



Support H.B. No. 5767: An Act Concerning Farm to School Program Establishing a CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS Grants Program

CT Grown for CT Kids enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites.

- ❖ The CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS Grant Program can support:
 - Food-insecure students with healthy, local food.
 - Meaningful educational experiences for students through STEM and health education curriculum.
 - Mental well-being of students by bolstering resilience, and providing social emotional support.
 - School districts and early childhood providers in cultivating relationships with local farmers to purchase, promote, and serve CT Grown food.

Why a CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS Grant Program NOW?

- ❖ There is a need!
 - Food insecurity is a persistent problem among CT's children, and has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Childhood obesity rates have increased as a result of the pandemic. Studies show that students have better diets, and lower rates of unhealthy weight gain when eating school meals.
 - Compacted by trauma and stress from isolation and the uncertainty of the future, access to safe outdoor educational opportunities for students are paramount.
- ❖ There is demand!
 - 92 Towns or Districts signed up to participate in farm to school programming in the 2019-20 school year and continue to participate during the 2020-21 school year. These school districts represent a total of 585 *cafeterias* across Connecticut that are promoting farm to school.

How will the CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS Grant Program work?

- ❖ CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS grants are **community driven**. Administered through the CT Department of Agriculture, applicants can apply for funds to address their community's unique needs, including; school garden resources, training, equipment, local food products, stipends for visiting farms and field trips to farms, and more.
- ❖ To **ensure equity**, priority is given to Title 1 schools and early childhood centers who receive school readiness funding. These funding streams support predominantly students and communities of color. ([Data Demographics for 2018](#))
- ❖ Grants can be used for technical assistance and professional development for school nutrition services in providing more scratch cooking, serving high quality food, and opening new channels for schools to buy local.

The CT Farm to School Collaborative is a multi-stakeholder partnership committed to growing farm to school in CT. We pursue projects together that no one partner could do alone. To learn more visit: <https://www.ctfarmtoschool.org/>