

**From:** Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 18, 2011 4:24 PM  
**To:** MDE-SchoolNutrition  
**Subject:** Tuesday News from MDE 101811

The weeks fly by, don't they? Already getting close to Halloween!! Here is the latest:

- 1) Rural Area Equipment Grant – Attached is letter from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) detailing some low cost loans and grants that are available through the USDA's Rural Development's Community Facilities Program. Note that these loans/grants can be used for a variety of food service needs. Also, please note that these loans/grants are not administered through this office. You will need to contact your local Rural Development Office or go online to: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF\\_CF.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF_CF.html).
- 2) Promotions and Special Events – I know this is a bit of a \$64,000 Question (for those too young to know that reference, think of the million dollar question on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire"), but just as I collected a list of the nutrition changes that were made at your district, I would like you to send me promotions that you have done at your school that have been successful – in terms of participation, public relations, just plain fun, success even when it is repeated, and/or educating the public on school lunch. Notice I said "or." A successful promotion doesn't have to have all these qualities, not necessarily even an increase in participation. A promotion that achieves any or all of these end results can be considered successful. Anyway, if I get a good list, I will compile and send out for all to use. If participation does increase, include some information if possible.
- 3) School Nutrition Association of Michigan (SNAM) Annual Conference – This important conference is coming up soon, November 10-13, in Traverse City at the Grand Traverse Resort. The School Nutrition Programs (SNP) Unit will be providing various training including our all encompassing School Meals Program Requirements Training. I will be giving a Michigan Department of Education Update and Marla Moss will be talking about the new fresh produce program pilot that Michigan has been awarded. Here is the link to the SNAM website: <http://www.michigansna.org/>.
- 4) Thanks – Last week I asked for volunteer schools to host a meeting for us state employees at the School Nutrition Programs (SNP) unit. A good number of schools volunteered to host my group and I will be contacting the "winner" soon. I appreciate all that offered their hospitality.
- 5) Roadblocks and Barriers – While we have been focusing on treating our sponsors and food service directors as customers, I know there is still a feeling that sometimes the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) can be a roadblock or barrier to achieving your goals. Keeping in mind that the vast majority of the tasks, duties and responsibilities

we ask of you, are from USDA, do you have any constructive ideas on how we can more effectively do all of our jobs? No promises but I am interested in hearing how the field views us.

Enough for this week. I'll be back at it next week.

*Howard Leikert, MBA, SNS*

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*Looking for information on local schools? Go to [www.michigan.gov/mischooldata](http://www.michigan.gov/mischooldata).*



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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SUBJECT: Rural Development's Community Facilities Program

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All States

To support Secretary Vilsack's and Deputy Secretary Merrigan's focus on rural development, this memorandum brings attention to the USDA's Rural Development Community Facilities (CF) program. The CF program provides loans and grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population and offers a unique opportunity for non-profit organizations, public bodies, and tribal organizations to upgrade their community's child nutrition facilities and purchase equipment that could improve access to healthy, locally, or regionally grown products.

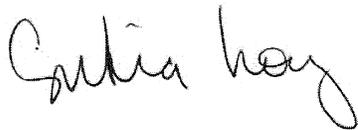
The CF low-interest loans and grants are available to public entities such as county and local governments, non-profit organizations, and tribal organizations. These funds can be used to construct, enlarge or improve community facilities that provide healthcare, education, public safety, and public services. Specific to the Child Nutrition Programs, the CF loan/grant funds could be used to improve public buildings like school food service facilities, Head Start centers, pre-schools, adult day care centers, child day care centers, and food preparation centers.

In the past, communities have used CF funds to renovate cafeterias and purchase food preparation and storage equipment. For example, a County Board of Education Food Service Division, that provides breakfast and lunch programs for public school students, used CF funds to improve a warehouse by adding refrigeration units for fresh fruits and vegetables, which allowed them to purchase larger quantities, expand choices, and increase the amount of locally grown food served in their schools. One school used a CF loan to expand their campus to include an organic vegetable garden and fruit orchards which provide fresh produce for the after school snack program. Another school purchased a convection food steamer to prepare locally grown vegetables with CF funds.

The CF loans and grants are both competitively scored, however, according to Rural Development, grant funds are limited. Therefore, we encourage communities to consider the affordable low-interest, fixed-rate loans the CF program offers. Child Nutrition Programs operating in small, low-income communities may be eligible for a higher percentage of grant funding or loans.

Regional Directors  
State Directors  
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State agencies are encouraged to share this information with School Food Authorities and sponsors participating in the Child Nutrition Programs. Please direct interested participants to work through their local USDA Rural Development office to learn more about how the CF Program can help them expand their access to and support local and regional foods. Further information about this opportunity can be found at the following website: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF\\_CF.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF_CF.html) and within the attached information.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia Long".

Cynthia Long  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment

## Community Facilities Program

The Community Facilities (CF) Program supports the success of rural communities by providing loans and grants for the construction, acquisition, or renovation of community facilities or for the purchase of equipment for community projects. Among other things, these facilities can improve access to high-quality and affordable local foods.

### *Who is eligible to apply for CF loans and grants?*

Local governments, non-profit organizations, and State and Federally-recognized Indian tribes are all eligible to apply for funds to finance “essential community facilities.” Applications must be for projects in rural areas (defined as areas with no more than 20,000 residents).

### *What is a Community Facility? How does this program relate to agriculture?*

The uses of CF funds are limited principally by the requirement that the project be for the benefit of the community as a whole rather than for a private, commercial purpose. To help ensure that a facility under the control of a non-profit organization will carry out a public purpose and continue to serve rural communities, USDA looks for strong ties between the organization and the rural area in which it is located. Such ties might be evidenced by a local board membership base or funding from the local government or community.

The CF program finances many types of facilities and equipment that facilitate distribution and marketing of local foods. Projects that support local and regional food systems that may qualify for CF funding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Farmers markets
- Community kitchens and food distribution centers
- Facilities and equipment used by not-for-profit food distribution networks
- School cafeteria renovations and equipment
- Community food banks

### *What are Loan and Grant Amounts?*

Loan amounts vary widely depending on the project. Grants, which are available for projects in communities with smaller populations and lower median household incomes, are usually highly leveraged with other loan and grant awards.

### *How do I apply?*

All applications for CF projects are filed and processed in the local USDA Rural Development Office for the project location. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and are subject to funds availability. Contact your Local Office either by telephone or through our website to obtain more information on how to proceed with your loan or grant request. The locations and contact information for Local Offices can be found at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd\\_map.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html). For more detailed information about eligibility, loan rates and terms, and security requirements, you can also visit our website at [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF\\_CF.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF_CF.html)