

# **D.C. Farm to School Network**

**Building Healthy Communities**

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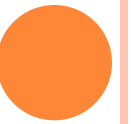
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# What is a School Food Community?







# What is a Healthy School Meal?



Funding



Refrigeration

Food supply

Transportation

# Community

Equipment

Staff Capacity

Politics

Creativity

Leadership

Culinary Skills

USDA Guidelines

Processing

Government

Participation

Money

Customer Satisfaction



Kick-backs

Washing facilities

Seasonality



Staff buy-in



# Why are Healthy School Meals Important?

- 78,000 school aged children in D.C.
- Nearly 80% eligible for free/reduced price meals
- Nearly 1 in 2 at risk of hunger
- Many kids get most (if not all) their main meals and snacks each day at school
- Better attention span, capacity to learn, growth & development, mood/attitude
- Opportunity to learn healthy eating habits for life





# What is Farm to School?

**A connection between school and a nearby farm that aims to:**

- serve healthy meals in school cafeterias;
- improve student nutrition;
- provide health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime; and
- support local farms.



# What do Farm to School Programs Look Like?

- Grower delivers apples to 5 schools every Tuesday
- School picks up at the farmers' market
- School chooses local foods when ordering from distributor
- Local foods in salad bars, hot lunch, snacks, events
- Connect to gardens, field trips, classroom curricula, nutrition education, taste tests...





# Why are Farm to School Programs Important?

- **Serve high-quality foods** picked at the peak of their flavor and nutrient content that kids eat and love!
- **Build an appreciation** for nutrition, agriculture, food and the environment.
- **Lower the risk of obesity** and other serious diet-related diseases.
- **Promote optimal health**, growth, energy levels and intellectual development.
- **Support the local farm and food economy** and preserve open space in our neighboring states.
- **Reduce the school food carbon footprint** because food doesn't have to travel thousands of miles from farm to cafeteria.
- **Support sustainable agriculture** and the minimal use of harmful chemicals, additives and hormones.
- **Encourage lasting healthy eating habits** in schools that spread to families and communities.
- **Increase school meal participation** rates (and thus increase revenues for school food service operations)
- **Engage youth** in nutrition, food, agricultural, and environmental issues.



When schools **serve** healthy, local foods  
and kids are **excited** about those  
foods, they like them and **EAT THEM!**



# What is the D.C. Farm to School Network?

- A coalition of advocates working to incorporate more healthy, local foods into Washington, DC school meals
  - Outreach/communication
  - Education
  - Direct Assistance/matchmaking
  - Advocacy



# Major Accomplishments

- Hundreds of members
- Website, newsletter, meetings
- Farm to School Week
- Healthy School Meals Workshop
- Healthy Schools Act
- Relationships/  
Connections





# Partners



- Parents
- Principals
- Teachers (Science, Art, Gym...)
- Garden Educators
- Master Gardeners
- Chefs
- Food Service Providers
- Growers
- Farmers' Markets
- Distributors
- Media



# Getting Started

- Listen and learn
- Know your school food community
- Make friends in your school food community – find key changemakers
- Leverage existing partners and advocates
- Identify needs – Supply? Demand? Policy? Education?
- Think small – apples
- Farm to School Day/Event/Week



## Tools & Resources

- D.C. Farm to School Network - [www.dcfarmtoschool.org](http://www.dcfarmtoschool.org)
- National Farm to School Network - [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)
- Let's Move – [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)
- School Food FOCUS – [www.schoolfoodfocus.org](http://www.schoolfoodfocus.org)
- The Lunch Box – [www.thelunchbox.org](http://www.thelunchbox.org)



Thank You!

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