

What is Farm to School?

Farm to school connects children to local agriculture through:

PROCUREMENT: Using locally grown foods in meals, snacks and Child Nutrition Programs like the National School Lunch Program. Our network uses the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as our definition of local. While this is the network's definition of local, the network acknowledges that schools, child care centers and summer programs have their own definitions of local.

SCHOOL GARDENS: Helping educators and students grow their own food.

HANDS-ON LEARNING: Providing experiential education through farm field trips, cooking in the classroom and more.



Mission & Goals of the Pennsylvania Farm to School Network:

Our mission is to leverage and build upon our collective resources and shared vision to cultivate farm to school and farm to early care and education (ECE) initiatives that:

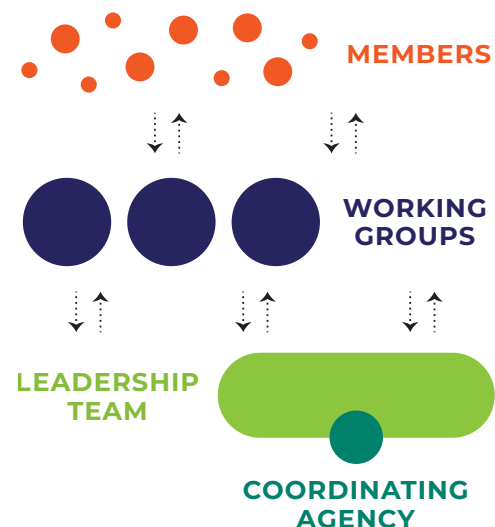
- Create opportunities for all children across the state to grow, learn about and enjoy eating Pennsylvania foods;
- Increase market opportunities for Pennsylvania producers;
- Connect growers, schools, ECE sites, and community members around food.

The network brings leaders across different sectors together to advance farm to school in a comprehensive way. Our work is guided by a [five-year strategic plan](#) created in late 2020. The plan centers around three overarching goals:

- Build and activate a strong, sustainable farm to school network
- Support increased and enhanced farm to school/early care and education implementation
- Strengthen and build sustainability for statewide farm to school policy.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PENNSYLVANIA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK?

The network is a collaborative that works to advance farm to school strategies and policies across the commonwealth. The network is made up of members, working groups, a leadership team and a coordinating agency.



The network is coordinated by [The Food Trust](#). It includes a leadership team, working groups and members.

Members include those working in school food service, teachers and administrators working in schools and early childhood education sites, farmers and suppliers, parents and community members, and more. Members receive our monthly newsletter, event invitations and funding opportunities.

The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network is launching working groups with the goal of bringing members together to collaboratively work on statewide farm to school communications and network building, implementation support and policy. Working groups will be facilitated by leadership team members and will be open to the public.

Visit the website to learn more: pafarmtoschool.org

HOW DOES THE NETWORK SUPPORT FARM TO SCHOOL/EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION?

Promotional campaigns provide a framework for school communities to begin implementing farm to school purchases and programming. In Pennsylvania, our network has collaborated on promotional campaigns, such as:

- **Pennsylvania Harvest of the Month:** Harvest of the Month programs are utilized across the country. Pennsylvania's program was developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Project PA (Penn State University) to promote a local agricultural product each month through schools, child and adult care centers/day care homes, and summer feeding sites. Fifteen products are promoted through posters, fact sheets, family newsletters, serving line signage, recipes and additional food service-related materials. All promotional materials are available online, and classroom materials are in development.
- **PA Preferred Days:** First piloted in the School District of Philadelphia, PA Preferred Days are a chance for schools to choose one day in October (National and Pennsylvania Farm to School Month) to feature an all local lunch menu in celebration of Pennsylvania agriculture. PA Preferred is Pennsylvania's state agricultural marketing brand and our resource for finding locally grown and processed agricultural products.
- **Apple Crunch** and **Go For the Greens:** These promotional campaigns are led by Penn State PRO Wellness and encourage healthy, locally sourced snacking in schools. The network supports and promotes these initiatives.

Relevant Resources & Links

- **The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network**
<http://www.pafarmtoschool.org>
- **Pennsylvania Harvest of the Month**
<https://www.paharvestofthemonth.org>
- **PA Preferred**
<https://bit.ly/2UOK1ej>
- **Penn State's Apple Crunch**
<https://bit.ly/3h1BBc7>
- **Penn State's Go for the Greens**
<https://bit.ly/328Pmh5>
- **Farm to School Institute**
<https://vtfeed.org/northeast-virtual-farm-school-institute-learning-community>

Resources and trainings provide professional development and technical assistance to support local food in Child Nutrition Programs and educational activities in communities, such as:

- **Producer Trainings:** The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, with the support of the network, leads farm to institution trainings for suppliers, equipping them with the knowledge they need to be able to sell their products to schools and other institutions.
- **Farm to School Institute:** The network has adapted this [training model](#) from New England, which focuses on bringing school teams consisting of food service personnel, teachers, administrators, and others together for comprehensive farm to school training and action planning.
- The network organizes and creates a variety of written **resources** to support communities in advancing their farm to school goals, which can be found online at pafarmtoschool.org/resources

For more information on network building, contact pafarmtoschool@thefoodtrust.org. For more information on how the network supports farm to school through state legislative policies, such as the Pennsylvania Farm to School Grant Program, please reference our farm to school policy fact [sheet here](#). For inspiration from other states, visit the National Farm to School Network at farmtoschool.org.

GET INVOLVED

To become a member by signing up for our newsletter and/or to sign up to participate in a working group, visit pafarmtoschool.org/get-involved.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, visit pafarmtoschool.org. For technical assistance, please contact us at: pafarmtoschool@thefoodtrust.org

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