



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION
PO BOX 334
TRENTON NJ 08625-0334

EDWARD D. WENGRYN
Secretary

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

Date: March 20, 2026

Subject: Announcement of Availability of Grant Funds
New Jersey Farm to School Procurement Initiative (NJF2SPI) SY 2025/2026

To: School Food Authorities Participating in Food Distribution

The purpose of this announcement is to provide information and outline the opportunity for School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in NSLP and SBP and the Food Distribution Program to obtain funding through the New Jersey Farm to School Procurement Initiative (NJF2SPI) for School Year 2025–2026. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) has allocated \$1,000,000 to NJF2SPI from the Hunger Initiative/Food Assistance Program to strengthen sustainable food procurement practices between New Jersey farms and schools. This initiative aims to increase school access to local foods that reflect the unique agricultural offerings of each geographic region, support economic growth among local producers, and offer nutritious meals to students.

NJF2SPI is a State reimbursement program that offers School Food Authorities (SFA) the opportunity to purchase locally sourced food grown and produced exclusively within New Jersey from farms, small businesses, and ranchers. To be eligible for reimbursement all foods purchased must be whole, unprocessed, or minimally processed.

Definition of Local Foods

Local foods are defined as domestic products grown and sourced within the state of New Jersey.

Whole, Unprocessed, or Minimally Processed Foods

Examples of Allowable and Unallowable Food Purchases include:

Allowable Food Purchases

Fruits
Vegetables
100% juice
Grains, pasta, rice
Meats – whole, pieces, ground
(includes beef, pork and poultry)

Unallowable Food Purchases

Baked goods
Premade rice or pasta dishes
Pre-packed sandwiches or meals
Prepared or precooked ready-to-eat foods
Chicken nuggets, chicken patties, etc.

Allowable Food Purchases

Beans – legumes
Cheese, yogurt, eggs
New Jersey Milk

Unallowable Food Purchases

Fish sticks, hot dogs, cured meats, etc.
Pizza
Sauces

Participation Requirements

SFAs participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and electing to participate in the NJF2SPI must:

- Be a Recipient Agency (RA) in USDA Foods Distribution
- Complete and submit an Attestation of Participation

Procurement and Reimbursement Guidelines

- Purchases must be made exclusively from farms, small businesses, and ranchers physically located in New Jersey
- Invoices must be submitted to NJDA for review to confirm adherence to purchase requirements
- Purchases from out-of-state vendors or products not meeting eligibility criteria will be rejected
- Reimbursements will be issued directly to RAs; payments will not be made to vendors or food service management companies
- Allocated funds must be fully expended by June 30, 2026. Extensions may be considered upon request

Funding will be allocated based on the RA's average daily participation (ADP) across all schools participating in NJF2SPI, with a minimum annual funding level of \$2,000 and a maximum annual funding level not to exceed \$10,000 per school district. No appeal shall be considered of any award made.

NJDA will provide purchasing resources, including, but not limited to, lists of local farms and small businesses eligible to participate in NJF2SPI and allowable purchases, to all participants. Virtual Office Hours will be scheduled for participants to ask questions, obtain guidance, and connect with farmers/producers.

The Guidelines and Attestation for Participation can be located at [NJ Farm to School website](#), SNEARS, Food Distribution Management System, Social Media. And have also been emailed to eligible SFAs.

Please submit the Attestation Statement by email no later than **April 1, 2026** to njdaF2SPI@ag.nj.gov. The subject line of the email should read as follows: District name – agency number.

SFAs will receive their entitlement amounts on or about **April 10, 2026**.