



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

FY2022 National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grant Competitive Preference

Background

The NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant enables schools to purchase capital equipment that can be used to serve healthier meals; meet the nutritional standards with an emphasis on more fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals; and improve: (1) the quality of food service meals, (2) safety of foods served in school meal programs, (3) the energy efficiency of schools food service operations, (4) the overall participation in school meal programs and expand accessibility to food services, and (5) equipment that aides in strategies for adopting smarter

NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants have a two year project period and the one-time awards can range from \$,1000 to \$15,000. Eligible applicants include District of Columbia (DC) public schools, non-profit private schools, and DC public charter schools.

OSSE's Division of Health and Wellness has a competitive preference for the 2022 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant which is intended to narrow the achievement and opportunity gap.

The Division of Health and Wellness will provide a competitive preference to DC public schools, DC public charter schools, and Non-Profit Private/Non-Public Schools who:

- Have not received an NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant in the previous three years, and;
- Earned a 1 or 2 star rating on the [DC School Transparency and Reporting \(STAR\) Framework](#)¹ or;
- Are purchasing equipment that supports providing breakfast meals in non-traditional setting² to expand accessibility to food service.

Competitive Preference

Based on the rationale above, OSSE will utilize a competitive preference in reviewing FY2022 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant applications. OSSE intends to award at least 50 percent of FY2022 funds to applications from competitive preference schools.

¹ This is DC's school accountability system. Each year, all schools receive a score of 1 to 5 stars, with 5 being the highest based on performance across multiple metrics, including Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, School Environment, English Language Proficiency, Graduation Rate (high schools and Alternative Schools), and Educational Progress (Alternative Schools).

² A non-traditional setting is defined as meals served outside of the cafeteria.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Should non-competitive preference schools apply?

A. Yes. Approximately 50 percent of the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds could be awarded to applicants regardless of whether those schools are provided the Division of Health and Wellness competitive preference.

Q. Will applications that receive the competitive preference be held to the same standards as those that do not receive the competitive preference?

A. Yes. Awards will be made in consideration of an applicant's score on the evaluation criteria described in the Request for Applications. OSSE shall make all final funding determinations.

Q. Will the Division of Health and Wellness competitive preference change or compromise the USDA guidelines regarding the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant program competition?

A. No. The Division of Health and Wellness competitive preference will be implemented within the USDA guidelines governing the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant program. USDA has reviewed and approved OSSE's RFA.

Q. How will competitive preference schools be identified?

A. Competitive preference schools eligible based on STAR rating will be identified using the DC School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework. Competitive preference schools eligible based on alternative breakfast serving models will be identified using data from the SY 2021-22 National School Lunch Program application, and must be supported in the grant narrative.