

Mississippi USDA F2S Grant Awards

2013

Oxford City Schools District

Oxford, Mississippi

Planning \$38,145

In order to improve the healthiness of school meals and to engage students and parents in using and appreciating fresh, local produce, the Oxford School District will plan a farm to school program. Over the last five years, the Nutrition Program and its director have improved the healthiness, variety and appeal of the meals offered, but need the help of advisors – farmers, parents, chefs, teachers, health professionals and other local resources – to begin to integrate local produce in a systematic, meaningful, permanent way. We anticipate four main areas of work: coordinating with local farmers and partners; preparing kitchens and training staff; making classroom connections for deeper student learning, and; engaging and educating parents on how to keep this going at home. We will conduct pilot activities in two elementary schools that serve K-3, but the implementation plan will lay out the procedure for district-wide implementation.

2014

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Choctaw, Mississippi

Grant Type: Planning; \$43,339

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (a federally- recognized Indian tribe) operates the largest unified reservation school system in the United States with 2,194 students. There are six elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Per the National Center for Health Statistics Guidelines, 19.8% in the age 2- 18 cohort are considered overweight and 35.6% are obese (or, at risk of obesity). The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has a Fresh Produce Initiative which raises fruits and vegetables for use in schools and the tribal resort. The tribal council has advised the school system to incorporate locally produced foods into the menus in school food service operations, and this application seeks funding for planning for that activity.

The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi

Flowood, MS

Grant Type: Support Service; \$89,844

As of September 2011, there were no “farm direct” programs operating in public schools in Mississippi. The U.S. Department of Defense’s Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program, operated jointly by the Mississippi Departments of Education, Agriculture, and, Commerce, is the only state-level effort for purchasing produce from Mississippi farmers. However, many small farmers still cannot participate because they do not meet state inspection and certification requirements. The majority of small and medium-sized farmers in Mississippi simply do not have current

information nor the expertise or financial resources to obtain Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) certification. The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi proposes to address these challenges by providing statewide coordination of farm to school activities in Mississippi and increasing farm to school capacity building efforts by providing training and technical assistance for key stakeholders. Successful implementation of this proposed project will result in the institutionalization of a farm to school program; increased knowledge as a result of information dissemination efforts, regional conferences, and educational booths at local farmers' markets; and, an increase of at least five school districts (over a current baseline of zero) utilizing small to mid-sized Mississippi farmers for fruit and vegetable purchases.

2015

My Brother's Keeper, Incorporated

Ridgeland, Mississippi

Grant Type: Conference and Event – State; \$25,000

My Brother's Keeper, Incorporated, a non-profit community-based organization, in collaboration with the Mississippi Food Policy Council and Delta Fresh Foods Initiative, will host the 3rd annual Mississippi Farm to Cafeteria Conference. This statewide event will provide up-to-date information on farm to cafeteria programming; educate participants about other institutional markets for farm produce; provide a forum for growers, purchasers, and other key stakeholders to connect, network, and further farm to cafeteria efforts; offer follow-up regional network meetings for conference participants to receive more hands-on farm to cafeteria programming and technical assistance; and serve as a catalyst to address legislative, cultural, and environmental barriers that oftentimes impede farm to cafeteria programming in Mississippi. This robust approach will prove instrumental in furthering the farm to cafeteria movement in Mississippi.

2016

Oxford School District

Oxford, Mississippi

Grant Type: Implementation; \$79,596

The Oxford School District, which previously received a USDA Farm to School planning grant, will take part in a city-wide food hub collaboration with the Oxford City Market and turn garden projects into self-sustaining educational programs. Since receiving their initial grant in 2013, the project has served as an example to schools around the state and will continue to lead the way for farm to school projects in the coming years

2017

The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi

Flowood, Mississippi

Grant Type: Support Service; \$99,726

The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi will implement "Be a Part of Farm to School Mississippi Program" which will benefit 9,547 underserved elementary and pre-kindergarten youth in Jackson Public School District. The "Be a Part of Farm to School Program" will expand farm to school programs in twenty-four Mississippi schools. These goals will be achieved by increasing hands-on learning in on-site school gardens, delivering local food taste-tests and farmers' market demonstrations, coordinating harvest of the month crop-drops, organizing farm field trips, and developing a public relations campaign around farm to school.

2018

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Choctaw, Mississippi

Grant Type: Implementation; \$100,000

The Choctaw Farm to School program will provide eight Choctaw Tribal Schools with Mississippi grown fruits, vegetables, and meats. Most of the fresh vegetables will come from farms operated by the Choctaw Fresh Produce Enterprise, which has high tunnel greenhouses in six Choctaw communities.

Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Jackson, Mississippi

Grant Type: Training; \$40,000

The Mississippi Association of Cooperatives (Association) will train farmers and cooperatives to increase their farm to school procurement knowledge. In addition to the training opportunities, the Association will (1) develop an edible school garden in two school districts, (2) promote healthier food choices, and (3) conduct two farm to school reality tours in which the farmer visits the school and the school visits the farm.

2020

Earth Island Institute

Jackson, Mississippi

Grant Type: Implementation; \$85,214

The mission of the Mississippi Farm to School Network (MSF2SN) is to strengthen the local agricultural economy and educate Mississippians on the importance of eating locally grown, nutritionally dense foods. This project will expand the educational reach of MSF2SN's comprehensive program by engaging school food service professionals, farmers, teachers, parents, and community advocates from across the state at a statewide MS Farm to Cafeteria Conference.

Delta Health Alliance, Inc.

Stoneville, Mississippi

Grant Type: Implementation; \$99,761

The Delta EATS (Edible Agriculture Teaching Students) collaborative seeks to improve agricultural education and develop new procurement relationships with local farmers to improve 1,196 public school students' understanding of and exposure to locally grown produce. The project's collaborators include McEvans Elementary, Sanders Elementary, Leland Accelerated Elementary, Leland School Park Middle, Leland Career and Technical Center, FoodCORPS of Mississippi and the Mississippi Farm to School Network.

Scientific Research (SR1)

Ridgeland, Mississippi

Grant Type: Planning; \$50,000

Scientific Research's (SR1) vision is a nation of food equity in which every child in every school has access to fresh, healthy and delicious food every day. SR1 will work with local school districts, parents, and community members to build a "whole setting approach" to support and sustain schools transition to fresh whole foods through menu audits and food tasting, farm-to-school curriculum, local agriculture and procurement, and hands on farm-to-school experiences. The whole setting approach will be an evidence-based intervention method that works to change food culture, contributes to community-wide whole systems change, and has an impact on education, sustainability, inequalities, communities, and health. The project will accomplish the objective to improve access to local foods in eligible schools by developing a comprehensive farm-to-school program that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts. SR1 will utilize the below proven methods and strategies to design a robust farm-to-school planning program.