



A project of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms

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My name is Betsy Rosenbluth, from Burlington, and I am the Project Director of Vermont FEED at Shelburne Farms.

**Please support the Farm to School & Early Childhood grant program with a level funded base appropriation of \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2024. Also, please fund the Local Food Purchasing Incentive program for schools at \$500,000 in base funding.**

Schools purchased over \$20 million in food last year and we want more of those dollars to go to Vermont farmers and stay in the VT economy. Right now, Over 100 Vermont farms provide food to our students across the state through early childhood and school nutrition programs. Every Vermonter should have access to the fresh, nourishing food we produce in this state, regardless of zipcode or income, so while we address food insecurity we are also helping our VT farmers and the agricultural economy. That's the win-win of farm to school.

The grants help schools create the capacity needed to bring farm fresh food into our schools and offer it to our students on a daily basis. And it helps students understand what that food does for their bodies and their communities, building healthy lifelong habits. We have heard from the staff of Sodexo at UVM, that the Vermont students at UVM that grow up with farm to school are asking for local and fresh food in their meals. That's the long term change we are working towards.

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Thank You!