

CT Department of Agriculture - Farm to School Grant Overview

Farm-to-school enriches communities' connection with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites.

Students gain access to healthy, local foods and education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons, and farm field trips. Farm to school empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.

Farm-to-school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following known as the 3 C's:



Source: Image from Food Connects

Why farm to school?

Kids WIN

Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high-quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm-to-school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture, and nutrition.

Farmers WIN

Farm to school can be a significant financial opportunity for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and food manufacturers by opening the doors to an institutional market worth billions of dollars in sales.

Communities WIN

Farm-to-school benefits everyone from students, teachers, and administrators to parents and farmers, providing opportunities to build family and community engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and strengthens the local economy.

Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School – CT Grown for CT Kids Grant (CTG4CTK)

The CTG4CTK grant was first awarded to Wintonbury for the implementation of the Growing, Eating, Learning Project for fiscal year 2023 and 2024. The grant, totaling \$24,999, allowed Wintonbury staff to work with Micro to Life, a local microgreens grower, and Auerfarm, a longtime partner of Wintonbury. The program funded curriculum and lesson development that merged nutrition education with STEM and provided the resources for the school sponsored Try Day Friday events which allowed students to taste-test locally sourced produce prepared in different ways. The Try Day Friday events were hosted in partnership with the Bloomfield Food Services Department.

As part of the second-year cohort of grantees for the Farm to School program, Wintonbury was given the opportunity to apply for another year of funding for fiscal year 2024-2025. The school was fortunate to be awarded \$26,500 for Growing, Eating, Learning Expansion Project.

Growing, Eating, Learning Expansion project is divided into four focus areas:

1. increasing access and establishing reliable sources to locally grown foods (via hydroponic, aquaponics and traditional growing methods) for students to sample during Try Day Fridays and other school events,
2. continue providing staff professional development in the areas of **nutrition** and **growing** to take full advantage of the school's and district's growing facilities and the longstanding Auerfarm partnership, and
3. provide avenues for families and students to share their cultural backgrounds through the development of a "Wintonbury's Recipes from Around the World" cookbook using locally grown produce.
4. continue to increase student knowledge in nutrition and making healthy food choices through the implementation of the updated STEM curriculum and lessons developed through the implementation of FY 2023 CTG4CTK grant.

Our goal utilize this initial investment in infrastructure and staff professional development which can continue function beyond the grant period.