

Steps to Get Growing! Launch Your Farm to School Program



1. Build Your Farm to School Team

Building a team is a critical first step and is essential to the long-term success of your program. It's an opportunity to create allies, bring in knowledge and expertise, and recruit some boots on the ground for planning and implementing your program. Consider including: administration, teachers, parents, facilities staff, community members, Extension Agents, etc.

2. Establish Vision and Goals

Assess where you currently are so you know where to start. What do you want to achieve with your farm to school program? Establishing short and long-term goals will help keep your program on track.

3. Design Your Program

For program success and sustainability consider including all three farm to school "core elements" in your program—local food procurement, school gardens, and education:

PROCUREMENT: Before you start purchasing local foods or determine which local foods you are already purchasing, you must determine what foods are grown, harvested, raised, caught, and processed in the region and when those foods are available.

When local foods are being procured using federal meal program funds, those purchases must be done in accordance with regulations.

SCHOOL GARDENING: Consider how you want the gardens to be used; what types and how much food you hope to produce; where to locate the gardens; how to design the gardens; what tools and materials you'll need; how much funding and staff support is needed; and what you'll do with the harvest.

EDUCATION & CURRICULUM INTEGRATION: What kinds of food, agriculture, and nutrition-related educational activities you will engage students in? How can you connect new foods in the cafeteria with educational opportunities?

Learn More

WEB

www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool

FACEBOOK

@MontanaFarmToSchool

INSTAGRAM

@MTFarmToSchool

CONTACT

Aubree Roth, Montana
Farm to School Coordinator

aubree.roth@montana.edu

(406) 994-5996

324 Reid Hall
PO Box 173370
Montana State University
Bozeman MT 59717-3370

Montana Farm to School is a collaboration between Montana Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, Montana State University, and other partners. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



4. Consider Food Safety

Maintaining food safety is essential to every school meal program. Gardening and local purchasing may present some new food safety questions and require new protocols.

5. Promoting Your Program

Key to getting buy-in and support for your farm to school program is clearly communicating your goals, achievements, and needs.

6. Evaluating Your Efforts

Evaluation findings can help you learn what works, improve your program, and demonstrate your success to funders, parents, administrators, and others.

7. Sustaining Your Program

The sustainability of your program should be an important consideration throughout your planning process. As your program expands, a solid plan for growing and maintaining resources, donations, and policy support will ensure that your program becomes part of the fabric of your district.

Adapted from: USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/census#/toolkit>

Updated June 2021

