

**[Subject] Press Release: New MA FRESH Grant to Fund Farm to School Programs Across
Massachusetts**

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New MA FRESH Grant to Fund Farm to School Programs Across Massachusetts

Boston, MA - *December 15, 2022.* The [Massachusetts Food for Massachusetts Kids Coalition](#) and farm to school stakeholders across Massachusetts are excited by the recent launch of a new farm to school grant program for Massachusetts K-12 schools and early care centers. These sites operating a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or a Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000.00 in funding for a wide variety of farm to school efforts.

The Massachusetts FRESH (Farming Reinforces Education & Student Health) grant, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE), will help schools and early care sites build capacity to grow or purchase locally grown and produced ingredients, prepare nutritious scratch-cooked meals and educate students about the food system.

DESE anticipates awarding \$300,000 in grant funds this first round, with a total of \$1M in funding awarded over the next 2-3 years to support farm to school activities. These activities include purchasing kitchen equipment used to prepare local food for school meals and snacks; training kitchen staff, educators and other school staff to strengthen farm to school programming; and infrastructure investments in farm to school, such as school gardens.

Lisa Damon, Co-Director of Massachusetts Farm to School says, “This exciting new grant opportunity will provide schools and early care sites with the opportunity to deepen their farm to school programming. Farm to school plays an important role in helping students learn about their food system, try new local foods, and supports local agricultural economies by directing federal

funding towards local food purchasing– ever more important with the expansion of Universal School Meals this school year here in Massachusetts.”

This grant will also support schools and districts in taking full advantage of a new USDA program, entitled, [Local Food for Schools](#), which has allocated an additional \$3.5M to Massachusetts enabling flexible local food purchasing. When combined with a MA FRESH grant, school districts will be able to serve more fresh, local ingredients to their students and increase access to food and nutrition education at the same time.

Please visit <https://mafoodformakids.org/farm-to-school-grant> for more details and information.

Founded in 2004, Massachusetts Farm to School has been at the forefront of the nationwide farm to school movement. Over ⅓ of the state’s school districts provide access to healthy, local foods and spend an estimated \$11.4 million annually on Massachusetts produced food.

Farm to School programs have exploded across the country in recent years, with a wide range of impacts on local economies, student health, and learning. Massachusetts has been at the forefront of this movement, with a strong statewide program since 2004. The U.S.D.A’s Farm to School Census finds that Massachusetts school districts are helping 595,000 students gain access to healthy, local foods and helping school cafeterias spend an estimated \$11.4 million on Massachusetts produced food.

For more information about Massachusetts Farm to School visit, www.massfarmtoschool.org.

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