



# 2020 – 2021 New York State Farm to School Institute Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the New York State Farm to School Institute?

The New York State Farm to School Institute offers a comprehensive learning opportunity for food service staff, educators, administrators, and community partners in New York schools to develop and refine their Farm to School programs, and to help bring more New York grown food into the cafeteria and the classroom. Given the momentum of public programs and increased interest in local foods, Farm to School has the potential to grow exponentially across New York State. The New York State Farm to School Institute will assist participating schools in creating successful Farm to School programs and connecting with farmers to help schools access these growing opportunities



## Who Will Benefit from the New York State Farm to School Institute?

Farm to school programs offer a direct opportunity to improve the health of students while strengthening the local agricultural economy by bringing farm fresh local foods into school cafeterias statewide. Though schools may want to support these benefits, in many cases there exists a knowledge gap in how to get food from the farm to the student plate. The Institute fills this need by offering school teams enhanced technical knowledge and support on how to procure and prepare local foods, tools for community engagement, and classroom and culinary education. Participating schools will also become alumni of a 'New York State Farm to School Institute Network', continuing to share best practices and resources with others championing farm to school for years to come.

## Why does New York State need an Institute for Farm to School?

New York is home to the largest school district in the country, as well as large urban and suburban districts, and smaller rural schools. The New York State Farm to School Institute is modeled after the longstanding Northeast Farm to School Institute but adapted for New York's unique school landscape. Hosting a state-specific Institute provides tailored support to schools in creating Farm to School programs. Furthermore, with the introduction of the 2018 No Student Goes Hungry Initiative, the need for training is timely and necessary to help schools find ways to source, procure, and serve more New York-grown foods to students across the State.

## When will the Institute be held and what will it include?

The 2020-2021 New York State Farm to School Institute is an annual, year-long training and continuing education program. Ten New York school teams will participate in a three-day Summer Retreat to kickoff the year. The Summer Retreat will be held at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York, from June 1 – 4, 2020, followed by a celebratory one-day Spring Gathering in the Hudson Valley. Schools will receive Farm to School Implementation Awards to encourage early progress in their Farm to School Action Plans with marketing resources or assistance with farm-based activities connecting class to cafeteria. Schools will track impacts made on students, the school community, and on procurement from local farms within the 2020-2021 academic year.



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## What will take place at the Summer Retreat?

Participants will stay at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York, for three immersive days of all things Farm to School! School teams will identify areas of opportunity and improvement in their own schools and develop individualized Action Plans specific to their school communities. Workshops, team meetings, and activities will be held at the Omega Center for Sustainable Living, where participants will be inspired by the Institute's Eco-Machine water reclamation system and the building's status certified as both LEED

Platinum and the nation's first Living Building (<https://www.eomega.org/omega-center-for-sustainable-living-0>). School teams will be able to connect with one another along with Farm to School experts, receiving coaching and best practices for their Farm to School programs.

## What does the Institute cover?

Schools will receive peer mentoring and coaching throughout the year, along with Implementation Grants of \$5,000 to use towards their Farm to School Action Plans. Graduates will join a growing group of NYS Farm to School Institute Alumni. Each school will receive lodging and meals to attend the Summer Retreat and Spring Gathering for five team members per school plus an accompanying travel stipend.

## What is the 3-C Approach (Classroom, Cafeteria, Community)?

The 3-C Approach is a comprehensive Farm to School method created by Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day) in 2000. This sustainable approach is the key to affecting long-lasting change in schools through incorporation of people "who are the web of the school". Visit Vermont FEED's website to find out more:

<https://vtfeed.org/what-farm-school>



## What is a School Team and who should I select to serve on it?

Successful Farm to School programs require "all hands-on deck" and so it is vital to bring together stakeholders from across the school community as you create and grow your program. Your School Team should encompass people involved in multiple Farm to School touch points in your community. Typical teams include school food directors and staff, administrators, educators, and community partners. Consider who you would need on board in the classroom, cafeteria, and community. How will your team members contribute to strengthening your Farm to School program?



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## What will I need to do throughout the year if my school is selected?

Accepted schools will attend the Summer Kickoff Retreat in June 2020 and Spring Gathering in 2021. Schools will need to complete a Memorandum of Understanding and team members need to sign a participant agreement to receive an Implementation Award. Institute schools are expected to commit to achieving their Farm to School Action Plan, and establish systems to track progress throughout the year. Teams will establish regular meetings with their peers and coach, and report on successes and challenges at the Spring Gathering and at the close of the school year.

## What is the cost to participate in the Institute?

Thanks to the generous support of our funders, we are able to provide year-long Institute programming to school teams at a reduced rate of \$300 per school team. We want to encourage participation from all schools across New York, and are working to make the Institute accessible to all by offering scholarships for potential applicants. Please contact us directly for information on how to apply for a scholarship.

## Who are we and how to contact us?

Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS) is a collaborative initiative led by American Farmland Trust with the goal to strengthen the economic security of farmers and the health of New Yorkers by empowering institutions to spend at least 25 percent of their food budget on food grown in New York. Contact Stephanie Hsu or Mikaela Perry at [finys@farmland.org](mailto:finys@farmland.org) for additional information or further questions about FINYS or the New York State Farm to School Institute.

The NYS Farm to School Institute is organized by Farm to Institution New York State in collaboration with Poughkeepsie Farm Project and the Hudson Valley Farm Hub and made possible by funding from the NoVo Foundation, The Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation, and members of American Farmland Trust.



Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation

