

## ILLINOIS FARM-TO-SCHOOL COHORT OPPORTUNITY

### “BUY LOCAL, COOK FRESH ILLINOIS”

Beyond Green Partners (BGP) invites you to apply for “Buy Local, Cook Fresh Illinois” a comprehensive training cohort project to help guide three rural Central Illinois schools in transforming their food service programs to scratch-cooking operations that use locally sourced ingredients. The cohort approach allows participants to collaborate and learn together, creating a community of schools to help build and support a local school food system.

Participants will enroll in the our Online Learning Platform and Community Hub which allows participants to share their menus, recipes, challenges, and successes to learn from one another throughout the project. Our virtual course consists of 75+ training modules plus 28 recipe videos, guiding learners throughout the change-management lifecycle of a scratch-cooking program transition:

- **CHAPTER 1: WEIGHT VS. VOLUME**
- **CHAPTERS 2 & 3: TEAMWORK & LEADERSHIP**
- **CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONS & FOOD SAFETY**
- **CHAPTER 5: WASTE TRACKING & ZERO WASTE INITIATIVES**
- **CHAPTER 6: EQUIPMENT IN A SCRATCH-KITCHEN**
- **CHAPTER 7: CULINARY METHODS: JUST-IN-TIME COOKING & BATCH PRODUCTION**
- **CHAPTER 8: PROCUREMENT: SOURCING LOCAL & FRESH FOODS**
- **CHAPTER 9: RECIPE & MENU DEVELOPMENT**
- **CHAPTER 10: GUEST EXPERIENCE**
- **CHAPTER 11: QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE DATA**

### WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Schools with self-operating foodservice departments that want to gain the skills to incorporate local and fresh food in preparing culturally relevant meals that students want to eat and staff want to make. The project lifecycle is a **2.5-YEAR** commitment that requires full stakeholder buy-in and engagement which includes submitting data for use in guiding the project. Project activities are set to launch Fall 2024. Please email [greg@beyondgreenpartners.com](mailto:greg@beyondgreenpartners.com) to apply or request more information.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

Through virtual and some in-person training and coaching, BGP will guide cohort participants in:

1. **Scratch-Cooking** - Kitchen staff will be equipped with methods and skills for scratch-cooking to implement a new scratch-cooked menu developed with student and staff input.
2. **Local Food Purchasing** - Participating schools will learn to incorporate local and fresh food in preparing culturally relevant meals that students want to eat and staff want to make.

### COST

Participating schools are responsible for the cost of labor for training hours, food for taste tests and recipe testing, and new equipment for use in scratch-cooking (estimated equipment cost is \$7,500 but is dependent on existing equipment at each site). The cost to participate in the program including trainings, coaching, resources, and select smallwares are covered by grant funds.

### ABOUT BGP

We collaborate with institutions to train existing cooks to make food from scratch with fresh and locally sourced ingredients using money and time that already exist in the system. We utilize waste reduction strategies and implement efficient kitchen systems to purchase higher-quality food with no additional program costs. We support regional local food system growth in Illinois by increasing demand for local food from institutional kitchens.