equipment, etc.

- Professional development and skills training for food service staff in how to process and prepare fresh food.
- Creation of regional producer trainings, technical assistance or the creation/expansion of aggregation groups for selling to schools.
- Activities focused on increasing awareness and education about CT Grown farm products such as taste tests for sustained programming and local/regional food purchases in school meals.

Schools looking to purchase local or regional food for school meals should pursue the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program funding through the [CT Department of Education](#) or the [CT Department of Agriculture](#).

Eligible Applicants: Schools, school districts, and boards of education.

Track 2: Connecticut Farm to School Experiential Learning Grant

Purpose: This grant track is for the development and/or implementation of Farm to School experiential learning opportunities for students and/or educators such as school gardens, agriculture education, and professional development for educators.

Award Amounts: Up to \$5,000 for **Microgrant awards**, and between \$5,000 and \$75,000 for **Full Grant awards**. Please review the Important Dates section (page 4) to be aware of the various application deadlines.

Project Examples (projects can incorporate multiple components; you are not limited to those listed):

- Materials and installation for a school garden. This could include, but is not limited to, materials for raised bed construction (CT Grown lumber and CT Grown compost preferred), purchase of a greenhouse or tower gardens for multiple classrooms.
- Curriculum design and/or implementation of lessons to integrate a school garden into classroom learning.
- Agricultural education and experiences such as farm field trips, gleaning on farms, stipends to bring a farmer to the classroom.
- Professional development for educators to create/integrate farm to school education within existing curriculum.
- Hands on culinary and nutrition education for students using CT Grown products.
 - No more than 10% of the budget should be spent on local food purchases of farm products, unless it is being used as matching funds for the [CT Local Food for Schools Incentive Program](#).

Eligible Applicants: Schools, school districts and boards of education. Producers who want to implement farm education programs should partner with a school district to apply under this category.

Track 3: Connecticut Producer Capacity Building Grant

Purpose: This grant category provides financial resources to Connecticut producers for projects and training that must be directly associated with increasing farm sales to schools. *Please note, this is a microgrant only category (up to \$5,000 awards).*

Producers, producer cooperatives, and farm aggregators should apply under this track. K-12 and Early Childcare Providers should not apply under this category.

Award Amounts: \$5,000 Microgrant awards. For larger awards for farmers, please consider [DoAg's other grant opportunities for farmers.](#)

Project Examples (projects can incorporate multiple components; you are not limited to those listed):

- Equipment costs for harvest, wash and pack, sorting, and/or transportation of farm products to schools and ECE buyers.
 - Infrastructure such as high tunnels and/or storage to allow for season extension.
 - Required trainings and certifications (such as food safety) needed to sell to local schools.
- *Note please inquire with your local school district about their requirements.

Eligible Applicants: CT farmers

Track 4: Connecticut Farm to Early Childcare and Education (ECE) Grant

Purpose: Early Childcare Education (ECE) is a critical component of farm to school, yet many operate very differently from K-12 education, thus we have created a separate track for all ECE providers and networks to apply. Applicants under this category will only be evaluated against each other.

***Award Amounts:* Up to \$5,000 for **Microgrant awards**, and between \$5,000 and \$50,000 for **Full Grant awards**. Please review the Important Dates section (page 4) to be aware of the various application deadlines.**

Project Examples (projects can incorporate multiple components; you are not limited to those listed):

- Purchase of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares for students and families.
- Purchase of CT Grown farm products for integration into student snacks/meals with clear educational farm and/or nutrition connection.
- Purchase and installation of raised garden beds or indoor growing systems/container gardens, tools, and equipment for experiential learning.
- Development/expansion of agriculture curriculum for students.
- Establishing and expanding Farm to ECE Networks.
- Professional Development Trainings for staff.
- Family engagement activities such as the creation of recipe books, cooking classes and/or take-home taste tests.
- Farm field trip and farmer visit to school(s).

Eligible Applicants: ECE providers and ECE networks should apply under this track.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

Microgrant projects **must be completed between six (6) months and twelve (12) months** of contract execution.

Full Grant projects **must be completed within eighteen (18) or twenty-four (24) months** of contract execution depending on award amount.

Contract and project extensions will not be allowed.

Applicants of awarded projects will be responsible for the following:

1. Signing an agreement with the State of Connecticut
2. Providing a Certificate of Insurance listing the state as an additional insured on the grantee's liability insurance policy
3. Completing the project within the contractual timeframe
4. Submitting a final project report including a sustainability plan in the required format per the executed contract
5. Submitting a final financial report itemizing paid/actual expenses. Copies of invoices and proof of payment must be submitted with the payment request at the conclusion of the project to be eligible for reimbursement.
6. Agreeing to a site inspection once the project is complete and prior to final payment being released (if applicable)
7. Other requirements as outlined in the State of Connecticut agreement

Grantees will receive additional training on agreement requirements once agreements are distributed for signature.

In addition, each awardee will attend at least one meeting with other grantees during the duration of the project for networking and resource sharing.

Application Requirements

For all grant requests

1. Completion of the application through DoAg's online grant portal.
2. *(Optional)* Up to three letters of support demonstrating that there is support for this effort from applicable stakeholders such as school administration, school nutrition professionals, educators, producers, and community stakeholders. A template is available for download from the [grant webpage](#) and then uploaded to your application. **Letters of support must be signed by author and on organizational letterhead for consideration in the application.**
3. Full Grant applications must include the Budget form which can be found on DoAg's online grant portal.
4. If applicable, estimates/quotes for services and infrastructure uploaded to your application.

5. Any additional conceptual drawings, stories, videos the applicant would like to share related to the project can be uploaded to your application in DoAg's online grant portal.
6. If you have not contracted with the State of Connecticut in the last five years, you will need to submit the W9, Vendor form, and Direct Deposit form which are linked in the online grant application portal and must be uploaded to your application.
 - a. K-12 public schools are already registered in the state payment system and are not required to complete this.
 - b. Producers, non-profits, and ECE's who are unsure may inquire with the Project Coordinator as to status as an established vendor with the state.

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- I'm a producer/farmer. What grant track would I be eligible to apply under?
 - You would be eligible to apply for Track 3 and be limited to a Microgrant of \$5,000 or less. If you apply in conjunction with a school district, you may apply for Track 2.
- I'm a school district, regional board of education, private school, or other entity (not farmer/producer). What grant track would I be eligible to apply under?
 - You would be eligible to apply for Tracks 1 and 2 and may apply for either a Microgrant (\$5,000 or less) or a Full Grant (\$5,000.01-\$75,000).
- I'm an Early childcare educator or provider. What grant track would I be eligible to apply under?
 - You would be eligible to apply for Track 4 and may apply for either a Microgrant (\$5,000 or less) or a Full Grant (\$5,000-\$50,000).
- How much money may I apply for?
 - Microgrant applicants may apply for up to \$5,000, and their programs must run for a minimum of six (6) months to a maximum of twelve (12) months.
 - TIP: This would be a great opportunity for a teacher looking to do a project within the current school year.
 - Full Grant applicants may apply as followed:
 - Early childcare educators may apply for up to \$50,000, and their programs must run for a minimum of twelve (12) months to a maximum of eighteen (18) months.
 - Schools and school programs may apply for up to \$75,000, and their programs must run for a minimum of twelve (12) months to a maximum of twenty-four (24) months.
- How long could it take to complete the application process?
 - Microgrant Applications have a simplified process and could take approximately 1-2 hours to complete, provided you have a clear understanding of what you are requesting.
 - Full Grant applications will likely require 2-6 hours to complete as you will need to prepare a budget, answer questions in more length, and provide supplemental documentation including quotes or estimates.
- Who should letters of support be from?
 - While not required, letters of support should be from project partners or organizations who will be apart of your project. The letters can also be from beneficiaries of your proposed project showing a need for the project. If you are planning to purchase from a specific farm, a letter of support from that farm, is recommended as well.
- For more questions asked throughout the grant process, please visit: shorturl.at/DJkvk

Appendix B: Evaluation Criteria and Process

The CTG4CTK is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as outlined above which are submitted on time, will be evaluated. The evaluation will be weighted heavily on the project impact and work plan described in the grant narrative. Applications will be evaluated by an advisory team after an administrative review by DoAg. Please see Appendix B for the scoring rubric.

SCORING RUBRICS

Microgrant Scoring Rubric

Possible 60 pts

1. Is the location of where the project will take place in an Alliance District or a school which provides a School Readiness Program? (5 pts and a yes/no question)
2. Introduction (up to 10 points)
 - a. Does the application clearly identify who the audience served is and who will benefit from the project? (0-5pts)
 - b. Does the applicant demonstrate sufficient readiness to undertake the project? (0-5pts)
3. Project Workplan (up to 10 points)
 - a. 1. Does the project clearly identify what it will accomplish and how? (0-5pts)
 - b. Is the timeline reasonable to accomplish the proposed project? (0-5 pts)
4. Project Impact (up to 10 points)
 - a. Does the project clearly explain how it will contribute to the creation/furthering of a Farm to School program? (0-10 points)
5. Demonstration of Broad Support and Commitment (up to 10 points)
 - a. Does the application demonstrate that there is broad support for the project and/or detail how input was gathered to formulate the idea? (0-10 points)
6. Project Budget (up to 15 points)
 - a. Is the submitted budget reasonable and cost effective to accomplish the project?
Consider the cost per student, does the project described maximize the benefits of the dollars spent? (0-10 points)
 - b. Does the project described provide a measurable and necessary impact to its community? (0-5 points)

Full Grant Scoring Rubric

Possible 120 pts

1. Is the location of where project will take place in an Alliance District or a school which provides a School Readiness Program? (10 pts and a yes/no question)
2. Introduction (up to 15 points)
 - a. Does the application clearly identify the audience served and who will benefit from the project? (0-10pts)
 - b. Does the applicant demonstrate sufficient readiness to undertake the project? (0-5pts)

3. Project Explanation (up to 20 points)
 - a. Does the project clearly explain how it will contribute to the creation/furthering of a Farm to School program? (0-10 points)
 - b. Does the project clearly identify what it will accomplish and how? (0-10 pts)
4. Project Outcome and Impact (up to 20 points)
 - a. Has a quantifiable outcome(s) been identified as a result of the project? (0-10 points)
 - b. Does the application explain how project outcome(s) will be evaluated? (0-10 points)
5. Project Workplan and Budget (up to 30 points)
 - a. Is the timeline reasonable to accomplish the proposed project? (0-5 points)
 - b. Do the tasks encompass the entirety of the project? Is there anything missing/forgotten? (0-5 points)
 - c. Is the submitted budget reasonable and cost efficient to accomplish the project? (0-5 points)
 - d. How well does the proposal explain each identified cost? (0-5 points)
 - e. Consider the cost per student, does the project described maximize the benefits of the dollars spent? (0-10 points)
6. Demonstration of Broad Support and Commitment (up to 15 points)
 - a. Does the application demonstrate that there is broad support for the project and/or detail how input was gathered to formulate the idea? (0-15 points)
 - i. *Accomplished through review of narrative and signed letters of support
7. Project Sustainability Plan (up to 10 points)
 - a. Does the application state how this project could contribute to the longevity of a Farm to School Program and outline steps that could be taken beyond the grant? (0-10 points)

Appendix C: Narrative Forms

DoAg has eliminated the upload process for narratives in this grant program and instead asks that you submit the information directly into the online grant portal. For those more comfortable developing the project application in a Word document, we have provided the following links to narrative forms. You **MUST** copy and paste this information into the agency online application form to be considered. We will **NOT** review narrative information submitted as an attachment.

Please note the links below are cAsE sEnSiTiVe. You may download the forms directly from the link below.

MICROGRANT NARRATIVE FORM

shorturl.at/T2mx4

FULL GRANT NARRATIVE FORM

shorturl.at/hNSLy

Appendix D: Letter of Support Template

[On Letterhead if applicable]

Dear Commissioner Hurlburt,

Approx. 3-5 sentences describing how you are connected to the school and why you are supportive of farm to school initiatives.

Approx. 2-4 sentence describing what you think the impact of this project will be and why applicant is ready to undertake it.

If applicable, please include any details of your involvement with the project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Printed Name

Title (e.g., Executive Director)

Address and telephone number if that information is not already on the letterhead