



OUTREACH TOOLKIT



An overview of the
Illinois Farm to School Network

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Illinois Farm to School is sowing the seeds of farm to school and bridging the gap between institutional buyers and Illinois producers by providing training, connecting partners and sharing resources.

The goals of this toolkit are to assist schools and farmers to help students in changing their food purchasing and education practices. This toolkit includes information about the free programs Illinois Farm to School offers, contact information and ways to get connected, social media and press articles, past events, information about our partners, photos and more.

About Us



Illinois Farm to School Network (IFSN)

The Illinois Farm to School Network (IFSN) is a growing coalition of organizations, school districts, early care providers, and individuals who support food and nutrition education, local food purchasing, and building our local food economy. Farm to School is a people-powered movement that seeks to strengthen the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers.

Three Elements of Farm to School

- **Local Food Procurement:** Local foods purchased, promoted, and served in cafeterias
- **Food and Nutrition Education:** Students are able to participate in educational activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition
- **School Gardens:** Students are able to engage in hands-on learning through gardening.



Farm to School empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.

Children are provided with access to nutritious local food and the ability to learn how to grow it. Farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers are provided significant financial opportunity through Farm to School by opening the doors to a billion-dollar institutional market. This is important in the face of increasing globalization and corporate consolidation in agribusiness with agriculture workers losing out on potential markets. By supporting these local agriculture workers, Farm to School creates new jobs, strengthens the local economy and creates a solution to the crisis facing small farms. By offering this new market to farmers everywhere there's an opportunity for connections to be made with the next generation of consumers to eat locally grown food. From students, teachers and administrators to parents and farmers; Farm to School creates opportunities for everyone to win by building family and community engagement.

Farm to School has been a growing movement in the State of Illinois for more than a decade, with many dedicated people and groups working together for our students.

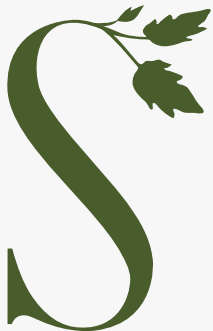
Now more than ever, Farm to School is growing across the country and the Illinois Farm to School Network is happy to be a part of that growth. With every new school garden, every new food tasted, and every farmer now able to sell local products to school districts, we are creating a better food system. Illinois Farm to School Network is a proud Illinois Core Partner of the National Farm to School Network.



**NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK**
ILLINOIS

Seven Generations Ahead (SGA)

The IFSN is a program of Seven Generations Ahead, a non-profit dedicated to building healthy and sustainable communities.



**Seven
Generations
Ahead**

SGA works with local government, community and private sector leaders to help communities make the changes they need to build a healthy and sustainable future. Through community-wide sustainability planning and implementation, project design and implementation, educational conferences and forums, community network development, consulting, and programs, SGA is a catalyst for local community solutions to global environmental issues.

SGA's Sustainability Work Covers:

- energy efficiency and renewable energy
- transportation
- water conservation
- open space and ecosystem enhancement
- sustainability education
- waste reduction
- healthy community development
- local, sustainable food
- green business
- procurement

Farm to School in Practice: Illinois

In 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture conducted a census-style survey of all school districts to learn more about Farm to School activities.

>57 districts in Illinois were starting school gardens



>100 school gardens started in Chicago Public Schools

This did not include the many nonprofits and community organizations working with schools to build and support their gardens and garden-based curricula.

59
districts in Illinois
procuring food
locally

While only 15% percent of our food dollars are currently being spent on local food purchases, there is significant interest on the ground in buying food from local farmers. IFSN is a resource for districts that want to learn more about how to prioritize local food purchases.

From 2017 to 2019, our Illinois
Farm to School Network grew

152%



1350 current members
in IFSN

If your organization would like to be involved, [contact us](#).

We also offer a variety of tools and resources to help educators, farmers, producers, and distributors get started with Farm to School on our [website](#). [Sign up](#) for our monthly newsletter to read the latest news on all things farm to school across our state.



Our Programs



Illinois Great Apple Crunch

Illinois Great Apple Crunch is a celebration of local food, and of course, apples.

Crunching into local apples on Apple Crunch day, which is always the second Thursday in October, can become a yearly event at your school, or program site. You can purchase local apples for your celebration in a number of ways. Celebrations can be held in the cafeteria, outside in a garden or lawn space, or in the classroom.



Our website offers all the tools you need for a successful event; from registration to a variety of educational activities as well as ways to celebrate and share your event. We encourage participants to include educational enrichment activities on that day to promote the knowledge of where food comes from and healthy eating habits.



605,530

Illinois participants in 2019

20%

increase from 2018

1,048%

increase from 2015



Share your Crunch on your site's social media pages! Use the hashtags **#GreatAppleCrunch** **#F2SMonth** and **#ILAppleCrunch** to share your images on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.



Make sure to follow us on [Instagram](#) (@GreatAppleCrunch), [Twitter](#) (@Gr8AppleCrunch), and [Facebook](#)!

Illinois Harvest of the Month

Illinois Harvest of the Month offers our partners ways to celebrate a different in-season, locally grown food item every month.

It's a free and flexible way to buy, grow, and serve more local food while teaching students about healthy eating, nutrition, and agriculture! Illinois Harvest of the Month helps school districts, feeding sites, and early care centers source and celebrate seasonal, local food.



In 2019/2020:

41

participants

13

partner orgs.

493,671

children served

871

sites served

Registered sites receive:

- **Seasonal calendar** of suggestions for what to feature. You choose what works best for your meal of garden program.
- **Over 200 recipes**
- **One-on-one assistance** to ensure your Harvest of the Month success!
- Access to classroom and cafeteria **activities and curriculum**
- Awesome **promotional materials**
- **Monthly email** full of cafeteria celebration tips/ideas for seasonal foods, featured recipes, intriguing fun facts and nutrition facts



Each month, registered participants are able to select and highlight a different local item on their cafeteria menus or in their school gardens. This is a free program to all child feeding and education sites in Illinois! **Illinois Harvest of the Month brings more money to local farmers, healthier food to the cafeteria, and educational opportunities for students about healthy eating.**

Registration is free.

[Click here](#) to see the seasonal Harvest of the Month calendar.

Would you like a sneak peek of Harvest of the Month?

[Click here](#) to see a program toolbox preview with recipe samples and our promotional Harvest Tips monthly email! This is a free program for Illinois early childhood, child feeding, garden sites, and non-profits!

[Click here](#) to download our one-page information sheet.

Read about [Mooseheart Child City and School](#) to see what Illinois Harvest of the Month looks like in action.

When participants register for Illinois Harvest of the Month, they receive a suite of food service and home recipes, classroom activities, a tasting toolkit and marketing materials. Sites can also use the Extension Kit that allow grocery stores and the community to participate in Harvest of the Month. It's a great way to take your farm to school program to the next level.



Fresh From the Farm Curriculum

Fresh from Farm provides a curriculum that is designed to engage children from 1st to 8th grade while aligning with the common core standards and Illinois State Learning Standards.

From Speaking and Listening Standards to Next Generation Science Standards to CDC National Health Education Standards and more, the complete list of Common Core Standards that the nutrition lessons address can be found [here](#).



While all of our lesson plans for all courses can be found with downloadable PDFs for free, [please consider donating](#) so we can continue to develop and provide these resources for all to enjoy. If you have any questions regarding the curriculum, please contact us at FarmentoSchool@SevenGenerationsAhead.org.

Sow and Grow

Sow and Grow curriculum educates **elementary-aged** children about various plants and their parts, how plants grow, where our food comes from, and what is required to grow a healthy plant. Each nutrition lesson of Sow and Grow is comprised of objectives and goals. These are aligned with Common Core Standards as well as Next Generation Science Standards.

Topics covered:

- school gardens
- plant life cycles
- crop harvesting and seasonality
- weeds
- bugs and insects
- the importance of soil
- how to compost

[Click here](#) to view the PDF for the Sow to Grow curriculum.

[Click here](#) to view a complete list of Common Core Standards for nutrition lessons.



Roots and Fruits

Roots and Fruits curriculum, designed for **3rd through 5th grade**, can be adapted for younger ages. A combination of classroom curriculum, school gardens, organic farm tours, school lunch reform, and whole school wellness strategies create a positive impact on children's diets with the consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Topics covered:

- the environment
- local farms and our food system
- nutrition and health
- experiencing food with our senses



[Click here](#) for the student workbook.

[Click here](#) to view and download the PDFs for Roots and Fruits curriculum.

Linking Plants and Food

Linking Plants and Food curriculum for **5th to 8th grade** students instills a deep understanding of a sustainable food system and uses the local environment as a focal point for learning. Incorporating place-based education, Linking Plants and Food creates a meaningful and culturally relevant framework for learning. Assessments in this curriculum present opportunities for students to make collaborative decisions that affect the classroom community and incorporate student voices.

[Click here](#) to view and download the PDFs for Linking Plants and Food curriculum.



Interactive Tools



Illinois Farm to School Toolkit

Looking for extra support to help you achieve your farm to school goals?

With educators, farmers, producers, and distributors in mind, Illinois Farm to School Network created a free interactive toolkit for every element of farm to school programming. The toolkit covers everything from the procurement of local foods and funds to on-site gardens and Farm to School advocacy.

Check out our comprehensive [toolkit](#) and see how you can get started with Illinois Farm to School!

Illinois Learning Gardens Map

Looking for a garden site near you?

Our website offers an interactive map of garden programs offered in Illinois. Visit the page and click on each dot for more information about gardens near you. You can see what foods the garden produces, whether it has a compost system, whether it's a community garden, and more. We are happy to connect you with these sites! If you want to add your garden site to our map, visit the website below for more information.

Check out our [interactive garden map](#)!



Farm to School varies widely by location. In addition to the programs covered here, it can also encompass farmer visits to classrooms, field trips, and much more! Farm to School programs come in many shapes and sizes. We can help you build the right program for you!

Drop us an [email](#) and tell us how we can help!

Contact Us



Follow Us on Social Media!

Instagram



[@ilfarm2school](https://www.instagram.com/ilfarm2school)

Facebook



[Illinois Farm to School](https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisFarmtoSchool)

Twitter



[@ILFarm2School](https://twitter.com/ILFarm2School)

LinkedIn



[Illinois Farm to School Network](https://www.linkedin.com/company/IllinoisFarmtoSchoolNetwork)

If you are interested in any of these programs or getting to know more about Illinois Farm to School, please contact us and [visit our website](https://www.farmtoschool.org) for more information.

Email us at: farmtoschool@sevengenerationsahead.org



A very special thank you to our Illinois Harvest of the Month Partners:



Charitable
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Central Illinois Produce
Vermilion Valley Produce Gateway Produce

