

# SUMMARY

# Minnesota

# Farm

# to

# Kids

Strategic Plan  
2025-2030



## Overview

For more than a decade, the Minnesota Farm to School Leadership Team and the Minnesota Farm to Early Care Advisory Group have convened state agencies, institutions, and organizations from around the state to collaboratively support Farm to School and Early Care initiatives in Minnesota. To do their work more effectively, these two groups came together in 2023 to create a shared vision and roadmap for advancing local purchasing and agricultural education in K-12 schools and early care settings across the state. This plan will serve as the foundation for Minnesota's new Farm to Kids Alliance, unifying the efforts of the Minnesota Farm to School Leadership Team and the Minnesota Farm to Early Care Advisory Group. Informed by robust public engagement, the plan identifies key priorities, goals, and strategies to guide the collaborative work of Farm to Kids partners over the next five years in pursuit of our shared vision.

# Minnesota Farm to Kids Alliance Vision and Guiding Principles



## Vision

The Minnesota Farm to Kids Alliance exists to unite the efforts of people supporting Farm to School and Early Care to nourish children's bodies and minds, cultivate viable farms, and build vibrant communities in our state. We work together to support:

- Development of relationships and infrastructure that advance the production and sustained purchase of local foods.
- Integration of food and agriculture into teaching and learning.
- Availability of diversified, flexible funding to advance Farm to Kids efforts.
- Increased public awareness and participation in Farm to Kids in Minnesota.

*Inspiration for this vision statement came from the Vermont Farm to School Network.*

## Guiding Principles

### Silos are for farms

We are committed to working collaboratively. We welcome diverse and intersecting identities and hold differences as a strength. We support Farm to Kids efforts by building bridges across partners and valuing everyone's contributions.

### Kitchens are for experimenting

We embrace new ideas with openness and curiosity. We bolster proven strategies, recognizing that impactful Farm to Kids work demands a balance between pioneering change and lifting up what works.

### All are welcome at the table

We are committed to a just, equitable food system that promotes the health of all children and benefits producers, workers, educators, and their communities. We seek out, include, and amplify voices who have been systematically excluded, with a particular focus on young people and emerging farmers.

### Every community matters

We honor and are guided by knowledge, experience, and expertise within Minnesota's unique communities. We know different environments require different approaches and strive to align resources accordingly.

## Priority 1: Increase purchases of Minnesota-grown and -raised foods by schools and early care settings.

### Further develop statewide policy and infrastructure that builds capacity for local purchasing.

- Increase funding for Minnesota's Farm to School and Early Care grant programs.
- Establish regional coordinators to serve as place-based connectors, educators, capacity-builders, and technical assistance providers to producers, schools, early care providers, and other institutional buyers.
- Stimulate investment in regional food aggregation, infrastructure, and distribution.

### Support the development of relationships among schools, early care settings, producers, and local partners.

- Enhance utility of Minnesota Grown Wholesale Directory to better support connections between producers and institutional buyers.
- Coordinate virtual and in-person events to support connections between local producers, schools, and early care providers.

### Expand statewide programming that builds capacity and preparedness among producers, schools, and early care providers to engage in Farm to Kids.

- Develop trainings and systems of support for Minnesota producers to access and succeed in wholesale markets, including schools and early care settings.
- Expand professional development opportunities for school food service professionals, early care professionals, and educators to build knowledge and skills for purchasing and serving local foods.

## Priority 2: Improve integration of food and agricultural education in classrooms, cafeterias, and other educational environments.

### Increase support for educational food production (gardens, greenhouses, hydroponics, etc.) in schools and early care settings.

- Create a central location for Minnesota educators and partners to access current information and resources for educational food production.
- Create and support a community for educational practitioners that cultivates peer-to-peer learning, collaboration, and growth for educational food production.

### Enhance integration of Farm to Kids into Career and Technical Education (CTE) program frameworks.

- Create connections and build awareness to embed Farm to Kids concepts within CTE in Minnesota.
- Provide professional development opportunities for CTE educators on Farm to Kids integration.

### Expand standards-based educational resources, training, and support for food and agricultural education for early care through 12th grade.

- Expand Minnesota Harvest of the Month resources to engage more schools and early care settings.
- Integrate Farm to Early Care learning objectives and best practices into existing state resources and systems for early care providers.

## Priority 3: Build and activate a strong Farm to Kids network.

### Establish the Minnesota Farm to Kids Alliance to foster shared, collaborative leadership among Farm to School and Early Care partners.

- Formalize and implement Farm to Kids Alliance structure that unifies work of state's existing Farm to School Leadership Team and Farm to Early Care Advisory Group.
- Establish plans for implementing the Farm to Kids Strategic Plan.

### Evaluate Farm to Kids efforts to inform future work and measure impact.

- Advance evaluation for Farm to Kids programs and initiatives in Minnesota.

### Increase reach and awareness of Farm to Kids through coordinated outreach and communication.

- Develop platforms and processes for consistent, coordinated Farm to Kids communications.
- Develop ways to nurture, elevate, and celebrate participation in Farm to Kids activities.

