



**NATIVE FARM
TO SCHOOL**



RESOURCE GUIDE



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First Nations Development Institute: Our Guiding Principle

We believe that when armed with the appropriate resources, Native peoples hold the capacity and ingenuity to ensure the sustainable, economic, spiritual and cultural well-being of their communities.

First Nations Development Institute: Our Mission

Our mission is to strengthen American Indian economies to support healthy Native communities. We invest in and create innovative institutions and models that strengthen asset control and support economic development for American Indian people and their communities.



INTRODUCTION

About First Nations Development Institute

First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) is a Native American-led, national, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen American Indian economies in support of healthy Native communities. First Nations achieves this mission through a three-pronged strategy of educating grassroots practitioners, advocating for systemic change and capitalizing Indian communities. Through these efforts, First Nations is working to restore Native American control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own – be they land, human potential, cultural heritage, or natural resources – and to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native communities. First Nations is the only Native American-controlled nonprofit dedicated to asset-based, sustainable development.

First Nations recognizes that farming, ranching and land management are long-time traditions in Native communities and are key assets affecting Native communities' economic health and Native community members' physical health. First Nations created the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (NAFSI) to support Native communities in building sustainable food systems that improve health and nutrition, strengthen food security, create food-related businesses and, overall, increase control over Native agriculture and food systems.

NAFSI is one of First Nations' largest program initiatives. NAFSI provides assistance to tribes committed to promoting food sovereignty, including farm-to-school programs. This assistance includes financial support, training materials, strategic planning, business planning, and research of projects that address the agriculture and food sectors in Native communities.

First Nations' work in Indigenous community food systems is at the nexus of agricultural producers, food security, community health, economic development, and environmental sustainability. In 2017, First Nations was awarded a grant from the USDA Farm-to-School Program to provide technical assistance and support for tribes that were interested in potentially applying for the Farm-to-School Grant.

In 2018, the USDA identified tribes as an organizational priority. Native farm-to-school programs are similar to most other farm-to-school programs, but many tribes also wish to incorporate the cultural aspects of traditional food practices. This added component requires an additional layer of planning and local capacity building.

The purpose of this report is to provide tribes, schools, and community members with a resource guide to address the unique needs of Native farm-to-school programs.

What is Farm-to-School?

Farm to school is the common term for programs and activities that are intended to get more local foods into school systems and to increase students knowledge of nutrition, agriculture, and/or culinary arts, typically through hands-on, experiential learning methods. Fundamentally, farm-to-school programs are intended to strengthen the connection between students, farmers and the community as a whole in order to become more healthy, self-reliant and sustainable. The types of foods that can be included in farm-to-school comprise “the whole tray” including fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, grains and flour. These food items can be whole, processed or value-added. The key is that they are sourced locally.

“ Farm to school empowers children and families to make informed food choices while supporting economic development, food sovereignty and cultural revitalization. – National Farm-to-School Network, *Growing Farm-to-School in Native Communities*

Is Native Farm-to-School Different?

Many Native farm-to-school programs also want to incorporate cultural aspects of their traditional food practices. Activities include growing traditional crops from heirloom seeds, such as blue corn or squash; substituting traditional foods, such as buffalo, into modern recipes; using traditional processing methods, such as grinding corn; and using traditional recipes. Incorporating traditional approaches to farm-to-school make the program more relevant to the community and thus has a greater impact on tribal members. Native farm-to-school programs require thoughtful planning and, at times, entirely different approaches to other types of farm-to-school programming.

Native children also attend a wide variety of schools, each with its own policies regarding food procurement, food safety and curriculum integration. As a result, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to Native farm-to-school. This resource guide is intended to provide a roadmap for Native communities to plan and implement a Native farm-to-school program that is appropriate for their unique circumstances and objectives.





Why Farm-to-School?

FOR THE KIDS

It is estimated that kids get up to 50% of their caloric intake from their school meals (Kaiser Permanente). This percentage is likely even higher in some low-income tribal communities that offer both school breakfast and lunch programs as well as summer feeding programs. Many health and wellness advocates report that the most effective way to improve long-term community health is by influencing the habits of the children. As such, a vibrant and sustainable tribal food sovereignty initiative that seeks to have a positive and long-term impact on its community should include the food policies and practices of the local school system.

Summary of benefits reported by farm-to-school practitioners:

- ✓ Kids are more willing to try new foods.
- ✓ Increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Improved knowledge and awareness regarding gardening, agriculture and healthy eating.
- ✓ Traditional foods improve the overall health of Native peoples.
- ✓ Hands-on learning in the garden supports physical well-being.
- ✓ Kids plant, grow and harvest in the school garden reinforces the concept of self-reliance.

FOR FARMERS

Many family farms struggle to achieve and maintain financial sustainability, especially in rural, tribal communities that are not near large consumer markets. According to the USDA, school systems spend approximately \$10 billion annually to purchase food to serve their students. Farm-to-school programs that are able to procure locally-grown foods put more money in the local farmers' pockets. Most schools also have the ability to purchase specialty crops, such as traditional heirloom varieties that can give local farmers a competitive edge over the large-scale, commercial food-distribution companies that tend to sell only the generic varieties.

Summary of benefits reported by farm-to-school practitioners:

- ✓ Farmers that supply schools earn more income
- ✓ Farmers can establish a profitable new market niche with traditional foods and specialty crops
- ✓ Farmers host student farm tours and special farmers' markets that strengthen their connection to the schools and community as a whole

FOR COMMUNITY

An additional benefit of vibrant farm-to-school programs is the positive impact on the local community. This includes the economic benefits that naturally occur by circulating more dollars through the local economy, as well as providing opportunities for the community to come together around planned activities or events. In Native communities, farm-to-school programs can also act as a strong catalyst to revive heirloom crops, traditional recipes and culturally-significant traditions and practices.

Summary of benefits reported by farm-to-school practitioners:

- ✓ Positive economic impacts on the local economy.
- ✓ Healthier eating habits is most effective with youth, which improves the health of the community over the long term.
- ✓ Increases cultural knowledge by strengthening connections to traditional food.
- ✓ Reinforces the shared value of self-reliance by supporting local farmers.
- ✓ Highlights how traditional foods connect children to the land, their tribal history and creation stories.
- ✓ Celebrates Indigenous knowledge and strengthens cultural, spiritual and social connections.
- ✓ Increase purchasing among traditional food growers, supports cultural values and sparks community economic development.
- ✓ Reduce the carbon footprint by shortening the food supply chain/transportation.



NATIVE FARM TO SCHOOL



“ Farm-to-school activities connect students and communities to fresh local foods and the family farmers, ranchers and fishers that produce them. This is a new term for an ancient concept that embraces Indigenous knowledge and values in harmony with traditional Native lifeways, and has proven positive results on health, education and hunger.

Source: National Farm-to-School Network; Growing Farm-to-School in Native Communities

Farm-to-School Program Components

CORE ELEMENTS

Farm to school includes a variety of approaches that are unique to each community. However, all farm-to-school programs include at least one of the following three core elements:

1. **Procure** local foods to serve in school cafeterias.
2. **Educate** students about agriculture, health, and/or nutrition.
3. Establish **school gardens** to provide hands-on learning and enrichment.

COMMON NATIVE FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Each farm-to-school program has a customized mix of activities to support the core elements that are appropriate to their unique program goals, geography, climate, locally-farmed products, and access to resources, among other variables. Some of the most common examples include the following:

Student Farm Tours: A great example of hands-on, experiential learning is to take students out to visit local farms and meet the farmers. This allows them to see first-hand where their food comes from. They also have the opportunity to learn more from the farmers about what it takes to grow and supply fresh foods in their community.



Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Tucker Elementary School tour of a high tunnel at Choctaw Fresh Produce

ACTIVITY

NATIVE FARM-TO-SCHOOL



NATIVE FARM TO SCHOOL

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS



RESOURCE GUIDE

POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS



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POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The most important partner in a farm-to-school program is the school's food service department. It is responsible for feeding the students throughout the school year and, in some cases, throughout the summer.

Potential roles to play in promoting farm-to-school:

- ✓ Plan menus and selecting ingredients
- ✓ Promote seasonal eating
- ✓ Coordinate taste tests to encourage kids to try to new items
- ✓ Integrate the harvest from the school garden
- ✓ Write the specifications for procurements that could favor local farmers (e.g., items must be harvested within the past 48 hours)
- ✓ Hire and/or train kitchen staff who are able to process fresh produce or cook meals from scratch

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL GUIDANCE

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR / FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR

Potential First Steps

- **Network:** Contact an experienced farm-to-school practitioner such as the USDA OCFS farm-to-school regional lead or tribal liaison, or the national farm-to-school network tribal liaison.
- **Tools & Equipment:** Assess the school cafeteria's existing tools and equipment to determine if able to process fresh/whole food items or cooking from scratch.
- **Staff:** Assess cafeteria staff member skills to determine if they would need additional training to cook whole foods from scratch.
- **Availability:** Assess the local availability of agricultural products and prepared foods.
- **Policies:** Determine the federal, state and local regulations relate to food procurement, food safety and nutrition requirements.

Top Challenges Reported by Practitioners

- **Supply (especially if focused on traditional foods):** Many schools report that it is challenging to find local food suppliers due to pricing, seasonality, and food safety requirements.
- **Student Taste Preferences:** Schools commonly report that it can be difficult to find recipes that students enjoy and that also incorporate local ag products, especially using traditional foods or seasonings.
- **Regulations:** Several regulations exist related to nutrition requirements, procurement policies and food safety issues.
- **Cost:** Most local ag producers are growing at a relatively small scale, making it difficult to match the low prices offered by large, nationwide food providers (e.g., US Foods, Sysco).
- **Tools & Equipment:** Many cafeterias are not equipped to process whole food items and cook from scratch.
- **Staff Skills:** Many cafeteria workers have not been trained in preparing whole foods and cooking from scratch.
- **Recipes:** Creating recipes that incorporate traditional food items (e.g., bison, blue corn) is difficult due to nutrition standards as well as appealing to student taste preferences.

Best Practices

- **Taste Tests:** Students enjoy taste tests that allow them to vote or share their opinions about new recipes.
- **Harvesting:** Involving students in the school garden harvesting process can be an effective way to increase student support for local foods.
- **Supply:** Identify the community's natural food system and incorporate those items first (e.g., fresh produce, fruit, fish).
- **Coordinate:** Coordinate efforts with the state's farm-to-school program coordinator (exists in 29 states).
- **Expertise:** Partner with local chefs (e.g., casino) to train cafeteria staff and upgrade their cooking skills to strengthen the local workforce.
- **Contacts:** If you want to source specialty crops (e.g., traditional crops) consider pre-procurement agreements with local growers.
- **Focus:** Start small and evaluate regularly. Keep records of everything.
- **Leverage:** Try to work with existing food suppliers to source more local foods since many have programs already in place to buy local.

Lessons Learned

- **Training:** Cafeteria staff usually need skills training to be able to cook from scratch.
- **Upgrade:** Most facilities need tools and recipes to scale up using traditional ingredients.
- **Partners:** State cooperative extension programs can help with recipe development and nutrition information.
- **Salad Bars:** Adding salad bars is often an effective gateway to expand a farm-to-school program.
- **Measure:** Establish the baseline of local food procurement to track progress, and establish measurable goals for future years.

RESOURCES

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR / FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR

Helpful Organizations

USDA OCFS Farm-to-School Program	www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool
National Farm-to-School Network	www.farmtoschool.org
State Farm-to-School Networks	www.farmtoschool.org/our-network
Chef Ann Foundation	www.chefannfoundation.org
FoodCorps	www.foodcorps.org
National Agriculture in the Classroom	www.agclassroom.org
Captain Planet Foundation	www.captainplanetfoundation.org/programs/project-learning-garden
Whole Kids Foundation	www.wholekidsfoundation.org

Other Helpful Websites

- Salad Bars-to-Schools Resources: www.saladbars2schools.org
- Tools & Resources for Food Service Directors: www.thelunchbox.org
- Grant Funding and Educational Resources: www.wholekidsfoundation.org
- University of Minnesota Online Training Series
- School Gardens: www.kidsgardening.org
- Find Local Farmers: Farm Logix: www.farmlogix.net
- Find Local Ag Producers: Market Maker: www.foodmarketmaker.com
- Find Local Farmers Markets: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets>
- Vermont Farm-to-School Network

Video/Recorded Webinars

- USDA Farm-to-School Initiative Video Playlist (31 videos)
- USDA – Farm-to-School: What Does Farm-to-School Look Like in Native American Communities? (April 2016)
- PowerPoint Slides
- USDA Community Food Systems in Native Communities: Partnering for Success
- PowerPoint Slides
- USDA Farm-to-School Grant Program: Overview + How to Apply (October 2017)
- PowerPoint Slides
- National Good Food Network: Food Hub Webinars

Publications

- USDA – Farm-to-School Planning Toolkit
- USDA Grants and Loans that Support Farm-to-School Activities
- USDA Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs (2015)
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: Frozen Local: Strategies for Freezing Locally Grown Produce for the K-12 Marketplace
- USDA Local Foods Decision Tree
- USDA – Farm-to-School Grant Program: FAQs (2018)
- American Heart Association: School Garden Lesson Plans
- Beef to School Decision Tree

Podcasts

- www.Heritageradionetwork.org





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POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

NATIVE AGRICULTURE FOOD PRODUCER

Most farm-to-school programs want to procure food that is produced locally. This may include fresh produce from farmers, milk from a local dairy, or meats that are raised by local ranchers and properly processed locally, among others. This could also include value-added products that are made locally such as baked goods, cheeses or soups, among others. One of the most important aspects of procurement from local food producers is related to food safety. For farmers, this may mean that they must obtain food safety certification requiring Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). For value-added processors, this also usually requires Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification. Also, local food producers must be able to produce at a commercial-scale in order to have enough volume of items to justify doing business.

Potential roles to play in promoting farm to school:

- ✓ Provide experiential tours of the farm to students.
- ✓ Plan, growing, harvesting, and supplying quality foods in commercial quantities.
- ✓ Grow and supply specialty and/or traditional food items (e.g., heirloom varieties).

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL GUIDANCE

NATIVE AGRICULTURE OR FOOD PRODUCER

Potential First Steps

- **Self-assessment:** Have you ever sold your agricultural or food products to wholesale or institutional customers (as opposed to selling direct to individual customers at a farmers' market)? If not, meet with some experienced sellers in your region to better understand the differences in terms of pricing, quality demands, and food safety regulations, among others.
- **Research:** Find out what types of schools in your area are educating tribal youth: public schools, private schools, BIE schools, BIE grant schools, other. They each have their own procurement policies and regulatory process.
- **Network:** Contact the food service director (FSD) at each local school to find out if there are active farm-to-school programs already in existence.
 - If yes, determine if their procurement policies would fit your agricultural production system, and if they require their suppliers to have GAP food safety certification.
 - If no, contact the state farm-to-school coordinator (they exist in 29 states) to find out if there schools in your area that are planning or potentially interested in starting a farm-to-school program.

Top Challenges Reported by Practioners

- **Pricing:** Small-scale, local ag producers often find it difficult to match the prices offered by large-scale, nationwide food providers (e.g., US Foods, Sysco).
- **Seasonality:** The typical school year of September – May is not prime growing season for most ag producers.
- **Food Safety:** Many schools require food vendors to have GAP/GHP or HACCP Food Safety Certifications
- **Cafeteria Staff:** Many school cafeteria staff are not trained to process and cook whole foods, such as fresh produce, from scratch, which could prevent or delay efforts to buy more local whole food products.
- **Cafeteria Tools/Equipment:** Many school cafeterias are not equipped for cooking from scratch, which may delay or prevent the launch of a new farm-to-school program.
- **Advocacy:** The school's food service director who is responsible for sourcing food must want healthy, fresh, local foods. If price is the only issue this will likely be a challenge.

Best Practices

- **GAP certification:** Ag producers who get GAP Certification are best-positioned to supply schools.
- **Fruits:** Fruits are very popular among students.
- **Contracts:** Try to work with local schools to supply them a predetermined quantity of specialty crops under a preseason supply contract.

Lessons Learned

- **Wholesale Practices:** It is helpful to adopt a wholesale supplier mindset in terms of the demand for high quality, increased scale, and lower pricing.
- **Meats:** Meats are more difficult to supply as compared to fresh produce due to the food safety inspection regulations for processing, handling, storing and delivering meats.
- **Season Extension:** Most regions require farmers to adjust growing methods, such as using hoop houses for season extension, to match the school year.



POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

RESOURCES

NATIVE AGRICULTURE OR FOOD PRODUCER

Helpful Organizations

First Nations Development Institute	www.firstnations.org/programs/foods-health
Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas	https://law.uark.edu/service-outreach/ifai/
Intertribal Agriculture Council	www.indianaglink.com
Intertribal Buffalo Council	www.itbcbuffalonation.org
Food Finance Institute	www.foodfinanceinstitute.org
National Center for Appropriate Technologies	www.attra.ncat.org
USDA Farm-to-School Program	www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool
National Farm-to-School Network	www.farmentoschool.org
USDA Farm Service Agency	www.fsa.usda.gov
USDA National Resources Conservation Service	www.nrcs.usda.gov
State Cooperative Extension Program	(state specific)

Other Websites

- www.Beginningfarmers.org
- www.youngfarmers.org
- www.farmanswers.org
- www.onfarmfoodsafety.org
- Cornell University – Small Farms Program: Online Courses
- Cornell University – Produce Safety Alliance
- National Good Food Network
- University of Minnesota – www.farmanswers.org
- University of Minnesota – Center for Farm Financial Management -- <https://www.cffm.umn.edu/>
- Videos / Recorded Webinars
- National Good Food Network - Farming Webinars
- USDA Partnering for Success in Tribal Communities: May 18, 2016
- PowerPoint Slides
- On-Farm Food Safety and Access to Larger Markets
- NFSN: Farm-to-School Benefits for Farmers and Producers
- PowerPoint Slides

Publications

- USDA Selling Local Foods to Schools
- NCAT Tips for Selling to Institutions
- NCAT Farm Business Planning Guide
- USDA Fact Sheet - Local Meats in Schools
- Farmers Guide to On-Farm Food Safety Certification

Podcasts

- Farmer-to-Farmer Podcast, Chris Blanchard
- Edible Alpha, University of Wisconsin – Extension Program
- Small Farm Nation: Farming, Marketing, Homesteading, Tim Young
- Farm Small Farm Smart, Diego Footer





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POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

TRIBAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

In Native communities, the tribe's government and elected officials can play an important supportive role to help strengthen a farm-to-school program. In most situations, it is helpful for the tribe's elected officials to support the Farm-to-School efforts through enabling policies or providing financial support.

Potential roles to play in promoting farm to school:

- ✓ Adopt policies that support farm-to-school such as healthy foods and/or procurement policies that favor local food producers.
- ✓ Provide financial support for farm-to-school staff, equipment and/or activities.

TRIBAL PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT

Tribal government departments and programs can also be effective partners in farm-to-school efforts. Most of the successful farm-to-school programs have evolved into a form of public-private partnership that includes a variety of supporting programs. Existing tribal departments are normally financially stable due to their structure and reliable government funding. This can be a very stabilizing force when getting a program established.

Potential roles to play in promoting farm to school:

- ✓ Tribal health and wellness programs can provide nutrition education activities and curriculum to students.
- ✓ Tribal economic development can provide business planning training to tribal farmers who want to earn income through selling ag products to the schools.
- ✓ Tribal natural resource department could provide plowing services to help prepare a school garden plot.

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL GUIDANCE

TRIBAL ELECTED OFFICIAL OR TRIBAL PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT

Potential First Steps

- **Farm-to-School:** Contact the schools that serve tribal students to determine if a farm-to-school program is underway or being planned.
- **Food Sovereignty Initiative:** Determine if the tribe has a food sovereignty initiative already underway that could be coordinated with a farm-to-school program.
- **Local Ag/Food Production:** Determine if the tribe, or individual tribal members, are actively growing agricultural or value-added food products that could be supplied to local schools.
- **Policy Review:** Determine what, if any, procurement policies exist and impact food buying within the tribal school cafeteria.
- **Wellness Initiatives:** Determine if the tribe, or schools that serve tribal students, have adopted wellness policies that could support local, healthy foods.

Top Challenges Reported by Practitioners

- **Supply (especially if focused on traditional foods):** Many schools report that it is very challenging to find local food suppliers due to pricing, seasonality and food safety requirements.
- **Culture:** Many tribal cultures do not believe in selling items for profit, which begs the question how do tribes and schools ensure that their farm-to-school programs are financially sustainable?
- **Financial sustainability:** Many farm-to-school programs report challenges related to maintaining financial sustainability if the program needs a full-time coordinator.
- **Policies:** Several regulations exist related to nutrition requirements, procurement policies and food safety issues that can make it difficult to buy from local ag or food producers.
- **Pricing:** Small-scale, local ag producers often find it difficult to match the prices offered by large-scale, nationwide food providers (e.g., US Foods, Sysco).
- **Seasonality:** The typical school year of September – May is not prime growing season for most ag producers.
- **Food Safety:** Many schools require food vendors to have GAP/GHP or HACCP Food Safety Certifications.
- **Cafeteria Staff:** Many school cafeteria staff are not trained to process and cook whole foods, such as fresh produce, from scratch, which could prevent or delay efforts to buy more local whole food products.
- **Cafeteria Tools/Equipment:** Many school cafeterias are not equipped for cooking from scratch, which may delay or prevent the launch of a new farm-to-school program.
- **Advocacy:** The school food service director is responsible for sourcing food. He/she must want healthy, fresh local foods. If price is an issue, securing these foods might be a challenge.

Best Practices

- **Student Involvement:** Farm to school programs that include students in planning, advisory roles, taste tests, etc. report a higher success rate.
- **Land-Use Policies:** Tribal land-use policies that support and promote local agricultural production are important to increasing the availability of local foods and strengthening the local food system.
- **Food Sovereignty Initiatives:** Tribes that have planned and implemented tribal food sovereignty initiatives are very well-positioned to add a farm-to-school program.
- **Policies:** Tribal governments that adopt supportive policies related to wellness and/or purchasing local and healthy foods can significantly improve the success of a farm-to-school program.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Most farm-to-school programs require partnerships among entities such as the tribal government, schools, local nonprofits, and private-sector farmers/ranchers and food producers.

Lessons Learned

- **School Garden Maintenance:** School gardens need dedicated gardeners to make them successful. Otherwise they get built then often becomes fallow due to the maintenance and workload required to water and weed the garden.
- **Self-Reliance:** Farm to school supports the concept of self-reliance among Native ag producers.
- **Independent Structure:** Farm to school programs need to be structured independently from tribal government to remove the dependence on tribal election outcomes.
- **Advisory Group:** Forming an advisory group with a wide variety of stakeholders such as faculty, students, local farmers, nutritionists, and elected officials, among others, will increase the long-term viability of a farm-to-school program.

POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

RESOURCES

TRIBAL ELECTED OFFICIAL OR TRIBAL PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT

Helpful Organizations

First Nations Development Institute	www.firstnations.org/programs/foods-health
Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas	https://law.uark.edu/service-outreach/ifai/
Intertribal Agriculture Council	www.indianaglink.com
Intertribal Buffalo Council	www.itbcbuffalonation.org
USDA Farm-to-School Program	www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool
National Farm-to-School Network	www.farmtoschool.org

Other Websites

- Salad Bars-to-Schools Resources: www.saladbars2schools.org
- [National Good Food Network](#)

Videos/Recorded Webinars

- USDA – Farm-to-School: What Does Farm-to-School Look Like in Native American Communities? (April 2016)
 - PowerPoint Slides
- USDA Community Food Systems in Native Communities: Partnering for Success
 - PowerPoint Slides
- USDA Incorporating Traditional Foods in Child Nutrition Program Menus: April 20, 2016
 - PowerPoint Slides

Publications

- National Farm-to-School Network: Economic Impact, Case Studies, Assessment Tools
- USDA OCFS: Farm-to-Child Nutrition Programs Planning Guide
- USDA Fact Sheet – Farm-to-School Grant Program
- USDA Grant and Loans that Support Farm-to-School Activities
- White Earth Land Recovery Project: Indigenous Farm-to-School Programs
- STAR School: Farm-to-School Program

Podcasts

- www.Heritageradionetwork.org

People to Contact

- USDA OCFS Farm-to-School Program: Federal Staff, Regional Leads, or Tribal Liaison
- National Farm-to-School Network – Tribal Liaison







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POTENTIAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members, whether they be parents of student or not, can also be a strong partner in a Native farm-to-school program. At its core, the farm-to-school program is intended to strengthen the connection between the school, farmers and the community as a whole. In many successful programs, the community members were the lead advocates for establishing a farm-to-school program.

Potential roles to play in promoting farm to school:

- ✓ Volunteer time to coordinate farm-to-school activities, especially when programs are being established and may not have the financial resources in place to be self-sustaining.
- ✓ Donate equipment, supplies or even money to enable farm-to-school activities.
- ✓ Participate in events and activities that connect the schools, the farmers and the community as a whole.
- ✓ Serve on an advisory board or steering committee for a farm-to-school program.
- ✓ Help identify local farmers or ranchers that could supply food products to the school.



"Farm-to-school is a community-building activity." – **Dr. Mark Sorensen,**
STAR School, Navajo Reservation

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL GUIDANCE

INCORPORATING TRADITIONAL FOODS

Potential First Steps

- **Network:** Contact a tribal liaison at USDA farm-to-school program and/or national good food network to get their guidance and advice on incorporating traditional foods.
- **Availability:** Assess the local availability of traditional products and prepared foods.
- **Policies:** Determine the federal, state and local regulations related to food procurement, food safety and nutrition requirements.
- **Donations:** Determine the policies related to accepting the donation of traditional food items.

Top Challenges Reported

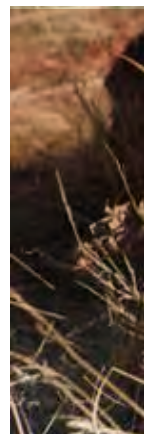
- **Recipes:** Creating recipes that incorporate traditional food items (e.g., bison, blue corn) is difficult due to nutrition standards as well as appealing to student taste preferences.
- **Food Safety:** Many schools require food vendors to have GAP/GHP or HACCP food safety certifications.
- **Supply of Traditional Foods:** Many schools report that it is very challenging to find a reliable supply of traditional food items.
- **Student Taste Preferences:** Schools commonly report that it can be difficult to find recipes that students enjoy that incorporate traditional foods or seasonings.
- **Regulations:** Several regulations exist related to nutrition requirements, procurement policies and food safety issues.
- **Tools & Equipment:** Many cafeterias are not equipped to process whole food items and cook from scratch.
- **Staff skills:** Many cafeteria workers have not been trained in preparing whole foods and cooking from scratch.

Best Practices

- **Substitutions:** Substitute into existing/approved recipes by meal component.
- **Teach Cultural Traditions:** Teach traditional cooking and prep methods along with the stories and values that go with that.
 - *Example:* attitudes, self-reliance, preservation, etc.
- **Involve the Community:** Host a community-wide event featuring locally-grown foods.
- **School Gardens:** Grow traditional foods in school gardens (herbs can be grown with enough volume to be used in a single school cafeteria).

Lessons Learned

- **Cultural Preservation:** Native farm-to-school programs are a great way to connect students with culture and tradition by incorporating language, recipes and traditions into the curriculum.
- **Flavor Enhancers:** Use traditional herbs and spices as flavor enhancers.
- **Nutrition Rules:** Learn about nutrition substitution in order to incorporate into the menu.
- **Substitutions:** Use bison or venison as a substitute for recipes that include meat.



RESOURCES

INCORPORATING TRADITIONAL FOODS

Helpful Organizations

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas	https://law.uark.edu/service-outreach/ifai/
Intertribal Agriculture Council	www.indianaglink.com
Intertribal Buffalo Council	www.itbcbuffalonation.org
National Farm-to-School Network	www.farmtoschool.org

Other Websites

National Native Network	http://keepitsacred.itcmi.org/
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Videos / Recorded Webinars

- USDA Incorporating Traditional Foods in Child Nutrition Program Menus: April 20, 2016
 - PowerPoint Slides
- USDA Community Food Systems in Native Communities: Engaging Students
 - PowerPoint Slides

Publications

- USDA Fact Sheet - Bringing Tribal Traditional Foods into Cafeterias
- USDA Fact Sheet - Tribal School Gardens
- USDA Fact Sheet - Local Meats in Schools
- National Native Network – Traditional Foods Toolkit
- Farm-to-School Profiles from Native Communities
- NFSN Fact Sheet - Growing Farm-to-School in Native Communities
- STAR School: Farm-to-School Guide
- White Earth Land Recovery Project: Indigenous Farm-to-School Program
- USDA: Farm-to-School: What Does Farm-to-School Look Like in Native American Communities?

People to Contact

- Your state farm-to-school program
- Regional farm-to-school lead





ACTIVITY



School Garden with Heirloom Crops:

The Circle of Nations BIE Boarding School in Wahpeton, North Dakota, includes a school garden that raises traditional, heirloom crops. The students plant, grow, harvest and help prepare these traditional crops.

Circle of Nations, Traditional School Garden



FARM-TO-SCHOOL PLANNING GUIDE

Survey your community resources and build on existing programs and assets.

Conduct a kitchen assessment. Can we handle processing and cooking traditional foods?

Map out existing local ag/food producers that are capable of supplying at wholesale quality and scale.

AN APPROACH TO PLANNING YOUR FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM



1 Assess where you are and where you'd like to be. Are your goals centered on the procurement of local foods to be served in school? Establishing a school garden? Integration of farm-to-school within the curriculum?

2 Form a team and collaborate. School food service staff, teachers, administrators, local farmers, students, parents and community organizations each have an important role in establishing a sustainable farm-to-school program.

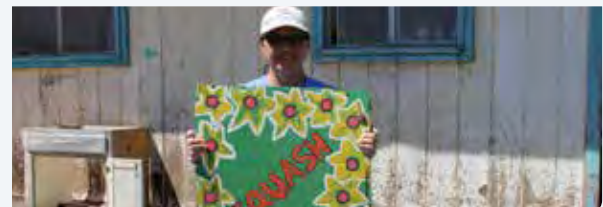
3 Establish one or two attainable goals to get started. Identify menu items that you would like to transition to local products. • Find a farmer or distributor to connect you to local items. • Plan a local meal event. • Determine training needs to assist food service staff with incorporating farm fresh items in meals. • Bring a school garden planning team together. • Identify curricular opportunities to connect to a school garden. • Bring a chef into the classroom. • Plan a farm field trip or host a tasting event featuring local produce.

4 Learn from others. If you are running into an obstacle, there is likely someone who has run into it before. Connect and learn from others through:

- The National Farm-to-School Network (farmtoschool.org). Find abundant resources and contact information for people in your state and region who are working on farm-to-school.
- Your state's school nutrition association. Learn how others in your state are approaching farm-to-school in their school/district.
- The child nutrition program at your state agency (typically your department of education or department of agriculture).

5 Promote farm-to-school in your school and community. Create promotional materials such as:

- Signage or posters in the cafeteria or classroom
- Bulletin boards throughout the school
- School newsletters (print and electronic)
- School website
- School events and parent teachers associations
- Local media



SOURCE: NATIONAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL NETWORK



USDA Farm-to-School Program Overview

Purpose

The USDA farm-to-school program was created to improve access to local foods in eligible schools through grants and technical assistance.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture - Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is charged with implementing the farm-to-school program.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The **Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA)** established a farm-to-school program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm-to-school programs that improve access to local foods at eligible schools. The program is funded with \$5 million each year.

YEAR OF 1ST FARM-TO-SCHOOL GRANTS

Fiscal Year 2013

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- **Make local food products** available on the menu of the eligible school.
- Serve a high proportion of children eligible for **free/reduced price lunches**.
- **Experiential nutrition education** in curriculum planning that encourage the participation of school children in farm and garden-based activities.
- **Demonstrate collaboration** between eligible schools, NGOs, ag producer groups and other community partners.
- Include adequate and participatory **evaluation plans**.
- Demonstrate the potential for **long-term program sustainability**.
- Meet any other criteria that the Secretary determines appropriate.

SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Training
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Supporting operations
- ✓ Purchasing equipment
- ✓ Developing partnerships
- ✓ Implementing farm-to-school programs



TARGETED IMPACT AREAS

- **Economic Development:** Spend local school funds with local food producers.
- **Public Health:** Improve student nutrition behaviors.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Reducing food waste and the carbon footprint of the food supply chain.
- **Education:** Provide information to students related to agriculture and nutrition.
- **Community Engagement:** Host events and activities that strengthen connections within the community.

Scope and Scale

- Schools spend \$10 billion per year on food.
- During school days, children consume 50% of their daily caloric intake from school. – Kaiser Permanente
- Farm-to-School Grants Total investment = Approximately \$30 million in 438 projects in all 50 states, D.C., Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam

SOURCE: USDA Farm-to-School

ACTIVITY

Veggie Bucks: The Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah, Oklahoma created the Veggie Bucks Program in partnership with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) which allowed students to make purchases at the farmers' market. Students were provided with \$6 to \$12 each in "veggie bucks" that they were allowed to spend at a farmers' market that was brought to the school. The farmers exchanged these veggie bucks for funds that were provided by a grant from the CDC.



Circle of Nations, Traditional School Garden



"The kids have a way of getting their family to eat healthier food. And the family needs to be able to trust their schools." – Dr. Mark Sorensen, STAR School, Flagstaff Arizona

Integrating Native Language:

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina incorporates its Native language into their farm-to-school program by adding colorful nametags to each planted crop. This helps to strengthen the kids' connection with culture and tradition, while reinforcing the importance of language preservation.



Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Native Language Integration, Cherokee School Garden

USDA Farm-to-School Grant Program Overview

The USDA farm-to-school program offers grant funding to support farm-to-school activities. Thus, in fiscal year 2018, it offered three different types of grants: 1) planning, 2) implementation, and 3) training (see Table 1). The USDA provides \$5 million each year to support farm-to-school activities. To receive notifications for the next available round of grant applications, contact the USDA farm-to-school office at 703.457.7803.

MATRIX – TYPES OF GRANTS

	Intended Impact	Intended For	Timeline	Funding Amount
PLANNING	Create a framework for a successful program through your action plan.	School districts or schools that are just getting started with farm-to-school activities.	12 or 24 months	\$20,000 - \$50,000
IMPLEMENTATION	Help your farm-to-school program flourish. Invest in long-term sustainability.	School districts or schools that are already operating programs where partnerships are established and early successes have accrued	12 or 24 months	\$50,000 - \$100,000
TRAINING	State, regional, national training event or conference.	State/local agencies, tribes, ag producers, or nonprofits that have evidence of strong community support.	12 months	\$20,000 - \$50,000

Table 1

ELIGIBLE FOOD PROGRAMS

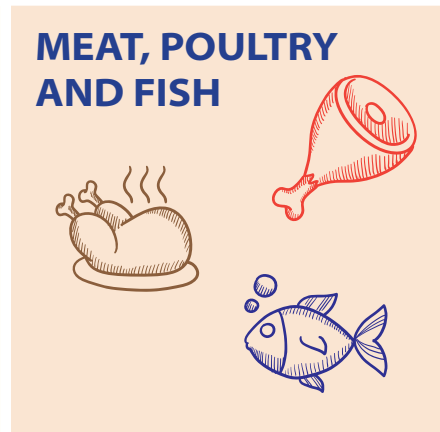
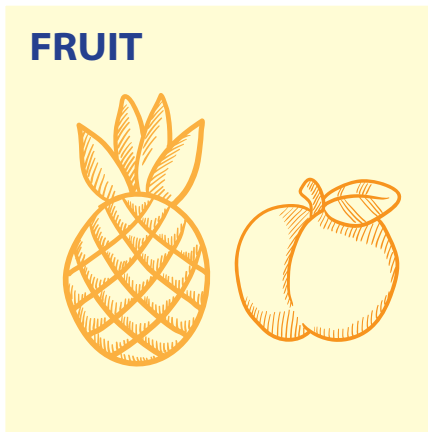
In order to be eligible to receive farm-to-school grant funds, you must be participating in at least one of the following USDA food programs:

- National School Lunch Program
- National School Breakfast Program
- Summer Food Service Program: Seamless Summer Option
- Summer Food Service Program: Child and Adult Care Program

TYPES OF FOOD PRODUCTS: "THE WHOLE TRAY"

- Veggies
- Fruits
- Meat, poultry, fish
- Eggs
- Beans, grains, flour
- Fruit
- Dairy

What Types of Products?





ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES (EXAMPLES)

The USDA Farm-to-School Program offers the following examples of allowable activities that can be supported by the Farm-to-School Grant:

- Bring more locally-sourced food into the school meals.
- Solve distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more local foods.
- Supplement local food offerings by canning, freezing, storing or otherwise processing seasonal items for later use.
- Create buying groups with other districts to increase purchasing power related to local food procurement.
- Conduct training of food services staff to augment skills related to food prep, safe handling and storing.
- Establish new or strengthen existing community partnerships (e.g. working with culinary schools on training or menu development; partnerships with Extension to identify suppliers).
- Encourage increased consumption of local fruits and vegetables through promotional activities, taste tests and other activities.
- Expand experiential or agriculture-based learning opportunities, such as creation of school gardens, support to agriculture or food clubs, or increased exposure to on-farm activities.
- Develop integrated curriculum to reinforce food and nutrition-based learning throughout the school environment.
- Create communications and outreach efforts that promote cafeteria changes and increase participation rates.
- Introduce strategic planning efforts to expand or coordinate efforts across multiple districts.

Source: USDA Farm-to-School, Presentation: Funding Your Farm-to-School Programs





Incorporating Traditional Foods into Native Farm to School

The additional opportunity for farm-to-school in Native communities is the potential to incorporate traditional food items into the school menu. This offers a great opportunity to teach traditional cooking and preparation methods along with the stories and values that go along with them. And being able to make intergenerational connections between tribal elders and the youth to transfer values such as self-reliance, sustainability and preservation make this opportunity even more impactful for tribes.

Definition

The 2014 U.S. Farm Bill defines traditional foods as follows:

- (A) In General —The term “traditional food” means food that has traditionally been prepared and consumed by an Indian tribe.
- (B) Inclusions —The term “traditional food” includes—
 - (i) wild game meat;
 - (ii) fish;
 - (iii) seafood;
 - (iv) marine mammals;
 - (v) plants; and
 - (vi) berries.





FEDERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Policy Memo TA 01-2015 -- Child Nutrition Programs and Traditional Foods: Not only are traditional foods allowed to be served in Child Nutrition Programs, but USDA-FNS encourages traditional foods to be included.

Policy Memo SP 42-2015, CACFP 19-2015, SFSP 21-2015 -- Service of Traditional Foods in Public Facilities: Clarifies that child nutrition programs and public and nonprofit facilities that primarily serve Indians may accept and serve donated, unprocessed traditional foods.

Policy Memo SP 01-2016, CACFP 01-2016, SFSP 01-2016 -- Procure Local Meat, Poultry, Game and Eggs in Child Nutrition Programs: Outlines the requirements around serving variety of protein product in child nutrition programs. For tribal communities, this memo clarifies that wild and domesticated game must be voluntarily inspected at a USDA or state inspection facility to be served in child nutrition programs.

STATE AND LOCAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Some state and local governments have published rules and regulations related to the use of traditional foods. Be sure to contact the relevant state agency or USDA regional farm-to-school lead to identify and understand the relevant procurement and food safety regulations.



"Many of the staples that we use in the U.S., and throughout the world, came from Native American cultures and land. However, many of the foods became domesticated and no longer contain the rich nutrient value that they once did."

Source: USDA – Farm-to-School, Webinar: Traditional Foods, USDA Nutritionist



ACTIVITY



Traditional Food Recipes: The STAR School, a charter school located just off the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, has incorporated traditional recipes and cooking methods to strengthen the students' hands-on learning about their culture and traditions. The students can participate in planting, growing, harvesting and cooking these heirloom varieties using traditional cooking methods.

Cherokee Nation, Tqhlequah, Oklahoma, Veggie Bucks Program

Native Farm-to-School Information Resources

Format	Source
Online Information Sources	USDA Farm-to-School: www.fns.usda.gov National Farm-to-School Network: www.farmentoschool.org Food Hubs: www.food-hub.org/knowledgebase Fish to School: www.sitkawild.org Integrating Buffalo into Farm-to-School: http://www.itbcbuffalonation.org/
Events/Networking Opportunity	National Farm-to-Cafeteria Conference
Technical Assistance Organizations	USDA Farm-to-School Staff National Farm-to-School Network Alena Paisano, 505.819.8277 Intertribal Agricultural Council Kelsey Ducheneaux, 406.259.3525
Farm-to-School Research	USDA Farm-to-School Census (2015)
Newsletters	<i>The Dirt</i> (e-Letter) - published by USDA Food and Nutrition Service



BEST PRACTICES

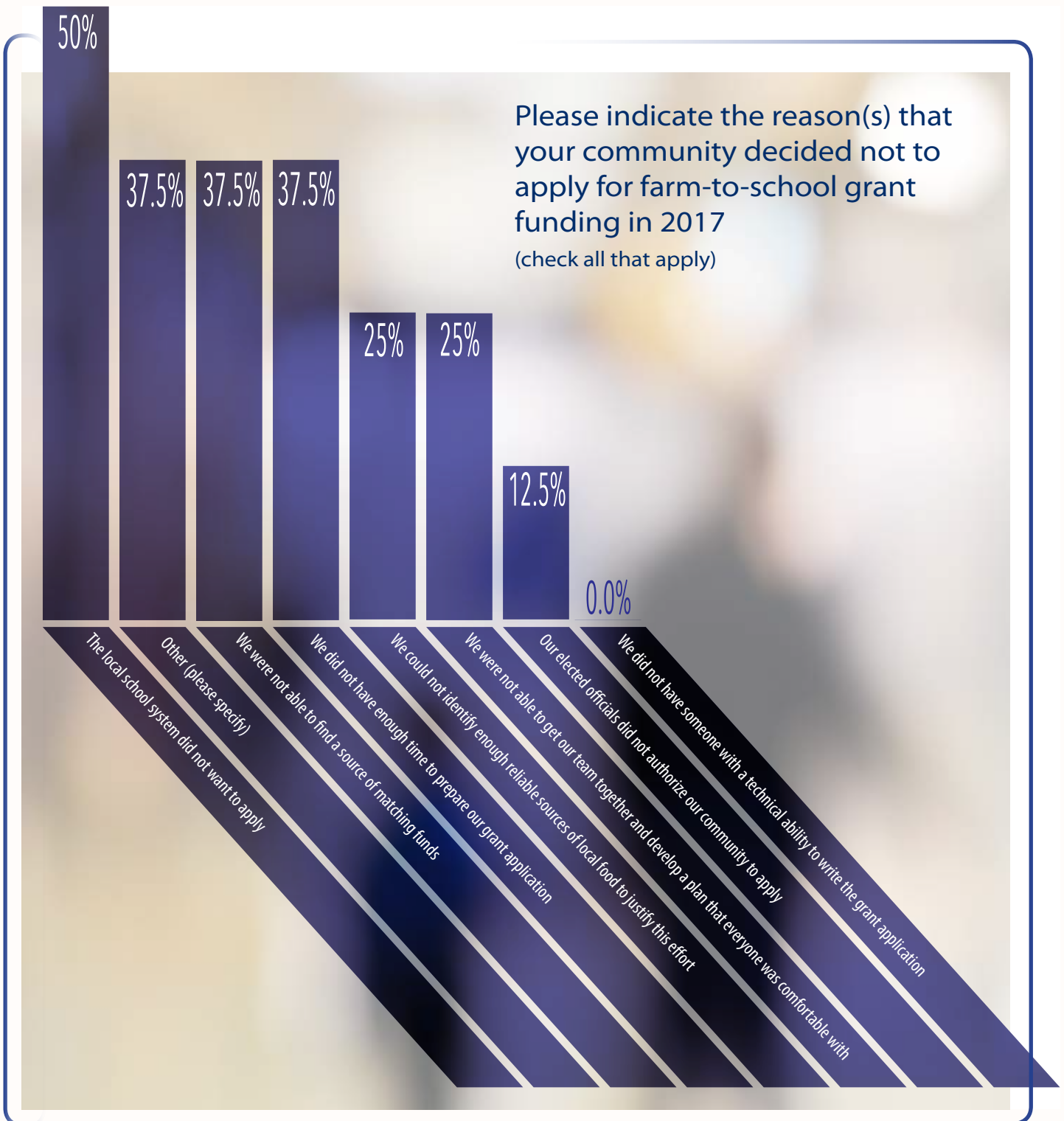
- Assess existing community programs and resources and build on them first (rather than starting from scratch).
- Map out local producers and ask what they grow, especially traditional foods.
- Start small and evaluate regularly.
- Build relationships with local producers (farmers, ranchers and fishers) and seek out traditional foods from your region.
- Connect your culture, land and water to the nutrition/health of your people.
- Support and reinforce changes in the cafeteria throughout the school learning environment (be integrated).
- Include many types of ag producers (be inclusive).
- Grantees offer the following tips for establishing a Native farm-to-school program:
 - Include students in the core team.
 - Familiarize yourself with the school food supply chain, including who is in charge at which points.
 - Allow extra time for harvesting traditional foods. For example, one grantee paid cafeteria staff an extra week to harvest you-pick peaches and process them for storage.
 - Conduct training sessions for cafeteria workers. For example, a casino chef organized a day-long training for cafeteria workers.
 - Salad Bar as the gateway to supply (Oneida).
 - Identify specialty crops – contract to grow and supply at fixed price.
 - Establish pre-procurement agreement with growers.
 - Let kids participate in the harvest.
 - Include students on advisory/planning board.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Adjust growing methods to accommodate school year.
- Realize that there are many different types of schools; need to know what you are working with and what is the process: public, private, BIE, BIE grant schools (contract schools); they each have their own procurement policies.
- Engage students in hands-on planting, growing and harvesting.
- Teach traditional cooking and prep methods along with the stories and values that go with that.
- Celebrate community events featuring locally-grown foods.
- Taste testing.
- Those who are into community service enjoy sharing the harvest with elders.
- If they grow it, they will eat it.
- Fruits are very popular with the students.
- Archives and documentation and processes.

COMMON CHALLENGES IN APPLYING FOR A FARM-TO-SCHOOL GRANT

In January 2018, First Nations conducted a survey of tribes that had previously indicated a high level of interest in pursuing farm-to-school grant funding. The chart below identifies the reasons that these programs decided not to apply for grant funding for fiscal year 2018.





Other: (Comments received by survey respondents)

1. In initial stages, we received approval to apply. One week before grant was due tribal council pulled out of the proposal as they did not see that its benefit to our community.
2. Based on the list of previous awards, we did not believe we were serving a large enough population to be competitive. We only serve 150 students.
3. Our natural resources department just started in July 2017. We do not have a staff person yet for the Ag Program.



COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

A community's food system includes all of the people, processes and food outlets that are required to get food from "farm to table." It includes the farmers and ranchers, value-added processors, food brokers and distributors, food retailers, restaurants, food-serving institutions, as well as the waste disposal. The more a community relies on food sources outside its region, the more dependent it is on others. A community becomes more resilient by increasing the food supply from within its region. A community becomes more sustainable by enhancing the positive environmental, economic and health impacts that result from a food system.

TRIBAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty is the right to define, plan and control the agricultural, hunting, fishing, food, and land policies. Due to well-known U.S. policies and practices toward Native Americans, tribal communities lost their food sovereignty rights which had many negative impacts such as the loss of traditions, declining health situations, and decreased self-reliance. Today, many tribal communities are working hard to reestablish their tribal food sovereignty. They are creating community food systems that are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances.





CASE STUDY

TRIBAL COMMUNITY: STAR SCHOOL, FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

Year Established: 2012

Funding Sources: Farm-to-School Planning Grant (2013), First Nations Development Institute (2012)

Primary Activities:

- Incorporated traditional foods such as blue corn (dried kernels and flour), squash, pumpkins, melons and greens.
- Hosted farm tours to include harvesting activities as well as an overnight camping trip.
- Planted school garden with a hoop house.

Biggest Challenges:

- Food safety regulations continue to evolve and gain complexity.
- Sourcing fresh foods from local farmers during the school year because of our high desert climate conditions.

Best Practices:

- Utilize hoop houses to extend the growing season and enable the growing and harvesting of more fresh produce during the school year.
- Incorporate culture and tradition into the farm-to-school program to strengthen the connection between the students and the tribe's culture. If possible, provide intergenerational learning opportunities.

Lessons Learned:

- Food service personnel need to identify potential farm partners and meet with them early to find out what crops they can grow successfully and how much volume they can supply. Ask for price points and projected range of harvest dates for each crop. It's a good idea to start simply by choosing one or a few products that you can handle fresh and easily process for storage.
- Menus need to be adapted to match available farm products, production volume and timing. Consider the capacity of your food service staff to handle fresh produce and to prepare and process excess for longer-term storage. Food service staff should work closely with a nutritionist to ensure that the new menu items are not only nutritious but satisfy requirements for school breakfast/lunch subsidies.
- Consider choosing produce that has a long shelf life or can be processed simply to extend use beyond the harvest season. If your kitchen has the capacity, consider simple processing methods like freezing, drying, pickling or canning. This requires additional time for kitchen staff, so consider using volunteers, interns or special programs like AmeriCorps.

CASE STUDY



MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

Year Established: 2014

Funding Sources: Farm-to-School Planning Grant (2014), USDA-NIFA Community Food Projects Grant (2015-2017), Farm-to-School Implementation Grant (2018)

Primary Activities:

- Procurement of organic, fresh produce from Choctaw Fresh Produce, a 100% tribally-owned enterprise.
- Hosted student farm tours (primarily 5th and 6th graders).
- Organized student-run Thanksgiving Farmers' Market (High School FFA students).
- Established high school senior organic farming internship at Choctaw Fresh Produce.

Biggest Challenges:

- Price: Locally-grown produce is usually more expensive than buying from large food distributors.
- Processing: School kitchen workers did not have the tools or training to process fresh produce. They were accustomed to processed and frozen items that did not need additional preparation.

Best Practices:

- Kids really enjoy touring the farms and being allowed to pick and eat the fresh produce.
- Allowing the high school students to run a farmers' market increases their level of interest by demonstrating the connection between farming and the potential to earn income.

Lessons Learned:

- Farm to school is a great way to build a stronger local ecosystem of support for the tribe's food sovereignty initiative.
- Include a wide range of stakeholders from across the tribe that are involved in nutrition education, health and wellness, farmers/ranchers, elected officials and the students. It will greatly increase the momentum for food sovereignty in your community.



CASE STUDY

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

Year Established: 2012

Funding Sources: Farm-to-School Support Services Grant (2015)

Primary Activities:

- Procurement of local produce such as apples, cabbage and Romaine lettuce
- Established school gardens with 22 raised-bed school gardens and greenhouse hydroponic system
- Grew traditional Cherokee crops with edible, medicinal and craft uses, like corn varieties with hard seeds that can be used for making jewelry.
- Developed mobile kitchens that can be moved between classrooms to demonstrate how to transform freshly harvested vegetables into snacks like salads, pesto and smoothies.

Best Practices:

- Farm-to-school is a great opportunity to educate students about Cherokee language related to food and agriculture by including the Cherokee words in educational materials.

Lessons Learned:

- Integrated the culinary arts to include recipe creation, junior chefs, and taste tests is a very effective way to get students to try new foods.



Appendices

USDA 2018 RFA Grant application checklist

SOURCE: FISCAL YEAR 2018 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

This application checklist provides a list of the required documents; however FNS expects that applicants will read the entire RFA prior to the submission of their application.

In order to apply, **at least three weeks** prior to submission, you must have:

- Obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
- Registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
- Registered in Grants.gov.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:

- Your application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section 4 “Application and Submission Information,” including page limits, priorities outlined in Section 1.4, and all necessary attachments.

When **preparing your budget**, ensure the following information is included:

- You have at least a 25 percent match and that you have detailed the source of those funds.
- All key staff who are paid by this grant.
- The percentage of time the project director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents.
- Your organization’s fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation.
- The type of fringe benefits to be covered with federal funds.
- Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justifications, basis for lodging estimates, and estimates for one mandatory face-to-face meeting.
- Types of equipment and supplies, justifications, and estimates, ensuring that the budget is in line with the project description.
- Information for all contracts and justification for any sole-source contracts.
- Justification, description and itemized list of all consultant services.
- Indirect cost information (either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or if no agreement exists, the basis of the indirect costs requested). If none requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.



When **submitting** your application, ensure you have submitted the following:

- Farm-to-School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet
- SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – Budget Information and Instruction Form (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
- SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.
- Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (in Appendix B)
- Project Narrative (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Signed Letters Verifying Matching Funds for EACH cash and/or in kind resource (PDF or MS Word - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Signed Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations (PDF or MS Word - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Staff Resumes (PDF or MS Word - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)

When applicable, application packages are required to include the following documents:

- AD-3030 – Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (fillable PDF in Grants.gov).
- Signed Letter(s) Stating Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure (PDF or MS Word - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15)

ACTIVITY



Choctaw Fresh Produce, Student-Run Farmers Market

Student-Run Farmers’ Markets: Choctaw Fresh Produce started a student-run farmers’ market on the last day of school before the Thanksgiving holiday break in order to give Choctaw Central High School students some hands-on experience with the business-side of organic farming. The student are involved in distributing flyers, setting up the market for display, helping the customers, and handing out healthy recipes

USDA GRANTS AND LOANS THAT SUPPORT FARM-TO-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

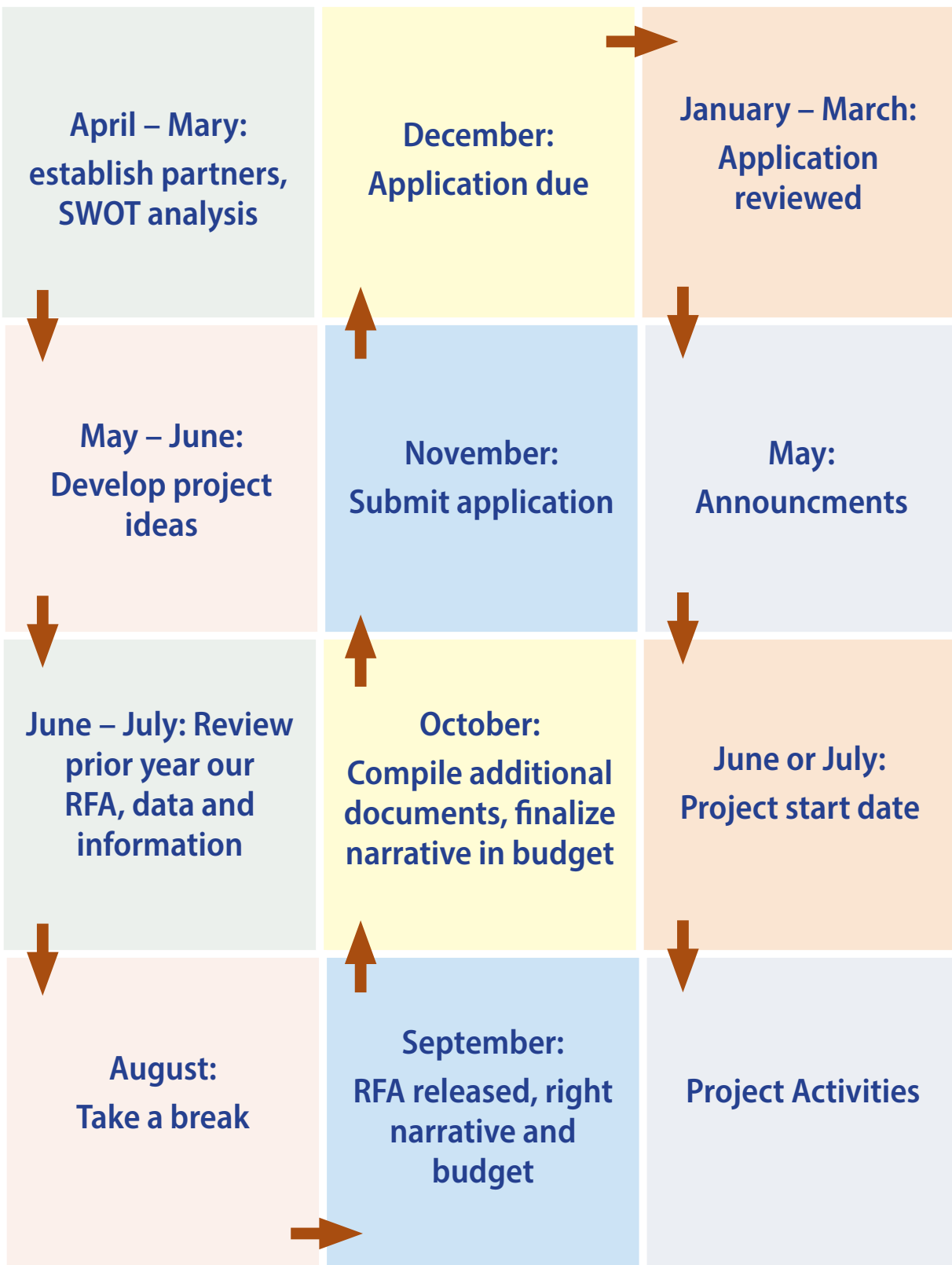
Funding from the US Department of Agriculture is available to assist farms, schools, and every link in between in feeding kids healthy local meals; teaching them about food, farming and nutrition; and supporting local agricultural economies. While the programs listed below provide a good starting point for those looking to bolster farm to school efforts, other USDA grant and loan programs support local food systems work as well. Visit www.usda.gov/farmtoschool for more information.



Note: Eligibility guidelines can be quite specific, so be sure to confirm your eligibility on the webpage for the grant or loan program before applying. In addition, non-eligible entities can often partner with eligible entities to benefit from programs they might not otherwise have access to.



USDA RECOMMENDED GRANT APPLICATION TIMELINE



NOTES



NOTES



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