

RFP GC22-004 FY21 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants for SFAs Questions & Answers Summary

1. What are the requirements for a district to qualify for the equipment grant? Is there a checklist to use when applying?

The first page of the application provides an Application Checklist for your convenience. As stated in the Request for Proposal (RFP), Equipment Assistance Grant Applications will only be considered if the following Mandatory Application Requirements are met:

- Non-public and charter school School Food Authority (SFA) applicants are prequalified in the Grants Gateway by the application deadline of 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2022. Additional information is provided in the Prequalification for Individual Applicants section of the RFP.
- Applications are submitted by an eligible SFA applicant that is currently approved to participate in the NSLP or that receives formal approval from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) by the application deadline.
- Applications request equipment that is allowable under this RFP with a value greater than \$1,000.
- All applications for non-public school Recipient Agencies (RA) include a current Certificate of Occupancy or other documentation from the local government authority having jurisdiction for determining compliance with applicable building codes of New York State (NYS) and current building fire inspection that indicates no violations from the local government authority having jurisdiction for determining compliance with applicable fire codes of NYS for the RA building in which the equipment will be placed. (See Mandatory Requirements for Non-public Schools section of RFP for details.)
- Applications must be submitted to the SharePoint submission website by the application deadline. Please see the “FY21 SharePoint Instructions” document posted with the RFP.

Potential applicants should review the RFP in its entirety prior to applying.

2. Would you please confirm if a charter school needs to submit a current building fire inspection and certificate of occupancy for the grant?

No, charter schools do not need to submit the Certificate of Occupancy and Fire Inspection.

3. We see a section where charter schools are included with non-public schools and wanted clarification on what the requirements are for a charter school.

Charter schools, like non-public schools, must prequalify in the [Grants Gateway](#) system by the application deadline of 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2022.

4. One of the required information on the Application checklist is a copy of the RA’s current building Fire Inspection. NYSED changed that all fire inspections should be done electronically in the NYSED Business portal. What documentation have to be submitted?

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As stated in the RFP, non-public schools must submit mandatory required documents with their application for the application to be eligible. Applications that do not contain the required documentation as described in the RFP will be disqualified and will not be considered.

All applications for non-public school RAs must include a current Certificate of Occupancy or other documentation from the local government authority having jurisdiction for determining compliance with applicable building codes of NYS and current building fire inspection that indicates no violations from the local government authority having jurisdiction for determining compliance with applicable fire codes of NYS for the RA building in which the equipment will be placed. (See Mandatory Requirements for Non-public Schools section of RFP for details.)

If applicable, SFAs will need to upload a copy of the fire inspection, as described in the RFP, into the SharePoint site.

5. Can you please tell me how I prequalify for this grant? How do I check if we are prequalified to apply for the grant or not.

To become prequalified, a nonprofit must register with Grants Gateway and complete an online Prequalification application. This includes completing a series of forms with basic questions regarding the organization and uploading key organizational documents. Detailed information on how to register with the Grants Gateway and become prequalified is available on the [Grants Management website](#).

You must sign into their website to view prequalification status. Generally, it takes 5-10 business days from the receipt of complete Prequalification applications to conduct a review. However, volume is significantly higher in the months of December, November and May of the year. If supplementary information or updates are required, review times will be longer. Due to the length of time this process could take to complete, it is advised that nonprofits Prequalify as soon as possible. Failure to successfully complete the Prequalification process early enough may result in a grant application being disqualified. Proposals received from nonprofit applicants that are not Prequalified in the Grants Gateway by 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2022., will be disqualified from further consideration. Prequalification status may be confirmed on the Grants Management Site.

6. While the RFP indicates that those that have not received prior equipment will receive priority, does it exclude those that may have received funding with FY18, FY19 and FY20 from applying? If we did receive a previous grant, are we still eligible to apply for this grant, or would we need to wait? I wasn't sure how long we have to wait in between each grant year, or if we could apply every year?

You can still apply and are eligible for an award if you have received a previous grant. Priority will be given to RAs that did not receive a previous grant award through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, FY 2019 or the FY 2020 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant for School Food Authorities. SFAs may still apply; however, 10 bonus points will be received only if the RA did not receive a previous award in those three years.

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7. Our School opened a new RA last year and I would like to know if we can apply for the grant at both locations?

SFAs can apply on behalf of all eligible RAs that meet the eligibility and mandatory requirements of the RFP.

8. We are in the process of building a new building for our school, our plan is to move in for the upcoming 22-23 school year, can I apply for this grant for equipment for the new building?

Please see the RFP for detailed information regarding eligible applicants. All School Food Authorities (SFAs) are eligible to apply for funding for their Recipient Agencies (RA) that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including public school districts, nonprofit non-public schools, charter schools and residential child care institutions in the NSLP in New York State.

As stated above, approved SFAs are allowed to apply for the Equipment Grant on behalf of their approved NSLP RAs. If you have an established school that will simply be changing address and moving into that new building and that school is already an approved RA in NSLP, you could apply for equipment to meet the needs of that approved RA if the RA will be in the new building by the project end date. Please note, if multiple schools are currently being claimed in the child nutrition programs under one RA code, and one of those schools is separating and moving into the new building space, the school must be approved as its own RA in NSLP by the application due date to be eligible.

The following conditions must also be met:

- All grant activities must be completed (including installations and use of the equipment) and documentation for reimbursement must be submitted by the project end date of 6/30/23.
- You must detail this information on the application and include the address the RA is moving to where the equipment will be placed.
- The new RA address must be on file with NYSED and updated in State Education Department Reference File (SEDREF) prior to the project end date and prior to receiving reimbursement for the equipment.
- Applications for non-public schools must still include all mandatory requirements for the address in which the equipment will be placed (building fire inspection and certificate of occupancy, as described in the RFP) for the application to be considered complete. If a non-public applicant is unable to provide these required documents at the time of application, the application will not be eligible.

9. Is it correct that an applicant could potentially receive 30 bonus points (10 points for not having received an award in the last three funding rounds + 10 points for being a central kitchen serving RAs that have not received funding in the last three funding rounds + 10 points if applying for a POS system that would be used by an RA that has not received funding in the last three award cycles)?

No, If a Recipient Agency has not received a previous grant award through the FY 2018, FY 2019 or FY2020 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant for School Food

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Authorities, they will receive 10 bonus points. Applications that are for central kitchen and POS System requests will only receive these bonus points if all included RAs within the application have not received an award in those years. Example: An SFA is applying for a piece of equipment for an RA that is a central kitchen, all RAs being served by this central kitchen have not received a previous award for FY18, FY19 and FY20. The application will receive 10 bonus points for not having been awarded in FY18, FY19 and FY20. Alternatively, an SFA is applying for a POS system for multiple RAs within the SFA. The SFA has three RAs included on the application. Two of the RAs did not receive an award in FY18, FY19 and FY20. The third RA received an award in FY19. This application will not be awarded the 10 bonus points. In order to receive bonus points, all RAs listed on the application must not have been awarded an equipment grant in FY18, FY19 and FY20.

- 10. Is this grant equal across the board or if there are going to be extra points given to high free/reduced districts? We continually apply and were told in the past that eventually the grants would reach down to us districts that are under 50% free/reduced. Last year extra points were given to districts with over 50% participation. Will that be happening again this year? Or do we maybe have a shot as we've never received an equipment grant before?**

Per the RFP, "Please note, unlike previous year grants, there will be no bonus points provided for RAs where at least 50% of enrolled students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals or for RAs with a high level of participation in the NSLP."

- 11. Please clarify the guidance manual states "Equipment may not be purchased exclusively for programs outside federally assisted school meals programs" and then it lists School Breakfast Program as being part of the list that is outside the program. However, on the purpose of the grant one of the intents is listed as to help support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of school breakfast program.**

The School Breakfast Program is a federally assisted school meals program.

As stated in the RFP, the equipment purchased with the FY 2021 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant must be used to support the federally assisted school meals programs. Equipment may not be purchased exclusively for programs outside of the federally assisted school meals programs.

When an RA participates in other school meal programs, such as the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), in addition to the NSLP, those other meals programs **may benefit from equipment purchased with FY 2021 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds.**

- 12. I would like to know whether equipment purchased with funding from the FY21 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant may be used at a site that administers the SFSP program.**

All SFAs are eligible to apply for funding for their RAs that participate in the NSLP and the equipment purchased with the FY 2021 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant must be used to support the federally assisted school meals programs.

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When an RA participates in other school meal programs, such as the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), in addition to the NSLP, those other meals programs **may benefit from equipment purchased with FY 2021 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds.**

13. Are grants available to SFAs currently operating under Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)/ Seamless Summer Option at this time?

Yes, for School Year 2021-2022, any SFA/RA with a previously approved State agency agreement on file to operate NSLP is eligible to apply for the FY21 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant while utilizing the flexibilities granted under the current Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Nationwide Waiver.

14. Can you please tell me if purchases for a school that operated the milk program only would be eligible under this grant?

No, SFAs are eligible to apply for funding for their RAs that participate in the NSLP, including public school districts, nonprofit non-public schools, charter schools and residential childcare institutions in New York State.

15. Are we able to submit a request for two pieces of equipment? We are in need of a grab and go merchandiser as well as recently a new garbage disposal.

SFAs must complete a separate application for each piece of equipment requested for each eligible RA. The equipment requested must be more than \$1,000 to fulfill the obligation of the grant. Total combined awards to an SFA for an individual RA cannot exceed \$20,000.

16. Just to clarify, we are not submitting an FS-10 with the application. FS-10s will be required if an applicant wins a grant award—is this correct? Will successful applicants need to submit a project FS-10 immediately after awards are announced? Or will the FS-10 be due after project equipment is rebid with updated prices, after awards are announced?

That is correct, FS-10s will not be submitted with the application. Applicants that have been tentatively awarded will use the posted allocations to complete the FS-10. The FS-10 is expected to be sent to the Child Nutrition office within one week of the posted awards. The FS-10 is needed to create the Grant Award Notice; any delay in receiving this document from the awarded school will potentially delay the official award notification. The instructions on how to submit your FS-10 will be posted with the award list.

17. Can an SFA receive a dishwasher as a part of the Equipment Assistance grant?

Yes. The “Examples of Eligible Equipment Requests” list in the RFP (page 9) is intended to serve as a guideline when considering equipment options. SFAs are not limited to the items listed. Equipment requested should contribute to improving your Child Nutrition Programs.

18. Can this grant be used toward repairing a dishwasher we already have, or do we have to use it to get a new dishwasher? Can the cost of disposal of old equipment be included in equipment cost?

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No, the equipment grant may not be used for repair costs. Equipment requests may include new equipment, used equipment, and replacement of equipment with a per item acquisition cost greater than \$1,000. The cost of disposal of the old equipment may be included in the equipment cost. Total combined awards to an SFA for an individual RA cannot exceed \$20,000.

19. For questions 4(b) on page 21 of the guidance manual, can you provide some examples of what is meant by “type of procurement conducted?”

As with all federal grant funds, procurement regulations at 7 CFR Part 210.21 and 2 CFR Part 200.317-326 apply and SFAs must follow regulations at 2CFR Part 200: Subpart E, Cost Principles. Please see the following memo for information on the methods/types of procurement in the federal Child Nutrition Programs: [Guidance on Procurement Methods: Thresholds UPDATED](#) . Additional information can also be found at this link: [Procurement Information | Child Nutrition | NYSED](#).

20. Are freight costs related to the equipment purchased allowable for reimbursement under the grant?

Yes, freight costs, direct labor costs, installation, disposal and acquisition costs shall be included. Do not include indirect labor costs; they will not be reimbursed and are not allowable under the grant.

21. If we need to run new plumbing or electrical/utility lines to accommodate the requested equipment, can we include it in the installation costs?

As stated in the RFP, equipment requests may include new equipment, used equipment, and replacement of equipment with a per item acquisition cost greater than \$1,000.

Acquisition cost is defined as the net invoice unit price of the property, including the cost of modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make the property usable for the purpose for which it was acquired. Other charges such as the cost of installation, transportation, duty or protective in-transit insurance, shall be included or excluded from the unit acquisition cost in accordance with the grantee’s regular accounting practices.

Plumbing and electrical costs necessary for installation to get the equipment working would be covered. Please note, while installation costs are allowable, renovation of the school nutrition area would fall under the category of construction costs, which must be charged to the school general fund or capital outlay fund.

22. What do you consider remodeling vs. installation?

Remodeling/renovation is considered changing the structure of the building, while installation is what is required to set up equipment for proper use. Please see question 19 above and refer to the RFP and regulations at [2 CFR 200](#) for more information.

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23. I complete applications for multiple SFAs. Do I need to use separate emails for each district, or can I just use one login to submit all applications?

Only one email is needed to access the SharePoint site. Each application will need to be uploaded separately but can be done under the same username.

24. A chopper could be \$1,000 and a serving line could be \$50,000. We do not see that stipulated anywhere. What are the limits of the grant per school?

Grant awards will be awarded at a value greater than \$1,000 and up to a maximum of \$20,000 per Recipient Agency (RA). Unless otherwise exempt, as detailed in the RFP, the SFA will submit a separate application for each piece of requested equipment for an eligible RA. Total combined awards to an SFA for an individual RA cannot exceed \$20,000. If the total amount of the requested piece of equipment exceeds the amount awarded, the School Food Authority (SFA) would contribute the difference in cost. So you could be awarded both equipment requests, but would only receive \$20,000 of the \$51,000 per RA.

25. With rising costs, it is difficult to obtain a quote of under \$20,000 for the equipment that we need the most. Can we submit quotes that are over the threshold if the LEA commits to paying the difference in price?

Yes, submitted quotes may be more than \$20,000, and the SFA must pay the difference.

26. Most equipment items are over \$20,000, the grant will not cover the whole cost. Can I still apply for them and put the remaining amount in with my funds? If so, is there someplace to state this on the application?

Your SFA would need to submit separate equipment applications as applicable. Indicate actual costs on the application, but total combined awards to an SFA for an individual RA cannot exceed \$20,000. If the total amount of the requested piece of equipment exceeds the amount awarded, the SFA would need to contribute the difference.

27. The required documentation for the application mentions three vendor quotes for any equipment requested. If, as a school district, we use a vendor on state contract, does this still apply? The Food Service Director indicated to me that he often has trouble getting quotes from vendors who know we have a contract with another vendor, since they know they will inevitably not receive the order.

Question 4(c) of the application asks for the applicant to identify supporting documentation for at least 3 vendors to substantiate the cost requested (price quotes, equipment specification sheets, etc.). If the SFA is unable to obtain 3 quotes, the applicant should identify in question 4(b) which vendors were contacted for quotes and that the vendors did not provide them. As with all federal grant funds, procurement regulations at 7 CFR Part 210.21 and 2 CFR Part 200.317-326 apply and SFAs must follow regulations at 2CFR Part 200: Subpart E, Cost Principles. Equipment

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competitively procured using these grant funds must be necessary, reasonable and allocable. All SFAs, including those using the services of a Food Service Management Company, must adhere to the federal, State and local procurement requirements.

28. We would definitely be interested in applying for this grant if it includes equipment we previously purchased for this school year in order to efficiently manage the child nutrition program properly - following all health safety guidelines. We felt it was crucial and an obligation at this time, during a state of emergency, to offer free meals to our students, even though we knew the school would undergo a large financial loss by purchasing all the equipment needed to manage this program properly. I just want to be sure that this grant includes any equipment purchased for this school year 2021-2022. Even if we purchased the equipment in previously for this school year.

No, this grant does not apply to equipment that has already been purchased.

29. We are renovating a number of kitchens and want to develop a purchase order now, so equipment is received in time for the 2023 school year. Can we code now through the C-Fund and if in fact we are awarded the grant, generate the revenue after July 1 to be reimbursed for these costs.

As stated in the previous response, Equipment requests may include new equipment, used equipment, and replacement of equipment with a per item acquisition cost greater than \$1,000. This grant does not apply to equipment that has already been purchased.

30. For point-of-sale applications, is it ok if individual pieces are less than \$1,000 when listed on a single application form, if considered equipment by the district (so long as they total at least \$1,000 together)?

As stated in the RFP, the individual equipment requests for point of sale (POS) equipment must have a value greater than \$1,000 as described in the "Equipment Requests" section of the RFP.

However, if the SFA will consider the entire POS system (all components together instead of individual pieces) to be equipment for financial statement purposes rather than supplies and materials, the SFA should submit a written statement on letterhead indicating this. This letter will be used by NYSED to determine if the POS system as a whole is greater than \$1,000 and meets the definition of equipment as stated in the RFP.

If the SFA does not indicate in writing with the application that the individual components of the POS system will be combined and considered equipment, the cost of the individual POS components will be evaluated by NYSED to determine if each item has a value greater than \$1,000, as required.

For other equipment requests that are not for POS systems, multiple items whose per-unit acquisition cost is less than \$1,000 may not be combined to meet the minimum value of greater than \$1,000. Under no circumstance will a grant be awarded for an item that does not have an acquisition cost greater than \$1,000.

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31. How does a District actually secure their grant?

Awarded SFAs will be expected to submit an [FS-10 Budget](#) form with an original signature at the time of award to formally receive the grant funding.

32. If approved, do they purchase the equipment that was approved and then submit for reimbursement?

Submission and approval of the FS-10-F with required supporting documentation is required to receive the grant funding. The reimbursement requires that award recipients accept an electronic payment that will be received in the same manner of the CN reimbursement.

If an SFA is awarded, they will receive payment on a reimbursement basis. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted to SED Child Nutrition Program Office as soon as possible after equipment is purchased. To receive reimbursement, SFAs will be required to submit an [FS-10-F budget form](#) and include paid purchase invoices/receipts for the awarded/purchased equipment along with the serial number of each piece of equipment. Please see the [Fiscal Guidelines for Federal and State Grants](#) for additional information. The instructions on how to submit an FS-10 will be posted with the awards.

33. Is there a timeline on when the equipment must be purchased by?

SFAs must complete the solicitation of the equipment and obligation of funds by 9/30/2022. All procurement and expenditure activities must be completed no later than 6/30/2023.

SharePoint Questions

34. I missed the deadline for the SharePoint invitation, can I still apply? When can I request a SharePoint invitation?

Potential applicants that did not receive the invitation email should request an invitation via foodequip@nysed.gov . The email request must contain the SFA name, SFA LEA code, the individual's name, title, and email that wishes to be granted access to the SharePoint site. Invitation requests for SharePoint will be accepted and approved until 4:00 pm March 31, 2022. Requests to access SharePoint after this time will not be granted. It is recommended that the SFA administration designate only one duly authorized user to upload all submissions for the SFA.

35. If files are uploaded to the application portal, can changes be made to those files up until the deadline?

Yes, Files that are uploaded to the application portal can be changed up until the deadline. Once the deadline passes, users will be unable to access their submissions to make changes.

36. When uploading the completed applications to SharePoint, should we put all applications for one school in the same file? And so, we may be uploading three docs total – for instance, one of all

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paperwork for the high school (which is for 2 different pieces of equipment), one for the elementary school (with one piece of equipment) and one for the middle school (with two pieces of equipment)?

No, all applications for one school should **not** be in the same file. Unless otherwise exempt as detailed in the RFP, a separate application must be submitted for each piece of equipment for each Recipient Agency (RA) requesting funds. See RFP for details. A complete application should have multiple documents submitted into one upload.

37. I started to upload my application and I'm having technical difficulties, what do I do?

Technical support questions that may arise during the submission process should be forwarded to FOODEQUIP@NYSED.GOV so that assistance can be provided.

38. Once in SharePoint, it appears the first step is to click on the maroon "+New" box; is that correct? Please advise where in this site I would submit the grant when it is completed.

Once in SharePoint, a user will click "SFA Submissions" on the left-hand side of the screen. The "+ New" Maroon box will appear. Once you click that box, the application submission menu of fields will appear. Enter the corresponding values into the text boxes and drop downs and attach your documents. Then click save. This will submit your application. [Please visit the SharePoint Instructions for more information.](#)

39. In SharePoint, if we upload applications, will they save for later? And can we make changes later? In other words, can we upload applications at different times, and when we are done checking everything then send them to SED?

SharePoint submissions are saved in real time when you click the save button. They will be saved to view any time between the upload and the application due date. You can make changes to your submissions until the application due date. SED will not review the applications until after the due date and the SharePoint site closes. Please feel free to upload the applications at any time before that due date and check them continually until you are satisfied with your submission. Be sure to click SAVE. SED will access all applications from SharePoint after the deadline.

40. When attachments are uploaded into SharePoint should they be labeled as something more than the recipient agency name? If we are submitting more than one application, is it permissible to add something ("application 1," "application 2," for example) to differentiate each separate application being submitted?

Yes, you can differentiate the applications to track them. We asked that applications be labeled clearly so that SFAs can determine easily that all intended applications have been submitted. NYSED will not be reviewing the applications until after the due date, so clear labels will allow NYSED to communicate any correspondence for technical support with the specific labeled application.

41. How do I upload my application, I thought the application was on SharePoint, where is the application?

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SharePoint is only the website used to upload and submit the application. The RFP, application form, and all other related documents are housed on the [NYSED Grants Opportunity website](#) from which they can be downloaded and completed. The application is named “Grant Application (Fillable PDF).”

42. In SharePoint there is a drop-down box to select if the RA is Active or Inactive. Is this a reference to the RA participating in NSLP?

Yes, The Active/Inactive selection box in SharePoint is to indicate whether the RA applying is currently active or inactive in NSLP programs.