



Become a National Farm to School Network Partner Organization

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National Farm to School Network Background:

National Farm to School Network (NFSN) is an information, advocacy, and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into school systems and ECE (Early Care and Education) settings. Farm to school and ECE empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities. NFSN's more than 20,000 members and partners reflect our tagline "Growing Stronger Together" and a belief that robust movement building is possible only when we work collaboratively across sectors and locations.

NFSN has a record of extraordinary accomplishment, pioneering a national and budding international farm to school movement and placing farm to school and ECE as a ubiquitous part of food systems change work, federal and state policy, and cross-sectoral connections. NFSN was instrumental in establishing the USDA Farm to School Grant program that has disbursed \$52 million in federal grants since 2013, and has institutionalized national and regional farm to school staffing within USDA. As of 2020, **45 states, Washington D.C. and three U.S. territories have passed farm to school supportive policies** and as of 2019, there are an estimated 47.2 full time staff equivalents dedicated to expanding farm to school efforts within State Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Health. NFSN has developed innovative resources such as [Evaluation for Transformation](#), [Benefits of Farm to School](#), and [State Farm to School Policy Handbook](#) to support and guide farm to school stakeholders. Beginning in 2011, NFSN expanded the farm to school model into ECE settings and continues to build partnerships to expand capacity for farm to ECE.

While the growth over the last decade is impressive, there are significant disparities in implementation of and access to farm to school across states and communities. We realize that we have been part of the problem such that the foundation of our network and our work has not been rooted in racial equity. We must make changes to ensure those who are most impacted and do the work day in and day out to feed us all are the ones who drive decision-making. We need to ensure youth across all races and ethnicities not only have access to nourishing food, but also hold leadership in our food system. And we need to unite against the deeply racialized food system that continues to exclude, oppress, exploit, disadvantage and cause harm to Black, Indigenous, Latino, immigrant, and other people of color in our communities.

Recognizing the importance of evolving our work to achieve our vision for a just food system, our [Call to Action](#) is that **by 2025, 100% of communities will hold power in a racially just food system**. Part of our strategy for reaching this goal is broadening our network to ensure that NFSN reflects the intersectionality of our work with other sectors. Thus, we are restructuring and relaunching our partner structure as part of our commitment to shifting power and to achieving a racially just food system.



There are many overlapping and intersecting movements and systems that we need to activate in order to move towards this Call to Action. For us at the National Farm to School Network, this means focusing on how farm to school must shift and adapt to support communities in holding power in a racially just food system. From 2018-2019, we embarked on a systems mapping process to get input from our network and to begin to outline the next chapter of farm to school's evolution as a movement. With your feedback, we identified three equity-centered priority areas that will help move us further distances in the shortest amount of time to meet this Call to Action:

- **Relationships:** Which relationships – with organizations and individuals in communities – will shift power such that we may achieve and sustain a racially just food system?
- **Strategies:** What transformational and outcome-driven strategies will eliminate bias and redistribute power to achieve a racially just food system?
- **Programs and Policy Projects:** What programs and policies will shift power to achieve and sustain a racially just food system?

[Learn more about our Call to Action here.](#)

Partnership Description and Purpose:

NFSN is seeking partner organizations from across the country, including in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., the five U.S. Territories, and Sovereign Nations. We seek organizations to join us as partners in our Call to Action.

We are looking to build partnerships with organizations that are community owned, in which the voices of those most impacted are not only centered but deferred to and that align with our [core values](#). Specifically, NFSN is dedicated to building more authentic partnerships with BIPOC-led organizations. We know that if we don't there is no way we can begin to break down systemic racism in our food system. While all types of organizations -- including white-led organizations -- are welcome in our network, NFSN is unapologetically and intentionally working to center the voices and leadership of BIPOC communities and organizations in our network.

NFSN seeks representation from organizations that work on any of the following issues and want to work towards aligning around the intersectionality of their work and the food system.

- **Economic justice:** Farm to school isn't just about food miles, it's about valuing the livelihoods of the people who grow, harvest, process, and prepare the food that children eat. We have the chance to build relationships between producers, workers, and eaters in ways that enrich communities and address economic racial injustices.



- **Environmental justice:** Education and the purchasing power of meal programs can shift our food system away from practices that contribute to climate change and pollute communities of color, and towards a more equitable, sustainable use of our soil and water.
- **Health impact:** Farm to school activities go beyond getting kids the calories they need, to giving them the tools for childhood nourishment and lifelong health. In addition to key nutrients provided by school meals, kids should be empowered with the knowledge and skills to build healthy habits later in life and increase their sovereignty in our food system.
- **Prioritizing racial equity:** Progress towards a just food system requires us to dismantle the historic and ongoing structural racism in this system, and actively promote food sovereignty and racial equity in farm to school activities.
- **Respecting workers and educators:** School nutrition professionals are the essential role in promoting fresh, healthy foods for our kids. The workers who harvest and process the vast majority of our nation's food supply deserve -- but don't currently have -- the same legal protections as workers in other industries in our country. Policies and practices should respect their rights and value their work appropriately.
- **Animal welfare:** Humane treatment of animals in food production is a key part of a respectful, relational – not extractive – food system. Inhumane conditions in meat and poultry production are intertwined with the corporate consolidation of our food system, and the prioritization of cheaply produced meat at the expense of animal welfare, worker safety, farmer livelihoods, and community health.

Partner Changes:

We are moving away from our previous structure of two levels of partners – Core and Supporting Partners – to a flat partnership structure. We are also eliminating the cap on the number of partners – all organizations that pledge to the commitments outlined below are welcome. We know it takes all of us to achieve our vision. All partner organizations in each place will be given equal recognition by NFSN for their roles in our network.

Additionally, we recognize the important value of state networks and existing state-level farm to school/ECE agency support, and we want to continue to be in partnership with those organizations. However, we are going to focus our staff capacity on building new relationships that center on grassroots, community-based organizations. We are striving to diversify the types of organizations we partner with to better reflect the six values named above, which are needed to help us move on our Call to Action.

Note: This is a Commitment Form, not an RFA. This means that any organization that signs this commitment form will automatically become a National Farm to School Network Partner. This is a rolling application with no deadline.



What Partners Will Do:

Partners will contribute to movement building, information and resource sharing and collaboration, and policy development. Partners will have an opportunity to participate in peer learning opportunities and to shape our work through roundtables, working groups, and surveys. NFSN will also work to elevate the efforts and voices of our grassroots partners through our network and platforms.

We are seeking partnership with organizations that are centering racial justice and will work with NFSN towards the following outcomes:

- Leveraging policy opportunities to advance activities around farm to school, ECE, and food justice.
- Implementing equitable strategies to ultimately achieve equal access to farm to school and ECE for all children and communities.
- Deferring to the solutions elevated by the most impacted communities
- Undoing racial injustices in our food system and co-creating a racially just food system.
- Shifting power away from institutions towards BIPOC communities
- Demanding racial justice in other allied national organizations' work.

Partner Benefits:

Partner organizations are recognized leaders in the farm to school and ECE movement, and will be featured on NFSN's website through which NFSN members and the public can connect with you directly.

Partners will have opportunities to engage with NFSN staff on project-based funding partnerships, development of new resources and information, content and design of national campaigns and events, and strategic discussions about the growth and evolution of farm to school, farm to ECE, and our call to action. Relevant requests for speaking engagements, events, and media queries will be directed to partners, and you will have access to support and assistance from a network of peer partners, national staff, NFSN Advisory Board, and farm to school and ECE stakeholders across the country.

Partners will also have access to the following:

- Webinars
- Trainings
- Partners Listserv
- Partner roundtable discussions
- Networking events
- Place-based Logos
- Opportunities for cross-promotion on NFSN communications channels
- Discount on select events
- Participatory Leadership



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK
A PROJECT OF TIDES CENTER

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

To become a partner, we ask that you sign a pledge of commitment to:

1. Upholding the [mission, vision, and values](#) of NFSN,
2. Actively working towards our [Call to Action](#), and
3. Deferring to BIPOC voices and leadership

[Click here to complete the National Farm to School Network Partnership Commitment Form.](#)

For more information or if you have any questions please contact Krystal Oriadha, Senior Director of Programs and Policy, at krystal@farmtoschool.org.