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# How to Connect to Institutional Buyers: The Institutional Buyer Playbook Part 1





# Overview

- Farm to School Primer:
  - What is farm to school?
- National Farm to School Network
- Illinois Farm to School Network
- Key Programs
  - Illinois Harvest of the Month
  - The Great Apple Crunch
- Who we work with.
- Illinois Local Food System



# What is Farm to School?

GREAT LAKES

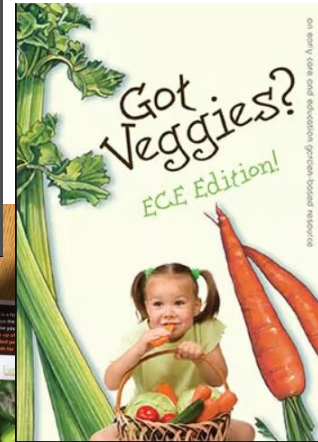


**FARM to SCHOOL**  
CLASSROOM — DINING CENTER — GARDEN

**GARDEN HARVEST CULINARY EVENT**

The Chicago Public Schools Farm to School program encourages students to participate in every step of the food system from harvest to taste. As a highlight event of this program, Garden Harvest Culinary events involve two (or more) collaborating schools to plan for and create a meal using produce harvested from their school gardens. A Culinary Arts demonstration takes students through the entire process of preparing a meal, from gathering ingredients to presenting the final dish on the table. Students form a deeper understanding and better appreciation of food when they help to grow and prepare it.

Collaboration of garden and culinary teams allows schools to connect and learn from each other to plan, grow, prepare and share a meal. Elementary school students travel to a nearby high school Culinary Arts program classroom. This event can be done at within two hours as high school culinary students will utilize Culinary Arts education objectives to demonstrate sanitation, safety, and cooking techniques for students from neighboring elementary schools.



**organiclife** SMART BOODIES SERVICE

November Menu, Menu.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p><b>ALLIANCE HARVEST MONTH</b></p> <p>Chicken Breast, Broccoli, Rice, Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Apples, Carrots, Onions, Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Pepper</p>	<p>Beef Meat 'N' Cheese</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Hot Diggity Dog</p> <p>Hot Diggity Dog, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Perennial Pan Cheese Pizza</p> <p>Perennial Pan Cheese Pizza, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Hot Diggity Dog</p> <p>Hot Diggity Dog, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>
<p>Chicken Breast, Broccoli, Rice, Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Apples, Carrots, Onions, Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Pepper</p>	<p>Chicken Pullets</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Squidetti &amp; Meatballs</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Perennial Pan Cheese Pizza</p> <p>Perennial Pan Cheese Pizza, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Hot Diggity Dog</p> <p>Hot Diggity Dog, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>
<p>Hot Meat 'N' Cheese</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Beef Meat 'N' Cheese</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Grilled Cheese Pizza</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Perennial Pan Cheese Pizza</p> <p>Perennial Pan Cheese Pizza, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Hot Diggity Dog</p> <p>Hot Diggity Dog, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>
<p>Chicken Nuggets</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Beef Meat 'N' Cheese</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>No School</p>	<p>No School</p>	<p>No School</p>
<p>Crappy Chicken Sandwichs</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Chicken Quesadilla</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Crappy Chicken Sandwichs</p> <p>Beef, Swiss Cheese, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Hot Diggity Dog</p> <p>Hot Diggity Dog, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>	<p>Have your best shot to win a \$2500 prize!</p> <p>Hot Diggity Dog, Pickled Peppers, Ice Cold Milk</p>



**FOOD SERVICES**

Menu

Food Production/Meal Application

Payment - After/Mealtime

Come Work With Us

Witness Harvest Of The Month

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 17 Board of Education Meeting
- Nov 14 Board of Education Meeting
- Nov 19 Board of Education Meeting

View all upcoming events

**Illinois Harvest of the Month**

Illinois Harvest of the Month is a program that encourages students to participate in every step of the food system from harvest to taste. As a highlight event of this program, Garden Harvest Culinary events involve two (or more) collaborating schools to plan for and create a meal using produce harvested from their school gardens.

**Fun Fact Friday**

An ear of corn always has an even number of rows and about 800 individual kernels on each ear.



# Farm to School's Core Components

Strengthening the connections that communities have with fresh, healthy food and local producers

- Procurement
  - Local food in taste tests, snacks, and school meals
- Education
  - Learning about agriculture, food, health, & nutrition
- School Gardens
  - Hands-on engagement



# What is the National Farm to School Network?



## Our Network

Our network is the heart of our organization. Our structure allows information to move from the local level to the national level and across all states, Washington, D.C. and U.S. Territories.

Both partnership and membership are free!

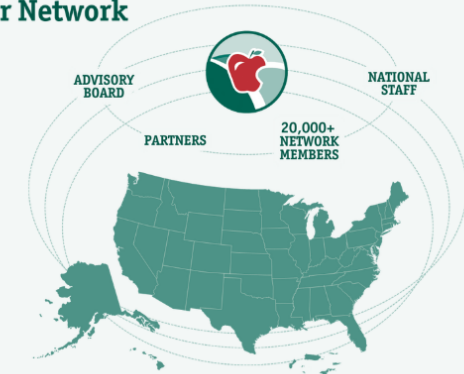
**Partners:** Partner organizations build capacity for and support the expansion of farm to school and farm to early care and education efforts in their state, Washington D.C. or U.S. Territory. Based at nonprofit organizations, state agencies, universities and other entities, Partners serve as liaisons for information, resources, needs and opportunities with the National Farm to School Network. They support capacity building and expansion of farm to school and farm to early care and education in every state, Washington D.C. and U.S. Territories. Partners are invited to join a listserv where they can email the entire partners list to network together, ask questions and share resources. Signing an agreement to uphold our **Call to Action** is required to become a partner.

[BECOME A PARTNER](#)

**Network members:** More than 20,000 farm to school practitioners and supporters have joined our network. Members support the mission of the National Farm to School Network by advocating for supportive policies, volunteering in their communities and supporting the organization financially as they are able. Members receive our monthly email newsletter and are the first to hear about special events like the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference.

[BECOME A NETWORK MEMBER](#)

## Our Network



74,433+\*

Schools Participate in Farm to School

74.1%\*

of US Schools

45.6M\*

Students Engaged

\$1.8B\*

Spent on Local Food

46

States with Supportive Policies

20,000+

NFSN Members

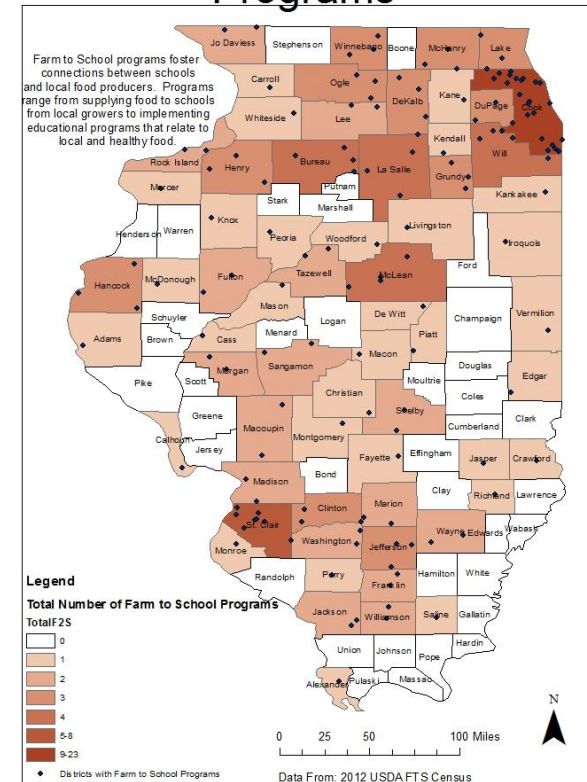
# We are the Illinois Farm to School Network

Managed by Seven Generations Ahead

Non-profit promoting the development of ecologically sustainable and healthy communities around the region



## Districts with Farm to School Programs



# Food System Work at Seven Generations Ahead

- Cross Community Climate Collaborative
- [Illinois Farm to School](#) (local food procurement for schools and early childcare)
- [Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition](#) (composting and using compost)
- [Wasted Food Action Alliance](#) (prevent, rescue, recycle)
- [Zero Waste Schools](#)



# Illinois Farm to School Network



## IL State Partner, National Farm to School Network

- Providing information, resources, advocacy, and a networking hub for communities to bring local food sourcing, school/community gardens, and food and agriculture education into child feeding and education settings across the state.



# Network Support & Resources

- [illinoisfarmtoschool.org/](http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/)
- [harvestillinois.org](http://harvestillinois.org)
- Monthly newsletter
- In-person & virtual trainings
- One-on-one consulting

## The Illinois Farm to School Toolkit

Looking for support to advance your farm to school activities? You've come to the right place! Access our comprehensive portal of farm to school resources below.

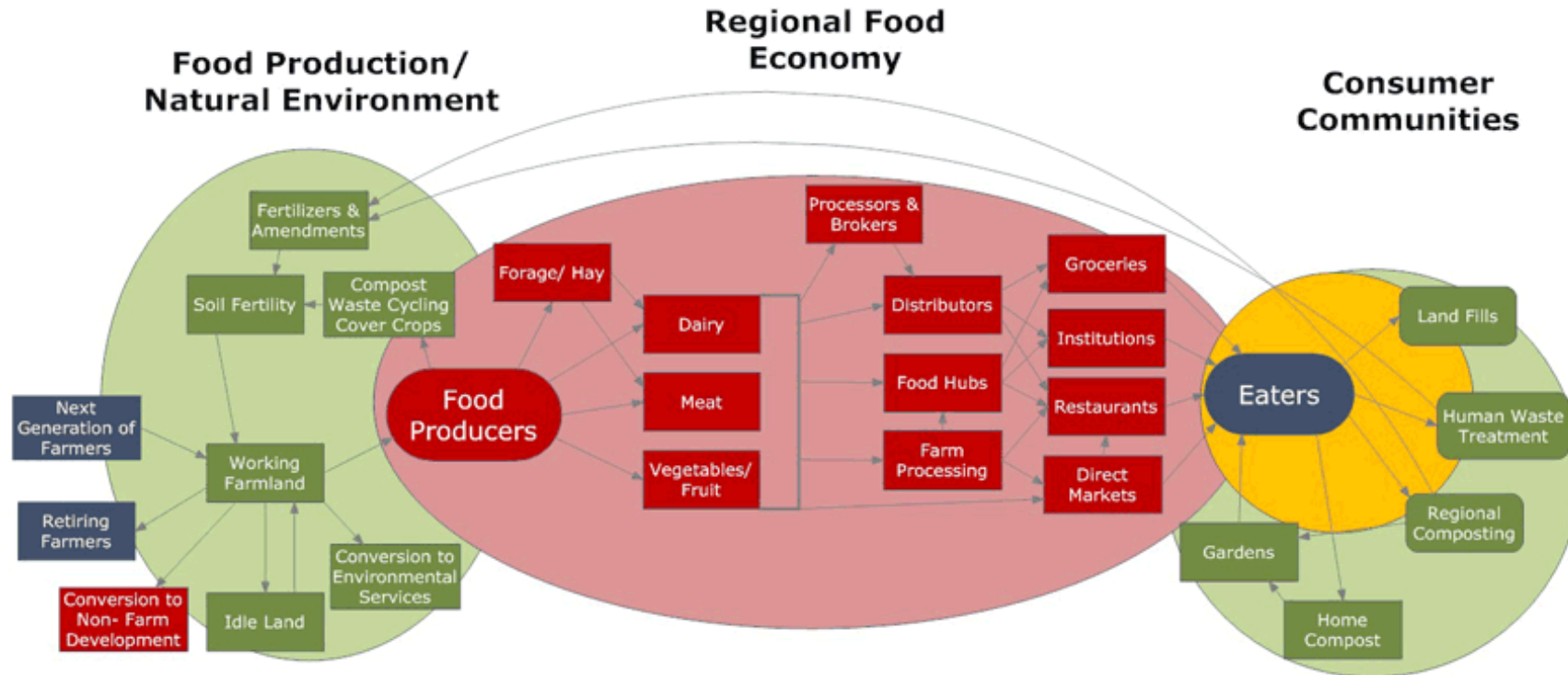
### TOOLKIT TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 🍃 Getting Started
- 🍃 Sourcing Local Food
- 🍃 Gardening On-Site
- 🍃 Farm to Summer
- 🍃 New! At Home and In Community Toolkit
- 🍃 Food & Agriculture Education
- 🍃 Early Care Providers
- 🍃 Farmers & Producers
- 🍃 Distributors
- 🍃 Funding
- 🍃 Advocate for F2S
- 🍃 Outreach Toolkit
- 🍃 Boot Camp Education
- 🍃 Illinois Stories- Listen to our podcast series!

Can't find what you're looking for? Get in touch with the Illinois Farm to School Network! [Contact us here.](#)

# Illinois Farm to School Coalition

The coalition is engaged in critical work to advance farm to school programs throughout Illinois, bringing healthier meals to school children, strengthening local economies and food systems, and reducing the environmental impact of industrially produced food.



# Great Lakes School Food System Innovation Awards



LAKE MICHIGAN  
SCHOOL FOOD SYSTEM  
INNOVATION HUB

[InnovateSchoolFood.org](https://www.innovateschoolfood.org)

# Two Grants / Four Year Cycle

## SPARK AWARDS

Spark Awards fund projects that need a short-term infusion of funds for school food system and marketplace improvements, such as capacity-building, planning, and product testing projects.

**Award Range:** \$30,000 – \$100,000

**Grant Cycle:** One year, with optional 4-month extension period

**Application opens:** February 14, 2025

**Final Application Deadline:** May 30, 2025

**Missing Materials Deadline:** June 13, 2025

**Project Timeline:** September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026

## INNOVATION COLLABORATIVE AWARDS

Innovation Collaborative Awards fund projects that promote systems-level change of the school food system and marketplace, such as scaling up of programs, regional partnerships, or new program or product development and integration.

**Award:** \$250,000

**Grant Cycle:** 2.5 years

**Project Timeline:** August 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026

These awards are funded through the  
USDA School Food System Transformation Challenge Sub-Grants Initiative

**2025 Spark Awards** fund projects that need a short-term infusion of funds for school food system and marketplace improvements, such as capacity-building, planning, and product testing projects.

**Award Range:**

\$30,000 – \$100,000

**Grant Cycle:**

One year, with optional 4-month extension period

**Grant Opening:** February 14, 2025

**Grant Closing:** May 30, 2025

**Project Timeline:**

September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026



# Illinois Harvest of the Month

[Harvestillinois.org](http://Harvestillinois.org)



# Program Goals



PARTICIPANTS  
FEATURE LOCAL OR  
GARDEN FOODS ON  
THEIR OWN  
SCHEDULE



TEACHES KIDS ABOUT  
SEASONAL EATING  
DEVELOPS STUDENT  
ACCEPTANCE OF  
FRESH, HEALTHY  
FOODS



MAKES IT EASY FOR  
SITES TO BRING FOOD  
EDUCATION TO THE  
MEAL PROGRAM,  
GARDENS AND THE  
CLASSROOM



PROVIDES WAYS TO  
INCORPORATE  
WELLNESS WORK  
INTO FEEDING  
PROGRAMS



TEACHES PROGRAM  
STAFF HOW TO BUY  
AND CELEBRATE  
LOCAL FOOD



## SCHOOLS

Information for individual school sites and entire school districts that are participating in Illinois Harvest of the Month through their meal program.



## GARDEN BASED PROGRAMS

Information for any type of program that is utilizing Illinois Harvest of the Month with a garden program.



## EARLY CHILDCARE (ECE)

Information for early childcare sites. These are sites that provide care and meals for children under 5 years old (Pre-K).



## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

Information for residential program sites. These are sites where children reside on-site part or full time.



A young child with curly hair, wearing a blue t-shirt with a white circular logo, is holding a green pea in their hands. They are standing in a garden with rows of pea plants. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the garden and another person in the distance.

# Our Participants

## School year 2024/25 Year 7 Participation:

- Estimated 433,000 children at approximately 651 sites participating at:
  - K-12, ECE, feeding centers, summer feedings and boarding sites
  - Juvenile Justice Centers
  - 90 garden sites
  - 34 partner organizations and agencies
  - 4 farm to school consortiums, coalitions, or groups
  - 2 out-of-state K-12 districts (IN and WI) joined Illinois HOTM.



# The Great Apple Crunch



You can register here: [CRUNCH!](#)



# The Great Apple Crunch

- Midwest Great Apple Crunch regional event (IL, IN, IO, MI, MN, OH, WI)
- Celebrated every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of October, and throughout Natl Farm to School Month
- **In 2023 over 1,000,000 participants Crunched across seven states!**
- **The 2023 Illinois Crunch: 480,693 total Crunchers!**
- [Illinois Great Apple Crunch](#)



**October 10, 2023 | 3-6 PM**  
**at the Champaign Farmers Market**

- Sample 11 varieties of apples courtesy of Curtis Orchard
- Enjoy exciting kids games
- Let your creativity shine with apple coloring sheets
- Shop an assortment of local apples and honey

# Crunch at the Farmers Market

5h · 🌐

It's going to be a 🍏 perfectly cool afternoon 🍏 to spend at the [Champaign-Urbana Farmers Markets!](#) We will be there from 3pm to 6pm with a wide assortment of preservative free breads and pastries. Hope to see you there! 🍞🍪

💙 Baked with love in the heart of Champaign, then sent without preservatives straight to a location near you. Find the nearest source for Central Illinois Bakehouse products at <https://cibakehouse.com/find-our-bread> 💙



## Champaign Farmers Market Crunch 2023



The Great Apple Crunch Education Day  
Event Wrigley Field September 2024

Our farm and orchard..

3709 Miller Road

McHenry, Illinois 60051, US

<https://stadesfarmandmarket.com/>

# We Work With..



**Illinois**  
State Board of  
Education



# Where Farm to School lives.



## Federal

- [The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program](#)
- [The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program](#)
- [Illinois USDA Farm to School Grant Awards](#)
- [USDA Farm to School Census, Illinois State Profile 2022/23](#)

## State

- [IL State Board of Education Farm to Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [IL Farm to School Network](#)
- [IL Farm Fresh Schools Program Act- currently unfunded](#)
- [CU Farm to School](#)
- [Greater Wabash Food Council Farm to School](#)

Thank you!

Contact us:

[farmtoschool@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:farmtoschool@sevengenerationsahead.org)

