



MASSACHUSETTS  
FARM TO SCHOOL

## Mini Mobile Farmers Markets

November 29, 2023



# MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mass. Farm to School strengthens local farms and fisheries and promotes healthy communities by increasing local food purchasing and education at schools.

Get involved through our:

- Professional learning opportunities
- Networking
- Policy/Advocacy
- Communications



# Presenter: Eliza Lawrence

Eliza joined the REC in 2015, originally as youth mentor for the urban agriculture and employment program, YouthGROW. In 2017, she began working for REC's School Gardens program, a program that supports local schools with the infrastructure, tools and education to grow and maintain raised bed gardens on school property. Under her tenure, the School Garden's network in Worcester has grown to include 34 school partners, and directly engages over 2,400 Worcester Public School students every year. For the past year and a half she has been developing specialized Early Childhood programming in collaboration with Worcester Head Start that has now branched to all the pre-K serving sites with school gardens.



# REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL



Our mission is to bring people together to create a just food system and to build healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities in Worcester, MA and beyond.

We do this through 3 programs:

- YouthGROW
- Farmer's Markets
- UGROW (School and Community Gardens)

Our mini markets are a partnership between the last two programs.

# Early Childhood and Mini Markets



- United Way Grant for Early Childhood
- 2 year program that got extended.
- Began with 4 Head Starts and expanded to all the Pre-K serving sites we have gardens at (hoping to one day be at all Pre-K serving sites!)
- Mini Market Goals:
  - Support educational programming
  - Distribute information to families
  - Support families over holidays with a bag of free produce

# Sample Flow of Market



## Leading up to Market

- Partner with a classroom or a school
- Send out information a week before the market
- We always need to know how many kids and how many groups or classrooms we will be doing this with.
- Do they want a whole lesson and market, or just the one off market. Do they have time for a story?
- What is the space and setup like?
- Will they have staff participating?

## Day of

- Gather kids and talk about what we are doing today
- Ask about cooking/grocery shopping/gardening
- Read a book
  - We love "Growing Vegetable Soup" and "A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds"
- ID fruit/veggies with kids and count how many of each they get
- Each student pairs with a buddy to go shopping. When they are done they can play with the sorting toys



## MINI MARKET PACKING LIST

Date:

School:

- Table Cloth Tote
- Tote with Magnets/Flyers/Books/Sharpies
  - Check for sharpies
  - Make sure correct book is inside box
  - Add additional print materials if needed
- A Frame Chalkboard
- Produce
- All Tables (small ones)
- Tote bags
  - Make sure you have the correct amount
- Black produce baskets large and small
- Wagons/dollies
- Play materials
  - Veggie sorting by color
  - Veggie sorting by part of the plant



## Print Materials

- Flyer explaining activity and who we are (we also always send one of these out a week early so parents know what to expect)
- Project Bread Flyer: how to sign up for SNAP/EBT
- HIP Flyer
- Produce List
- Recipes
- Information on our Farmer's Markets
- If school has a garden: information on how to get involved with my contact info

## Internally

- Packing list
- Truck or Mobile Market Van (all our markets at schools run on Fridays when we don't have markets)
- Send information with flow of the day out to teachers a week in advance so they can ask any questions

Flyers are in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. If teachers need other languages we will ask ahead of time



## Tips for Classes

- Toys or activities for when kids are finished
- Bags are heavy for them! Dolly or cart to help carry them to the classroom.
- Some teachers want to label them per kid, some schools if it's school wide will just leave the bags in the gym and parents will pick them up with pickup.
- Having extras for staff is always appreciated



# Crops



- **Local vs. Conventional:** We typically offer local foods, but will often include oranges because they're so universally loved.
- **Summer:** Tomatoes or Fruit in summer. We've done boxes of blueberries/strawberries, fresh heads of lettuce etc.
- **Winter:** Staple crops such as potatoes, onions, apples, squash
- Depending on the population, what type of crops would be popular? Examples: okra, plantains, eggplant, cabbage
- Bags that are a whole kit? Or part of a meal? I.e. sancocho, soup, salsa, sofrito, stir fry etc.
- Always include recipes! Could be family recipes or recipes sourced from the school community!
- Worcester Regional Food Hub, Marty's, Community Harvest Project

# Related Content for the Classroom



## Classroom Content

- Where does our food come from?
- Parts of a Plant
- Needs of Plants
- Drawing a plant or a garden ecosystem
- Temperature and seasons
- Sorting and Counting
- Measuring and Weighing
- Growing seeds in the classroom

How can we tie it back to our school garden?

# Scaling the Market



## Scaling the Market

- Lots of different ways to structure the mini market
- Structure for small school or one classroom vs. an entire school
- Can be scaled for other age groups really well
- With more time, you can make a really great activity out of it, or even whole lessons leading up to the market

# Scaling for ages/topics



## Very Scalable for Different Ages

- Money (kids could pay for the fruits and veggies or figure out how much things cost)
- Local vs. Organic vs. Conventional Agriculture
- Pumpkin Jack
- Garden Maintenance
- Weather and Climate
- USDA Plant Hardiness Maps and Growing Zones
- What can we grow in Massachusetts?
- Researching where each plant comes from originally in the world
- History of different foods or recipes

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- [Subscribe](#) to the Mass. Farm to School newsletter and stay up to date on upcoming webinars and other professional learning opportunities
- [Harvest of the Month for Educators](#), a monthly newsletter about our HOTM crop with resources, lesson plans, book suggestions, and more!
- [2023-2024 Event Calendar](#)

# STAY IN TOUCH!



Visit us online:

[www.massfarmtoschool.org](http://www.massfarmtoschool.org)

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