

OSPI CNS Farm to Child Nutrition Programs Resource Reference Sheet

What is Farm to Child Nutrition?

Farm to Child Nutrition connects locally grown food to child nutrition programs in Washington state. It's about serving fresh, local food to children and promoting healthier eating habits. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) extends this concept to all child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option (SFSP/SSO), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Schools, daycares, and community sponsors can join this initiative to offer nutritious, locally sourced meals.

The following resources are geared toward cost-effective strategies with the sponsor in mind. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that only creditable meals are served and claimed per individual Child Nutrition Services (CNS) requirements. All resources linked here should be reviewed by sponsors for meal pattern compliance before revising menus and/or recipes. For crediting information use the [Food Buying Guide from the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#).

1. Getting Started with Farm to Child Nutrition Programs

New to Farm to Child Nutrition? These resources are designed for anyone looking to implement a new Farm to Child Nutrition program or those who are new to the position responsible for running the program. You'll find step-by-step guidance, planning tools, and best practices to help you launch successfully – from building partnerships and sourcing local foods to integrating them into menus and meeting program requirements.

NSLP/SFSP/SSO Sponsors

- [Getting Started – Farm to School Start-Up Kit – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [New to Farm to School – USDA](#)
- [Getting Started with Farm to School – National Farm to School Network](#)
- [Farm to School Planning Toolkit – USDA](#)
- [Farm to Summer Guide: What is it? – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Farm to Child Nutrition Programs Planning Guide – USDA](#)
- [Farm to Summer – USDA](#)

CACFP Sponsors

- [Farm to CACFP Guide: What is it? – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Farm to CACFP – USDA](#)
- [Farm to Preschool – WSDA Farm to School](#)



2. Procurement Rules and Regulations

Access guidance to ensure compliance with federal and state procurement requirements when purchasing local foods. These resources include policy overviews, step-by-step guides, and best practices to help you navigate competitive bidding, documentation, and allowable costs – supporting transparency and accountability in your program.

- [Procurement Reference Sheets – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Procurement and Geographic Preference – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [Procuring Local Foods – USDA](#)
- [Farm to School Procurement Online Training – OSPI](#) (NSLP/SFSP/SSO Sponsors only)

3. Finding Local Food Sources

Discover tools to help you identify and connect with local farms, producers, and distributors for your child nutrition program. These resources include directories, procurement guides, and networking opportunities to make sourcing fresh, local ingredients easier and more efficient.

- [Finding Farms – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [Local Farm Finder – Eat Local First \(Washington\)](#)
- [Find a Farmers Market – Washington State Farmers Market](#)
- [Farm to ECE: Local Procurement – Washington State Farm to School Network](#)
- [Local Food Directories – USDA Food Hub Directory](#)
- [Native-Owned Business Listings – Native Grown and Gathered](#)

4. Culinary Skills Training for Staff

Access resources designed to strengthen your team's culinary skills and confidence in preparing local foods. These tools include videos and best practices for knife skills, scratch cooking, and safe food handling – helping staff create appealing, nutritious meals that highlight fresh, local ingredients.

- [Culinary Skills Training | SNA Training Zone](#)
- [Culinary Resources – Georgia DOE – School Nutrition Division](#)
- [Raw Meat Culinary Training Videos and Handouts – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [Culinary Connections: Recorded Webinar Trainings – GaDOE Community](#)
- [Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition – A division of the Institute of Child Nutrition](#)

5. Developing Cycle Menus That Include Local Foods

Access tools to help create cycle menus that incorporate local foods with easy swap options for current menu items. These resources include sample menus and recipes for integrating seasonal and local ingredients into your menus. **Reminder:** *Sponsors are responsible for ensuring proper crediting and recipe standardization when making menu changes.*

- [Sample Menus – WSDA Farm to School](#)

- [WA Grown Food & Recipe Kit – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [65 Free Farm to School Recipes – The Chef Ann Foundation](#)
- [Meal Planning – Georgia DOE – School Nutrition Division](#)
- [Child Nutrition Recipe Box – USDA Standardized Recipes](#)
- [Scratch Recipes for School – The Lunch Box](#)
- [Recipes – National CACFP Sponsors Association](#)

6. Equipment to Process Local Foods

Explore resources that help you fund the purchase of equipment needed to process local foods for your child nutrition program. These tools include funding opportunities and tips for writing grants to fund the purchase of equipment.

- [Grants and Funding – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [Child Nutrition Grants – OSPI CNS](#)

7. Marketing and Promoting Local Foods

Find tools and strategies to showcase local foods in your program and engage your community. These resources include customizable marketing materials, promotional templates, and tips for highlighting farm to child nutrition program initiatives.

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- [Summer Meal Program & Farm to Summer Toolkit – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Farm to School Resources – National Farm to School Network](#)
- [Promotion and Educational Materials – WSDA](#)
- [Farm to School Guide Resources – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Farm to Summer Guide Resources – OSPI CNS](#)

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- [Farm to CACFP Outreach Guide – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Farm to CACFP webpage – OSPI CNS](#)
- [Garden Seasonal Storyline – Learning in Places](#)

8. Nutrition, Food, and Agriculture Education

Access a variety of tools to support engaging education around healthy eating, food systems, and agriculture. These resources include lesson plans, interactive activities, and curriculum guides that help students understand where food comes from, the importance of nutrition, and the role of agriculture in their communities.

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- [Washington Agriculture in the Classroom](#)
- [Team Nutrition – USDA](#)

- [Classroom Activities and Curricula – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [Career and Technical Education – WSDA Farm to School](#)
- [Farmers Market Finds Grades 3-5 – National Agriculture in the Classroom](#)
- [Oregon Department of Education Harvest for Schools](#)

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- [Farm to ECE: Food, Nutrition, and Agriculture Education – WA Farm to School Network](#)
- [Grow It, Try It, Like It! Fun with Fruits and Vegetables at Family Child Care – USDA](#)
- [Harvest for Healthy Kids – Mt. Hood Community College](#)
- [Activities for Pre-K – Louisiana Farm to School](#)
- [Farm to ECE Activities – Renewing the Countryside](#)
- [Program Materials – Seattle Farm to Preschool Program](#)
- [Connecting Farm to ECE – Michigan State University](#)

9. School Garden to Cafeteria Resources

Discover tools and guidance to help bring fresh, school-grown produce into your cafeteria. These resources support implementation of a School Garden to Cafeteria Program making it easier to connect the garden to the plate and promote healthy, local eating.

NSLP/SFSP/SSO Sponsors

- [School Agriculture & Garden Education \(SAGE\) – WA Farm to School Network](#)
- [School Garden Reference Sheet – OSPI CNS](#)
- [School Garden Resources – Life Lab](#)
- [Home – KidsGardening](#)

CACFP Sponsors

- [Farm to ECE: Gardening – WA Farm to School Network](#)
- [Gardening – SNAP-Ed](#)

10. Connecting with Peers

Looking to share ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and celebrate success? These resources are designed to connect with other sponsors engaged in Farm to Child Nutrition efforts. These tools include networking platforms, discussion forums, and collaborative spaces where you can exchange best practices and build stronger Farm to Child Nutrition partnerships.

- [Join Washington Farm to School Network](#)
- [Communities of Practice – WA Farm to School Network](#)
- [Stay Connected with Farm to School & ECE – National Farm to School Network](#)

Next Steps

Do you still have questions? Reach out to one of the Program Specialists below.

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Reference

- CACFP – Child and Adult Care Food Program
- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- DOE – Department of Education
- ECE – Early Childhood Education
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SFSP – Summer Food Service Program
- SNA – School Nutrition Association
- SSO – Seamless Summer Option
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
- WSDA – Washington State Department of Agriculture