

## **Competitive Procurement and Private Grants for School Food Programs**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently brought to our attention that some school districts may be applying for or participating in grant programs aimed at assisting schools with start-ups or expansions of the Child Nutrition Programs, specifically the School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Programs. The foundations sponsoring the grants are associated with companies that provide goods and services to school meals programs. Review of these grant programs revealed that at least some contain a mandatory purchasing component, requiring recipients to purchase and use a vendor-specified product for a stipulated amount of time.

Please be reminded that all school food authorities (SFAs) must comply with the federal procurement requirements set forth in program regulations and must require procurements be conducted in a competitive manner.

Due to the proprietary purchasing requirements imposed by these particular grant programs, an SFA would be unable to participate in the grant while adhering to all required program regulations, specifically those addressing procurement activities. SFAs that already received such a grant must take immediate steps to curtail the grant or to ensure that all purchases made because of the grant requirements come only from non-program funding sources. The SFA may not go forward with the grant purchasing requirements using nonprofit school food service account funds.

If you have any questions regarding this topic, please contact our office at (800) 545-7892 or via electronic mail at [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net).