



# FARM TO SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

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**NATIONAL  
FARM to SCHOOL  
NETWORK**

### **GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER**

The National Farm to School Network is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into school systems and preschools.

**W**hether you are just getting started or have been involved with farm to school for some time, you may need to fundraise to support aspects of your program. This document offers tips and information on fundraising strategies ranging from pursuing grant funds, to establishing a giving/donation arm of your program, to holding special events.

### **Grants**

Grants are available from a variety of sources including public funds (local, state and federal government) and private funds from foundations (general, community, corporate, family), corporations and other resources.

#### **Here are a few tips for finding and applying for grants:**

- Look for grants with requirements that match your needs. For example, some grants fund school garden projects, whereas others may be used for more broad-based farm to school activities.
- Join email lists or social media groups that distribute information about farm to school grant opportunities as they arise.
- Join the National Farm to School Network E-News distribution list by signing up at [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org).
- Find out what philanthropic groups or foundations have donated in your geographical region and to similarly focused projects (youth, health, agriculture, food).
- Take time to write a carefully planned proposal and have many eyes review it before submitting.

#### **Farm to School Fundraising Gems**

**Local food sale supports Farm to School in Madison, Wisconsin**  
Each winter, REAP Food Group in Madison, Wisconsin supports their program by holding a local-food sale. Students and families offer boxed, local, preserved foods for sale in the community. The event is conducted much like traditional wrapping paper sales.

### **Donations**

Donations can be in the form of money, materials (plants, seeds, soil or tools) or services (release time for employees who wish to participate in a school garden). In-kind gifts such as use of equipment or professional skills, like landscape design, curriculum development or chef/cooking experience, are other meaningful and generous ways for community members to support local farm to school projects.

## How to promote healthy fundraising at your school:

### What's your policy?

Work with your school's wellness team or petition your administration to set a school or district policy supporting fundraisers that improve student and community wellness.

### Connect with Community

Engage your PTA/PTO, principal, coaches, school clubs, academic and athletic departments, booster clubs and food service in conversations about healthier fundraising options.

### Beyond Food Items

Good fundraisers can involve more than just food. Consider selling farm or food-related products like kitchenware, seeds, seasonal or local cookbooks, magnets or frames featuring students' artwork, garden stones or tiles, plants, flowers, bulbs, greeting cards with pressed flowers, herbs and spices.

### Promote Physical Activity

Promote physical activity and active living through healthy fundraisers. For example, host a bike, jog or hike-a-thon and encourage students to collect pledges for their performance.

### Some tips for a healthy donation strategy:

- Provide clear messaging to donors on why giving to your organization/project is a good use of their resources and what recognition you can provide for their support.
- Begin with parents. They have a strong connection to the school/program and may be willing to donate directly or pursue community connections that can fulfill your needs.
- Identify potential donors by matching your needs with their services and products.
- Acknowledge all donations—large and small—through personal thank you notes, posters, banners and so on. Include students in the acknowledgment process.

## Special Events

Special events raise both funds and enthusiasm for your program/activity. Some successful special event approaches include:

- Collect recipes from students and staff to create a cookbook that is then sold to members of the community.
- Sell craft projects created from school garden products such as potpourri, pressed flower stationery or dried flower arrangements.
- Have a spring garden sale with plants started by students or seeds saved by students from a previous growing season.
- Invite chefs from local restaurants to prepare dishes or healthy hors d'oeuvres and desserts for a local culinary event featuring your program. Charge for admission to raise funds.
- Organize a festival or craft fair and sell locally created arts and crafts or locally produced food items.
- Sell ad space in the school newspaper to community businesses.
- Work with local businesses to allocate a percentage of sales to your project on specified days.

### Farm to School Fundraising Gems

New Jersey restaurants step up to support Farm to School  
New Jersey Farm to School Network held a "Tastes of New Jersey" event to support their farm to school programs. The event featured a partnership with local restaurants and tastings of local food for a small donation. For a larger contribution, guests could enjoy a five-course farm to table tasting menu prepared by a local chef.

### Before you begin here are a few things to consider:

- Seek approval from school administrators and ensure they are aware of the size and scope of the project.
- Check to see if you will need a special license depending on the type of event (such as a nursery license or food handlers' license).
- Establish procedures for handling and depositing money.
- Be prepared to provide information and answer questions. It may help to create folders about your farm to school program that you can take with you and leave with potential donors or partners. Include a letter of support from school administration, a description of your proposed project, a list of people who support the project, a list of program needs and other more personal items like quotes and drawings from students.

The National Farm to School Network has compiled resources on this topic and others as well as contact information for people in your state and region who are working on farm to school programs. Find more information and join our network: [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)