

**Connecticut State Department of Education
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education**

Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

**Request for Proposal (RFP)
Chefs to Schools**

Application Due Date: February 5, 2025

**Published: January 8, 2025
RFP #849**



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The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

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Chefs to Schools General Information

I. Purpose

Section 6 of Public Act No. 23-167 (“An Act Concerning Transparency in Education”), and amended in Public Act No. 23-167, directs the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to administer a wholesome school meals pilot program (hereinafter referred to as “Chefs to Schools”) that awards grants to Alliance Districts, as defined in Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-262u, for the purpose of embedding professional chefs to assist with school meal programs (See Appendix D).

The purpose is to address five (5) key areas including:

- build the capacity of food service staff;
- improve school meal quality;
- increase diner satisfaction;
- streamline operations; and
- establish a financially viable school meal program.

II. Eligible Applicants

The CSDE will award these grants through a competitive RFP process to up to five (5) Alliance Districts. All Alliance Districts are eligible to apply.

III. Grant Duration and Funding

The CSDE will award up to five (5) selected Alliance Districts grants totaling each \$150,000 yearly award to each Alliance District for three (3) school years (2025, 2026 and 2027). Each \$150,000 of yearly awarded allotment must be spent by June 30 of each fiscal year or it will expire, and funds may not be carried forward. Unspent funds must be returned to the CSDE following the end of each fiscal year.

IV. Evaluation Consideration

The CSDE will convene a panel to review all completed applications received by the due date and time. During the evaluation and selection process the CSDE will consider the following areas of need within an Alliance District for the placement of a professional chef:

1. assisting school meal programs in building the capacity of food service staff;
2. improving the quality of school meals;
3. increasing diner satisfaction;
4. streamlining operations; and
5. establishing a financially viable school meal program.

Additional considerations will include how the application:

1. describes the rationale and need for this funding;
2. describes the anticipated timeline for implementation; and
3. describes how the project will promote equitable outcomes.

V. Application Deadline

Proposals must be received by 5:00 PM Eastern time February 5, 2025.

Submit responses to this RFP only electronically to Sean Fogarty at Sean.Fogarty@ct.gov.
Completed RFPs must be e-mailed with the subject line: **Chefs to Schools RFP**, to:

Sean Fogarty, Grants & Contracts Specialist
Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
Sean.Fogarty@ct.gov

Application Requirements

VI. Obligations of Grantees

All applicants are hereby notified that the grant to be awarded is subject to contract compliance requirements as set forth in C.G.S. §§ 4a-60 and §§ 4a-60a and §§ 46a-68j-21 et seq. of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (R.C.S.A).

VII. Data Collection and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to maintain data that track services, activities, goals, and participant information. Program data include, but are not limited to, details of activities offered such as start and end dates, program location(s) and type of activity. Participant data include, but are not limited to, demographics, program attendance, completion and information collected from participant surveys.

VIII. Grant Award Decisions and Disposition of Proposals

The CSDE reserves the right to award in part, to reject proposals in entirety or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities, or omissions if, in its judgment, the best interest of the state would be served. After receiving grant applications, the CSDE reserves the right not to award all funds.

All applicants (awarded and not awarded) will be notified regarding the outcome of the proposal review process. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs will initiate a grant award letter. The level of funding and effective dates of the projects will be set forth in the notification of the grant award. The CSDE will retain all proposals submitted and such proposals will become part of the public domain.

The CSDE may, after the award notification, withhold funds and/or rescind funds if the required reporting documentation has not been submitted according to established reporting requirements.

The Scoring Rubric for Chefs to Schools (Appendix A) includes a breakdown of how applications will be scored for your reference.

IX. Management Control of the Program and Grant Consultation Role of State Department of Education Personnel

The grantee must have complete management control of this grant and the associated funding. While the CSDE staff may be consulted for their expertise, they will not be directly responsible for or involved in the expenditure and payment of funds obligated by the grantee.

X. Freedom of Information Act

All of the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to this RFP is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Sections 1-200 to 1-242 of the C.G.S, inclusive. The FOIA declares that except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in the statute) are public records and every person has the right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records.

XI. Proposal Guidelines Cover Page

Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

This section includes guidelines and requirements for developing a proposal.

Cover Page and Authorization

The cover page must contain all the required information. A template for the cover page is provided below.

Chefs to Schools Cover Page
Organization: (Organization name and address)
Lead Applicant Contact Person: (Name, phone, and e-mail)
Authorization: <i>The undersigned authorized chief administrative official submits this proposal on behalf of the applicant agency, attests to the appropriateness and accuracy of the information contained herein, and certifies that this proposal will comply with all relevant requirements of the state and federal laws and regulations.</i> <i>In addition, funds obtained through this source will be used solely to support the purpose, goals and objectives as stated herein. The following signature is required:</i> Superintendent- Signature (Chief Administrative Official): _____ Name (typed): _____ Date: _____

XII. Proposal

**RFP # 849
Chefs to Schools**

Chefs to Schools Proposal

Submit one proposal

Applicant Alliance District

Name of District: _____ **Sponsor Agreement Number:** _____

UEI Number: _____

Address: _____

Primary Contact Person

Name: _____

Phone Number of Contact Person: _____

E-mail Address of Contact Person: _____

Secondary Contact Person

Name: _____

Phone Number of Contact Person: _____

E-mail Address of Contact Person: _____

XIII. Proposal Questions

Chefs to Schools

Please address how the placement of a professional chef in your district will help to meet the key criteria below.

Please provide the following information:

1. describe the rationale and need for this funding.
2. describe your anticipated timeline for implementation.
3. describe how your project will promote equitable outcomes.
4. describe your current population to be served.

Please address how the placement of a professional chef will support:

- assisting school meal programs in building the capacity of food service staff;
 - improving the quality of school meals;
 - increasing diner satisfaction;
 - streamlining operations; and
 - establishing a financially viable school meal program.
-

Appendix A

Scoring Rubric for Summer Chefs to Schools

A. Need for the Project (max. 27 points)	Exemplary	Adequate	Marginal	Inadequate
	(Well-conceived and thoroughly developed)	(Clear and Complete)	(Requires additional clarification)	(Information not provided)
1. Introduction and Rationale: Provided a rationale to describe the need for this funding for the Alliance District.	3	2	1	0
2. Provided a project description which includes details on how the project will assist the district build the capacity of food service staff.	3	2	1	0
3. Provided the project details on how funding would improve the quality of school meals with desired outcomes and how these outcomes will be tracked and documented.	3	2	1	0
4. Provided information on how the funding opportunity will increase diner satisfaction, including how the district will track and document this information within the student body to achieve a positive outcome including projected outcome benchmarks.	3	2	1	0
5. Provided information on how the funding opportunity will streamline operations, including the methods and measures to achieve this outcome.	3	2	1	0
6. Described how the funding will support the establishment of a financially viable school meal program and how this outcome will be measured.	3	2	1	0
7. Described the anticipated timeline for this project including projected outcome benchmarks.	3	2	1	0
8. Described the current overall population to be served including the number of students.	3	2	1	0
9. Described how this project is promoting equitable outcomes.	3	2	1	0

Appendix B

**Standard Statement of Assurances for Grant Programs
Connecticut State Department of Education**

Project Title:	
Applicant:	

The Applicant hereby assures the Connecticut State Department of Education that:

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant.
- B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application.
- C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant.
- D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency.
- F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded.
- G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary.
- H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant.
- I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding.
- J. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant.

K. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the C.G.S., and the applicant shall return to the Connecticut State Department of Education any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit.

L. Nondiscrimination

1) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a. "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
- b. "Contract" and "contract" means this grant;
- c. "Contractor" and "contractor" means the applicant and any successors or assigns;
- d. "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.
- e. "good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
- f. "good faith efforts" shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;
- g. "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the State of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
- h. "mental disability" means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
- i. "minority business enterprise" means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons: (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (2) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of C.G.S. § 32-9n; and
- j. "public works contract" means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

- 2) For purposes of this Section, the terms “Contract” and “contract” do not include a contract where each contractor is (a) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, unless the contract is a municipal public works contract or quasi-public agency project contract, (b) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in C.G.S. § 1-267, (c) the federal government, (d) a foreign government, or (e) an agency of a subdivision, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (a), (b), (c), or (d).
- 3) (a) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, status as a veteran, status as a victim of domestic violence, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, status as a veteran, status as a victim of domestic violence, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (b) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an “affirmative action equal opportunity employer” in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (c) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission advising the labor union or workers’ representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (d) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and C.G.S. §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e, 46a-68f and 46a-86; and (e) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, municipal public works contract or contract for a quasi-public agency project, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he or she will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works or quasi-public agency projects.
- 4) Determination of the Contractor’s good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor's employment and subcontracting

policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.

- 5) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
- 6) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (3) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and in every subcontract entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a municipal public works contract for a quasi-public agency project, and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56, as amended; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding the State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.
- 7) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.
- 8) (a) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (b) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (c) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 46a-56; and (d) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56.
- 9) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions

including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56, as amended; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding a State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

10) Nondiscrimination Certification. Pursuant to subsection (c) of section 4a-60 and subsection (b) of section 4a-60a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Contractor, for itself and its authorized signatory of this Contract, affirms that it understands the obligations of this section and that it will maintain a policy for the duration of the Contract to assure that the Contract will be performed in compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of such sections. The Contractor and its authorized signatory of this Contract demonstrate their understanding of this obligation by signing this Statement of Assurances below.

- M. The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.
- N. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the C.G.S. concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

Signature of Authorized Official:	
Name: <i>(typed)</i>	
Title: <i>(typed)</i>	
Date:	

Appendix C

Legislation - An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPARENCY IN EDUCATION.

Sec. 6. (Effective July 1, 2024) (a) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2027, inclusive, the Department of Education shall administer a wholesome school meals pilot program that awards a grant to an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, for the purpose of embedding a professional chef in such alliance district to assist school meal programs in building the capacity of food service staff, improving school meal quality, increasing diner satisfaction, streamlining operations and establishing a financially viable school meal program. The department shall partner with an organization that specializes in the placement of chefs for the purposes described in this subsection. (b) Not later than October 1, 2023, a local or regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district may apply to the department, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, for a grant under this section. (c) The department shall review each application submitted under subsection (b) of this section and award five grants under this section. Each grant recipient shall receive an annual grant of one hundred fifty thousand dollars in each year of the pilot program. Such grant shall be expended for the purposes described in subsection (a) of this section. (d) Not later than January 1, 2028, the department shall submit a report on the wholesome school meals pilot program to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and appropriations, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCES AMENDMENT

(a) For the fiscal years ending June 30, [2024] 2025, to June 30, [2026] 2027, inclusive, the Department of Education shall administer a wholesome school meals pilot program that awards a grant to an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by [this act] public act 23-167, for the purpose of embedding a professional chef in such alliance district to assist school meal programs in building the capacity of food service staff, improving school meal quality, increasing diner satisfaction, streamlining operations and establishing a financially viable school meal program. [The department shall partner with an organization that specializes in the placement of chefs for the purposes described in this subsection.]

(b) [Not later than October 1, 2023, a] A local or regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district may apply to the department, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, for a grant under this section.

(c) The department shall review each application submitted under subsection (b) of this section and award up to five grants under this section. Each grant recipient shall receive an annual grant of one hundred fifty thousand dollars in each year of the pilot program. Such grant shall be expended for the purposes described in subsection (a) of this section.

(d) Not later than January 1, [2027] 2028, the department shall submit a report on the wholesome school meals pilot program to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and appropriations, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.