WSDA Purchasing Grants Farm to ECE Resources & Strategies

The [WSDA Farm to School Purchasing Grant](#) application is open now through Dec 20th. Below are strategies and resources to assist in your application and in planning your local purchasing program.

**General Resources:**
- [Washington State Farm to ECE Community of Practice](#) find resources on getting started with farm to ECE, local procurement, gardening, farm to ECE experiential education, community engagement, cultural adaptations and Tribal resources.
- [Farm to Early Care and Education: Growing Minds and Healthy Appetites](#) Online professional development course hosted by Nourished & Active in Early Learning. Learn how to integrate farm to ECE into CACFP, the basics of farm to ECE experiential education and educational gardening, and how to engage families, staff and your community. (2 hours credited CEUs)

For one-on-one technical assistance by email or phone, please contact:
- Annette Slonim, WSDA Farm to School Purchasing Grant Specialist, farmtoschool@agr.wa.gov, 206-714-2757
- Kendra Vandree, OSPI Farm to Child Nutrition Program Specialist, kendra.vandree@k12.wa.us, 206-445-2032

**Strategies to increase the amount and variety of Washington grown food purchases for your child care program:**
- Use local fruits and vegetables as snacks.
- Use local produce for taste tests.
- Schedule local products alongside farm to ECE activities. For example, if your program is structuring farm to ECE activities with a fruit or vegetable of the week/month, such as in the [Harvest for Healthy Kids](#) curriculum or [Harvest of the Month](#), try incorporating that item into the Wednesday snack and/or Thursday lunch.
- Replace a non-local product with the same or similar product grown locally.
- Develop new recipes and menus based on products specific to a region.
- Replace a non-local product with a local, seasonal product to feature for the week or month, such as in a Harvest of the Month program.

**Additional Resources**
- [MSU Farm to Early Childhood Programs Step-By-Step Guide](#) This guide contains many helpful tools, including a local food purchasing assessment and a menu analysis sheet to help identify places in your current menu to substitute or add local foods.
- [Local Food Decision Tree](#) by North Carolina State extension, meant to help you determine what method of local food procurement is best for your program.
- [WSDA Seasonality Charts](#) can help identify local products and when they are in season.
- **Eat Local First Wa Food & Farm Finder** a statewide, comprehensive search tool to help you locate local farms, farm stands, farmers markets, CSAs, food hubs, and co-ops.

**Strategies to engage children in farm to ECE:**
- Conduct a taste test.
- Use leaves, seeds, beans, and plant parts in crafts and activities.
- Plan a cooking activity featuring local products.
- Read books related to food, farming and gardening.
- Use/adapt a farm to ECE curriculum.
- Host a field trip to a farm, a farmers market, community garden, or botanical garden.
- Bring a farmer to the classroom.

**Additional Resources:**
- [Farm to ECE Curriculum Guide](#) An easy reference guide to farm to ECE curriculums.
- [Growing Minds Farm to School Bookshelf](#) hundreds of books related to farm to school that can be read during story time.
- [Taste test guide](#) on how to conduct a taste test.
- [Farm to Preschool: Farm Field Trips](#) Ecotrust’s quick guide with steps and considerations for planning your field trip.
- Try one of the virtual farm visits found in this [farm to ECE virtual learning resource](#).

**Strategies to incorporate culturally relevant menu items:**
- Partner with vendors that grow culturally relevant foods or request culturally relevant products.
- Serve a “Three Sisters” meal and pair it with a classroom activity.
- Gather recipes from families to serve in meals.

**Additional resources**
- [Serving Up Tradition: A Guide for School Food in Culturally Diverse Communities](#) FoodCorps Massachusetts and Massachusetts Farm to School’s guide on serving culturally appropriate foods in schools.
- [Team Nutrition Multicultural Childcare Recipes](#) 40 recipes from different cultures and regions available in English and Spanish.
- [Community Food Systems in Native Communities webinar](#) on incorporating traditional foods into child nutrition programs.
- [Child Nutrition Programs and Traditional Foods](#) USDA memo on the contribution of traditional foods toward meal pattern requirements.
- [Service of Traditional Foods in Public Facilities](#) USDA memo on donations and serving of traditional foods in public facilities and nonprofit facilities operated by Tribal organizations or organizations that “primarily serve Indians”.
- [Bringing Tribal Foods and Traditions into Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Gardens](#) USDA fact sheet on incorporating traditional foods into menus and supporting native farmers.