

Florida USDA Farm to School Grant Awards

2014

Food and Nutrition Sarasota County Schools

Sarasota, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

Sarasota County Schools, Food and Nutrition Services established one of the first comprehensive farm to school programs in the state of Florida. Our goal is to source at least fifty percent of our produce purchases from local farms, focusing on the southwest region of Florida. The Implementation Grant will allow us to expand upon and improve the established distribution channels and relationships with local farmers. A farm to school liaison will enhance communication between the school food authority, distributors and local producers. Our well established partnership with the local Cooperative Extension Office will support the farm to school liaison in developing a foundation with essential farm to school contacts. The result will be increased purchases of local produce, support for the local economy, education, and overall quality of the farm to school program. The model will be transferable to other districts and communities.

School Board of Alachua County

Gainesville, Florida

Grant Type: Planning; \$45,000

Alachua County Public Schools seeks to increase the amount of locally produced foods served in school meals, and to expand nutrition and wellness curriculum through support from a Farm to School Planning Grant. In developing a comprehensive farm to school program, Alachua County Public Schools will focus on high need Title I elementary schools. A farm to school coordinator will be hired to oversee and facilitate various outreach activities and to develop a district nutrition and wellness program, as well as carry out feasibility studies for increasing procurement of local foods and for upgrading district infrastructure to support processing and distribution to individual schools.

2016

School Board of Alachua County

Gainesville, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$80,179

Alachua County Public Schools, formerly an FY 2014 USDA Farm to School planning grantee, will increase the amount of locally produced foods served in school and summer meals, expand nutrition and wellness curriculum, and provide hands-on learning experiences for students. The project will collaborate with the district's Exceptional Student Education Department to expand the Alachua Farm to School to Work Hub, which grows, aggregates, and processes locally grown foods for distribution to district schools.

2017

District School Board of Putnam County, Florida

Palatka, Florida

Grant Type: Planning; \$43,550

The Putnam County Public Schools Food Services Staff will design a comprehensive program to supply locally produced foods to schools. The District aims to forge community partnerships to identify sources of fresh foods for school needs as well as educate students and parents about the health benefits of eating fresh, locally grown foods.

2018

Leon County School District

Tallahassee, Florida

Grant Type: Planning; \$50,000

Leon County School District will implement "Planting the Seeds for Tomorrow" to develop the first school district-owned production garden in Leon County. Leon County School District plans to (1) develop academic pathways and curriculum-pacing guides to initiate farm to school practices into the school and community culture, (2) develop an implementation plan for middle school students to participate and/or earn career certifications in Agriculture Science, (3) provide field trips to expand the background knowledge for students, (4) embed hands-on nutrition and agricultural science in daily instructional activities, and (5) engage the community through marketing and promotion of health and wellness initiatives for staff, students, parents, and community stakeholders.

School Board of Sarasota County

Sarasota, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

The Sarasota County School Food Ambassador Program, modeled upon the successful FoodCorps program, will build capacity within Sarasota County to bridge the gap between nutrition, agriculture, and the development of healthy food choice behaviors within the K-12 school environment. School Food Ambassadors will develop school-based programs to increase students' acceptance and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables with a focus on local produce, promote school gardens, and initiate a school garden network.

2019

School Board of Orange County, Florida

Orlando, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$95,532

The Career and Technical Education division of Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), Florida, the ninth largest school district in the nation, will move forward with Strong Roots: Farm to School, a program intended to strengthen and expand a model Farm to School program currently serving horticulture students at Ocoee High School and replicate it at Edgewater High School. Key partners include the 4R Foundation and Dr. Phillips Charities.

2020

The BloominThyme Collaborative Inc.

Leesburg, Florida

Grant Type: Planning; \$26,325

The BloominThyme Collaborative Inc. will collaborate with the University of Florida Extension Office, and the Lake County Public School District, a predominantly Title 1 district in rural Central Florida, to develop a broad plan for procuring locally sourced produce and serving it in school cafeterias. The project will focus on K-8 schools with a high rate of students receiving free or reduced lunch and breakfast and provide opportunities for hands-on learning with the installation of school gardens. Harvest tastings and nutritional education will be provided, and families will be encouraged to consume fresh produce at home by receiving easy-to-prepare recipes.

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom

Gainesville, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom will hire a School Garden Specialist to assist Florida educators, in PreK-12 public, charter and non-profit private schools, on how to start a garden, get funding, use it as a teaching tool, create a successful garden team and assist with Florida's school garden certification program. Through these efforts, students will have an increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, with the intent of increasing the amount of locally grown produce served in the cafeteria.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Tallahassee, Florida

Grant Type: State Agency; \$64,588

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will engage K-12 STEM and agriculture educators interested in starting or strengthening aquaculture education programs in their schools to: 1) participate in a three-day intensive training and skills building workshop, and 2) award aquaculture systems and supplies to 20 schools selected through a competitive application and review process. This project will help provide teacher training, technical support and physical resources for schools to incorporate aquaculture into lesson plans, hands-on activities, experiential learning opportunities and agriculture, garden or Farm to School initiatives. Key partners include the University of Florida Institute for Food and Agricultural Science (UF/IFAS) Tropical Aquaculture Lab and an experienced Florida K-12 aquaculture

educator. This project ultimately has the potential to enhance agriculture education for hundreds of students throughout the state.

Florida Impact, Inc.

Tallahassee, Florida

Grant Type: Planning; \$50,000

Florida Impact, Inc., a not-for-profit advocacy organization dedicated to improving nutrition for children in Florida, has formed an alliance comprised of Fort Braden K-8 School, Leon County Public Schools District Food and Nutrition Services, Red Hill Small Farm Alliance and Florida A&M University to plan a Farm to School project for the school. The partnership seeks to develop a plan to incorporate fresh products in the school menus and assist school food services personnel with training on ways to incorporate local fresh food in their cooking. The planning group will research best practices and curricula for teaching students about local food and agricultural production with the goal of building increased understanding and appreciation of the importance of fruits and vegetables for optimal nutrition.

Leon County School District

Tallahassee, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

Leon County Schools District will implement a comprehensive farm to school program that will include local procurement and agricultural education efforts. The Farm to School program will operate at Woodville K-8 School where agricultural classes will be expanded to provide students and community with the opportunity to have access to fresh food.

The Education Fund, Inc.

Miami Lakes, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

The Education Fund's Food Forests for Schools (FFS) transforms public schoolyards into outdoor eco-labs that provide both nutrient-dense food for school cafeterias and agricultural education. Weekly harvests and a progressive partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools led to policy change and cafeteria manager training, resulting in school-fresh produce enhancing school meals and filling homebound harvest bags, affecting 31,532 students annually. The project will expand the FFS model and procurement of local and Florida grown produce of items similar to FFS crops, standardize school meal recipes and FFS procedures, and continue teacher training with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. A researcher from Florida International University will also evaluate production, as well as general plant and soil health, to help the understanding of the suitability (and sustainability) of FFS species in the South Florida environment.

2021

School District of Putnam County Florida

Palatka, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$91,210

A farm to school planning grant created a path and foundation for a healthy network and many collaborations. The implementation grant will allow for an even bigger expansion of the current program as well as enrich the local produce procurement, school gardens, and further develop the EH Miller Farm and a future food hub. The educational experiences of the students, Exceptional Student Education Department student volunteers, combined with the EH Miller Farm endeavors to craft a true farm to plate for Putnam County Students. The amazing progression of this project has been made possible by the outpouring of community support, the school food service team, agriculture educators, master gardeners, and local farming partners.

St Lucie Public Schools

Port St Lucie, Florida

Grant Type: Turnkey; \$9,700

The Farm to School Program at St Lucie Public Schools is an essential pillar to the Child Nutrition Services Department. The organization provides fresh, local, wholesome meals to their students daily. They also pride themselves in their partnership with UF/IFAS which provides nutrition education resources, garden assistance, trainings, community support, and more. With the USDA Farm to School Grant Program, they will continue collaborative partnerships with local vendors such as Localecopia, and Robert Erneston Produce, who provide them with locally sourced foods. Continued plans include expanding upon the current school garden program and incorporating curriculum into the gardens to bridge the gaps in nutrition knowledge. Another goal is to focus on marketing campaigns including printouts, multimedia, and social media that will highlight the Farm to School Program, which will in turn create more engagement from students, parents, educators and the community.

Tampa Metropolitan Area Young Men's Christian Association

Tampa, Florida

Grant Type: Implementation; \$78,439

The Tampa YMCA will expand nutrition education at four sites in Hillsborough County, Florida to encompass nutrition education, garden instruction, and entrepreneurship through Food, Fit and Fun at the Y. Students at Sulphur Springs K-8 Community School (SSK8) and three YMCA centerbased after school locations will participate in a twice-weekly nutrition education club where they will learn the importance of eating healthy foods and create healthy snacks with produce delivered by the Veggie Van. Students at SSK8 will also grow produce in the Sulphur Springs Learning Garden and create a plan to distribute the harvest within the community.

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, FL

Miami, Florida

Grant Type: Turnkey; \$36,746

Miami-Dade County Public Schools will establish a sustainable, student-led agribusiness program, the William H. Turner Technical Arts High School Fresh Food Venture, which will act as a reliable source of fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, and meat for the community. Students in the program will serve as community ambassadors, leading workshops on urban farming and incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables in a healthy diet. Students will apply marketing and business skills and partner with students from the school's Finance Academy to incorporate best business and accounting practices. This Farm to School edible garden project fits into the school's comprehensive plan to provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge of Agritechnology in real-world contexts, support high level stakeholder engagement, foster student leadership, and prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace.