



## Local Food for Schools Program Request

### About the Program

[Local Food for Schools](#) (LFS) is a new one-time grant created by USDA. This federal program will direct \$3.5 million to Massachusetts schools to be spent exclusively on local, unprocessed or lightly processed foods.

The program will be administered by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Schools will have 18 months to spend the funds, starting in early 2023.

### How the Grant Will be Used

DESE would like to administer the program in a way that has the greatest potential long term impact for Massachusetts farmers, fishers, and food producers.

In partnership with Mass. Farm to School (MFTS), DESE intends to support schools to not only buy directly from local farmers and fishermen, but to also purchase from a network of regional food hubs (i.e. Worcester Regional Food Hub, Boston Food Hub, New Entry Food Hub) that would distribute foods to schools.

This strategy minimizes the procurement burden for schools and will develop new purchasing relationships and systems that can be sustained beyond the length of this grant.

### The Request & Return on Investment:

#### **\$150,000 for one year to leverage \$3.5million in purchasing power**

DESE would like MFTS to support implementation of this program. To do so, MFTS would need to hire one additional staff person for a 1-year period. DESE does not currently have funding available for this staff person, and the federal funds can only be used for food purchases.

This staff person would ensure that we maximize the federal funding by:

- Serving as a liaison to the food hubs and farms, matching them with school districts they have the capacity to serve
- Providing technical support to schools to ensure effective utilization of their federal funds and compliance with all state and federal procurement regulations
- Leveraging the relationships created through this funding opportunity to support schools in applying for the newly created MA Farm to School Grant Program
- Ensuring that data is collected appropriately for both our State's needs and also for accurate reporting to the USDA

**This small investment of \$150,000 in state funding will ensure that the \$3.5 million in federal dollars are successfully invested to the greatest lasting impact in our local economy.**