





Today's Agenda



- Illinois Farm to School Support
- Connect Local Procurement to Standard Procurement
- LFS Information and Best Practices, Lindsay Blough Mabie, ISBE
- Looking for Local Foods and Buying Local Foods
- Toolkits, Resources and So Much More
- Farm to School Programming in a Nutshell
 - Great Apple Crunch
 - Harvest of the Month
- Creating a Fifth Season Program at Your Site
- Need Financial Help? It's all about the funding
- Meet and Greet; shake some hands and make connections with farmers, local food distributors, and food hubs attending

Wheeling CCSD 21 and The Common Market January
HOTM Watermelon Radish Tasting



Network Support & Resources

- <https://illinoisfarmentoschool.org/>
- Monthly and program specific newsletters
- Fun Fact Friday social media shares
- In-person and virtual trainings
- One-on-one consulting



IFSN Toolkit

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!

<https://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/>



IFSN Focus:
School lunch, meet local food infrastructure.

School lunch, meet fresh produce: Suffolk business connects farmers to nutrition programs

SUFFOLK, VA

When Suffolk entrepreneur Breon Clemons became a father, he experienced a revelation. When he took his daughter to school, he soon began to realize that lunchrooms were lacking in fresh, quality produce. He was disappointed the school wasn't able to provide the same fresh fruits and vegetables that his child received from his home garden. So, Clemons began planning a way to connect Virginia farmers to school cafeterias.

Now, after just a year and a half of business, GoGreen Farms & Greenhouses is making a sizable impact, securing food service contracts with 10 school districts and more than 200 schools in Hampton Roads and outside the region.

[Read more here](#)

Food for Thought: Community is the answer.
What was the question?

Reconnecting Community:
Answers to age-old questions.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic there has been increased concern over system shortcomings and failures across the country. I, personally, have listened in on discussions related to school infrastructure and the increasing responsibility to feed hungry children through the pandemic. At the onset, schools across the country stepped in to assume an even greater role in providing sustenance to families affected during the COVID crisis, often at their own expense. It is truly wonderful to note that in a time of crisis people do step up.

What have we learned?

Every crisis we endure exposes the flaws in our systems and provides us with an opportunity to ask the questions we may not have realized needed asking. Many of us are pondering those questions. Now is the time we should all be asking ourselves what we as a group, organization, state, country, and as individuals should strive to change.

What was the question?

When it comes down to feeding people, whether at schools or institutions, at restaurants, or at home, building sustainable systems and ensuring access to healthy food lies within the development of community. Connected communities, these communities working together as a whole, can provide stable infrastructure

You're invited to be a part of the Illinois Farm to School Network

Our newsletter arrives on the 10th of the month chocked full of Farm to School news including:

- Food for Thought: insights into the local food landscape and farm to school across Illinois
- grant openings
- garden resources
- early childcare resources
- K-12 foodservice resources
- producer resources
- Join the network at:
- <http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/about/join/>





Connect Local to Standard Procurement

Methods to buy local foods:

- Informal Buying:
 - Micro Purchases / Small Purchases
- Direct Relationships
- Garden Produce
- DOD “identified local” Products
- Buying and Bidding Together
- Language for Buying Group Bids
- Develop a Local Bid



Tools for Local Procurement



NEW: ADVANCING SCHOOL FOOD PROCUREMENT: DRIVING VALUES-BASED PURCHASING THROUGH COMPETITIVE SOLICITATIONS

This new resource is intended to inspire all schools interested in shifting toward or advancing their values-based procurement and sourcing practices.

- Case studies and tangible tips
- Findings from a series of expert interviews (including school nutrition directors, food service management company staff, university extension agents, and others)
- An extensive review of solicitation language to better understand how districts across the country are incorporating their school meal values into procurement practices!





Buying Together

Creating a buying group with varying size sites can give you the ability to buy and share the bounty. Very small sites cannot meet minimums and do not have the ability to utilize larger quantities.

When sites work together to buy local their buying capabilities are improved, and sourcing local is more efficient.

[Frac.org/buying_groups.pdf](https://frac.org/buying_groups.pdf)



HOW IT WORKS

Buying Groups:

Helping School Districts Purchase Healthy Food

Overview

A buying group, one option for collaborative food procurement, can help school districts maximize nutrition program dollars while offering high quality food items to students. Collaborative food procurement pools the purchasing needs of a group of organizations (e.g. school food authorities) in order to increase buying power. Larger purchase order sizes encourage vendors and distributors to aggressively compete for a group's bid. Increased competition often drives down prices allowing schools to buy the goods needed to prepare appetizing, nutritious meals for students at lower costs. Of the methods available to collaboratively procure food, a buying group may be a good option for school districts because membership typically does not have associated fees.

In a **buying group**, one or more organizations (e.g. school food authorities) collectively purchase combined orders of desired goods and self-manage the purchase order process. Often in lieu of a fee structure, the administrative workload is distributed among participating schools. The buying group

standards.¹ For more information, review USDA's guidance regarding how to [procure services from purchasing cooperatives, group purchasing organizations, or group buying organizations](#).

As outlined by the Public Health Law Center, other methods of collaborative food procurement include:

Group Purchasing Organization (GPO): A third party entity serves as the umbrella organization to a group of school food authorities. Schools develop a contract with the GPO and the GPO assumes the responsibility of submitting, managing and negotiating bids for desired products. This model often requires members to pay a fee in order to be a member.¹

State Purchasing Cooperatives: Through certain state laws, states may have established cooperatives that allow its schools to benefit from pooling its product



Group Bidding Language

The USDA Farm to School Program maintains examples of strong solicitations that use different strategies to target local foods. These include both informal and formal solicitations (Requests for Proposals (RFP's) or Invitations for Bid (IFB's)) and contracts with effective language to encourage local sourcing by distributors or Food Service Management Companies such as:

- Requiring product traceability or source of origin labeling
- Using geographic preference
- Having strong evaluation criteria
- Providing detailed product specifications

Examples begin on page 114:

[USDA Buying Local Foods Guide-Opportunities to Target Local Growers](#)




Local Food for Schools

Lindsay Blough

Farm to Child Nutrition Programs Administrator

localfoods@isbe.net





What is
LFS?

- Local Food for Schools (LFS) is funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to purchase local unprocessed or minimally processed foods to be served in the:
- National School Lunch,
- School Breakfast programs,
- After School Snacks and
- the Seamless Summer Option.

LFS Basics

Who can participate?

- SFAs that have at least 1 site in the NSLP and/or SBP are eligible.
 - Public Schools
 - Charter Schools
 - Non-public Schools
 - RCCI's

Start and End of Funding

- Started August 1, 2023
- Ends January 31, 2026

How Do I Sign Up?

For schools that have not

**IT'S NOT
TOO LATE!**

Just email me at localfoods@isbe.net to inquire about signing up. I will send you a link to an online training and I can open up the application in WINS.

What are the requirements for the food?

Must be LOCAL!

- raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in IL OR
- Within 400 road miles of your school

Unprocessed or Minimally Processed

- Natural state unprocessed
- Minimally processed = whole, cut, pureed, fresh, frozen, canned, dried, butchering.

New LOCAL Food

- LFS funds must be used to **increase or expand** but not duplicate existing LOCAL food procurement.

Visit our Farm to Child Nutrition programs Website (F2CNP)

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/School-Nutrition-Farm-to-School.aspx>



Want to know how much funding your district was allotted?

- Click on the Local Food for Schools (LFS) tab
- Select the SFAs That Are Not Signed for LFS file
- Find your district & the funding amount

NUTRITION

FARM TO CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS (F2CNP)

EVENTS & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- [Click here to register for the Local Food for Schools \(LFS\) Overview, Updates and Q&A webinar – 2-3 p.m. Tuesday May 7](#)
- Open Enrollment for Local Foods for Schools (LFS) funding has ended. If you did not sign up for LFS, but are interested please reach out to ISBE staff at localfoods@isbe.net to inquire if funds are still available. We will do our best to accommodate requests to participate!
- Out of LFS funds? If you used all of your LFS funds but would like to request additional funds, [click here for guidance on how to request additional LFS funds](#).
- We Need Your Input! Please complete ISBE's Farm to School survey by clicking here. On average the survey takes less than 15 minutes to complete.
- Check out the Illinois Farm to School Network website for upcoming Events.

General Farm to School Information



Farm to Early Care



Food Safety



Procurement



For Producers (Farmers, Ranchers, Processors, and Distributors)



Local Food for Schools (LFS)



Websites/Links



Scratch Cooking



School Gardens



Success Stories

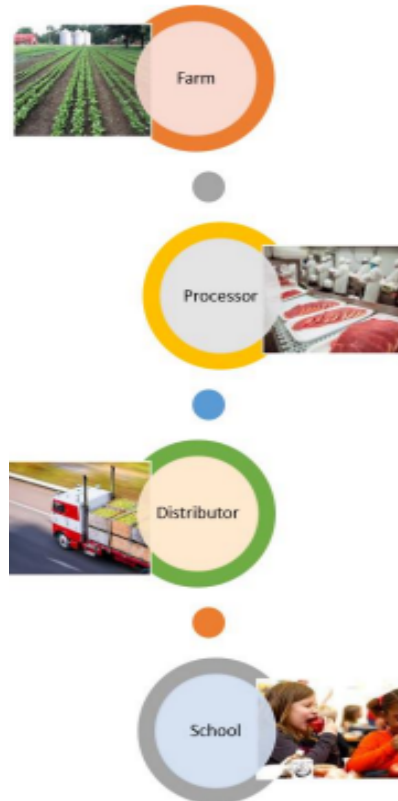


How do I Find Local Foods?

Resources for Sourcing Local Foods

If you are like many schools, figuring out where to get local foods from can feel very overwhelming and can often cause a roadblock in moving forward with local food purchasing. We put together a list of places to start on your journey of sourcing local foods to serve in your school meal programs. Our list is not all-inclusive but does include a variety of methods for sourcing, from online search engines to one-on-one assistance from organizations that have experience with farmers, ranchers, producers and farm to school.

When purchasing local foods, it is the responsibility of the SFA to ensure that the food items meet the definition of local, that they are unprocessed or minimally processed, that all foods safety requirements are met and that they follow all applicable procurement rules.



Visit our F2CNP Website at:

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Resources-Sourcing-Local-Foods.pdf>

- ISBE Known Farmer, Rancher, Producer, Processor, Distributor List
 - Located in the WINS System under Sponsor Tasks. Click on Local Food for Schools (LFS) Farm Search, then select a county and the results will display.
 - Please note this is not a required list, recommended list or approved list. This is a list of those that sell local foods that completed a survey and indicated that they are interested in selling to schools.
- IL Farm to School Network
 - <http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/>
 - [Where to Find Food](#) – listing of search engines, directories and maps to locate sources of food grown near you.
 - farmtoschool@sevendgenerationsahead.org
- Illinois Market Maker
 - <https://il.foodmarketmaker.com/>
- IL Farm Bureau
 - County Contacts: <https://www.ilfb.org/about-us/directory/>
 - Main webpage: <https://www.ilfb.org/>
- Local Farmers Market
 - IL Farmers Market Association: <https://www.ilfma.org/>
- Uofl Extension
 - Find a Uofl Ext. Office: <https://extension.illinois.edu/global/where-we-serve>
- Ask Your Current Distributor or through a new local food distributor
 - Finding out if local foods are available through your current distributor starts with you inquiring about it and letting the know what you are looking for.
 - Creating a consistent needs for local products could create motivation for a distributor to source more local products.
- Through Your DoD Provider
 - SFAs will need to set up a separate account with their DoD provider for purchasing your LFS eligible foods. SFAs cannot purchase LFS foods through FAVORS and will need billed separately for LFS foods.
- Through Your Current Purchasing Cooperative
- Contact a Food Processor

Procurement Requirements

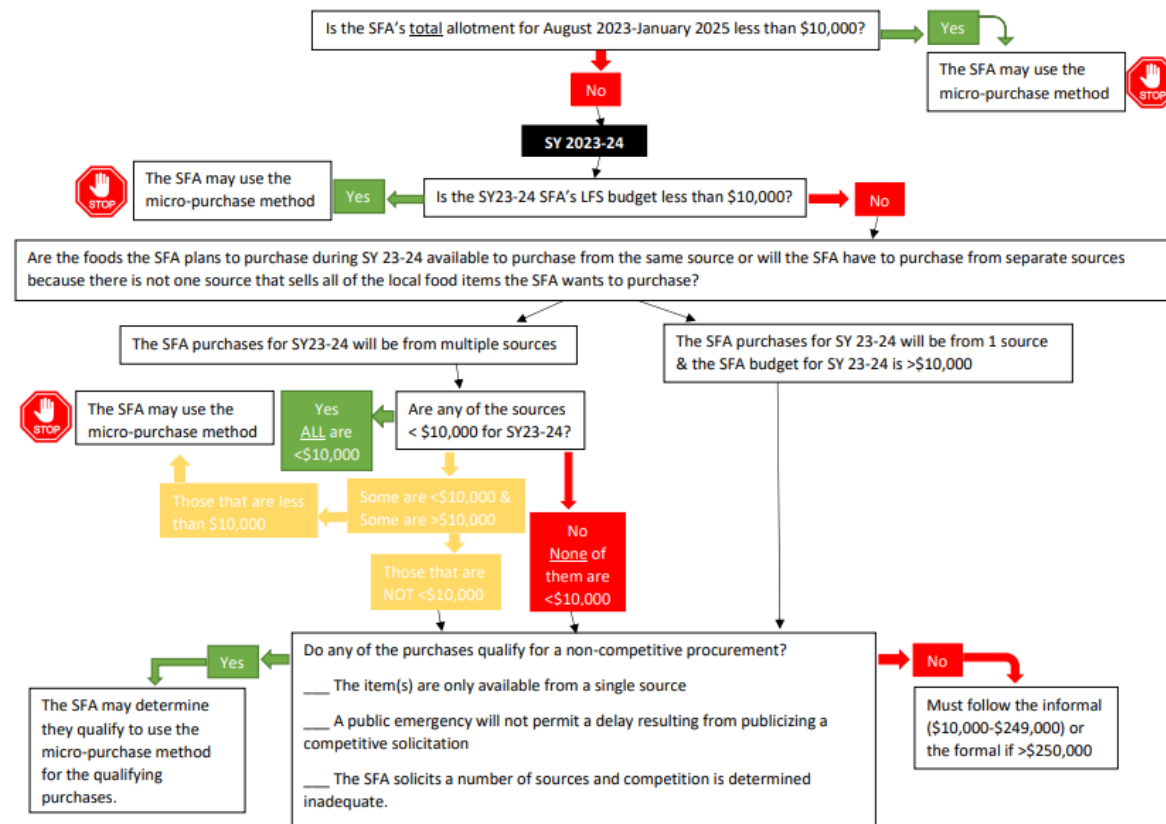
Federal Funds = Rules for Purchasing to help schools get what they want for the best price.

89% of schools were allotted < \$10,000 =
Micropurchase

If you are allotted over \$10,000 first use this chart to figure out if you may still be eligible to use the micropurchase method.

\$10,001-\$250,000 = Small/informal Procurement
a.k.a. 3 bids & a buy

> \$250,001 = formal Procurement



<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/LFS-procurementresource-flowchart.pdf>

Procurement Type Fact Sheets: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-Financial-Management.aspx>



- What do you want to buy?
- How much money do you have? what type of procurement do you need to follow?
- Figure out where your eligible local foods will be purchased from & make your purchase
- Submit a claim to ISBE for reimbursement
 - The LFS claim is an online survey type form – the instructions and link to the claim form are on the ISBE Farm to Child Nutrition Programs webpage under the LFS dropdown bar.
- Receive your reimbursement from ISBE (FRIS Code 4210-LF)



Steps to Request Additional \$

Email ISBE your request for additional funds at localfoods@isbe.net

We ask that you request no more than you can use in 2-3 months time and then if you use that up, you can submit another request for another 2-3 months worth of funding.

Send us the amount you want & your RCDT #.

We will do our best to accommodate your request.

Do not make purchases until you receive an approval from our office.



Q&A

Thank you!

We look forward to seeing what fresh local foods are served in Illinois Schools!

Please reach out with any Questions.

Email: localfoods@isbe.net

Phone: 800/545-7892

F2CNP Website: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/School-Nutrition-Farm-to-School.aspx>

Nutrition Website: www.isbe.net/nutrition



Equity • Quality • Collaboration • Community

Sourcing Local Food

Overview

Local Food Procurement Resources

Where to Find Food

Menu Planning with Local Foods

Sourcing Locally Grown Food

Local food procurement is different for each school based on the amounts of food needed, the location of the school and the seasonal availability of fresh, local foods. Sourcing locally can involve direct relationships with local farmers and producers, shopping at farmer's markets or produce auctions, drawing from local DOD selections, working with regional produce distributors and aggregators, or working with primary or secondary distributors to locate regional or local items. The Illinois Farm to School Network has created a Mighty Mini training video, Local Sourcing, which provides information and insight for school districts considering, or expanding local or regional



How to find local





“.. a school called inquiring about what veggies I could deliver for next month’s menu. In late November.”

**shared at the 2024 Everything Local conference*

Step One

Understand local food..

Know what’s growing so you can focus on fresh, local procurement.

Understand there’s more to local, beyond fruit and veggies.

- Local yogurt and string cheese
- Local flour and grains like rice
- Local proteins
- Local honey and maple syrup

Understanding seasonal availability is your first step to successfully purchasing local foods.

Discover the seasons for local at: IL Farmers Market Association

What’s in Season?

Contact your local farmers market manager for grower info and seasonal info for your area.

Search on [IL Market Maker](#) to discover what’s available in your area.

Look on the ISBE LFS farmer list for interested growers and producers.

Watch the [Market Maker video](#) to create an account.

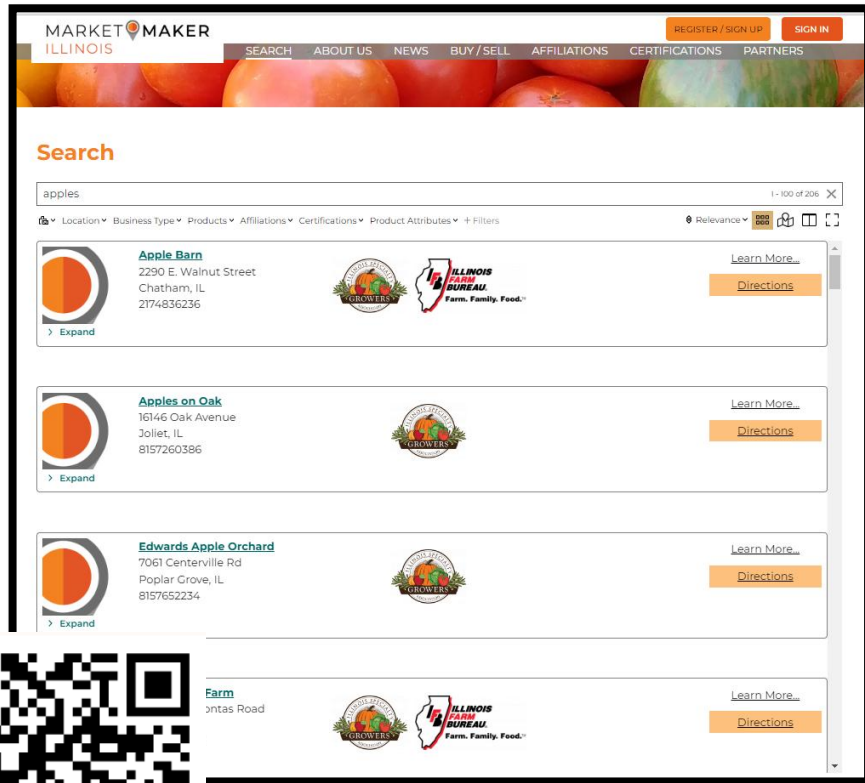
Where do you look?



- Direct Sales on the Farm
- Farmer's Markets
- Produce Auctions
- Producer Co-ops and Food Hubs
- Produce Distributors
- CSA Memberships
- DOD Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Broadline Distributors w/local programs
- School Farms and Gardens



Tools to Find Local Foods



Where to Find Food

Use the following list of search engines, directories, and maps to locate sources of food grown near you:

- FarmMatch**
 - Find local food in the Chicagoland, Elgin, Decatur, and St. Louis areas.
- Band of Farmers**
 - Includes a directory of Chicagoland CSAs (community supported agriculture) and great for locating food for ECE sites.
- Illinois Farmers Market Association**
 - View a map of farmers markets throughout the state of Illinois; helpful for finding food for ECE sites and small districts.
- Eat Wild**
 - Find a farm or ranch near you throughout IL on their map or scroll through the alphabetical list.
- LocalHarvest**
 - Locate farms, farmers markets, CSAs, co-ops and more near you by typing your location into the search bar.
- Buy Fresh Buy Local**
 - Find farms, markets, and more in Illinois.
- Illinois Local Food Map**
 - University of Illinois Extension food map including, onsite farmsales, wineries, orchards, nurseries and CSAs.
- Orange Pippin**
 - Illinois orchard directory. Use the map or enter your zip code to find nearby orchards.
- Local Honey Source**
 - View list of sources of honey produced in Illinois.
- Illinois Organic Growers Association**
 - View a list of food producers that are members of the Illinois Organic Growers Association.
- The Mill at Janie's Farm**
 - An extension of Janie's Organic Farm, The Mill is a source of local flour and grains located in Ashkum, IL.
- Cahokia Rice, McClure IL**
 - At Cahokia we are committed to providing fresh, locally grown rice to the southern Illinois community and beyond. Our cities of Chicago and St. Louis allows us to be a truly authentic farm to table provider.
- Illinois Vegetable Growers Association**
 - A 6-page PDF of Illinois sources of vegetable food production.





Buy Sell Forum Plug In

Can be embedded and customized for partner web sites (API driven)

Ability to filter ads by location, product etc.

Ability to create notification preferences for ad/trade alerts.

SMS notification options (in process)


Easier ad creation process

Ad specific e-commerce




Enter search terms 1 - 10 of 10 X

Location ▾ Looking to Buy ▾ Looking to Sell ▾ Services & Equipment ▾ Discounts & Donations ▾ + Filters Relevance ▾




Looking To Sell
Peaches
Flamm Orchards, Inc.
Cobden, IL 62920
June 1, 2025 to September 1, 2025

[> Expand](#) [Learn More...](#)




Looking To Sell
Peach & Apple Crisp Mixes and Cobbler Mixes
Rendleman Orchards
Alto Pass, IL 62905
January 15, 2025 to January 31, 2026

[> Expand](#)

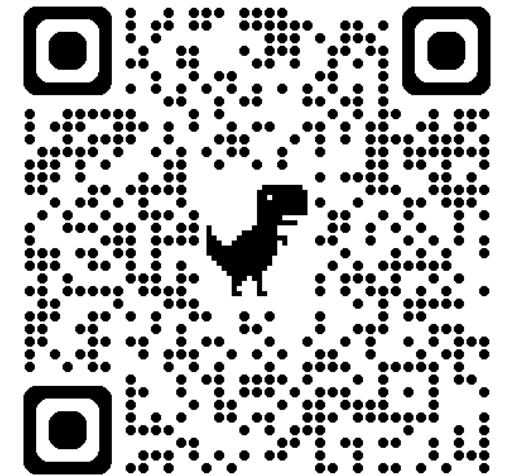


Looking To Sell
Applesauce (Different Varieties)
Rendleman Orchards
Alto Pass, IL 62905
January 15, 2025 to January 31, 2026

[> Expand](#)



Looking To Sell



Remember!

Garden food is local food.



- Gardens have intrinsic value for children and adults
- Other benefits:
 - Increase fruit and vegetable consumption
 - Teach children about healthy eating habits
 - Connect them to their natural environment
 - Develop physical and social skills
 - Reinforce educational concepts

Mooseheart Child City and School Garden Program





Discover ways to menu Illinois foods year-round

Menu Planning with Local Foods



Fresh, local vegetable cups prepared for the National School Lunch Program at Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia.

Schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program should incorporate local foods into their menus in way coordinate with the school nutrition guidelines.

Illinois Farm to School Network has a series of Mighty Mini Videos to assist schools in every aspect of farm to school programming. Check out the training videos on the Mighty Mini video tab.

There are many resources for food service directors to use when planning menu items that use local foods.

- [Adding Local to the Menu](#)
 - From Illinois Farm to School Network
- [Nutritious and Seasonal Recipes for School Cooks by School Cooks](#)
 - From the Vermont Department of Education
- [Menu Planning for Farm to School Programs](#)
 - From the USDA FNS
- [Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook](#)
 - From the USDA Team Nutrition
- [The Lunch Box Recipes and Menus for Schools](#)
 - From the Chef Ann Foundation
- [The USDA Mixing Bowl Large Quantity Recipes](#)
 - From the USDA FNS
- [Eat Healthier School Recipes](#)
 - From Alliance for a Healthier Generation

- IL Farm to School Network Toolkit
 - [Menu Planning Toolkit](#)
- IFSN Mighty Mini Training Videos
 - [Adding Local to the Menu](#)
- Chef Ann
 - [Recipe and Menuing Toolbox](#)
- Use food resource toolkits.
[Register for IL Harvest of the Month](#)



The IFSN Menu Planning Toolkit



Key Programs

- Illinois Harvest of the Month
- The Great Apple Crunch





Illinois Great Apple Crunch

- Part of Great Lakes Crunch; seven states participating
- Annual event every 2nd Thursday of October
- Over 1,400,000 participants crunch across the region!
- On site, community and at-home participation

<http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/great-apple-crunch/>



Kinnikinnick CCSD 131 Great Apple Crunch





Our kids love the
Crunch- it's a
wonderful autumn
celebration!

IL K-5 SCHOOL

How to participate

- Celebrate in the cafeteria
- Share curriculum with teachers
- Create a taste test of local apples
- Tie your Crunch to your Wellness Policy activities
- Invite IL Ext educators to share their knowledge- do they have a cider press you can set up on the playground?
- Invite your local orchard to visit and share how they grew the apples the kids are Crunching
- Promote your event to parents, your community and your local farmers market to increase exposure
- Read the Crunch guide you receive after you register for more ideas!



Illinois Harvest of the Month



- Provides 53 seasonal food options for institutional and community sites to celebrate a featured foods seasonally
- Free registration opens the website sharing resources, curriculum and activities
- Teaches children about seasonal eating and develops acceptance of whole, healthy foods
- Provides a way to connect multiple types of programs to local and garden foods
- Connects programs to growing food at home and in the community
- Encourages food education to continue during winter months

ILLINOIS HARVEST OF THE MONTH

Celebrate a new fruit or vegetable every month.
Savor the flavor of fresh and local food grown by farmers near you!

HarvestIllinois.org

SEASON	FOODS
AUTUMN	Apples, Pumpkins, Potatoes, Brussel Sprouts, Kale, Cabbage, Plums, Hard Squash
WINTER	Beets, Dairy, Honey, Grains, Carrots
SPRING	Spinach, Peas, Radishes, Rhubarb, Asparagus
SUMMER	Cucumbers, Melons, Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Berries, Summer Squash, Lettuce, Bell Peppers

If these items aren't a good fit, check our website for more alternatives!

IL Farm to School Network
PO Box 3125, Oak Park, IL 60303
Office: 708.860.3909
<http://IllinoisFarmtoSchool.org>



HarvestIllinois.org

Harvest of the Month Program Types



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.



HARVEST AT HOME

A new Harvest of the Month Program for families at home is coming soon! By taking Harvest home we can create more exposures to healthy foods and deepen the education shared to include growing, cooking and preserving foods at home!



NON-PARTICIPANTS

What is Harvest of the Month and why should I sign up? Check out this page for a sneak peek at some of the resources we offer in addition to one-on-one assistance for all things farm to school.

Harvest of the Month

Connect what's on the tray to:

- Cafeteria celebrations
- Curricula
- Clubs, FFA, culinary arts, garden programs
- Families at home via newsletters, recipe of the month, fun facts, and more
- Community via your local grocery store produce section w/ Harvest of the Month features and home recipes
- Education partners via IL EXT, local health departments, community colleges and non-profit hospitals
- Your local Farmers Market



ILLINOIS HARVEST OF THE MONTH

Watch for a new featured fruit or vegetable every month.
Savor the flavor of fresh and local food grown by farmers near you!

HarvestIllinois.org

SEPTEMBER

Bell Peppers



OCTOBER

Potatoes



NOVEMBER

Cabbage



DECEMBER

Carrots



JANUARY

Apples



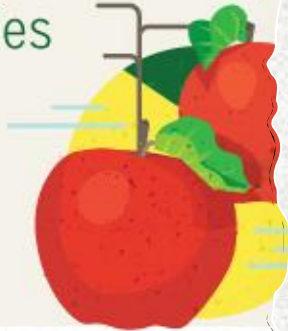
FEBRUARY

Beets



MARCH

Apples



APRIL

Lettuces



MAY

Spinach



JUNE

Summer Squash



JULY

Cucumbers



AUGUST

Sweet Corn



IL Farms to School Network
903 East 225, East Moline, IL 61930
Phone: 304.050.9600
<http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org>



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A look at the website..

<https://harvestillinois.org/>




The Illinois Pumpkin Roast!

Our next Illinois food day celebration will focus on pumpkins.

The new event will provide training and resources to bake and convert whole, roasted pie pumpkins into recipes, ingredients and celebrations.

We are looking for K-12 schools to join as host training sites.

Planning begins in summer of 2025. Event training in June of 2026.



Help us name the next
Illinois Farm to School Event!

- Pie in the Sky Illinois
 - The Big Orange Roast
 - Great Gourds! Illinois
 - Butcher, Baker, Pie Maker
 - Celebrate Pumpkin Land
 - Pumpkin Land Celebration
 - The Great Pumpkin Roast
 - Pumpkin Bash
-

Consider:

- This is a roasting event and training opportunity
- Tied to Harvest of the Month and local food procurement
- Illinois is the #1 pumpkin producer in the US!



SCHOOL GARDEN RESOURCES

Garden Toolkit:

<https://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/toolkit/school-garden-resources/>

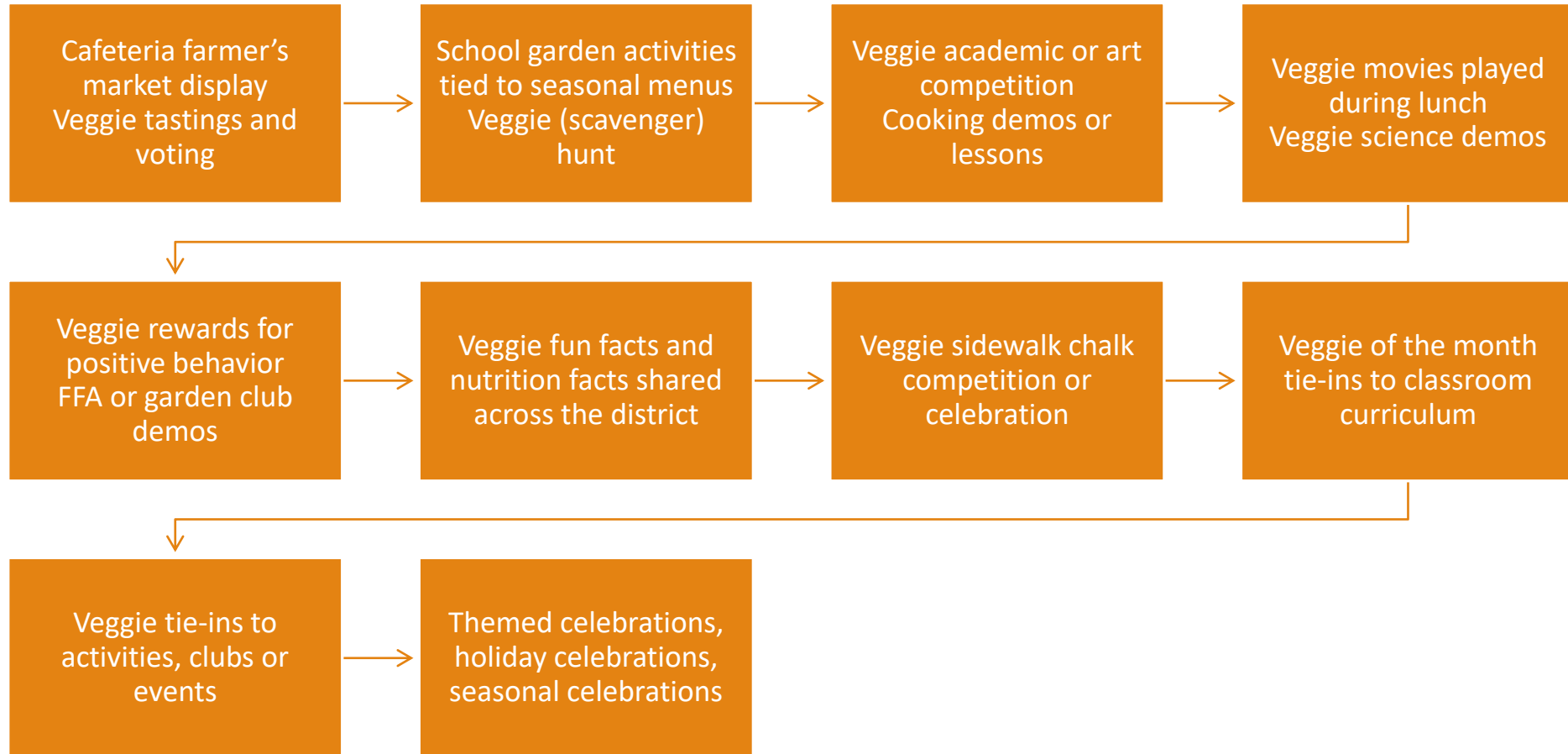




Let's market that vegetable!

Put food in bellies and not the garbage can.

Create activities to promote healthy foods



Consider the cultures of your students

“Culturally appropriate” food items are those foods that are most commonly found within a particular culture.

When you add culturally appropriate food items and recipes to your lunch menus you are creating a direct connection to your students.

When you nurture that connection, you increase interest and encourage participation and consumption.

You also create a space for inclusion of community and family traditions.



Promote your efforts across your school community

- Website
- Newsletters/Announcements
- Social media
- Local media coverage- radio, local cable, local news
- Menus
- Posters and signs- not just in school, extend into the community
- Home recipes
- Community participation
- Promotional materials

River Trails SD 26 features Harvest of the Month activities and celebrations on their webpage and on social media monthly.





Creating a Fifth Season Program

- Develop a harvest processing day plan for late summer sharing your intent and planning with primary staff and admin.
- Bid out a list of desirable processing ingredients in May/June to local farms with wholesale capabilities for Grade B late season offerings.
- Convert lower cost, locally grown, grade B veggies and fruits into easily usable ingredients for winter menus.
- Can you add your site's garden harvest to your winter ingredients?
- Work with educators to plan education and activities around harvest ingredients and food preservation in winter months.



Spring Lake CCSD 606 garden harvest
prep day





Many schools hold a “freezing day” in July, August or September to “put up” or preserve local produce at the peak of harvest utilizing a skeletal staff.

Other schools bring in additional labor or staff for a workday(s) once school is back in session. Some schools have added these activities into the regular workday to avoid incurring additional labor costs.

Schools utilizing outside volunteers in the kitchens and the cafeteria engage those same volunteers in preserving the harvest activities, supervised by trained staff.

In each case the method utilized to extend the produce season was fitted to the staff and the schedule of the individual schools. This allows for the development of the best practices for each kitchen facility involved.



Utilize Resources Already Available

- Curriculum and recipes are available to add to your food preservation activities and education.
- Partners can be found in your community: IL Ext educators, local chefs and local college professionals and culinary instructors.
- Connect to your county sanitarian to look for more partners and educators you can draw from.
- Need to teach knife skills to your staff? Include it in your search to locate the best partners for your program.
- Need funding to move forward? Innovation Spark Awards fund infrastructure development to move local, fresh foods to the lunch tray.



The image is a screenshot of the Illinois Harvest of the Month website. At the top, there is a header with three circular icons containing illustrations of a corn cob, a radish, and a bell pepper. To the right of these icons is the text "ILLINOIS HARVEST OF THE MONTH" in a stylized font, with "ILLINOIS" in orange and "HARVEST OF THE MONTH" in green. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, REGISTERED SITES, FARMERS, DISTRIBUTORS, RECIPES, LOGOS, PARTNERS, UPDATE US, and CONTACT. The date "JULY 19, 2017" is displayed below the navigation menu. The main content area is enclosed in a dashed orange border and features the title "PETER PIPER'S PICKLED PEPPERS AND FRIENDS" in bold. Below the title is the text "Adapted from marthastewart.com". A photograph of several colorful bell peppers (yellow, red, and purple) is centered in the content area. Below the photo is the text: "JUST LIKE IN THE MOTHER GOOSE RHYME, WE'VE PICKED A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS. WHAT THE RHYME FAILED TO NOTE WAS JUST HOW DELICIOUS THESE PICKLED PEPPERS ARE!". Below that is the text: "THIS IS A SPRING, SUMMER, AND AUTUMN SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE RECIPE FOR BELL PEPPERS AND RADISH.". At the bottom of the content area is the text: "COOKING AND PREP LEVEL: BASIC."



Costing Out Ingredients

- Labor rate per hour
- Labor hours required
- Supervision cost
- Unprocessed to Processed Yields
- Produce raw cost per pound
- Delivery charges
- Packaging



Viroqua Public Schools roasted ratatouille ready for the freezer.



Locate Funding

- Supporting Farm to School with non-profit hospital community benefit dollars
 - <http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/Hospital%20Community%20Benefit%20Dollars.pdf>
- Mighty Mini Video: Innovative Funding for Farm to School
 - <http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/video-training-series/innovative-funding-farm-school/>
- Illinois Farm to School Network Funding Toolkit
 - <http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/toolkit/funding/>
- Donations and grants from local businesses and companies
 - <https://efficientgov.com/blog/2017/11/10/5-big-box-store-community-grant-opportunities/>
- Apply for Grants-
 - <http://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/toolkit/funding/>



ILLINOIS
FARM TO SCHOOL
NETWORK



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. The new cycle is currently on hold via Executive Order. Please check back on the website to learn more.





Let's Chat

- Who in the room is buying local foods for their program?
- Who in the room is experiencing problems or roadblocks?
- Who in the room feels they are successful in their local procurement?
- Who in the room is utilizing farm to school programming?
- Can you share what you are doing? Is your program active:
 - In the cafeteria
 - The classroom
 - Connected to another program like gardens, community groups, farmers market or others?





Thank you for listening!

Need help?

farmtoschool@sevengenerationsahead.org