

Farm to CACFP: Getting Started Toolkit

Quick Reference Guide

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Best Practices

Local Food Sourcing & Menu Integration

Step-by-Step: How to Start Sourcing Local Foods

1. **Learn about what products are available** when using seasonality charts, visiting local farmers markets, etc.
2. **Pick 1–2 local food items** to introduce (e.g., apples, carrots, yogurt) into your menu.
3. **Check if your current vendor** carries WA-grown items — ask for details.
 - You may also consider sourcing from local grocery stores, food hubs, CSA boxes, or farm stands — ask vendors about Washington-grown items.
4. **Use these tools to find producers:**
 - [Eat Local First Finder](#)
 - [WSDA](#)
 - Connect with your local [Conservation District](#)
5. **Confirm documentation requirements:**
 - Farm name and location on invoices
 - See the items listed under 'Compliance Essentials' on page 2
6. **Place a small trial order** and test integration into your menu or taste tests/samples.

**These steps are recommended best practices and can be adjusted based on your site's capacity.*

Seasonal Planning Tools

- [F2P-WA Seasonality Chart \(2023\)](#)
- [Harvest of the Month Resources](#)
- [Eat Local First Seasonality Chart](#)

Pro Tip: Tie meals to student activities!

- [USDA "Grow It, Try It, Like It!"](#)
- [WSDA Farm to Preschool Toolkit](#)



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

- [National Ag in the Classroom lessons](#)
- Washington Farm to School Network:
 - [Gardening](#)
 - [Education](#)
 - [safely start a garden & serve garden produce to kids](#)
- [Harvest for Healthy Kids](#)

Procurement & Documentation for CACFP Sponsors

Procurement Methods and Thresholds for Food Purchases:

- Micro-purchase: <\$10,000
- Small purchase: \$10,000–\$250,000
- Formal bid: >\$250,000

Compliance Essentials:

- All foods must meet CACFP meal pattern requirements.
- Use the USDA Food Buying Guide or the CACFP Crediting Handbook to confirm crediting.
- For record retention, save all records that support the claim for three years plus the current program year, or follow the sponsor's retention schedule if applicable. ([eCFR :: 7 CFR Part 226 -- Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)).

Purchases (examples):

- Whole produce (apples, carrots, spinach)
- Frozen/dried fruit from WA processors
- Milk, yogurt, cheese from WA dairies
- Meat or eggs from USDA-inspected WA farms
- (Including WA-grown items sourced from food hubs, grocery stores, or direct from farms, when properly documented)

Need Help?

- OSPI: farmtocnp@k12.wa.us
- WSDA: farmtoschool@agr.wa.gov

We're here to support your Farm to CACFP goals!

Resource Links & Tools

General Best Practice for CACFP:

Incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods into meals.

Here is a list of tools and resources that can help you incorporate seasonal produce, depending on your program's capacity and needs:

 Local Vendor Search Tools:	
WSDA Finding Farms Webpage	
Eat Local First WA Food & Farm Finder	
WA Farmers Market Directory	
Native Grown + Gathered	
ICN: Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs	
Local Food Directories- Food Hub Directory	
 Compliance & Crediting Tools	
Meat-to-School Reference Sheet	
USDA Food Buying Guide	
Seattle Farm to Preschool: Wholesale Veggie Tool	
USDA Crediting Handbook for CACFP	
 Seasonal Planning & Harvest Of the Month (HOM) Materials:	
WA Seasonality Chart (F2P-WA)	• Washington Grown Seasonality Chart - Vegetables Spanish Version - Vegetables • Washington Grown Seasonality Chart - Fruit and Herbs • Spanish Version - Fruta y Hierbas
OSPI Harvest of the Month	
Eat Local First Wholesale Seasonality Guide	
Farm to Preschool Local Food Purchasing Seasonality Chart	
 Nutrition Education & Engagement Resources:	
Grow It, Try It, Like It (USDA)	
WSDA Farm to Preschool	
Seattle Farm to Preschool: Curriculum	
National Ag in the Classroom – Farmers Market Finds	
USDA VegU Program	
FoodMASTER: Fruits Activities	
Oregon Department of Education Harvest for Schools	

Louisiana Farm to Childcare Seeds to Success
Minnesota Farm to ECE Activities
Harvest for Healthy Kids
 Recipe Libraries:
ICN Child Nutrition Recipe Box
CACFP Recipe Library
Vermont FEED's New School Cuisine
OSU Food Hero
The Lunchbox
USDA MyPlate Kitchen – Recipes

Farm to CACFP Resources – Adult Care Focus

 Resources Directly Related to Adults in CACFP
California Department of Social Services – Farm to CACFP Comprehensive tip sheet for Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) settings. Includes gardening, local procurement, nutrition education ideas, and recipes.
Nebraska Department of Education – CACFP Week Resources While mostly Farm to ECE, scroll to the bottom for adult-focused tools.
Serving Adult Participants in the CACFP - USDA

 Broader Farm to CACFP Resources with Potential Adult Applications
USDA Local Foods in the CACFP – Policy Memo CACFP 11-2015 Clarifies allowability of using CACFP funds for local foods and gardening (including adults).
USDA SNAP-Ed Gardening Resources Adult-accessible gardening guides for nutrition education.
USDA MyPlate Kitchen – Recipes Includes accessible, low-cost, produce-centered recipes adaptable for adult menus.
 Multi-State or Regional Resources (ECE-Focused, May Be Adaptable for Adults)
Colorado Department of Public Health – Farm to Child Includes some adult training modules in its Education section.
Kansas Rural Center – Farm to School Provides training and outreach to both farmers and educators; may be transferable.
Missouri “Growing with Nutrition and Outdoors” (Growing with MO) Toolkit Contains adaptable curriculum and outreach for caregivers and educators.
ASPHN (Association of State Public Health Nutritionists) Resource bank from grantee projects, including some aimed at adult-serving populations.

[Farm to ECE State Resource Directory](#) (National Farm to School Network)
Some states (e.g., WA, MN, AL) include adult training content within ECE PD frameworks.

[Connecting Farm to ECE Standards](#) – Michigan State University
Guidance on how Farm to ECE activities like gardening, local sourcing, and nutrition education align with CACFP, QRIS, and Head Start frameworks. Ideal for programs working toward accreditation or quality improvement.

Definitions

 Resources Directly Related to Farm to CACFP	
Food Hub	○ Definition: A business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers. ○ Source: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Farmers Market	○ Definition: A recurring gathering of farmers or their representatives selling locally grown, raised, or produced foods directly to the public. ○ Source: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service via ERS
WSDA Farm to School Purchasing Grant	○ Definition: A Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) grant that provides funding to child nutrition sponsors such as schools, early learning sites, and child care centers, to purchase Washington-grown, raised, caught, or foraged foods for use in school and child care meals. ○ Source: WSDA Farm to School Program
Washington-Grown	○ Definition: A food product that is grown, raised, harvested, caught, or foraged within the state of Washington. ○ Source: See RCW
Local Food	○ Definition: While there is no single federal definition, "local" typically refers to food grown within a certain geographic radius (e.g., within Washington state or a specific region). For WSDA grants, it specifically refers to Washington-grown foods.

○ Source: USDA & WSDA
Seasonality ○ Definition: Refers to the time of year when a particular food is harvested and available fresh in the region. Incorporating seasonal items can improve flavor and reduce costs. ○ Source: Washington Seasonal Fruit & Produce Charts (WSDA)
Direct Purchasing ○ Definition: When a CACFP sponsor buys products directly from a farmer or producer, rather than through a distributor or third party. This typically involves simpler transactions and fewer intermediaries.
Micro-Purchase Threshold ○ Definition: The federal threshold (currently \$10,000) under which purchases may be made without competitive bidding, provided they are distributed equitably among qualified vendors. ○ Source: USDA Procurement Regulations
○ Definition: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs typically offer weekly boxes of local produce in exchange for upfront payment during the growing season. Farm boxes may offer more flexible options and are sometimes coordinated by food hubs. ○ Source: ATTRA – Sustainable Agriculture