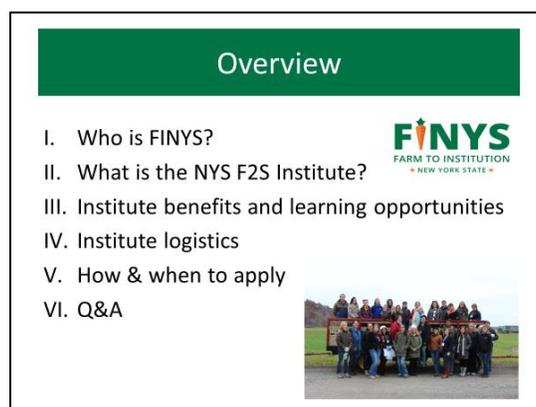


New York State Farm to Institute Informational Webinar Slides and Transcript



(Stephanie Hsu) Hi everyone - welcome to our 2019 Farm to School Institute webinar! Thanks everyone for holding a little bit while we waited for folks to come join us. I wanted to introduce us – I am Stephanie Hsu I am the Farm to Institution New York State Manager over at American Farmland Trust, with us today we also have our organizer Jamie Levato, the Education Director for Poughkeepsie Farm Project and Ashlea Raemer, our New York State Program Assistant at American Farmland Trust. A couple housekeeping items for today’s webinar: today’s webinar is going to be recorded and it’s going to be posted on our site for those who couldn’t attend today. Your computer audio should be fine so there’s no need to call in through your phone. You’re muted right now and will be until the end of the presentation, if you need to hop on just do so but we’ll be accepting questions throughout the presentation either through voice and chat, and Jamie and I are going to answer them at the end. Alright, let’s begin!



(Stephanie Hsu) Ok, so here’s a brief overview of what we’re going to be talking about today. We’re going to first start with who is FINYS and why are we putting on this Institute? We’re going to define what is the New York State Farm to School Institute. We’re going to talk about Institute benefits and what learning opportunities you’re going to be partaking in. We’ll talk a little bit about logistics, how and when to apply, and then we’re going to open it up for questions and answers.

FINYS Theory of Change

Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS) will strengthen the economic security of farmers and the health of New Yorkers by empowering institutions to spend at least 25% of their food budget on foods grown in New York.



(Stephanie Hsu) So a little bit about FINYS, American Farmland Trust New York formed Farm to Institution New York State, or FINYS, in 2011 as a statewide initiative to help bridge connections between all participants in the supply chain, from farmer to producer to institutional buyer, with the overall goal of strengthening local economies through new markets for farmers and improving the health of New Yorkers through access to healthy, local foods. We do so in three areas: first in advocacy and policy support; second resources and education for institutions; and third storytelling and research to highlight successes and challenges across the state. So, our work in farm to school coincides with state initiatives to help increase local foods in K-12 schools. Along with hosting the inaugural NYS F2S Institute, we also are producing toolkits in menu planning and local food guides to aid in the procurement process. Additionally, we'll be conducting research on the 30% Initiative and the publishing results and recommendations from the program's first year as well. So here we have our theory of change, so what we do here, as I mentioned before, is strengthen the economic security of farmers and the health of New Yorkers by empowering institutions to spend at least 25% of their food budgets on local foods here in New York.



(Stephanie Hsu) So rather than hearing me describe our work in Farm to Institution, our work can also be summed up rather tidily in a short video. Here we highlight folks who help bring farm to school to Buffalo City School District.

Link to video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nz4lbo6bQ4>

NYS Farm to School Institute

- **What is the NYS F2S Institute?**
 - History
 - 3-Cs: Classroom, Cafeteria, Community
 - Hands-on, integrative learning across fields
- **Why host an Institute in New York?**




(Jamie Levato) So we're going to talk next about the New York State Farm to School Institute, and this is a really exciting opportunity for all of us in New York State who are doing farm to school work, because it's the first of its kind. There has been a history of this work happening in the Northeast through Vermont FEED, and I actually had the opportunity to participate in the Farm to School Institute retreat up in Vermont the past two Junes, and it is a brilliant model that we are super excited to bring to New York State. They've been doing this work for ten years, and so after ten years of seeing all their successes we're bringing it to New York State so we can build upon all the work that has been going on so far. It uses a "3-C" model bridging classroom, cafeteria, and community. The idea here is of course to get local food into the school meals, connect the local food in the school meals to learning in the classroom, and then also connect that out to the community because we know that that's the way that this can be supported and grow even bigger. What this might entail is figuring out for example how to best procure local foods for school meals and then how to make those classroom connections. Figuring out which types of curriculum, also what types of community events and celebrations can happen that can relate all of these things together. In addition, the classroom learning, the cafeteria, the community – those things really need to be connected by a strong team. One of the great things that this retreat offers is a team of individuals from a school in the state to come together and develop a plan. Working together throughout the Institute retreat, the teams will be working with each other, they'll be doing learning on a variety of different topics that will help them create that plan with a 3-C's approach. Then figure out how to implement that plan, how to build support, and throughout the whole experience at the retreat there will be a coach supporting their work. That coach will then be able to support them throughout the year implementing that plan. I'll just say having been a part of this as an observer for the past two years through Vermont's program, it has been absolutely incredible to see what the teams have come up with and how their coaches have supported them, and then what they've been able to accomplish over the course of the year, really making their school communities committed to farm to school. Maybe they start out with just an idea that they want to do this, and they know who needs to be in the room and then they come up with a plan that really makes it a part of their educational environment. For us it's just a great opportunity because we have a much larger state in terms of population than Vermont and so we know that we need to really build on what they're doing to make it possible for more schools to be involved or for more schools to have the opportunity and the support to really implement robust farm to school programs throughout New York and then continue to expand and expand.

(Stephanie Hsu) Great so as Jamie mentioned as well, New York comes with its own state regulations, its own initiatives, its own opportunities and challenges, and our programming over the year will reflect that as well. We're really excited to be offering this for our state at this time!

Institute Benefits & Opportunities



- Special focus on new state Farm to School programs (i.e., 30% Initiative)
- Recognition of diverse New York State schools
- State-specific networking and peer-to-peer mentorship
- \$5000 Implementation Award for F2S projects

(Stephanie Hsu) Institute benefits and opportunities. As I mentioned in the last slide, the New York State Farm to School Institute will focus on the issues and opportunities for our specific state, including the 30% local food lunch reimbursement and farm to school grant allocations from the 2018 No Student Goes Hungry Initiative. Institute schools will benefit from, as Jamie mentioned, yearlong networking and coaching opportunities to help them build capacity within their own teams and their knowledge about Farm to School. And lastly, the New York Institute also provides Implementation Awards of \$5000 to each to school to help inspire new farm to school projects or fortify current ones that they are already implementing right now.

NYS Farm to School Institute



Summer Retreat:
 August 12 – 14, 2019
 Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, NY

Call for School Team Applications
 Deadline:
 April 12

(Stephanie Hsu) Details about the institute: our six institute schools are going to be starting their year-long training before the 2019 school year begins at our Summer Kickoff Retreat which will be held at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck on August 12-14. Schools will develop Action Plans that they'll bring back to their respective schools. In the fall, our School Teams will get together once again for a one-day refresher meeting to share out with one another on progress made or challenges faced during the school year, and then they're going to continue refining or reshaping their Farm to School Action Plans. As Jamie mentioned, throughout the 2019 – 2020-year, school teams will meet with coaches on a monthly basis, they're going to identify areas in which they would like more support. The Institute will match schools with resources and pair them with experts in the state to help schools work towards their Action Plan goals. Finally, in the Spring of 2020, the Institute is going to come to a close and schools will evaluate their year and how they've progressed. We're asking schools to prepare presentations to share out with their peers and join an Institute network to continue sharing best practices to strengthen communities, the environment, health and wellness, and the economy across the state.

Institute Logistics



- On-site programming: garden-based workshops, guest speakers, Omega open classes.

- Summer Retreat:
- 3 days, 2 nights at Omega
- Inclusive meals & lodging
- School-specific F2S Action Plan Development sessions



Courtesy of Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, Rhinebeck, NY, Omega.org

(Jamie Levato) Institute logistics – we are super excited to have the Institute retreat at the Omega Institute. The way it’s going to work is there is going to be three days and two nights, the meals and lodging are going to be included in the program, and as I was mentioning before, the experience there is going to have a variety of different types of opportunities. There will be workshops based on the specific needs of the individuals in the group, so basically around the 3-C’s (classroom, community, and cafeteria). Then there will be coaching time so time to develop plans, and then there will be some other periods that might have some full-group presentations, so sessions that are for everyone in the team regardless of what role they are. For example, for workshops there might be some that are specifically for educators or specifically for food service directors, but then there might be some presentations that are suitable for all audience members. Each school is going to be developing their own action plan, and that is really going to be based on the particular needs of that school. One of the focuses that Stephanie had mentioned before is this goal of this 30% budget incentive and figuring out how to support schools and teams in reaching that so that the additional funds can flow to the school meals. There are some other opportunities that are a real advantage to having this session at Omega, and that is that there are some sessions that will be offered by Omega, including some of their open classes and possibly a presenter or two from one of their programs. It’s really a nice mixture of the resources that our farm to school community brings and then also this beautiful site that does actually some growing of food on site as well, they have a wonderful food service team that is going to be collaborating with us in the meals as well.

Who Should Apply?



- Assess your school environment
- Assess capacity and enthusiasm levels from community and school
- Form your school team of 5-7 participants in different Farm to School roles

(Jamie Levato) In terms of who should apply, I see that we have several folks on the line and if you're considering applying, I really hope that you do. What we are looking for is a team of people from an individual school that has approximately five to seven participants that have different roles in that school. We're looking really for representation in the [school nutrition program, anyone working with school meals, teachers, school administrators,] any nonprofit support or family members can be other great roles but one of the keys is having people with a variety of different roles on the team really adds strength to that team and allows it to really be successful because farm to school is really a multi-sector kind of program and you want to really make sure that you are assessing what your school's assets are, what your school's challenges are, and what types of support you're going to need and then who is best to be at the table. In addition, you really want to be thinking about what's the capacity? What kind of time commitment are you all able to put in? What skills do you have? What are the skillsets that are missing from your current prospective team? Which types of skillsets do you want to make sure you have at the table? Figure out who from your community can you invite to join your team that might have some of those assets current team members might be lacking. You absolutely want a high level of enthusiasm from your team members – ideally folks who will be able to spread that enthusiasm to the rest of your school and community because the way this works best is when everyone is really engaged and excited about starting it in one school and then, you know, perhaps in some cases that school can be a pilot and it can spread to other districts or schools in your community.

How & When to Apply

- Visit www.finys.org/institute to complete online application or download and complete Word version.
- Deadline is 5:00 pm, April 12, 2019
- Institute participants notified late-April 2019



(Stephanie Hsu) How and when to apply – once you've gathered your team of five to seven farm to school champions, you'll need to complete the brief application on our website, or we have a downloadable word form as well. There are four short answer questions on there. Be open with your assessments and needs, be honest, so we can both make sure the Institute is a good fit and ensure we have programming that will address your specific challenges and goals. We're also seeking information on evaluation and measurement on your local procurement and other Farm to School efforts. Don't worry if you don't have an elaborate tracking system already set up! The goal is to determine your baseline and then find ways to effectively measure your program throughout the year. Our deadline is April 12 at 5 pm, and we will notify participants of their acceptance in late April.



(Stephanie Hsu) Ok we have now come to the question and answer part of our presentation – do we have any questions out there?

Question: For the application, is it just one individual school that can apply or can a school district or SFA or collective of schools in a county that have received a grant to work together apply?

Answer: (Stephanie) We recommend that schools apply themselves, if you have a smaller district, then you are welcome to apply. I know this is kind of on a case-by-case basis, so we want to ensure your action plan is actually going to have the most effective reach. I'll give one example – if you have a really large school district and you have one person from in each field, say you have a food service director from one school, then you maybe have an administrator from another school, and maybe a teacher in another school you know, is there a way that you can actually bring this all together and effectively implement the farm to school program in all of your schools, in that one large district. I think, again, it's on a case-by-case basis and one of the things you could probably do is reach out to us afterwards and we can kind of talk through what that might look like. We might give you some other ideas on how you could also maybe make that work maybe even look into one or two smaller schools within your district as well. Jamie do you have anything to add?

(Jamie) Yeah I would kind of echo what you're saying that it is, we have seen that it has been better for an individual school to apply because when you have the five to seven individuals in different sectors spread out over the district it's much more difficult to build a cohesive program district-wide, and honestly sometimes it can be hard enough to build a cohesive program building-wide. I would say that if there's a way to kind of have your long-term vision be to implement a program throughout the school district but maybe the short-term plan is to start out with a pilot school. I think that might be the best bet because it really sets you up better for success and having that model to build upon because really having five to seven people working in one individual school, again it can be even a challenge. Of course, you know, it's possible and it's going to happen and it happens all the time but there's still even more support that needs to be built with other educators with other people who are not taking part in the retreat and so, yeah I would lean towards applying as an individual school as a pilot without necessarily saying applying for a larger school district is not possible just probably not recommended.

Question: We are in the process of implementing a school lunch program to begin in 2020, how feasible would it be to implement farm to school at the same time?

Answer: (Stephanie) I think it would be feasible and in terms of meeting the 30% - I mean, actually, in some ways, if you're starting the implementation program right now this would be an ideal time to start. You already looking at and trying to establish those vendors. If you're building it right now you could start from scratch and start working on building the capacity and trying to reach out and make those contacts with local food vendors. I think it's a great time to do that, whether or not you would meet that 30% now, I mean that's something that again I think we probably have to discuss on a one-on-one basis to see where you're at and look at your challenges and look at the various factors that would maybe prevent you from doing that. Or maybe you already are set up for it. I think again maybe having a conversation offline would be a good thing.

(Jamie) I think it depends on what you mean by 2020 also because this Farm to School Institute is going to be for implementing a plan for the next school year, so if you're talking about the school year that starts in 2020 that would be the following school year. If that's the case I would suggest holding off a year because if you're not doing school meals at the moment, I think it would be a challenge. I'm just not sure how you would fit in getting local food into school meals if you aren't going to be having school meals in the coming school year. And I apologize if I'm misunderstanding the question a little bit, but I would say implementing those two together could be a great opportunity to start strong from the beginning but I am not sure you could implement a farm to school program effectively before having school meals unless you came up with a totally different creative model, which is also possible.

Question: Do you recommend a farmer being included on a school team?

Answer: (Stephanie) I'm going to say yeah, I think that would be really fantastic to have someone who's actually involved in the producing side. I think that would be really helpful and informative, again we had a farm and other producers who were on our former teams and I think that was a really great connection. Not even for that specific school team but for all the other schools who were participating as well. It was really great to have that farmer prospective in there.

(Jamie) Yeah it sounds like a great asset. I would say that it wouldn't be a requirement, but I think it could be a really great benefit to have a partnership with a producer right on the team.

Question: If we have several schools in the district and are trying to decide which one is the best one to start the program in? Is an elementary or middle/high school better?

Answer:(Stephanie): I think it depends on maybe taking a look and rather than saying elementary or high school? I would probably say who you have in that school and what roles and which do you think would be the strongest team and where do you think you could have the most impact and the most you know change within each of those institutions right? If you feel like you could make greater change within that elementary school and you think the support system would be better maybe you have a lot more parents involved, maybe there are folks who are more engaged, and maybe that's the better way to go, and vice versa maybe if you think the high school or the middle school have a better support system.

(Jamie) Stephanie I think that's such an excellent point. Where are your champions? Do you have a school garden in one of the schools? Is there somebody who's so into this stuff? Do you have a really dedicated parent at one of these schools? That would be a great place to start as Stephanie said. Now if all things are kind of equal, and you've got similar levels of support at all of the schools, that's a harder decision. The benefit of starting with an elementary school is that those students will eventually become your middle schoolers and high schoolers, so when you expand up you have an audience that's prepared for it. However, you could also make the argument that if you started at the high school level, well those are going to be our next set of parents and next community advocates, and they are going to be the next teachers, and so they have a role to play as well. I think the argument could be made for really any of those options. If you think about those different aspects and how they relate to your individual schools, that might help you make a decision.

Question: Do you recommend schools reaching out to nearby farms that could potentially be suppliers before they apply to the institute to see about developing a partnership?

Answer: (Stephanie) I think that wouldn't hurt. I don't think it's required, however if you're thinking about developing this action plan and part of it involves specifically saying "oh we're going to get food from these specific three farms" and then you find out those farms are not interested or if they're not equipped or they're not able to do so then that definitely would lead you back at the drawing board. However, before you apply, I think it's almost like you get an "A" for effort for doing that beforehand but I don't think it's necessarily a bad idea to do that and again maybe if you reach out to these three farms now, maybe if they're interested you can get them excited about it and you can generate that enthusiasm and perhaps maybe one of them would actually like to participate, maybe they would like to be on the school team or at least getting them involved early on. I don't think it could hurt at all.

(Jamie) And if you do reach out and the farms are hesitating at the idea, I think it would be really important to just follow-up with perhaps some questions about what are the barriers? And maybe think about how to work on those barriers as part of your plan.

Question: Can you give some more details about what the action plan entails?

Answer: (Jamie) Basically, what it will involve is taking each of the 3-C's and developing a plan for what your school will accomplish during the coming school year. You want to think about what kinds of goals you have and how you might accomplish those. There will be those three different categories so what will you be doing in the cafeteria, what will you be doing in the classroom, what will you be doing in the community, and how will that be building towards your farm to school vision? In terms of detail, that's really where the school teams, with the support of the coach, are going to figure those things out, because it may look very different at different schools. For example, one school might say okay, we're going to focus on garden-based learning, and we're going to do a harvest of the month program for our school meals and serve a local product once a month. Whereas other school teams might focus on the 30% threshold, and doing taste-testing school-wide, I mean there are just so many possibilities. I remember last year at the Northeast Farm to School Institute, getting to hear the plans of the variety of different schools, and although there were some similarities here and there, there were just all of these different exciting brilliant ideas and plans for how to make them happen. The great part is that each team gets to figure out what they want to do and how to do it, but they're getting all the support to think about what kind of plan is going to work best for them, and all kinds of ideas about what they might want to do. It's somewhat open, but the support will be there.

Question: Can we still apply if we don't have an administrator on board?

Answer: (Stephanie) That's a good question, you know we do encourage folks from, I think we touched upon all the different roles, and I think it is difficult if you don't have someone from the administration who is, even if they're not necessarily on your team, per se, if you would reach out to them before you apply and let them know that this is something you're interested in, and this is something the school is intending to do. I think it would be beneficial to have the support of your administrator or multiple administrators when you're applying for the school team.

(Jamie Levato) Absolutely, I think if you can't get an administrator on the team I think you definitely want to get the support of the administrator, and I would say the enthusiastic support of the administrator because if they're not on board with the idea it's going to be really hard to make it happen.

Question: What are the requirements of us if we are to be accepted?

Answer: (Stephanie) All of our accepted teams are going to need to attend both our summer retreat, which I hope you do since that's one of the main draws – going to the Omega Institute, and our fall meeting which is going to be in the Hudson Valley. We also are going to have a memorandum of understanding for you to sign, which includes acknowledgement of adhering to your action plan, sticking to what your plan was and what you intend to do. Then also tracking and reporting your progress for AFT and also for the larger group. That's the only requirement, and have fun, enjoy yourself, and be part of our community and be proactive about promoting farm to school.

Question: What happens if one of my team members cannot make the Summer Retreat but still wants to be part of the Institute?

Answer: (Stephanie) We do have folks who, for whatever reason, illness or what not, if they can't make the Summer Retreat, they're welcome to actually join us for the Fall Meeting. We've obviously got the Summer Retreat where a lot of the planning is, however, once the rest of the school team goes back to their respective school you can fill that team member in, and again, you can come out to the Hudson Valley in the fall, join us for a meeting, and I'm assuming that other absent member will be joining for subsequent school team meetings as well.

(Jamie Levato) I would just add that it would still be worthwhile to have five to seven people who can take part in the retreat itself, even if you have additional members of the team who aren't able to, you still want to have a nice group of people that can make it so there are more people having had that experience to bring it back to the rest of the team and the rest of the school.

(Stephanie Hsu) Jamie that's a great point too, we have had in the past where they've asked for somebody to sub in and at the same time at the very end that other person, so basically two of those people joined the school team and that's totally fine too.

Question: Do we have a date set for the fall meeting? Or can you just provide some more information about what that will look like?

Answer: (Stephanie): We don't have a date set quite yet, and that's intentional, so once we actually do pick our six schools, and after we have our summer kickoff retreat, we're going to be in touch with everyone to figure out what dates work best for the six teams. Last year we ended up doing it in November, and that kind of gave enough time for people to do their action plans in the summer, and get it started in the school year and kind of get settled and kind of figure out how to put their plans into practice for a couple months and come back and join us in November. We could potentially do that again, last year was at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, not quite sure if it's going to be there yet, I think it depends on the date. The fall meeting, what we had planned last year was a combination of time for teams to actually get together with one another and their coaches, and also some programming that was relevant to their specific needs at the time. We hosted some workshops on meeting the 30% and we had some workshops on evaluation as well, and again enjoying ourselves and we had a tractor tour of the Farm Hub as well. But it's a nice way to congregate and inspire you to keep going with those action plans going during the year.

Question: My teammates hold the same positions as I do in food service, do I necessarily need a mixed team of teachers, administrators, etc.?

Answer: (Stephanie) Yeah, as Jamie echoed before I think it's really important to get that combination of folks from different roles.

Question: Will the Institute help me reach the 30% for local food purchases?

Answer: (Jamie) I would just say that the Institute is going to provide guidance and support, but I don't think that we could say that if you go to the Institute you are guaranteed to reach the 30%, I think every school is different and what we intend to provide is guidance, support, strategies, that sort of thing that can help you get there, but actually getting there will involve having a record of your purchases in one year in order to set you up for that provision in the following year, so it is going to be based on what you do and so that's where the school teams come into play in supporting making that actually happen.

Question: For how many years has the Institute been running this retreat?

Answer: (Stephanie) This is actually, for New York State this is our inaugural year, so we had a pilot year last year where we funded four schools from New York to attend the Northeast Farm to School Institute, and they came in the summer, and then they reconvened here in the Hudson Valley in the fall, however this is our first inaugural year where this state is actually going to be putting it on here specifically in New York. Again, the Northeast Farm to School Institute run by Vermont FEED has been around, I believe it's been since 2008, Jamie correct me if I'm wrong, but we're basically adopting their model.

Question: Can a year-round farmer's market play a role in supplying food or is it required that the partnership is with a particular farm?

Answer: (Jamie) I don't think there's a requirement to have a relationship with a particular farm, I think the goal is getting locally produced food into the school meals, so I think if that happens through a farmer's market – that happens even through a distributor that provides food coming from local farms that's also fine.

(Stephanie) Okay, any last remaining questions? And feel free too, to reach out to us. I think we're going to end it here, we're really excited about hosting our state's first institute and thank you guys for joining us I hope that this has answered a lot of your questions and that your school teams will apply. If you have additional questions or if you have questions that are specific to your potential team, please do reach out to Ashlea, you can reach out to me, and we'll help you answer that and get you along your way. Our contact information is here on the screen and we'll also be putting this webinar up on our website as well. Okay, thank you everyone! I appreciate you taking the time out to be with us.

(Jamie) Thanks a lot, take care. And good luck with your applications!