



NY Farm to School Research Consultant- Request for Proposals

The American Farmland Trust's Farm to Institution NY State (FINYS) program is requesting proposals (RFP) from qualified consultants to conduct research to assess proposed policy changes to the NY State 30% Reimbursement Incentive Program for Farm to School. The consultant will work closely with AFT's New York Policy Manager and FINYS team to design and conduct a survey for school food authorities, hold interviews with partners and stakeholders, provide updates at NY Grown Food for NY Kids Coalition meetings, and conduct a policy analysis leading to key recommendations for improving the state's local food incentive policies.

About the 30% Reimbursement Incentive Program

Since 2018, NY State has allocated \$10 million in the state budget to incentivize schools to purchase local products from NY State producers. If school food authorities (SFAs) purchase at least 30% of their school lunch costs from NY farmers or producers (processed items must be comprised of 51% raw agricultural product from NY to qualify), they will receive an additional 19 cent reimbursement per school lunch served per day in addition to the existing 6 cent reimbursement from the state per school lunch. **This totals 25 cents per lunch served per day for schools who have purchased 30% of their school lunch budget from NY State farmers, growers, and producers.**

The number of schools able to participate in this program have stagnated over the past four years due to various challenges, such as the administrative burden on schools to separate the tracking of their local purchases between breakfast and lunch. AFT has [previously conducted research](#) to identify these challenges and make policy recommendations, however the program remains unchanged within the state legislature. In preparation for the next legislative session, AFT is seeking a consultant to work closely with the NY Policy Manager to explore potential changes to increase the accessibility of this program, such as:

- Exploring a program which reimburses schools for 25% of all school food costs procured locally rather than 30% of school lunch costs;
- Analyzing a tiered approach to farm to school incentive programs, adopted in states such as Vermont, and making NY-specific recommendations around this approach; and
- Researching ways to integrate local food purchasing incentives into free, universal meals.

Scope of Work:

The selected consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Design a survey for school food authorities in NY State to gather data on their current or anticipated participation in the 30% reimbursement incentive program and the impact of the program on their ability to purchase local foods;
- Hold interviews with 5-10 key stakeholders, including school nutrition professionals, local food producers, partners working on similar policies in other states, and advocacy organizations to gather additional insights and perspectives on New York's program;

- Conduct policy analysis of proposed changes to the 30% reimbursement incentive program, including an assessment of potential impacts on school food authorities, local food producers, the broader farm to school community, and potential fiscal impacts for the state of NY;
- Provide policy manager with a policy analysis report that includes key recommendations for lobbying strategy for the FY25 legislative session in the state of NY.

Deliverables:

The selected consultant will be required to deliver the following:

- A survey design (in collaboration with Policy Manager);
- Administering the survey and analyzing the data (in collaboration with Policy Manager);
- Interview questions (varies by stakeholder), transcripts, and notes.
- Policy analysis report with key recommendations for lobbying strategy (in collaboration with Policy Manager).

Timeline:

The following timeline will apply to this project:

Proposals accepted on a rolling basis.

Anticipated project start: ASAP

Final deliverables due:

- Survey design: June 16, 2023
- Administering survey: July 1, 2023
- Interview plan: July 1, 2023
- Interview transcripts & notes: August 15, 2023
- Policy analysis with key recommendations: September 30, 2023

Anticipated Budget:

AFT has \$25,000- \$30,000 to dedicate to this project.

Proposals should include the following information:

- Consultant’s CV or Resume
- Consultant's qualifications and experience, particularly in policy analysis or state policy related to farm to school or food systems;
- Proposed approach to the project, including a methodology for designing the survey, interviews, and policy analysis;
- Timeline for completing the project, including anticipated hours;
- Proposed budget, including all costs associated with the project.
- At least two references who can speak to the consultant's experience with similar projects.

Proposals should be submitted by email to Mikaela Perry, the NY Policy Manager at mperry@farmland.org. Please include the subject line “NY Farm to School Research Consultant Proposal.”

Selection of Consultant:

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until a consultant is found. The consultant will be required to sign a contract with AFT outlining the scope of work, deliverables, timeline, and budget.