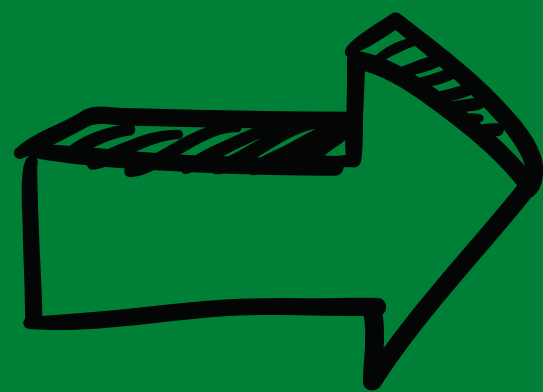


FEDERAL FUNDS FOR LOCAL FOODS

About: The USDA has recently established the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program. The federal funds, known as the Local Foods for Schools (LFS) program, are granted to districts that have opted in. Through the LFS program, USDA is awarding up to \$200 million to states for purchases of domestic local foods for distribution to schools. This program aims to strengthen the local food system by promoting local foods in schools. The program also emphasizes purchasing from historically underserved producers and processors. Funds are issued to districts based on enrollment.



Benefits: These federal funds can be used to purchase minimally processed local produce and value added dairy and protein. This program aims to emphasize working with small and socially disadvantaged farms in the community. 100% reimbursement is issued for local products purchased.

SUPPORTING SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMS

Definition: The USDA defines socially disadvantaged farmer or ranchers (SDFRs) as someone who has been subject to discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity, or other cultural bias.



SDFRs may have faced financial hardship due to the prejudice they face. The USDA has issued a federal grant to support these farmers. Connecting schools to these farms is not only a way to utilize federal funding for local foods, but to also support Maine farmers across the state. Visit the [Farm and Sea to School](#) webpage for a list of SDFRs by county.

CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL FARMS

Finding Farms: One way to start connecting with local farms is by reaching out to your Foodservice distributors, as they may already source from Maine farms. There are opportunities for schools to connect with local farms and producers all across the state. Click [here](#) to visit the Farm to School map to search for farmers near you.



Building Relationships: Maintaining a positive relationship with farmers is an important part of working with local farms. Talk to farmers to determine what kinds of products are available, pricing, and the volume at which they can sell. There could be opportunities to consistently work together to meet your district's needs.