

NEW YORK GROWN FOOD FOR NEW YORK KIDS

Schools across New York State serve breakfast, lunch, and afterschool meals to 1.7 million schoolchildren each year. Raising the quality of these meals with Farm to School programs can improve student health and academic performance and teach healthy habits that will last a lifetime all while supporting New York's farmers and helping our rural communities thrive. For food insecure children, school meals can be their only daily dependable source of food, therefore Farm to School is also an effective way to improve access to healthy food for our most vulnerable children.

Recent State Investments Grow Schools Ability to Serve Farm Fresh Food to Students Across NY

In the FY19 Enacted State Budget, \$10 million was allocated to quadruple the state's lunch meal reimbursement for K-12 schools that spend 30% of their lunch budget on New York grown food. As a critical complement, funding for the Farm to School Grants Program was doubled to \$1.5 million to help schools hire and train staff and buy equipment that will enable them to increase their ability to purchase New York Grown food and reach the 30% threshold.

In 2018, over 40 applications were submitted requesting a total of \$3.4 million in Farm to School grant funds to support projects that would help schools purchase more healthy, local food to serve to students. While K-12 schools won't know whether they qualify for the new incentive program until September of this year, it is already clear that these two programs have increased interest in purchasing more food from New York farmers.

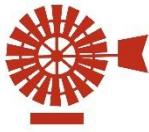
It is critical to continue, and build on, these programs in this year's state budget to maintain this forward momentum in improving our children's health and supporting our farmers. Additionally, making new investments to fill gaps in the Farm to School supply chain will be essential to unlock the full public health and economic development potential of Farm to School in New York State.

Priority Farm to School Recommendations for FY20 State Budget:

In his FY20 Budget proposal, the Governor maintained the incentive program at \$10 million and allocated \$750,000 to the Farm to School Grants Program. This coalition encourages the legislature and the Governor to build on these proposals in the FY20 Enacted State Budget by:

- Appropriating \$10 million to continue to reimburse 25 cents per lunch to K-12 schools that spend at least 30% of their lunch budget on food from New York farmers, growers, producers, and processors.
- Allocating \$3 million for the Farm to School Grants program, so long as this does not compromise funding for critical agricultural programs, to meet current demand from schools and other organizations for assistance purchasing equipment and building the human capital, knowledge and skills necessary to purchase, prepare and promote New York grown foods to New York kids.
- Investing in Farm to School Capital Grants through Regional Economic Development Councils to support aggregation, processing, transportation, and distribution of farm foods to K-12 schools.
- Creating a Model New York State School Wellness Policy supporting Farm to School that promotes locally sourced school meals and links them with increased experiential education such as hands on lessons, tastings, school gardens, local farm visits, and family engagement.

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