



# Arkansas

Farm to school is a common sense approach to child nutrition and community economic development and is uniquely designed to address the ways in which each of these rates intersects with one another through policy, programming, and partnerships. In Arkansas, the childhood obesity rate is 20%,<sup>1</sup> the food insecurity rate is 19.2%,<sup>2</sup> and the rate of students receiving free and reduced-price meals is 62.3%;<sup>3</sup> farm to school can be used to address these issues. In addition, studies show that every dollar spent on local food can generate up to an additional \$2.16 in economic activity,<sup>4</sup> indicating school districts' local food purchases can lead to over \$1 billion in local economic activity over one school year.<sup>5</sup>

## USDA Farm to School Census (School Year 2013-14) in Arkansas

The U.S. Department of Agriculture tracks farm to school activities at the state and school district level.

**Arkansas invested \$1,255,960 in local foods, with the average school district spending 2% of their budget on local products.**

- 45% Vegetables
- 53% Fruit
- 18% Milk
- 16% Meat or Poultry

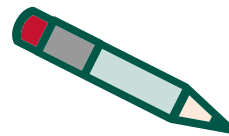
Arkansas ranks 40 out of 50 states in local food purchasing.

**There is demand for farm to school in Arkansas:**

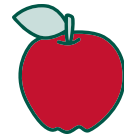
**18% of districts surveyed** plan to start farm to school activities in the future.

**55% of districts surveyed** plan to increase local food purchases in the future.

**22% of Arkansas school districts report participation in farm to school.**



47 school districts



195 schools



95,605 students



at least 36 school gardens

**In Arkansas, 32% of school districts are engaging preschool children in farm to school activities, and 16% of school districts are using local foods in summer meals.**

## State Farm to School Network and Organizations in Arkansas



ARKANSAS  
DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION



## Federal Support for Arkansas Farm to School

The USDA administers the Farm to School Grant program, which has awarded the following projects in Arkansas:

**2018** - The Conway School District received \$96,779 to enhance their farm to school efforts by expanding the local food processing kitchen program and the school garden initiatives that emerged from the 2016 USDA Farm To School Planning Grant.

**2017** - The Arkansas Agriculture Department received \$31,381 to build cross -sector farm to school leadership.

**2016** - Conway School District received \$44,927 to design a local food processing kitchen program in a centralized school kitchen facility, and Winrock International received \$47,646 to conduct trainings for producers and enterprises in food safety certifications.

**2015** - Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute received \$49,918 to conduct multiple regional summits in 2015, and The Lawrence County Farm to School Initiative received \$100,000 to implement their comprehensive farm to school plan.

**2014** - Mansfield School District 76 received \$32,721 to form partnerships with local farmers and producers in order to increase procurement of locally sourced foods for the nutrition program.

**2013** - Fayetteville School District #1 received \$99,058 to develop a comprehensive farm to school program, and The Lawrence County District received \$45,000 to lead a cluster planning project.

**Between FY 2013 - FY 2018, Arkansas was awarded 9 of 32 grant requests.**

**Funds awarded total \$547,430 of \$2,217,184 requested.**

## Arkansas Farm to School Administrative Efforts

State agency and university Extension positions can support farm to school, and do in many states. The following shows FTE devoted to supporting farm to school:

**Arkansas has fewer farm to school FTEs than 47 states.**

|                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Department of Education (FTE 0) | Department of Agriculture (FTE 0) |
| Department of Health (FTE 0)    | University Extension (FTE 0)      |

## Arkansas Enacted State Farm to School Policies

### 2017

#### Creating the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act - CODIFIED AT ARK. CODE § 15-4-3800 ET SEQ.

H.B. 1839 requires the state Department of Agriculture to create a local foods coordinator position and encourages the Department to develop a database of local farmers. H.B. 1839 sets specific procurement goals, encouraging state agencies to purchase 10% of foods locally in fiscal year 2018, and 20% in the years following. And because local foods may not always be the lowest cost option, H.B. 1839 allows state agencies to purchase local foods that cost up to 110% of the lowest responsible bid.

#### Strengthening Incentive Programs for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - CODIFIED AT ARK. CODE § 20-76-114

H.B. 2150 encourages the state social services department to support incentive and education programs for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The bill directs the state to accept private funds to support nutrition education and to offer instruction at current Healthy Active Arkansas partner sites, which include schools.

#### Supporting Efforts of the Healthy Active Arkansas Initiative - Adopted

H.C.R. celebrates the statewide obesity prevention strategy, Healthy Active Arkansas Initiative.

*The National Farm to School Network is an information, advocacy, and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing, school gardens, and food and agriculture education into schools and early care and education settings.*