

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



FY26 Agricultural, Food, and Natural Resources Programs Grant RFP

Submission Deadline Date: September 26, 2025

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Program Purpose and Goals

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Career and Technical Education is seeking competitive written proposals from qualified Applicants to obtain capitalized equipment upgrades for the FY26 Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Pathways Program through grant awards issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

The purpose of the program is to assist local educational agencies (LEAs) with acquiring needed capitalized equipment to teach the most recent curriculum for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources programs. The capitalized equipment requested must be listed on the approved capitalized equipment list located on the Mississippi State University (MSU), Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) website <https://www.rcu.msstate.edu/>.

The Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Pathways Grant meets Goal 2 of the Mississippi State Board of Education Strategic Plan.

Having updated resources will allow programs to implement curricula that prepare students for success as they move into roles and jobs in the agriculture business and industry.

A grant agreement will be signed. All grant awards are at the discretion of the State Board of Education (SBE). This solicitation and any resulting grant agreement shall be governed by the applicable provisions of *the State Board of Education Grant Policies*. The grant agreement Assurances and Standard Terms and Conditions have been included as Form 2 and Form 3 for your review and acceptance.

A copy of this solicitation, including all attachments and any subsequent amendments, including the Question-and-Answer amendment, if issued, will be posted on the MDE [website](#) under RFP/RFQ/RFA/Invitation to Bid section. It is the sole responsibility of all interested Applicants to monitor the website for updates regarding this solicitation.

1.2 Eligibility Criteria

This solicitation is to provide information required to submit a response to this Request for Proposal (RFP). Please be aware that changes to previous requirements and/or eligibility solicited may have been made.

1. All school districts with an approved 2024-2025 Perkins Local Plan Applications are eligible to apply through the Request for Proposal (RFP) competitive process. A school district is limited to submitting one (1) proposal per school district. The budget amount per school district shall not exceed \$20,000, limiting the total award available per school district to an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

Applicants that previously received a subgrant award must be in good standing with the MDE to receive an award through this solicitation. If applicable, Subgrantees must have previously submitted:

- All data for the school year 2023-2024 Perkins Performance Measures; and
- Signed 2023-2024 CTE District Summary Report; and

- Requests for reimbursement of all 2024-2025 CTE competitive grants awarded.

If a previous Subgrantee is not in good standing, the proposal will be disqualified and will not be considered for an award.

The awarded Subgrantee must meet the following criteria to submit a proposal for these services:

1. Applicants must be a Mississippi school district with an approved 2024-2025 Perkins Local Plan Application; and
2. Applicants must be seeking to obtain capitalized equipment upgrades through implementing the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Pathways Program.

1.3 Pre-Proposal Conference

The MDE will host a Pre-proposal Conference via Microsoft TEAMS, at 10:00am on Thursday, September 11, 2025, to assist potential Subgrantees with understanding the program and the proposal process. There is no cost for the workshop; however, registration is required. A TEAMS invite link will be sent via MDE CTE Lotus Notes on **Tuesday, September 9, 2025. Proposal workshop participation is not required to apply but is highly encouraged.**

1.4 Conflict of Interest

Each Applicant receiving an award for funds must maintain a written conflict of interest policy.

SECTION 2. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Scope of Work

The Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Grant must encompass the following:

- Enhancement of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources programs in local educational agencies through capitalized equipment upgrades; and
- Implementation of activities within the period of performance.

2.2 Program Activities

Applicants receiving an award are responsible for utilizing these funds to carry out activities that advance student achievement and support student success through implementation of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources pathways.

Each eligible school district receiving an award will use the funds to carry out activities that assist their Career and Technical Education programs in properly equipping their classrooms and/or labs to teach the most recent curriculum for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources programs.

Subgrantees are also obligated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to ensure that their proposed

program activities are outlined and are accessible to persons with disabilities.

2.3 Program Reports and Evaluation

Subgrantees are required to submit a Performance Report that will include at a minimum the number of students served and quantifiable outcomes for the project measures identified on the Work Plan Table.

2.4 Proposal Review and Selection Process

Phase I – Compliance

Proposals are reviewed by MDE program staff to determine if all formatting and submission requirements are met. **If any proposal fails to meet the established deadline or Required Elements, the proposal will be disqualified.** Please review the submission deadline and the *Required Elements*. *Proposals that are not received by the deadline or fail to provide the information as specified in the “Required Elements” will not be considered for an award and the Applicant may reapply at a future date.*

Phase II – Review and Scoring

An evaluation committee, authorized by the MDE, shall evaluate and score each proposal based on the quality of the proposed activities and the evidence provided to demonstrate the capacity of the Applicants to implement the proposed program. The evaluation committee is comprised of expert proposal readers from various related professions and backgrounds.

Each proposal will be evaluated using the criteria for the proposal and scoring process. The evaluation committee will recommend proposals from highest to lowest ranking to be funded by the MDE.

A minimum of five evaluation committee members will review and evaluate each proposal and score utilizing a rubric. A reader may award up to **100 points** for each proposal. A proposal must receive a minimum total quality score of **75** before the proposal can be considered eligible for funding. The MDE will allocate funding based upon the average scores of all committee members and will fund Applicants, based on the highest to lowest scores, until funding is exhausted, or all eligible Applicants receive funding.

The MDE reserves the right to reject any portion of the proposal and negotiate with potential Subgrantees to address any issues that may impact the proposal or funding.

After the selection process, Applicants that were not recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE) for funding may receive copies of the evaluator’s comments and feedback upon a formal request to the MDE Office of Public Reporting only.

2.5 Proposal Scoring Criteria

This section covers the criteria an Applicant must address in the ***plan of action*** to obtain the maximum points available to score **100 points** upon submitting a proposal.

The proposal shall consist of the Applicant's program operating plan to address the certain criteria below. The stated plan must be clear, concise, and be implemented with fidelity upon the SBE approval. When completing the proposal, please remember that Applicants will not be permitted to change the program's scope (i.e., type of services and/or target population) that is originally outlined in the proposal, scored by the evaluation committee during the proposal review process, and approved by the SBE. This is designed to provide an open competitive, fair, and transparent process for all submitting a proposal.

Subgrantees must submit a proposal that includes an Operating Plan consisting of the following: Narrative, Work Plan Table, Collaboration and Support, Evaluation Plan, Budget Forms, and support letters. The Operating Plan section should be **one sided**, double spaced, using Arial or Times New Roman, 12-point font.

The maximum points available for each component of the Operating Plan is provided below.

• Project Narrative (including Work Plan Table)	60	points
• Collaboration & Support	5	points
• Evaluation Plan	20	points
• Budget Information	<u>15</u>	<u>points</u>
• Total	100	points

A. Project Narrative (60 Points)

The Project Narrative must include a narrative that provides a response to each of the items listed below and submission of the Work Plan Table. The items must be provided in the narrative in the order listed. These questions must be listed in the Project Narrative section.

- Describe the overall project to be implemented.
- Describe the need for this project.
- Describe the specific capitalized equipment that will be purchased to properly equip classrooms and/or labs to align Secondary Career Pathways in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources program with current industry standards.
- Indicate the grade level and number of students that are the target population for the project.
- Describe how the project is related to real-world activities or experiences.
- Describe how the project lends itself to attract agricultural students

Work Plan Table Form

As part of the project narrative, applicants are to submit the Work Plan Table to provide information on objectives, activities, performance measures and project staff. The following definitions are to be used to assist with preparing the Work Plan Table.

- **Goal:** Describe the purpose for implementing the grant program.

- **Activities:** Activities are even more specific than objectives. They explain who will do what, when, where, and for how long. Grantees must include specific activities that will clearly allow the program to progress towards the stated objective(s).
- **Performance Measures:** Identify the targeted outcomes for each activity; these outcome measures must be quantifiable.
- **Staff Responsible for Activity**

Remainder of page intentionally left blank

**FY26 Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Programs RFP
Work Plan Table**

District Name: _____

Goal (What is the purpose for implementing the grant program)	Activity List the project activities (what will be done in this project; limit to 3)	Performance Measure (What is the targeted outcome of this Activity; the outcome measures must be quantifiable)	Project Staff Responsible for Activity (First Initial & Last Name Only)

B. Collaboration and Support (5 Points)

Applicants must describe collaboration and support for the project. This section must include a description of the following. There are 2.5 points allowed for each item.

- A summary of collaboration and commitment between school district(s) and local business and industry focused on the preparation of students for success as they move into Agriculture jobs.
- Letters of commitment or support as evidence of collaboration for programs specifically targeted in this project. Each individual letter of commitment should be specific in listing or stating exactly what will be provided to the district toward the implementation of this grant project. Letters that only state general support, congratulate the district for their many accomplishments, or related to programs not targeted in this project should not be submitted. The limit is three (3) letters, and these support letters are included in the 35-page limit.

C. Evaluation Plan (20 Points)

Applicants must describe the Evaluation Plan for how the project will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of implementing the grant activities listed in the proposal. Outcome measures must be quantifiable. The Evaluation Plan must answer the questions below in the order listed. The questions must be included in this Evaluation Section. There are 5 points allowed for each item.

- What are the performance measures for the proposed project (must be quantifiable)?
- What is the expected impact of implementing the project activities?
- What data will be collected for the Evaluation Plan?
- What is the timeline for completing the evaluation?

D. Budget Information (15 Points)

1. A district is limited to submitting one (1) proposal per district. The budget amount per district shall not exceed \$20,000, limiting the total award available per district to an amount not to exceed \$20,000.
2. For the Budget Section applicants must submit the three required Budget Forms: *Budget Overview (Budget Form A)*, *Budget Summary (Budget Form B)* and *Budget Narrative (Budget Form C)*.
3. Applicant's budget must only contain allowable uses of funds listed in this RFP. Failure to comply with this requirement will impact scoring.
4. Applicants must submit the page(s) from the approved curriculum capitalized equipment list located on the Mississippi State University (MSU), Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) website <https://www.rcu.msstate.edu/>. The capitalized equipment in the budget must be highlighted on the page(s) from the RCU website. Failure to include this information in the proposal will impact scoring.

5. Applicants must submit quotes for the capitalized equipment listed on Budget Form C. Failure to submit quotes for the capitalized equipment with the proposal will impact scoring.

The Budget Section will be evaluated by reviewers to determine if requested funds align with the allowable uses of funds and directly support the accomplishment of the project purpose, priorities, and expected outcomes. All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Project funds must be used for activities that directly support the accomplishment of the project purpose, priorities, and expected outcomes. All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Subgrantees must list all budgetary costs based upon the narrative components and program design and ensure that the budget includes a line-item description for every allowable cost necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the proposed program. It is advisable to consult with the financial office of the applying agency prior to submitting the proposal.

Successful Subgrantees may use grant funds for allowable costs only during the grant award period. **Any costs occurring outside the grant award period are solely the responsibility of the subgrantee and will not be reimbursed by the MDE.**

SECTION 3. GRANT AWARD AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Funds are subject to appropriations by the state/federal government. This grant will be awarded in the amount of \$20,000.00 for fiscal year 26 for an approved project period of one contingent on the availability of funds. All grants will be awarded contingent upon appropriations, proper implementation of the proposed project implementation, completion, and submission of all required documentation. Funding to eligible Applicants is subject to the SBE approval. **The Mississippi Department of Education reserves the right to negotiate grant award amounts with all potential Subgrantees.**

3.1 Use of Funds

The allowable uses of funds for this grant only include the following:

- The purchase of capitalized equipment. The capitalized equipment must be on the approved capitalized equipment list at <https://www.rcu.msstate.edu/Curriculum/AgriculturePathway.aspx?tag=AEST>.

Applicants should be aware that funds must be used in a manner consistent with all requirements of the statute and must be used only to supplement, not supplant, any federal, state, local, or non-federal funds available to support activities.

3.2 Responsibilities of A Fiscal Agent

The following are some of the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of a fiscal agent:

1. As the official Subgrantee, all awards must be adopted by the Local Board of Education for LEAs or the Board of Directors for non-LEAs.

2. Administer the subgrant from award to closeout in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
3. Serve as the Subgrantee representative and point-of-contact for all business management aspects of the award agreement.
4. Apply appropriate management controls using management systems, checklists, and records, including, but not limited to:
 - **Internal Controls**
 - Safeguard assets; ensure reliability of accounting data and subgrant terms and conditions
 - **Operating Controls**
 - Fiduciary procedural manuals; budgetary control
 - **Accounting Controls**
 - Implement controls to ensure reliability of recorded financial data;
 - Maintain appropriate level of transaction review and authorization;
 - Develop and implement proper procurement procedures and cash management procedures that are well defined; and
 - Develop procedures that facilitate timely review and audit of financial activity.
 - **Compliance Controls**
 - Consider mechanisms to monitor and review compliance with subgrant terms (i.e., ensure grant funds are disbursed only to eligible Subgrantees);
 - Ensure **all** expenditures and disbursements are consistent with the objectives of the subgrant award and comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the program and use of funds.
 - **Document Control System**
 - Develop written documentation of adequate internal operating and accounting controls that demonstrate evidence of controls related to grant compliance.
5. Assemble appropriate staff resources and communicate all compliance requirements and resources of the subgrant.
6. Keep abreast of changes in policies, procedures or requirements and continue to advise program staff of subgrant requirements.
7. Request any further “prior approvals” when identified.
8. Submit subgrant reimbursement requests no later than June 30, 2026, with liquidations by July 12, 2026.
 - **Eligibility of Expenditures**
 - Adhere to the list of eligible activities for which funds under the program may be spent, as well as allowable cost objectives in applicable cost principles; and
 - Ensure that transactions are made in a reasonable and prudent manner, are allowable and allocable, and avoid double charging and ensure that credits are applied appropriately.
9. Prepare necessary reports:
 - **Source Documentation**
 - Appropriately support transactions entered into the Subgrantee’s system
 - Documentation tracks each subgrant transaction and supports the validity of financial data reported; and

- Maintain separate funding lines for funds
- **Audit Trail**
 - The lowest level of detail the system should provide is documentation that supports all transactions (e.g., invoices, contracts, purchase orders);
 - The overall recordkeeping system should be able to trace financial statement balances through the Subgrantee's general ledger, cash books and other journals; and
 - Amounts claimed on financial statements and reports accurately reflect the accounting books and records from which they were prepared.
- 10. Use feedback from site visits by the MDE to enhance the program, show Subgrantee's strength and demonstrate commitment to the project.
- 11. Keep the MDE and the public aware and informed about grant project progress.
- 12. Evaluate the extent to which measurable project objectives are being met.
- 13. Liquidate all obligations incurred under the award within the set deadline.
- 14. Ensure and oversee the performance of final audits and resolution of findings.
- 15. Establish adequate system for records retention.

3.3 Audit

Please note that the Subgrantee is required to, **if applicable**, have the financial and compliance audits conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1966 and 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F – Audit Requirements. Any non-federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more in a year in federal awards shall have a single or program specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F. If the non-federal entity did not expend \$750,000 or more in a year in federal awards, a letter **MUST** be provided stating that this requirement does not apply.

The financial audit shall be conducted by a certified public accountant or by an accountant certified as qualified to audit local government accounts. The audits must be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) and the financial statements must be prepared in conformity with general accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

SECTION 4. TENTATIVE TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

A recommendation to the SBE for an approval of awards is anticipated for Applicants based on proposals submitted and accepted, and an evaluation and selection process. All new Subgrantees approved for funding by the SBE at that time must attend subsequent mandatory meetings for all Subgrantees. An award or non-award letter will be sent to Applicants confirming the SBE's action. The letter will include specific information on meeting dates and times, if applicable.

Important tentative dates and activities related to this solicitation are listed below.

Important Dates	Activity
August 26, 2025 September 2, 2025	RFP Issued – Email and Post to MDE Website/Newspaper
September 11, 2025	Pre-proposal Conference
September 15, 2025	Deadline for submitting questions
September 18, 2025	Questions will be posted to the MDE website
September 26, 2025	Proposals deadline by 2:00 PM CST
October 8, 2025	Evaluation of proposals
October 29, 2025	Notification of awards and non-awards
December 5, 2025	To ensure adequate time to expend grant funds, grantees are only allowed 2 Budget Revisions. The deadline for submission of Budget Revisions is December 5, 2025.

SECTION 5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1. Proposal Formatting and Submission Information

Developed by the MDE, this solicitation contains all the forms and instructions necessary to apply for this grant opportunity. Please review the enclosed materials and carefully follow the instructions for completing and submitting a proposal. Before submission, review the proposal requirements to ensure that all sections and documents are complete.

The proposal **must** include **all** the required components listed below in the Submission Requirements section and must be in the exact order to proceed to **Phase II** of the proposal process. **Failure to submit the required completed forms with signatures will result in the rejection of the proposal. The proposal will consist of the required elements listed below ONLY:**

The entire proposal should not exceed 35 pages.

5.2 Submission Requirements

Proposals shall be submitted as described below with section components clearly distinguished as follows:

1. Signed Cover Page (Form 1) - *Required Signature(s)*
2. Signed Assurances (Form 2) - *Required Signature(s)*

3. Signed Standard Terms and Conditions (Form 3) - *Required Signature*
4. Signed Conflict of Interest (Form 4) - *Required Signature*
5. Sign Acknowledge of Amendments (Form 5) - *Required Signature*
6. Program Plan and Implementation Section including the Work Plan Table Form
7. Budget Forms A, B, & C – Complete

5.3 Formatting and Submission Directions

Applicants should submit proposals using the following parameters:

- Submitted on 8.5” x 11” white paper using 12-point Arial/ Times New Roman font
- Formatted using 1” margins on all sides
- Portrait setting
- Double-spaced and single-sided (pages must include the Applicant’s name and page number within the footer in the lower right-hand corner)
- The complete proposal including all attachments shall be submitted in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF) only
- “Links” received to obtain a response via the RFXS will not be opened and the email will be rejected without further consideration for an award
- A response proposal received via the RFXS must include ONE proposal packet per the submission requirements.
- **Duplicate submission** of an electronic or mailed response proposal will result in the **LAST submission** being considered as a modification to the original submission. The previous submissions will be rejected and will not be considered for the evaluation and award. **Any late duplicate copy will disqualify all submissions from the evaluation process for an award.**
- Applicants are encouraged to submit ONE response to prevent duplication. Upon submission of the response a confirmation receipt shall be provided as assurance that the Office of Procurement received the response packet.

This grant competition is highly competitive. Applicants should ensure that all guidelines and requirements are met before submitting proposals. Please note that the MDE staff will not grant permission to Applicants to modify or change the criteria established in the proposal. This includes extending the date and time proposals are due.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit only the requested information. The evaluation committee will have limited time to evaluate proposals; and for this reason, the proposal should focus solely on the requirements of the solicitation. Supplementary materials such as videotapes, CD-ROMs, publications, press clippings, and testimonial letters **will not** be reviewed or returned.

5.4 Proposal Submission and Due Date

A signed proposal packet shall be submitted electronically in PDF format via [RFXS](#) no later than Friday, September 26, 2025, **by 2:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST)**. Applicants shall allow at least **72 hours** in advance of the due date to consider unforeseen technical issues.

Proposals received after the time designated in the solicitation shall be considered late and shall not be considered for an award.

Please NOTE: The email subject line and electronic document shall identify the name of the solicitation and the name of the entity/individual submitting the response. Any deviation from these instructions may result in disqualification of the response proposal and shall not be considered for an award.

Example Format for Subject Line: 21st Century Program by John Blue LLC (DO NOT UNDERSCORE or INSERT SYMBOLS)

OR

Shipping instructions are provided below:

An original signed proposal packet shall be shipped/mailed and received in a sealed envelope at the MDE no later than Friday, September 26, 2025, by 2:00 PM Central Standard Time (CST).

Please NOTE: The return address label must be visible on the outside of the sealed shipping envelope and shall include the name of the entity/individual submitting the response. Any deviation from these instructions may result in disqualification of the response proposal and shall not be considered for an award.

Ship To:

**MONIQUE CORLEY
Office of Procurement
The Mississippi Department of Education
FY26 Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Grant RFP
359 North West Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201**

5.6 Risk of Delivery

Timely submission of the proposal package is the sole responsibility of the Applicant. It is suggested that if the proposal is shipped to the MDE, it should be tracked to require an MDE mailroom staff signature and request a return receipt/notice with signature. Any proposal shipped or mailed MUST be verified, date and time stamped and recorded by an MDE mailroom staff. The time and date of the receipt will be indicated on the sealed envelope or package by the MDE mailroom staff. The only acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the MDE will be identified by the time and date stamp of the MDE mailroom staff on the proposal wrapper or other documentary evidence of receipt used by the mailroom.

Packages that are delivered at the MDE in person by the applicant or a representative will NOT be opened. Packages received by shipping/mail without the appropriate acceptance by the MDE mailroom staff or is received and recorded AFTER the submission deadline will NOT be considered for an award.

The MDE will not be responsible for delivery delays or lost packets. All risk of late arrival due to unanticipated delays – whether delivered by shipping or electronic method – is entirely on the Applicant. All Applicants are urged to take the possibility of delay into account when submitting the proposal and submit the packet via [RFXS](#). **Applicants are encouraged to submit ONE response to prevent duplication. Upon submission of the response a confirmation receipt shall be provided as assurance that the Office of Procurement received the response packet.** The Applicant shall be notified if their proposal was rejected and the reason for such rejection after the applicable State Board of Education session.

Supplemental or revised proposal information, either from the Applicant or another source, will not be accepted. A proposal package must contain every element intending to be submitted. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the procedures for submitting their materials. No changes or additions to a proposal will be accepted after the deadline.

5.5 Restrictions on Communications

At no time shall any Applicant or its personnel, contact or attempt to contact any MDE staff regarding this solicitation. All correspondence shall be sent via email to the assigned contact person within the time specified in the Request for Information section. **Should it be determined that any Applicant has attempted to communicate or has communicated with any other MDE staff regarding this solicitation, MDE, at its discretion, may disqualify the Applicant from submitting a proposal in response to the solicitation.**

5.7 Rejection of Proposals

Proposals that do not conform to the requirements of the solicitation will be rejected by the Mississippi Department of Education. Proposals will be rejected for reasons below:

- The proposal is received late. Late proposals will be maintained unopened in the procurement file.
- The proposal contains unauthorized amendments to the requirements outlined in the solicitation.
- The proposal required signatures have not been obtained.
- The proposal contains misleading signatures, statements, or references.
- The proposal is incomplete or contains irregularities that make the proposal indefinite or ambiguous.
- Additions, modifications, alterations, or perceived improvements to any portion of the solicitation shall be considered non-responsive and will not be evaluated.
- Proposals that do not meet and conform to all requirements as outlined in *Required Submission*.
- The Applicant has previously been cited with major and/or significant deficiencies by the MDE in one or more programs or included on the debarment list.
- Required forms and attachments are not included in the proposal.
- The proposal is determined non-responsive.
- The UEI number is inactive or restricted upon verification, if applicable.
- The Applicant owes the State money.

- The Applicant did not perform prior services in a proper, workmanlike, and/or dignified manner.
- The Format and Procedure for Submission and Delivery of Proposals Section was not followed.
- The proposal packet was attached as a “link” in response to the solicitation.
- In person delivery.

5.8 Conditions of Solicitation

The MDE reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate regarding submitted proposals based on the evaluation criteria contained in the solicitation. The final decision to award a grant rest solely with the MDE.

The Applicant should note the following:

1. The MDE will not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals incurred by the Applicant.
2. The selection of an Applicant is contingent upon favorable evaluation of the proposal; approval of the proposal by the review panel selected by MDE, approved budget and the State Board of Education approval.
3. The selection of an Applicant is contingent upon successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal as required by MDE.
4. The MDE also reserves the right to accept any proposal submitted for grant award, without negotiation. Therefore, Applicants are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.
5. Applicants shall acknowledge all funds and awards are subject to appropriations by the state/federal government and the MDE will not be liable for compensation of any award terminated prior to services beginning.
6. Applicants will be required to assume full responsibility for meeting all specified requirements stated in the solicitation.

5.9 Acceptance of Proposals

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in proposals. A minor irregularity is a variation of the solicitation that does not affect the proposal or the competitiveness, give one party an advantage or benefit over other parties, or adversely impacts the interest of the MDE.

5.10 Modification or Withdrawal of a Proposal

Prior to the proposal due date, a submitted proposal may be withdrawn by submitting a written request for its withdrawal to the MDE, signed by the Applicant.

A proposal may be submitted as an amended proposal before the due date for receipt of proposals. Such amended proposals shall be a complete replacement for a previously submitted proposal

and shall be clearly identified as such. The MDE shall not merge, collate, or assemble proposal materials.

Unless requested by the MDE, no other amendments, revisions, or alterations to proposals shall be accepted after the proposal due date.

Any submitted proposal shall remain a valid proposal for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the proposal due date.

5.11 Disposition of Proposals

All proposals become the property of the state of Mississippi.

a. Protest/Complaint Policy

When an award complaint is issued the complaint must be submitted in writing to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

The mailing address is: Mississippi Department of Education, State Superintendent of Education, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201.

Within 30 days of receiving the hearing request, MDE will hold a hearing on the record to review its action. The Subgrantee or Applicant will receive notice of the hearing and will have the opportunity to participate and be represented by counsel. The hearing will be conducted by an impartial hearing officer. During the hearing, the parties will have the opportunity to present and challenge evidence in an orderly fashion before an impartial decision maker. No later than 10 days after the hearing, the hearing officer, as the impartial decision maker, will issue a written ruling on behalf of MDE including findings of fact and reasons or the ruling. The parties may waive these deadlines by mutual consent in writing.

MDE will rescind its action if it determines the action conflicts with Federal or State laws and regulations governing the grant program. If after review, MDE does not rescind its action, the Subgrantee or Applicant may appeal to the Secretary of the US Department of Education within 20 days of being notified as a result.

MDE will make all records pertaining to any review or appeal of the Subgrantee or Applicant available at reasonable times and places to the Subgrantee or Applicant. This includes records of other Subgrantees and Applicants.

5.12 Requests for Information

Written questions concerning the solicitation should be **emailed** to: danmoore@mdek12.org.

The deadline for submitting written questions by email is **Monday, September 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Times (CST)**. The answers to the questions will be provided to the general public on **Thursday, September 18, 2025**, on the MDE's website www.mdek12.org under RFP/RFQ/RFA/Invitation to Bid section. **No individual replies will be granted.**

A copy of this solicitation, including all attachments and any subsequent amendments, including the Question-and-Answer amendment, if issued, will be posted on MDE's website. It is the sole responsibility of all interested Applicants to monitor the website for updates regarding this

procurement.

SECTION 6. PROPOSAL FORMS & ATTACHMENTS

Each of the forms below must be included in the proposal. Please follow the instructions on the individual forms to ensure each form is complete and signed, if applicable. **Any questions regarding the forms below should be submitted to the identified contact person via email during the time specified in the Request for Information section above.**

Form 1 Cover Page

FY26 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Programs Grant FY26 (School Year 2025-2026) PROPOSAL PACKAGE

Name of School District/Applicant:	Address:	City, State:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:
Amount Requested Fund Year 25-26 \$ _____		

NAME OF SCHOOL(S):	ADDRESS OF SCHOOL(S):	NUMBER OF STUDENTS TO BE SERVED BY GRANT:	GRADE LEVELS TO BE SERVED:

Required signatures:

Superintendent Date _____

Project Coordinator Date _____

Type Information Below:

Phone Number for Project Coordinator _____

E-Mail Address for Project Coordinator _____

Mailing Address for Project Coordinator _____

For MDE program office use only:

Mississippi Department of Education Approval

List name of 1st Level Approver _____

2nd Level Approver _____

Grants Management Director
(If funding with federal funds) _____

Executive Director _____

Approval Date: _____

Form 2
ASSURANCES
(Please read carefully before signing)

The Applicant hereby assures that as a Subgrantee, in accordance with the statute, the Applicant submitting this proposal shall comply with the following:

Certain terms and conditions are required for receiving grants from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE); therefore, the Subgrantee will agree to the items that follow.

- A. The Subgrantee shall be an equal opportunity employer and shall perform to all other applicable requirements; accordingly, the Subgrantee shall neither discriminate nor permit discrimination in its operation or employment practices against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sex in any manner prohibited by law. Further, the Subgrantee agrees to comply with the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
- B. The Subgrantee agrees that the MDE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of Subgrantee related to Subgrantee charges and performance under this agreement. The Subgrantee shall keep such records for a period of five years after final payment under this agreement, unless the MDE authorizes their earlier disposition. Subgrantee agrees to refund to the MDE any overpayments disclosed by any such audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the five-year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues that arise from it.
- C. The Subgrantee assures that it possesses legal authority to apply for and to receive funds under this agreement.
- D. The Subgrantee certifies they have not been barred from contracting or otherwise doing business with the State or Federal Governments.
- E. This agreement shall not be modified, altered, or changed except by mutual agreement by representative(s) of each party to this agreement, and must be confirmed in writing through MDE grant modification procedures.
- F. The Subgrantee shall perform all services as an independent grantee and shall discharge all of its liabilities as such. No act performed or representation made, whether oral or written, by the Subgrantee with respect to third parties shall be binding on the MDE.
- G. The MDE, by written notice, may terminate the grant, in whole or in part, if funds supporting the grant are reduced or withdrawn. To the extent that the grant is for services, and if so terminated, the MDE shall be liable only for payment in accordance with payment provisions of the grant for services rendered prior to the effective date of termination. The MDE, by written notice, may terminate the proposal for nonperformance of the applicant at any time during the term of the program. The Subgrantee agrees that work, data, etc. created under the auspices of the program shall be turned over to the MDE upon such termination. The MDE, in whole or in part, may terminate the program for cause by written notification. Furthermore, the MDE and the Subgrantee may terminate the agreement, in whole or in part, upon mutual agreement. Either

the Mississippi Department of Education or the awardee may terminate this agreement at any time by giving written notice to the other party of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof. The Subgrantee shall be paid an amount which bears the same ratio to the total compensation as the services actually performed bear to the total services of the contractor covered by the agreement, less payments of compensation previously made.

- H. This agreement, and all matters or issues collateral to it, shall be governed by, and constructed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Mississippi.
- I. Subgrantee shall not assign or sub-grant in whole or in part, its rights or obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of MDE. Any attempted assignments without said consent shall be void and of no effect.
- J. The Subgrantee adheres to the applicable regulations of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education: 34 CFR Subtitle B, Parts 100-199.

By signing this statement, the Subgrantee hereby certifies and assures that the school district/entity submitting this document shall comply with MDE Assurances and Certifications in accordance with state and federal regulations requirements, and MDE policy and requirements pertaining to this program. The Subgrantee certifies further that the information submitted on this is true and correct.

Superintendent Signature

Date

Form 3

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Certain terms and conditions are required for contracting. Therefore, the Applicant shall assure agreement and compliance with the following standard terms and conditions.

1. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of MDE to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the congressional appropriation of funds and the receipt of federal funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to MDE, MDE shall have the right upon ten (10) working days written notice to the Subgrantee, to reduce the amount of funds payable to the Subgrantee or to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expenses to MDE of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of reduction or termination shall be as specified in the notice of reduction or termination.

2. CHANGES

This agreement shall not be modified, altered, or changed, except by mutual agreement by an authorized representative(s) of each party to this agreement, and must be confirmed in writing through MDE grant modification procedures.

3. INDEPENDENT SUBGRANTEE

The Subgrantee shall perform all services as an independent Subgrantee and shall discharge all of its liabilities as such. No act performed or representation made, whether oral or written, by Subgrantee with respect to third parties shall be binding on the MDE.

4. TERMINATION

The MDE, by written notice, may terminate this grant, in whole or in part, if funds supporting this grant are reduced or withdrawn. To the extent that this grant is for services, and if so terminated, the MDE shall be liable only for payment in accordance with payment provisions of this grant for services rendered prior to the effective date of termination.

The MDE, in whole or in part, may terminate this grant for cause by written notification. Furthermore, the MDE and the Subgrantee may terminate this grant, in whole or in part, upon mutual agreement.

Either the MDE or the Subgrantee may terminate this agreement at any time by giving 30 days written notice to the other party of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof. The Subgrantee shall be paid an amount which bears the same ratio to the total compensation as the services actually performed to the total services of the Subgrantee covered by the agreement, less payments of compensation previously made.

5. ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Subgrantee agrees that the MDE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit and examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of Subgrantee related to Subgrantee's charges and performance under this agreement. Such records shall be kept by Subgrantee for a period of five (5) years after final payment under this agreement, unless the MDE authorized their earlier

disposition. Subgrantee agrees to refund to the MDE any overpayments disclosed by any such audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the 5-year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it.

6. LAWS

This agreement, and all matters or issues collateral to it, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Mississippi.

7. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Subgrantee assures that it possesses legal authority to apply for and receive funds under this agreement.

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Subgrantee shall be an equal opportunity employer and shall perform to applicable requirements; accordingly, Subgrantee shall neither discriminate nor permit discrimination in its operations or employment practices against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sex in any manner prohibited by law.

9. COPYRIGHTS

The Subgrantee: (i) agrees that the MDE shall determine the disposition to title to and the rights under any copyright by Subgrantee or employees on copyrightable material first produced or composed under this agreement; and, (ii) hereby grants to the MDE a royalty free, nonexclusive, irrevocable license to reproduce, translate, publish, use and dispose of, to authorize others to do so, all copyrighted or copyrightable work not first produced or composed by Subgrantee in the performance of this agreement, but which is incorporated in the material furnished under the agreement, provided that such license shall be only to the extent Subgrantee now has, or prior to the completion or full final settlements of agreement may acquire, the right to grant such license without becoming liable to pay compensation to other solely because of such grant.

Subgrantee further agrees that all material produced and/or delivered under this grant will not, to the best of the Subgrantee's knowledge, infringe upon the copyright or any other proprietary rights of any third party. Should any aspect of the materials become, or in the Subgrantee's opinion be likely to become, the subject of an infringement claim or suite, the Subgrantee shall procure the rights to such material or replace or modify the material to make it non-infringing.

10. PERSONNEL

Subgrantee agrees that, at all times, the employees of Subgrantee furnishing or performing any of the services specified under this agreement shall do so in a proper, workmanlike and dignified manner.

11. SURRENDER OF EQUIPMENT

Subgrantee and MDE shall jointly conduct a closing inventory and Subgrantee shall replace or repair all equipment lost, damaged, or destroyed to make up any deficiency between the opening and closing inventories. Subgrantee shall transfer all equipment per MDE's guidance and written instructions.

12. ASSIGNMENT

Subgrantee shall not assign or subgrant in whole or in part, its rights or obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of the MDE. Any attempted assignment without said consent shall be void and of no effect.

13. MISSISSIPPI ETHICS

It is the responsibility of the Subgrantee to ensure that subcontractors comply with the Mississippi Ethics Law in regard to any conflict of interest. A statement attesting to said compliance shall be on file by the Subgrantee.

I have **read** and **agree** to comply with the Standard Terms and Conditions. I certify that the contents of this proposal, if funded, will be followed for the implementation of the grant award described herein. *Signatures of the Superintendent, Executive Director, Agency Head, and/or Fiscal Agent on this page must match the signatures on the cover page. A representative from each partnering agency must sign the assurances. Failure to sign the above assurances will result in the rejection of the proposal.*

Superintendent

Date

Form 4
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

Mississippi Department of Education

Each Applicant must disclose any personal, business, or volunteer affiliations that may give rise to a real or apparent conflict of interest. The purpose of this form is to help MDE identify the actual or potential conflict and ensure the avoidance where necessary. Please complete and sign the form below as it relates to a conflict of interest within the program activities.

☐ I have no conflict of interest to report.

☐ I have the following conflict of interest(s) to report. Please describe any relationships, transactions, positions you hold (volunteer or otherwise), or circumstances that you believe could contribute to a conflict of interest:

I certify that the information set forth above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I agree that if I become aware of any information that might indicate that this disclosure is inaccurate, I will notify MDE immediately.

Superintendent

Date

Title of Authorized Person

Form 5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AMENDMENTS

The Question-and-Answer amendment shall be signed, if issued. The Question-and-Answer amendment will be posted on the MDE [website](#) under “under RFP/RFQ/RFA/Invitation to Bid section. It is the sole responsibility of all interested applicants to monitor the MDE website for updates regarding any amendments to the solicitations.

BUDGET FORMS

Budget Overview, Narrative, and Summary

All Applicants must submit a ***Budget Overview and Budget*** and a ***Budget Summary***.

When determining the amount to be requested for school districts, please consider the need and the number of students to be served. All Applicants must submit a budget and sustainability plan, if applicable.

Allowable Expenses

Project funds must be used for activities that directly support the accomplishment of the project purpose, priorities, and expected outcomes. All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Applicants must list all budgetary costs based upon the narrative components and program design and ensure that the budget includes a line-item description for every allowable cost necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the proposed program. It is advisable to consult with the financial office of the applying agency prior to submitting the proposal.

Successful Subgrantees may use grant funds for allowable costs only during the grant award period. **Any costs occurring outside the grant award period are solely the responsibility of the Subgrantee and will not be reimbursed by the MDE.**

Instructions for Budget Forms:

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

You may request an amount equal to or less than the first year for additional years, if applicable. Pay attention to applicable program specific instructions given in the solicitation.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Budget Overview Form A (REQUIRED)

All Applicants must complete Budget Form A and provide an overview to support the budget that is presented as part of this solicitation. This overview must address all components listed, if applicable.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget Summary Form B (REQUIRED)

- Applicant must complete Budget **Form B** and provide a breakdown by the applicable budget categories shown.

- Budget Form B must only include the allowable budget category.
- Applicants must not add budget categories to Budget Form B. Failure to comply with these instructions will impact scoring.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Budget Narrative Form C (REQUIRED)

Budget Form C must meet the following requirements.

1. Applicants must not add budget categories to Budget Form C. Failure to comply with these instructions will impact scoring.
2. Budget Form C must be itemized in accordance with the attached CTE Grant Budget Instruction Guide. Failure to provide an itemized budget in accordance with the attached CTE Grant Budget Instruction Guide will impact scoring.
3. Budget Form B and Budget Form C must meet the allowable uses of funds listed in this RFP. Failure to comply with this requirement will impact scoring.
4. Applicants may only use these grant funds to purchase capitalized equipment. For the capitalized equipment listed on Budget Form C budget, applicants must submit the page(s) from the approved curriculum capitalized equipment list located on the Mississippi State University (MSU), Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) website <https://www.rcu.msstate.edu/>. The capitalized equipment listed in the budget must be highlighted on the page(s) from the RCU website. Failure to comply with this requirement of this solicitation will impact scoring.



FY26 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Programs Grant RFP CTE Grant Budget Instruction Guide

The Uses of Funds Section of this Grant RFP must be reviewed to identify the actual allowable costs. This document provides instructions for preparing the budget for the FY26 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Programs Grant RFP. The budget must contain sufficient information for staff to determine if proposed costs are allowable. The budget must be detailed and cannot contain the word “etc.,” or phrases such as “including but not limited to.” This language will not allow MDE to determine if proposed items are allowable. Budgets submitted for CTE Grants must contain the information outlined below on Budget Form C. These guidelines apply to both the grant application and budget revisions.

1. Capitalized Equipment- provide the following on Budget Form C:
 - a. A brief description of how the costs were estimated for the capitalized equipment
 - b. Name of capitalized equipment
 - c. Estimated unit cost and quantity
 - d. The overall total requested for capitalized equipment budget category

BUDGET FORM A
FY26 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Program Grant
BUDGET OVERVIEW

District Name: _____

Provide a brief and concise narrative on the following:

- a. How the items within the budget support the goals of the program;

--

- b. How the requested funds will be allocated for accomplishing tasks and activities described in the proposal;

--

- c. How the major costs indicated on the Budget Summary will be reasonable and necessary in relation to the number of participants to be served, to the scope of the project, and its anticipated outcomes;

--

BUDGET FORM B
Mississippi Department of Education

FY26

Projected Budget Summaries

BUDGET SUMMARY PAGE
FY26 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Grant RFP

Fund Number: 2711

Name of Institution/Applicant:

Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns, if applicable. Please read all instructions before completing form.

BUDGET SUMMARY – FORM B

Budget Categories	Project Year <u>2025-2026</u>
1. Capitalized Equipment	
Total Grant Funds Requested	

BUDGET FORM C

BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY26 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Grant RFP

Use Budget Narrative Form C to provide a complete budget narrative **for a one-year project period**. On this page, provide the following: 1) a brief description that explains how the costs were estimated for the capitalized equipment; 2) the name of the capitalized equipment to be purchased; 3) unit costs; 4) the quantity; 5) the overall total for the budget category; and 6) the total grant amount being requested. This information is required to determine the **necessity and reasonableness** of **all** costs. See the CTE Grant Budget Instruction Guide for additional instructions for completing Form C. Form C may be reproduced as needed. Please do not add budget categories to Budget Form C.

Applicant Name _____

CATEGORY/ACTIVITY	AMOUNT	GENERAL DESCRIPTION
1. Capitalized Equipment Only (Applicants must attach page(s) from Curriculum Research and Curriculum Unit which provide the approved capitalized equipment listing). The capitalized equipment must be highlighted on the page(s) from the RCU website.		
TOTAL GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED:		

END OF DOCUMENT