



United States Department of Agriculture

CULTIVATING OPPORTUNITY:

an Overview of USDA's Fiscal Year
2015 and 2016 Farm to School
Grantees' Growing Achievements

THE
FARM *to* **SCHOOL**
GRANT PROGRAM



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BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT, AL

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committed to incorporating local and regional foods throughout its nutrition assistance programs, providing high-quality, nutritious foods to program participants and increasing economic opportunities for U.S. food producers. To achieve this goal, USDA encourages program participation across all types of agricultural producers and all types of program operators.

The USDA Farm to School Grant Program is one way schools, State agencies, Indian Tribal Organizations, producers, and nonprofit organizations are working together to incorporate local and regional foods into the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). This report explores the history and benefits of farm to school programs across the country and dives deeper into the strategies and outcomes of USDA's Farm to School Grant Program.



MAGDALENA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, NM

WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?

Simply put, “farm to school” refers to efforts that bring locally or regionally produced foods into schools, including: sourcing local foods for school meal programs; providing hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and integrating food-related education into the regular, standards-based classroom curriculum. USDA considers farm to school to be inclusive of many types of producers such as farmers, ranchers, and fishers, as well as many types of food businesses including food processors, manufacturers, distributors, and other value-added operations.

Though the term “farm to school” specifically applies to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, USDA encourages similar efforts to increase locally produced foods across all child nutrition programs including the Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Successful farm to school strategies improve children’s access to high-quality, nutritious foods and can also boost local economies.



Why Is Farm to School Important?

Kids Win!

Farm to school efforts help teach children where their food comes from and how food fuels their bodies. It enhances classroom education through hands-on learning, such as school gardens and other educational activities related to food, health, agriculture, and nutrition. These activities ignite excitement around food, and this holistic approach to learning enhances the chances for students to adopt these practices beyond the classroom. The USDA's 2015 Farm to School Census shows that when farm to school efforts are present at school, students are more willing to try new foods, waste less food, and consume more fruits and vegetables.¹



**KIDS WIN,
FARMERS WIN,
SCHOOLS WIN, AND
COMMUNITIES WIN.²**



Farmers Win!

The operators of child nutrition programs purchase more than \$12 billion of food each year, which is a significant market opportunity for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and food manufacturers. In the 2015 Farm to School Census, school districts reported purchasing nearly \$790 million in local food from farmers, ranchers, fishers, food processors, and manufacturers throughout the 2013-2014 school year. This represents a 105-percent increase over 2011-2012 when the first USDA Farm to School Census was conducted. Nearly half (47 percent) of the districts that were surveyed reported interest in purchasing even more local foods in future school years.

Schools Win!

More than two-thirds of school districts that engaged in farm to school activities reported positive impacts, including increased support from parents and community members. Schools also reported that farm to school helped lower school meal program costs.

Communities Win!

Research shows that farm to school activities stimulate job creation and local economic activity.² Farm to school efforts rely on collaboration, which strengthens community engagement among students, teachers, parents, producers, and administrators. USDA's 2015 Farm to School Census shows 42 percent of surveyed school districts participate in farm to school activities. This means farm to school impacts more than 5,200 school districts, 42,000 schools, and 23.6 million children.



¹ <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/>

² National Farm to School Network. The Benefits of Farm to School, <http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/BenefitsFactSheet.pdf>

WHEN DID FARM TO SCHOOL BEGIN?

Over the past 20 years, schools across the Nation have increasingly embraced farm to school efforts. The farm to school movement has grown from a handful of schools in the late 1990s to more than 42,000 schools in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2014.³

Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act was amended in 2010 to create a Farm to School Program in order to:

- Distribute grant funding to improve access to local foods in schools;
- Provide training and technical assistance to improve access to local foods in schools; and
- Disseminate research and data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.

Over the last several years, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has been actively supporting farm to school efforts through what is now known as the Office of Community Food Systems. Since 2013, USDA has offered \$5 million in grants annually to schools, school districts, nonprofit organizations, State Agencies, agricultural producers, and Indian Tribal Organizations through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program to plan, implement, and/or provide training on farm to school activities. In 5 years, the USDA Farm to School Grant Program has provided funds to over 365 grantees, reaching over 29,000 schools and 13 million students in all 50 States. In addition, FNS staff offers technical assistance in the form of fact sheets, memos, webinars, and in-person training to farm to school stakeholders. FNS also conducts the Farm to School Census, which records and monitors farm to school activities and trends across the country.



³ USDA Office of Community Food Systems. 2015 Farm to School Census, <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/>.

About This Report

This report details trends and best practices from fiscal year (FY) 2015 and 2016 farm to school grantees. In FY 2015, the Farm to School Grant Program introduced standardized baseline and final reporting measures (Appendix B) for grantees to more effectively document project outcomes and overall impacts of the grant program. These standardized measures were directly aligned with the USDA Farm to School Census⁴ to facilitate direct comparison between the grantee cohorts and other stakeholders working on farm to school initiatives across the Nation in order to investigate the impacts of the grant program on the growth of the farm to school movement nationwide. FNS used that information to identify the strategies contained in this report. Details about the methodology and limitations of the data can be found in Appendix A.

The report is divided into three key strategies for farm to school success. Each section contains an overview of the strategy, spotlights of grantees that leveraged the strategy to increase their success, and key partner roles in implementing the strategy.

4 USDA Office of Community Food Systems. 2015 Farm to School Census, <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/>.



CARLTON-COOK-LAKE-ST.
LOUIS COUNTY COMMUNITY
HEALTH BOARD, MN

BY THE NUMBERS: FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM 2013-17

The USDA Farm to School Grant Program awards up to \$5 million annually in competitive grants for program planning, implementation, and activities such as training, partnership development, equipment purchases, and development and maintenance of school gardens. In 5 years, the USDA Farm to School Grant Program has provided:

365
GRANTEES

50
STATES

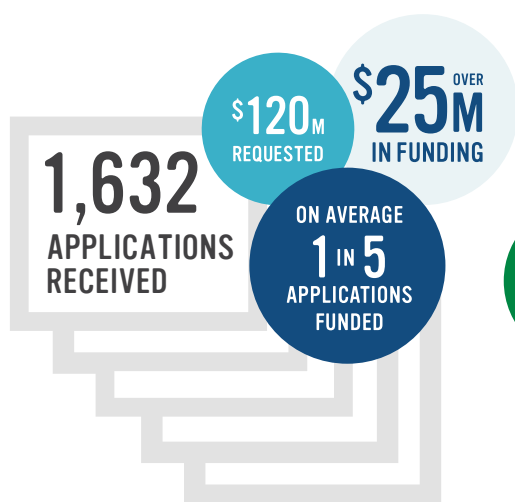
REACHED



OVER
29K
SCHOOLS



APPROX.
13M
STUDENTS



50% OF ALL AWARDS & **45%** OF AWARD DOLLARS

WENT TO SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS



MURFREESBORO CITY SCHOOLS, TN

FY 2015-2016 FARM TO SCHOOL GRANTEE DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Awarded

\$4,733,631

Total Number

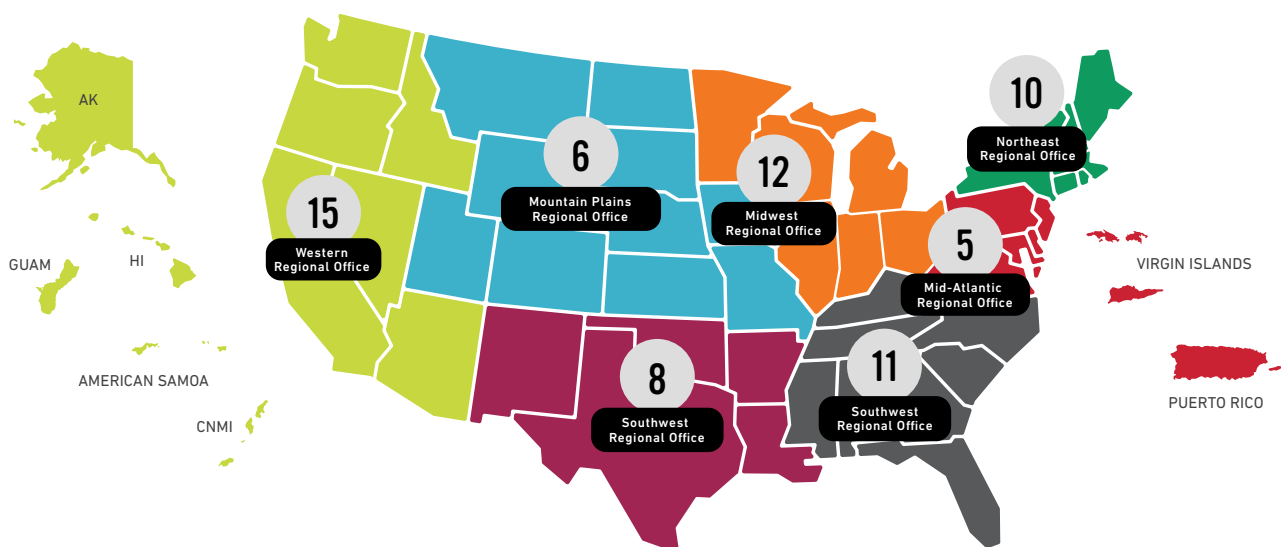
67 GRANTEES

* * * * *

Number of Grantees by Type



Number of Grantees by Region



Number of Grantees by Entity





SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF DETROIT, MI

FARM TO SCHOOL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

USDA farm to school grantee activities range from designing and implementing educational and experiential learning tactics to sourcing local foods and embedding farm to school principles within policies and systems. These activities provide a holistic approach that benefits entire communities, from the youngest eaters in daycare to senior citizens participating in community meal programs. Farm to school provides communities with local control and flexibility by incorporating regionally specific and seasonally available foods and allowing schools to determine their definition of local.

Across the board, grantees attested to the benefits of farm to school activities. The feedback that grantee Program Directors received from school cafeteria managers, teachers, students, and principals revealed that farm to school can truly make a difference.

Since implementing farm to school activities, grantees reported a multitude of benefits, including:

- Increased economic activity in the community and State;
- Improved knowledge, attitudes, and access to healthy food options;
- Increased opportunities for students to learn about agriculture and nutrition while gaining life skills, self-esteem, and social skills;
- Increased community engagement and awareness; and
- Additional opportunities to combat inequities in the school food system.⁵

Grantees Report Benefits from Farm to School:

GRANTEES REPORT BENEFITS FROM FARM TO SCHOOL	
Increased participation in school meals	45%
Lower school meal program costs	20%
Perceived reduced food waste	18%

⁵ National Farm to School Network. The Benefits of Farm to School, <http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/BenefitsFactSheet.pdf>

Key Strategies for Farm to School Success:

Based on the data and feedback submitted by grantees, FNS identified three key strategies for farm to school success:



Educational and Experiential Learning

The majority of grantees reported providing educational and experiential learning activities such as school gardens, field trips, cooking classes, farmer visits, and curriculum development and integration.



Sourcing Local Foods

Finding, buying, processing, preparing, and serving fresh, local foods is a central activity of farm to school programming. Grantees reported developing new cafeteria infrastructure, new menu items, and staff training to successfully source and incorporate local foods into their programs.



Policy and Systems Changes

Program success and sustainability depends on institutionalizing farm to school efforts through methods such as:

- Incorporating farm to school initiatives such as starting a school garden and using the harvest for school meals and taste tests in school policies;
- Training school food service staff and authorities on local food procurement and safe food handling; and,
- Hiring new staff to promote and coordinate farm to school activities.

Key Partners Implementing Farm to School Strategies:

Partnerships are vital to establishing and sustaining farm to school programs. From establishing long-term contracts to grow food for school meals to partnering with a local nonprofit to recruit garden volunteers, committed partnerships are the foundation of farm to school success. Key partners include:

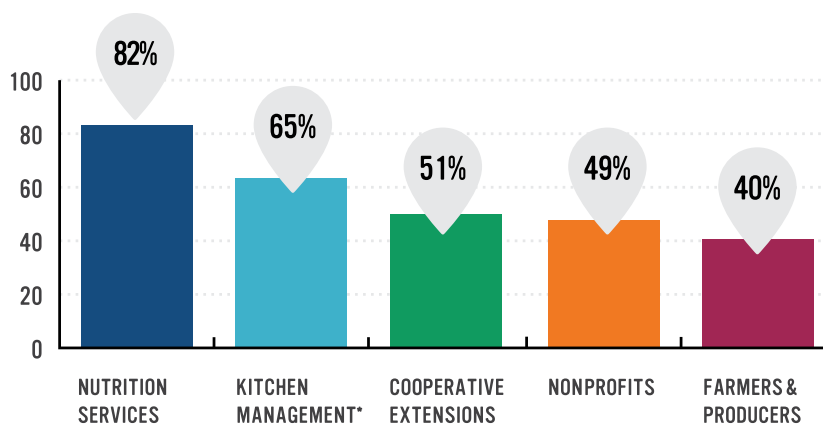
**SCHOOLS AND
SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

**STATE AND LOCAL
AGENCIES**

**NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS**

**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS
AND DISTRIBUTORS**

Grantees reported receiving support from and collaboration with the following types of partners:



* With help from administration staff

1 Educational and Experiential Learning

Educational and experiential learning are key farm to school strategies, providing students hands-on opportunities that connect them to the source of their food. Farm to school activities can be integrated into any subject, including mathematics, science, reading, writing, life science, health education, and engineering. These educational activities can include the use of a school garden, where students can learn about the plant cycle, measure how tall their plants grow or the circumference of a tomato, compare and contrast seedlings, or taste test their harvest. Additionally, posting promotional materials throughout the school engages students and helps them acknowledge the importance of how and from where their food is sourced. **Seventy-three percent of grantees reported that their farm**

to school educational activities were aligned with national and State-adopted content standards, such as Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Next Generation Science Standards, or Common Core Standards.

These activities strengthen children's understanding of agricultural practices and promote exposure to career opportunities in agriculture, nutrition, and other STEM-related subjects. In addition to the educational aspects, farm to school activities also make healthy eating fun. Students who participate in these activities are more likely to make healthier food choices at school and home.⁶

↑ 97%

increase in the number of grantees reporting that farm to school concepts were integrated into their school's curriculum.

Farm to School Grantees Reported:

Students Participating in Educational and Experiential Learning Activities

Enjoyed a visit from a local farm **257,372**

Participated in garden activities **78,178**

Participated in a taste test **24,973**

Visited a local farm or orchard **18,835**

Started school gardens **693**

On the Rise: Rural Participation

39

School gardens started

2,869

Students participated in garden activities

2,174

Students visited a local farm or orchard on a field trip

1,114

Students enjoyed a visit from a local farmer

6,171

Students participated in a taste test

⁶ National Farm to School Network. The Benefits of Farm to School, <http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/BenefitsFactSheet.pdf>

Farm to school grantees reported the following increases:



97% more farm to school concepts in curriculum



33% more student field trips to farms



37% more taste tests and cooking demonstrations



19% more edible school garden/orchard activities

Farm to school activities create a more nutritious school food environment with hands-on learning opportunities and marketing materials that make healthy eating fun.

Students who participate in these activities are more likely to make nutritious food choices at school and home. Promotional efforts and community engagement activities, especially among parents, are essential for securing buy-in among stakeholders and increasing awareness of the positive effects that farm to school has on the community.

Grantees reported significant increases in promotional events and community engagement activities during farm to school implementation:

↑ 36%

Promotion of locally produced foods at schools increased by 36%

↑ 29%

Promoting local efforts through themed or branded promotions increased by 29%

↑ 20%

20% more grantees celebrated National Farm to School Month in October





SPOTLIGHT: WATERFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT, MI

The Waterford School District in Michigan has used grant funding to implement a farm fresh approach toward learning. Local farmers set up mini farmers markets in the cafeteria to talk to students about things like the nutritional value of certain foods and how they are grown. Students get a first-hand look at the source of their foods.

Through this experience, students also come to understand that eating nutritious, local fresh foods is not only good for them but also good for the environment and their community.



SPOTLIGHT: CITY SCHOOLYARD GARDEN, VA

City Schoolyard Garden, in partnership with Charlottesville City Schools and many others, utilized their Farm to School Grant to launch a Harvest of the Month: Garden to Table snack program. This program gives youth in Charlottesville City Schools a great way to learn about – and taste – seasonal vegetables and fruits. Harvest of the Month highlights a locally available crop each month by providing a fresh, nutritious snack to over 3,500 public school students from Pre-K through 12th grade, the majority of whom are enrolled in the free and reduced school meal program.

The morning of the Harvest of the Month snack, students are asked a trivia question to encourage creative thinking and curiosity about the month's featured crop. In addition to the trivia and tastings, students learn information about the nutrition of the Harvest of the Month selection and how to grow and prepare it. Students are provided handouts in English and Spanish with Harvest of the Month recipes. Evaluation results indicate student's preferences of the Harvest of the Month crops have increased each month.

The Charlottesville City Schools' Nutrition Department has also increased the number of local and from-scratch items served on their lunch lines. **As of 2016, City Schoolyard Garden has served over 56,000 fresh local snacks**





SPOTLIGHT: MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MN

Minneapolis Public Schools took a comprehensive approach to integrating farm to school activities in their meal program and beyond. All Minnesota Public Schools serve Minnesota-grown food for lunch on the first Thursday of each month during the school year, known as MN Thursdays.



The schools report an increase in participation in school meals on MN Thursdays, most prominently at the middle school level, where meal participation increases by 1,500 students!

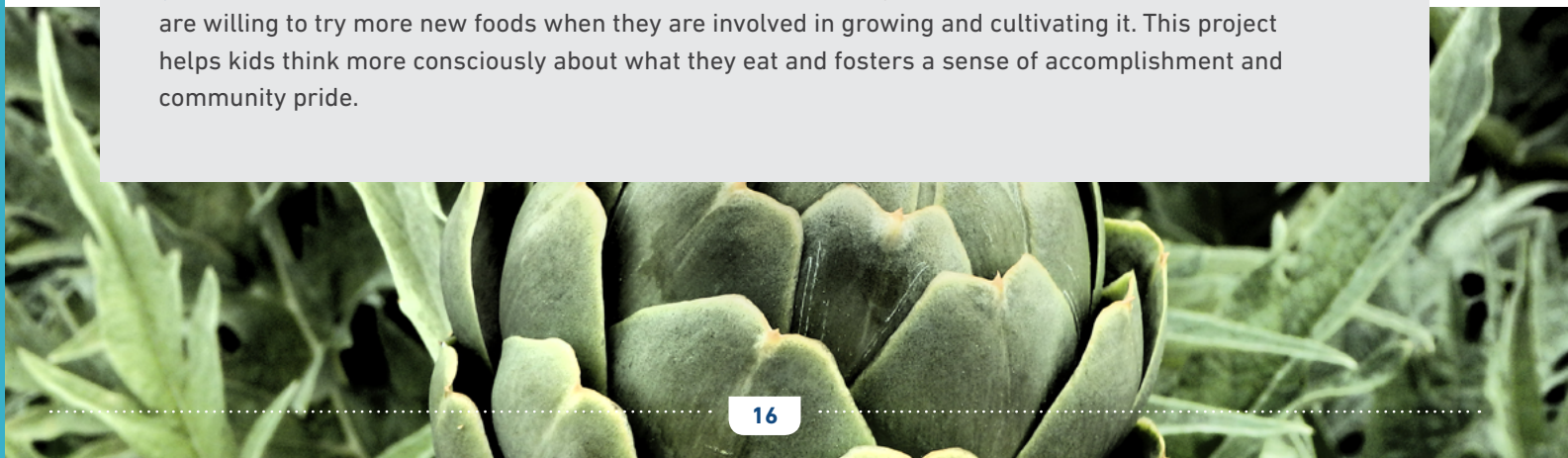
"We also continue to hear positive feedback from lunchroom managers, teachers, administrators, and parents about farm to school products, MN Thursday menus, and the overall quality of our food via feedback forms, social media, and conversations.

The program has been so successful that students and farmers eat meals together, our school halls are covered in MN Thursday posters, lunchroom staff distribute farmer trading cards to excited students, principals wear MN Thursday t-shirts, lunchroom staff and teachers recognize farmers from promotional videos, and countless other moments remind us about the value of our farm to school program." This has led to increased participation in school meals, greater acceptance of new menu items, and greater community support for school meals. They've also expanded and promoted local procurement and increased scratch-cooking with fresh ingredients.



SPOTLIGHT: MID KLAMATH WATERSHED COUNCIL, CA

The Mid Klamath Watershed Council in California discovered that sometimes the best way to help empower kids to choose nutritious food options is to encourage them to do a little digging – in the dirt! The council used its Farm to School Grant to fund the Klamath Roots Food Project. **Hundreds of students take advantage of California's rich agricultural climate to plant and nurture their own gardens.** When harvest time arrives, kids can pick their own vegetables. Research shows children are willing to try more new foods when they are involved in growing and cultivating it. This project helps kids think more consciously about what they eat and fosters a sense of accomplishment and community pride.



Key Partners in Educational and Experiential Learning



SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Schools and school districts are ripe with opportunities for nutritional and agricultural education as more than 30 million students participate in the National School Lunch Program each day. School gardens, taste tests, and farm visits are only a few methods through which students are exposed to the food system. Buy-in from school staff is key to the successful integration of these and other farm to school activities.



STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

State and local agencies offer regulatory guidance on farm to school decision-making, provide administrative oversight to program operations, and support efforts to educate communities on food systems. Considered the experts on education and agricultural policy, they support schools and districts by establishing education regulations, interpreting educational guidance, and training educators on effective nutrition and agriculture-related education topics and techniques.



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit organizations strengthen networks between schools and other farm to school stakeholders. From developing and distributing standards-based curricula to building school gardens and donating staff time, nonprofit organizations often fill in the gaps that many schools experience due to staff or resource shortages. They also build capacity for long-term sustainability of farm to school activities by advocating for farm to school and related policies.



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Agricultural producers and distributors connect students to the source of their food by donating or selling their foods to schools for integrating into school meals, Harvest of the Month programs, taste tests, and more. By visiting schools or having students visit the farm, producers provide students with fun, hands-on learning.

2 Sourcing Local Foods

Procuring local foods for school meals invests money back into the local community. From the creation of new jobs to increasing annual farm income,⁷ farm to school activities stimulate local and regional food economies, offer a long-term revenue stream for farmers, and support the Buy American provision. When schools source food from local food businesses, producers take pride and ownership over their contributions in keeping their community fed with wholesome food from their own backyard. Farm to school, in many ways, builds a customer base for farmers because the students they feed today will grow up to be adult consumers.

Grantees reported spending \$28M on local foods, not counting milk, as a result of their farm to school programming. While there is not a standard definition for “local,” almost half of grantees reported that they defined local as “produced within the State.” By developing their own definition of local, grantees have the flexibility to shift strategies as needed according to the seasonal availability of local foods and to fit local and/or cultural traditions. The definition of local can also change with the season to accommodate a larger radius during times of the year when local food options are limited.



7 Kane D, Kruse S, Ratcliffe MM, Sobell SA, Tessman N. The Impact of Seven Cents. EcoTrust. 2010



SPOTLIGHT: MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, CA

A fundamental starting point for increasing local procurement is to revise internal procurement processes within what is allowable under State and Federal guidelines. Planning grantee Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) in Contra Costa County, California, reported that, “through our farm to school project, MDUSD has fundamentally changed district-wide procurement practice for produce by including a specification for seasonality for select produce items in order to ensure good pricing, and by including bid language that rewards procurement and identification of locally sourced produce.” **The district went from not purchasing any local foods to spending 11 percent of its school food budget spent on local foods (excluding milk) over the course of the grant period.**





TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT ON FOOD : \$538 MILLION



► INCLUDING MILK

\$58 MILLION, 17.1%

Spent on Local Products by Grantees,
Total Percentage

Higher than the national avg. of 11.4%

► EXCLUDING MILK

\$28 MILLION, 6.2%

Spent on Local Products by Grantees,
Total Percentage

Higher than the national avg. of 4.4%

CHALLENGES

Schools looking to source more local foods should be aware that tracking local food procurement can be challenging. Grantees reported:

- Unreliable methods for tracking invoices and purchasing;
- Inconsistent tracking mechanisms across school districts; and
- Limited technological resources.



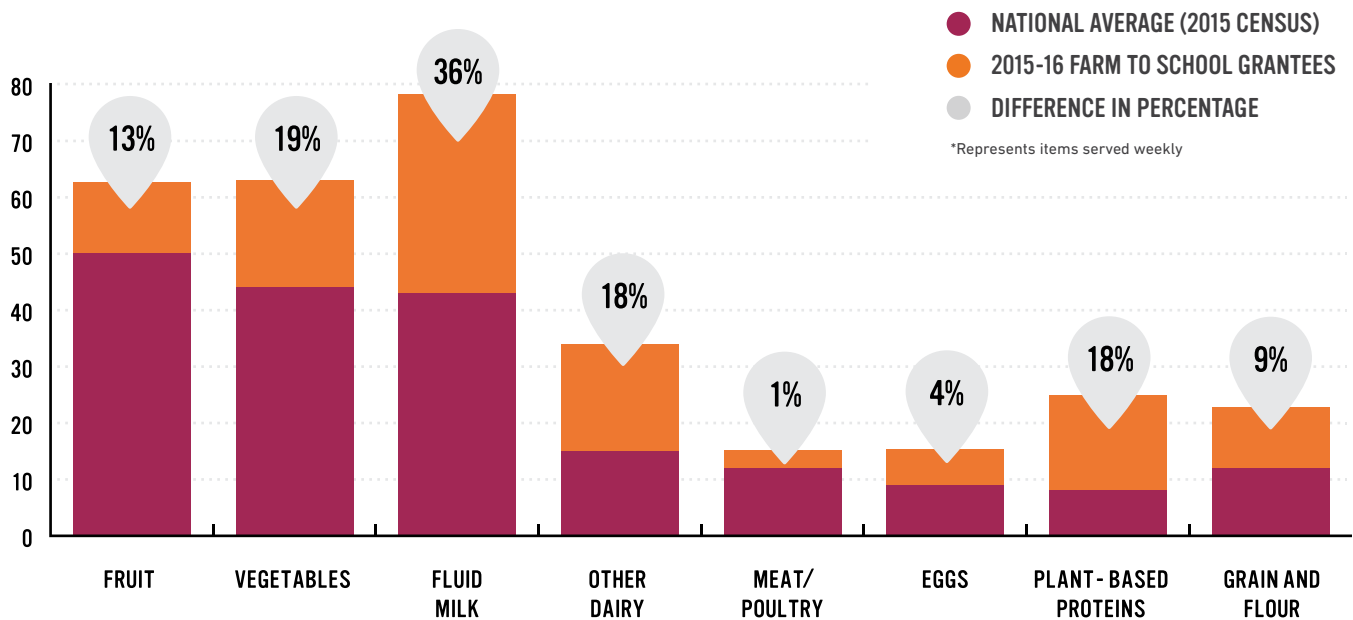
SPOTLIGHT: DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, TX

Dallas Independent School District (ISD) in Texas is home to approximately 160,000 students. With the Farm to School Grant, the district sought to connect local growers and producers with the wholesalers and distributors used to procure foods for Dallas ISD and other Dallas County schools. Dallas ISD surveyed regional farmers and producers and used the results to coordinate connections to the distributors as well as potential farm to school activities at the schools. **As a result, the percentage of the total school food budget spent on local foods (excluding milk) went from 10 percent to 27 percent over the course of the grant period.** According to the grantee, "This significant increase in purchasing local items is a direct result of the years of hard work Dallas ISD has done to intentionally seek out local sources for menu items and the coordination of our Harvest of the Month initiative."

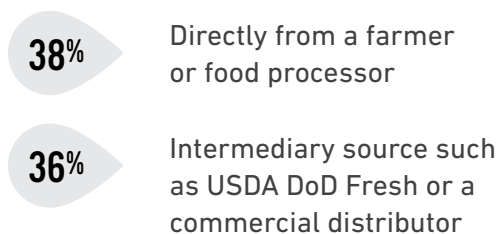


INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF LOCAL FOODS IN MEALS AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS

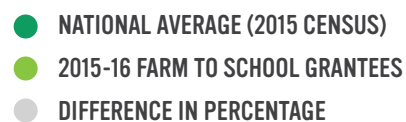
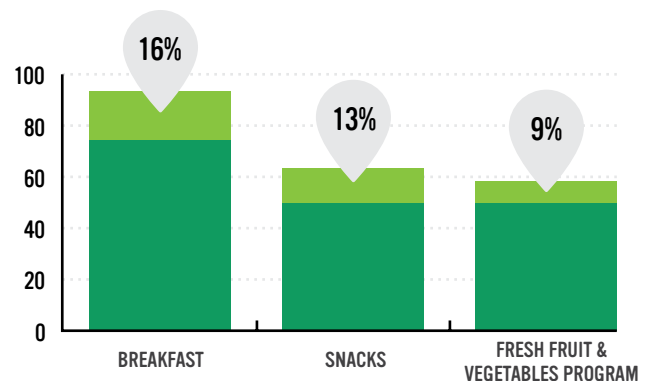
On average, grantees were able to incorporate more local foods into their meals, compared to other school districts surveyed in the 2015 Farm to School Census. Ninety-seven percent of grantees sourced local food for the USDA National School Lunch Program. This could include everything from the whole wheat in pizza crust, beans in chili, and rice for stir-fry to the turkey in sandwiches, cheese in quesadillas, and fresh fruit and vegetables for the salad bar.



Grantees procured local foods from a wide variety of sources:



Grantees believe incorporating local foods has a positive impact on participation in their school lunch and school breakfast programs. Forty-five percent of grantees reported increased participation in school meals, and 18 percent reported a reduction in food waste.





SPOTLIGHT: INTER TRIBAL BUFFALO COUNCIL, SD

A growing number of Tribal communities are reconnecting children with their rich history and culture by establishing farm to school programs. In doing so, Tribes are integrating traditional foods into child nutrition programs. The Inter Tribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) has used its Farm to School Grant to help beef up the lunch menus at Tribal schools with buffalo. The ITBC visits with schools and the corresponding Tribes to determine their ability to incorporate locally raised buffalo meat into school lunch programs. This partnership not only connects students with a part of their cultural heritage, but also empowers local Tribal producers by creating a market for their tasty, nutritious product.



SPOTLIGHT: LIVE54218, WI

Thanks to its Farm to School Grant, nonprofit organization LIVE54218 was able to link eastern Wisconsin food growers with wholesale institutional buyers like schools. Growers can list what they have available for sale on the LIVE54218 marketplace platform and, with the click of a button, schools can order from multiple local sellers at once – one transaction, one invoice. The program not only saves school officials time and effort, but also helps give an economic nudge to local growers by increasing the demand for their products.



SPOTLIGHT: COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, DE

Colonial School District (CSD), located in New Castle, Delaware, serves approximately 10,000 students across eight elementary, three middle, one high, and two special needs schools. CSD is involved in the cooperative management of four acres of farmland at the historic Penn Farm, where high school students are integrally involved in crop production. Farm to School Grant funding supported expansion of The Penn Farm Project, increasing supply for the school meal programs and enhancing agriculture education for elementary and middle school students. Through increased purchases from Penn Farm and other sources, CSD's local food expenditures increased nearly ten-fold, from \$23,081 in 2014 to \$202,491 at the end of 2016. Nutrition staff coordinated with the high school agriculture teachers, students, and the Penn Farm manager to incorporate food from the farm in their meals as often as possible. They were able to exceed guidelines for vegetable inclusion in school meal menus, incorporating more than 40 varieties of vegetables. According to the grantee, "We want our students to understand and gain an appreciation for the many careers available in agriculture and gain a greater appreciation of the connection between the food, consumers, and the land, and hard work [it takes] for it to get to their plate/tray."



Key Partners in Sourcing Local Foods



SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Procuring local foods is the responsibility of the school district, and the ability to do so may differ due to variations in size, geographic location, and financial capacity. Food Service Directors must balance the preferences of their student body, the capacity and technical skills of cafeteria staff, and their food budget.



STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

State and local agencies can train agricultural producers and school food providers in proper procurement practices and best practices on including local food in child nutrition programs. Federal agencies, such as the Department of Education or USDA, can also help establish relationships and encourage partnerships between food suppliers and schools.



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit organizations can act as advocates, educators, and policy-influencers to enhance schools' opportunities for procuring local foods. They may be able to resolve issues and reduce barriers in the local food supply chain by negotiating agreements and locating resources to support distribution challenges.



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Agricultural producers and distributors grow, pack, aggregate, and deliver local foods to schools. Producers can plan ahead by planting specific crops that schools request, and distributors can identify, incorporate, and promote local products for schools to order.

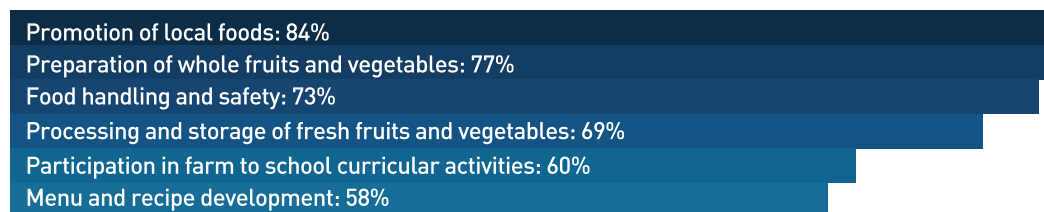
3 Policy and Systems Change

Successful, sustainable integration of farm to school activities often requires long-term policy and/or systemic change. Policies can include district, State, and Federal rules and regulations. For example, some States have also developed policies that provide additional reimbursement to schools that source locally. Enacting school- and district-level policies is an important strategy for embedding farm to school programming within a school's culture. The number of school grantees who reported having farm to school policies in place increased by 10 percent over the grant period to a total of 67 percent.

Systems refer to the everyday infrastructure and operations by which schools function, such as the way food arrives at the cafeteria. For example, a school could move away from procuring non-local lettuce to harvesting its own lettuce from a school garden for the school's salad bar. Training staff in local procurement and scratch cooking are also examples of systematic changes. For many schools, improving the quality and appeal of meals requires additional capacity; therefore, many grantees supported scratch cooking by purchasing kitchen equipment and training nutrition personnel, teachers, and farmers to process, store, prepare, and serve fresh, local items.

Grantees reported training on the following topics:

NUTRITION PERSONNEL



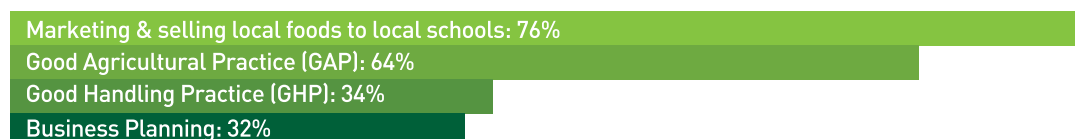
4,943

farmers and nutrition personnel trained

TEACHERS



FARMERS



With appropriate policies and systems in place, environmental changes will occur. For example, State agency grantees developed statewide programs, such as California Thursdays® and Minnesota Thursdays, featuring meals that are entirely locally sourced on at least one Thursday per month, building recognition for local food and increasing participation in school meal programs.



SPOTLIGHT: FERGUSON-FLORISSANT SCHOOL DISTRICT, MO

As part of the USDA Farm to School Implementation Grant project, Ferguson-Florissant School District came up with a creative solution to put the bounty of produce available in the summer to good use: The district employs high school students to process and freeze fresh, local produce for use later in the school year. It's a win-win – students gain valuable culinary skills (and paychecks) while the school nutrition program has local food to serve throughout the school year. Six raised bed gardens grow fresh produce for the Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum as well as school salad bars.



SPOTLIGHT: DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MI

Before receiving their Farm to School Implementation Grant, Detroit Public Schools had already been operating a 2.5-acre farm, Drew Farm, at one of their schools, which grows enough produce to serve 2,000 students a week during the growing season. Farm to School Grant funds allowed Detroit Public Schools to add a 30 x 100 foot high tunnel greenhouse to the site to create “a learning environment for hands-on educational programming targeting teachers, parents, children, and other community members with the end goal of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and encouraging home and school gardening efforts.” An evaluation of the high tunnel project found that “teachers significantly improved their knowledge and self-efficacy to implement what they learned during the workshops, and during field trips to Drew Farm, students were very enthusiastic and expressed a desire to share what they had learned with friends and family.”





SPOTLIGHT: THE CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS, NE

Based in Lyons, Nebraska (population 851), The Center for Rural Affairs is a nonprofit with a mission to support small family farmers and ranchers, new business owners, and rural communities. With support from a Farm to School Training Grant, the center hosted a regional event attended by over 150 participants from Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska. Participants included 35 farmers who learned about strategies and tools to best serve school customers including crop planning, purchase agreements, and marketing strategies, and 75 food service employees who received training in procurement strategies and regulations to grow their farm to school programs. **Ninety-eight percent of the surveyed participants responded they would recommend the training program to a colleague.** One farmer reported that his next step following the training was to “find all our local producers in a 40-mile area and coordinate production and scheduling for area schools.”



SPOTLIGHT: SARANAC LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, NY

Saranac Lake changed its wellness policy to include a geographic preference for fruit and vegetable procurement and, with help from the district’s Farm to School Grant funds, made a commitment to procuring 15 percent of all fruits and vegetables from local sources. The policy also includes a commitment to offering fresh fruit and vegetables at every meal, chef salads at lunch in all schools, and monthly tastings of new foods that could be introduced in school menus.



SPOTLIGHT: THE FOOD LITERACY PROJECT, KY

The Food Literacy Project worked with youth and community partners to transform an ordinary red Chevy pickup truck into a mobile, edible learning garden. Truck Farm Louisville travels to schools, community-based agencies, and summer feeding program sites, where students eagerly engage in hands-on learning – touching, smelling, and tasting fresh fruits and vegetables and discovering that they can grow their food! Truck Farm also makes appearances at community fairs, farmers’ markets, parades, and neighborhood festivals, spreading awareness of the Food Literacy Project’s farm to school program and promoting nutritious eating.

Key Partners in Policy and Systems Change



SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Establishing policies and sustainable practices is essential to ensure that school and district grantees can continue farm to school activities after their funding ends. Schools can incorporate farm to school efforts into their official policies, such as wellness policies. They can also revise existing systems to incorporate more local foods, such as serving produce from the school garden on their salad bars. Schools that successfully implement farm to school activities can engage with their districts and State agencies to establish permanent funds for future efforts.



STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

State and local agencies can enhance farm to school activities by implementing supportive policies, such as additional reimbursement for serving local foods or providing funding for schools to purchase equipment for sourcing, storing, processing, and cooking local foods. These agencies also assist districts in the creation, adoption, and implementation of wellness policies. In addition, agencies can fund a statewide farm to school program coordinator position to connect producers with schools and provide technical assistance to improve or develop new farm to school systems.



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit organizations can develop and promote policies that support farm to school at local, State, or national levels and facilitate key connections. Their extensive networks can spur policy change and work to embed farm to school principles through legislation.



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Producers can work together to develop or shift systems and policies to meet schools' demands for high volumes of local foods. Many States have food safety regulations associated with selling local food to schools. Agricultural producers can partner with State agencies and nonprofit organizations to gain the necessary food safety and handling practices, making them a viable procurement option for schools. Distributors can also develop new systems to highlight local foods for schools through their ordering processes.



RURAL ACTION, INC., OH

PATHWAYS FORWARD

The results, challenges, and best practices reported by grantees reveal opportunities for enhancing farm to school efforts and outcomes across the country. FNS and its partners will continue to support farm to school activities nationwide, including in summer meals, childcare, and afterschool programs, as well as work with growers, producers, and program operators to increase capacity for local sourcing. This evaluation portfolio serves as evidence of farm to school's positive impacts, as well as a roadmap for those interested in initiating, expanding, and institutionalizing farm to school practices.

THANK YOU!

Farm to school is a team effort. USDA is grateful to our partners and grantees for their work to connect children with the source of their food in fun and creative ways. Their efforts in growing, transporting, sampling, sourcing, or dissecting local food products will continue to make a distinct and significant impact children, schools, and communities. We look forward to continuing to work with our strong network of local, State, and national partners.

APPENDIX A

Methodology

The measures specified in the baseline and final reports were chosen based on priorities outlined in authorizing statute, in-depth consultation with a panel of farm to school evaluation experts, and a review of the farm to school literature. The majority of the measures specified in the baseline and final report corresponds to the *Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School* report.⁸ The 2015 farm to school grantees were the first cohort to receive the standardized, web-based reporting form incorporating these measures to identify the effects of funding on the planning and implementation of farm to school activities.

Grantees completed baseline reports within 60 days of starting their project and final reports within 90 days of project completion. The report tools can be found in Appendix C. The data collected from the baseline and final reports were captured in Qualtrics, a web-based application used to organize grantee responses for future analysis. FNS staff and the contract evaluation team, PEER Associates, reviewed the data for accuracy and asked clarifying questions as necessary. This report summarizes findings using baseline and final data submitted by 67 FY 2015 and FY 2016 farm to school grantees who completed their projects by December 2016.

Data Limitations

Considering that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to farm to school activities and the entities that are involved in this community-based initiative are all unique, there are limitations to the data represented in this report as described below.

- **DATA COLLECTION**

Data were collected from 67 grantees across all four grant tracks (planning, implementation, support service, and training) whose projects ended in 2015 or 2016. This is a small sample of the 365 grantees that have received funding since FY 2013. Respondents were required to recall activities and figures from the previous school year for the baseline survey and activities and figures from the current school year for the final survey.

- **DATA QUALITY**

All of the data represented in this report are self-reported. Schools, districts, State and local agency staff, project coordinators, food service managers, producers, and even teachers contributed to this data set. Due to the different entities that responded to this survey, there may have been inconsistencies in how the questions were interpreted.

Collecting data on local procurement is challenging because each entity tracks the data differently. The quality of responses can be affected by how the food items are identified as local by the producer and the buyer. If schools are unsure about the origins of all food purchases, they may underreport their local purchases, and hence the cumulative sourcing of local food from all grantees may not be accurately reflected. Lastly, some that apply to the Farm to School Grant Program may be short-staffed and have limited resources for employing efficient systems to effectively document activities and maintain records.

Analysis of the first cohort of standardized reporting has provided many insights into how the reports may be streamlined and revised to provide better and more useful information in the future.

8 Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School report, <http://www.farmtoschool.org/resources-main/evaluation-framework>

SECTION 1. PROJECT INFORMATION

 FIRST NAME

 LAST NAME

 EMAIL ADDRESS (in case clarification is needed)

How many full time paid employee equivalents (FTEs) are currently involved with your USDA Farm to School grant project? (Please provide a numeric answer.)

SECTION 2. PROJECT NETWORK

USDA is interested in your relationships with other groups or organizations that may be involved with your farm to school project.

- For the groups and organizations listed in the chart below, please choose the response that best describes their approximate level of involvement in your project. *If the stakeholder group refers to you or your role, please simply check N/A.*

STAKEHOLDER	SOME SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	EXPERIENCED SPONSORS/ SITES	NONE, BUT WE EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NONE, AND WE DON'T EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NOT SURE OR NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
Farmers and producers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Distributors and aggregators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Processors and manufacturers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nutrition services management and administrative staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
District/school administrators (e.g. the superintendent, the school board, or the COO. etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PTA/PTO	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

STAKEHOLDER	SOME SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	EXPERIENCED SPONSORS/ SITES	NONE, BUT WE EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NONE, AND WE DON'T EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NOT SURE OR NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
Parents/caregivers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local chefs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local food banks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local businesses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nonprofit organizations (other than your own if you are a nonprofit)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cooperative extension professionals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University faculty/staff (non-extension)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Municipal or local government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Department of Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Department of Agriculture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Department of Health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faith-based organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Food and Nutrition Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Rural Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1. Which **THREE** partners are the most important to reaching your project objectives?
See list of stakeholders from the chart to the left.

1.

2.

3.

2. Why are these groups the most important partners?

3. Please select all of the ways your farm to school efforts are currently being financially supported. *Please check all that apply.*

☐ USDA Farm to School grant

☐ In-kind contributions

☐ General school/school food service funds

☐ Fundraising

☐ Other federal grants (e.g. CDC, etc.)

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Local state or private grants

☐ Other national private grants
 (e.g. WK Kellogg Foundation)

4. Please provide any additional information to clarify how your project is financially supported

5. Please provide any additional information to clarify how your project is financially supported.

SECTION 3. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This section contains questions regarding a number of activities that are common to many farm to school programs.

Procurement

1. How do the schools or school districts you are currently working with define local food?

Please check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Same city/county | ☐ Produced within the region |
| ☐ Produced within a 50 mile radius | ☐ Geographic along with other restrictions |
| ☐ Produced within a 100 mile radius | ☐ I don't know |
| ☐ Produced within a 100 mile radius | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Produced within a day's drive | _____ |
| ☐ Produced within the State | |

2. How many total **school districts** is your project currently working with?

#

3. How many total **schools** is your project currently working with?

#

4. Please choose the option that best describes your ability to report on procurement data (e.g. amount and type of local purchasing, numbers and types of suppliers, etc.) from the schools or school districts you are currently working with:

- ☐ Our project is not working directly with schools or school districts to support purchasing of local foods for school meals. *Skip to question 13.*
- ☐ We cannot provide procurement data for the schools or school districts we are currently working with. *Continue to question 5 then skip to question 13.*
- ☐ We can provide procurement data for some schools or school districts we are currently working with. *Skip to question 6.*
- ☐ We can provide procurement data for all schools or school districts we are currently working with. *Skip to question 6.*

5. Please tell us why you cannot provide procurement data for the schools or school districts you are currently working with. *Please check all that apply then skip to question 13.*

- ☐ We have not yet identified the schools or school districts that we are going to work with.
- ☐ This information is not being systematically tracked by the schools or school districts we are working with.
- ☐ Other: _____

The following questions ask about how much money the schools or school districts you are reporting on spent on all food and local food during the 2014-2015 school year. Please aggregate data from ALL of your school and district partners for which you can provide procurement data and give your best approximation. Do NOT include USDA Foods or DOD Fresh purchases.

6. For the **2014-2015** school year, what were the approximate total food costs of the schools or school districts you are currently working with? *Please round to the nearest dollar.*

\$

7. For the **2014-2015** school year, approximately how much did the schools or school districts your project is currently working with spend on locally-sourced foods, **INCLUDING** fluid milk?
*If you are not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.
Please round to the nearest dollar.*

\$

8. For the **2014-2015** school year, approximately how much did the schools or school districts your project is currently working with spend on locally-sourced foods **NOT INCLUDING** fluid milk?
*If you are not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.
Please round to the nearest dollar.*

\$

9. For the **2014-2015** school year, please indicate **how many** of each of the following sources the schools or school districts your project is currently working with obtained local foods **DIRECTLY** from.

#

Direct from individual food producers
(i.e. farmers, fishers, ranchers)

#

Via a Community Supported
Agriculture (CSA) model

#

Direct from farmer, rancher or
fisher cooperatives

#

Direct from food processors
and manufacturers

#

Direct from farmers markets

1. For the 2014-2015 school year, please indicate how many of each of the following **INTERMEDIARY** sources the schools or school districts your project is currently working with obtained local foods from.

#	Distributors	#	USDA Foods
#	Food buying cooperative	#	Food hubs
#	Food service management companies	#	State Farm to School Program office
#	DoD Fresh Program vendors		

2. Please indicate whether any of the schools or school districts your project is currently working with used local products **IN ANY FORM** (fresh, minimally processed, or processed) for any of the following federal nutrition programs during the 2014-2015 school year.
Please check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Breakfast | ☐ Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) |
| ☐ Lunch | ☐ Summer meals (<i>i.e., meals in the Summer Food Service Program, in Seamless Summer, or in the NSLP under accredited summer school programs</i>) |
| ☐ Supper | |
| ☐ Snacks | |
| ☐ Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program | |

3. On average, about how frequently did the school or school district meals or snacks your project is currently working with include at least one locally sourced food item from the categories below during the **2014-2015** school year?

PRODUCT	DAILY	A FEW TIMES PER WEEK	A FEW TIMES PER MONTH	MONTHLY	OCCASSIONALLY
Fruit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vegetables	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fluid Milk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Dairy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meat/poultry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eggs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PRODUCT	DAILY	A FEW TIMES PER WEEK	A FEW TIMES PER MONTH	MONTHLY	OCCASSIONALLY
Seafood	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Plant-based protein items such as beans, seeds, nuts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grains and flour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bakery products	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Herbs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Food Preparation and Serving

4. Do you or any of your project partners currently provide training to school food service staff to help them purchase, prepare, or serve local foods in school meal programs?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

5. For the schools or school districts you are currently working with, approximately what percentage of the food served in school meals is prepared from scratch?

If you are not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.

☐ 0%
☐ 1-10%
☐ 11-25%
☐ 26-50%
☐ 51-75%
☐ 76-100%
☐ I don't know

Activities

1. For the schools or school districts that you are currently working with, please indicate which of the following activities occurred during the 2014-15 school year. *Please check all that apply.*

- ☐ Serving locally produced foods in the cafeteria
- ☐ Serving locally
- ☐ Serving locally produced foods or providing farm to school activities as part of afterschool programs
- ☐ Serving products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria
- ☐ Holding taste tests/cooking demonstrations of locally produced foods or products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria, classroom or other school related setting
- ☐ Using Smarter Lunchroom strategies to encourage student selection and consumption of locally produced foods (e.g., product placement, food prompts, creative signage, etc.)
- ☐ Using cafeteria food coaches to promote the consumption of local foods (e.g. adults or students in the cafeteria encouraging kids to eat healthy/local foods)
- ☐ Using USDA Team Nutrition materials (such as The Great Garden Detective Adventure or Dig In!) as part of taste testing or educational activities
- ☐ Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of a school curriculum or after school program.
- ☐ Conducting student field trips to farms or orchards
- ☐ Having farmer(s) visit the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- ☐ Promoting local efforts through themed or branded promotions (e.g. Harvest of the Month, Local Day, Taste of Washington, etc.)
- ☐ Promoting locally produced foods at school in general (e.g. via cafeteria signs, posters, newsletters, etc.)
- ☐ Generating media coverage of local foods being used in schools (e.g. press interviews or other activities that resulted in local coverage)
- ☐ Hosting farm to school related community events (e.g. invited parents to lunch, corn shucking contests, etc.)
- ☐ Celebrating Farm to School Month
- ☐ Integrating farm to school concepts, including school gardening activities, into educational curriculum (math, science, language arts, etc.)
- ☐ Providing training to school food service staff on farm to school or school gardens
- ☐ Working with local food producers to develop a specific food product using local foods
- ☐ Implementing farm to school activities as part of overall school efforts to reduce food waste
- ☐ Evaluating changes in student acceptance and food waste as a result of implementing farm to school activities

Policies

2. How many school or community gardens is your project currently involved with? #
3. From the list below, please select which of the following policies are currently in place in the schools or school districts you are currently working with? *Please check all that apply.*
- ☐ Wellness policies that support farm to school
 - ☐ Procurement policies that support the procurement of local foods
 - ☐ Policies that support fundraising for farm to school activities
 - ☐ N/A - No policies are in place to support farm to school activities
 - ☐ I don't know
 - ☐ Other:

Thank you for completing this survey.

We greatly appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you!

USDA Farm to School Program Grantee Final Survey

WELCOME

Dear USDA Farm to School Grantee,

Congratulations on receiving a USDA Farm to School Grant Program award. At this early stage of your grant, USDA would like to collect some initial baseline data about your project. This is intended to help us (and you) identify your starting point. You will be asked to complete a similar report at the end of the grant period to document changes.

This report should take about 20 minutes to complete once you have procurement data on hand regarding the schools or school districts currently involved with your project.

This report contains three main sections:

- **SECTION ONE** will ask for general information about your project.
- **SECTION TWO** will ask about the management of your project.
- **SECTION THREE** will ask about your project partners and network.
- **SECTION FOUR** will ask about your project activities, including questions regarding the a) procurement practices of the schools or school districts involved in your project, b) food preparation and serving practices that took place, c) farm to school activities taking place at the schools or districts involved in your project, and d) policies in place supporting farm to school in the schools or districts involved in your project.
- **SECTION FIVE** will ask you to share any additional evaluation findings you may have gathered as part of your project. Planning grantees should attach a copy of their action plan here.

For the procurement data in section three, the data you provide should be about the schools or school districts currently involved with your project. If you do not know this information, please do your best to gather this information from the appropriate school food service directors or food service management companies.

Once finished with this report, you will be emailed a copy to save in your files. If you have questions or need assistance completing this report, please contact the USDA Farm to School Program at farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov.

The deadline for completing this report is September 30th, 2017 for 18 month projects and March 30th, 2018 for 24 month projects.

Sincerely,

The USDA Farm to School Program

SECTION 1. PROJECT INFORMATION

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS (in case clarification is needed)

SECTION 2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. Were all project goals and objectives completed?

☐ Yes *Go to question 3.*

☐ No *Go to question 2.*

2. Please briefly describe the goals and objectives that were not completed and why they were not completed.

3. Was the project budget sufficient for meeting the project goals?

☐ Yes *Go to question 5.*

☐ No *Go to question 4.*

4. Please briefly describe why the budget was insufficient for meeting the project goals.

1. Please provide a brief summary of the overall project, with emphasis on major goals and objectives achieved and who was served by your project.

2. Please briefly describe how USDA's training and technical assistance materials (e.g. webinars, fact sheets, procurement manual, etc.) were used to help fulfill the goals of your project.

3. If you purchased equipment valued over \$5,000 please describe the purchase and explain how the equipment will be used after the project.

4. Please select the option below that most accurately describes how sustainable you believe your USDA Farm to School grant activities to be now that funding has ended?

- ☐ All of the farm to school activities funded by the USDA Farm to School grant will continue even though funding has ended.
- ☐ Most of the farm to school activities funded by the USDA Farm to School grant will continue while others will not.
- ☐ A few of the farm to school activities funded by the USDA Farm to School grant will continue while others will not.
- ☐ None of the farm to school activities funded by the USDA Farm to School grant will continue now that funding has ended.

5. Please provide any additional details that will clarify your response above.

6. Which of the following benefits have the schools or school districts involved in your project enjoyed as a result of your grant activities? *Please check all that apply.*

- ☐ Reduced food waste
- ☐ Lower school meal program costs
- ☐ Greater acceptance of the new meal pattern
- ☐ Increased participation in school meals
- ☐ Greater community support for school meals
- ☐ Other: _____

7. How many full time paid employee equivalents (FTEs) were involved with your USDA Farm to School grant at the end of your project?

#

8. Please provide feedback on your overall grantee experience including any suggestions for improving the program.

SECTION 3. PROJECT NETWORK

USDA is interested in your relationships with other groups or organizations that may have been involved with your farm to school project.

- For the groups and organizations listed in the chart below, please choose the response that best describes their approximate level of involvement in your project.

If the stakeholder group refers to you or your role, please simply check N/A.

STAKEHOLDER	LOTS OF SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	SOME SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	NONE, BUT WE EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NONE, AND WE DON'T EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NOT SURE OR NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
Farmers and producers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Distributors and aggregators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Processors and manufacturers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nutrition services management and administrative staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kitchen management and kitchen staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
District/school admin. (e.g. the superintendent, the school board, or the COO etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PTA/PTO	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents/caregivers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local chefs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local food banks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local businesses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nonprofit organizations (other than your own if you are a nonprofit)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cooperative extension professionals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

STAKEHOLDER	LOTS OF SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	SOME SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	NONE, BUT WE EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NONE, AND WE DON'T EXPECT TO WORK WITH THEM	NOT SURE OR NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
University faculty/staff (non-extension)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Municipal or local government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Department of Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Department of Agriculture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Department of Health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faith-based organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Food and Nutrition Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Rural Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Which **THREE** partners are the most important to reaching your project objectives?
See list of stakeholders from the chart.

1.

2.

3.

3. Why were these groups the most important partners?

SECTION 4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This section contains questions regarding a number of activities that are common to many farm to school programs.

Procurement

1. How do the schools or school districts you are currently working with define local food?
Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Same city/county
- ☐ Produced within a 50 mile radius
- ☐ Produced within a 100 mile radius
- ☐ Produced within a 100 mile radius
- ☐ Produced within a day's drive
- ☐ Produced within the State
- ☐ Produced within the region
- ☐ Geographic along with other restrictions
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other

2. Please briefly describe any changes to school food service operations of the schools or school districts you worked with that came about as a result of your project.

3. How many total **school districts** is your project currently working with?

#

The following questions ask about how much money the schools or school districts you are reporting on spent on all food and local food during the 2016-2017 school year. Please aggregate data from ALL of your school and district partners for which you can provide procurement data and give your best approximation. Do NOT include USDA Foods or DOD Fresh purchases.

4. For the **2016-2017** school year, what were the approximate total food costs of the schools or school districts you are currently working with? *Please round to the nearest dollar.*

\$

5. For the **2016-2017** school year, approximately how much did the schools or school districts your project is currently working with spend on locally-sourced foods, **INCLUDING** fluid milk?

\$

*If you are not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.
Please round to the nearest dollar.*

6. For the **2016-2017** school year, approximately how much did the schools or school districts your project is currently working with spend on locally-sourced foods **NOT INCLUDING** fluid milk?

\$

*If you are not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.
Please round to the nearest dollar.*

7. For the **2016-2017** school year, please indicate **how many** of each of the following sources the schools or school districts your project is currently working with obtained local foods **DIRECTLY** from.

#

Direct from individual food producers
(i.e. farmers, fishers, ranchers)

#

Via a Community Supported
Agriculture (CSA) model

#

Direct from farmer, rancher or
fisher cooperatives

#

Direct from food processors
and manufacturers

#

Direct from farmers markets

8. For the **2016-2017** school year, please indicate how many of each of the following **INTERMEDIARY** sources the schools or school districts your project worked with obtained local foods from.

#

Distributors

#

USDA Foods

#

Food buying cooperative

#

State Farm to School
Program office

#

Food service management companies

#

Food hubs

#

DoD Fresh Program vendors

9. Please indicate whether any of the schools or school districts your project worked with used local products **IN ANY FORM** (fresh, minimally processed, or processed) for any of the following federal nutrition programs during the **2016-2017** school year.

Please check all that apply.

☐ Breakfast

☐ Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

☐ Lunch

☐ Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

☐ Supper

☐ Summer meals (i.e., meals in the Summer Food Service Program, in Seamless Summer, or in the NLSP under accredited summer school programs)

☐ Snacks

1. On average, about how frequently did the school or school district meals or snacks your project worked with include at least one locally sourced food item from the categories below during the **2016-2017** school year?

PRODUCT	DAILY	A FEW TIMES PER WEEK	A FEW TIMES PER MONTH	MONTHLY	OCCASSIONALLY
Fruit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vegetables	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fluid Milk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Dairy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meat/poultry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eggs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seafood	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Plant-based protein items such as beans, seeds, nuts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grains and flour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bakery products	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Herbs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Food Preparation and Serving

2. For the schools or school districts you are currently working with, approximately what percentage of the food served in school meals is prepared from scratch?

If you are not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.

- ☐ 0% ☐ 51-75%
☐ 1-10% ☐ 76-100%
☐ 11-25% ☐ I don't know
☐ 26-50%

3. How many **NEW** recipes were created that emphasize using seasonal ingredients sourced from local or regional producers as a result of your project?

#

Education, Gardening, and Outreach

4. For the schools or school districts that your project worked with, please indicate which of the following activities occurred during the 2016-2017 school year. (Please check all that apply.)
- ☐ Serving locally produced foods in the cafeteria
 - ☐ Serving locally
 - ☐ Serving locally produced foods or providing farm to school activities as part of afterschool programs
 - ☐ Serving products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria
 - ☐ Holding taste tests/cooking demonstrations of locally produced foods or products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria, classroom or other school related setting
 - ☐ Using Smarter Lunchroom strategies to encourage student selection and consumption of locally produced foods (e.g., product placement, food prompts, creative signage, etc.)
 - ☐ Using cafeteria food coaches to promote the consumption of local foods (e.g. adults or students in the cafeteria encouraging kids to eat healthy/local foods)
 - ☐ Using USDA Team Nutrition materials (such as The Great Garden Detective Adventure or Dig In!) as part of taste testing or educational activities
 - ☐ Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of a school curriculum or after school program.
 - ☐ Conducting student field trips to farms or orchards
 - ☐ Having farmer(s) visit the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
 - ☐ Promoting local efforts through themed or branded promotions (e.g. Harvest of the Month, Local Day, Taste of Washington, etc.)
 - ☐ Promoting locally produced foods at school in general (e.g. via cafeteria signs, posters, newsletters, etc.)
 - ☐ Generating media coverage of local foods being used in schools (e.g. press interviews or other activities that resulted in local coverage)
 - ☐ Hosting farm to school related community events (e.g. invited parents to lunch, corn shucking contests, etc.)
 - ☐ Celebrating Farm to School Month
 - ☐ Integrating farm to school concepts, including school gardening activities, into educational curriculum (math, science, language arts, etc.)
 - ☐ Providing training to school food service staff on farm to school or school gardens
 - ☐ Working with local food producers to develop a specific food product using local foods
 - ☐ Implementing farm to school activities as part of overall school efforts to reduce food waste
 - ☐ Evaluating changes in student acceptance and food waste as a result of implementing farm to school activities

1. For the schools or districts that your project worked with, approximately how many students participated in each of the following activities as a result of your project?

Holding taste tests/cooking demonstrations of locally produced foods or products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting

#

Conducting student field trips to farms or orchards

#

Having farmer(s) visit the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting

#

Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of a school curriculum or after school program

#

2. Were any of your farm to school activities aligned with to the Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core Standards, or other national or state-adopted content standards?

☐ Yes ☐ No *Go to question 17.*

3. Please briefly describe how your activities were aligned with standards.

4. For the schools or school districts that your project worked with, please indicate approximately how many teachers received professional development training related to farm to school as a result of your project.

#

5. What topics were included as part of the training for teachers? *Check all that apply.*

☐ Agricultural education

☐ Cooking skills

☐ Nutrition education

☐ Other: _____

☐ Gardening skills

6. How many school or community gardens was your project involved with at the end of your project?

#

Policies

7. From the list below, please select which of the following policies are in place at the end of your project in the schools or school districts you worked with? *Please check all that apply.*

- ☐ Wellness policies that support farm to school
- ☐ Procurement policies that support the procurement of local foods
- ☐ Policies that support fundraising for farm to school activities
- ☐ N/A - No policies are in place to support farm to school activities
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other: _____

SECTION 5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

1. Please discuss and attach any other evaluation findings that have not been reported above.

Thank you for completing this survey.

We greatly appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you!

APPENDIX B

Application Satisfaction Survey

WELCOME

Thank you for recently submitting an application to the FY 2016 USDA Farm to School Grant Program. As a recent applicant, we would like to receive your feedback about the application process.

This survey should only take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

All responses are confidential and will not influence any decisions about funding. Thanks so much for taking the time to share your feedback.

Sincerely,
The USDA Farm to School Team

INTRODUCTION

Please think back to when you first learned about the grant program and when you were preparing your proposal.

1. How did you find out about the Farm to School Grant Program?

- ☐ USDA farm to school e-newsletter
- ☐ Listserv or email
- ☐ Web search (Google, etc.)
- ☐ At a conference

☐ Through a colleague

☐ Other: _____

2. Which type of grant did your organization apply for?

☐ Planning

☐ Implementation

☐ Support services

☐ Training

3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The request for applications (RFA) described what was needed to be successful in the proposal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The application process worked the way I expected it would.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The submission deadline allowed a reasonable amount of time to craft a successful application.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was clear which type of grant I should apply for (e.g., planning, implementation, support services, training).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was clear how the application would be reviewed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was clear how much funding I could apply for.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of funding available matched the level of work required to submit the application.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The suggested activities/uses of funds matched the work that needs to be done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The proposal preparation webinar(s) were helpful in completing the application.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Farm to School Program staff were helpful during the application process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of time and effort required to prepare the application seemed appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Please offer any clarification or further explanation for your responses above, and/or any other feedback on the application process.

Thank you for completing this survey.
We greatly appreciate your time and responses.

APPENDIX C

2016 Grantee Satisfaction Survey

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WELCOME

Welcome to the USDA Farm to School Grant Program Grantee Satisfaction Survey. We know this is a busy time of the year and we deeply appreciate your time.

The survey is optional, and your responses will provide valuable feedback to the USDA Farm to School Program about your level of satisfaction as a current grantee. Your responses will also be used to help improve how we serve our current and future grantees.

All responses are anonymous so please offer your candid feedback. Please complete the survey by Friday, July 1, 2016.

Sincerely,
The USDA Farm to School Team

INTRODUCTION

Please think back to when you first learned about the grant program and when you were preparing your proposal.

1. How did you find out about the Farm to School Grant Program?

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Planning | ☐ Training |
| ☐ Implementation | ☐ Not sure |
| ☐ Support Service | |

2. Which type of grant did your organization apply for?

- ☐ FY 2014 (awarded November 2013)
- ☐ FY 2015 (awarded November 2014)
- ☐ FY 2016 (awarded November 2015)

3. Has your organization ever received another federal grant other than from the USDA Farm to School Program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

The next few questions refer to the notification/award process and the ongoing process of grant administration.

4. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The terms and conditions of the grant award were clear.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The proposed project started at the expected time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The budget revision process was easy to navigate and timely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The project revision process was easy to navigate and timely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enrollment in FPRS was straight forward. (implementation and support service grantees)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of FPRS was straight forward. (implementation and support service grantees)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enrollment in ASAP was straight forward.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of ASAP was straight forward.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA staff were helpful with issues that required feedback or USDA approval.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Farm to School Program staff were helpful during the application process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of time and effort required to prepare the application seemed appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Please offer any clarification or further explanation for your responses above, and/or any other feedback on the application process.

GRANTEE SUPPORT

Questions in this section refer to the different types of training and technical assistance provided by USDA.

6. Have you been contacted by your USDA Farm to School Program Regional Lead?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Do you have all of the information you need from USDA or know where to get the information you need to coordinate a successful project?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. How often do/did you participate in or watch the recordings of the Farm to School Grant Program webinars?

☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

9. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for future Farm to School Program webinars?

10. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The content on the webinars was applicable to our project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The timing of the webinars was aligned with my project needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The USDA Farm to School regional lead was responsive to my requests for assistance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The USDA Farm to School regional lead helped us meet our project goals and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The timing of the annual meeting/ grantee gathering was helpful for my project needs (FY 2016 grantees only).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The content of the annual meeting/ grantee gathering was applicable to my project. (FY 2016 grantees only)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The grantee networking at the annual meeting was beneficial to my project. (FY 2016 grantees only)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I found the resources I was looking for on the USDA Farm to School website.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Please offer any clarification or further explanation for your responses above and/or any other feedback on grantee support.

GRANT REPORTING

The next few questions refer to reporting and evaluation requirements.

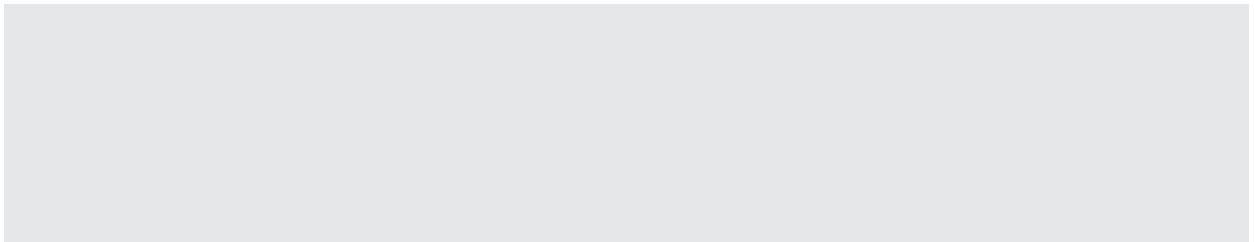
12. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The amount of time required for completing the baseline report was manageable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of time required for completing the progress reporting was manageable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The reporting process provided a useful reflection for our team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The progress reporting felt repetitive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was challenging for our team to complete the baseline report.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was challenging for our team to submit reports in a timely fashion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Examples of good reporting practices would be helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I found the resources I was looking for on the USDA Farm to School website.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USDA expectations for evaluation are clear.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
More direct assistance on evaluation would be helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A USDA evaluation toolkit or evaluation resource guide would be helpful for designing and completing our evaluation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Are you using the tracking tools provided on the grantee resource page? (FY 2016 grantees only)

☐ Yes ☐ No

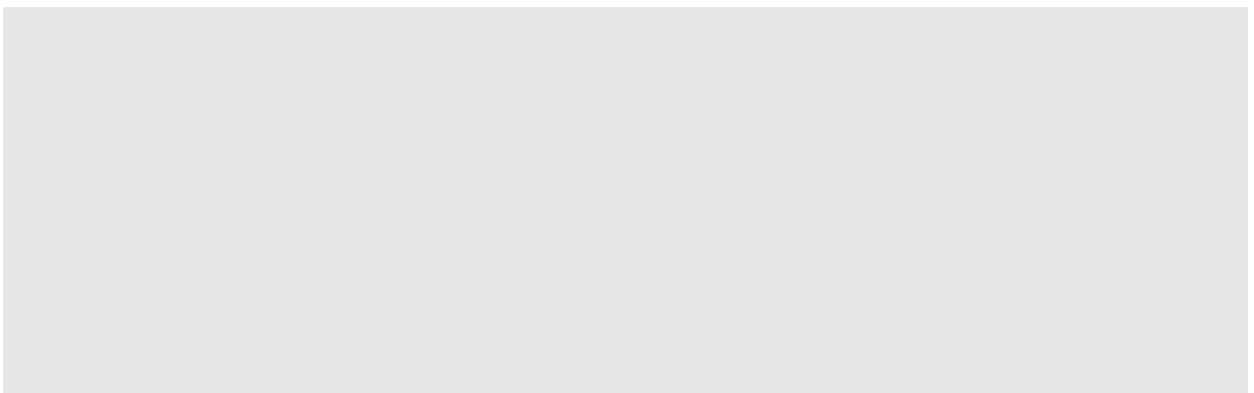
14. Please offer any clarification or further explanation for your responses above, and/or any other feedback on grant reporting.



15. Overall, how satisfied are you as a grantee with the level of support from the USDA Farm to School Program?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Unsatisfied
- ☐ Very unsatisfied

16. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



Thank you for completing this survey.
We greatly appreciate your time and responses.

THE
FARM *to* **SCHOOL**
GRANT PROGRAM