



**FOOD PURCHASING
PILOT PROGRAM
FOR SCHOOLS**



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

Choose Iowa Food Purchasing Pilot Program

Available Funds

Up to \$70,000 is available. Each school building in a district is eligible for up to \$1,000. Public and private K-12 schools are eligible for grant funding.

Schools must provide a minimum of a one-to-one (1:1) financial match for the program award. In-kind contributions are not accepted. For example, a school receiving \$1,000 must provide at least \$1,000 from other sources for a total of \$2,000 spent on local foods.

Application Questions

1. Contact First Name
2. Contact Last Name
3. Contact email address
4. Contact phone number
5. Are you applying for a school district or a school building?
6. School Name
7. School District
8. School Address
9. School County
10. How many schools are in your district?
11. Number of students broken down by education level as applicable (Elementary, Middle, Intermediate, High School, etc.)
12. Is your school a Title I school?
13. How much grant funding are you applying for?
14. Have you purchased local food before? If so, please explain.

Eligible Producers

To be eligible for funding, food must be purchased from Choose Iowa members. A current list of members can be found on the website (chooseiowa.com/find-local). If schools wish to purchase from specific Iowa producers, please encourage them to apply to become a Choose Iowa member as soon as possible to avoid reimbursement delays if they are not already members of the Choose Iowa brand program. [Members enjoy a variety of benefits](#) beyond being eligible to participate in this Choose Iowa Food Purchasing Pilot. Visit the Choose Iowa website for more details on membership benefits at <https://www.chooseiowa.com/members>. If producers need help enrolling in the program or have any questions, please direct them to chooseiowa@iowaagriculture.gov. The Choose Iowa team would be happy to help producers.

Food hubs that are Choose Iowa members are also eligible for food purchases within the program. Please make sure to communicate that products purchased through food hubs must come from Iowa producers as some food hubs source from outside the state. The food hubs must be a Choose Iowa member, however while the producers the food hubs source from do need to be within Iowa, not all those producers are required to be Choose Iowa members (although they are strongly encouraged to join).

Eligible Purchases

Schools may purchase meat and poultry, dairy products other than milk, eggs, honey and produce.

Application Process

Interested schools fill out the application via the online portal. There will then be a selection process. Awarded schools will receive communication regarding their selection. Selected schools will need to (1) sign the grant agreement and (2) submit a copy of their W-9 so their organization can be properly set up for reimbursement. **You may not submit any purchases for reimbursement that were made before these two steps are completed.**

Selection Criteria

For the Food Purchasing Pilot Program for Schools, a diverse range of schools will be picked for funding to reflect differences in size, geographic location, student ages and experience (or lack thereof) with local food.

Reimbursement

Reimbursement requests can be submitted on a quarterly basis.

To request a reimbursement, please complete and submit the reimbursement form provided by Choose Iowa. List the producer(s) purchased from, what was purchased, quantity of purchases, the date of each purchase, the cost and then the half eligible for reimbursement. Please also submit proof of purchase for every item purchased. This can be in the form of receipts, invoices marked paid, etc. Proof of payment must be included for each item submitted in the reimbursement request.

Example: For a reimbursement request of \$1,000, purchases of local Iowa foods from Choose Iowa members totaling \$2,000 or more must be included on the paid invoice(s).

Reporting Information

Participating organizations will need to provide information about the number of students served, farms used, and the categories of items purchased (i.e. milk, eggs, beef, etc.) Please use the reporting form created by Choose Iowa. Any additional quotes or relevant information would also be appreciated so that IDALS can report to the Iowa Legislature on the program.

Submitting Information

Submit reimbursement requests and requested reporting information to ChooselowaGrant@IowaAgriculture.gov

Tentative Timeline

February 24, 2025: Announcement of Food Purchasing Pilot for Schools and application period opens.

March 31, 2025: Application period closes at 12 p.m. (noon) CST.

April 2025: Awardees announced.

August 2025: Reimbursement and reporting can begin to be submitted.

June 2026: Funds must be spent.

July 2026: Receipts and Reimbursement must be submitted.

Questions?

Please reach out to Choose Iowa at chooseiowagrants@iowaagriculture.gov. We would be happy to work through any issues or details with you.