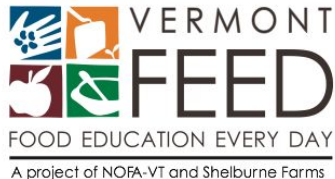


# Values-based Local Food Procurement Strategies

This training is presented by the following partners for the 2020-21 Northeast Farm to School Institute with additional support from the USDA Farm to School Training Grant.



# Agenda for Today

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- Welcome & Introductions
- USDA Procurement Overview
- Integrating Values-based tiered buying within the procurement framework
- Scenarios & small-group discussion
- Q & A
- Evaluation & Closing

## Who's in the Zoom?

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- Change your Zoom name to reflect your State, your first name, and your team/organization name
  - Example: VT - Helen, VT FEED
- Also, please type the same info, with your role as well, into the chat
  - Example: VT - Helen, VT FEED, FTS Prog. Director

# Introductions



**Katina Kefalas** (she/her)  
Northeast Regional Lead,  
Office of Community  
Food Systems, FNS, USDA



**Stephanie Cesario** (she/her)  
Maine FTS Network  
Coordinator



**Helen Rortvedt** (she/her)  
Farm to School Program  
Director  
Northeast Organic  
Farming Association of  
Vermont (NOFA-VT)



**Renee Page** (she/her)  
Executive Director,  
Healthy Communities of  
the Capital Area (Maine)

## **A little inspiration**

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Farm to School in the Saranac Lake School District |  
New York

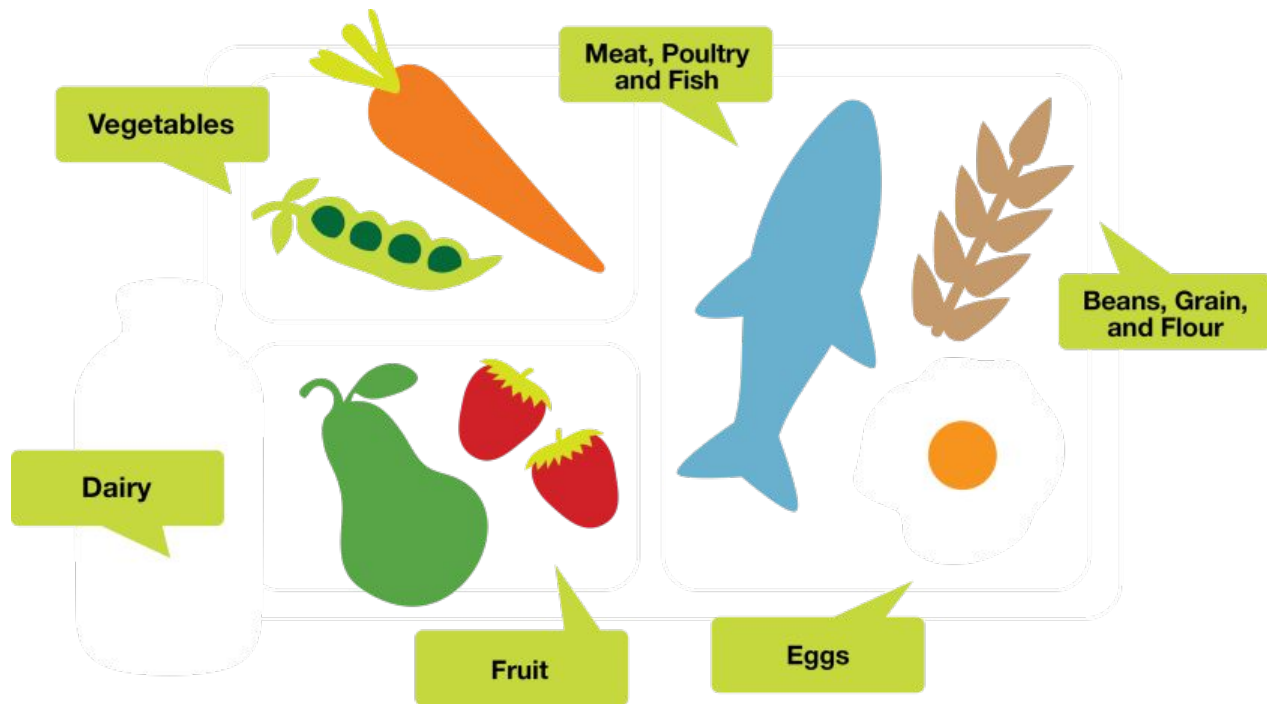
<https://vimeo.com/286184057>



# USDA Procurement Overview

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# Local What?



# Defining Local – up to you!

- Within a radius
- Within a county
- Within a state
- Within a region



A district's definition of local may change depending on the:

- Season
- Product
- Special events





# Where to Get Local Foods

- Through distributors
- Through food service management companies
- From food processors
- Through DoD Fresh
- From individual producers
- From producer co-ops/ food hubs
- From school gardens



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# Principles of Good Procurement



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## What Is Procurement?

Procurement is the purchasing of goods and services.  
The procurement process involves:

### Procurement Principles

Planning

Drafting  
Solicitations/  
Specifications

Advertising the  
Procurement

Awarding  
a Contract

Managing  
the Contract



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## Guiding Principles

Local or non-local product, guiding principles apply to every purchase every time.

**1**

**Federal, State, and  
Local Regulations**

**2**

**Competition  
§2 CFR 200.319**

**3**

**Responsive and  
Responsible  
§2 CFR 200.320**

**4**

**Buy American\*  
§7 CFR 210.21(d)**



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# 1

## State and Local Procurement Policies

- Schools must be aware of procurement requirements at the federal, state and local levels and are responsible for complying with all levels of regulations.
- In some cases, state and federal regulations may be in conflict with each other.

## 2

# Competition

Competition is essential to ensure the best cost and quality of goods and services.



### Ask for what you want, but do not...

- Place unreasonable requirements on firms;
- Require unnecessary experience;
- Give noncompetitive awards to consultants or vendors;
- Have organizational conflicts of interest;
- Specify only brand name products;
- Make arbitrary decisions in the procurement process;
- Write bid specifications that are too narrow and limit competition;
- Allow potential contractors to write or otherwise influence bid specifications; or,
- Provide insufficient time for vendors to submit bids.
- **Use local as a product specification.**



# Responsive and Responsible

**Awards must be made to vendors that are responsive and responsible.**

- Responsive means that the vendor submits a bid that conforms to all terms of the solicitation.
- Responsible means that the vendor is capable of performing successfully under the terms of the contract.



# The Buy American Provision

The National School Lunch Act requires SFAs to purchase domestically grown and processed foods to the maximum extent practicable.

MEMO  
SP 38-2017



**QUIZ: If a vendor cannot meet a school's specifications or requirements, is the vendor responsive?**

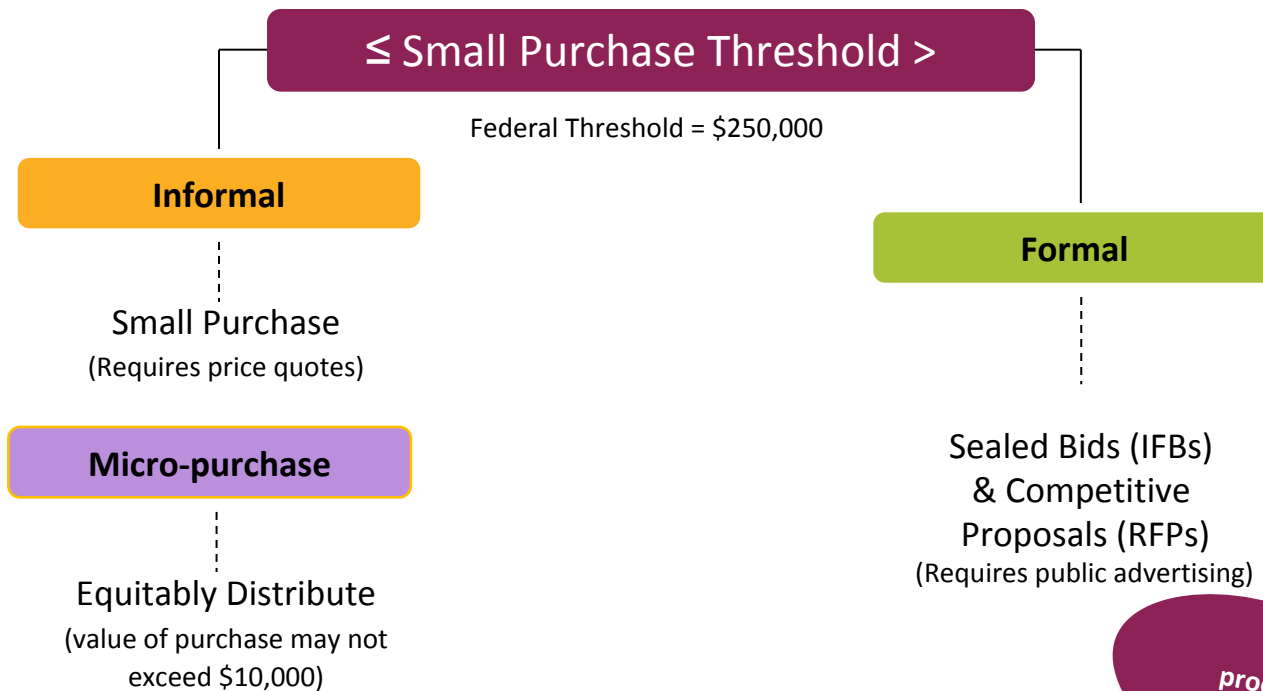


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# Procurement Methods



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**TIP:** The same procurement methods and requirements apply for local and non-local procurements!

**Use it when:**

The aggregate value of your purchase falls below the micro-purchase threshold of \$10,000.

**Micro-purchases enable schools:**

- To purchase supplies or services without soliciting quotations, if the school considers the price reasonable.

**When using the micro-purchase option, schools must:**

- Distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers, and
- Document all purchases.

**Informal**

**Use it when:**

The estimated amount of your purchase falls below \$250,000, your small purchase threshold.

**Small purchases require that schools:**

- Acquire bids from an adequate number of responsible and responsive vendors;
- Develop written specifications; and,
- Document all bids.

**Informal**



**QUIZ: Do the same  
procurement methods and  
rules apply to local  
purchasing as any other type  
of procurement?**



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# Strategies for Targeting Local



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# Write Solicitations Targeting Local Products

- Particular varieties unique to the region
- Freshness (e.g. Delivered within 48 hours)
- Size of farm
- Harvest techniques
- Crop diversity
- Origin labeling
- Able to provide farm visits or class visits



## Example: Use Product Specifications

### Product Specification

- Granny Smith,
- US. Fancy,
- Five 185 count boxes per week for September - December





## Example: Use Product Specifications

### Product Specification

- Granny Smith or local variety,
- US. Fancy or No. 1,
- Prefer five 185 count boxes per week but willing to consider other pack sizes for September – December
- Delivered within 48 hours of harvest





- Apply an advantage to local unprocessed products
- Evaluate your bids and give preference to local
- Many ways to apply this and still ensure fair and open competition
- Can be used in any procurement method

## What is “unprocessed”?



“Unprocessed” agricultural products retain their inherent character. These are the **allowed** food handling and preservation techniques:

- Cooling, refrigerating, and freezing
- Peeling, slicing, dicing, cutting, chopping, shucking, and grinding
- Forming ground products into patties
- Drying and dehydrating
- Washing, packaging, vacuum packing, and bagging
- Adding preservatives to prevent oxidation
- Butchering livestock or poultry
- Pasteurizing milk

Unallowable food handling and preservation techniques include heating and canning.



## Geographic Preference Using One Penny = One Point

	Owen's Orchard	Apple Lane Farms	Bob's Best
Price	\$1.97	\$2.05	\$2.03
Meets geographic preference? (10 points)	No (0 points)	Yes (10 points)	No (0 points)
Price with preference points	\$1.97	\$1.95	\$2.03

---

10 points will be awarded to bids for apples grown within 100 miles of the school board office. 1 point equals 1 penny.

**Quiz: Interest in local products  
can be incorporated into  
multiple sections of any  
solicitation?**



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# Resources



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United States Department of Agriculture

## GEOGRAPHIC PREFERENCE

What it is and how to use it



United States Department of Agriculture

## USDA FOODS: A RESOURCE FOR BUYING LOCAL



United States Department of Agriculture

## USING DOD FRESH TO PURCHASE LOCAL PRODUCE

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh) allows schools to use their USDA Foods entitlement dollars to buy fresh produce. The program, operated by DoD's Defense Logistics Agency, began in school year (SY) 1994-1995 as a pilot in eight states. As of 2013, schools in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam participate; schools received more than \$100 million worth of produce during SY 2012-2013.

### What are the advantages of DoD Fresh?

- ★ **Flexibility:** States can change DoD Fresh allocations on a monthly basis, which allows them to utilize USDA Foods entitlement dollars more effectively. USDA does not impose a cap on the amount of entitlement dollars or the amount of cash reimbursement funds that a state can allocate to DoD purchases.
- ★ **Variety:** DoD Fresh vendors offer as many as 50 different types of produce, available in multiple forms (whole, precut, and a variety of pack sizes) and from multiple locales (local and non local items are routinely offered).
- ★ **Easy ordering and funds tracking:** Schools place orders via the web-based Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order/



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Procuring Local Foods  
for Child Nutrition Programs

# Thank you!



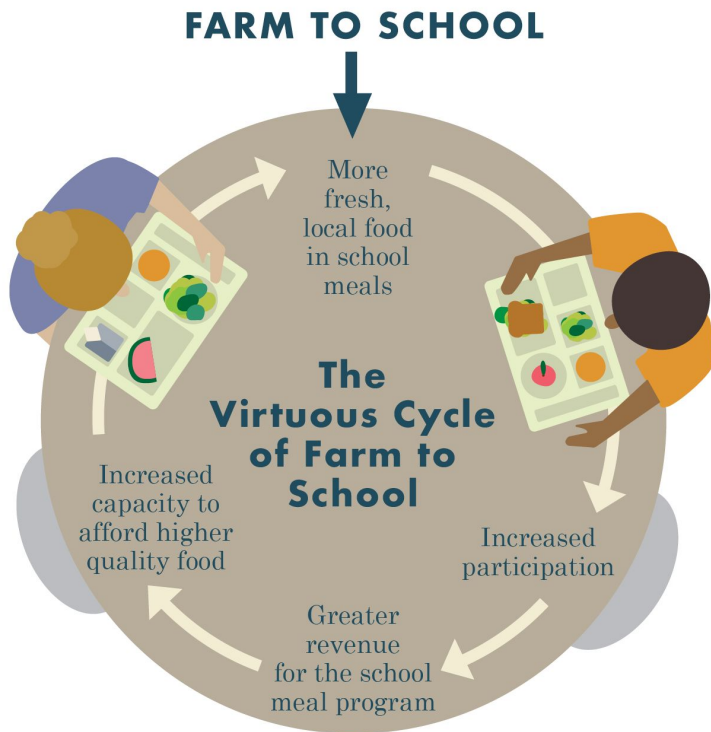
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# Integrating values-based local purchasing within the procurement framework

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Incorporating local foods into school nutrition programs may seem daunting, but the benefits can far outweigh the challenges.

# The Virtuous Cycle of Farm to School



## The Results:

- Support the local agricultural economy
- Improved student focus
- Increased attendance
- Decrease in reported behavior incidents & nurse visits

**Students are nourished,  
engaged, and ready to  
learn.**

{Adapted from our friends at Hunger Free Vermont.}

# Defining your food values

---

Taking the time to develop and communicate which values are motivating your school nutrition program's purchasing decisions has several benefits:

- helps simplify daily decisions and sift through the multiple purchasing options available.
- frames food program decisions within the context of values when speaking to the broader community.
- creates a shared vision and open communication among school nutrition, administration, teachers, parents, and students.

# Defining “local”

---

- Not just a focus on geography; Several motivators exist for buying local
- “Local” is often a proxy for other values
  - Freshness, High Quality, Homemade
  - Healthy
  - Local economy
  - Responding to customer demand
  - Fair trade
  - Affordability
- What are you trying to accomplish?
  - Is there state based legislation regarding local purchasing that you'd like to be aligned with?
  - Do you want to bring as many local product as possible onto the menu quickly?
  - Do you want to couple local purchases with farm visits and have personal relationships with suppliers?

# How to integrate values-based local procurement

---

1 Articulate your Purchasing Values Statement with your school nutrition team and Farm to School committee

2  
3  
4  
5  
6



# Creating a Local & Values-Based Purchasing Action Plan

Each institution has a unique set of priorities, challenges, and values that determines what food they purchase, how much of it they'll buy, where that food comes from, and how it will be used. This worksheet is designed to help you to articulate your food values, what program considerations and logistics impact your purchasing, and how these factors determine your goals toward local/regional and values-based purchasing.

Once you've completed this worksheet, you will be able to better communicate the good work your Food/Nutrition Program is doing to purchase local and values-based products.

## 1) Values

When we buy food we unconsciously use a set of values that determine our purchasing. These values may include issues such as: quality, cost, convenience, origin, labor, safety, production practices, distribution, economic impact, and sustainability.

The first step in creating a successful *Local and Values-Based Purchasing Action Plan* is to articulate the values of the customers, community, and food/nutrition program staff. To complete the boxes below, it's important to gather information from each group on their values. The different groups may have shared, similar, different, or even conflicting values –there are no wrong answers!

### Food/Nutrition Program

### Community


### Customers



# How to integrate values-based local procurement

---

- 1 Articulate your Purchasing Values Statement with your school nutrition team and Farm to School committee
- 2 Identify local vendors you are currently working with or would like to work with
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6



Direct from  
individual  
producers

Food  
Hubs

School  
gardens

DoD  
Fresh

Food  
processors


Producer  
co-ops

Broadline  
Distributors

# How to integrate values-based local procurement

---

- 1 Articulate your Purchasing Values Statement with your school nutrition team and Farm to School committee
- 2 Identify local vendors you are currently working with or would like to work with
- 3 **Determine which programs you want to develop a bid for and which products you are seeking**
- 4
- 5
- 6



Which  
Programs?

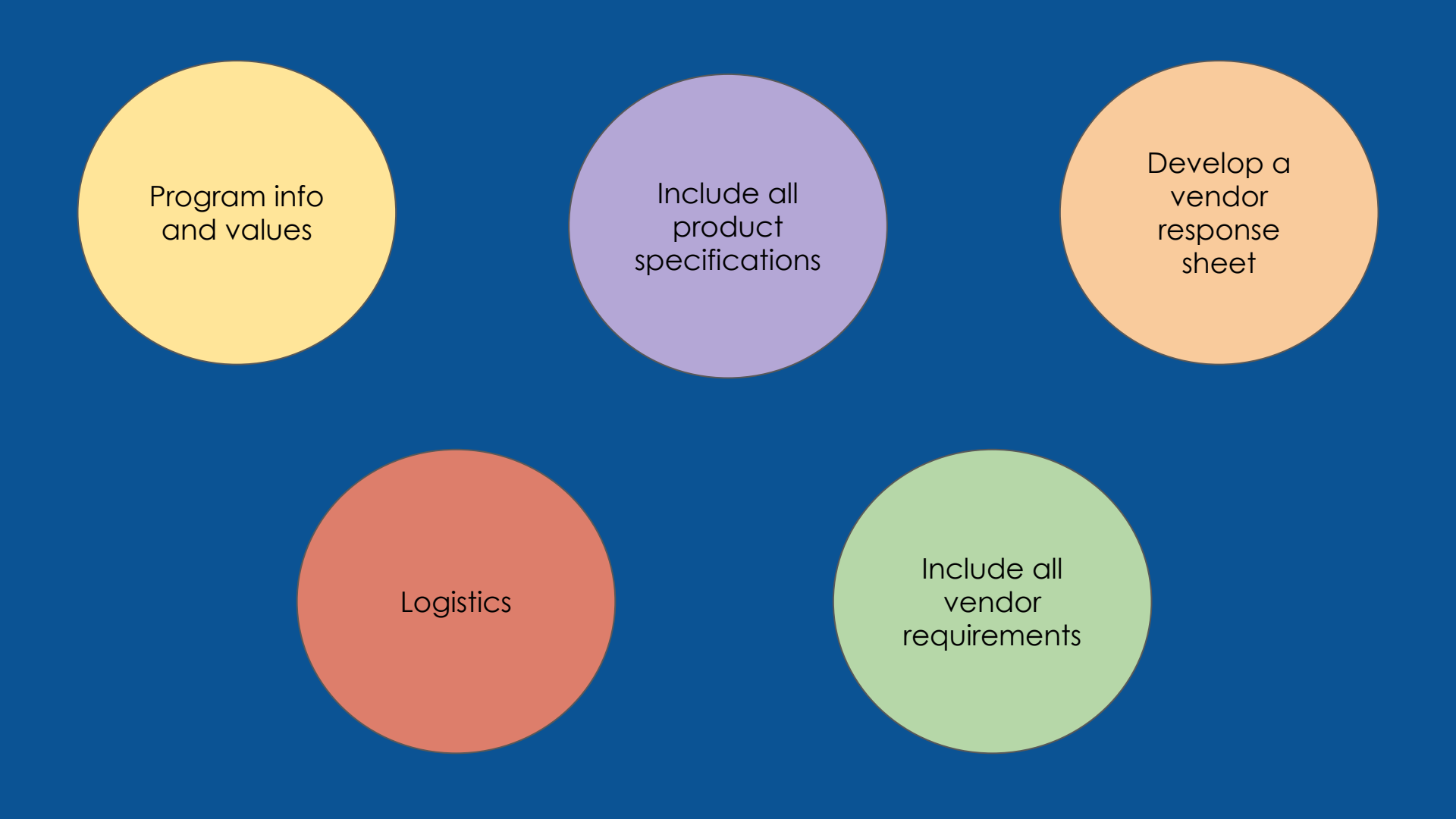
Bid timeframe  
(week, month,  
season, year)

Determine  
specifications  
that will target  
local products

# How to integrate values-based local procurement

---

- 1 Articulate your Purchasing Values Statement with your school nutrition team and Farm to School committee
- 2 Identify local vendors you are currently working with or would like to work with
- 3 Determine which programs you want to develop a bid for and which products you are seeking
- 4 **Write up your solicitation**
- 5
- 6



Program info  
and values

Include all  
product  
specifications

Develop a  
vendor  
response  
sheet

Logistics

Include all  
vendor  
requirements

## Informal Solicitation Bid - General Template

**NOTE TO SCHOOL:** Please use your letterhead and whatever parts of this template meets your needs.

### Informal General Solicitation Bid

The **(School)** is inviting you to participate in the following bid for the purchase of \_\_\_\_\_.  
Please see the *Vendor Response Sheet* to submit a bid.

Bid must be returned electronically by: \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct any and all questions to:

**(Your contact information)**

**Our Farm to School Program—values statement and purchasing goals are as follows:**  
(This is important so that producers know more about you and your school food program)

The **(your program)** is a Farm to School and Nutrition Program that believes the following:  
**(These are examples, use what you want.)**

- Access to nutritious, safe, healthy and delicious food is paramount for the success of students.
- We honor the work of our farmers and value the importance of connecting to local farms and agriculture.
- Providing health and nutrition educational opportunities for students is part of the overall educational experience.
- Supporting local and regional producers benefits everyone.

**Specifics about our program**

**(Ex: number of students served and grades, number of schools, days of operation)**

**Specifications for products:**

**(Ex: Note if you are willing to adjust any of these criteria, state that flexibility)**

**Additional vendor requirements:**

**(Ex: Willing to visit classrooms or do an occasional taste test; carries liability insurance, source of the product, identified at time of purchase, delivery schedule and locations, return policy)**

**Payment Terms and Process:**

**(Provide your invoicing and payment process)**

**Buy American:** The Buy American provision requirements. Section 104(d) of the William F. Goodling Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-336) added a provision, Section 12(n) to the NSLA (42 USC 1760(n)), requiring school food authorities (SFAs) to purchase, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodity or product.

## Product Solicitation Bid

**Name:**

**Farm name and address:**

**Contact information:**

Producers will be good candidates for our program and the bidding process if they meet ALL the requirements listed below. If all requirements are met, the lowest price will win the bid.

Instructions: Please indicate which of the vendor criteria you can fulfill, and fill in your price.	
Criteria (include those from the specifications for product and vendor requirements listed in the solicitation)	Yes/No
Price (includes delivery costs).	\$

**The award will go to the vendor who is able to meet all the criteria above and gives the lowest bid.**

**Notification criteria:**

- All producers will receive a notification letter via email informing them of the school or district award decisions.
- This letter will contain the name of the producers awarded the bid.
- A general outline of the ordering and delivery process and duration of the awarded bid will also be included.

**Timeline:**

Quote submissions are due:

Decisions made by and communicated by:

Orders may be placed as early as:

**Please return bids to:**



# How to integrate values-based local procurement

---

- 1 Articulate your Purchasing Values Statement with your school nutrition team and Farm to School committee
- 2 Identify local vendors you are currently working with or would like to work with
- 3 Determine which programs you want to develop a bid for and which products you are seeking
- 4 Write up your solicitation
- 5 **Send out your solicitation**
- 6

For informal bids: You  
decide who to send  
solicitation to

Share all criteria with all  
prospective vendors

Gather at least 3 bids

Prices can be verbal or  
written quotes, OR posted  
prices

# How to integrate values-based local procurement

---

- 1 Articulate your Purchasing Values Statement with your school nutrition team and Farm to School committee
- 2 Identify local vendors you are currently working with or would like to work with
- 3 Determine which programs you want to develop a bid for and which products you are seeking
- 4 Write up your solicitation
- 5 Send out your solicitation
- 6 **Document**

# VT FEED Local Procurement Toolkit:

<https://vtfeed.org/local-food-procurement-toolkit>

# Scenarios

- Please turn your cameras on! :)
- 3 breakout rooms, each w/ a facilitator
- Each discussion will be recorded
- 15-20 min for discussion
- 5 minutes to prepare report out
  - 1 representative from your group will have 1 minute to share out

## Scenario 1 (Facilitator: Renee)

---

Your school district lies near a state border, and your community enjoys a lot of interstate economic activity. The Farm to School committee would like to define local as being within 25 miles of each school, and the schools are spread out over a wide geographic area, making for a potentially complicated definition of local, district-wide.

## Scenario 2 (Facilitator: Helen)

---

Your school district has recently formed a FTS Committee and they have developed the following Values Statement:

*“We support a FTS program that fosters student ownership of healthy eating habits that also develop connection to (and stewardship of) their community, their environment, and their local community.”*

How might you reflect this values statement and put it into action in your school nutrition program purchasing?



## Scenario 3 (Facilitator: Katina)

---

Y.our school has a garden program that seems to change every year. New parent/volunteer coordinators have come and gone, different produce is grown every year, and production has really fluctuated, too. One thing is constant, however: the coordinator always wants to see garden produce end up in your menus! This year's garden coordinator is determined to make the program a little more sustainable, too, and has asked if you can purchase the garden produce in order to generate some funding to buy seeds and equipment for next year's garden

## Scenario Discussion Reflections

---

- What were some key takeaways?
- What struck you? Any “a ha!” moments or ideas?
- What questions remain?

# Thank you!

Please take a minute to fill out [this evaluation survey](#).

Your input is really valuable for the presenters!

# Keep in touch!

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