

2021 Equipment Grant Processing
Texas Dept of Agriculture – Food & Nutrition Division

- I. The award amount for Texas is \$3,816,551. The goal is to have the awards announced by October 2021.
- II. The grant applications will be processed by using an internally designed on-line application on the Texas Department of Agriculture’s agency website. District Superintendents and Child Nutrition Directors of all eligible SFAs will be emailed an invitation to apply.
- III. Grant reimbursements will be processed through the Texas Dept of Agriculture after the SFA has completed the purchase of equipment. To request a reimbursement, the SFAs will provide the following forms and information to TDA:
 - a. TDA Claim Cover sheet & the invoice describing the equipment purchased.
 - b. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) identification number.
 - c. “System for Award Management” (SAM #) number. To set up a record, the CE must go to <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/#1> .
 - d. Form 74-176 “Vendor Direct Deposit Authorization” if one is not currently on file for TDA.
- IV. Memo SP 13-2021 dated June 2, 2021, from USDA defines the minimum threshold for the purchase of equipment at \$1,000¹, as specified by Congress. Based on this memo, any equipment requests with a “per unit value” of less than \$1,000 will be marked as ineligible.
- V. Due to the limited funds available and prior experience, there will be a limit to the number of awards given to any one site. Initial selection will be based on the score and a \$76,000 limit. This \$76,000 value was determined by allowing for roughly 2% of the 2021 total grant value. This threshold is subject to adjustment based on equipment necessity.
- VI. Based on guidance from USDA’s Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), eligible sites that never received a prior year equipment grant will be given priority to receive a 2021 NSLP Equipment Grant.
 - a. All eligible applications from sites that have not received a prior year award from the 2009 or 2010 ARRA grant, or the 2014-2020 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants will be ranked first (based on scoring criteria listed below) and awarded in the initial round of funding, until the entire grant is exhausted.
- VII. Based on USDA guidance regarding Equipment Grants, all equipment will be scored based on the following criteria:
 - a. Schools with limited access to other financial resources will receive additional points. The SFAs will be required to provide TDA with their 2020-2021 fund balance. A fund balance that covers more than 3 months of average expenses will be ineligible.
 - b. Schools will receive additional points for a higher percentage of free and reduced students / CEP claiming. This data will be pre-loaded into the application data base and is derived using the February 2020 claim data.
 - c. Priority to sites (not SFAs) that did not receive previous NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant (either 2009 or 2010 ARRA grant, or the 2014-2020 equipment grants).

¹ Equipment is defined as tangible, nonexpendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. For the FY 2021 Equipment Assistance Grants, Congress has specified that the threshold for the purchase of equipment has been lowered to \$1,000.

- d. All eligible types of equipment have been pre-scored to allow for expedited award processing. [Scoring Criteria](#) can be found on the squaremeals.org website. All equipment is scored with consideration to USDA requirements to:
 - 1) Improve the safety of the food served in the school meals.
 - 2) Improve overall nutrition and food quality.
 - 3) Improve or expand participation in NSLP/SBP.
 - 4) Improves availability of healthier choices.
 - 5) Improves overall student convenience and appeal.
 - e. The SFAs will need to report the age of the existing equipment that is being replaced with the grant funds. Priority will be provided for older or non-existent equipment.
 - f. The SFAs will indicate whether equipment will be utilized to expand the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, or both. No scoring is based on this criteria.
- VIII. Scoring would be based upon a possible total of 100 points.
- IX. Tie-breaker process: TDA will use the following tiebreaker schematic for those site requests involved in the tiebreaker process.
- a. If the site is already receiving one or more awards from the current award process (as in they submitted a request for multiple items and it is their 2nd, 3rd, or more requests that is in the tie breaker) – the additional request(s) that fell into the tie breaker list would be excluded.
 - b. If a tie remains after the first process, the next step would be to rank requests in order of sites’ free and reduced % / CEP Claiming %; highest % wins.
 - c. If a tie remains after the second process, TDA will rank the SFAs on the ratio of available funds. A higher ratio indicates a lower fund balance available. Highest available funds ratio wins.
 - d. If a tie remains after the third process, we will use the specific equipment score for the following criteria:
 - 1. Equipment that aids in healthier meals
 - 2. Equipment that improves food safety
 - 3. Equipment that improves or expands participation in the NSLP/SBP.
- X. For grant year 2021, SFAs operating Seamless Summer Option and Summer Food Service Program in school year 2020 – 2021 are considered eligible to apply.
- XI. The Compliance Department will include equipment awards during all future Administrative Reviews.