



# Planning Your Farm to School Program

## Vision and Goal-Setting Questions to Consider

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### Background and Current Status

Start small. Although having high expectations and ambitions is not a bad thing, it becomes frustrating at times to feel we were "failing" in some areas when we did not see progress come as quickly as we wanted. A recommendation for any entity starting farm-to-school efforts is to scale back your goals initially, attain some small successes and then build up from these smaller "wins".

#### Questions for Team Members:

What led to your decision to establish a farm to school program? This can be a turning point in your program, or a list of improvements and changes you wish to create. Consider the school/district environment, student population, grounds, staff interests and any factors that led you here.

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What activities have you participated in to date that have readied you to move into the implementation stage?

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What benefits do you think a farm to school program can bring to your students, school/district, or community?

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### Long-term Vision

What is your long-term vision for a thriving farm to school program? **\*TIP!\*** Define "long-term" however you like! Your farm to school goals might be achieved in 2 years or 10 years. You decide how much time your combined vision may require.

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### Near-term Goals & Objectives

What are your near-term (1- to 2-year) goals and objectives for your farm to school program? Keep these goals succinct, simple, and obtainable. **\*TIP!\*** You cannot move a mountain in a day!

- Year one:
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- Year Two:

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## **School Environment & Student Population Questions**

How big is your school or district?

What types of students do you serve?

What cultures do your students come from, and how might this be relevant to your farm to school program?

Are you in an urban or a rural setting?

Is there a garden on your school grounds, or space for one?

Do many of your students garden or farm outside of school?

How and how well do your students eat outside of school?

If a high school, is your campus open or closed?

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## **Program Context**

What existing programs and initiatives are relevant to your farm to school program?

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## **Child Nutrition Programs**

Which federal Child Nutrition Programs does your school operate?

***\*TIP!\*** The federal Child Nutrition Programs include the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the After school Snack Program, Seamless Summer, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Special Milk Program.*

Are there any planned or anticipated changes to these programs?

What percent of your students are eligible for free and reduced price meals?

## **State and Local Initiatives**

What state, local, and district-wide programs and initiatives might be relevant to your farm to school program? ***\*TIP!\*** Initiatives might include everything from a state-level effort to reduce childhood obesity, to a countywide "buy local" campaign, to a district-wide initiative to put a garden in every school.*

### **Policy Context**

What general policies and regulations at the federal, state-, local- and district levels are relevant to your farm to school goals? ***\*TIP!\*** This list should include policies that bolster and guide your efforts, and those that create barriers.*

How does your farm to school effort fit in with your school's wellness plan? ***\*TIP!\*** Are farm to school principles and goals already written into the plan? Would you like for them to be? (If so, include that as a goal above.)*

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### **Funding Goals**

**What are you goals for funding?** ***\*TIP!\***: Consider the funding needed yearly or per project or goal, as opposed to a large amount which may be unobtainable. By breaking down funding needs it will become clear smaller, specific grants and donations will supply your program with needed funding.*

Year one:

Year two:

Year three:

Year four:

Year five:

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## Create Your Plan

Now that you have a basic idea of what you would like to add to your program let's turn your goals into steps, or actions. **\*TIP!\*** *Think chronologically about your steps. You cannot harvest produce from a garden that is not established and producing enough product for your needs! And, you need a food safety plan in place before you move garden produce into the kitchens. Combining goals in one step will work, as long as you do not over-plan for the amount of time you anticipate to complete those goals. Keep your plan adjustable so you can easily make changes when needed!*

### BE SPECIFIC!

Goal/ Step 1:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 2:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 3:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 4:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 5:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 6:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 7:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 8:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 9:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:

Goal/ Step 10:

Planning Notes to Remember:

Est. Time Frame:



Contact the Illinois Farm to School Network at [farmtoschool@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:farmtoschool@sevengenerationsahead.org) for assistance or information on programming.