

2024-2025 Equipment Grant Processing
Texas Dept of Agriculture (TDA)–Food & Nutrition Division

- I. Texas has an award amount of \$1,146,825. TDA intends to have the equipment grant awards announced by August 2025.
- II. TDA will use an internally designed on-line application within the Texas Department of Agriculture’s (TDA) agency website for grant applications. TDA will email invitations to apply for the grants to all Superintendents and Child Nutrition Directors of eligible School Food Authorities (SFAs). The Word document “Application Design” is a mock-up of the grant application flow for applicants.
- III. TDA will process grant payments through its CAPPS Financial system after the SFA has completed the purchase and installation of approved equipment. To request reimbursement, SFAs will provide the following forms and information to TDA:
 - a. TDA Claim Cover Sheet & the purchasing invoice.
 - b. Form 74-176 “Vendor Direct Deposit Authorization,” for TDA if necessary.
 - c. An active Unique Entity ID (UEI) issued by SAM.gov. To register with SAM.gov, the CE must go to <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.
- IV. Memo SP 20-2024 dated May 16th, 2024, from USDA defines the minimum threshold for the purchase of equipment at \$1,000, as specified by Congress¹. Based on this memo, equipment requests with a “per unit value” of less than \$1,000 will be ineligible.
- V. Due to the limited funds available and prior experience, TDA will limit the award amount any one SFA can receive to \$60,000. TDA arrived at the \$60,000 value in 2014 by allowing for roughly 2% of the total 2014 grant value. This threshold has worked well in past awards, and TDA recommends that it should be utilized again for 2024.
- VI. TDA will only award 2024-2025 equipment grants to SFA sites that have not received one in a prior year.
- VII. Per the USDA guidance regarding the Equipment Grants, TDA will score requests based on the following criteria:
 - a. TDA will provide additional points to schools with limited access to other financial resources. SFAs must provide TDA their 2024-2025 fund balance as of August 31, 2025. SFAs with more than a 3-month average fund balance will be ineligible.
 - b. TDA will provide additional points for higher free and reduced-price percentages/CEP designations. TDA will preload this information based on the September 2025 NSLP and SBP claim data into its application database.
 - c. TDA will prioritize awards to school sites in SFAs where no other sites have received prior year awards.
 - d. TDA has pre-scored all eligible equipment to allow expedited application processing. The attached scoring spreadsheet demonstrates how applications and eligible equipment meet USDA requirements to:
 - 1) Improve the safety of the food served in school meals.
 - 2) Improve overall nutrition and food quality.
 - 3) Improve or expand participation in NSLP/SBP programs.
 - 4) Improve the availability of healthier food choices.
 - 5) Improve overall student convenience and appeal.
 - e. TDA will require SFAs to report the age of the existing equipment to be replaced with the grant funds. Scoring will give priority to older or non-existent equipment.

¹ Congress.gov. "Text – H.R.4366 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024." March 9th, 2024.
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/4366>.

- f. SFAs must indicate whether the equipment requested will be used to expand the School Breakfast Program (SBP). This serves only to highlight the approach requested in USDA memo SP 20-2024² and will not be considered in the application scoring.
- VIII. Application scoring will be based on a total of 100 points. See spreadsheet for the specific scoring criteria.
- IX. Tie-breaker process: TDA will use the following tiebreaker schematic if needed:
 - a. If a site is already receiving one or more awards from the current award process (as in they submitted a request for multiple items and their 2nd, 3rd, or more requests are in the tiebreaker)—TDA will exclude those request(s) that fell into the tie breaker.
 - b. If a tiebreaker remains after the first process, TDA will rank requests in order of free and reduced percentages / CEP claiming percentage. The highest percentage wins.
 - c. If a tiebreaker remains after the second process, TDA will rank the SFAs on the ratio of available funds. A lower ratio indicates a lower fund balance available. The lowest available funds ratio wins.
 - d. If a tiebreaker exists after the third process, TDA will use equipment age. The oldest or non-existent equipment would be awarded.
 - e. For ties within a single CE, the CE’s chosen priority would dictate the winner. If the CE has not specified a priority, TDA will award the site with the highest enrollment so that more students may benefit from the grant award.
- X. For grant year 2024, SFAs operating Seamless Summer Option in school year 2025 – 2026 are eligible to apply.
- XI. Deadlines, performance period, and links to governing CFRs will be posted on TDA’s squaremeals.org website and linked on the FAQs posted online and emailed to sub-awardees.
- XII. TDA Compliance will assess equipment awards use during the Administrative Review process.
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- XIII. Other Requirements:
 - 1. Quarterly and Final FNS–425 financial report for the grant – 30 days after each quarter's end and 120 days after the performance end date.
 - 2. Reporting for the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) once awarded.
 - 3. A Final FNS-908 Performance Progress Report will be submitted to USDA.
 - 4. Preliminary Timeline:
 - a. 08/14/25 – USDA approval of scoring methodology
 - b. 08/25/25 – Announce upcoming grants application to SFAs.
 - c. 09/29/25 – Open application process for SFAs to submit requests.
 - d. 10/31/25 – Close application process for SFAs (11:59pm)
 - e. 11/01/25 – 11/14/25 – Scoring of application and preparing award letters and documents.
 - f. 11/24/25 – Announce awards via USPS mailed award letter and email to both Superintendent and Child Nutrition Director.

²“Equipment purchased under the subgrant must be for the purpose of serving healthier meals, improving food safety, and/or helping to support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of the School Breakfast Program.”