



NATIONAL
FARM to **SCHOOL**
NETWORK

Farm to ECE Policy:

National Overview &
How You Can Be Involved

July 8, 2024

National Farm to School Network Speakers



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She/Her

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He/Him

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Agenda

I

About Farm to School - 5 min

II

Pathways for ECE Policy - 5 min

III

ECE Policy Examples - 5 min

IV

Plugging Into Advocacy - 10 min

V

Breakout Sessions - 10 min

VI

Q&A - 10-15 min



Our Mission

National Farm to School Network increases access to local food and nutrition education to improve children's health, strengthen family farms, and cultivate vibrant communities.

Our Vision

National Farm to School Network envisions a nation in which farm to school programs are an essential component of strong and just local and regional food systems, ensuring the health of children, farms, the environment, the economy and communities.

Our Core Functions

**We are a hub
for:**



Information



Networking



Advocacy

**Connecting
people to:**



Resources



People



Policy

Why Farm to School?



Kids Win!



Farmers Win!

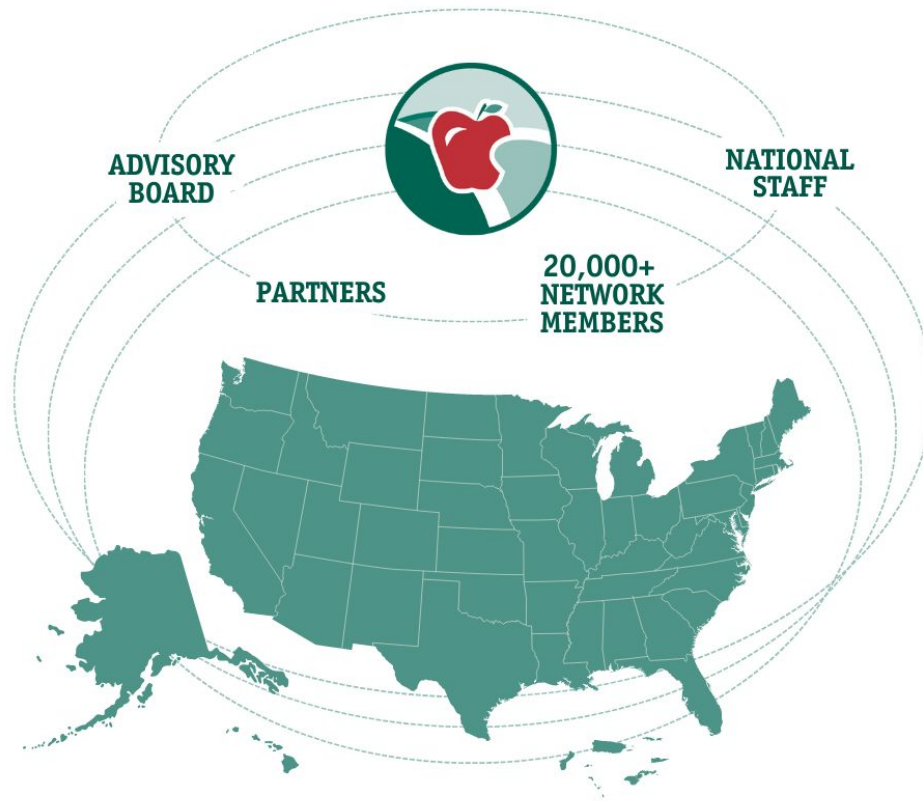


Communities Win!

CORE ELEMENTS OF **FARM** *to* **SCHOOL**



What Is Farm to School?



Our Network

POLICY SUPPORT FOR NFSN PARTNERS:

- ***Guide network direction:*** Influence national farm to school agenda, policies, and programs
- ***First access to projects:*** Co-develop and lead grant projects with NFSN
- ***Policy influence:*** Elevate concerns, connect with federal government
- ***Bi-Weekly Policy Team Office Hours:*** Thought partner with us
- ***Technical assistance:*** One-off help and content expertise
- ***Access to Partner Listserv:*** Share resources and ask questions
- ***State Policy Quarterly Roundtables:*** Connect with partners nationwide



Learn more about
becoming a partner!



Become a partner!

Join as a Partner



Our Call to Action
**100% of
Communities
Will Hold
Power in a
Racially Just
Food System**



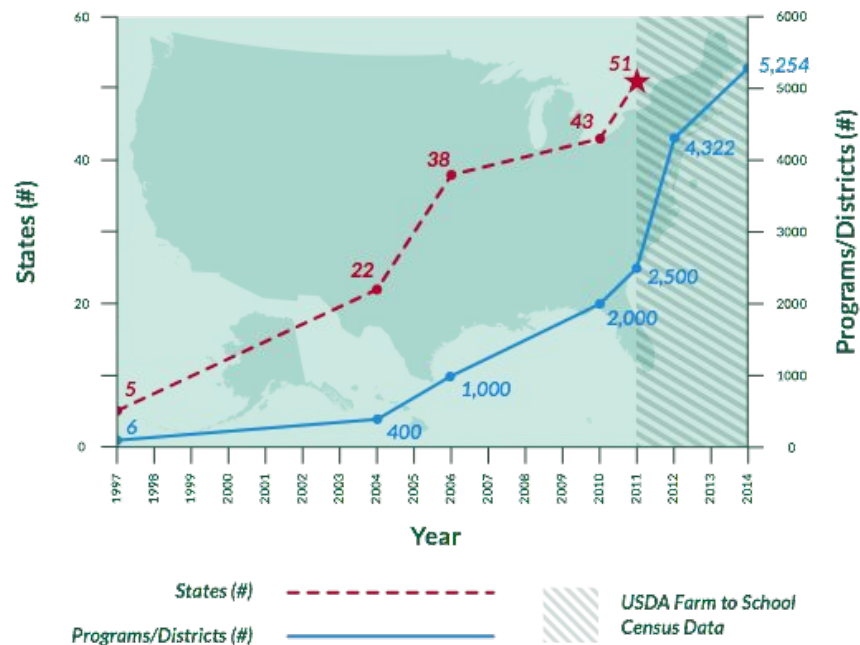
Community Values
**Economic Justice
Environmental Justice
Health Impact
Racial Equity
Workers Rights
& Animal Welfare**



**NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK**

We are a part of a Growing Movement!

Growth of Farm to School in the U.S.
(1997-2014)



67,000+*

Schools Participate in Farm
to School

42%*

of US Schools

23.6M*

Students Engaged

\$1.26B*

Spent on Local Food

46

States with Supportive
Policies

20,000+

NFSN Members



**NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK**



Farm to Early Care and Education

Farm to ECE encourages:

- Health & Wellness
- Experiential Learning
- Family & Community Engagement

It applies the same core elements as farm to school in settings for children ages 0-5

- Including in child care centers and family child care homes
- Also in preschools, nursery schools, Head Starts, Early Head Starts, programs in K-12 districts, and others



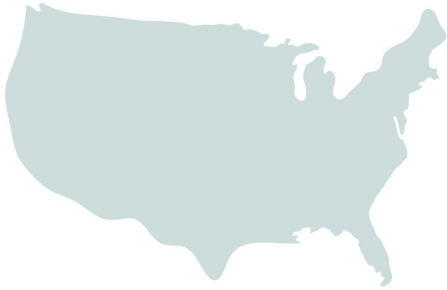
What are policies?

A law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions.

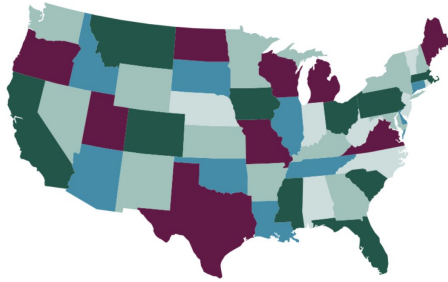
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Pathways for Farm to ECE Policy

Federal



State



Local





FEDERAL Pathways

Bills

Authorizing bills such as CNR, Farm Bill; marker bills

Annual Appropriations

\$ to previously authorized bills; policy riders

Resolutions

Easiest to pass, generally celebratory in nature

Executive Orders

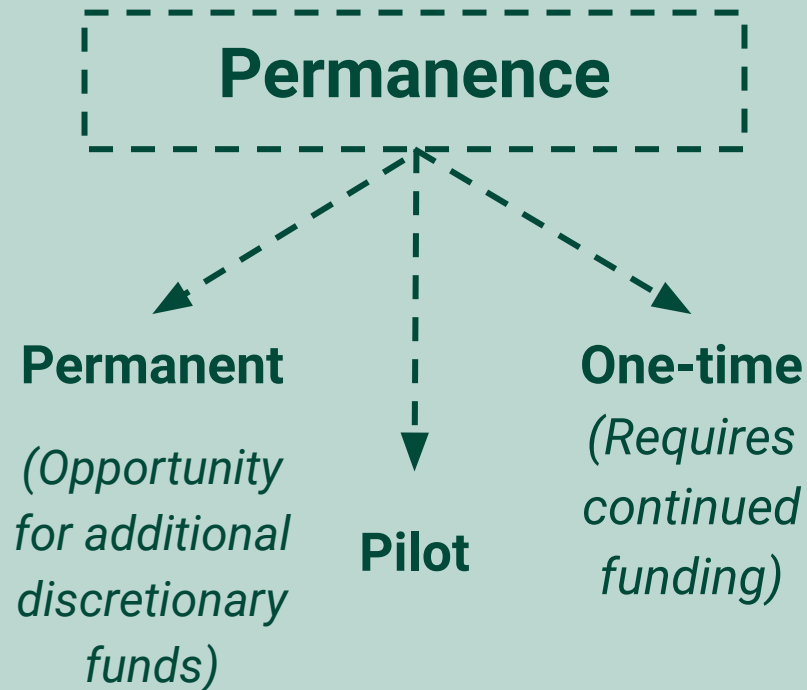
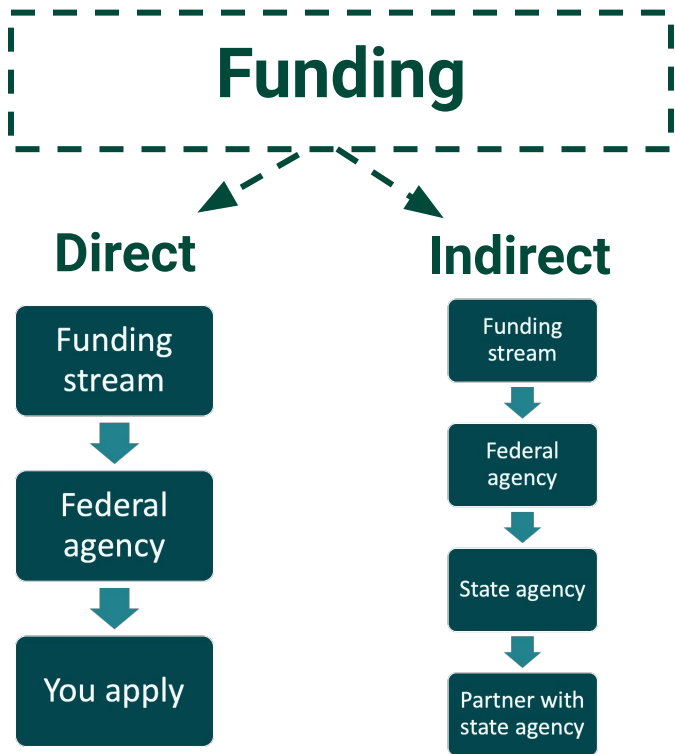
Quick via President may not last in admin change

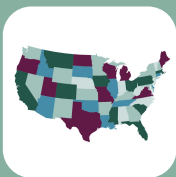
Agency Implementation

Varies! Rules, grant guidelines, plans for TA, etc.



FEDERAL Pathways





STATE Pathways

Bills

Short v. Comprehensive, can mandate funding

Budget Process

Varies! 1-2 years, omnibus/exec/1house budget

Resolutions

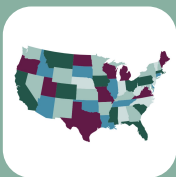
Easiest to pass, generally celebratory in nature

Executive Orders

Quick via governor, may not last in admin change

Agency-Level Decisions

Varies! Program development, policies, etc.



STATE Pathways

Funding

Yes

- Grants
- Incentives
- Positions

No

- Goals, directives
- Proclamations
- Technical changes
- Politics of permission

Permanence

Permanent

Pilot

One-time *(Requires continued funding)*

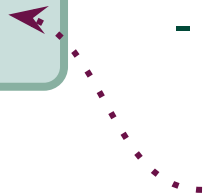


LOCAL Pathways

Where are local policies made?

City/Town/Village Gov.

County Gov.

Organization/Institution 

These Policies Can Include:

- Food safety
- Standard procedures
- Grant programs
- Coordinators
- Events and programs

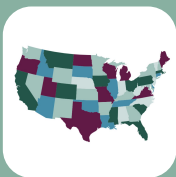
*commonly in Extension or SNAP Ed

School Wellness Policies





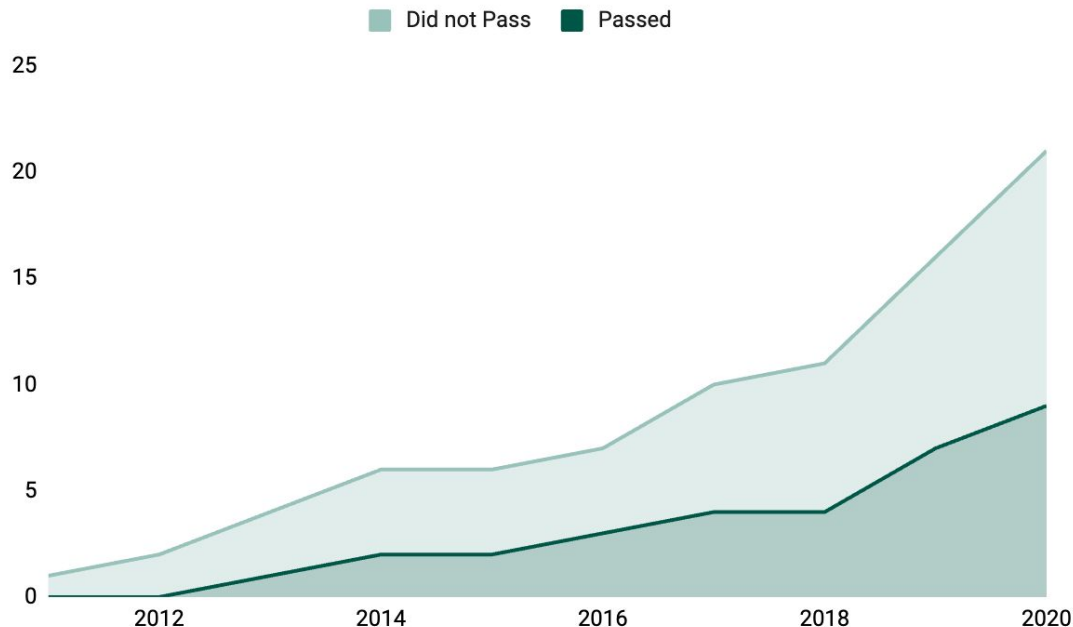
The Farm to ECE Policy Landscape

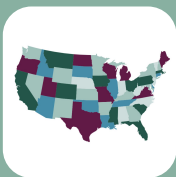


STATE Policy Landscape

State Farm to School/ECE Bills 2002-2020

- 591 total bills recorded
- 21 ECE related (3.5%)
- 43% ECE-related bills passed





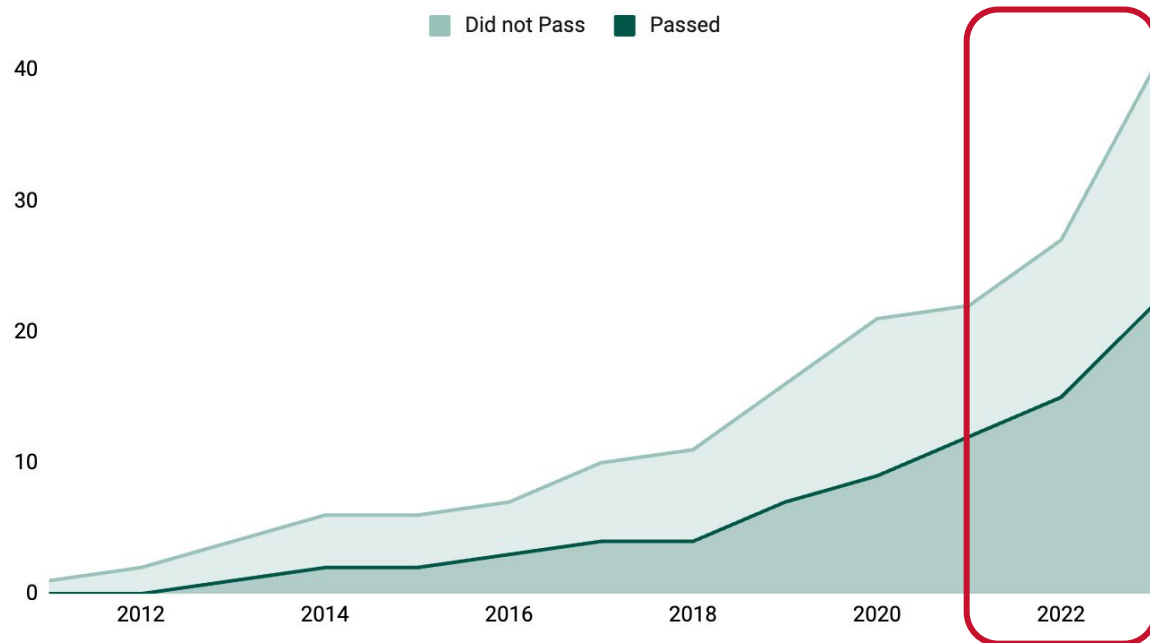
STATE Policy Landscape

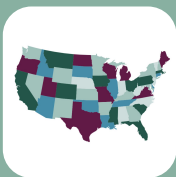
In progress farm to school bill coding

(35/50 states)

2021-2023

- 219 bills
- 29 ECE related (13%)
- 45% passed





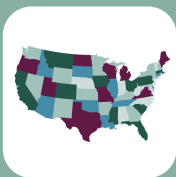
STATE Policy Landscape

Funding

- **Farm to School/ECE Grants**
(education, school gardens, kitchen equipment, matchmaking)
- **Local Food Purchasing Incentives**
- **Statewide Farm to School/ECE Programs**
- **Statewide Farm to School/ECE Coordinators**

Non-Monetary

- **Councils / Task Forces to Develop Research or Guidance**
- **Encouraging Local Food Purchasing**
- **Resolutions Supporting Events**



STATE Policy Examples

Non-monetary



Delaware

S.C.R 90 (2023)

Encouraging the Use of
Locally Sourced Food

Working group, research

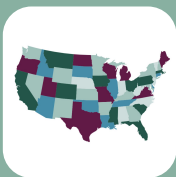


New Mexico

H.M. 1 / S.M. 7 (2023)

Declaring “New Mexico
Food and Farms” Day

*Honoring ECEs that
purchase local food*



Statewide Programs & Coordinator Positions



Arkansas

H.B. 1615 (2019)

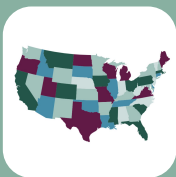
Establishing A
Farm to School and Early
Childhood Education Program
Includes coordinator position



Nebraska

L.B. 758 (2022)

Expanding the
Farm-to-School Program Act
to Include ECE Programs
*(expanded L.B. 396, (2021)
\$100,000 annual budget)*



STATE Policy Examples

Funded

Grant Programs (*not comprehensive*)



Vermont

H. 828/S. 169 (2016)
S. 33 (2017)

Including ECE in
Rozo McLaughlin
Farm-to-School
Grant Program



Pennsylvania

Farm-to-School
Act. H.B.1514 (2019)

Farm to School
Grant Program
Up to \$15,000



Oregon

Multiple bills
over time

Farm to CNP
Education Track
Up to \$100,000



California

Budget Acts of
2021-2023

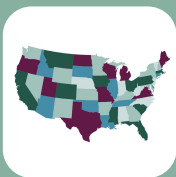
Farm to School
Incubator Grant -
ECE Track
\$50,000-200,000



Connecticut

H.B. 6882 (2023)

CT Grown for CT
Kids Grant
Program
Up to \$50,000



STATE Policy Examples

Funded

Local Food Purchasing Incentives

Direct monetary support for ECEs to buy locally

New Mexico

New Mexico Grown
Program

Minnesota

First Bite and Full
Tray Grants

DC

Local5 Program /
Healthy Tots Act

Washington

Farm to School
Purchasing Grant

Oregon

Farm to Child
Nutrition Program

Michigan

10 Cents a Meal

California

Farm to School
Incubator Grant

Vermont

Community
Supported Ag. Grant

And many more pilot programs!





FEDERAL Policy Landscape

Legislation

- **Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR)**
 - Farm to School Act
 - CACFP
- **Farm Bill**
 - SNAP
 - WIC

Agencies

- **Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
 - FNS
- **Health and Human Resources**
- **CDC**



FEDERAL Policy Landscape

**Directly
Funded**

USDA Farm to School Grants

- USDA awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school and ECE programs. USDA's Farm to School grants are an important way to help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.

Cooperative Extension System

- Hire farm to ECE staff and direct farm to ECE activities and technical assistance.

Head Start and Early Head Start

- As HS/EHS is a federally operated program, funding flows from HHS directly to Head Start agencies and their grantees.
- Through the American Rescue Plan Act, an additional \$1 billion dollars was appropriated to HS/EHS agencies.
- Farm to ECE goals align with HS/EHS Performance Standards



FEDERAL Policy Landscape

**Indirectly
Funded**

Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- Staff time can be used for farm to ECE, provide technical assistance, and coordinate farm to ECE activities
- Target CACFP providers for farm to ECE trainings, grants, and pilot programs
- Mitigate cost of local foods, garden development and maintenance, and educational costs

Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBGP)

- Increase child nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops through outreach, education, and marketing campaigns; improving efficiency of distribution systems; developing “Good Agricultural Practices” through distribution chains

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Infants, Women, and Children (WIC)

- WIC funds flow to state agencies through grants. DPH then allocates funding to local agencies based on WIC participation caseloads
- WIC provides participants with a monthly cash value benefit (CVB) that can be used to purchase fruits and vegetables at any WIC-approved vendor



FEDERAL Policy Landscape

Indirectly
Funded

Supplemental Nutrition Education Program - Education (SNAP-Ed)

- Can provide technical assistance, subsidize materials, and implement educational activities. State SNAP-Ed funds can also be used to hire farm to ECE staff.
- USDA FNS distributes funds to state agencies who then disperse funds to more localized agencies to carry out programming.

State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (SPAN)

- CDC funding CDC 16 states to implement interventions at state and local levels to improve population health, nutrition, and physical activity. Previous iterations have spread a similar amount of funding among all states and the DC.
- Can be used for state-level farm to ECE work such as resource development, state-level surveys, mini-grants, etc.
- Learn more [here](#)
- **Action:** RFA released every 5 years, with another SPAN RFA anticipated April, 2023.



Title V Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) Block Grant

- Noncompetitive grant that 59 states and jurisdictions receive. Every 5 years, states submit a needs assessment to inform a 5 year action plan.
- Action plan can include priorities to improve early childhood health through farm to ECE. Can allocate funding for staff's time on farm to ECE initiatives, resource design, mini-grants, and other state-level initiatives.

Preventative Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant

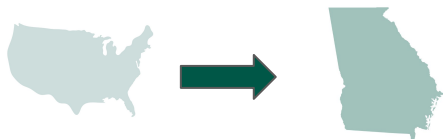
- Mandatory grant given to 61 recipients including all states to address national health priorities in their jurisdictions. Recipients can set their own goals and program objectives based on local needs and strategies that align with CDC's [Healthy People 2030 goals](#).

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

- Support activities (e.g., facilities enhancements to kitchens and gardening infrastructure)
 - Encourage use of CCDF discretionary funds for quality improvements in child nutrition, social-emotional health, and professional development for providers
- Learn more about leveraging these funds [here](#)



FEDERAL Policy Examples



Georgia Dept. of Early Care and Learning

Farm to School Act
Received \$63,408 for two years
(2020-2022)

- *Strengthen and expand the reach of farm to ECE initiatives in Georgia.*
- *Hosted a state-wide farm to ECE conference and gathered feedback and recommendations on future activities and challenges related to farm to ECE.*



FEDERAL Policy Examples



Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Standards: Geographic Preference

USDA updated the durable rules
on April 25

- *Schools can now include “local” as a purchasing **specification** for fresh and minimally processed food items.*
- *Defining “local” is up to the buyer.*
- *USDA received nearly 400 comments about this change.*



How Can I Advocate for Farm to ECE Policy?



ADVOCACY Cultivating Knowledge and Motivation

Knowledge

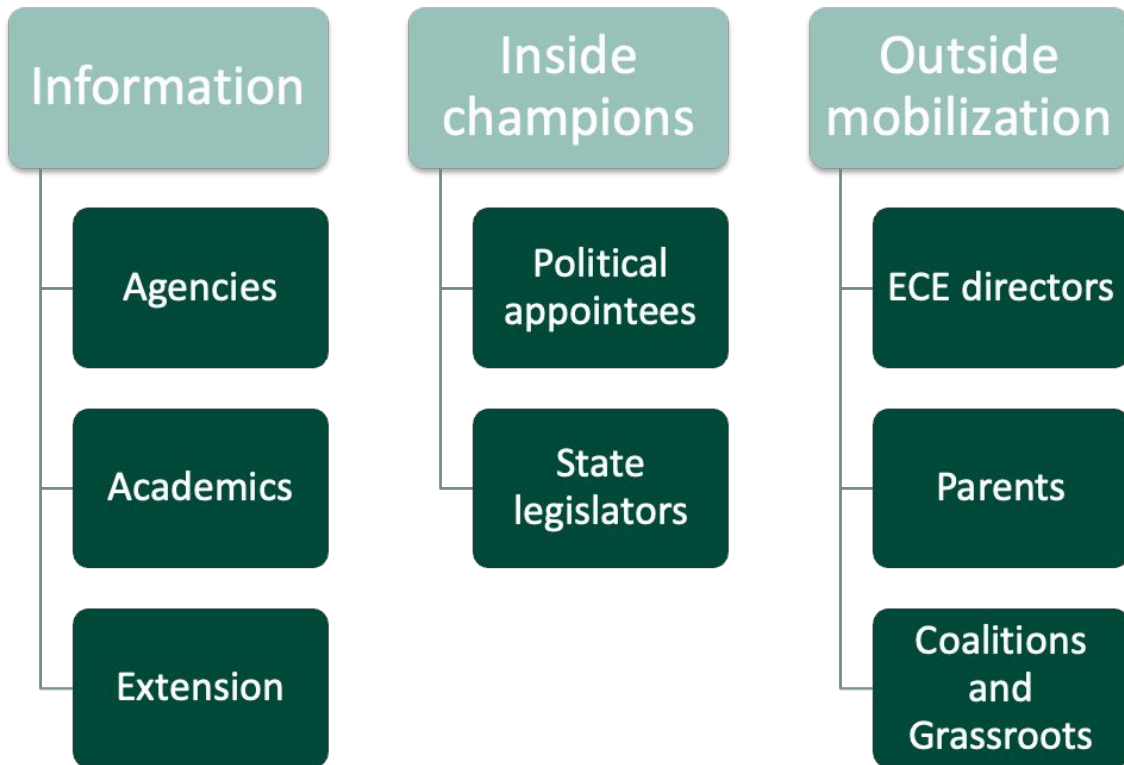
- **Specific policy asks/levers**
- **Existing in state already**
- **What other states are doing**

Motivation

- **Belief that it's important/beneficial**
- **Belief that there's demand**
- **Belief that it's beneficial to them**



ADVOCACY Roles





ADVOCACY Identify the Players and Gather Information

Identify the Players

- **NFSN Partner Map**
 - *Become a partner!*
- **Reach out to ASPHN**
- **Reach out to Coalitions or Food Policy Councils**
- **Reach out to SNA**
- **Google**

Gather Information

- **NFSN Resource Page**
- **NFSN State Policy Handbook and Map**
- **Consult other national/state networks**
- **Federal Funding Opportunities Resource**



ADVOCACY The Pathway

Identify

- Benefits
- Stakeholders
- Champions

Cultivate champions

Illustrate benefits

Frame the narrative

- Use data and stories

Get it done

- Identify funding/implementors
- Mobilize at key moments



How Can **State Agency Officials** Be Involved?

*Each state & agency
is different*

*Varying degrees of
agency & budget*



SUPPORT as a State Agency

Storytelling and Events



- Highlighting good press from ECE sites
- Developing storytelling content (blogs, videos, social media shares)
- Co-organize or attend site visits with key stakeholders
- Other recognition programs



SUPPORT as a State Agency

Spearheading Research



- Develop needs assessments
- Host listening sessions and share back themes
- Conduct or support program evaluation
- Publish legislative reports about program outputs



SUPPORT as a State Agency

Providing Technical Expertise



- By sitting in on coalition or advocacy group meetings
- By providing expert testimony to a legislative body
- By supporting ECE sites or nonprofit partners



SUPPORT as a State Agency

Spearheading Agency Policies Outside of State or Federal Policy



Lowercase “p” policy:

- What programs or policies can you do at the agency level that doesn't need bill authorization?
 - *Farm to ECE Networks*
- What kind of budget does your agency have for these?
- Are there other non-monetary policies that can uplift farm to ECE?



Think–Pair–Share

Do you have personal experience in supporting Farm to ECE policy?

What are some Farm to ECE policies that inspire you?

What are your next steps in supporting Farm to ECE policy?

Introducing New ECE Staff Member!



Hawthorn McCracken

Farm to Early Care and Education
Program Associate
Hawthorn@farmtoschool.org



Q&A

Thank you for listening!

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Farmtoschool.org

