



Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



July 2021

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program is committed to providing equitable and just programming, resources, funding, and technical assistance to schools, farmers, and partners in the local food system.

USDA Awards Three Farm to School Grants to Arkansas Organizations



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded three Arkansas organizations Farm to School Grants on July 15. USDA is investing \$12 million in Farm to School Grants this year, announcing awards to [176 grantees](#), the most projects funded since the program began in 2013.

Grantees include the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Fayetteville School District #1, and Healthy Flavors Arkansas LLC.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture will host the first-ever Arkansas Farm to School Institute, to focus on bringing more locally grown foods into Arkansas school cafeterias, classrooms, and communities.

Fayetteville Public Schools Seed to Student (S2S) will improve student access to local food and agricultural education by enhancing existing farm to school programming and expanding the program to provide high quality, equitable, and consistent child nutrition education and experiential garden-based learning at all 17 schools in the District.

Healthy Flavors Arkansas will develop a scale focused, closed-loop resourced, centrally administered farm to school program serving multiple public school districts in the Central Arkansas region. The organization aims to minimize multiple challenges faced on the farm and in schools by initially growing and selling a single crop, peas, that can be harvested, packaged, stored, and used in districts throughout the school year at affordable price points.

We're Hiring - State School Garden Manager



We are hiring a State School Garden Manager! The State School Garden Manager will provide technical assistance to schools, develop farm to school resources, host webinars and trainings, and lead the school garden contest and grant program.

This is a part-time grant funded position available for one year.

[Apply Here](#)

Webinars and Trainings

Summer Professional Development Opportunities

FARM TO SCHOOL TEACHER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUMMER, 2021



July, 2021

The Farm to School team is offering farm to school professional development opportunities this summer to public school teachers.



Educators will receive professional development credit from the Arkansas Department of Education for attending. Multiple dates and times will be offered for each session.

[View Schedule and Register Here](#)

Resources

Planting the School Garden

The Farm to School team at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture is excited to share a new school garden resource!

The Planting a School Garden handout includes information about different ways to begin growing food at your school, recommends what to plant, and how to align the garden with your school's goals.

[View Resource](#)



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Planting the School Garden

School gardens are a fantastic educational tool and provide students with the opportunity to eat healthy foods, connect to nature, and learn about nutrition. School gardens also provide an avenue for students to engage in hands-on learning through gardening and farming. Once you've gathered your **garden committee**, **acquired funding and materials**, and **planned the layout and structure** of the garden, it is time to choose your plants and start growing!



For additional help and support in school garden development, contact Hanna Davis, State School Garden Manager at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov, (501) 295-8856.

Consider the Goals of your Garden

Although it can seem difficult to decide what to grow in your school garden, it is helpful to first consider the **goals of your garden**, and which plants align with those goals. For example, if you started your garden in order to promote healthy eating habits, grow a variety of fruits and vegetables that can be harvested while school is in session. Radishes are one of the quickest growing vegetables and a fun one for students to taste. Watch out, they can be spicy!

Some schools want to grow more than just fruits and vegetables. If you want to teach students about plant biology, fill your garden with native plants for pollinators. Students can document the plant growth and observe local bees, butterflies, and other animals in real time. You could even create a sensory garden to teach about the five senses. Preparing your garden with intentional connections to the classroom is a great way to enrich student learning!

Consider the Garden Space and Maintenance Abilities

When planting, it is important to consider the physical attributes of your garden in order to plan what to grow. For instance, are you growing in containers or in-ground? Do you have a lot of room, or is your space limited? In addition to space considerations, be realistic about the time your team is willing to devote, as well as the skill level of those involved.



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New Website!

A new Arkansas Farm to School website will be coming soon!

The website will be full of information about school gardens and farm to school integrations into the classroom, cafeteria, and community.

It will also include an interactive school garden and local procurement map.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities



Little Seeds Pollinator Pals Grant

Deadline: July 30, 2021

Funding: \$500

The Little Seeds Pollinator Pals Grant presented by Little Seeds and KidsGardening is designed to support youth garden programs interested in preserving and creating pollinator habitats to help rebuild declining pollinator populations. In 2021, eighteen programs will be awarded

a check for \$500 to support the development of new and expansion of existing pollinator gardens in communities across the United States. [Apply here.](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)





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