To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to award grants to eligible entities for farm to school programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2010

Mr. HOLT (for himself, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. BOYD, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to award grants to eligible entities for farm to school programs.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Farm to School Improvements Act of 2010”.

SEC. 2. FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 19, the following:
“SEC. 19A. FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide assistance, through competitive matching grants and technical assistance, to eligible entities for farm to school programs that—

“(1) improve access to local foods in schools and institutions participating in programs under this Act and section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773) through farm to school activities, including the purchase of local food, establishment of effective relationships between school and institutional food service providers, distributors, and producers or groups of producers, school gardens, appropriate equipment, and the provision of training and education; and

“(2) are designed to—

“(A) improve the nutritional health and well being of children;

“(B) procure healthy local foods from small and medium-sized farms for meals at eligible schools and institutions;

“(C) support experiential nutrition education activities and curriculum planning that incorporates the participation of school children in farm and garden-based agricultural education activities;
“(D) develop a sustained commitment to farm to school programs in the community by linking schools and institutions, State and local agencies including Indian Tribal Organizations, institutions of higher education, agricultural producers, parents, community garden groups and other community stakeholders; and

“(E) increase farm income by facilitating farmers’ access to institutional markets including schools.

“(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(1) a school;

“(2) nonprofit organization; or

“(3) other entity that the Secretary determines offers a unique ability to provide services or farm-to-school programs.

“(c) GRANTS.—

“(1) TYPES OF GRANTS.—A grant awarded under this section may include—

“(A) an implementation grant to support the cost of implementing a farm to school program;

“(B) a training and technical assistance grant to support the cost of—
“(i) providing the training, operational support, information, and access to resources necessary to implement a successful farm to school program; and

“(ii) encouraging collaboration between public and private entities; or

“(C) a planning grant to support the cost of conducting research, identifying resources, and developing partnerships to design a successful and sustainable farm to school program.

“(2) Grant Amounts.—A grant awarded under this section to an eligible entity shall not exceed

“(A) in the case of an implementation or training and technical assistance grant, $100,000; and

“(B) in the case of a planning grant, $25,000.

“(3) Grant Duration.—A grant under this section shall be awarded for a period—

“(A) in the case of an implementation or training and technical assistance grant, not to exceed 2 years; and

“(B) in the case of a planning grant, not to exceed 1 year.
“(d) Cost Share.—

“(1) In General.—The amount of a grant made under this section shall not exceed 75 percent of the cost of the proposed grant activities.

“(2) Non-Federal Support.—A recipient of a grant under this section shall be required to provide at least 25 percent of the cost of the proposed grant activities in the form of cash or in-kind contributions (including facilities, equipment, training, or services provided by State and local governments and private sources).

“(e) Evaluation.—A recipient of a grant under this section shall cooperate in an evaluation by the Secretary of the programs carried out using such grant funds.

“(f) Regional Balance.—In making awards and providing technical assistance under this section, the Secretary shall to the maximum extent practicable, ensure—

“(1) geographical diversity; and

“(2) equitable treatment of urban, rural, and tribal communities.

“(g) Technical Assistance.—The Secretary shall provide recipients of grants under this section with technical assistance, which shall include sharing information, best practices, research, and data on existing farm to school programs.
“(h) PROPOSALS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity desiring to receive a grant under this section shall submit a proposal to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(2) COMPETITIVE AWARD SELECTION.—The Secretary shall form review panels to evaluate proposals submitted under paragraph (1) based on the criteria described in paragraph (3). Such review panels shall include—

“(A) representatives of schools and eligible institutions;

“(B) registered dietitians;

“(C) operators of small and medium-sized farms;

“(D) public agencies;

“(E) non-governmental and community-based organizations with expertise in local food systems and farm to school programs; and

“(F) other appropriate parties as determined by the Secretary.

“(3) PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA.—In making awards under this section, the Secretary shall evalu-
ate proposals based on the extent to which the proposed program—

“(A) improves the nutritional health and well being of children;

“(B) makes local food products available on the menu of the school or institution;

“(C) benefits local small and medium-sized farms;

“(D) incorporates experiential nutrition education activities and curriculum planning that incorporates the participation of school children in farm and garden-based agricultural education activities;

“(E) serves schools and eligible institutions with a high proportion of children who are eligible for free and reduced price lunches;

“(F) demonstrates collaboration between schools or institutions, non-governmental and community-based organizations, farmer groups, and other community partners;

“(G) demonstrates the potential for long-term program sustainability;

“(H) includes adequate and participatory evaluation plans; and
“(I) meets such other related criteria as the Secretary may determine relevant.

“(i) FUNDING.—Beginning on October 1, 2010, or of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer to the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out this section $10,000,000 each fiscal year, to remain available until expended.”.

(b) CONFORMING CHANGE.—Section 18(g) of the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769(g)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraphs (1) and (2); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively.