



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Program

July 2020

## Introduction

Every child and family deserves access to fresh local food and hands-on gardening, cooking, nutrition, and agricultural education. However, amid the pandemic and other challenges, many more people are experiencing food insecurity due to unemployment and systemic food system inequities. The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program is committed to advancing and evolving to provide equitable and just programming, resources, funding allocation, and technical assistance.

## Farm to School Discussions

### **Nutrition Education: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation**

**July 20, 2020 at 12:30 PM CST**

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and nutrition education programs. The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance will share about the Cooking Matters program curriculum and Apple Seeds Inc. will share how they are creating virtual content for nutrition education, virtual field trips, and cooking courses.



[Register Here](#)

### **Farm to School 101 Training: Dawson Education Service Cooperative**

**July 21, 2020 8:30-3:30 PM CST - Zoom**

Are you a teacher in Arkansas who is interested in incorporating farm to school programming at your school? Learn how to build a sustainable program by developing your team and assessing and setting goals. Classroom, garden, and kitchen infrastructure will be discussed as well as ways to apply for grants and/or funding to meet the farm to school program goals. Finally, learn which agencies and organizations in Arkansas provide hands-on gardening, nutrition, and cooking lessons and learn how to integrate the concepts into your school's standards and curriculum.

[Register Here](#)

## Resources and Grants

### **Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest**

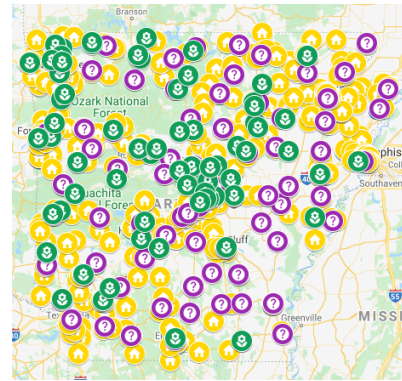
School entries are now being accepted for the seventh annual Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be any public and private: K-12 school, early care facility, and alternative learning environment. Applicants must have had a school garden open during the 2019-2020 school year, or be a school planning to start a garden in the 2020-2021 school year.



[Apply Here](#)

### **Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map**

The Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map shows where Arkansas Grown food is available all over the state, including at schools and organizations offering free meals while schools are closed. We continue to update, verify, and add to the Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map. Two partnerships continue to be available.



- [UpliftArkansas.com](https://UpliftArkansas.com) - This website provides a resource hub for Arkansans to reach farmers who provide fresh food direct to consumers, farm-to-table restaurants, and local grocery stores through online sales, farmers markets, and on-farm sales.
- No Kid Hungry - Families can text the word "FOOD" (or "COMIDA") to 877877 to find their nearest sites. This new partnership with No Kid Hungry ensures that all of the Arkansas School Meal data is available using the texting hotline.

[View the Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map](#)

### **Local Food in COVID-19 Response and Recovery, National Farm to School Network**

This fact sheet outlines some of the promising practices that school nutrition providers, early care and education centers, community partners, and state agencies have seen during COVID-19 while supporting local farmers and producers in accessing markets, and helping families in accessing healthy food.



**NATIONAL  
FARM to SCHOOL  
NETWORK**

[View Resource](#)

## News

### [Arkansas Department of Agriculture joins partnership to support Full Circle FarmCorps Members](#)

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture recently partnered with the St. Joseph Center

of Arkansas to grow the center's national service program, Full Circle FarmCorps. Full Circle FarmCorps is a state AmeriCorps program that promotes food security and strengthens communities through farming, teaching, and outreach. This summer 20 AmeriCorps members will serve 675 hours each at school and community gardens throughout Pulaski County.

### [USDA Gives Out \\$12.1 Million in Largest-Ever Farm to School Grant Awards](#)

\$12.1 million was awarded in Farm to School Grants on June 29, 2020 – the most awarded since the grant program's inception – to 159 grantees – the most projects funded to date. These awards, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), will help bring fresh, local foods into schools and foster economic opportunity for America's farmers over the next school year.

### [USDA Extends Three Nationwide Waivers](#)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced on June 25, 2020 a range of nationwide flexibilities to ensure America's children receive the nutritious food they need throughout the upcoming school year. The extended waivers provide flexibilities on: meal pattern, meal service setting, and parent/guardian pick-up. These waivers give states, schools, and childcare providers time to plan for how they will serve children in the fall, including allowing for new and innovative feeding options as the nation recovers from the coronavirus. The nationwide waivers will remain in effect through June 30, 2021 for the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

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