



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



## January 2021 Happy New Year!

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

### Successful School Garden Programs: Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversation

*January 21, 2021, 3:30 p.m.*

Join the conversation to hear about Arkansas Farm to School and expert school garden programs. Shannon Newerth-Henson with Kiddie Kollege Alma, Western Arkansas Child Development Inc. and Sara Tyler, Amanda Krell, and Brooke Long with Carolyn Lewis Elementary, Conway Public Schools will share what makes their school garden programs successful. Both schools were winners of the 2020 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest.



[Register Here](#)

Missed a previous network conversation?

[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

## AmeriCorps Positions

## Full Circle FarmCorps - AmeriCorps Positions Open

*Deadline: Final round consideration by January 6, 2021*

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.

Dig In for Food, Join FarmCorps!

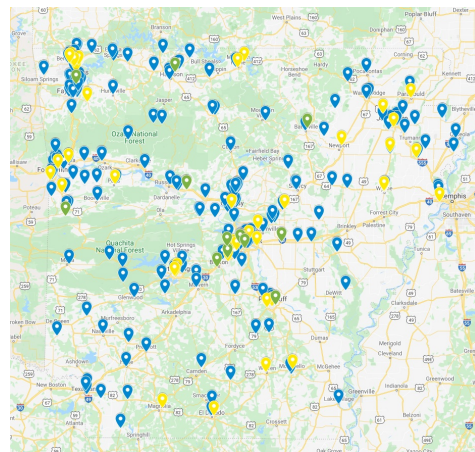


[Apply Here](#)

## Resources

### Map of School Gardens in Arkansas

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (Department) is excited to share a map of school gardens in Arkansas. Through conducting outreach to schools across the state, compiling information from a variety of stakeholders, and researching grant funding for school gardens from the last decade and beyond, the Department developed a list and map of school gardens in Arkansas.



There are over 300 sites across the state at K-12 public and private schools, early care and education facilities, and alternative learning environments. Additional information was provided by farm to school partners across the state.

If you'd like to add your garden to the map, contact Hanna Davis, StateSchool Garden Manager, at [hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov).

[View Map Here](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities



**ARKANSAS  
FLOWER AND  
GARDEN SHOW**

**Arkansas Flower and Garden Show Greening of Arkansas Grant Program**

*Deadline: January 31, 2021*

*Funding: Up to \$2,500*

The Arkansas Flower and Garden Show provides funding for community beautification projects through the Greening of Arkansas Grant Program. Grants are awarded to non-profit and civic groups for beautification projects on public land. [Apply here.](#)

**Arkansas Farm Bureau Outdoor Classroom**

## Garden Mini-Grant Program

*Deadline: February 15, 2021*

*Funding: Up to \$500*

The Outdoor Classroom Garden Mini-Grant Program is designed to show that agriculture is an integral part of our everyday environment. Farms, wildlife, forestry, people, and cities are all interrelated with agriculture. As most of Arkansas's wildlife resides on and feeds off private property, including farms and timberlands, the gardens can demonstrate the connection between agriculture, food, fiber, conservation, wildlife, and the urban environment. Schools, FFA Chapters, and 4-H Clubs with a minimum of 100 students for average daily attendance are eligible to apply. [Apply here.](#)



**Blue & You**  
FOUNDATION

**FOR A HEALTHIER ARKANSAS**

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## Blue & You Foundation Mini-Grant

*Deadline: February 15, 2021*

*Funding: \$1,000*

Blue & You Foundation offers a simpler application for \$1,000 mini-grants to support health improvement projects in Arkansas. Any health related activity is eligible. Applications for mini-grants will be accepted in the months of January, February, and March, with funding decisions made within 10 days of submission.

[Apply here.](#)

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## In the News

### Arkansas Farm to School Month 2020

Since 2014, October has been proclaimed as Arkansas Farm to School Month following a nationwide trend that was initially designated in 2010 by the National Farm to School Network. In 2020, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture partnered with Heifer USA to host a virtual farm field trip that brought the state together to celebrate local. [Read more here.](#)

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[Visit Our Website](#)



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



## February 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.

## Webinars and Trainings

### Farm to Early Care and Education Webinar

*February 25, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.*

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Curricula Concepts, and the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention have partnered to offer an hour-long webinar on the topic of farm to early care and education. Join on February 25, 2021 at either 12:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. to learn about the statewide Go NAPSACC program and how to start or expand your farm to school classroom, cafeteria, and community.



The webinar will be offered at two different times to allow educators, administrators, and child care staff flexibility.

February 25, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

February 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

[Register Here](#)

[Register Here](#)

## Recordings of the Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversations 2020 - 2021

Over the past twelve months, Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversations were held monthly and focused on a range of farm to school

topics with expert speakers. These conversations were a time to share successes in farm to school, problem-solve farm to school barriers, and provide peer-to-peer mentorship. Check out the recordings from last year!

## 2020

**February** - Starting a School Garden

**March** - Summer Garden Successes

**April** - Food Safety in the School Garden

**May** - School Meal Programs and COVID-19

**June** - Farm to Early Childhood Education

**July** - Nutrition Education

**August** - Grants and Funding

**September** - Preparing for Arkansas Farm to School Month

**October** - Goal Setting and Creating Action Steps

**November** - Local Procurement

**December** - Farmers Selling to Schools

## 2021

**January** - Successful School Garden Programs



[Find them on our YouTube Channel](#)

## Congratulations to the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program Recipients



The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce that 52 schools across Arkansas have been approved for funding through the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program. Each of the schools will receive a \$500 grant to be used for starting or expanding gardens on school grounds.

[Read more here](#)

## 2020 Annual Reports

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program submitted the Arkansas Farm to School and Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act 2020 Annual

Reports to the Governor and Legislative Councils at the end of 2020. We are pleased to share them with the public and greatly appreciate our partners who supported the creation of both reports.

## Arkansas Farm to School 2020 Annual Report

## Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act 2020 Annual Report



[View Report Here](#)

[View Report Here](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### Arkansas Farm Bureau Outdoor Classroom Garden Mini-Grant Program

*Deadline: February 15, 2021*

*Funding: Up to \$500*

The Outdoor Classroom Garden Mini-Grant Program is designed to show that agriculture is an integral part of our everyday environment. Farms, wildlife, forestry, people, and cities are all interrelated with agriculture. As most of Arkansas's wildlife resides on and feeds off private property, including farms and timberlands, the gardens can demonstrate the connection between agriculture, food, fiber, conservation, wildlife, and the urban environment. Schools, FFA Chapters, and 4-H Clubs with a minimum of 100 students for average daily attendance are eligible to apply. [Apply here.](#)



### Blue & You Foundation Mini-Grant

*Deadline: February 15, 2021*

*Funding: \$1,000*

Blue & You Foundation offers \$1,000 mini-grants to support health improvement projects in



Arkansas. Any health related activity is eligible. Applications for mini-grants are accepted January 1 – February 15, with funding decisions made by March 15. [Apply here.](#)

# Blue & You FOUNDATION

**FOR A HEALTHIER ARKANSAS**

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant

*Opens: February 15, 2021*

*Deadline: March 31, 2021*

*Funding: \$3,000*

Through the Garden Grant program, schools and non-profit organizations turn outdoor spaces into powerful hands-on learning gardens that connect kids with food, spark their curiosity, and support classroom curriculum. The program provides funding to support a new or existing edible educational garden at K-12 schools and non-profit organizations. [Apply here.](#)



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## In the News

### Farm to School FAQs

Since Farm to School's inception, over 300 schools have implemented farm to school programs across the Natural State with more popping up every year. If you would like to participate in the cultivation of young minds and fresh produce, check out this blog on frequently asked questions. [Read more here.](#)

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## Visit Our Website



# ARKANSAS Farm to School



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



**March 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.

## Webinars and Trainings

### Local Conversations

*March 12, 2021 from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.*



The Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Branding Programs and Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are hosting an event for farmers to learn about COVID-19 alternative selling methods, farmer social media marketing, e-commerce support, and a post-harvest calculator.

[Register Here](#)

### Farm to School Connection

*March 18, 2021 from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.*

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture and University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service are excited to offer an opportunity for schools and farmers to connect to create more opportunities for local food in schools.

Join us to learn how to buy local food, how to sell your local produce to schools, and connect in a regional



breakout session.

Register Here



March 18 | 2-3 pm  
Zoom Meeting

FEATURING

Randy Arnold and Ally Mrachek

Arnold Family Farm

Fayetteville Public  
Schools

Finding the perfect partner can be tough, so we're here to help build lasting relationships between local farms and schools. Join us to learn more about buying and selling local foods and to find potential partners.

Register at [www.uaex.uada.edu/localfoods](http://www.uaex.uada.edu/localfoods)



## Opportunities

### Farm to Early Childhood Education Survey



Do you work with students aged 0-5? We want to hear from you!

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, along with several collaborative partners, has created an online **farm to early childhood education (ECE) survey**. The survey will allow child care providers to share information on support and resources needed to implement food and agriculture education

activities in the classroom, to grow fruits and vegetables in on-site gardens, and to purchase Arkansas grown produce.

The responses we receive from this survey will help to develop targeted training presentations, webinars, and resources to answer questions and tackle challenges ECE providers face when implementing farm to ECE activities.

We will be accepting survey responses until March 19, 2021.

Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. As a thank you for participating, we will be sending a **farm to school gift** to every respondent.

Survey Link

# Apply to Serve with FoodCorps

We are so excited to share that applications to serve with FoodCorps Arkansas are now open! Since 2011, members in Arkansas have served their community, helped get kids excited about healthy food, learned new skills, and joined a network of changemakers. If you are interested in applying, the application to #ServeUpChange with FoodCorps is open through April 1!



[Apply Here](#)

## Resources

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program and the Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative have recently created NEW farm to school resources to support the growth of farm to school around the state.

Check out the first two resources if you are building a team or looking to find funding for projects, and the last two resources if you want to learn more about the statewide farm to school efforts in Arkansas.

### School Garden Grants

**ARKANSAS Farm to School**

#### School Garden Grants

Grants listed below help start or expand school gardens. The grants vary in amount and are arranged by the season in which the application is due. Arkansas specific grants are listed with a 🏠.

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

**SPRING/SUMMER (March - August)**

Action for Healthy Kids Game On Grants \$1,000 or \$2,500  
Action for Healthy Kids provides schools the resources for students to eat better, stay physically active, and be better prepared to learn. Their grant program, Game On Grants, supports physical activity and/or nutrition initiatives at schools.

Arkansas Department of Agriculture - Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest \$500-\$1,000  
The Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture with funding provided by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be public and private K-12 schools, early care and education facilities, or alternative learning environments that had a school garden open during the previous school year, or any schools planning to start a garden in the following school year.

Blue & You Foundation Grant \$5,000 and up  
Blue & You Foundation's mission is to work together with others to create a state of better health for all Arkansans. They strategically focus grant funding on community-based solutions in the hopes it will nurture community health leadership, foster collaboration and innovation, and leverage financial, human, and community resources to produce measurable, positive impacts. Any program or project that positively affects the health of Arkansans can apply to receive funding.

[View Resource Here](#)

Arkansas Farm to School

### School Garden Committees

**ARKANSAS Farm to School**

#### School Garden Committees

If you want to start a garden program at your school, the best place to start is by forming a school garden committee. School gardeners take a lot of planning and hard work, so it's important to enlist a team to help your program succeed. Pooling resources, ideas, and labor will help ensure that your garden will continue growing for many years to come!

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](mailto:hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov), (501) 295-8856.

**Gather Interest**

Start by building your network and reaching out to potential supporters for an initial brainstorming meeting. Send emails to the school community, post fliers, and talk to the school administration. School administration can help find resources and funding, coordinate with teachers, and promote the garden program in general.

If possible, invite the principal, school board members, superintendent, or other administrators to participate in the committee. In addition to school administration, consider involving the following people in the garden committee:

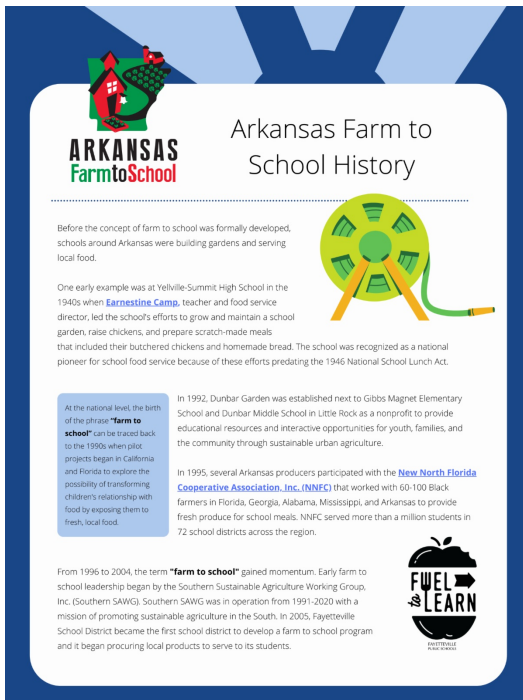
- Teachers/Educators
- Students
- Maintenance staff
- Farmers/Master Gardeners
- Food service staff
- County Extension Agents
- Family members
- Community members

Hold an initial interest meeting (in-person or virtual), to present a vision for the school garden, what the committee's role will be, and create a list of people interested in joining.

[View Resource Here](#)

Arkansas Farm to School

# History



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**

## Arkansas Farm to School History

Before the concept of farm to school was formally developed, schools around Arkansas were building gardens and serving local food.


One early example was at Yellville Summit High School in the 1940s when **Earnestine Camp**, teacher and food service director, led the school's efforts to grow and maintain a school garden, raise chickens, and prepare scratch-made meals that included their butchered chickens and homemade bread. The school was recognized as a national pioneer for school food service because of these efforts predating the 1946 National School Lunch Act.

At the national level, the birth of the phrase "farm to school" can be traced back to the 1950s when pilot projects began in California and Florida to explore the possibility of transferring children's relationship with food by exposing them to fresh, local food.

In 1992, Dunbar Garden was established next to Gibbs Magnet Elementary School and Dunbar Middle School in Little Rock as a nonprofit to provide educational resources and interactive opportunities for youth, families, and the community through sustainable urban agriculture.

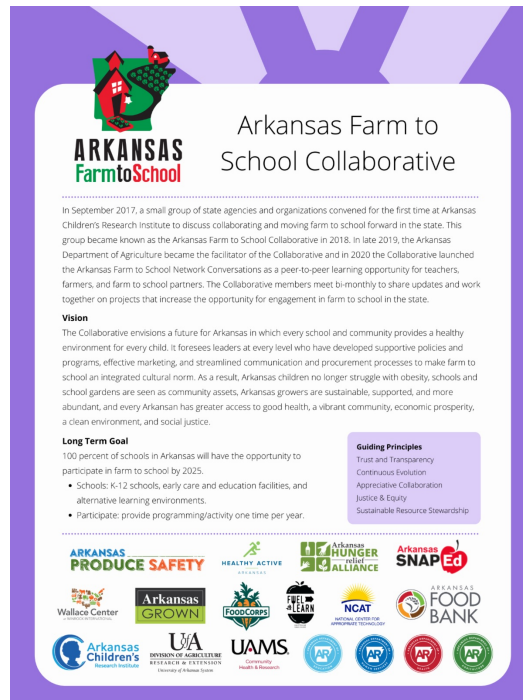
In 1995, several Arkansas producers participated with the **New North Florida Cooperative Association, Inc. (NNFCA)** that worked with 60-100 Black farmers in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas to provide fresh produce for school meals. NNFCA served more than a million students in 72 school districts across the region.

From 1996 to 2004, the term "farm to school" gained momentum. Early farm to school leadership began by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Inc. (Southern SAWG). Southern SAWG was in operation from 1991-2020 with a mission of promoting sustainable agriculture in the South. In 2005, Fayetteville School District became the first school district to develop a farm to school program and it began procuring local products to serve to its students.



[View Resource Here](#)

# Collaborative



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**

## Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative


In September 2017, a small group of state agencies and organizations convened for the first time at Arkansas Children's Research Institute to discuss collaborating and moving farm to school forward in the state. This group became known as the Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative in 2018. In late 2019, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture became the facilitator of the Collaborative and in 2020 the Collaborative launched the Arkansas Farm to School Network Conversations as a peer-to-peer learning opportunity for teachers, farmers, and farm to school partners. The Collaborative members meet bi-monthly to share updates and work together on projects that increase the opportunity for engagement in farm to school in the state.

**Vision**  
The Collaborative envisions a future for Arkansas in which every school and community provides a healthy environment for every child. It foresees leaders at every level who have developed supportive policies and programs, effective marketing, and streamlined communication and procurement processes to make farm to school an integrated cultural norm. As a result, Arkansas children no longer struggle with obesity, schools and school gardens are seen as community assets, Arkansas growers are sustainable, supported, and more abundant, and every Arkansan has greater access to good health, a vibrant community, economic prosperity, a clean environment, and social justice.

**Long Term Goal**  
100 percent of schools in Arkansas will have the opportunity to participate in farm to school by 2025.

- Schools: K-12 schools, early care and education facilities, and alternative learning environments.
- Participants: provide programming/activity one time per year.

**Guiding Principles**  
Trust and Transparency  
Continuous Evolution  
Appreciative Collaboration  
Justice & Equity  
Sustainable Resource Stewardship



[View Resource Here](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities



**Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant**  
*Deadline: March 31, 2021*  
*Funding: \$3,000*

Through the Garden Grant program, schools and non-profit organizations turn outdoor spaces into powerful hands-on learning gardens that connect kids with food, spark their curiosity, and support classroom curriculum. The program provides funding to support a new or existing edible educational garden at K-12 schools and non-profit organizations. [Apply here.](#)

**Cox Charities**  
*Deadline: March 31, 2021*  
*Funding: Varies*



Cox's primary focus area is youth and education. All opportunities that further their goal of strengthening the social, economic, and educational infrastructure of the community will be considered for sponsorship. [Apply here.](#)

## Visit Our Website





# ARKANSAS Farm to School



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



**April 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.

## Webinars and Trainings

### Measuring Impacts and Sharing Results in Garden-Based Education

*April 14, 2021 from 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.*



Since 2016, the School Garden Support Organization (SGSO) Network Leadership Institute participants have been collecting and sharing evaluation methods for their programs, how they assess student outcomes, and their impacts. The 2021 Virtual SGSO Leadership Institute focused on sharing these resources in a more organized manner.

Join SGSO at their upcoming webinar to learn more.

[Register Here](#)

## Virtual Field Trips

### Apple Seeds Teaching Farm

Apple Seeds is a nonprofit organization in Fayetteville, Arkansas whose mission is to inspire healthy living through garden-based education. For the past 17 years, Apple Seeds has facilitated

programming with students across Northwest Arkansas through field trips and cooking classes at their teaching farm and in schools.



Over the past year, Apple Seeds developed virtual resources for students and educators across the state and nation. These resources exist for anyone who wants to enhance their students' health, nutrition, and science knowledge through interactive video field trips that connect students to where food comes from.

- **Plant Science & Our Health:** Science, math, and health standards are addressed throughout a 20-minute video tour of Apple Seeds' grounds and gardens. They discuss how plants grow, how they adapt to their environment, the importance of nutrition, and give a lesson on basic cooking skills.
- **Nutrition Labels & the Food Around Us:** Students will learn to read nutrition labels, the importance of eating a balanced diet, how to make a simple recipe, and be introduced to fractions in a real-world setting. This interactive 15-minute video trip is fun and interactive while addressing math, science, and health standards.

[Access Here](#)

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## Resources

### Farm to School and Early Childhood Education in the USDA Southeast Region

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program is excited to share a new report: Farm to School and Early Childhood Education in the USDA Southeast Region. The report was written after conducting farm to school research and interviewing key players in the southeast United States.

[View Report](#)

FARM TO SCHOOL AND  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION IN THE  
USDA SOUTHEAST  
REGION

A LOOK INTO EXAMPLES OF BEST  
PRACTICES IN THE REGION



### Handouts

Three new resources are available to help school food service programs who want to buy more local food and farmers who want to sell to schools. The resources were created in partnership by the Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program, University of Arkansas System Division of

## Child Nutrition Flowchart: Buying Local

**Child Nutrition Flowchart: Buying Local**

Are you a school or school district that is interested in buying local? The following flowchart provides a step-by-step recommendation on how to build a connection and increase potential sales with a local farmer.

For additional help and support you may contact:

- Sarah Lantz, Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA), sarah.lantz@agriculture.arkansas.gov, (501) 251-3019
- Julia Foyte, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA), jfoyte@uada.edu, (501) 671-2181
- Rip Weaver, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA), rweaver@uada.edu, (501) 671-2182

**START**

Do you know how to connect with a local farmer?

**Yes** → **Contact the farmer.** Discuss their interests and local interests.

**Prepare for the meeting.** Create a list of questions to ask the farmer based on your school's needs. Review the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) list of approved products and ask about the difference between organic and non-organic products.

**Meet with the farmer.** Discuss your school's needs and the farmer's products. Discuss the logistics of delivery, pricing, and other details.

**Follow up with the farmer.** Thank the farmer for their time and discuss the next steps.

**No** → **Search an Arkansas-based website or reach out to ADA or UADA.**

**Review the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) list of approved products.**

**Make the first call!** Call the farmer to discuss their products and your school's needs.

**Follow up with the farmer.** Thank the farmer for their time and discuss the next steps.

**STOP**

For more information, visit [www.arkansas.gov](http://www.arkansas.gov) for the recently-revised [www.arkansas.gov](http://www.arkansas.gov) and [www.uada.edu](http://www.uada.edu) for the recently-revised [www.uada.edu](http://www.uada.edu).

[View Resource](#)

## Farm Food Safety Checklist - Produce

**Farm Food Safety Checklist - Produce**

Are you looking to buy food for your school or are you a farmer looking to sell your food products to a school? This checklist can be used to ensure food safety practices. This checklist includes worker health & hygiene, production practices, harvest & post-harvest handling, and transportation.

For additional help and support you may contact:

- Sarah Lantz, Arkansas Department of Agriculture, sarah.lantz@agriculture.arkansas.gov, (501) 251-3019
- Julia Foyte, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, jfoyte@uada.edu, (501) 671-2181
- Rip Weaver, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, rweaver@uada.edu, (501) 671-2182

**Farm Information**

Name of Farm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Products available for purchase: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Safety authorization: USDA GAP: YES/NO FSA 1502: YES/NO THIRD PARTY AUDIT: YES/NO  
Has the owner/manager attended a food safety training (such as GAP or FSA Grower Training)? YES/NO

**Worker Health & Hygiene**

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Workers are trained at least annually on food safety practices (training records available)				
Workers have designated areas for smoking and eating away from produce handling areas				
Workers are not permitted to work (e.g., wear, operate, etc.)				
Workers are not permitted to use hand sanitizer for food contact purposes (e.g., produce wash, etc.)				
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[View Resource](#)

## Farmer Flowchart: Selling to Schools

**Farmer Flowchart: Selling to Schools**

Are you a farmer that is interested in selling to a school? The following flowchart provides a step-by-step recommendation on how to build a connection and increase potential sales with a local school/school district.

For additional help and support you may contact:

- Sarah Lantz, Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA), sarah.lantz@agriculture.arkansas.gov, (501) 251-3019
- Julia Foyte, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA), jfoyte@uada.edu, (501) 671-2181
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**START**

Do you know who to contact at your school?

**Yes** → **Reach out to your local school leader.** Contact the school principal or administrator to discuss your products and your school's needs.

**Reach the school's principal or administrator.** Discuss your products and your school's needs.

**Fill the school's order!** Prepare your products for delivery. Ensure your products are safe for consumption. Deliver your products to the school.

**No** → **Contact the state extension/food service director.** Contact the state extension/food service director for more information and support.

**Prepare for the meeting.** Create a list of questions to ask the school leader based on your school's needs. Review the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) list of approved products and ask about the difference between organic and non-organic products.

**Meet with the child nutrition or food service director.** Discuss your school's needs and the farmer's products. Discuss the logistics of delivery, pricing, and other details.

**Follow up with the child nutrition or food service director.** Thank the school leader for their time and discuss the next steps.

**STOP**

Flowchart adapted from Georgia Organic Farmer Guide to Selling to Schools and Kentucky Department of Education's Selling to Schools with Farm to School Farmers. For more information, visit [www.arkansas.gov](http://www.arkansas.gov) for the recently-revised [www.arkansas.gov](http://www.arkansas.gov) and [www.uada.edu](http://www.uada.edu) for the recently-revised [www.uada.edu](http://www.uada.edu).

[View Resource](#)

## Recordings

The recording from the Farm to School Connection virtual event is available to watch in case you missed it! The event allowed schools and farmers to connect to create more opportunities for local food in schools.

## Farm to School Connection

**FARM TO SCHOOL CONNECTION**

**March 18 | 2-3 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**



**Blue & You**  
**FOUNDATION**  
FOR A HEALTHIER ARKANSAS  
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## Blue & You Foundation Grant

*Deadline: July 15, 2021*

*Funding: \$5,000+*

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## Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

*Opens: April 19, 2021*

*Deadline: June 6, 2021*

*Funding: \$500 - \$1,000*

The Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture with funding provided by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be public or private K-12 schools, early care and education facilities, or alternative learning environments that had a school garden open during the 2020 - 2021 school year, or any schools planning to start a garden in the 2021 - 2022 school year. [Apply here.](#)



[Visit Our Website](#)



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**





# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



**May 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.

## Webinars and Trainings

### The Basics of Farm to School and Farm to Early Childhood Education

*June 10, 2021, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.*

Are you someone who likes to provide hands-on innovative learning opportunities for your students? Join the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Team to learn about farm to school and farm to early childhood education opportunities related to school gardens, education, and local procurement.

The webinar will dig into the history of Arkansas Farm to School and will teach participants how to set farm to school goals. This is the foundational course for farm to school, and is recommended to those who are new to the concept or looking for a refresher.



THE BASICS OF FARM TO SCHOOL AND FARM TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

JUNE 10, 2021, ZOOM, 12:00 - 1:00 P.M.



[Register Here](#)

### Summer Professional Development Opportunities

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

Sessions are offered through the South Central Service Cooperative and the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative.



Educators will receive professional development credit for attending. Multiple dates and times will be offered for each session.

The sessions offered include:

- The Basics of Farm to School;
- Digging Deeper - Starting a School Garden Program;
- Planting the Seeds of Success - Integrating Farm to School Into Your Classroom (PK-5); and
- Sowing the Seeds of Success - Integrating Farm to School Into Your Classroom (6-12).

[View Schedule and Register Here](#)

## Contest Open, Apply Now!

### Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

*Opens: April 19, 2021*

*Deadline: June 6, 2021*

*Funding: \$500 - \$1,000*

The Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture with funding provided by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be public or private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, or alternative learning environments that had a school garden during the 2020 - 2021 school year, or any schools planning to start a garden in the 2021 - 2022 school year.



[Apply Here](#)

## Resources

The Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture are pleased to share three new resources available to schools seeking to grow their farm to school program. The Getting Started and Action Planning handout explains foundational steps for success, such as creating a team and setting goals. Then, the school garden handouts detail how to design and equip school gardens for optimal use.

## Getting Started and Action Planning

**Getting Started & Action Planning**

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food, as well as local food producers, by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early childhood education sites. Students gain access to healthy local foods and educational opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons, and farm field trips.

Farm to school empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy, and contributing to vibrant communities.

Farm to school implementation differs by location, but always includes one or more of the following:

- **Education:** students participate in educational activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition, and
- **Procurement:** local foods are purchased, promoted, and served in the cafeteria, as a snack, or taste test.

**Types of Schools**

Farm to school activities are categorized by school type and student age:

Early Childhood Education	K-12 School	Alternative Learning Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Care Center</li> <li>Child Care Learning Center</li> <li>Preschool</li> <li>Head Start Program</li> <li>Child Care Center Program</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary School</li> <li>Middle School</li> <li>Junior High School</li> <li>High School</li> <li>Charter School</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Education Center</li> <li>Health Center</li> <li>Health Facility</li> <li>Rehabilitation Center</li> <li>Homebased</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>

[View Resource](#)

## School Garden Layout and Structure

**School Garden Layout and Structure**

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. Aside from gathering your **desired vegetables and acquiring building**, learning the layout and structure of the garden is an essential step in starting a garden program at your school.

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](mailto:hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov), (501) 255-8856.

**Determining the Location of your Garden**

When choosing the location of your garden, the first decision is whether you want to plant an indoor or outdoor garden. You should consider available space and resources for your project, as well as the amount of time your team is willing to devote to the garden.

**Indoor**

If you want to start small, or do not have access to an outdoor growing space, an indoor garden is a great option. A simple way to grow indoors is windowsill gardening.

Windowsill gardens are easy to manage, take up relatively little space, and are a fantastic way to integrate convenient hands-on learning in your classroom. You may be keen to grow your plants in front of windows that receive good amounts of sunlight. Indoor gardens can also supplement natural sunlight with **grow lights**. You can learn more about [windowsill gardens here](#).

[View Resource](#)

## School Garden Tools and Materials

**School Garden Tools and Materials**

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.

After completing the initial steps of gathering your **garden vegetables, acquiring building, and planning the layout and structure of the garden**, it's time to start stocking your garden with tools and materials for the program to grow!

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](mailto:hanna.davis@agriculture.arkansas.gov), (501) 255-8856.

**Suggested Tools and Materials**

When shopping for your school garden be sure to choose quality, durable products. In addition, purchase a variety of child-sized tools to ensure students have suitable materials when participating in garden tasks. If you aren't sure what tools to purchase, the following will get you started:

- Hand trowels** for weeding and digging small holes to transplant seedlings.
- Hand cultivators** for weeding and loosening soil.
- Hand pruners** for cutting back plants and harvesting crops.
- Hoses, sprinklers, and watering cans** for watering your plants. Other types of irrigation, such as a drip-irrigation system, could be worth investigating, depending on the scale of your garden.

[View Resource](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### Action for Healthy Kids

*Deadline: June 4, 2021*

*Funding: \$1,000+*

Action for Healthy Kids provides schools the resources for students to eat better, stay physically active, and be better prepared to learn. Their District Partnership Grants and School Grants support physical activity and/or nutrition initiatives at schools. [Apply here.](#)



### Blue & You Foundation Grant

*Deadline: July 15, 2021*

*Funding: \$5,000+*

Blue & You Foundation's mission is to work together with others to create a state of better health for all Arkansans. They strategically focus grant funding on community-based solutions in the hopes it will nurture community health leadership, foster collaboration and innovation, and leverage financial, human, and community resources to produce measurable, positive impacts. Any program or project that positively affects the health of Arkansans can apply to receive funding. [Apply here.](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)





# ARKANSAS Farm to School



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



June 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.

## We're Hiring!



The Farm to School team is growing! **We are hiring a Local Procurement Manager.** This is a part-time grant funded position, available for one year with potential extension based on funding.

The Local Procurement Manager will provide technical assistance to school food service departments and farmers, develop local procurement resources, lead trainings, host regional local procurement events, and lead the

Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program.

[Apply Here](#)

## Webinars and Trainings

### The Basics of Farm to School and Farm to Early Childhood Education

*June 10, 2021, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.*

Join the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Farm to School team to learn about farm to school and farm to early childhood education opportunities related to school gardens, education, and local procurement.

[Register Here](#)



## THE BASICS OF FARM TO SCHOOL AND FARM TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

JUNE 10, 2021, ZOOM, 12:00 - 1:00 P.M.



## Summer Professional Development Opportunities

FARM TO SCHOOL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUMMER, 2021



*June and July, 2021*

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



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

[View Schedule and Register Here](#)

## Edible Schoolyard Project Webinar Series



*June 14, 2021 – June 25, 2021*

The Edible Schoolyard Project is hosting virtual professional development sessions that invite participants to create, cook, taste, and share experiences. This series will prepare participants to support youth learning about food.

[Register Here](#)

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## Resources

The Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative is pleased to share the Arkansas Farm to School State Profile, a handout that provides a snapshot of farm to school in Arkansas. Currently, Arkansas has 310 school gardens, 34 school

districts purchasing local food from a farmer, and 44 farms and businesses supplying schools with local food, as outlined in the resource.

It also lists state farm to school bills and the school districts who have received either a USDA or a CDC Farm to School grant.



[View Resource](#)

Further, the Farm to School team at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture is excited to share a new report on the Arkansas Farm to Early Childhood Education 2021 Survey that presents the data received from 202 early childhood education facilities, as well as an infographic highlighting the successes of the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program, and a Local Harvest Calendar that was co-developed with the University of Arkansas System Cooperative Extension Service's Local, Regional & Safe Foods team.


## Arkansas Farm to Early Childhood Education 2021 Survey Results



[View Resource](#)

## Arkansas School Garden Grant Program Overview: 2020 - 2021

## Local Harvest Calendar



## Local Harvest Calendar

Arkansas grows and raises a variety of foods throughout the year. From fruits and vegetables to grains, protein, and dairy - there is always something local available!

Serving local foods in school cafeterias is a great way to teach students about the local food system while supporting nearby farmers. Don't forget, local food can span the whole plate!

For additional help and support you may contact:



- Sarah Lane, Arkansas Department of Agriculture, sarah.lane@agriculture.arkansas.gov, (501) 251-3019
- Julia Fryer, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, jfryer@uark.edu, (501) 671-2181

**How to Use the Harvest Calendar**


The local harvest calendar shows when vegetables, fruits, grains, proteins, and dairy products are harvested and/or available for purchase in Arkansas. The calendar is based on the school year, beginning in July and ending in June. Each chart on the calendar is a different color to indicate the food group it belongs in.

The harvest calendar is considered an average for the whole state, so harvest season will be slightly shorter in the north, and longer in the south. The darker shaded boxes indicate peak harvest, whereas the lightly shaded boxes show when the product might still be available. This could mean the product was processed through freezing, canning, and/or drying to increase storage life.

The phone icon on the vegetable and fruit charts indicates when to contact a local farmer to place an order. Generally, it is recommended to contact farmers at least a month in advance of harvest. Further, if a school is interested in planning with a farmer, early summer and winter is the best time to contact and provide information on the local products they want to purchase.


[View Resource](#)



# ARKANSAS SCHOOL GARDEN GRANT PROGRAM


2020-2021

**52 SCHOOLS, CHILD CARE CENTERS, AND ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS WERE GRANTED FUNDING TOTALING \$26,000 TO START OR EXPAND THEIR SCHOOL GARDEN**





**14,698 STUDENTS IMPACTED BY SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAMS**

**SCHOOLS FUNDED BY THE GRANT ARE LOCATED IN 23 COUNTIES THROUGHOUT ARKANSAS**



**67 PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVE FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH**

[Learn More Here](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

*Deadline: June 6, 2021*  
*Funding: \$500 - \$1,000*

The Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture with funding provided by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be public or private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, or alternative learning environments that had a school garden during the 2020 - 2021 school year, or any schools planning to start a garden in the 2021 - 2022 school year. [Apply here.](#)







ARKANSAS  
community foundation

## Access to Local Foods Grants

*Deadline: July 1, 2021*

*Funding: \$10,000 - \$15,000*

The Arkansas Community Foundation is seeking proposals for projects that will increase Arkansas's access to locally grown and produced foods and/or strengthen the local food ecosystem. [Apply here.](#)

## Blue & You Foundation Grant

*Deadline: July 15, 2021*

*Funding: \$5,000+*

Blue & You Foundation's mission is to work together with others to create a state of better health for all Arkansans. They strategically focus grant funding on community-based solutions in the hopes it will nurture community health leadership, foster collaboration and innovation, and leverage financial, human, and community resources to produce measurable, positive impacts. Any program or project that positively affects the health of Arkansans can apply to receive funding. [Apply here.](#)



**Blue & You**  
FOUNDATION  
FOR A HEALTHIER ARKANSAS  
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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[Visit Our Website](#)



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**



# 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](#)



## 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](mailto: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.



**ARKANSAS**  
**FarmtoSchool**

## 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](#)





# ARKANSAS Farm to School



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



## August 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.

### Welcome New (and Old) Team Members!



#### **State Local Procurement Manager**

We are excited to introduce Shannon Newerth-Henson, who recently joined the farm to school team as the State Local Procurement Manager! Shannon will provide technical assistance to school food service programs and farms, develop the Harvest of the Season Promotional Program, host local procurement webinars and trainings, and lead the Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program. Welcome, Shannon!

Shannon is an Indiana native and graduated from Purdue University with a Bachelor's in Plant Science. She moved to the Natural State shortly after graduation and served a year-long term in AmeriCorps as a FoodCorps Arkansas service member at two elementary schools in Van Buren. For the past two years, Shannon has been educating students at early childhood education centers in the River Valley, and her passion for farm to school continues to grow! She is also passionate about conservation and is an acting member of the Board of Directors for Keep Van Buren Beautiful, one of 13 certified Keep America Beautiful affiliates in the State.

Reach Shannon via email at [atshannon.henson@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:atshannon.henson@agriculture.arkansas.gov).

#### **Local Foods Specialist**

We are also thrilled to share that Mark Nelson will be re-joining the farm to

school team for the next few months. Mark will assist with the reporting requirements for the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act. Welcome back, Mark!

Mark recently completed a one-year term as the Farm to School Innovation Lead, AmeriCorps VISTA member, with the Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. A native Arizonan, he has now called Arkansas home for the past 13 months and plans

to stick around in the Natural State. Prior to moving to Arkansas, Mark spent two years in the Peace Corps as a Food Security Specialist and Agroforestry Extension Agent in Zambia. Over the past year, Mark has plugged into the Little Rock urban gardening community and his desire to combat food insecurity, enhance access to healthy, local food, and serve others has continued to grow.



Reach Mark via email at [mark.nelson@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:mark.nelson@agriculture.arkansas.gov).

## **We're Hiring - State School Garden Manager**



### **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. Qualified applicants will begin interviewing on August 9, 2021.

[Apply Here](#)

## **New Arkansas Farm to School Website!**

The new Arkansas Farm to School website will be launching 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.

Stay tuned for the details later this month!

# Connecting schools, farms, and the community to local food

Farm to School Auto Draft

Enter your town or zip code. Proximity 5mi All categories Search

**MISSION**

The Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative envisions a future for Arkansas in which every school and community provides a healthy environment for every child. The Collaborative foresees leaders at every level who have developed supportive policies and programs, effective marketing, and streamlined communication and procurement processes to make farm to school an integrated cultural norm.

## Webinars and Trainings

### Summer Vegetable Garden Tour: Tomato Harvest

*August 19, 2021 at 2:00 PM*

Join Heifer USA Horticulture Specialist, Sarah Bakker, live on YouTube for a virtual, interactive tour! Heifer USA will show you around their 3.5-acre certified organic Market Garden located in Perryville, AR, and answer questions live throughout the broadcast.



Do you have questions about crop and variety selection? Trellising and pruning? When to harvest? Then tune in to ask Sarah all about Heifer's Market Garden operation!

[Register Here](#)

### Funding and Sustainability Solution Webinar



**SGSO NETWORK**  
 School Garden Support Organization Network  
 A Learning Community of School Garden Support Professionals

*August 25, 2021 at 1:00 PM*

The School Garden Support Organization Network is hosting a webinar on funding and sustainability solutions for school gardens across the nation.

The webinar will explore challenges related to sustainably funding school garden programs and include information on fundraising, grant writing, and other revenue streams.



[Register Here](#)

## Successful Food Product Development for New Food Businesses: Managing Food Quality & Safety Webinar Series

*August 31st - September 2, 2021, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM everyday*

Are you an entrepreneur developing new and exciting products? Do you have questions about ensuring the safety of your product? If so, this is the program for you!

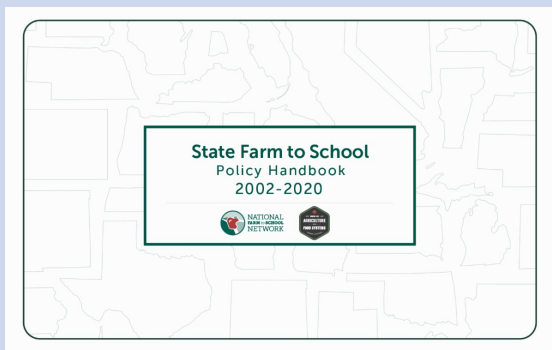
This program is designed specifically to address product development and food safety issues faced by small food processors.

Participants will learn food science basics, important considerations when developing a new food product, key elements required for product labeling, and be provided an overview of key regulatory requirements for small and emerging food businesses, such as entrepreneurs and local food processors.



[Register Here](#)

## National Updates and Resources



### State Farm to School Policy Handbook: 2002-2020

The National Farm to School Network and the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School have released a new resource for farm to school policy advocates.

The Handbook summarizes and analyzes every proposed farm to school bill and resolution introduced between January 1, 2002, and December 31, 2020, from the 50 states, District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. It enables readers to search bills by both jurisdiction and topic, and includes analysis of trends, case studies, advocacy resources, and more.

Arkansas bills and policies are included in the handbook. This resource can be a great reference for local farm to school programs, so be sure to check it out!

[View Handbook](#)

**USDA Farm to School Census**

## New Data

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released the 2019 Farm to School Census, and the data shows that farm to school continues to grow!

During the 2018-2019 school year, 65.4% of school food authorities (SFAs) reported participating in farm to school activities, reaching up to 42.8 million students, and investing \$1.2 billion into communities through local food purchase.

Learn more and see what the data shows about Arkansas by clicking below!



[View Census Data](#)

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### William T. Grant Foundation - Institutional Challenge Grants

*Deadline: September 14, 2021*



The Institutional Challenge Grant, offered by the William T. Grant Foundation, encourages university-based research institutes, schools, and centers to build sustained research-practice partnerships with public agencies or nonprofit organizations in order to reduce inequality in youth outcomes.

Applications are being welcomed from partnerships in youth-serving areas such as education, justice, child welfare, mental health, immigration, and workforce development. They especially encourage proposals from teams with African American, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American members in leadership roles. [Apply here.](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



## September 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.

### Welcome Our New Team Member!



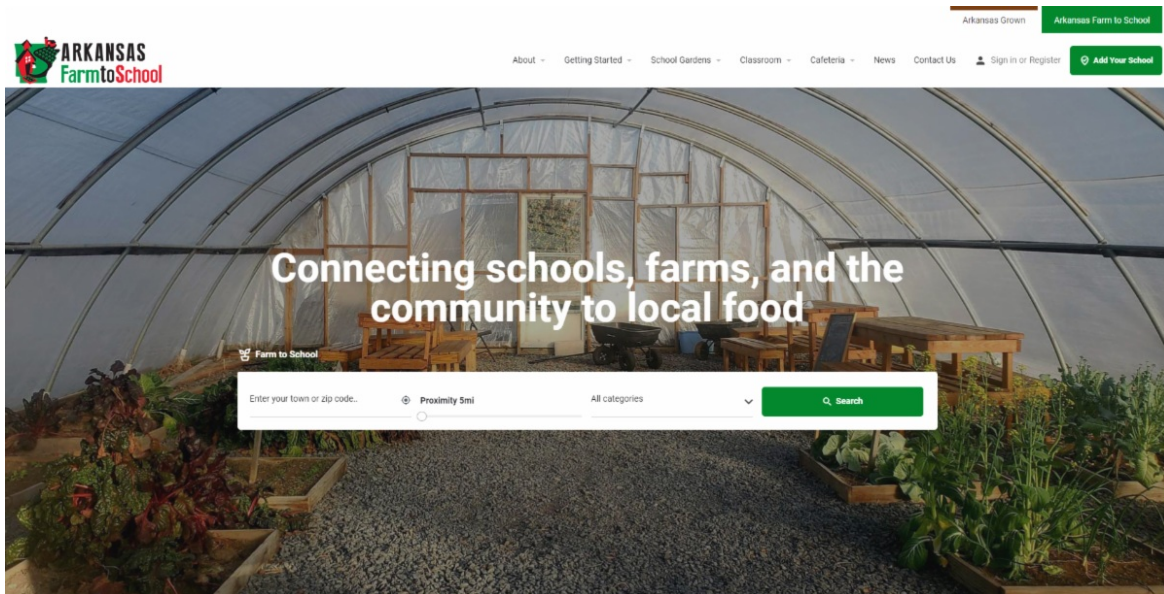
#### **State School Garden Manager**

We are excited to introduce Erica Benoit who recently joined the farm to school team as the State School Garden Manager! Erica will provide technical assistance to schools, develop farm to school resources, host webinars and trainings, and lead the school garden contest and grant program. Welcome, Erica!

Erica Benoit recently moved back to her home state of Arkansas with her partner and dog after completing her Master of Environmental Studies degree from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. For the last three years, Erica has worked for the Sustainability in Prisons Project to provide environmental education

and nature access to incarcerated individuals in Washington State prisons. Before this, Erica graduated from Hendrix College in 2017 with a Bachelors in Environmental Studies/Spanish and then served as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the Arkansas Children's Research Institute, the former National Farm to School Network's Core Partner for Arkansas. Erica's passion for food justice has fueled all her career and academic endeavors, and she is excited to continue this important work in a new capacity.

## New Arkansas Farm to School Website!



The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce the launch of a new multi-platform website that partners Arkansas Farm to School, [arfarmtoschool.org](http://arfarmtoschool.org), with Arkansas Grown, [arkansasgrown.org](http://arkansasgrown.org). It is the first website of its kind that connects farm to school to a state's local food branding programs.

The connected website was developed by MHP/Team SI and offers many features, including interactive maps of school gardens, local procurement activities, farms, and producers across the state. Farmers and producers can search on [arfarmtoschool.org](http://arfarmtoschool.org) to find contact information for school districts that buy local food. Alternatively, schools can find contact information on [arkansasgrown.org](http://arkansasgrown.org) for farmers and producers when searching the site for sources to buy local food.

Schools that add or update school garden and local procurement information on the website will receive a **FREE Arkansas Farm to School plaque** that can be displayed in the school garden or cafeteria. With Arkansas Farm to School Month coming up in less than 30 days, this is a great way to kickstart your school garden, agriculture education, and local procurement activities.

Receive a  
**FREE**  
Farm to  
School

# Plaque!

Add or update your farm to school listing to qualify for the promotion.

Promotion Available:  
September 1 - October 31, 2021  
Supplies Limited

[Visit Website](#)



## Farm to School Opportunities

### Adopt A Cow Program

*Sign-Up Deadline: September 15, 2021*



[Sign-Up Here](#)

The Discover Dairy “Adopt a Cow” program is an exciting, year-long experience for your classroom. Through the program, schools will get an inside look at dairy farming and be paired with a calf from a dairy farm in the United States. Schools will find out her name, birthday, where she lives, and how the farmer takes care of her.

Schools will also receive progress updates, photos of the calf, live chats from the farm, activity sheets for students, suggested lessons that follow Common CORE standards, and even opportunities to write letters to the calf!

### RESCHEDULED: Funding & Financial Sustainability Solution Webinar

*September 22, 2021 at 2:00 PM*

The School Garden Support Organization Network is hosting a webinar on funding and sustainability solutions for school gardens across the nation.



The webinar will explore challenges related to sustainably funding school garden programs and include information on fundraising, grant writing, and other revenue streams.

[Register Here](#)

## Grants and Funding

### **Be Mighty Equipment and Supplies Grant (Little Rock)**

*Amount: \$5,000*

*Deadline: September 17, 2021*

Be Mighty has created an equipment and supplies grant for the Little Rock community through generous funding from the National Recreation & Parks Association Nutrition Hub Grant.

The application is open for organizations such as community centers, libraries, and schools to request equipment that will support USDA meals and/or nutrition and garden education programming in Little Rock. The goal of the grant is to expand organizational capacity to serve meals, conduct nutrition education programming, or develop and maintain a community garden.

### **Be Mighty Equipment & Supplies Grant**

WHO: Local organizations, community centers, schools, and others in Little Rock, AR

WHAT: Request equipment & supplies up to \$5,000

WHY: Expanding capacity to serve USDA meals, conduct nutrition education programming, or develop and maintain community gardens for educational purposes

WHERE & WHEN: Apply online before 5:00 p.m. on September 17, 2021

Contact Jasmine ([jzandi@cals.org](mailto:jzandi@cals.org)) for more information.

[Apply Here](#)

### **Big Green Jumpstart Garden Grant**

*Amount: \$2,000*

*Deadline: September 21, 2021*



[Apply Here](#)

Schools that already have a garden, are teaching in the garden or have plans to do so soon, and need more funding to engage more children in outdoor learning can apply for this exciting new opportunity!

Schools interested in applying must attend a Grantseeker Webinar on September 15, 2021.

### **Cooking Matters Stipends**

*Amount: \$1000 for family classes and \$600 for student classes*

Cooking Matters is a hands-on food skills education program that empowers families with the skills they need to cook and shop healthy on a budget.

Programming options include: 6-session cooking and nutrition classes, 1-time grocery store tours, virtual programming options for parents, and a universal lesson plan for teachers.

For more information or to apply, contact Nutrition Director, Samantha Stadter at [ssstadter@arhungeralliance.org](mailto:ssstadter@arhungeralliance.org).

### Course Stipends Available

Funding available for Cooking Matters classes with parents, families, or kids



Stipends can be used to cover the costs of class groceries, teaching materials, cooking equipment, childcare or participant transportation.

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### Visit Our Website



# ARKANSAS Farm to School



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



## October 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.

### Hiring Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator!

The Program is hiring a Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator! The Program Coordinator directs and manages the Department's school garden, education, and local procurement activities. This includes farm to school programs, grants, contests, trainings, resources, reports, marketing, and communication. The Program Coordinator also provides technical expertise and assistance to schools, early childhood education facilities, local farmers, and other institutions and farm to school stakeholders.



[Apply Here](#)

October is Farm to School Month!



# ARKANSAS FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH 2021

## Overview of Activities



The graphic features four circular icons and a central illustration. The icons are: 'Website Promotion' (September 1 - October 31, 2021) in a green circle; 'Great Farm to School Transformation' (October 1 - 31, 2021) in a blue circle; 'Virtual Farm Tour' (October 14, 2021 at 9:00 AM) in an orange circle; and 'Farm to School Grants and Funding' (Due in October and November) in a purple circle. The central illustration shows a group of diverse people, including children and adults, gathered around a table with various farm products like milk, eggs, and produce. The text 'ARKANSAS Farm to School MONTH' is at the top of the illustration, and 'Connecting Schools, Farms, and the Community to Local Food.' is at the bottom.

October is Arkansas Farm to School Month! Arkansas has been formally recognizing Arkansas Farm to School Month since 2014 when then-governor Mike Beebe first proclaimed October as Arkansas Farm to School Month. Governor Asa Hutchinson has continued the tradition every year since. Find the Governor’s 2021 Arkansas Farm to School Month proclamation [here](#).

This year, Arkansas Farm to School Month is themed “Connecting Schools, Farms, and the Community to Local Food.” Check out some of the opportunities below to see some of the many ways you can get involved! The Arkansas Department of Agriculture has also created a [media and promotion toolkit](#) that includes resources, graphics, language, and examples to help schools, farms, and individuals promote their Arkansas Farm to School activities.

[Learn More Here](#)

## Farm to School Opportunities

### Virtual Farm Tour

*October 14, 2021, 9:00 a.m.*

### VIRTUAL FARM TOUR

October 14, 2021 9:00 - 9:45 a.m. CST



Have you ever wondered where your ice-cold milk came from? Or how long it takes for milk to travel from farm to table? Your classroom is invited to join us for a FREE live Virtual Farm Tour of Triple A Farms in Bentonville, Arkansas. The link to view the live stream will be included in your confirmation and reminder emails.

This tour is brought to you by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, the Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative, Midwest Dairy, and Discover Dairy.

[Register Here](#)

## National Farm to School Virtual Event: Shifting Towards the Next Generation

October 14, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

Join the National Farm to School Network (NFSN) for a virtual Movement Meeting featuring young leaders of color working to transform their community. The discussion will open with how the food movement intersects with racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, and other key justice-centered movements. A crucial step towards NFSN's vision of a just food system for all is centering the voices of our next generation of leaders.



[Register Here](#)

## School Food Service and School Gardens Webinar

October 20, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.



[Register Here](#)

Join the School Garden Support Organization Network (SGSO) for a webinar discussing how school gardens can be intertwined with the work of school nutrition programs. SGSO will share case studies related to school food service program funding and staffing support of school gardens, garden to cafeteria programs, and policies to support school gardening efforts. Bring your questions and ideas to share as time will be allowed for Question and Answer.

## Grants and Funding

### Budding Botanist Grant

Amount: \$1,000

Deadline: October 29, 2021



**KLORANE  
BOTANICAL  
FOUNDATION**

CORPORATE FOUNDATION FOR THE PROTECTION  
AND THE PROMOTION OF PLANT HERITAGE

The Klorane Botanical Foundation is committed to supporting programs to teach respect for the environment and protect nature through the preservation of plant species and biodiversity. Designed to further their mission, the Budding Botanist Grant will help our youngest citizens learn about plants, explore their

[Learn More Here](#)

world, and inspire them to take care of the life they discover in their local ecosystems. In early 2022, eighteen high-need schools across the United States will be awarded \$1000 in grant funding to support their youth garden programs.

## Gro-More Good Garden Grant

*Amount: \$2,000-\$5,000*

*Deadline: November 15, 2021*

The Gro-More Gardens Initiative, sponsored by the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, will be awarding garden grants to supplement needs of existing garden projects and to help launch new garden projects. The Initiative will be awarding a total of \$50,000 in grant awards. Recipients will also receive a gift card for the purchase of garden curriculum materials, tools, and additional gardening resources



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

[Learn More Here](#)

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[Visit Our Website](#)



**ARKANSAS Farm to School**



# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program

## November 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.

### Applications Now Open for Arkansas Farm to School Grants

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for the second-annual **Arkansas School Garden Grant Program** and the new **Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program** to help schools start or expand farm to school activities. The grant programs are 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 already have existing farm to school activities or they are just getting started with school gardens and local procurement.

## FARM TO SCHOOL GRANTS AND FUNDING

Applications are now open and will close on November 30, 2021.



Arkansas School Garden Grant Program	Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program
Schools can apply for a \$500 grant to start or expand their school garden. A total of 60 school garden grants will be awarded. 	Schools can apply for a \$250 grant to host school-wide cafeteria taste tests. A total of 60 taste test grants will be awarded. 

Applications for both grants will be accepted through November 30, 2021. More information about the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program and Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program can be found at: [agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture/farm-to-school/](https://agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture/farm-to-school/) or by contacting Erica Benoit at [erica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:erica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov) and Shannon Newerth-Henson at [shannon.henson@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:shannon.henson@agriculture.arkansas.gov).

## 2021 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Winners Announced



The Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas announced the 2021 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year contest winners. Congratulations to the 10 winning schools on this achievement!

- Best Start-up School Garden Proposal, \$500 Awards: Blevins High School and Quitman Elementary School
- Best Education Based School Garden, \$500 Awards: Ouachita Elementary School and Sheridan Elementary School
- Best Harvest Partnership School Garden, \$500 Awards: The Delta School and First Friends Preschool
- Best Community Collaboration School Garden, \$500 Awards: Ozark Junior High School and Retta Brown ABC
- Best Overall School Garden, \$1,000 Award: Cedarville Elementary School
- Champion of School Garden Sustainability, \$1,000 Award: Forest Park Elementary School

Find the official press release announcing this year's winners [here](#).

Watch the announcement video [here](#)!



## 2022 USDA Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA)

*Amount: up to \$500,000*

*Deadline: January 10, 2022*



The 2022 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA) is

now available! The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) seeks to award up to \$12 million this fiscal year. Eligible schools, institutions operating the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program, State and local agencies, Indian Tribal Organizations, small- to medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- to medium-sized agricultural producers, and non-profit organizations are eligible for Farm to School grants.

[Please see the RFA for full details.](#) The Office of Community Food Systems will host webinars [Monday, November 8th, 2021](#) and [Tuesday, November 9th, 2021](#), each at 2:30pm ET, to help interested applicants learn more about the RFA and put together a grant package, respectively.

Additional information is available through the [Farm to School Grant Applicant Resources Page](#) of the FNS website.

[Learn More Here](#)

## Growing My Plate Survey Results

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council – Full Circle FarmCorps, and AmeriCorps VISTA, compiled survey findings for the Growing My Plate courses delivered by Full



Circle FarmCorps members in the summer of 2021. The Growing My Plate program empowers students with cooking skills, nutrition knowledge, and a desire to prepare healthy foods. Results of the Growing My Plate Survey were released in October and are available [here](#).

## Grants and Funding

### Youth Garden Grant

*Amount: \$1,050 – \$2,200*

*Deadline: December 17, 2021*

A total of 50 programs will be awarded Youth Garden Grants in 2022. All winning programs will receive a check for \$250, and materials to grow their garden program. Forty programs will receive packages worth \$1,050, five programs will receive the base package plus a \$1,000 tool grant from Corona Tools, and five programs will receive the base package plus two Garden Towers from Garden Tower Project! Any nonprofit organization,



public or private school, or youth program in the United States or US Territories planning a new garden program or expanding an established one that serves at least 15 youth between the ages of 3 and 18 is eligible to apply.

[Learn More Here](#)

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## Training Opportunities

### Regional School Garden Support Models

*November 17, 2012, 1:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. CT*

[Register Here](#)

Are you seeking ways to more effectively support a large or larger number of school gardens? Discussion will include activities that regional support organizations provide and sharing of a framework to enhance your work supporting multiple school gardens. In preparation for this webinar, please complete this [template](#).



[Visit Our Website](#)





# Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



## December 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.

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### Farm to School Coordinator Announced

We are excited to announce that Erica Benoit has accepted the position of Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. Before moving into this position, Erica was the Department's State School Garden Manager.

Erica is an Arkansas native, though she spent the last few years in Washington State earning her Master of Environmental Studies degree. While there, she also worked for the Sustainability in Prisons Project providing environmental education and nature access to incarcerated individuals in Washington State prisons. Erica graduated from Hendrix College in 2017 with a Bachelor in Environmental Studies/Spanish and then served as an AmeriCorps VISTA service member at the Arkansas Children's Research Institute, the National Farm to School Network's former core partner for Arkansas. Erica's passion for food justice has fueled all her career and academic endeavors, and she is excited to continue this important work in a new capacity.




Reach Erica via email at [aterica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:aterica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov).



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### Farm to School Grants Deadline Reminder





## FARM TO SCHOOL GRANTS AND FUNDING

Arkansas School Garden Grant Program	Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program
<p>Schools can apply for a \$500 grant to start or expand their school garden. A total of 60 school garden grants will be awarded.</p> 	<p>Schools can apply for a \$250 grant to host school-wide cafeteria taste tests. A total of 30 taste test grants will be awarded.</p> 

Applications now accepted through December 10, 2021.

The deadline to submit applications for the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program and the Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program is this Friday, December 10, 2021. Applicants are welcome to apply for both grant opportunities through the same [application](#).

The grant programs were established by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture to help schools start or expand farm to school activities. The grant

programs are 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 already have existing farm to school activities or they are just getting started with school gardens and local procurement.

More information about the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program and Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program can be found [here](#), or by contacting Erica Benoit at [erica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:erica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov).

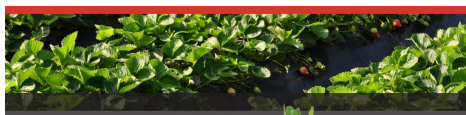
Apply Here

## Farm to School Opportunities

### Sanitation for Strawberry Growers Training

*Choose between December 14, 2021, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. CT or January 11, 2021, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT*

Register Here



SANITATION FOR  
**STRAWBERRY GROWERS**  
An **ONLINE** Supplemental Curriculum to PSA Grower Training



Are you interested in or planning to grow strawberries in your school garden? The Arkansas Produce Safety team at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, along with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture and Clemson University, are offering a **FREE**

produce safety grower training focused on food and farm safety for strawberry production. Many of the safety practices and principles taught in this training can be applied beyond just strawberries!

### Growing School Gardens Summit

*April 22-25, 2022 in Denver, Colorado*

Register Here

# GROWING SCHOOL GARDENS SUMMIT

April 22-25, 2022



A gathering to inform, inspire & invigorate the school garden movement

The Growing School Gardens Summit, hosted by the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation in partnership with Life Lab and the School Garden Support Organization (SGSO) Network, is the first-ever national gathering focused entirely on school gardening. The summit is designed to unite educators and leaders to share innovations and promising practices and to harness our collective power to strengthen and sustain the school garden movement.

## Grants and Funding

### Gro More Good Garden Grant

*Amount: \$2,500 - \$5,000*

*Deadline: December 15, 2021*

In collaboration with the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation and KidsGardening, the National Head Start Association's Gro More Good Garden Grants Initiative will award garden grants to supplement needs of existing garden projects and to help launch new garden or outdoor green space projects. The Initiative will award a total of \$50,000 in grant awards. Grant amounts will vary depending on the demonstrated need and application proposal provided.

[Learn More Here](#)



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

### Youth Garden Grant

*Amount: \$1,050 - \$2,200*

*Deadline: December 17, 2021*

KidsGardening will award Youth Garden Grants to a total of 50 programs in 2022. All winning programs will receive a check for \$250, and materials to grow their garden program. Forty programs will receive packages worth \$1,050, five programs will receive the base package plus a \$1,000 tool grant from Corona Tools, and five programs will receive the base package plus two Garden Towers from Garden Tower Project! Any nonprofit organization, public or private school, or youth program in the United States or U.S.

[Learn More Here](#)

Territories planning a new garden program or expanding an established one that serves at least 15 youth between the ages of 3 and 18 is eligible to apply.



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[Visit Our Website](#)

 **ARKANSAS Farm to School**

The logo icon features a red house with a white chimney, a green field, and a red tractor, all enclosed within a green circular border.