

Vermont Farm to School Program 2017 Legislative Report



The Vermont Farm to School Program would like to thank our partner organizations for their continued support and contributions, without which this program would not be possible:

Addison County Relocalization Network
Center for Agricultural Economy
Farm to Institution New England
Food Connects
Green Mountain Farm to School
Healthy Roots
Hunger Free Vermont
Marble Valley Grows
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Northshire Grows
Rutland Area Farm and Food Link
Salvation Farms
School Nutrition Association of Vermont
Shelburne Farms
Upper Valley Farm to School

USDA Farm to School
University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies
University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture
University of Vermont Extension
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Vermont Agency of Education Child Nutrition Program
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Materials Management Team
Vermont Community Garden Network
Vermont Dairy Promotion Council
Vermont Department of Health
Vermont Farm to Plate Network
Vermont Farm to School Network
Vermont FEED
Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

We would also like to extend a special thank you to those that have made financial investments in the Vermont Farm to School Program, helping the program to grow and thrive:

Leigh and Charlie Merinoff of Meadows Bee Farm & Leigh's Bees
USDA Farm to School
The State of Vermont
Vermont Community Foundation

And of course, at the very heart of it all are:

Vermont farmers, students, teachers, child nutrition professionals, school staff, principals and superintendents.

Lastly, we would like to recognize that the Vermont Farm to School Program has been made possible by the vision and dedication of the late Representative Rozo McLaughlin.

Dear Vermonter:

2017 is an exciting year for the Vermont Farm to School Program as we celebrate our tenth year of delivering high impact farm to school programming in classrooms, cafeterias, and communities throughout the state. With unflagging support from our partner agencies and organizations, the Vermont Farm to School Program has become the role model that other states and the USDA look to for information and inspiration. Each year, the Vermont Farm to School Program continues to grow and innovate, increasing student access to fresh, nutritious foods, improving nutrition education and agricultural literacy, and expanding markets for local producers.

The Vermont Farm to School Program contributes to multiple goals of the Vermont Farm to Plate Strategic Plan and the Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Plan. Moreover, by increasing equitable access to fresh, nutritious foods for all Vermont students, regardless of their income or background, and by creating new economic opportunities for Vermont producers and processors, the Vermont Farm to School Program's mission is also well aligned with the strategic goals put forth by the 2017 State of Vermont Administration.

In addition to the cumulative impacts of the Vermont Farm to School Program over the last ten years, this report will highlight:

- New research demonstrating the multiplier effect of local food purchases made by Vermont schools on the local economy;
- A snapshot of the 2015 Farm to School Grant Program; and
- Exemplary Farm to School grantees in Bennington and Milton.

Ten years is an exciting milestone for this unique and innovative program. We are grateful for the opportunity to share its successes in the following pages and look forward to the next ten years of serving Vermont's students, schools, farmers, and economy.

Sincerely,



Secretary of Agriculture, Anson Tebbetts
Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Alyson Eastman

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GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mission & Goals

MISSION

The Vermont Farm to School Grant Program strives to improve the education and health of Vermont's students and positively impact the local economy by providing Vermont schools with technical and financial assistance to develop and execute farm to school programs that source and integrate fresh, healthy, locally grown foods and nutrition education into Vermont's cafeterias, classrooms and communities.

GOALS

The goals of the Farm to School Grant Program are to help Vermont schools, districts, and supervisory unions develop sustainable farm to school programs that:

1. Maximize equitable student access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown foods;
2. Educate students about food systems and healthy eating habits through hands-on experiences; and
3. Support and grow market opportunities for local producers and processors.



GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Types of Grants

There are three types of Farm to School grants available to individual and consortiums of Vermont schools, districts and supervisory unions to support diverse, sustainable farm to school programs that integrate the 3 C's (cafeterias, classrooms, communities).

PLANNING

Planning grants provide schools with technical and financial assistance to create a farm to school action plan, develop a strong network of supporters from the school community and roll out their action plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation grants provide schools with more substantial financial assistance to further develop and expand their existing farm to school programs by investing in personnel, infrastructure, and supplies.

UNIVERSAL MEALS--New for 2017!

New for 2017, Universal Meals grants will provide schools with technical and financial assistance to create more sustainable school meal programs and increase equitable access for all students to fresh, healthy school meals.



FARM TO SCHOOL IMPACT

Grant Program Impacts

Since the first round of Vermont Farm to School Grants in 2007, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has been investing state funds, as well as leveraged federal, private and foundation funds, into the creation of sustainable farm to school programs throughout the state of Vermont. Thus far, the Vermont Farm to School Program has awarded 112 grants to educational institutions.

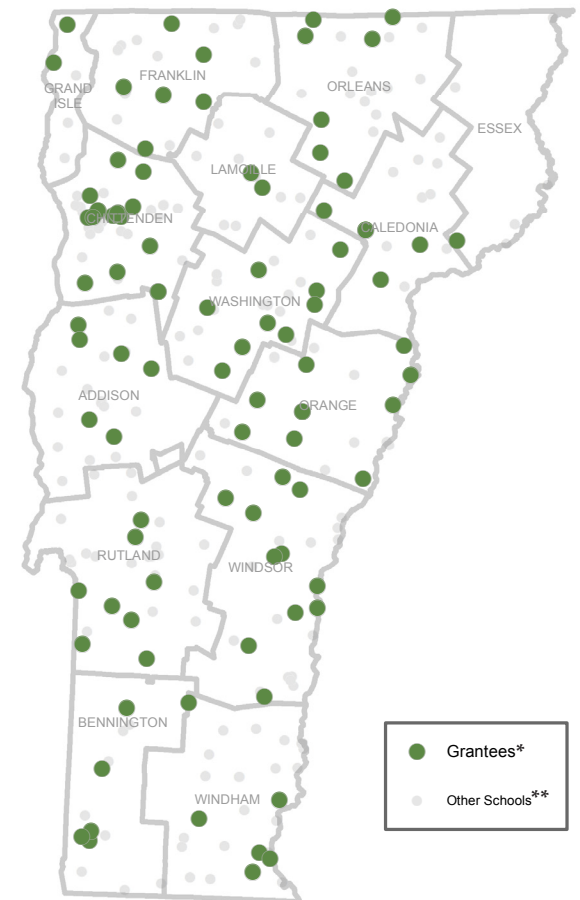
PROGRAM IMPACTS INCLUDE:

138 schools impacted

40,000 students reached

\$1,000,300 state funds invested

\$500,000 additional funds leveraged



*Some grantees have received multiple grants, which are not represented more than once on this map.
**These are all other Vermont schools which have not received a Vermont Farm to School Grant. Some of these, however, may have been part of a consortium, district or supervisory union which has received a grant (these grants are represented by only one point on the map).

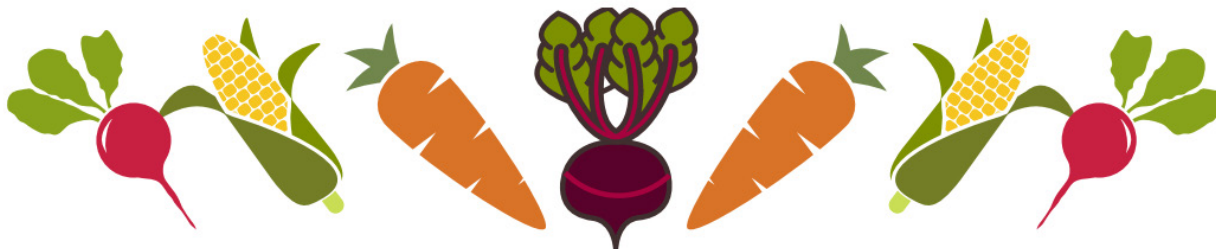
FARM TO SCHOOL IMPACT

Statewide Economic Impact of Farm to School

Farm to school in Vermont has community wide economic impacts that reach far beyond the school walls, as demonstrated by new research on the economic impact of farm to school conducted by the University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and the Vermont Farm to School Network.

The resulting report, "Economic Contribution and Potential Impact of Local Food Purchases Made by Vermont Schools," concludes that every dollar Vermont schools spend on local food contributes an additional \$0.60 to the local economy. Collectively, Vermont schools spent \$915,000 on local food during the 2013-2014 academic year, which contributed a total of \$1.4 million to the local economy.

A key component of the Vermont Farm to School Grant Program is the use of locally grown foods in school cafeterias. Therefore, the grant program's impact reaches beyond the school walls and benefits the entire community. Investing in farm to school in Vermont benefits all Vermonters, not just students.



When
schools buy
local food
EVERY



SPENT

CONTRIBUTES



ADDITIONAL

60¢

to the

**LOCAL
ECONOMY**

FARM TO SCHOOL IMPACT

Grantee Spotlight

VERMONT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

2015 Planning Grantee & 2016 Implementation Grantee

Total amount granted	Students	Grades served
\$10,900	55	7-12

Vermont School for Girls is a trauma treatment center for girls focusing on mental health and wellness. As an institution that focuses on mental rehabilitation and growth, the school has long known the power and importance of diet as part of the rehabilitative process. However, school food budget challenges have made it difficult for the school to implement the kind of nutrition program students really needed to experience transformative results. That changed with the help of two consecutive Vermont Farm to School Grants: a Planning Grant for \$2,200 in 2015 and an Implementation Grant for \$8,700 in 2016.

The grant funds Vermont School for Girls received allowed for the creation of a multi-stakeholder Farm to School Planning Board at the school. One of the priorities that the board identified was the lack of locally sourced foods in the school cafeteria. Through a school wide effort, with technical assistance provided through the grant program, Vermont School for Girls was able to increase their locally sourced food from 5% to 42% over the course of the grant period. The technical assistance provided by the grant program also helped the school access federal funding sources, such as the National School Lunch Program.

After witnessing the demonstrated successes of the Farm to School Planning Board, the School Board decided to include farm to school in the annual budget. Nearly two years after receiving a 2015 Planning Grant and a year after initiating their 2016 Implementation grant, Vermont School for Girls' Farm to School Program has not only grown, but is sustaining itself through staff and administration support, school budget allocations and in-kind donations from the community.



“The Farm to School program has truly helped us to define our **experiential learning** programs (horticulture and culinary in particular) so that they now better match our values of **sustainability** and supporting local businesses”



FARM TO SCHOOL IMPACT

Grantee Spotlight

MILTON ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

2013 Implementation Grantee

Grant award	Students	Grades served
\$7,500	1,238	preK-8

Before 2013, Milton Elementary and Middle School’s farm to school seed had been planted, but just wasn’t being watered enough. The schools had begun implementing farm and nutrition education in their curricula and had been trying to source local food for their school meals programs, but found it difficult to maintain constant focus on farm to school. Receiving an Implementation Grant in 2013 enabled the Milton schools to create a “Farm to School Education Coordinator” position, allowing their farm to school program to truly blossom.

Using their grant funds, Milton was able to host five community dinners, where parents, students, faculty and farmers came together to highlight the students’ farm to school activities and where farmers could talk to community members about their products and community supported agriculture (CSA) offerings. The elementary and middle schools also planted gardens, giving the science classes a way to have hands on learning experiences. The gardens allowed for the first ever Garden and Cooking Summer Camp, a weeklong program put on by the school that revolved around garden education and helped contribute some fresh produce to the summer school meal program.

Milton’s farm to school program is now fully integrated into the classroom, community and cafeteria. The program has changed the culture around food in the school community, helped boost school meal participation, and is a large part of the school curriculum. Milton’s Vermont Farm to School Implementation Grant sparked a movement that has changed the entire community and has helped to boost the local economy.



One teacher proudly reminisced,
“Within 5 minutes I saw a student’s face change from uncertainty and a reaction of ‘I hate kale!’ to, ‘I’m going to try it.’ ”



2015 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Applications & Allocations

The scope and impact of the Vermont Farm to School Grant Program is best demonstrated through a snapshot of a full grant round. Our most recent round of completed grants are from the 2015-2016 school year. This was a very competitive round for Farm to School Grants. State funding was used to provide schools with both financial and technical assistance.

APPLICATIONS

- 🍏 24 grant proposals submitted
- 🍏 \$129,764 requested



ALLOCATIONS

- After careful review of applications,
 - 🍏 10 grants awarded
 - 🍏 \$59,000 invested in schools
 - \$48,000 granted directly to schools
 - \$11,000 invested in technical assistance resources
 - 🍏 \$25,097 leveraged in matching funds*

* Matching funds are not required for the Vermont Farm to School Grant Program, but they are encouraged. The matching funds leveraged by schools can be in-kind donations of time and/or resources.



2015 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Grantees

PLANNING

1. VERMONT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Bennington County
Award: \$2,200

2. DERBY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Orleans County
Award: \$1,400

3. FRANKLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL

Franklin County
Award: \$2,200

4. NEWPORT CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Orleans County
Award: \$2,200

5. PEACHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Caledonia County
Award: \$2,200

IMPLEMENTATION

6. BREWSTER PIERCE MEMORIAL SCHOOL

Chittenden County
Award: \$2,300

7. CHELSEA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Orange County
Award: \$8,875

8. WALDEN SCHOOL

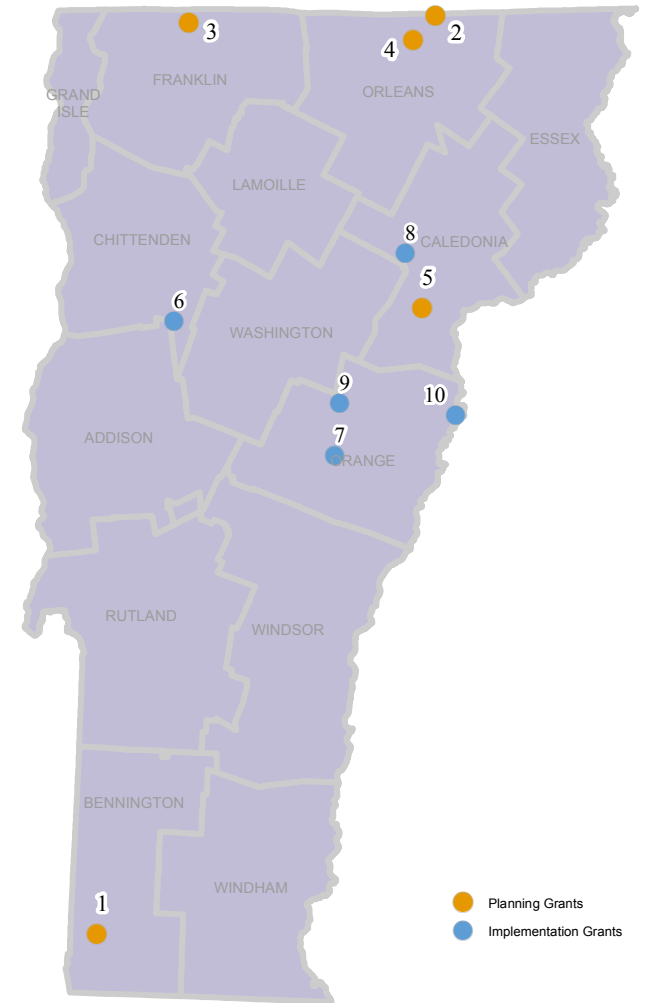
Caledonia County
Award: \$8,875

9. WASHINGTON SOUTH SUPERVISORY UNION

Washington County
Award: \$8,875

10. NEWBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Orange County
Award: \$8,875



2015 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Program Impacts

The ten projects funded by the 2015 Vermont Farm to School Grants helped to build new farm to school programs across the state and strengthen already existing ones. The results of these grant projects reach beyond individual school walls and into our local communities.

2015 PROGRAM IMPACTS INCLUDE:

41 farm relationships established or enriched

1,208 farm to school activities* during grant period

2,004 students engaged in farm to school programming

\$100,170 spent annually on local food

*Farm to school activities include: farmer visits to the school; cooking local food; taste tests; harvest festivals; gleaning, harvesting, weeding, or planting; nutrition, agricultural or food systems education; and compost/food waste management.

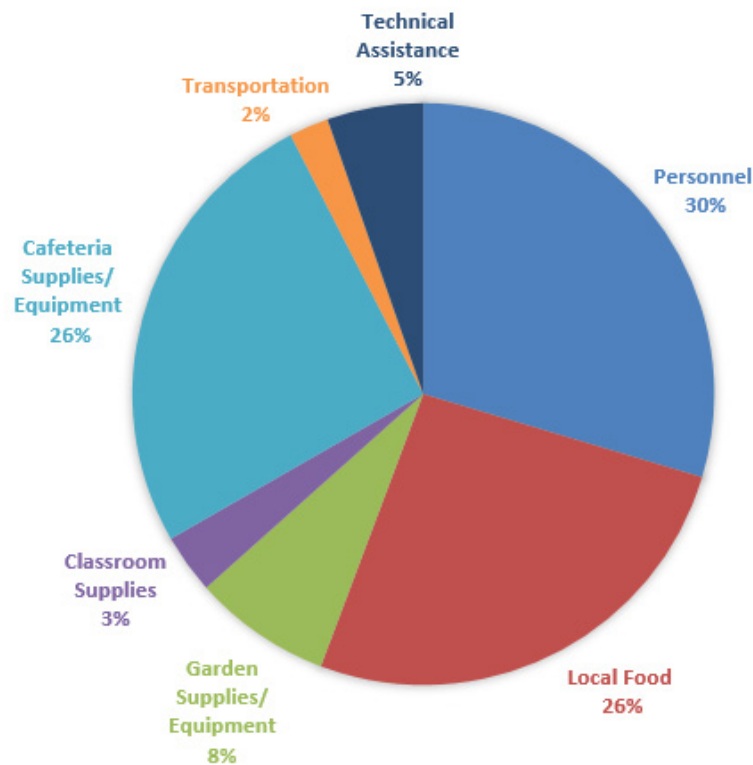


2015 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Grantee Expenditures

Farm to School grantees spend their funds on a wide range of activities, supplies, infrastructure and personnel development. Spending is spread across the 3 C's of farm to school: the cafeteria; the classroom; and the community. 2015 grantees spent a total of \$43,631.* The pie chart below breaks down grantee spending by category.

HOW DID GRANTEES SPEND THEIR FUNDS?



*Grantees only spent \$43,631 of the \$48,000 granted in 2015. The remaining \$4,369 was rolled over to the 2016 grants.

PERSONNEL: \$12,921

This can include professional development opportunities for staff, substitutes for staff to attend farm to school events, salaries for farm to school coordinators, and stipends for farmer visits or field trips.

LOCAL FOOD: \$12,394

This can include local food used for school meals, taste tests or special events, such as community meals or Harvest Festivals.

CAFETERIA SUPPLIES: \$11,231

This can include kitchen equipment that makes it easier to purchase, process and serve whole, fresh, local foods.

GARDEN SUPPLIES: \$3,351

This can include seeds, tools, and other inputs needed to grow or maintain a school garden.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: \$2,331

This can include assistance from external partners around topics such as gardens, local procurement, menu planning, and curriculum development.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES: \$1,443

This can include Harvest of the Month posters and materials used for food systems, nutrition, or agricultural curriculum.

TRANSPORTATION: \$959

This can include transportation for students and staff to farm field trips, trainings, or other special events.

2015 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Grant Review Committee

A team of farm to school partners from across the state gathered to review applications for 2015. The Review Committee included farmers, parents, school administrators, teachers, food service personnel and representatives from state agencies and non-profits.

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Professional Learning Facilitator
VT FEED

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Program



ROZO MCLAUGHLIN FARM TO SCHOOL ACT

The Vermont Farm to School Grant Program was created in 2006 with the passage by the Vermont legislature of the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act.

The act declares the purpose of the grant program is to help connect schools with local farmers and producers by:

1. Funding equipment, resources, training and materials that will help to increase use of local foods in the School Food Service Program;
2. Funding items, including local farm products, that will help teachers to use hands-on educational techniques to teach children about nutrition and farm to school connections; and
3. Providing professional development and technical assistance to help teachers educate students about nutrition and farm to school connections.

FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM STAFF

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