



NATIONAL FARM to SCHOOL NETWORK

Innovations in State Farm to School Policy

June 3, 2022



Our Core Functions

We are a hub
for:



Information



Networking



Advocacy

Connecting
people to:



Resources



People



Policy



Our Mission

National Farm to School Network increases access to local food and nutrition education to improve children's health, strengthen family farms, and cultivate vibrant communities.



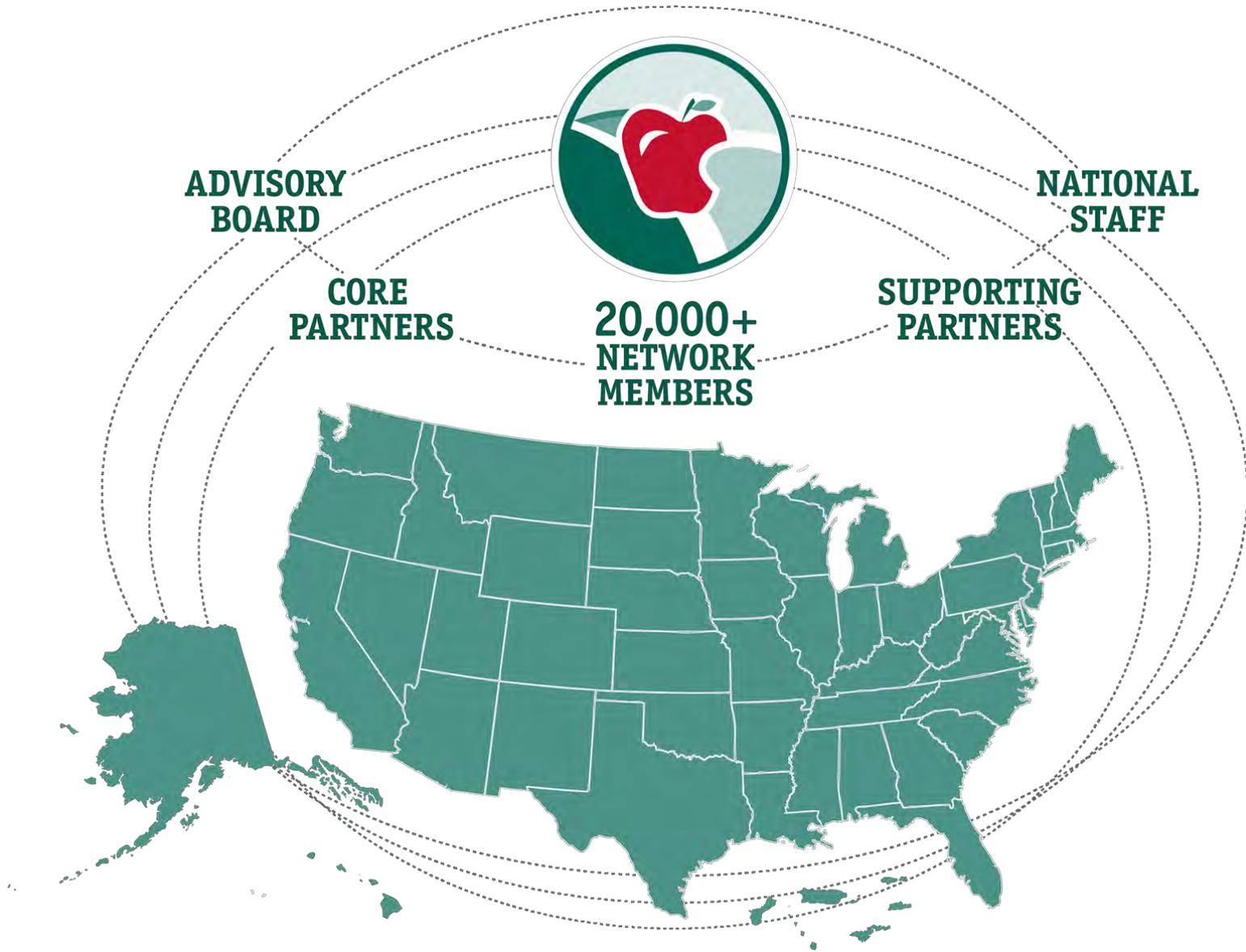
Our Vision

National Farm to School Network envisions a nation in which farm to school programs are an essential component of strong and just local and regional food systems, ensuring the health of children, farms, the environment, the economy and communities.





NFSN call to action: By 2025, 100%
of communities will hold power in a
racially just food system.



Our Network

Why Do Farm to School?



Kids Win!



Farmers Win!



Communities Win!

CORE ELEMENTS OF **FARM** *to* **SCHOOL**



What Is Farm to School?



Farm to Early Care and Education

Farm to ECE encourages:

- Health & Wellness
- Experiential Learning
- Family & Community Engagement

It applies the same core elements as farm to school in settings for children ages 0-5

- Including in child care centers and family child care homes
- Also in preschools, nursery schools, Head Starts, Early Head Starts, programs in K-12 districts, and others

Benefits of Farm to School

- Economic Development
- Public Health
- Education
- Environment
- Equity and Community Engagement

Link: <https://www.farmtoschool.org/resources-main/benefits-of-farm-to-school>



THE BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL

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What is Farm to School?

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by enhancing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites. Farm to school, inclusive of farm to early care and education, empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities. Farm to school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following three core elements:

- Procurement:** Local foods are purchased, promoted and served in the cafeteria or at meal times, as a snack or in classroom taste-tests.
- Education:** Students participate in education activities related to agriculture, food, health and nutrition.
- School gardens:** Students engage in hands-on, experiential learning through gardening.

Why Farm to School?



KIDS WIN
Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high-quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm to school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture and nutrition.



FARMERS WIN
Farm to school can serve as a significant financial opportunity for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers by opening doors to an institutional market worth billions of dollars.



COMMUNITIES WIN
Farm to school benefits everyone from students, teachers and administrators to parents and farmers, providing opportunities to build family and community engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and strengthens the local economy.

Benefits of Farm to School



Economic Development



Public Health



Education



Environment



Equity & Community Engagement

NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER
National Farm to School Network is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing, school gardens and food and agriculture education into school and early care and education settings.

Updated May 2020

Economic Development

- **Job Creation and Economic Activity**
Up to 2.35 additional jobs in the community
Stimulates up to \$2.14 additional spending in state
- **School District and Economic Benefits**
Increase in paid meal participation of students, teachers, and staff
- **Producer and Food System Impacts**
Increase in stability and revenue for producers
Diversifies relationships for more robust farm sector

- **Student Food and Nutrition Knowledge, Attitude, and Behaviors**
When students participate in hands-on, food-based activities, students triple amount of fruit and vegetable consumption
- **Healthier School and ECE Food Environments**
Supports achieving wellness policies and improved food service
- **Family and Community Nutrition Behaviors and Access**
Supporting parents to establish healthy habits

Education

- **Student Engagement and Whole Child Development**
Important social emotional growth with experiential learning
Increases positive school engagement
- **Academic Achievement**
Supports STEM education in innovative ways
- **Family, Educator, and Staff Engagement**
Positive attitudes from educators and families as F2S programs are implemented

Environment, Equity & Community Engagement

Environment

Increase in activities like composting

Increased appreciation of environmental impact and farming practices

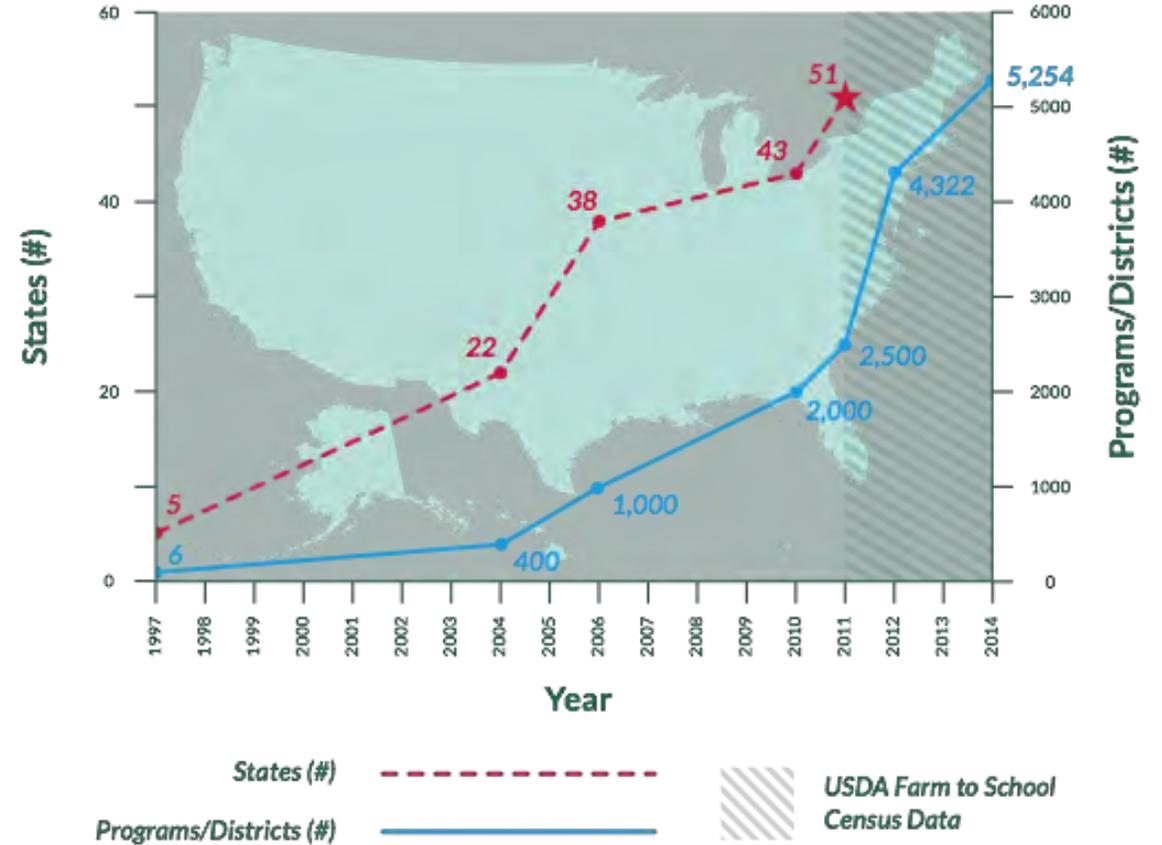
Equity & Community Engagement

Promotes positive connections between school and community

Opportunity to engage diverse cultural knowledge and family involvement

We are a part of a
Growing
Movement!

**Growth of Farm to School in the U.S.
 (1997-2014)**



42,587*

Schools

42%*

of US Schools

23.6M*

Students Engaged

\$789M*

Spent on Local Food

40

States with Supportive Policies

15,000+

NFSN Members



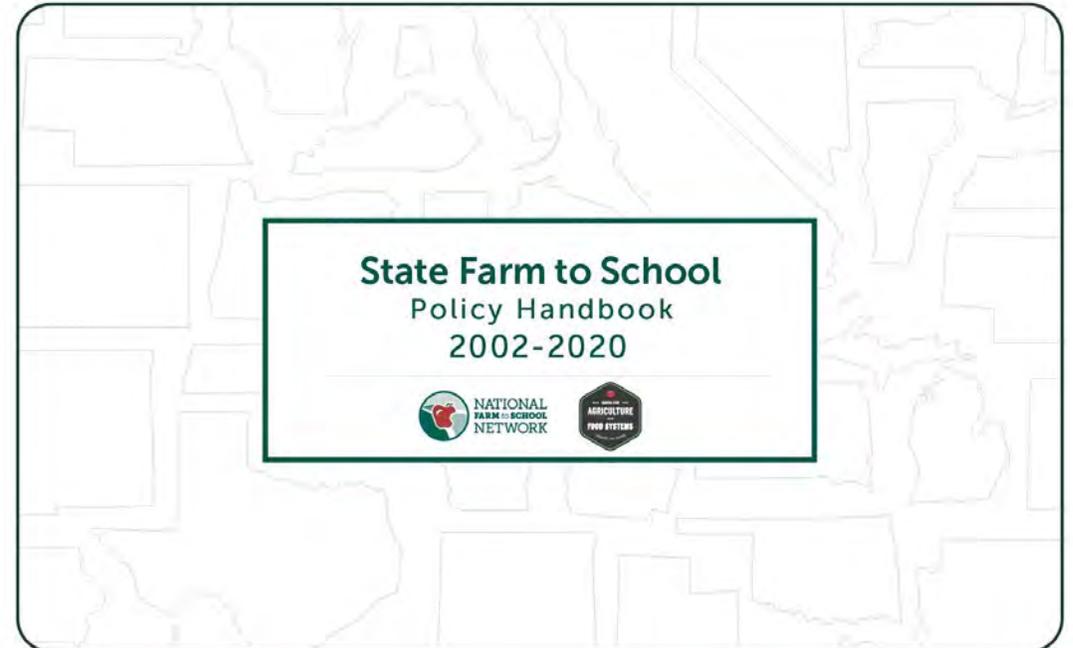
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State Farm to School Policy Handbook

- Analysis of farm to school and farm to ECE policies in all 50 states, DC, and US Territories
 - Includes introduced and enacted legislation related to core farm to school elements
- Highlight state case studies of Hawai'i, Michigan, New Mexico, US Virgin Islands, and Vermont
 - Highlight issue case studies on:
 - Local procurement incentives
 - Farm to School State Policy Strategies to Support Native Food and Tribal Sovereignty
 - State Policy Responses to COVID-19 Impacting Farm to School

Use this guide to:

- **Learn** about existing state farm to school policies and programs as potential models for future efforts
- **Compare** farm to school laws, policies, and programs across states
- **Access** the full text of state farm to school legislation for inspiration and assistance in the legislative drafting process
- **Advance** new farm to school laws, policies, and programs



Policy Options

Seeding, Growing, and Sustaining Farm to School in Your State

FARM TO SCHOOL BILL TYPES

Proclamations

Local Preference Laws

Funded Farm to School Programs (including grant programs and coordinators)

Task Forces, Councils & Working Groups

Pilot Farm to School Programs

Funded Local Procurement Incentives

Databases & Directories

Unfunded Farm to School Programs (including grant programs and coordinators)



SEEDING

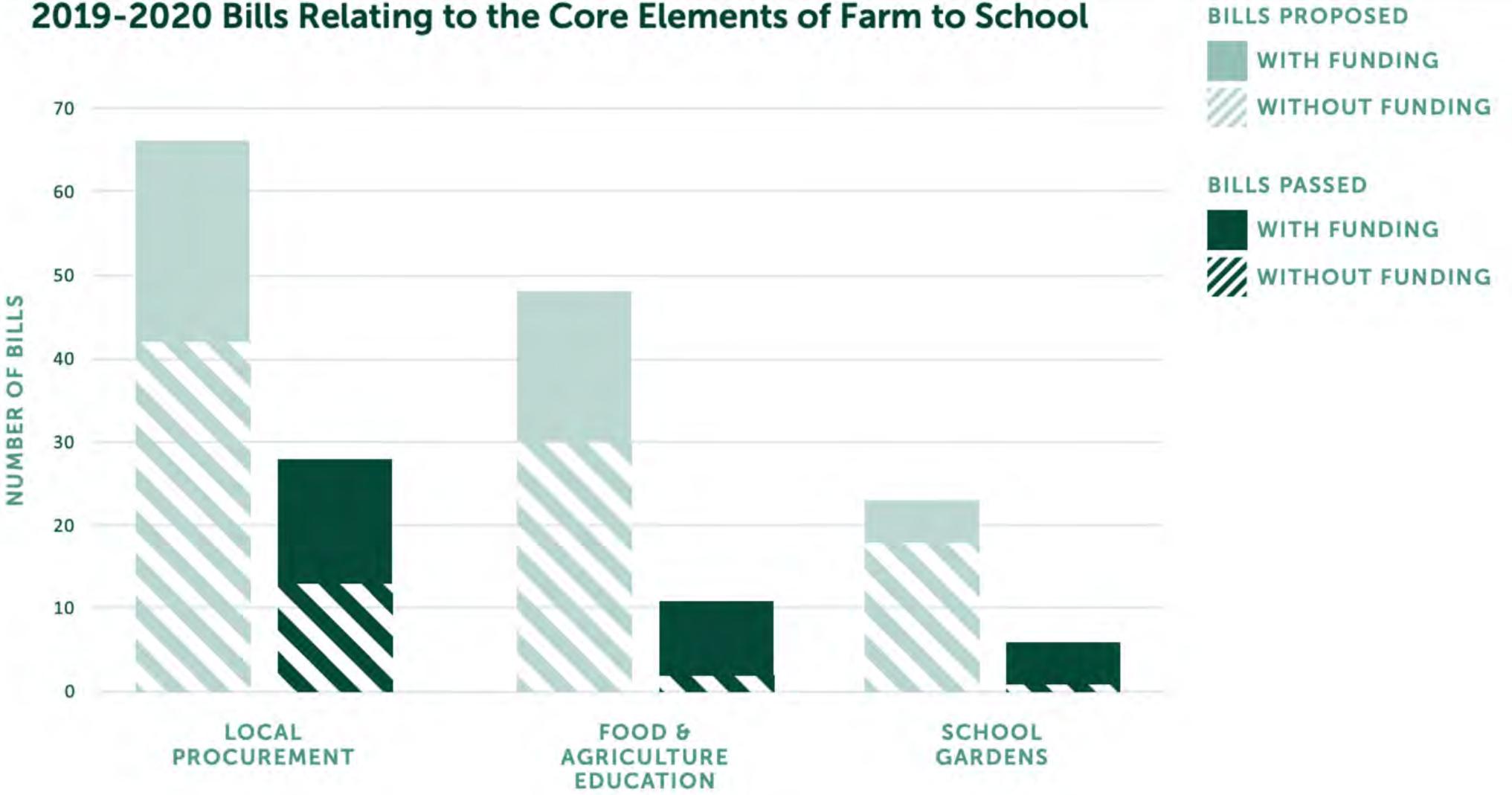


GROWING



SUSTAINING

2019-2020 Bills Relating to the Core Elements of Farm to School



Minnesota

Authorizes up to \$400,000 each year over two years to develop and enhance farm to school markets for Minnesota farmers by providing more fruits, vegetables, meat, grains, and dairy for Minnesota children in school and childcare settings, including reimbursement of schools for purchases from local farmers.



- H.F. 4490 (2020)

Michigan

Early adopter of local preference, including:

- Directing schools to have a procurement policy
- Allowing simplified buying procedures for contracts under \$100,000
- Directing state agencies to encourage and support farm to school procurement procedures

- H.B. 6365 & H.B. 6366 (2008)
- H.B. 6368 (2008)
- H.B. 5314, H.B. 5372, & S.B. 838 (2014)



Michigan: Ten Cents a Meal

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms is a state-funded program that matches what schools spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes with grants of up to 10 cents per meal.

- Intentional piloting, growth, and evaluation since 2016
- Districts spent funds with 198 unique vendors 2017-2019
- Reaching districts serving 134,00 kids

- S.B. 927 (2020)

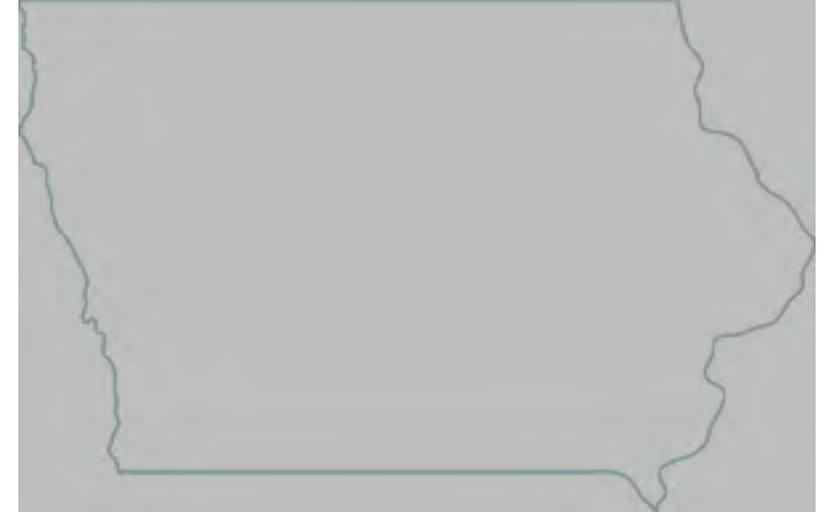


Iowa

Policies that fund a coordinator position through the Local Food and Farm Program have helped lay groundwork for future work in Iowa.

Networking supported by philanthropy has built strength in the farm to early care and education (ECE) sector.

CARES funding for Local Produce and Protein Program grants from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in 2020.



S.F. 609 (2019)

Case Studies

Farm to School State Policy Strategies to Support Native Food and Tribal Sovereignty

- Recognizing and honoring government to government relationships
- Long term relationship building and formal consultation
- Investment in Native producers and educators

Local Procurement Incentives: Lessons from the Field

- Policy models have benefits and challenges in implementation
- Benefits of piloting
- Leveraging federal funding
- Investment in evaluation, technical assistance, and continued improvement
- Involve state agencies and other implementing bodies early

State Policy Responses to COVID-19 Impacting Farm to School

- Challenges included the interpretation of federal guidance, the varied responses within each state, budgetary issues, and speed of response
- Previous investment in relationships and capacity increased resilience

Case Studies: State Policy Responses to COVID-19 Impacting Farm to School

- Innovations in child nutrition program delivery and purchasing were made possible through scaling up existing relationships
- State agency capacity and familiarity with farm to school increased ability to quickly distribute federal funding sources
- Policymaker familiarity with farm to school and local food systems issues increased likelihood of food system needs being top of mind in distributing funding
- Resources
 - National Farm to School Network Impact Assessment, completed for USDA May 2021
 - Local Food in Covid-19 Response and Recovery, National Farm to School Network, May 2020



The Common Market Southeast delivers boxes to Enrichment Services Program Head Start

LOCAL FOOD IN COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

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When the COVID-19 emergency closed schools and child care across the country, child nutrition programs heroically responded by instantly pivoting their practices to ensure children and families continued to have access to nutritious food. Schools and early care and education (ECE) sites have always been a vital access point for meals for children. During this emergency, the role that schools and ECE sites can play as community hubs for food access have only become more apparent. As that hub for food access, schools and ECE sites can not only meet the need to feed the whole family, but also remain potential markets for local producers. Sites with existing relationships with producers have been able to continue as viable outlets for producers, even as other institutional markets shut down.

As producers continue to seek markets and child nutrition programs prepare for a different kind of feeding this summer and fall, it is an opportunity for new relationships to form. Though child nutrition programs face new and emerging challenges, including adapting to insufficient funding, managing new types of expenses (including additional labor, transportation, and packaging), and supply chain barriers, the importance and benefit of connecting with local food continues to emerge as vitally important and a key to addressing some of these potential challenges. As school nutrition providers, community partners, and state agencies come together to support producers in accessing markets while supporting families in accessing healthy food, several themes of promising practices have emerged.

Choose products that work best for modified feeding operations
(e.g., grab-and-go, delivery, weekly pick-up):

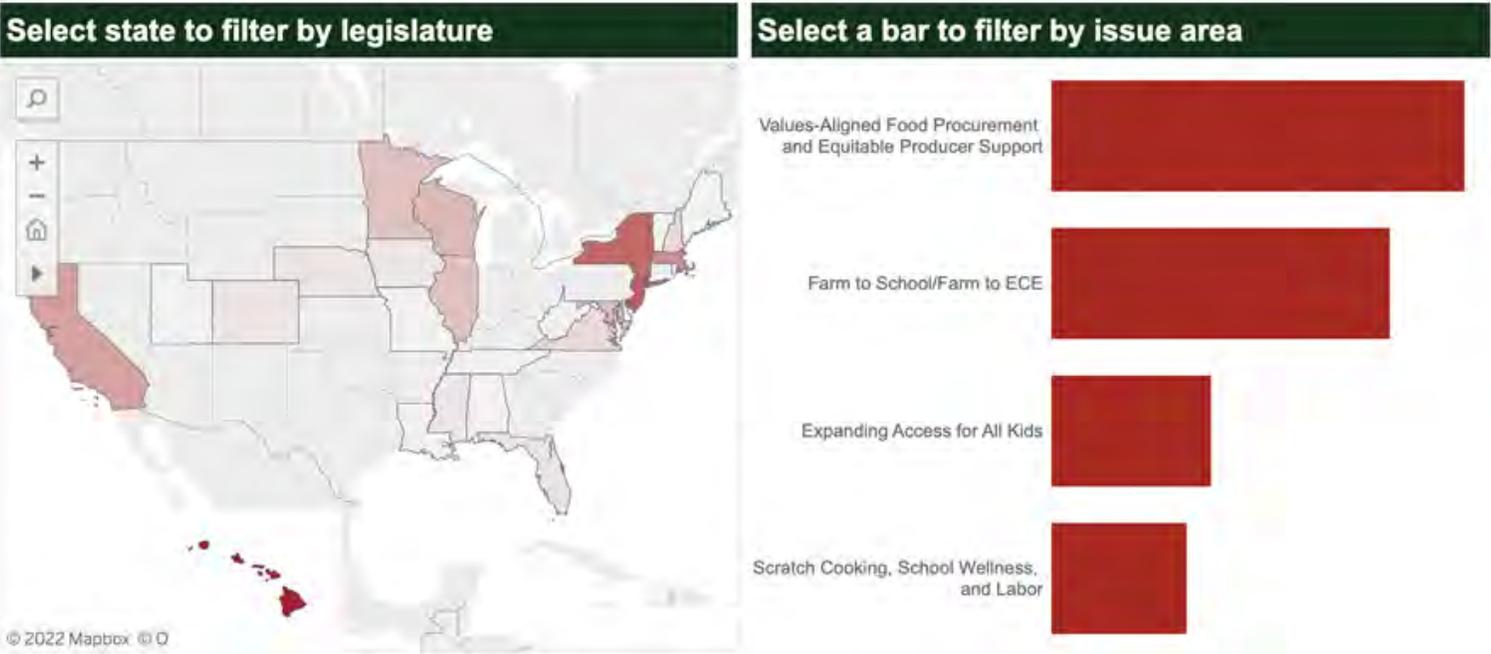
- **Hand-fruit**, like apples and pears, require no preparation and can hold up well to transportation.
- **Individually packaged** local products at their peak, like strawberries, snap peas, and cherry tomatoes, package well and are enjoyed by students.
- **Prepared foods from local vendors** that use local ingredients can fit well within many preparation and service styles. Traditional favorites like burritos and tamales can be frozen and sent home with families for reheating.
- **Produce bags/boxes and bulk products** can be offered to provide meals for multiple days for students. Though adult meals are not reimbursable through USDA Child Nutrition Programs, many districts have used additional funding and donations to provide supplemental food for the family. This minimizes packaging and processing requirements from producers and school nutrition staff, offers access to local foods for the whole family, and has increased meal program participation and pick up in some states.

Utilize innovative and emerging platforms for connections.
In addition to the traditional “matchmaking” platforms for local foods, state agencies, non-profits, and community partners have stepped in to develop innovative platforms to connect producers with excess product to programs and organizations in need.



Current Sessions

Interactive map of newly introduced policies in farm to school, farm to ECE, and related areas of child nutrition and producer support.





Thank You!

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