

Texas USDA Farm to School Grant Awards

2013

Dallas Independent School District

Dallas, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$43,587

Dallas ISD has several initiatives that teach and model healthy eating including healthy menu planning, coordinated school health curriculum, local wellness policy, robust physical education, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and school gardens. However, we have not linked all of these activities together. Thus with grant funding we intend to build and strengthen relationships with local farmers, non-profits and food wholesalers/distributors, identify seasonal fruits and vegetables grown locally and in school gardens to include on school menus, identify curriculum to integrate gardening and experimental learning across core subject areas, and identify strategies for evaluation and sustainability of a farm to school program. Dallas ISD has a strong record of promoting healthy eating and physical education. The Food and Child Nutrition Services will work with District Coordinated School Health and Texas A&M University to pilot test curriculum Texas Grow! Eat! Go!, Walk across Texas and CATCH Coordinated School Health Curriculum. The local supplier will assist to identify and track the volume of product and sales of locally/regionally grown foods. This grant will open another door to students to experience school-grown and locally-grown foods, as well as stimulate the local/regional economy.

2014

Idea Public Schools

Weslaco, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$44,232 IDEA

Public Schools is a high- performing network of 28 tuition- free K- 12 public charter schools serving 12,878 students in Texas's Rio Grande Valley. By 2017, IDEA will grow to a network of 56 schools serving more than 40,000 students. The Valley (where Texas meets Mexico) is the most obese metropolitan area in the nation: 38.8% of adults are obese. It is also the poorest, with 52.8% of all households with children receiving food stamp assistance and 84% of IDEA students participating in the free/reduced meal program. IDEA has a system of three school-based farms that have been recognized by the Texas Department of Agriculture as the largest in the state, but production is uneven and a reliable crop cycle has not been established. This Farm to School Planning Grant will Increase access to local and regional foods and integrate nutrition- based efforts across the curriculum at all IDEA schools. Grant funds will provide an organic farm consultant, training for IDEA's farmers, and nutrition education programming for students. Potential partners include the University of Texas- Pan American Border Health Office, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health/Brownsville Regional Campus, Recipe for Success, and Infant and Family Nutrition Agency of Cameron County.

2015

Dallas Independent School District

Dallas, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

Dallas Independent School District's (ISD) Farm to School Implementation Project has three areas of focus. First, the district will encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by expanding and building upon our existing Harvest of the Month promotional activities, taste tests, distribution of fresh produce at schools and other activities which promote the benefits of locally grown products. Second, the district will expand experiential and agricultural based learning opportunities through the expansion of school gardens, field trips and teacher trainings to integrate farm to school into the curriculum and classrooms. Lastly, we will expand our supply chain by increasing our existing pool of local farmers who can produce items for Dallas ISD consumption.

2016

Elgin Independent School District

Elgin, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$44,948

Elgin Independent School District will develop, implement and evaluate a farm to school work plan, create a comprehensive needs assessment, engage families and students, and disseminate results. All five school campuses, including pre-kindergarten, will be involved in the farm to school program.

North East Independent School District

San Antonio, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$45,000

North East Independent School District will lay the foundation for a thriving farm to school program throughout the entire district of almost 68,000 students. The district will work to identify community partners and sources of fresh, local produce. Project goals include offering a farm to school training for community partners and creating a school garden how-to video and toolkit.

Sustainable Food Center

Austin, Texas

Grant Type: Training – State

Sustainable Food Center will organize a Texas Farm to School Training, which will combine a pre-conference event at the 2016 Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Conference, along with a track of at farm to school sessions during the conference. The training

will be designed for small-scale and larger-scale farmers and ranchers, and for farm advocates and agencies that can support producers in farm to school efforts.

2017

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District

Pharr, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$44,646

The “Improving Student Achievement through Nutrition” project will enable Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District (PJA ISD) to cultivate local partnerships and purchase fresh produce from local farmers to serve in schools.

IDEA Public Schools

Weslaco, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$93,058

IDEA Public Schools will build systems to standardize academic instruction while continuing to grow and expand farm production capacity and increase access to farms for over 30,000 students in three Texas regions. The focus on the balanced formula of production, education, and safety will be exemplified through the “Garden in a Box,” toolkit, a standardized method schools use to actualize the promise of our Healthy Kids Here initiative and to increase students’ level of interest and participation in IDEA’s farms and gardens.

2018

Houston Independent School District

Houston, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$67,395

Houston Independent School District will expand their “Get Growing Houston” program to 15 schools. Schools that apply for the program and will be rated on their commitment, sustainability, human capital, space, and integration of curriculum. Priority will be given to schools who have more than 70 percent of its population eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. The expected student outcomes include, (1) increased vegetable acceptability at school, (2) increased knowledge of nutrition and plant science, and (3) increased student engagement in moderate physical activity. Acceptability of vegetables served during school lunch that are also grown in the gardens will be tracked using food production records and knowledge and physical activity will be measured through pre-and post-program surveys.

North East Independent School District

San Antonio, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$90,668

North East Independent School District will increase the purchase of local produce to expose students to a variety of healthy options including raw selections, prepared menu items, and frozen options blended into smoothies. The North East Independent School District will establish efficient methods to process, vacuum seal, and freeze seasonal produce to serve 65,933 students during the school year.

2019

Elgin Independent School District

Elgin, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

The Elgin Farm to School Program includes Elgin Independent School District (ISD), Sustainable Food Center and Texas Center for Local Food along with several local farmers. This team will work to increase the amount of locally grown fresh produce consumed by students and families, enhance partnerships between local farmers and community organizations to increase access to locally grown produce, increase community knowledge of healthy eating practices, local resources, and nutrition utilizing local produce and develop a model for small rural school districts that engages the community, supports healthy practices for all, and sustains overall wellness for children and families. This will be accomplished through activities in the areas of: curriculum development and alignment including integration of school gardens, family and community engagement and procurement and technical assistance to local farmers.

Laredo Independent School District

Laredo, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

The Laredo School District's "Enhancing Agricultural Literacy through Community Education" builds a foundation for developing farm fresh activities and practical applications that increase leadership skills including team building, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, ethics, and professionalism connecting classroom knowledge and academic experiences with everyday practice in leadership and organizational activities for the purpose of Education, providing outdoor exercise, and practice in healthy life styles that start with eating right.

Waco Independent School District

Waco, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$48,319

The Farm to School Program will be a pilot program for Waco Independent School District's (WISD) Child Nutrition Services department that collaborates with the World Hunger Relief Farm, Inc., the Waco Downtown Farmer's Market, and the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District. The program will focus on expanding on existing District initiatives and activities that use local produce and institutionalizing new initiatives that promote healthy eating, and

provide WISD students with the opportunity to learn about fresh produce through garden-based programming and new cafeteria offerings.

2020

St. Mary's Academy Charter School

Beeville, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$42,800

St. Mary's Academy Charter School's farm to school initiative will increase the availability of locally sourced foods in the school breakfast, lunch and snack program. As part of the planning and development, St. Mary's will collect data and identify challenges and existing farm to school activities, partners, and community stakeholders. The project will use a farm for instruction and will collaborate with two nonprofits who provided community gardens. St. Mary's will increase locally sourced food by increasing its own farm production and by establishing organic produce supply-chain partners.

Common Threads

Austin, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

Common Threads' project will develop the programmatic infrastructure needed to begin sourcing from community-based urban farms for its school-based cooking and nutrition education programs in Chicago. Common Threads will make curriculum adaptations that emphasize seasonality and local food systems learning, implementing comprehensive Farm to School educational programming in three schools over the course of the project period for students, families, and teachers. Additionally, the project will increase awareness of local food and agricultural education resources in the community. The project will collaborate with three Chicago Public School sites and urban farms in close proximity to the schools. Common Threads' ultimate goal is to create a scalable model for local procurement that can be replicated at other schools in both Chicago and our 11 other program markets in future years.

Northside Independent School District

San Antonio, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$58,901

The Northside Independent School District (ISD) will implement a comprehensive Farm to School program at 10 elementary and middle schools to improve access to local foods through local procurement and agricultural education efforts. Activities will include staff training, school-based vegetable gardens, agricultural curriculum, taste tests, field experiences at local agricultural sites, and a culminating "farmer's market" event. The project will target at least 1,000 K-8 students in San Antonio, TX, of whom over 40% will be eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Meals. Key partners will include Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service, the San Antonio Food Bank, and the Herff Farm/Cibolo Nature Center.

The Gleaning Network of Texas Dba Grow North Texas

Dallas, Texas

Grant Type: Planning; \$46,072

The “Planning for Increased Farm to School Activities in Dallas” project will develop a Farm to School Action Plan, assess area farmer readiness for farm to school, and pilot a program to implement sustainable school garden programs. The Farm to School Action Plan to be developed will center on training and technical assistance to farmers interested in selling to schools and the support of school garden implementation and sustainability.

2021

Galveston's Own Farmers Market

Galveston, Texas

Grant Type: Turnkey; \$48,156

Galveston’s Own Farmers Market (GOFM) has worked with Galveston Independent School District (GISD) to address childhood food insecurity by establishing the Young Gardeners Program (YGP), an after-school gardening and healthy-eating program operational at 6 schools. The ‘Growing Farm to School in Galveston’ project empowers a team of local school & nonprofit leaders, food service personnel, local farmers and community health researchers to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for extending beyond their current farm to school activities. The plan will incorporate district-wide taste-testing of produce harvested from both onsite YGP school gardens & GOFM’s community ‘Victory Gardens,’ develop procurement pathways from local farmers, adapt existing YGP curriculum for school-day use, and strategically expand GOFM’s YGP and Victory Garden sites as a hyper-local pipeline to supply GISD schools with an aim towards supplying weekly cafeteria menus.

Sustainable Food Center, Inc.

Austin, Texas

Grant Type: Implementation; \$97,177

Sustainable Food Center—in partnership with Texas Department of Agriculture, Common Market, City of Austin, and the Farm to Institution Metrics Collaborative—aims to increase the amount of fresh, healthy, local food in available in rural and peri-urban Central Texas school systems through a three-pronged approach: capacity building for local food procurement and agricultural education; the creation of a peer-to-peer statewide learning collaborative; and piloting an innovative metrics framework to inform ongoing learning and development of farm-to-school programming.