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Arkansas Farm to School Institute Accepting Applications Until February 28

LITTLE ROCK, AR –The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (Department) is now accepting applications for the Arkansas Farm to School Institute (Institute), a year-long professional development program designed to help schools enhance their farm to school initiatives. Schools wishing to expand local food procurement, create school gardens, and integrate agricultural education into their curriculum are encouraged to apply by February 28, 2025. Up to 15 schools will be selected to participate for the 2025-2026 school year.

The Institute offers training, resources, and hands-on support to school educators, administrators, nutrition staff, local farmers, and community partners. Each selected school will receive:

- A summer retreat to develop a collaborative action plan for integrating school gardens, local food procurement, and agricultural education
- A \$1,000 implementation grant to help execute their farm to school action plan
- Ongoing support throughout the year from Department staff and expert coaches

“By connecting schools with local food producers and agricultural educators, the Institute supports the growth of farm to school programs across Arkansas,” said Jessica Chapman, Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator. “This is an exciting opportunity for schools to build lasting programs that benefit their students, communities, and local farmers.”

In addition to the Institute, selected schools can participate in the Arkansas School Garden Project. Through this program, up to five teachers per school will be able to complete a professional development course on school gardening. Upon course completion, each teacher will receive a \$1,000 grant to enhance their school garden.

Interested schools can apply now and learn more [here](#).

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources conservation to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while sustaining natural resources and ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For more information, visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/.