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Farm to School Efforts Supporting Resilient Local Food Systems

Julie Brewer, Director

USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS)

Agriculture Outlook Forum 2021

USDA Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS)

Our 3 Pillars of Work:

1. Distribute grant funding to improve access to local foods in schools.
2. Disseminate research and data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.
3. Provide training and technical assistance to improve access to local foods in schools.

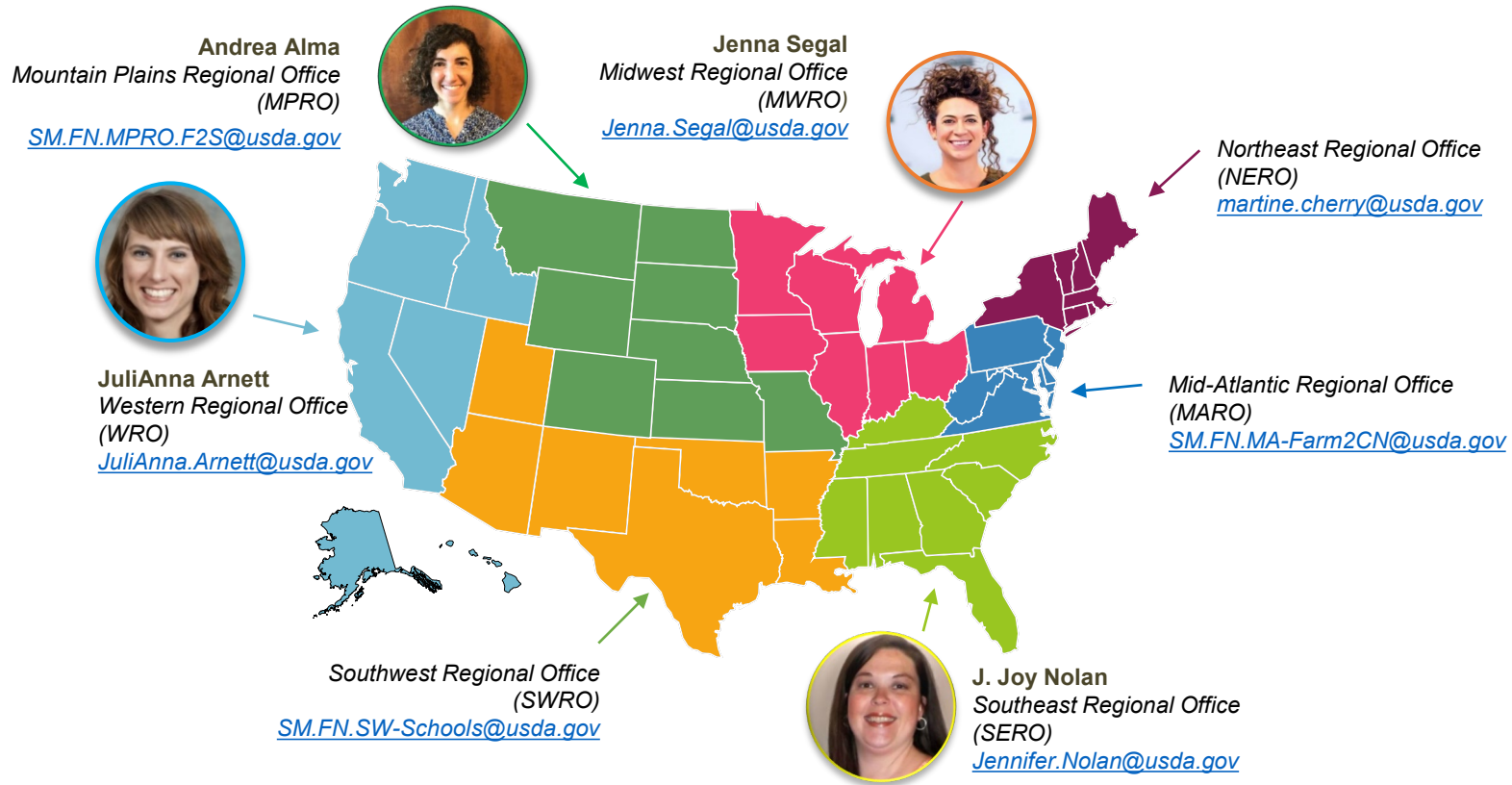


Farm to School Grant Program



- **FY 2020 USDA awarded \$12.1 million to 159 grantees**
- **Since 2013, USDA has awarded over \$52 million to 719 grantees**

OCFS Regional Staff



Fact Sheets

Community Food Systems Fact Sheets

HOME > COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

Resource Type
Fact Sheets



General Overviews

- [Office of Community Food Systems Resources](#)
- [Research Shows Farm to School Works](#)
- [Integrating Local Foods into Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Selling Local Food to Schools: A Resource for Producers](#)
- [How Cooperative Extension Professionals Can Support Farm to School Programs](#)
- [Effective Strategies State Agencies Can Use to Support Community Food Systems](#)
- [Farm to Child Nutrition Programs Planning Guide](#)

Special Topics

- [School Gardens: Using Gardens to Grow Healthy Habits in Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Communities](#)
- [Bringing Tribal Foods and Traditions into Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Gardens](#)
- [Gardens in Tribal Communities](#)

10 FACTS ABOUT LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOL CAFETERIAS

- 1. USDA supports and encourages the procurement of local foods.**

In USDA's vision, school cafeterias championing U.S. agriculture and proudly promoting locally sourced foods are the norm, not the exception.
- 2. The definition of "local" is different from school to school.**

Definitions for local vary widely depending on the unique geography and climate where a school is located and on the abundance of local food producers and manufacturers. Many schools define local as within a certain number of miles from the school, within the county, or within the state. Alternatively, definitions might include more than one state (i.e., Georgia, Alabama, and Florida) or discrete parts of several states (i.e., specific counties in southwest Washington, northeast Oregon, and Idaho). In addition, many schools use different definitions of local depending on the product or season.
- 3. Many local products are easy to find and source.**

Some products are more likely to be local than others. For example, fluid milk is produced in almost every state. Since milk is perishable and expensive to transport, most milk on school menus is relatively local. Similarly, schools in California serving avocado are likely using local avocados, while schools in Florida probably serve local citrus. Local products that are unique and/or abundant in a region are generally easier to find and source.
- 4. Food distributors and food service management companies can be great partners for local sourcing.**

Increasingly schools are including expectations regarding local sourcing in their contracts with food service management companies and/or distributors. Even without contractual obligations regarding local, many distributors already offer local products so all a school needs to do is find out what items on the contracted list are local and order those products. This approach is a very easy way to bring local products into schools without creating separate distribution channels.
- 5. Locally sourced fruits and vegetables are available through the DoD Fresh Program.**

Schools can elect to spend a portion of their USDA Foods entitlement money on fresh fruits and vegetables through the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, operated by the Department of Defense. To supply fresh fruits and vegetables to schools, DoD contracts with over 45 produce vendors across the country. DoD Fresh vendors often have local products and they identify them as such in the FFAVORS catalogue.

THE FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM

Farm to School Producer Training

Help agricultural producers build their capacity to launch or expand efforts to market to schools, therefore increasing farm to school activity in schools.



NATIONAL CENTER
FOR APPROPRIATE
TECHNOLOGY



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK



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COMMUNITY
FOOD SYSTEMS

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Our E-Letter, the Dirt!



United States Department of Agriculture

Volume 1, Issue 2, October 20, 2015

The Dirt

News and Notes from FNS's Office of Community Food Systems



Subscribe at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs>



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Coming Soon!

USDA FARM *to*
 **SCHOOL**
2019 CENSUS



Supporting Farm to School Efforts in 2020



Gardens



Brooklyn Center Schools (MN), FY 2018 Implementation Grantee

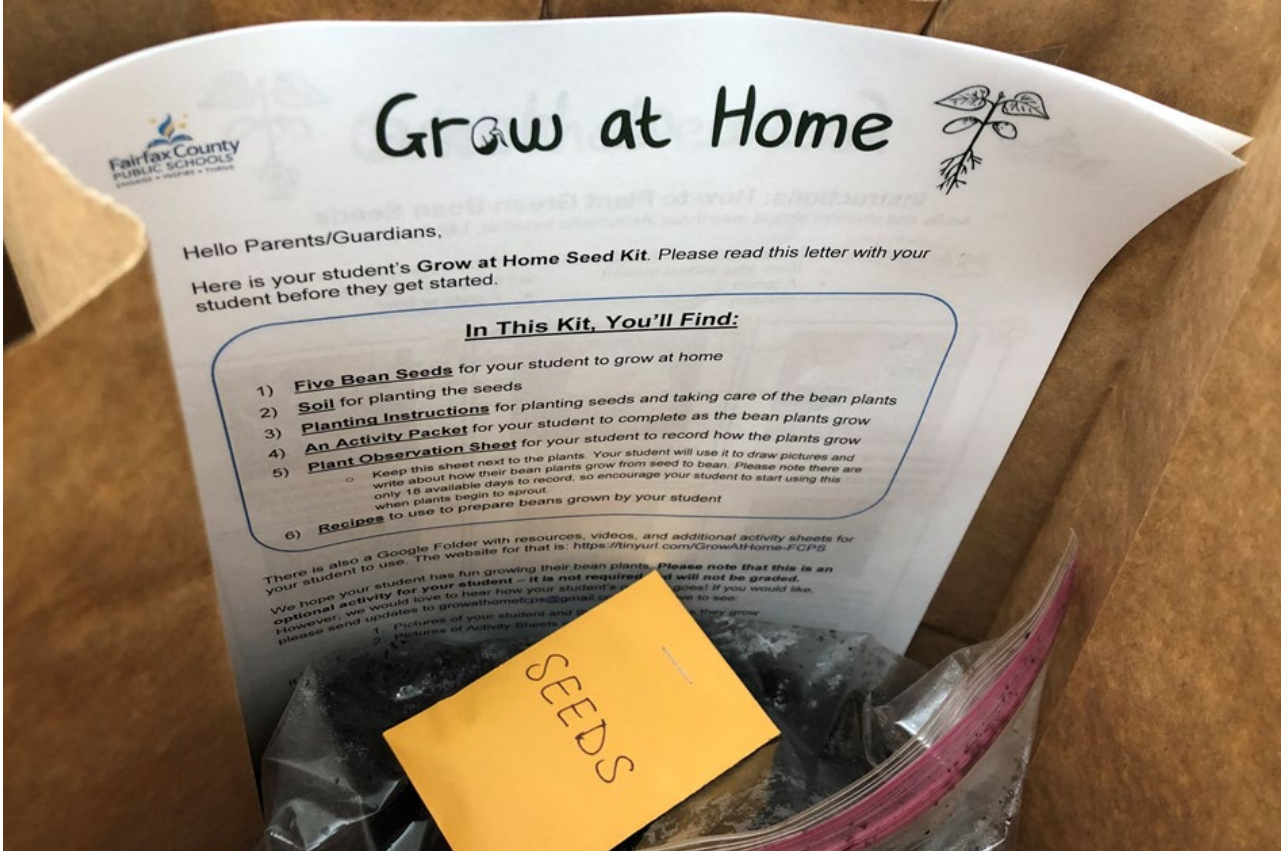






Fairfax County Public Schools (VA), FY 2019 Planning Grantee





7. Use a spoon to fill the milk carton with soil $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full (about a fingernail's length from the top).

8. Now it is time to plant the seed! Use your finger to make a little hole in the soil.

9. Place one seed inside the hole

9. Find a sunny spot for your





Agriculture Education



Urban Roots(NV), FY 2019 Implementation Grantee



urban  roots



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FRESHFARM





Local Procurement





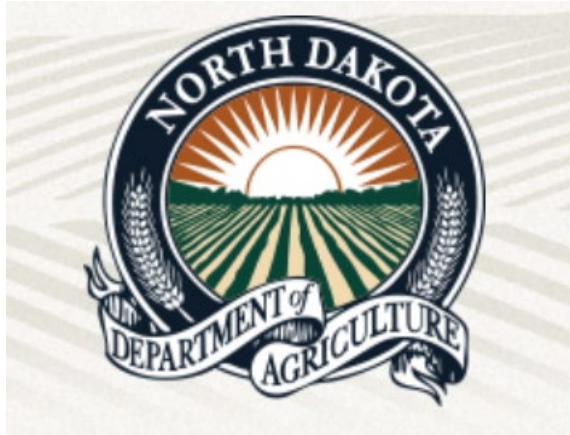
Need More Acres Farms

Kentucky Department of Ag, FY 2018 Implementation Grantee



Concrete School District (WA), FY 2016 Implementation Grantee
United General District 304 (WA), FY 2018 Planning Grantee





LOCAL FOODS DIRECTORY MAP

<https://www.nd.gov/ndda/NDLFMAP>



**Navigating a Changing Food Supply Chain
During COVID-19 School Closures**

[https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/coronavirus/pdfs/
NavigatingFoodSupply-COVID-19.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/coronavirus/pdfs/NavigatingFoodSupply-COVID-19.pdf)



West Virginia Department of Agriculture 2020 State Agency Grant



Thank You!

Please contact

SM.FN.FarmToSchool@usda.gov

**for any questions regarding
OCFS resources and the Farm to
School Grant Program!**



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