



# UConn Extension Put Local on Your Tray

## Growing Healthy Students and Farms

In Connecticut, 23% of kindergarten to twelfth grade children experience food insecurity, and 29% are overweight or obese. Put Local On Your Tray connects Connecticut farms with schools and early care centers to bring fresh, local food to children’s meals. Through education, partnerships, and local sourcing, the program supports healthy eating habits, food security, and vibrant local food systems. Put Local On Your Tray builds farm-to-school relationships, supports local food purchasing, and fosters healthy food environments for children, while strengthening the farm economy and addressing food insecurity.

### BY THE NUMBERS



**30**

K-12 public school districts served



**20**

early care education providers supported



**53**

CT Grown for CT Kids grant recipients



**8**

school districts received intensive technical assistance

### COMMUNITY IMPACTS



**85k**

local food purchased from 21 farms and 3 food hubs



**480**

pounds of sweet potatoes in one delivery to Hartford Public Schools



**42**

percent of youth participating in Pre-K school food programs



**244**

percent increase in the number of children eating locally grown food

“

Thank you (Regional Coordinators) so much for putting me in touch with Karabin Farms! I placed an order... and he had delivered it to me within an hour. And all of the veggies had just been picked that morning. Can't get any fresher than that! I am very excited to be working with him.”

Cheryl Fliss, Klingberg Family Center



“

If the kids like them, then it's a win for everybody... they're actually local, organic, real food.”

Lisa Griffin, Oxen Hill Farm

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Put Local On Your Tray delivers resources like farm-to-school recipe books, garden kits, and seasonal classroom materials. It offers trainings for food service staff and farmers, coaching for farm-to-school grants, and technical assistance for schools to source, serve, and celebrate local food. Last year, Tray supported over 50 institutions in purchasing Connecticut-grown foods and educated students on healthy, seasonal eating.

## ASSISTING SCHOOL FOOD DIRECTORS

The State of Connecticut Department of Education provides reimbursement incentives, up to 50% using state funds and 100% using federal funds, for schools purchasing local products. However, navigating procurement processes, identifying eligible products, managing relationships with farmers, and ensuring product availability can be daunting for school food directors. UConn Extension's Regional Coordinators serve as on-the-ground facilitators, helping districts connect with farmers and food hubs and navigate the logistics of purchasing local food.

*Put Local On Your Tray is a collaboration between UConn Extension, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, the Connecticut Department of Education, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, and the Connecticut Farm to School Collaborative.*



For more information, visit us at:  
[putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu](http://putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu)

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