

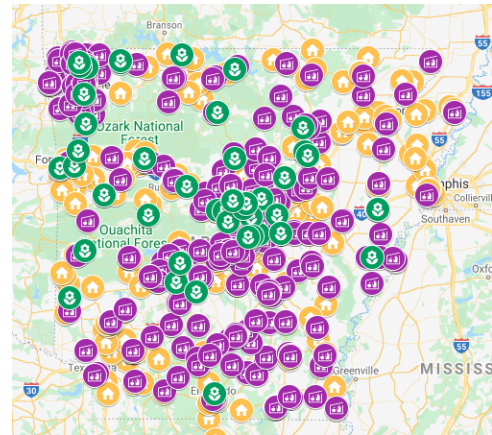


Farm to School and Early Childhood Program

April 2020

Farm to School and COVID-19

With the spread of COVID-19, farm to school systems have felt major impacts. Helping children across Arkansas access school meals in alternative ways is a primary focus. We have seen creative and innovative ideas blossom from Arkansas child nutrition directors, kitchen staff, and volunteers. In addition, food pantries, community organizations, farmers, and restaurants are stepping up to provide access to food. We want to send a huge thank you for their hard work!



To improve access to food across the state, we have developed an [Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map](#). The map features school meals, food pantries and community meals, and local food. This map is possible because of countless partnerships with agencies, nonprofits, farmers, and dedicated individuals, and we couldn't be more thankful for collaboration! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

If you have information to add to the map, click the link below to fill out the survey.

[Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Survey](#)



Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversations

Network conversations are a time to share successes in farm to school, problem solve farm to school barriers, and provide peer to peer mentorship. The topics vary, but are centered around school gardens, education, local procurement, and farmer support. Network Conversations are held digitally on Zoom.

- **March: Summer Garden Successes March 31, 2020 at 4:00 PM**

Forest Park Elementary, Carolyn Lewis Elementary, Marshall Elementary, and FoodCorps Arkansas will each share one of their summer garden successes that will highlight partnerships with the community. [Register here.](#)

- **April: Food Safety in the School Garden April 27, 2020 at 3:30 PM**

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Produce Safety team will discuss produce safety as it relates to worker health, soil, wildlife, water, and post-

harvest handling. [Register here.](#)

VISTA AmeriCorps Position

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is seeking to fill a VISTA position to serve as the Farm to School Innovation Lead! The Farm to School Innovation Lead will conduct research on farm to school programs in the United States and pilot an innovative farm to school project at a child learning facility such as a school, early childcare facility, or an alternative learning facility in Arkansas. [Apply here.](#)



Grants

American Farmland Trust (ATL) - Farmer Relief Funds

AFT's Farmer Relief Fund will award farmers with cash grants of up to \$1,000 each to help them weather the current storm of market disruptions caused by the coronavirus crisis. [Learn more here.](#)

No Kid Hungry Grants Available to Support Coronavirus Response

No Kid Hungry is offering emergency grants to support local school districts and nonprofit organizations in their efforts to ensure kids get the nutritious food they need. [Learn more here.](#)

Arkansas Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grants

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the 2020 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. These grants are funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of the Arkansas specialty crop industry. Specialty crops are defined by USDA as fruits, vegetables, horticulture, floriculture, and tree nuts. [Learn more here.](#)



<https://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/farm-to-school>



ARKANSAS Farm to School



Farm to School and Early Childhood Program

May 2020

Farm to School and COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted many of us around the state but farm to school continues on. Schools have officially closed for the rest of the school year, teachers are turning to digital instruction to support student learning, and farmers are shifting to online markets to sell their locally grown products. Teachers are sharing photos of their school garden plants growing, providing updates from the school chickens, and some are sending home gardening kits for their students and families to use. Beyond that, school meals continue to be served! The Arkansas Department of Education shared that 90% of Arkansas school districts are still serving meals versus 30% from around the nation! Thank you to the child nutrition directors, cafeteria staff, volunteers, bus drivers, and many more who make sure children in Arkansas have access to food.

Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map

We continue to update, verify, and add to the Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map. Two partnerships have developed to strengthen the impact of the map and spread awareness: Uplift Arkansas and No Kid Hungry.

Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map

Arkansas Farmers Receive Vital Support With Community Website UpliftArkansas.com

UpliftArkansas.com is a statewide, one-stop resource that provides a comprehensive, reliable list of information on local businesses, restaurants, services and other essential information for Arkansans during this pandemic. This new website update will provide 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. Local farmers and farmers market managers can upload real-time information and control their listings on the website as they adapt their operations to the COVID-19 situation. With this partnership, Arkansans can access the Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map resource on UpliftArkansas.com and find Arkansas Grown food available in their areas, as well as schools and organizations that are offering free meals while schools are closed.





No Kid Hungry Text Line Helps Families Find Meals During Coronavirus School Closures

No Kid Hungry launched a texting hotline to provide information about emergency food distribution sites in communities where schools have been closed due to COVID19. 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.

Farm to School Discussions

School Garden COVID-19 Roundtable

May 7, 2020 at 12:30 PM CST

This call will be an informal space to share successes, challenges, and opportunities related to school gardens in Arkansas during the COVID-19 crisis.

[Register Here](#)

Virtual Field Trip at Heifer

May 14, 2020 at 1:30 PM CST

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Heifer Ranch will host a LIVE virtual field trip where we will tour their production gardens at Heifer Ranch and learn more about gardening best practices. Attendees will be able to ask questions and interact with Heifer Ranch throughout the LIVE event. In case of rain, the virtual event will be hosted on May 18, 2020 at 1:30 PM CST.

[Register Here](#)

May Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation: Summer Feeding Programs

May 28, 2020 at 2:00 CST

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and summer feeding programs. Child nutrition directors and staff will discuss the changes they have made to their meal programs amid COVID-19 and will talk about their plans to transition into the summer.

[Register Here](#)

VISTA AmeriCorps Position

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is hiring a Farm to School Innovation Lead VISTA position! The Farm to School Innovation Lead will conduct research on farm to school programs in the United States and pilot an innovative farm to school project at a child learning facility such as a school,

early childcare facility, or an alternative learning facility in Arkansas.



[Apply Here](#)

Grants and Resources

Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

School entries will be accepted beginning May 11 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.

[Learn more here.](#)

COVID-19 GENYOUth Emergency School Nutrition Funding

GENYOUth is providing grants of up to \$3,000 per school to supply much-needed resources for meal distribution and delivery efforts to get food to students during COVID-19. From soft-sided coolers, bags and containers for individual servings, to protective gear for food service sanitation and safety, this equipment will help ensure our children continue to receive the nutritious meals they need. [Learn more here.](#)

COVID-19 National Farm to School Network New Weekly COVID-19 & Farm to School Resource E-Newsletter

National Farm to School Network is launching a free weekly e-newsletter to share a roundup of new COVID-19 related resources and information with farm to school and farm to ECE stakeholders. [Sign up here](#) to have this information delivered in your inbox weekly.

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[Visit our website](#)





Farm to School and Early Childhood Program

June 2020

A Message about Food Justice

There is unequal access to healthy, local, and nutritious food in Arkansas, as illustrated in the [USDA Food Access Research Atlas](#) that lists over 60 areas in the state that have low access to food in both rural and urban areas. The Arkansas Farm to School and Early Childhood Program is dedicated to building a strong and accessible food system for all Arkansans.

Farm to school efforts blaze ahead to support the growth and development of school gardens and locally grown food. We will press on to provide opportunities for professional development, community building, and provide place-based support.

The school year has officially ended, but teachers, garden educators, staff, and administration have stepped up to support their school gardens through the hot and humid Arkansas summer. Furthermore, many incredible Child Nutrition Directors are continuing to provide school meals throughout the summer to their community. Thank you to everyone involved!

Farm to School Discussions

Farm to Early Childhood Education: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

June 23, 2020 at 2:30 PM CST

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and farm to Early Childhood Education (ECE). Farm to ECE provides children age 0-5 the opportunity to participate in a school garden, learn about gardening, cooking, and nutrition, and eat locally grown foods.



[Register Here](#)

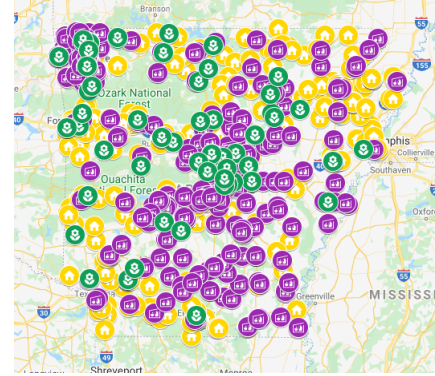
Resources

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 with information:

- 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 Arkansas School Meal data is available using the texting hotline.



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

Seamless Summer Option: Providing Multiple Meals at a Time During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working with State Child Nutrition agencies to provide safe and flexible meal service to children during the public health emergency. Under nationwide non-congregate feeding and meal times waivers, State agencies may allow Program operators to provide more than 1 day's worth of meals to eligible children via a single meal pick-up (by the child or the child's parent or guardian) or delivery. The USDA has made available a new publication which provides Program operators with technical assistance on the amounts of foods needed for multiple day distribution, use of "bulk" foods, best practices, and parent communication.



[View the USDA Resource](#)

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. [Learn more here.](#)

COVID-19 GENYOUth Emergency School Nutrition Funding

GENYOUth is providing grants of up to \$3,000 per school to supply much-needed resources for meal distribution and delivery efforts to get food to students during COVID-19. From soft-sided coolers, bags and containers for individual servings, to protective gear for food service sanitation and safety, this equipment will help ensure our children continue to receive the nutritious meals they need. [Learn more here.](#)

USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants

Program

Deadline: July 6

USDA has announced the availability of \$3 million for grants through its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. There is approximately \$1 million available for Planning Projects and \$2 million for Implementation Projects. The close date is July 6. [Learn more here.](#)

News

- [With Schools Closed, Their Gardens Take on a New Role: Cedarville Elementary and FoodCorps Arkansas](#)
 - [Arkansas Farmers' Market Updated Guidance](#)
 - [USDA Approves Program to Feed Kids in Arkansas: Pandemic EBT to Feed Children During COVID-19 National Emergency](#)
 - [USDA Extends Three Nationwide Waivers](#)
 - [National Farm to School Network: There Is No Food Justice Without Racial Justice](#)
-

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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

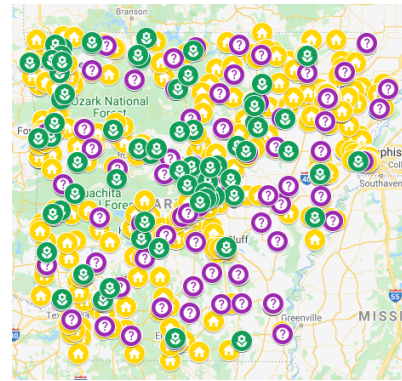
School entries are now being accepted for the seventh annual Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be any public and private: K-12 school, early care facility, and alternative learning 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 - 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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Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



August 2020

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.

Team Growth and Open Positions

We are excited to introduce Mark Nelson to the Farm to School team. Mark will serve as the Farm to School AmeriCorps VISTA Innovation Lead at the Department until July 2021 and will spearhead research, development, and implementation of trial initiatives to build the capacity of the Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program.



Our team will be growing again soon! **We are hiring a School Garden Manager.** The School Garden Manager will provide technical assistance to schools, develop farm to school resources, map school gardens around the state, 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

Grants and Funding: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversations

August 20, 2020 3:30 PM CST

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and grants and funding. Speakers will share about grant programs in Arkansas that support farm to school programming.



[Register Here](#)

Missed a previous network conversation?

[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

Resources and Grants

Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

Deadline: September 13, 2020

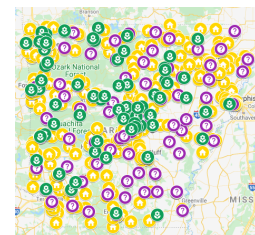
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[Apply Here](#)

Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map

The Arkansas COVID-19 Food Access Map lists information for school and summer meals, county resources like foodbanks, and local food access points such as farmers markets and on farm sales.



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

New Video Featuring Apple Seeds Inc. in Fayetteville

Apple Seeds Inc. is a non-profit organization that creates programs that educate young students about healthy food and increases their access to those foods. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Apple Seeds has been donating the majority of their food to local food pantries, schools, and community centers to help those who have found

themselves food insecure. As of July 2020, they have donated 2,038 pounds of food to the Northwest Arkansas area.



News

Small Farm to Schools Act Introduced in House

Rep. Antonio Delgado (NY-19) and Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05) introduced the Small Farm to School Act, bipartisan legislation that would create an eight state pilot program where local public schools would be reimbursed at a higher rate for sourcing school lunches from small farmers under the National School Lunch Program.

[Read more here.](#)

Green Schoolyard Americas COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Resources and Guidance

Schools across the United States are facing an uphill battle as they figure out how to navigate COVID-19 physical distancing requirements that will allow students to return to campus. Repurposing outdoor spaces is a cost-effective way to reduce the burden on indoor classrooms while providing fresh air, hands-on learning opportunities, and the health benefits associated with increased access to nature. This webpage shares information for the new National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative. [Learn more.](#)

Growing Healthy Communities in School Gardens During COVID-19

With schools closed and orders to shelter in place, COVID-19 shuttered gardens and altered meal service in cafeterias—a critical safety net for those who depend on school meals for nourishment. School nutrition professionals quickly launched emergency meal distribution programs to connect kids and families with their next meal. Naturally as part of this heroic effort, school gardens and food educators took on a new essential role: helping feed the community. [Read more here.](#)

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ARKANSAS Farm to School



Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



September 2020

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.

Webinars and Trainings

Preparing for October Farm to School Month: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

September 22, 2020 3:30 p.m. CST

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and how to prepare for October Farm to School Month. Speakers will share about upcoming events, campaigns, and opportunities to "Celebrate Local."



[Register Here](#)

Missed a previous network conversation?

[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

NWA Farmers Market Cook-Along Cooking Demo

September 19, 2020 12:00 p.m.

Join this free cooking demo where the recipe featured will highlight flavors from the Marshall Islands and use local farmers market produce. SNAP and P-EBT recipients will receive \$25 in market tokens for attending.



[Register Here](#)

Cooking Matters for Parents

Tuesdays & Wednesdays through October 21

Learn to prepare delicious, affordable meals the whole family will enjoy. The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance is hosting 30-minute online classes on Zoom in September and October. The same lesson will be taught twice each week to try and accommodate parents' busy schedules. Beginning September 1st, sessions will be held every Tuesday evening from 6-6:30 p.m. and every Wednesday from 12-12:30 p.m. until October 21st. After completing the survey at the end of the class, any parent or caregiver of a child age 0-5 will receive a \$10 e-gift card sent to a valid e-mail address. Come to one session or all 8 - You'll receive a gift card for each week a survey is completed - so up to potentially \$80!



[Register Here](#)

Produce Grower Remote Trainings

September 23-24, October 21-22, November 9-10, December 1-2: 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule is the first federally regulated standard for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding fresh produce in an effort to reduce microbial contamination and foodborne illness outbreaks. If you grow fruits or vegetables, attend a training hosted by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service's Produce Safety Team to learn information about best practices, risk management, and regulatory requirements.



[Register Here](#)

Grants

Specialty Crop Farmers and Farmers Market Managers Adapting to the COVID-19 Pandemic Grant

Deadline: September 30, 2020

The goal of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Alternative Selling Methods Campaign is to recognize and highlight Arkansas farmers and farmers market managers who have adapted their operations to continue meeting the needs of their communities during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Arkansas farmers and farmers market managers are invited to submit self-produced videos demonstrating the new selling methods they developed during COVID-19.



[Apply Here](#)

October Farm to School Month

October is National Farm to School Month, a time to celebrate the connections happening all over the country between children and local food. Schools, early care and education sites, farms, communities, and organizations in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and U.S. Territories join in celebrations such as taste tests in the cafeteria, nutrition education activities in the classroom, farm visits, and school garden harvest parties.

Every year since 2015, the Governor has proclaimed October as Arkansas Farm to School Month. This year we are "Celebrating Local!" From the farmers who grow our food to the educators and parents who teach children about gardening, cooking, and nutrition, together we create a strong local food system. Stay tuned for more details on how to join in this year as we "Celebrate Local."

Food Justice is Racial Justice: National Farm to School Network Movement Meeting



**NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK**

October 14, 2020 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Join National Farm to School Network for a virtual Movement Meeting featuring food justice activist Karen Washington for deep conversation and action-oriented reflection on racial justice in the farm to school movement and wider food system. You'll connect with fellow farm to school and food justice advocates from across the country, dig into conversations about what it means to shift power, and help shape the next steps of progress towards our vision of a just food system for all. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend this free event; no prior knowledge of farm to school needed.

[Register Here](#)

News

[USDA Extends Free Meals for Kids Through December 31, 2020](#)

On August 31, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will extend several flexibilities through December 31, 2020. The flexibilities allow summer meal program operators to continue serving free meals to all children into the fall months. Additional waivers are available through the end of 2020.

[Center for Arkansas Farms and Foods \(CAFF\) Farm School](#)

CAFF is part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. The Farm School begins in January and is an 11-month, experiential learning program for beginning farmers of specialty crops or for those who want to learn how to grow food. The school includes both classroom curriculum and hands-on experience for integrating production and business and legal issues. Apprenticeships and outreach events offer continuing education to learn more about the skills needed for successful farming.

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Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



October 2020

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.

Department Team

We are excited to introduce Hanna Davis to the farm to school team! Hanna will serve at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture over the next year as the State School Garden Manager. Hanna will provide technical assistance to schools, develop farm to school resources, map school gardens around the state, host webinars and trainings, and lead the school garden contest and grant program. Welcome Hanna!!!



Hanna grew up in Dallas, Texas and graduated from Hendrix College with a Bachelor's in Environmental Studies. Hanna spent a year as an AmeriCorps member at the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, teaching food skills classes and implementing outreach for school nutrition programs, and recently completed a term of service with Full Circle FarmCorps. Through Hanna's work at various gardens, restaurants, and community organizations in Arkansas, Hanna has become passionate about fighting food insecurity and removing the barriers that keep people from enjoying healthy, local food.

You can reach Hanna by emailing hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

October Farm to School Month

This year for Arkansas Farm to School Month we are "Celebrating Local!" From the farmers who grow our food, to the educators and parents who teach children about gardening, cooking, and nutrition, we together, create a strong local food system. **#ARF2SMonth #CelebrateLocal**

To Celebrate Local, we can eat local, grow local, and learn about local food. Spread the news and join in this month! We have created a [media and promotion toolkit](#) where you can find resources, graphics, language, and examples to promote your Arkansas Farm to School activities. Everything included has a downloadable version for editing and customization.

Another way you can Celebrate Local this October is by joining the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Heifer USA for a LIVE and INTERACTIVE virtual farm field trip or the National Farm to School Network's Movement Meeting.

Virtual Farm Field Trip

October 28, 2020, 1:30 p.m.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Heifer USA are hosting a virtual farm field trip and all are invited. We will tour the certified organic production gardens, hear expert advice on gardening best practices, and celebrate local successes from across the state. Attendees will be able to ask questions and interact throughout the LIVE event. In case of rain, the virtual event will be hosted on October 29, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. CST.



[Register Here](#)

Food Justice is Racial Justice: National Farm to School Network Movement Meeting

October 14, 2020, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Join National Farm to School Network for a virtual Movement Meeting featuring food justice activist Karen Washington, for deep conversation and action-oriented reflection on racial justice in the farm to school movement and wider food system. You'll connect with fellow farm to school and food justice advocates from across the country, dig into conversations about what it means to shift power, and help shape the next steps of progress towards our vision of a just food system for all. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend this free event; no prior knowledge of farm to school needed.



[Register Here](#)

Webinars and Trainings

Goal Setting and Creating Action Steps: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

October 22, 2020, 3:30 p.m.

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School, goal setting, and creating action steps. Cassidy Hobler with FoodCorps Arkansas will share tools and resources that help schools evaluate their farm to school

program and create yearly goals.



GOAL SETTING AND CREATING ACTION STEPS

OCTOBER 22 - 3:30 P.M. - ZOOM



Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School, goal setting, and creating action steps. Cassidy Hobler with FoodCorps Arkansas will share tools and resources that help schools evaluate their farm to school program and create yearly goals.

ARKANSAS Farm to School

[Register Here](#)

Local Procurement: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

November 12, 2020, 2:00 p.m.

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and local procurement. Ally Mrachek, Child Nutrition Director at Fayetteville Public Schools, will share their farm to school story and how their program has continued to purchase more and more local food.

ARKANSAS Farm to School

LOCAL PROCUREMENT

November 12, 2020 - 2:00 p.m. - Zoom



Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and local procurement. Ally Mrachek, Child Nutrition Director at Fayetteville Public Schools, will share their farm to school story and how their program has continued to purchase more and more local food.

FPS FAYETTEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FUEL THE LEARN

[Register Here](#)

Missed a previous network conversation?

[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

Lunchtime Learning Series

October 16 and 23, 2020, 12:00 p.m.

The Local, Regional, and Safe Foods Team of the University of Arkansas System, Division of Agriculture will be hosting a Lunchtime Learning Series in October to assist small food businesses. The first on October 16 is Starting a Small Food Business in Arkansas: Cottage Food. The second on October 23 is Food Safety Documentation and COVID-19 Preparedness for Small Food Manufacturers.



Lunchtime Learning Series

MAKING FOOD FOR PROFIT

Starting a Small Food Business in Arkansas: Cottage Food
October 16th | 12:00pm-1:00pm

Since 2011, the Arkansas Cottage Food Law has allowed residents to sell certain non-hazardous food items direct to the public. These "cottage foods" are specific types of food made in home kitchens, however, not all foods can be made at home and sold to the public. Food entrepreneurs and home-based food businesses can learn more about cottage food in this webinar, co-hosted with Family & Consumer Sciences.

Register at www.uaex.edu/cottage-food-webinar or contact Bryan Meeker at bmeeker@uaex.edu for more information.

Food Safety Documentation and COVID-19 Preparedness for Small Food Manufacturers
October 23rd | 12:00pm-1:00pm

Small-scale food manufacturers (< \$1 million in sales/year) must understand and comply with state and federal regulations to safely produce packaged food products. Ally Snyder, Food Safety Specialist, Cornell University, will lead this conversation about Good Manufacturing Practices, problem resolution, COVID-19 prevention and required FSMA documentation, food manufacturers, food processor regulations and shared use. Key-ten managers should attend this course, authored by Cornell University and available through your university's U-Extension.

Register at www.uaex.edu/food-safety-webinar or contact Angela Gardner at agardner@uaex.edu for more information.

Ongoing Support for Food Entrepreneurs:

- One-on-one support for food businesses with food safety questions.
- Assisting small food businesses in meeting permit requirements.
- Supporting food businesses in manufacturing safe food under permit.
- Resources to assist with product development.

Call 508-671-2238 or email ajp@uaex.edu.
Dr. Amanda Wilson, Food Safety Specialist

Additional webinars can be found at www.uaex.edu/localfoods

U.A. DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EXTENSION University of Arkansas System

LOCAL, REGIONAL, & SAFE FOODS

[Register Here](#)

Produce Grower Remote Trainings

October 21-22, November 9-10, December 1-2:
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule is the first federally regulated standard for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding fresh produce in an effort to reduce microbial contamination



and foodborne illness outbreaks. If you grow fruits or vegetables, attend a training hosted by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service's Produce Safety Team to learn information about best practices, risk management, and regulatory requirements.

[Register Here](#)

Resources

Apple Seeds Virtual Field Trips for Grades 3 and 4

Apple Seeds is a nonprofit Teaching Farm located in Fayetteville, Arkansas, whose mission is to inspire healthy living through garden-based education. For the past 16 years, Apple Seeds has provided garden-based education to students across all of Northwest Arkansas through school garden programming, field trips to the farm, and cooking classes on the farm and in the schools. With this year's challenge to in-person education they rapidly adapted their platform to reach students in any learning scenario. They have made new resources available to support students and educators across the state.



Grade 3: While exploring the Apple Seeds Teaching Farm, students will practice fractions as they learn how to be nutrition label detectives and prepare a delicious smoothie with ingredients from the garden.

[Register Here](#)

Grade 4: While exploring the Apple Seeds Teaching Farm, students will make observations to explain how and why plants adapt to their environment, help solve math problems in the garden, and learn how to make a healthy and delicious snack at home.

[Register Here](#)

Virtual Hunger Simulation

The Arkansas Foodbank has created a Virtual Hunger Simulation as a spinoff of their in-person hunger simulation. This virtual option gives participants a very brief introduction to the lives lived and tough decisions made by so many Arkansans. The launching of this hunger simulation was a part of **#HungerActionMonth** - a month long campaign focused on shedding light on hunger across our nation.



[View Here](#)

News

[AmeriCorps Grant Funds Community Garden Program](#)

Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council, in partnership with St. Joseph Center in North Little Rock and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, will reintroduce the Full Circle FarmCorps program this December in Sebastian and Pulaski County. The new \$186,557 program has been issued funding approval by the Arkansas State Service Commission, a division of the Arkansas Department of Education.

[2021 Environmental Mini-Grant Applications Open](#)

The Arkansas Environmental Education Association is soliciting proposals of up to **\$500** for AEEA's Environmental Education Mini-grant Program. The program is designed to support, enhance, and expand the implementation of environmental education throughout the state of Arkansas by classroom teachers and non-formal educators and organizations.

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Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



November 2020

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.

Webinars and Trainings

Local Procurement: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

November 12, 2020, 2:00 p.m.

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and local procurement. Ally Mrachek, Child Nutrition Director at Fayetteville Public Schools, will share their farm to school story and how their program has continued to purchase more and more local food.



[Register Here](#)

Missed a previous network conversation?

[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

Produce Grower Remote Trainings

November 9-10, December 1-2

8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule is the first federally regulated standard for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding fresh produce in an effort to reduce microbial contamination and foodborne illness outbreaks. If you grow fruits or vegetables, attend a training hosted by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service's Produce Safety Team to learn information about best



practices, risk management, and regulatory requirements.

[Register Here](#)

Grants

NEW! Arkansas School Garden Grant Program

Deadline: November 30, 2020

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce the new Arkansas School Garden Grant Program to help schools start or expand gardens on school grounds. The Department will award \$500 grants to 40 schools to purchase soil, specialty crop seeds and plants, and gardening equipment, and will provide technical assistance to grantees upon request. The grant program is available to public and private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments. All eligible schools are encouraged to apply, whether they are just getting started with a garden or have had a garden program for many years.



[Apply Here](#)



USDA 2021 Farm to School Grant Request for Applications

Deadline: January 8, 2021

The fiscal year (FY) 2021 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA) is now available! The solicitation officially opened October 16, 2020, and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. ET on January 8, 2021. The USDA seeks to award up to \$10 million this fiscal year. New for FY 2021, institutions operating the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program at non-school based sites are included in the definition of eligible schools and may apply for funding. Register for informational webinars scheduled November 10 and November 13.

[Apply Here](#)

Resources

Virtual Field Trips on the Apple Seeds Teaching Farm for Grades 3 and 4

Apple Seeds is a nonprofit Teaching Farm located in Fayetteville, Arkansas, whose mission is to inspire healthy living through garden-based education. For the past 16 years, Apple Seeds has provided garden-based education to students across all of Northwest Arkansas through school



garden programming, field trips to the farm, and cooking classes on the farm and in the schools. With this year's challenge to in-person education, they rapidly adapted their platform to reach students in any learning scenario. They have made new resources available to support students and educators across the state.

These free Virtual Farm Field Trips designed for Grades 3 and 4 are fun and interactive while reinforcing essential grade-level standards. The virtual field trips hit on math, science, literacy, and health standards. The program is suitable for 2nd thru 6th grades.

[Access Here](#)



\$10 Challenge Lesson Plan

Interested in teaching your students how to shop for, prepare, and eat more healthy foods on a budget? The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance has developed a universal lesson plan for K-12 teachers that teaches just that! The lesson focuses on food skills such as front-of-package and label reading (English), using ingredient lists (Science), calculating and comparing unit prices (Math), and much more. The lesson goes beyond just increasing knowledge about which foods are better for our bodies, focusing on why the words we use to talk about foods with kids is critical and how we can use language to promote adopting healthier eating. Though our lesson plan is designed for teachers, it is also useful for non-profits that work with teachers and/or offer nutrition education.

[Access Here](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)





Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



December 2020

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.

Webinars and Trainings

Farmers Selling to Schools: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

December 17, 2020, 3:00 p.m.

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and farmers selling to schools. Ekko Barnhill from Barnhill Orchards and Sean Pessarra from Heifer Ranch will share about connecting with schools to sell locally grown food.



[Register Here](#)

Missed a previous network conversation?

[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

AmeriCorps Positions

Full Circle FarmCorps - AmeriCorps Positions Open

Deadline: First round consideration by December 9, 2020

The mission of Full Circle FarmCorps is to confront food insecurity and strengthen communities through farming, teaching, and outreach. Join the national service team! Service Member positions in 2021



are available January 11 through August 20 for 38 hours a week and Team Leader positions are available January 04 through August 20 for 36 hours a week.

[Apply Here](#)

Grants



USDA 2021 Farm to School Grant Request for Applications

Deadline: January 8, 2021

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[Apply Here](#)

No Kid Hungry: Increase Food Security Among Young Children (0-5 Years Old) Grant Opportunity

Deadline: December 18, 2020

Community organizations, early child care centers, healthcare providers, and others working to ensure vulnerable young children have access to healthy food are encouraged to apply for a grant. Grants will be between \$15,000-\$25,000. These grants are flexible and No Kid Hungry is especially eager to support organizations who have authentically engaged community members to develop innovative programs that support young children.



[Apply Here](#)

In the News

Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest 2020 Winners

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture hosted the 7th annual contest this year. 32 schools applied and six schools were chosen and awarded for planning and implementing their school garden program. [Read more here.](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)





ARKANSAS FarmtoSchool