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Arkansas Department of Agriculture Accepting Applications for Farm to School Kitchen Equipment Grant Program

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for the new Farm to School Kitchen Equipment Grant Program. The goal of the new program to increase schools' capacity to process and serve more specialty crops to students through cafeterias and other school feeding programs.

Applications will be accepted through December 8, 2023. This year, selected schools will receive grants of up to \$5,000 to purchase equipment, improve school meal quality, and increase student consumption of specialty crops.

“School gardens and taste tests have proven to be valuable tools in teaching children about agriculture, nutrition, and a variety of skills,” said Jessica Chapman, Arkansas Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator. “The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to introduce the new Farm to School Kitchen Equipment Grant Program as another way to help schools start or expand on local procurement in their school cafeterias.”

This grant program is available to public and private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments. Schools will be required to submit a budget proposal to line out the equipment that will be purchased with this funding and how that equipment will increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria. Technical service is available to all grantees.

The application can be found at cognitofrms.com/ArkansasAgriculture1/ArkansasFarmToSchoolKitchenEquipmentGrant. Districts are welcome to apply for more than one campus.

This grant program was developed using funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to increase the production and consumption of specialty crops in schools. Specialty crops are defined by the USDA as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, floriculture, and nursery crops.

For more information on the Arkansas Farm to School Kitchen Equipment Grant Program, contact Jessica Chapman at jessica.chapman@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources conservation to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while sustaining natural resources and ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible

persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.