2019-2020 Annual Report and Key Recommendations
Executive Summary

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide a purchasing incentive through CACFP and NSLP of 10 cents per meal for meals prepared with locally grown products.</th>
<th>Create incentives and state assistance for food hubs, co-ops, farm organizations, and local food councils to promote and generate larger market opportunities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early care centers and schools lack incentives and financial resources to purchase locally grown products.</td>
<td>Insufficient or inconsistent institutional demand increases the risk for farmers to scale up production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create grants, loans and other incentives for building processing and packaging facilities, including on-farm processing facilities for marketable products.</td>
<td>Support financial assistance to build capacity at Iowa food hubs for operational improvements, transportation, processing, packaging, and storage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa lacks processing and storage facilities and local foods aggregation capacity.</td>
<td>Food hubs need sufficient logistical support to partner with schools and early care sites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Participation continues to increase across the state as more schools, early care sites, and farmer/food hubs engage in farm to school and early care initiatives organized at state and local levels.

Launch of Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition enhanced capacity, resources and collaboration around farm to school and early care initiatives to support a statewide network.

For more information, contact Coalition Co-Chairs: IowaF2SEC@gmail.com
IOWA FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CARE NETWORK
2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over 200,000
Children and youth participated in Iowa Farm to School and Early Care initiatives.

1,003
Schools and early care sites participated in Farm to School and Early Care initiatives.

469
School and early care sites hosted on-site gardens.

390
School districts and early care sites procured local food for meal programs.

107,900
Local meals served on 2019 Iowa Local Food Day.

Over $500,000
Reported purchases of local food by schools and early care sites.

$375,494
Grants brought to Iowa for Iowa Farm to School and Early Care programs and projects.

21
State organizations formed the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition.

150
Network members attended the Virtual Conference.

50
Network newsletters reached 895 stakeholders.

For more information, contact Coalition Co-Chairs: iowaF2SEC@gmail.com
Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition

Annual Report and Key Recommendations

September 2020

Report developed by Chelsea Krist, Farm to School Program Coordinator
Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development Program
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
cekrist@iastate.edu

For more information, contact Coalition Co-Chairs: iowaF2SEC@gmail.com
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*For more information, contact Coalition Co-Chairs: iowaF2SEC@gmail.com*
Overview: The Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition

Background
The Iowa Farm to School Coalition and the Iowa Farm to ECE Coalition operated independently from 2016–2019. During that time, both groups made great strides advancing work across the state. They created professional development opportunities, trainings, collaborative grants, educational resources, and partnerships—but with some duplication of efforts. A survey of both groups revealed the parallel priorities and overlapping representatives across the two coalitions. As a result, the groups undertook a strategic planning process to merge the coalitions. Coalition representatives cited the potential for enhanced sustainability, collaboration, and deepened impact.

Merger and Strategic Planning
In January 2020, 24 key stakeholders from 15 organizations met in Des Moines. The result: the Iowa Farm to School Coalition and the Iowa Farm to Early Care and Education Coalition merged. The unified organization developed a clearly defined vision and pathway for moving forward together. Stakeholders met for two days of facilitated discussion, activities, and strategy sessions. They established and agreed upon a group name, mission, vision statement, core values, structure, goals, objectives, and strategies, detailed here:

Mission: Increase access to locally grown food and food education for children and families by building cross-sector partnerships to advance programs and policies in schools, early care settings, and the food system.

Vision: Farm to school and early care programs in Iowa are rooted in just and strong local and regional food systems, ensuring the health and wellness of all children and families, the strength of family farms, and the resilience of our communities.
Our Core Values
The Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition supports and upholds the following values:

- **Education**: We value the voice and leadership of youth and educators; we support a comprehensive sequence of nutrition and food literacy from birth through 12th grade.

- **Equity**: We acknowledge and understand historical systems of oppression and inequity that exist in food systems and education; we support culturally responsive and reflective resources and practices.

- **Access**: We support policies and programs that increase equitable access to and awareness of local food, food education, and all farm to school and early care initiatives.

- **Transparency**: We value authentic and respectful communication and feedback with partners and community members; we maintain clear, coordinated communication systems with partners and communities about who we are and what we work to accomplish.

- **Relationships and Collaboration**: We center opportunities to build meaningful relationships with communities and stakeholders, developing shared understanding, language, and goals.

- **Respect**: We identify diversity as strength; we acknowledge and celebrate that we come together with personal experience, perspective, culture, and community.

"Values" word cloud created at strategic planning and merger, January 2020
Coalition Structure and Goals
Currently comprised of more than 20 organizations, the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition brings together a dedicated group of farm to school and early care stakeholders who collaboratively work toward shared goals, embodied in the coalition’s three strategy teams. The coalition gathers bi-monthly for half-day meetings, and strategy teams meet once per month.

Co-Chairs: Three representatives serve as rotating co-chairs of the coalition, coordinating general support, meeting facilitation, and evaluation of the coalition activities and projects.
1. ISU Extension and Outreach Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development (FFED): Chelsea Krist, Program Coordinator
2. FoodCorps Iowa: Nathan Spalding, Associate Director
3. Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children: Krista Smith, Farm to ECE Consultant

Strategy Teams: Three strategy teams bring the coalition’s goals to life and are coordinated by representatives from several state agencies and organizations. Strategy team goals and coordinators are listed here.
1. State Network Development: Grow and strengthen our statewide network to increase communication and collaboration
   ● Carrie Scheidel, Iowa Department of Education
2. Local Procurement: Increase local food purchasing in schools and early care sites
   ● Teresa Wiemerslage, ISU Extension and Outreach FFED
   ● Tammy Stotts, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
3. Food Education: Incorporate culturally relevant food education into existing policy, environments, and curriculum
   ● Lyn Jenkins, EveryStep 5-2-1-0
   ● Suzy Wilson, Iowa Department of Public Health, SNAP-Ed
Highlighted Statewide Farm to School and Early Care Projects & Activities

FY19-20 Projects and Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Farm to Early Care Training Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead Agency and Partners** | Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (lead)  
Iowa Farmers Union  
Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative |
| **Participation**         | Early care teachers, providers, and directors |
| **Funding**               | W.K. Kellogg Foundation |
| **Timeline**              | The virtual training option is in development with the goal to launch fall 2020 |
| **Goals**                 | ● Educating ECE professionals around the state on farm to ECE and how to implement it at their site.  
● Embedding F2ECE into programs statewide |

**Project Description:**

**Module 1: F2SEC: Get it Started, Keep it Growing**
School gardens, local food sourcing, and food and agriculture education are three core elements that connect kids to the foods they eat. Farm to early care and education (farm to ECE) offers an abundance of opportunities that enhance quality educational experiences for children in all ECE settings while also benefiting their families, communities, and farmers. Engage in activities and discussion around the core elements of farm to ECE and how to make it work in your ECE program.

**Module 2: Little Hands in the Garden and Engaging Families**
Time to dig in! The experiential learning that takes place in gardens is boundless. Discover options for installing a garden at your ECE site and how to involve children in the rich learning opportunities a site garden offers. Whether through your site garden or other engaging farm to ECE activities, bridge connections with home using a transformational family engagement approach.

**Module 3: Purchasing Local Food**
When you understand the benefits and positive health outcomes of serving children nutrient-dense, locally sourced food, you’re ready to start buying. Whether buying direct from a farmer or accessing products through a food hub or other market option, discover the best ways for your ECE program to connect with local food growers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Program (INNSGP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead Agency and Partners** | Iowa Department of Public Health (lead)  
FoodCorps Iowa  
ISU Extension and Outreach  
Local public health  
Local school districts |
| **Participation** | 10 school districts participated in INNSGP’s Farm to School Program |
| **Funding** | Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) |
| **Timeline** | October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019 (FY 2019) |
| **Goals** | The program aims to help children (and their families) eat more fruits and vegetables through interactive lessons, gardens, and increased access to local produce. |
| **Impact** | From SNAP-Ed and Farm to School one-pager:  
- 14,478 children impacted by school gardens, taste tests, local procurement, and agricultural-based lessons  
- 32 community and school sites involved in farm to school funded by INNSGP  
- 30 gardens created, maintained, or revived  
- $58,132 awarded to local partners for farm to school activities |

**Program Description:**
The Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Program is a SNAP-Ed program administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health. It includes classroom-based lessons focused on fruits and vegetables for K-3 students called Pick a better snack™. Additionally, local partners are awarded funds for farm to school programs, which are used to establish and maintain school gardens and source local produce for school meal programs and cafeteria tastings.

**Community Success Story:** Local Black Beans Served in Cedar Rapids Schools!  
- “Black beans go from farm to school cafeteria table in Cedar Rapids”  
- “Farm to school, Cedar Rapids students get fresh food from North English farm”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Program</strong></th>
<th>CACFP Farm to Early Care and Education Sub-Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead Agency</strong></td>
<td>Iowa Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>10 CACFP participants: 4 childcare centers and 6 home providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>USDA Team Nutrition Grant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Timeline** | Sub-grants were awarded July 13, 2020 and final report is due October 23, 2020  
*Note: Program evaluation and impacts to be developed and released in the 2021 Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Annual Report* |
| **Goals** | Increase in activities supporting farm to early care and education including:  
● Purchasing local foods to be served in meals or snacks  
● Establishing a garden or offering gardening experiences  
● Enhancing the learning environment with local foods |
| **Impact** | $2,000 in funding supports this project:  
● 4 childcare centers received grants at $350 each  
● 6 home providers received grants at $100 each |

**Project Description:**  
CACFP center or home providers who participated in the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Virtual Conference on June 19, 2020 were eligible to apply for the sub-grants ($350 for centers and $100 for homes). Activities and expenses will support farm to early care and education and center or home must be registered for Local Foods Day on October 14, 2020.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2019 Iowa Local Food Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Lead Agency and Partners | Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (lead)  
Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition |
| Participation | Over 280 K-12 schools (11% of Iowa school districts), 10 early care sites, food hubs, coalition partners, local farmers |
| Funding | Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship |
| Timeline | October 2019 |
| Goals | ● Increase the number of schools and early care sites purchasing and serving local food in meal programs  
● Support partnerships between schools, early care sites, specialty crop producers, and food hubs  
● Promote school meal programs and early care meals through coordinated, statewide, local food celebrations |
| Impact | Highlights from [2019 Evaluation Report]:  
● 100% of respondents plan to participate in 2020  
● ILFD meal participation rates increased on ILFD at 33% of sites  
● 64% received positive feedback from families, students, staff  
● Respondents purchased from 50 individual farmers and producers |

**Project Description:**
October 11, 2019 marked the second annual Iowa Local Food Day (ILFD), a statewide event that encourages schools to celebrate and serve at least two Iowa-grown foods in their meal programs. ILFD engages farmers and food service directors as partners, grows sales and viable markets for farmers, and expands local product options into more schools.
**Program**  
Food Hubs Support Local Food Deliveries to Schools

**Lead Agency and Partners**  
ISU Extension and Outreach FFED, Food Hub Managers Working Group, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

**Participation**  
24 school districts, 5 food hubs

**Funding**  
Specialty Crop Block Grant

**Timeline**  
August 2019 - January 2020

**Goals**
- Support partnerships between schools and food hubs to increase the purchase of local foods in schools
- Subsidize the cost of delivery of local foods to schools by food hubs to allow for more deliveries and enhanced local food procurement

**Impact**  
5 food hubs operating in Iowa delivered over $50,000 of local food to schools and early care sites in six months

**Project Description:**
Five food hubs currently work with schools in Iowa. One of the challenges cited by food hubs is the cost associated with delivery of product – especially to rural districts. With an average cost of $1 per mile for delivery, a 25-mile trip to the neighboring town can easily cost over $50. Funds from a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant were used to offer $50 stipends to food hubs for deliveries to schools and early childcare sites to support the inaugural Iowa Local Food Day on October 11, 2018.

This program was so well-received by all parties that it was offered again in 2019 and expanded to include more funds to cover deliveries for the entire fall semester. From August to January, Iowa’s food hubs made deliveries to 24 school districts and childcare sites. The value of the food delivered was $50,673. This means that for every dollar spent to assist with delivery, over $10 of local food was purchased.
**Program**: 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count! Integrates Farm to School

**Lead Agency and Partners**: Iowa Healthiest State Initiative

**Participation**: 133 schools and 109 early care sites registered in 2019

**Funding**: Iowa Healthiest State Initiative

**Timeline**: 2019-2020 school year

**Goals**: 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count! is a nationally recognized and evidence-based prevention framework to promote healthy habits. The goal is to increase physical activity and healthy eating through policy and environmental change. Farm to school and early care initiatives and activities are a natural fit for 5-2-1-0 registered sites and are being incorporated across the state.

**Impact**: A large percentage of registered 5-2-1-0 schools and early care sites are integrating farm to school initiatives through the program; details below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Data: Integrated Farm to School Initiatives</th>
<th>Percent of Schools Participating</th>
<th>Percent of Early Care Sites Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating in <strong>local, state, and/or national initiatives</strong> to support healthy lifestyles</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented a <strong>healthy snack policy</strong></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering <strong>taste-testing and food demonstrations</strong> of non-processed, healthy foods on a recurring basis, intended for inclusion in reimbursable meals</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating <strong>healthy options at events</strong>, such as family nights</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating food events/celebrations with <strong>school nutrition staff</strong></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with the school nutrition program to <strong>host educational food opportunities</strong> for students</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data represents 40 K-12 schools and 39 early care sites which completed the 5-2-1-0 Annual Recertification Survey, Sept. 2019*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2019 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign, &quot;Crunch into Cucumbers!&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>ISU Extension and Outreach FFED, IDOE, IDALS, FoodCorps Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Summer Food Service Program Sponsors, schools, early care sites, farmers, food hubs, local food coordinators, community partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Agricultural Marketing Research Center (AgMRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>December 2019-August 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Goals | ● Provide resources and coordinated statewide campaign to grow awareness of and participation in summer meal programs  
● Support summer market opportunities for local farmers through partnerships with summer meal programs  
● Encourage summer local food education and experiences |
| Impact | A total of $6,200 for local food purchases was awarded across 47 sites:  
● 17 early care sites  
● 16 school districts  
● 8 community partner organizations  
● 6 county extension offices |

**Project Description:**
The Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign is a statewide effort to promote summer meal sites by celebrating and serving local food throughout the summer months. Focusing on Iowa-grown, summer-ready veggies, the Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign increases participation at summer meal sites and supports local farmers with new market opportunities. Summer meal sites, schools, early care sites, and community partners participate and are required to source local food from area producers using mini-grant funding. Sites are encouraged to share promotional materials and local food education with youth and community partners.

**Participating and funding have increased annually since 2018 program launch**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign Themes</th>
<th># Sites</th>
<th>Local Food Fund</th>
<th>Youth Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2020: “Crunch into Cucumbers!”</td>
<td>47 sites</td>
<td>$6,200</td>
<td>13,083 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2019: “Snap for Snap Peas!”</td>
<td>25 sites</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>1,850 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018: “Root for Radishes!”</td>
<td>13 sites</td>
<td>$1,950</td>
<td>760 youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Emerging Projects and Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose Iowa - Iowa Food of the Month Initiative in Child Nutrition Programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Agency and Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Department of Education (lead)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISU Extension and Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools, childcare programs (CACFP participants), and summer food service programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USDA Farm to School Grant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2020 - June 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goals of the campaign are to feature locally grown food items each month, increase youth access to local food, educate youth on food systems and nutrition of food, and support local producers by increasing connections with schools, childcare, and Summer Food Service Program Sponsors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$99,989 awarded to support the program. The following sub-grants will be offered to support local level implementation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● 20 sub-grants to schools at $1,000 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● 20 sub-grants to CACFP centers at $500 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● 20 sub-grants to Summer Food Service Program Sponsors at $500 each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Description:

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) has updated their marketing campaign, Choose Iowa. The campaign creates support for farmers, drives demand for the products they produce, and generates excitement about agriculture innovation happening around the state.

The Iowa Department of Education received a USDA Farm to School Grant in July 2020. The grant activities expand upon the campaign to schools, childcare, and summer food service programs through the development of a “Choose Iowa Food of the Month” program, with promotional materials that highlight Iowa grown foods. Sub-grants will be awarded to support local level implementation in National School Lunch Program schools, Child and Adult Care Food Program centers, and Summer Food Service Programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition Website and Logo Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead Agency and Partners** | Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  
Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development  
Policy Equity Group  
ISU Extension and Outreach FFED  
Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition |
| **Participation** | Network Development Strategy Team |
| **Funding** | IDALS, ISU Extension and Outreach FFED |
| **Timeline** | Website and logo will be live to the public in October 2020 |
| **Goals** | ● Support stakeholders with relevant and responsive resources, tools, and technical assistance for growing farm to school and early care initiatives across Iowa  
● Enhance opportunities for sharing stories and learning across the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Network |

**Project Description:**
The Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition's Network Development Strategy Team is working in partnership with communication specialists and graphic designers from Iowa Valley RC&D, Policy Equity Group, and ISU Extension and Outreach FFED to create and launch a coalition website and logo. The purpose of the logo is to increase recognition of Iowa Farm to School and Early Care initiatives, projects and events. The purpose of the website is to effectively offer resources stakeholders need to grow support for farm to school and early care initiatives at community and regional levels and to share stories across the state.

The following website URL will be live in October 2020: [www.iowafarmtoschoolearlycare.org](http://www.iowafarmtoschoolearlycare.org)
## Ongoing Projects and Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Local Foods, Healthy Kids Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead Agency and Partners** | Iowa Farmers Union (lead)  
Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children  
Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness |
| **Participation** | Farmers, childcare providers, food hub managers, farm to school coordinators, and more |
| **Funding** | W.K. Kellogg Foundation |
| **Timeline** | 2020 and beyond |
| **Goals** | ● Increase economic opportunity for local food producers and improve health and educational outcomes for Iowa's children  
● Improve access to locally sourced food for Iowa's youngest population by advocating for changes to Iowa's food and childcare systems |

**Project Description:**
The Iowa Farmers Union (IFU), in partnership with passionate organizations and individuals throughout Iowa, seeks to convene stakeholders to develop and promote policies and practices to improve access to healthy food for all Iowans, especially vulnerable children and their families, through enhancing local and regional food systems.

These efforts aim to expand on and complement the work of the Iowa Farm to Early Care and Education Coalition, the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative, and the Association for the Education of Young Children. [Click here](#) to visit the project webpage for more information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FoodCorps Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Black Hawk County Extension and Outreach, Des Moines Public Schools, Linn County Extension and Outreach, Oelwein Community Schools, Postville Community Schools, Wapello County Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ten FoodCorps AmeriCorps service members, 17 Iowa schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>FoodCorps National, service sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Annually, August through July</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Goals | ● **Hands-On Lessons:** Collaborating with educators to teach cooking, gardening, and tasting, since kids love foods they have grown and prepared themselves.  
● **Healthy School Meals:** Teaming up with cafeteria staff to create a cafeteria that steers students towards the healthiest options and gets them excited to try new healthy foods.  
● **A Schoolwide Culture of Health:** Getting the school community, from principals to the hallways to the bake sales, to celebrate healthy food. |
| Impact | ● 73% of FoodCorps schools have a measurably healthier school food environment at the end of the school year.  
● Children attending FoodCorps schools eat up to three times as many fruits and vegetables per year.  
● Six in ten students partnering with a FoodCorps service program improve their attitude toward trying vegetables and trying new ones.  
(source: FoodCorps National) |

**Project Description:**
FoodCorps is a national service program that serves to connect kids to healthy food in schools. Since 2012, Iowa school districts and community organizations have been in partnership with FoodCorps Iowa to grow opportunities for experiential farm to school education and systems change in schools. FoodCorps Iowa service members collaborate with school district staff and students throughout the school year and summer.

**FoodCorps Iowa Community Stories**
- “Iowa FoodCorps Service Member bring Excitement to Healthy Eating for Students,” Oelwein Daily Register, March 2019  
- “Kids have been Eating Healthier School Meals, but Adults may Change the Rules,” Iowa Public Radio, February 2020
COVID-19 Response to Support Iowa Farm to School and Early Care

At its foundation, farm to school and early care is about community. This community—families, schools, early care sites, farmers, food hubs, partner organizations—immediately experienced the rapidly changing and challenging environment of COVID-19. School closures required modified meal programs and distance learning tools. Changes in early care participation numbers called for shifts in food procurement logistics. Local farmers and food hubs lost early-season markets and created new business platforms.

These adaptations responded to community context and highlighted the significance of partnership in local resilience. As cross-sector partners continue to come together in mutual support of equitable food access for youth and families, local food markets, and innovative resource development, farm to school and early care works as it was designed to do. Here are some examples from Iowa.

COVID-19 Online Resources and Strategies

Compiled by members of the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition and Network, this living document was created in April 2020, and is being consistently updated with Iowa-specific and national resources responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Organized by topic related to farm to school and early care audiences, the categories are evolving as resources continue to be requested and compiled:

- COVID-19 Information from Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition Partners
- Local Food Procurement and Child Nutrition Programs
  - For Food Service Staff: Back to School Resources
  - For Food Service Staff: Summer Meal Resources
  - Finding Local Food in Iowa
  - For Farmers
- Food Education: Outdoor Education + Distance Learning
  - Outdoor Education
  - Food Education Lessons and Videos for Families
  - Resources for Food Educators During School Closures
- Food Safety for School and Community Gardens
- Equity and Justice in Education and Response Strategies
- Finances and Funding for Schools and Early Care Sites
- Self and Community Care Resources
- Professional Development for Educators
School Districts and Food Hubs Partner for Mutual Aid

When school districts across Iowa closed and transitioned to grab-and-go meals in spring 2020, COVID-19 related disruptions within the food system left school nutrition programs with unpredictable access to meal staples from their traditional distributors. Filling bulk orders for meals became a challenge at the same time that community reliance on school meals was growing.

Chad Elliott, food director and culinary specialist with Decorah Community School District, shared in a May 1st interview, “That was the moment it occurred to me: we could guarantee delivery of product and help out our local producers at the same time! I called our Iowa Food Hub coordinators Teresa Wiemerslage and Kayla Koether to work on a local food order for our next grab-and-go meal. I felt relief knowing the food was ordered for next week’s meal. And I did not have to worry about whether or not we would receive product.”

Enter food hub partners. At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, all accounts at the Iowa Food Hub were closed and the business was struggling to justify the cost of a farmer’s product delivery to the hub. Through quick collaboration with this local school district, farmers were able to sell and deliver dozens of cases of local food to the hub, filling orders specifically for grab-and-go school meals. Local yogurt, cheese curds, salad greens, and produce became the reliable, local staples for the Decorah School District’s “Farm to School to Home” meal service program. This innovative meal program model worked by packing bulk items, enough for an entire week, for grab-and-go distribution.

Again, Chad Elliott: “It is a win for the producer, a win for the school, and a definite win for the students. I have always felt fortunate to have access to local producers, and during this emergency we have truly experienced the great value of local. We want them to be still here for us when this is over.”
CARES Act Funding to Support Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Efforts

Late in August 2020, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship announced that the state of Iowa would offer $500,000 in CARES Act funding to support Iowa farms, food hubs, schools, and early care sites. Three grant programs are currently being offered to help schools, colleges/universities, and early care centers purchase locally grown produce from Iowa farmers. Details regarding these three grant programs are listed here.

**Grower/Food Hub Grant** — Funds of $110,000 will be divided among eligible applicants ranging from $5,000-$10,000 to provide equipment or supplies needed to increase capability to sell produce to schools, early care centers and colleges/universities. Expenses include items such as boxes and packaging supplies, hiring of delivery or truck driver, coolers or refrigeration units. To be eligible, fruit and vegetable growers or food hubs must be willing to sell produce to schools and be enrolled in the Iowa Department of Agriculture’s Farm to School Directory.

**School Grant** — Funds of $160,000 will be divided among eligible applicants ranging from $5,000-$10,000 to provide equipment or supplies needed to work with local foods. Expenses include items such as dicers, portion containers, bags, coolers, and bagging or sealing machines. To be eligible, public or private K-12 schools must participate in the USDA National School Lunch Program and apply for the Local Food Grant (procuring at least $2,000 in local ag products).

**Local Food Grant** — Funds of $220,000 will be divided among eligible applicants depending on entity type. Funds will reimburse purchases of Iowa grown and raised produce, proteins, and dairy (with the exclusion of fluid milk) and will be limited to $2,000 per school building, $5,000 for colleges/universities, and $500 for early care centers. Purchases must be made directly from growers or food hubs and will not include distributors or grocery stores. If all funds are not spent, additional funds will be available.

*Note: Program evaluation and impacts to be developed and released in the 2021 Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Annual Report.*
# Appendix

## 2019-2020 Partners within the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Partner Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Lehman</td>
<td>Iowa Farmers Union</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Winslow</td>
<td>Early Childhood Iowa</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlene Enderton</td>
<td>ISU Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development Program</td>
<td>Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie Scheidel</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Education</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chelsea Krist</td>
<td>ISU Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development Program</td>
<td>Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emilee Harris</td>
<td>State Public Policy Group</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Clancy</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Human Services</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Olson</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Public Health</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gina Buttikofer</td>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haleisa Johnson</td>
<td>Northeast Iowa Food &amp; Fitness Initiative</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Scheesley</td>
<td>Child Care Resource and Referral</td>
<td>State agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi LaBounty</td>
<td>Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeannie Miller</td>
<td>Child Care Resource and Referral</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jen Ransom-Gach</td>
<td>Des Moines Public Schools</td>
<td>School district</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jolene Rosonke</td>
<td>Des Moines Area Community College, Early Care</td>
<td>College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaye Lindsley</td>
<td>Willowwind School</td>
<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly Davydov</td>
<td>Department of Management, Early Child Care</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Krista Smith</td>
<td>Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyn Jenkins</td>
<td>EveryStep Community Health</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martha McCormick</td>
<td>Next Step Adventure</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meg Brink</td>
<td>Area Education Agency (AEA) Purchasing</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathan Spalding</td>
<td>FoodCorps Iowa</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<td>Patti Delger</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Education</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suzanne Secor Parker</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Education, CACFP</td>
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<td>Suzy Wilson</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tammy Stotts</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship</td>
<td>State agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teresa Wiemerslage</td>
<td>ISU Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development Program</td>
<td>Extension</td>
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Roles & Responsibilities: Iowa Farm to School & Early Care Coalition  
(March 2020)

**Coalition Member**  
**Description:** Participate in the work of the coalition.

**Responsibilities:**
1. Participate in planning and setting priorities of the coalition.
2. Participate in defining the role of the coalition in the community.
3. Participate in leadership of the coalition.
4. Participate in evaluating the contribution the coalition makes to related outcomes.
5. Participate in coalition events and activities.
6. Represent the coalition within your sphere of personal influence.
7. Serve as a resource for coalition’s activities.

**Time Commitment:** Varies. Opportunities for engagement include participation in written and verbal communications, and attendance at bi-monthly meetings (2020: virtual, 3 hours). Time commitment may increase depending on other role involvement.

**Benefits:**
1. Opportunities to broaden your knowledge and skills.
2. Gain new experiences.
3. Increase communication skills.
4. Contribute to systems-wide change to improve the health of Iowa’s children, families, and communities.

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**Co-Chair Member, 3 per term**  
**Description:** Responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating activities associated with the coalition. General support of coalition activities and projects; support state and national reporting, technical assistance to local/regionally allied groups. Works to develop and implement strategies for long-term involvement of community institutions, organizations, and individuals that focus on similar topics. Support horizontal leadership structure by sharing duties, communication, and decision-making with other co-chairs.

**Responsibilities:**
1. **Clerical** duties include typing minutes and agendas, sharing reminder communications, preparing materials for meetings.
2. **Meeting preparation** includes organizing and collecting content for agendas, taking minutes, locating and preparing the meeting site, planning facilitation, and developing a system to provide refreshments.
3. **Membership** duties include outreach, orientation, ongoing contact, and support.  
   a. Recruit and maintain diverse coalition membership.
   b. Plan, coordinate and conduct educational and training activities for coalition.
4. **Reporting and evaluation** including data collection, process and outcome evaluation.  
   a. Develop and implement data collection methods, tools, and evaluation measures for coalition activities and associated projects.
   b. Evaluate coalition effectiveness and coalition strategic plan.
c. Document findings and progress of programs and activities in written reports.

5. **Coordination** of activities including special coalition events, media campaigns, joint projects,
   a. Assist members in conducting strategic planning and guide coalition to develop a comprehensive action plan based on needs assessment.

**Terms:**
1. Invited to, or volunteer for a role.
2. Ideally, serves a 1, 2, or 3-year term.

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### Strategy Team Member

**Description:** Participate in strategy team activities: network development, procurement, food education.

**Responsibilities:**
1. Participate in planning and setting priorities of the strategy team.
2. Participate in defining the role of the strategy team within the coalition.
3. Participate in the strategy team’s activities.
4. Represent the strategy team within your sphere of personal influence.
5. Serve as a resource for the strategy team’s activities.

**Time Commitment:** Varies. Strategy team meetings are held monthly (1 hour). Time commitment may increase depending on other role involvement.

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### Strategy Team Coordinator

**Description:** Lead the activities of a strategy team: network development, procurement, food education.

**Responsibilities:**
1. Contribute to development of strategy team meeting agendas, facilitate discussions during meetings, and assist with decision-making in meetings. For example; move conversation when it is stuck, pull out diverse perspectives, and report out from small group discussions.
2. Member management by addressing member concerns outside of meetings, learning more about member’s roles and experiences, using them to inform strategies.
3. Cultivate a focus on equity by striving for diverse membership, creating conditions for all voices and perspectives to be included, and using data to understand disparities and develop strategies.
4. Bridge communications between the strategy team, members of the greater coalition, and external community stakeholders.
5. Future consideration: Develop focus group or advisory council for informing strategy team direction.

**Time Commitment:** Varies. Strategy team meetings are held monthly (1 hour). 1-2 hours of pre- and post-meeting time may be required. Time commitment may increase depending on other role involvement.

**Terms:**
1. Invited to, or volunteer for a role.
2. Ideally, serves a 1, 2, or 3-year term.
Developed with perspectives from the following sources:

Infographic Sources, Executive Summary

**Page 1, Recommendations:** The four recommendations listed within the executive summary are sourced from the “Analysis of Iowa’s Food System: Opportunities and Policy Recommendations,” by the Local Food, Healthy Kids initiative. The full analysis and list of recommendations (pages 7-9) can be [found here](https://05f9dc24-75c9-4ef1-976a80d3c189b555.filesusr.com/ugd/1b1b6d_b2bcd88bfc0c482fa6380cec820d9538.pdf)

**Page 2, 2019 Accomplishments**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Over 200,000</th>
<th>Children and youth participated in farm to school and early care initiatives.</th>
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<tr>
<th>1,003</th>
<th>Schools and early care sites participate in farm to school and early care initiatives.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>469</td>
<td>School and early care sites host on-site gardens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>390</td>
<td>School districts and early care sites procure local food for meal programs.</td>
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<tr>
<th><em>Source:</em> Combined ECE and school data</th>
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<tr>
<th>2019 Iowa Farm to ECE Provider Survey</th>
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<tr>
<th>K-12 Schools: Most recent data from 2015 USDA Farm to School Census; 2019 data to be released fall of 2020</th>
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<tr>
<th>107,900</th>
<th>Local meals served on 2019 Iowa Local Food Day.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Over $500,000</td>
<td>Reported purchases of local food by schools and early care sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$375,494</td>
<td>Grant dollars brought to Iowa to Iowa for farm to school and early care programming.</td>
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<tr>
<th>21</th>
<th>State organizations and agencies formed the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Network members attended the Virtual Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Iowa Farm to School and Early Care newsletter reached 895 practitioners weekly.</td>
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<th>2019 Coalition strategic planning process notes and continued meetings</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Source:</em> 2019 Coalition strategic planning process notes and continued meetings</td>
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<th>Evaluation, 2019 Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Evaluation Report, ISU Extension and Outreach FFED</th>
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<td><em>Source:</em> Evaluation, 2019 Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Evaluation Report, ISU Extension and Outreach FFED</td>
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