PROGRAM’S OBJECTIVE
The Farmers to Families Food Box Program’s goal is to ensure that Americans in need have access to fresh food during the COVID-19 pandemic. USDA is partnering with national, regional and local distributors, whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of restaurants, hotels and food service businesses. The program will purchase up to $3 billion in fresh produce, dairy and meat products. Distributors will package these products into family-sized boxes, then transport them to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need. The first round of purchases totaling up to $1.2 billion occurred from May 15 through June 30, 2020. The second round will aim to purchase up to $1.47 billion July 1 through August 31, 2020. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service may elect to extend the period of performance of the contracts, via option periods, dependent upon program success and available remaining funds, up to $3 billion.

HOW IT WORKS
1. Farmers sell food previously destined for restaurants and bulk purchasers to distributors preventing waste.
2. Distributors partner with USDA to package family-sized boxes with fresh produce, dairy and meat products, then transport them to non-profits across America.
3. Families pick up food boxes from local schools, food banks, faith-based organizations and other non-profits.

REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY
USDA has approved up to $1.27 billion in extended contracts and up to $202 million in new contracts to support American producers and communities through the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program. USDA extended contracts to select vendors from the first round of the program and approved new contracts with select vendors whose offers were not previously accepted due to various issues in their proposals. These contracts will be exercised within the second performance period, July 1 through August 31, 2020. These distributors will help direct food to underserved areas and will have an increased focus on opportunity zones, places where either no food boxes have yet been delivered, or where food boxes are being delivered but require additional need.

In addition to these contracting activities, USDA is preparing to announce additional opportunities for new vendors to participate in the program in the weeks to come. USDA is exploring different contracting vehicles available for these additional purchases. Information about this next round of contracting will be made available on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program website at www.usda.gov/farmers-to-families.

The solicitation and SF 1449 form with instructions on how to complete the proposal are available here.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
a. Distributors must submit an invoice package that indicates the number of boxes delivered, contents of boxes and proof of delivery to a non-profit or other organization in the contract.

b. Through the contracting process, USDA will require that distributors participating in the program maintain records showing their deliveries have occurred to appropriate non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations will be responsible for timely distribution of food.
ENTITIES THAT ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FOOD BOXES FROM CONTRACTED DISTRIBUTORS
Any entity that provides to the distributor proof of its 501(c)(3) tax exempt status or is a government entity (e.g. school food authority, Indian tribe), who can demonstrate that it has the operational and financial capability to receive, store and distribute requested food items, is eligible to receive food boxes from contracted distributors. Governmental organizations that submit requests must have similar operational and financial capability.

CONSIDERATIONS
• $1.2 billion of the program's $3 billion available funding has been used in the base performance period of the program.
• The contracting officer evaluates proposals on the four components in descending order of importance:
  - Technical Information
  - Price
  - Past Performance
  - Offeror Capability
• Distributors will work directly with non-profit organizations to determine details regarding delivery, including volume and delivery schedules.
• The prime contractor/distributor receiving an award is responsible for all aspects of contract performance. The aspects of performance include, but are not limited to:
  - Sourcing product for inclusion in boxes.
  - Conducting all aspects of preparing the boxes.
  - Sourcing and communicating with non-profits.
  - Transportation and final delivery of boxes to the non-profit on a mutually agreeable recurring schedule.
• If a non-profit organization does not have a pre-existing relationship with a distributor, the non-profit should contact the distributor that has been awarded a contract within their service region. A list of approved distributors by region is available here.

WHO CAN BE CONTACTED TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT?
If you have any question regarding the specified requirements, please call 816-823-2169 or email ERAcquisition@usda.gov.
For more information about the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, please email USDAFoodBoxDistributionProgram@usda.gov or visit https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/farmers-to-families-food-box.

Source: ams.usda.gov