

A top-down view of various fresh vegetables arranged on a dark surface. In the foreground, several bright orange carrots with their green tops are visible. Behind them are several white onions and a head of garlic. To the left and right, there are beets with their characteristic red skin and green leafy tops. The background is filled with more green leafy vegetables, possibly chives or scallions. The overall composition is vibrant and emphasizes fresh, healthy produce.

USDA's Farm to School Program:
*Opportunities for Faith-based and
Neighborhood Organizations*

Welcome!



Ben Marcus
USDA Center for
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What is Farm To School?

Helps Child Nutrition Program operators:

- Serve meals that include local ingredients
- Provide agricultural and nutrition education

Why Farm to School?

- Supports a healthy diet
 - By improving the quality of food served
 - By increasing their consumption of the food served
 - By improving their knowledge and attitudes towards food and agriculture



Stronger Communities With Farm to School

Strengthen community food systems

- By geographically integrating food production, processing, distribution, and consumption
- By creating market opportunities for producers, processors, manufacturers, distributors, and other value-added operations





Child Nutrition Programs

- School Meals Programs
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program

Become a program operator! Visit:

www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/program-operator

www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/program-operator

Partners



- Faith-based organizations
- Non-profits that serve children or agricultural businesses
- Producers and other agricultural businesses
- Cooperative extension offices
- Teachers
- Parents

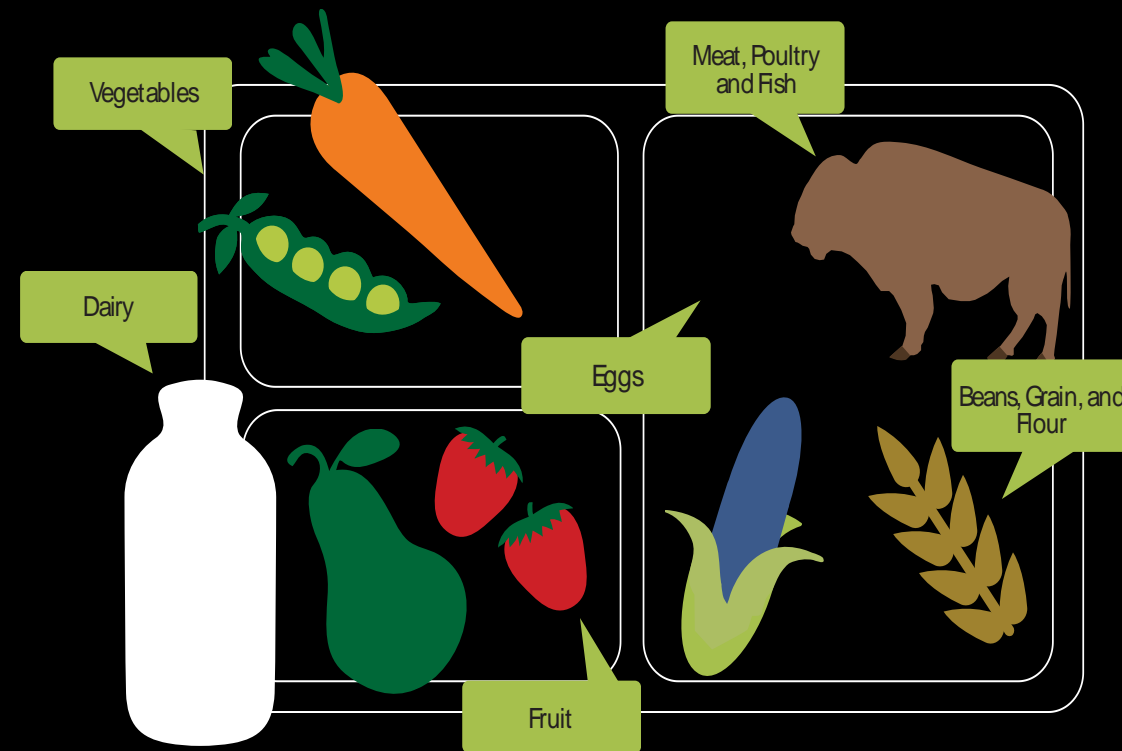
Educational Activities

- Gardening indoors or out
- Learning from producers at the farm or at school
- Taste-testing farm fresh foods
- Food preparation
- Integrated into curriculum



Serving Local Foods

- Local foods can span the tray
 - Produce
 - Proteins
 - Dairy
 - Grains
- Fresh and delicious
 - Scratch cooking
 - Customized recipes
 - Culturally appropriate meals
 - Locally processed, often minimally





Sourcing Local Food



- Straight from the producer
- Cooperatives and food hubs that sell for many producers
- Distributors that sell local and non-local foods
- Food processors

Edible Gardens

St. Luke's Episcopal Church – New York

- Serving Jamestown Public School District
- Indoor and outdoor gardening
- Serving foods grown in school meals
- With non-profits and university cooperative extension



Supporting Local Food

Brady Faith Center - New York

- Increase local sourcing at schools
- Needs assessment
- Training
- Service to students and families
- With social enterprise, schools, university, and food systems non-profit



Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program

Our 3 Pillars of Work:

1. Provide training and technical assistance to improve access to local foods in schools.
2. Conduct research and disseminate data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.
3. Distribute grant funding to improve access to local foods in schools.





Farm to School Resources

Publications

The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit

Questions and Resources for Designing a Robust Farm to School Program



United States Department of Agriculture

Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs



USDA Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SCHOOL GARDENS

Using Gardens To Grow Healthy Habits In Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Communities

TEACHING GARDENS in Tennessee, aquaponics systems in Montana, salad bars in New Mexico, garden-based curriculum in Guam, across the Nation schools are growing gardens to provide food for child nutrition programs, connect children to the source of their food, and create hands-on interdisciplinary classrooms.

In rural Montana, the growing season is short, but that doesn't stop the team from Farm to School of Park County in Livingston, MT. From growing food year-round. High school students manage an aquaponics greenhouse, growing a nutrient ecosystem that combines fish and plants. The students learn rich lessons in chemistry and biology, as well as the business skills needed to sell the fish to local restaurants.

Using School Garden Produce in the Cafeteria

Food service directors use school garden products in the cafeteria every day. From herbs to sprouts to greens to serving garden-grown lettuce on the salad bar, to roasting vegetables as part of a memorable meal. Foods produced in a garden operated or tended by the food service director can be used in the meal service and can be used for educational purposes. Produce can be procured from school gardens not funded by the food service account using a variety of procurement methods such as through an interdepartmental agreement, informal (cash) or invoice purchased procurement methods, or via a donation to the school meal program.

Space for Gardens in All Seasons

School gardens come in all shapes and sizes, and districts with varying amounts of land are finding ways to establish gardens both within and outside of school grounds. Gardens can be as simple as a few containers on a windowsill or can cover many acres, and gardens can thrive in all climates. Program operators find that even small gardens help children gain familiarity and comfort with the fruits and vegetables they are eating more of all year long.

Districts are also overcoming growing season challenges in creative and innovative ways. Even in Montana, where the traditional growing season just barely overlaps with the school year, season extension techniques make it possible for students to garden all year long.

PATRICK LEAHY FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM



Trainings



- Support producers, program operators, community partners, and tribal organizations
- Delivered through partners

Racial Equity Learning Lab



www.farmentoschool.org/about/racial-equity-learning-lab

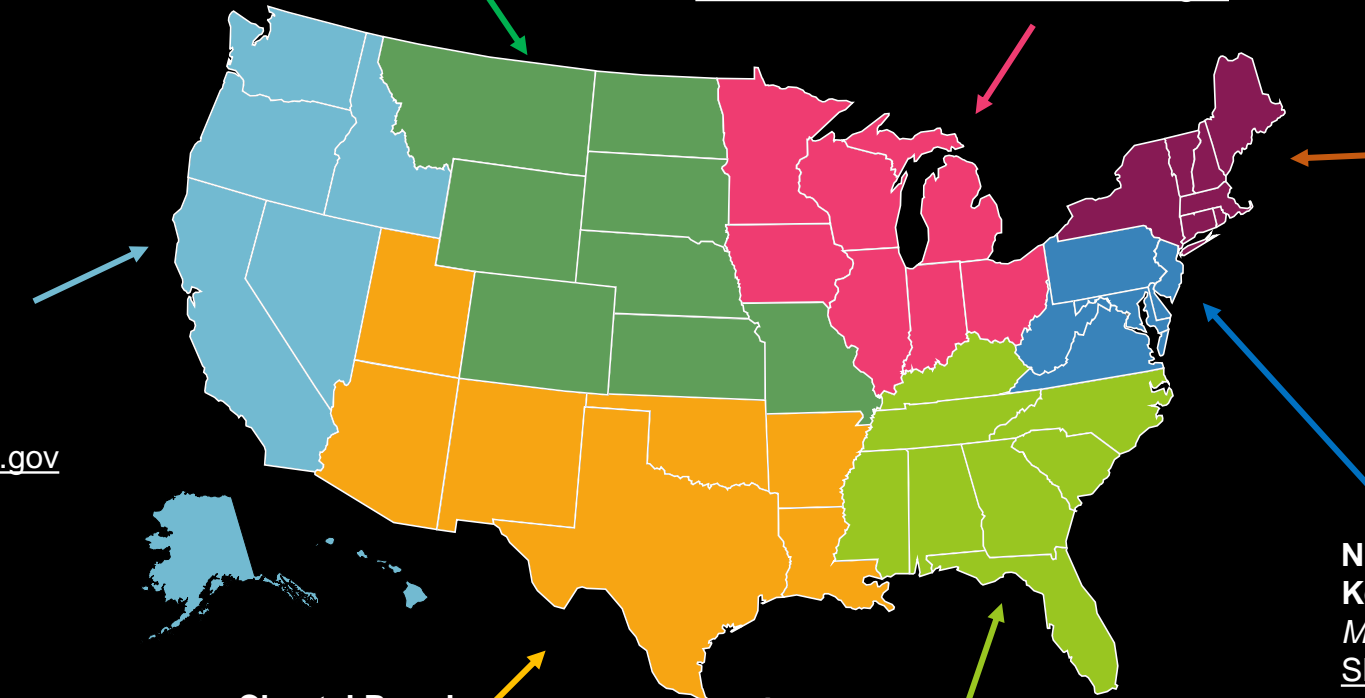
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Farm to School e-newsletter - The Dirt!

Delivered monthly, full of updates, webinar info, relevant news, and field notes.

More than **140,000** subscribers!



www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/e-letter-archive



Research



<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/census-partner-resources>

Farm to School Census

The 2023 Farm to School Census is open!

- Schools are asked about their farm to school activity in SY 2022-2023
- Survey links are sharable with partners who can provide data
- Visit the Census webpage for helpful resources, past Census results, and general information.



The Farm to School Grant Program

Who is eligible as lead applicant?



Schools and
Institutions



State agencies



Local agencies



Indian Tribal
Organizations



Agricultural
Producers



Group of
Producers



Non-Profit
entities

Level One

- Small, low-stake activities at your organization
- USDA Website resources
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-resources>



Level Two



- Partnering with an organization who is applying/received a Farm to School Grant
- Examples:
 - Allowing a school to use your space to create a community garden

Level Three



- Lead applicant for a Farm to School grant
- Different types of grant tracks:
 - Turnkey: Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, and Edible Garden
 - Implementation



Grant Tracks

Grant Track	Description
Turnkey	Three possible tracks: Action Planning, Agricultural Education Curriculum, and Edible Garden
Implementation	Unique and innovative project, or a multifaceted project that incorporates one or more elements found in the Turnkey track
State Agency	Specifically for State agencies looking to support farm to school efforts in their states



Grant Tracks

Track	Objective
Turnkey – Action Planning	Develop a Farm to School Action Plan to facilitate launching or scaling farm to school activities
Turnkey – Agricultural Education	Plan, implement, and evaluate the integration of farm to school topics into school, childcare, and/or summer site curriculum
Turnkey – Edible Garden	Plan, implement, and evaluate a food production operation that produces food for school, childcare, and/or summer site activities

Matching Funds

All applicants must show a match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost from non-federal sources.

Sample Match

Grant Request:	\$100,000
Match Amount:	\$35,000
Total Project Cost:	\$135,000
Match Percent:	26 percent (match ÷ total project cost)
USDA Percent:	74 percent (grant request ÷ total project cost)





Questions and Discussion

Thank you!

FY 2024 Farm to School Grants



www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program

Apply by January 12, 2024

Contact us:

SM.FN.FarmToSchool@usda.gov

The Dirt: Farm to School e-Newsletter



www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/e-letter-archive

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