







# Framing the Future: Local Food for Schools Funding 2025

### January 23, 2025 Notes

**Topic:** Framing the Future: Local Food for Schools Funding 2025 **Facilitator:** Kiffen Ratkevich & Stephanie Pike **Challenge:** How to leverage federal and state resources to increase impact and local foods in school meals.

### Background

Context: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has committed to strengthening local food systems and improving student nutrition through a new round of Local Food for Schools (LFS) funding, which gives grant funding to districts to purchase lightly processed and whole local food products.

### 1. People: Who is involved

- Parents
- Teachers
- Food Service Staff
- School Administrators
- Local Farms
- RI Department of Education
- K-12 Schools
- Legislators US Congress
- Processors
- Distributors
- Students
- Aggregators
- School Committees
- Stakeholders

### 2. Observation: What's happening? Why?

- Exhausting for farmers but is increasing sales
- No universal school meals

#### i. PEOPLE

Who's involved? Including you? With and for everyone involved, explore...

#### 2. OBSERVATIONS

What's happening? Why? Details and all sides of what people are doing, saying, thinking, feeling.

#### 3. PRINCIPLES

What matters most? Different, maybe competing things here. That's the challenge!

#### 4. IDEAS

What ways are there? Different who/what/when/where/ hows. Look around for ideas!

#### 5. EXPERIMENTS

What's a step to try? Small, with real details so you DO IT! What happens? (back to #2)











- Clear technical assistance technical assistance has been pretty clear but could use more and more consistent check ins
- Not enough local purchasing for local proteins
- Cost is currently okay because of funding, but is high and not sustainable
- Distrust ordering only though Farm Fresh
- Confusion from suppliers/farmers who maybe are not already selling about how to sell into schools with this program (market channel not LFS)
- Variety of products available are good, but schools are interested in more like mushrooms
- Storage Capacity is lacking
- Needs for allergy free products
- Delivery Issues
- Correct amounts of food getting from suppliers to schools
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# 3. Principles: What matters most?

- Giving children food they will enjoy
- Serving RI food to RI residents
- Local Economy
- Mutually beneficial partnerships between farmers and schools
- Steady market for farmers
- Scalable preparation for new products to serve
- Fair wage for producers and processors
- Culturally appropriate.
- Quality/Freshness of produce being sent to schools

# 4. Ideas: What ways are there?

- Create space/facilities to empower small producers
- Farm to School CS
- Use commodity food to offset local food costs
- Market Mobile more user friendly/easier to find and navigate market
- Every shareholder feels values in the process
- Aggregate with more mid-sized farmers
- Individual Quick Freezing + Demand
- Should expand purchasing to supper programs
- Align commodity with local
- More diversity among farmers and products









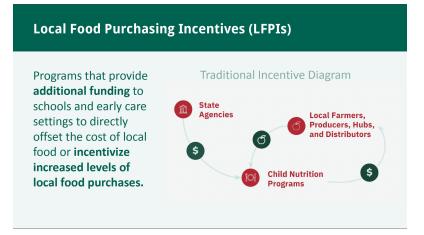


• Educating farmers and producers about how to get involved in these programs

### 5. Experiments: What's a step to try

- Participate in "Grow Together RI" CLP being created by Hope and Main
- Partner with SouthSide Community Land Trust or African African Alliance RI to contract for large quantities involves multiple mid sized BIPOC farmers
- Local Farm Collective
- Transformative technology efficient freezing techniques

### **Discussion notes**













#### Which States Have Incentive Programs?



Find links to program websites: farmtoschool.org/policy/lfpi

