



INDIANA GROWN FOR SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

Indiana's Statewide Farm to School Network

OUR TEAM IS GROWING!

The Indiana Department of Health is hiring a two-year full-time Farm to School value chain professional. This individual will be dedicated to creating and supporting market connections between producers and schools across Indiana.

This position will also join the Indiana Value Chain Network to learn alongside Indiana's other VCPs and provide them with specialized support and technical assistance around Farm to School. Interested candidates can apply through [LinkedIn](#) OR submit resumes directly to Brianna Goode (BGoode@health.in.gov), IDOH farm to school coordinator.

GET INVOLVED!

2023 USDA FARM TO SCHOOL CENSUS

October also marked the kickoff of the USDA Farm to School Census. The Census is conducted periodically to assess the state of farm to school activities across the U.S. The Census surveys all school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program and is the only national survey that examines local food purchasing, school gardens, and agricultural education efforts in schools.

The USDA needs your help to make the 2023 Census a success! For the first time, Census surveys will be “sharable.” SFAs can leverage the help of their partners in gathering accurate data on their district or schools’ farm to school activities. USDA encourages SFAs to collaborate with partners they engage with in school gardens, farm field trips, curriculum development, and more to share their comprehensive farm to school story through the Census. You can help USDA build the most accurate picture possible of the state of farm to school by spreading the word to complete the Census. See our [2023 Farm to School Census Resources page](#) for easy-to-use resources.

[CENSUS RESOURCES](#)

USDA EXPANDS ACCESS TO SCHOOL BREAKFAST & LUNCH FOR MORE STUDENTS

The USDA recently announced that it is giving an estimated 3,000 more school districts in high-need areas the option to serve breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost, by expanding the availability of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP is a simplified meal service option that allows schools to provide meals at no cost to all students without requiring families to apply for free and reduced-price meals. Before the Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs- CEP Increasing Options for Schools was published, at least 40% of students had to live in households participating in specific income-based federal assistance programs for a school, group of schools, or school district to be eligible for CEP. The new final rule lowers that threshold from 40% to 25%. Secretary Tom Vilsack stated, “Increasing access to free, healthy school breakfast and lunch will decrease childhood hunger, improve child health and student readiness, and put our nation on the path to better nutrition and wellness.”

[READ PRESS RELEASE](#)

[ACCESS CEP RESOURCE CENTER](#)



RESOURCES AND EVENTS



INDIANA GROWN FOR SCHOOLS NETWORK HARVEST OF THE MONTH DATABASE

Indiana Harvest of the Month celebrates a different in-season, locally-grown food item every month! Harvest of the Month is a great way to buy, grow, and serve more local food while teaching kids about healthy eating, nutrition, and agriculture!

The Indiana Harvest of the Month database provides you with access to classroom and cafeteria activities, lesson plans, videos highlighting Indiana producers, recipes, awesome promotional material, and more! All classroom lessons and activities have been aligned with Indiana Academic Standards for K-5 classrooms.

[ACCESS THE RESOURCES HERE](#)



CHECK OUT OUR NEW RESOURCES!

We love local food!
We're currently serving Indiana
PUMPKINS
in the cafeteria. *Did you know...?*

- Pumpkins are grown on every continent except Antarctica.
- 80% of the U.S. pumpkin crop is available during October.
- Indiana consistently ranks as one of the top five pumpkin-producing states in the nation.

For more information, visit ingrown4schools.com
f @INGrown4Schools #INGrown4Schools

ASPHN FARM TO ECE WEBINAR SERIES

NOV. 14 & DEC. 12, 2 P.M. EST

Nov. 14: Making Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Changes Sustainable: Farm to ECE and CDC's Spectrum of Opportunity

Dec. 12: Creating Culturally Centered Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs: 7 Strategies for Creating Culturally-Centered Nature Programs

[REGISTER HERE](#)

FOODCORPS LESSON PLANS

As you continue to expand your farm to school program, think about using one of [FoodCorps](#) interactive and educational lesson plans for your activities! FoodCorps has created hands-on experiential activities to engage kids in learning and

developing skills in gardening, cooking, and preparing healthy foods. The 96 [lesson plans](#) are organized by grade, season, and theme. There are many exciting themes, including the Connecting Food, Culture, and Community, Exploring the Ecology of Food, and Growing and Accessing Healthy Food.



[LEARN MORE](#)

STRENGTHENING EQUITY & INCLUSION IN GARDEN EDUCATION

The School Garden Support Organization Network has compiled resources that can help farm to school programs intertwine equity, inclusion, diversity, and justice into all aspects of their garden programming. Within the resource compilation, you can find resources on specific topic areas, such as Embedding Equity and Inclusion into Organizational Leadership and Strengthening Diversity Through an Equitable and Inclusive Organizational Culture and Structure.



[ACCESS RESOURCES HERE](#)

EAT WHAT YOU GROW TOOLKIT AND SAFETY MANUAL

Chicago Public Schools' Garden Team and the Office of Student Health and Wellness created two resources for planning, funding, implementing, and sourcing food from school gardens in a way that supports social emotional learning, nutrition education, and stress reduction for their students. The [School Garden Toolkit](#) covers suggested tools, design tips, and maintenance considerations for school gardens. The [Food Safety Manual](#) reviews how to safely cultivate, water, harvest, store, and consume produce grown at schools.

GRANTS & FUNDING

2023 USDA FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT

The USDA Farm to School Program is excited to announce the official release of the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA). USDA will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the grant program this fiscal year. Each grant will help implement farm to school programming that increases access to local food in eligible schools, connects children with agriculture for better health, and inspires youth to consider careers in agriculture.

[LEARN MORE](#)



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION PROCESS OPENS FOR USDA FARM LOAN BORROWERS WHO HAVE FACED DISCRIMINATION

Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs prior to January 1, 2021. Distribution of these funds is one step in the long march towards justice and an inclusive, equitable USDA. To be eligible, you must have experienced discrimination by USDA in USDA farm lending. Producers may also be eligible if they have currently assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was the subject of USDA discrimination that occurred prior to January 1, 2021. Importantly, individuals who have personally obtained money or loan forgiveness in a prior case addressing discrimination in USDA farm loan programs are still eligible to participate in this program. To support producers throughout the application process, USDA is ensuring that organizations with extensive experience conducting outreach to farm organizations are able to support individuals who may be eligible for the program.

[LEARN MORE](#)

YOUTH GARDEN GRANT DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15

Since 1982, the Youth Garden Grant has supported school and youth educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life for students and their communities. In 2024, fifty programs will receive award packages consisting of a cash prize and a variety of gardening tools and supplies.

[APPLY HERE](#)



USDA COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM (CFP)

The Community Food Projects program is intended to bring together stakeholders from distinct parts of the food system and to foster understanding of national food security trends and how they might improve local food systems. Nutrition security is defined as having consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being. Communities that are partially or fully located in Opportunity Zones are particularly encouraged to apply. The grant program provides \$5 million per year in competitive grant funding, with a dollar for dollar required match of non-federal funds. Implementation and planning grants are funded, with a **floor of \$25,000 and a ceiling of \$400,000 over a four-year period.**

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)



GOOD FOOD FUNDING GUIDE

New Ventures Advisors LLC has updated their Good Food Funding Guide which lists sources of grants, loans, and equity for businesses and programs promoting sustainable food, agriculture, and local economies. It is arranged alphabetically into four sections: Government Grants, Private Grants, Loans, and Equity.

[ACCESS RESOURCES HERE](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

FARM TO SCHOOL VALUE CHAIN PROFESSIONAL



The Indiana Department of Health is hiring a two-year full-time Farm to School Value Chain Professional. This individual will serve as a Value Chain Professional (VCP) dedicated to creating and supporting market connections between producers and schools across the state of Indiana. The Farm to School VCP will be responsible for collaborating with internal and external partners to envision a long-term plan for building statewide capacity for local procurement within school markets. This position will also join the Indiana Value Chain Network to learn alongside Indiana's other VCPs and provide them with specialized support and technical assistance around Farm to School.

[LEARN MORE & APPLY HERE](#)

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION COORDINATOR



The Indiana Department of Health is hiring an Early Care and Education Coordinator within the Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity. The Early Care and Education (ECE) Coordinator within the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (DNPA) is responsible for the execution of appropriate strategies to decrease the burden of early childhood obesity, while also focusing on embedding wellness initiatives into the early care and education (ECE) settings in Indiana. The ECE Coordinator will collaborate with other statewide and local stakeholders who work with ECE providers to promote access to healthy foods and physical activity as disease prevention by utilizing evidence and practice-based guidelines, strategies, and tools.

[LEARN MORE & APPLY HERE](#)

STAY IN TOUCH!



#INGROWN4SCHOOLS

CONTACT INFORMATION

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WEBSITE

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ON ALL SOCIAL MEDIA:

[@ingrown4schools](https://www.instagram.com/ingrown4schools)