

CAPITOL FACTS & FIGURES

● ● ● EDUCATION

Farm-to-School Programs

The Farm-to-School Initiative connects schools with area farms to serve healthy meals using locally produced foods.

The goals of these programs are:

- To meet the diverse needs of school nutrition programs in an efficient manner;
- To support farmers and thereby strengthen local food systems; and
- To provide support for health and nutrition education.¹

Nationally, farm-to-school programs have increased from fewer than 10 in 1997 to more than 2,000 in 33 states in 2008. The legislation takes several forms:

- **Project implementation:** Fourteen states have established a statewide farm-to-school program and provide support to local government agencies;
- **Task force/council:** Six states and the District of Columbia have established a task force or council to implement and assess farm-to-school programs;
- **Pilot program implementation:** Three states have established a temporary farm-to-school pilot program in school districts;
- **Budget appropriation:** Ten states have appropriated funding for farm-to-school programs;
- **Grant allocation:** Seven states and the District of Columbia have authorized grants for implementation of farm-to-school programs;
- **Additional reimbursements:** California and the District of Columbia allow schools to receive additional reimbursement for serving local food in meals;
- **Local preference:** Twelve states encourage state organizations, agencies and schools to use local produce by allowing preferences for state-produced agricultural products in their bidding procedures;
- **Promotional events:** Eight states have established a statewide promotional program for providing local agricultural products to children;
- **Database or directory:** Seven states have established websites or a list of participating schools and producers to facilitate local procurement;
- **Wellness or food security policies:** Four states and the District of Columbia encourage farm-to-school efforts as part of a broader wellness or food security policy;
- **Working groups:** Two states have established working groups or directed state agencies to collect data and make recommendations; and



- **Resolutions:** Seven states have adopted resolutions encouraging or recommending farm-to-school programs or policies across the state.³
- Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture established a Farm-to-School Team in 2009 to support local and regional food systems by helping to link schools and local food producers.

Research concludes farm-to-school programs can be effective.

- Several studies have shown children will eat more fruits and vegetables when they have easy access to a variety of high-quality fresh items, often on a salad bar where they have many different choices.
- Research and the experience of educators also have established that children are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables, especially unfamiliar items, if they participate in fun educational activities featuring these foods.
- Farm-to-school programs contribute to children's health by helping them develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.⁴



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REFERENCES

¹United States Department of Agriculture. *Farm-to-school*. Accessed at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/about.htm> on January 3, 2011.

²Joshi, Anupama and Andrea Azuma. *Bearing fruit: Farm-to-school program evaluation resources and recommendations*. Center for Food and Justice; Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College. Accessed at <http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/BF%20full%20report.pdf> on January 3, 2011.

³State Farm-to-school Legislation. (2010) Accessed at http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_177.pdf on January 3, 2011.

⁴Ralston, Katherine. *A healthy school meal environment: Food assistance research brief*. United States Department of Agriculture. (2003) Accessed at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr34/fanrr34-5/fanrr34-5.pdf> on January 3, 2011.

States With Farm-to-School Legislation

States	Project Implementation	Task Force or Council	Pilot Program Implementation	Budget Appropriation	Grant Allocation	Additional Reimbursements	Local Preference	Promotional Events	Database or Directory	Wellness or Food Security Policy	Working Group	Resolutions	Other Support*
Alabama													
Alaska	X		X			X							
Arizona													
Arkansas													
California		X		X	X				X				
Colorado		X	X			X							
Connecticut	X		X				X						
Delaware							X				X		
District of Columbia		X		X	X				X				
Florida	X												
Georgia						X							
Hawaii										X	X		
Idaho													
Illinois	X		X	X		X		X				X	
Indiana													
Iowa	X	X	X										
Kansas													
Kentucky						X	X						
Louisiana													
Maine										X			
Maryland	X					X	X						
Massachusetts						X							
Michigan	X					X		X				X	
Minnesota													
Mississippi													
Missouri													
Montana						X						X	
Nebraska													
Nevada													
New Hampshire		X											
New Jersey							X						
New Mexico			X								X		
New York	X					X	X						
North Carolina	X		X			X	X	X			X		
North Dakota													
Ohio			X	X									
Oklahoma	X		X					X	X				
Oregon	X		X										
Pennsylvania	X			X				X			X		
Rhode Island												X	
South Carolina													
South Dakota													
Tennessee									X				
Texas		X						X					
Utah													
Vermont			X	X							X	X	
Virginia	X	X					X	X					
Washington	X		X	X		X							
West Virginia													
Wisconsin		X											
Wyoming													

*May include provisions related to broader economic policy, goal setting, school construction, food processing or distribution infrastructure, income tax credit incentives or another topic not covered above.

Source: www.farmtoschool.org