



# VERMONT FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

2020 Legislative Report



The Vermont Farm to School Grant Program was created in 2006 with the passage by the Vermont legislature of the [Roza McLaughlin Farm to School Act](#).

The intent of the program is to, “execute, administer, and award local grants for the purpose of helping Vermont schools develop farm-to-school programs that will sustain relationships with local farmers and producers, enrich the educational experience of students, improve the health of Vermont children, and enhance Vermont’s agricultural economy.”

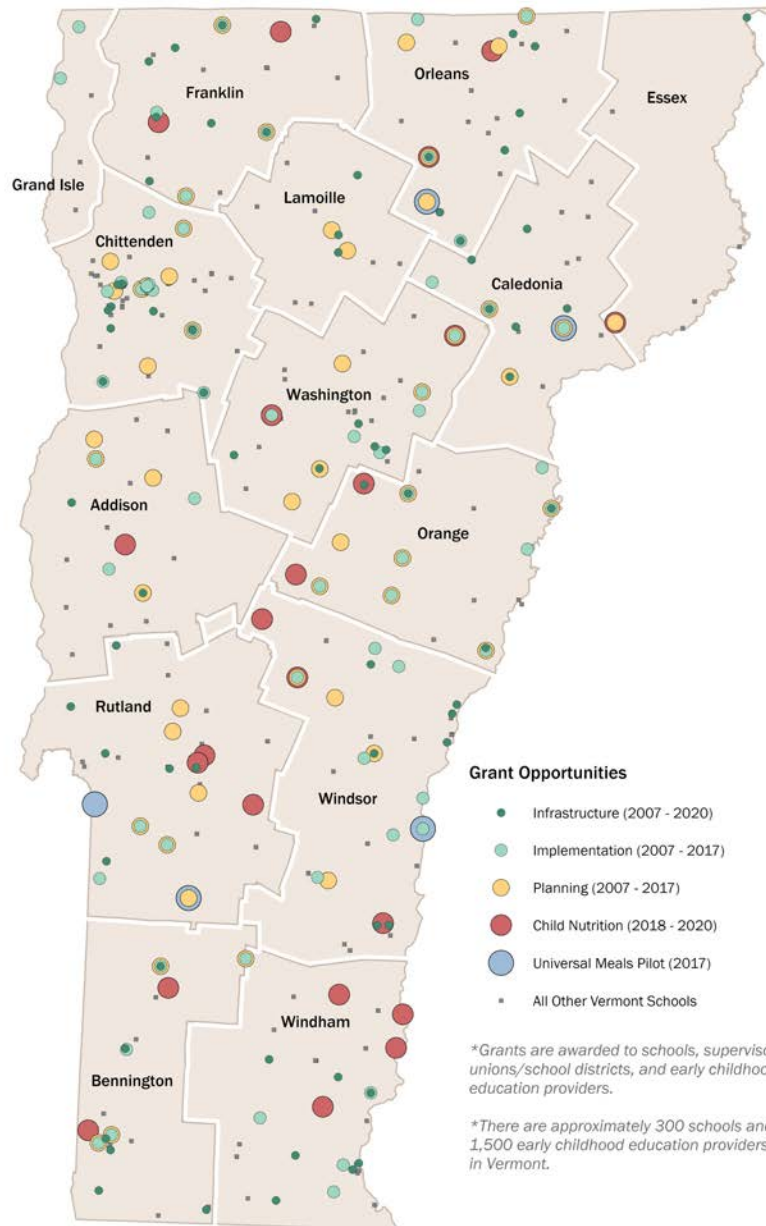
“ Farm to school is another born in Vermont initiative. I have been proud to support this work on Capitol Hill and help this program reach 33,000 schools nationwide. Nutrition education is one of the best tools we have to help our children live healthy lives and to connect our farms to local markets.

– SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY



Senator Leahy visits St. Albans Town Education Center, a 2019 program grantee.

## Farm to School and Early Childhood Grant Recipients | FY 2007 - FY 2020



### Program Overview To Date

<b>128</b>	<b>\$1,405,550</b>	
Total Grants Awarded <i>123 Child Nutrition Grants 5 Universal Meals Grants</i>	Total Dollars Granted	
<b>176</b>	<b>51,468</b>	<b>45</b>
Total Schools Impacted	Students and Children Impacted	ECE's Impacted

### FY20 Impact to Date

<b>7</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>	
Total Grants Awarded	Total Dollars Granted	
<b>8</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>2</b>
Total Schools Impacted	Students and Children Impacted	ECE's Impacted

Research has shown that farmers selling to local and regional markets spend more money in their **local economies** compared to larger food businesses.

According to a report from the Center for Rural Studies, every dollar Vermont schools spend on local food generates an additional \$0.60 in economic activity for the state.

- One-on-one procurement training helps grantees connect with farmers and purchase more local food.
- 2019 Farm to School grantees spent over \$125,000 on local food, generating an additional \$75,000 in economic activity.

Vermont’s investment in farm to school has made it a national leader in the movement. This reputation has played an important role in helping secure federal funding for farm to school.

- \$281,550 in federal grant funds were awarded to two VT organizations in 2019, VAAF and NOFA-VT.

After bringing their food program back in house and making a commitment to quality local ingredients and scratch cooking, Bellows Falls, a 2019 FTS grantee, saw a 5% increase in meal participation and sales to adults triple.

“The more connected a community is to itself, and the more local businesses trade with each other, the longer a given dollar will linger in the community.”

- KEN METER Local Foods Expert

Purchasing Local Food is part of a Virtuous Cycle





The **health benefits** of farm to school are far reaching and include increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, greater willingness to try new foods and increased knowledge of healthy eating habits.

A recent study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that **Vermont's childhood obesity rate has increased and, at 15.1%, is now the highest in New England.**

"If there's one thing we know, it's that eating more fruits and vegetables leads to better health. Farm to School is a key part of making this happen," – *Dr. Mark Levine, Vermont Commissioner of Health.*

"We are engaging in more scratch-cooking, as well as experiencing a higher number of students eating our school lunches," – *Lynn Carey, Principal, Bellows Falls Middle School, 2019 grantee.*

“**Farm to School has really changed our school, I feel, in many ways. I just feel like it's made it healthier.** – **LONDON MESSIER** St. Albans Town Education Center Student, 2019 grantee school.



Farm to school programs **enhance overall academic achievement** in early childhood education and k-12 settings by providing opportunities to engage in dynamic and multi-disciplinary experiential learning.

“Farm to School is such a valuable way for students to integrate their curricular standards with community engagement and grow a connection to their cafeteria and the food they eat. The lessons students learn through Farm to School roots their understanding and appreciation of Vermont working landscapes for the rest of their lives,” – *Misse Doe Axelrod, VT farmer and educator.*

Every farm to school grantee receives one-on-one technical assistance to help them integrate farm to school into their curriculum.

“” If you have something hands on, then kids will learn more. I feel like they’ll have a better time.

– **KATE STORMS** St. Albans Town Education Center student, 2019 grantee.





**From local harvest dinners to farm field trips, farm to school has the power to **strengthen communities.****

“The Farm to School grant can be seen woven throughout all of our programs. We educate, grow, and come together in community over a meal seeing food as an act of local culture and as a commitment to a healthy life. The conscious linkage of our food system with our wider ecological and cultural landscape gives us a larger and deeper sense of home and the security and confidence that comes with it,” – *Beth Miller, Administrator, Rutland County Parent Child Center, 2019 grantee.*



“Cabot Farm to School is about much more than nutrition, curriculum, and gardens – it’s about building community...learning and growing together,” – *Peter Stratman, Teacher, Cabot School, 2019 grantee.*

“**Farm to School has brought our school together around our garden and our new cafeteria area.**

– **ANGELA STEBBINS** Principal, St. Albans Town Education Center, 2019 grantee.



The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program is supported by a collaborative network of public and private organizations.

### Agency Program Staff

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