

THREE STEPS

TO STARTING & STRENGTHENING YOUR VERMONT FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



Photo courtesy of USDA

Vermont Farm to School Network

is made up of Farm to School champions working to engage Vermont students and school communities in a local food and farm culture.

OUR GOAL

to engage 75% of Vermont schools in integrated food system education, nourishing meals, and local purchasing by 2025.

Vermont is a national leader in the Farm to School movement, and **YOU** are an important part of this work. Join us at www.VermontFarmToSchool.org

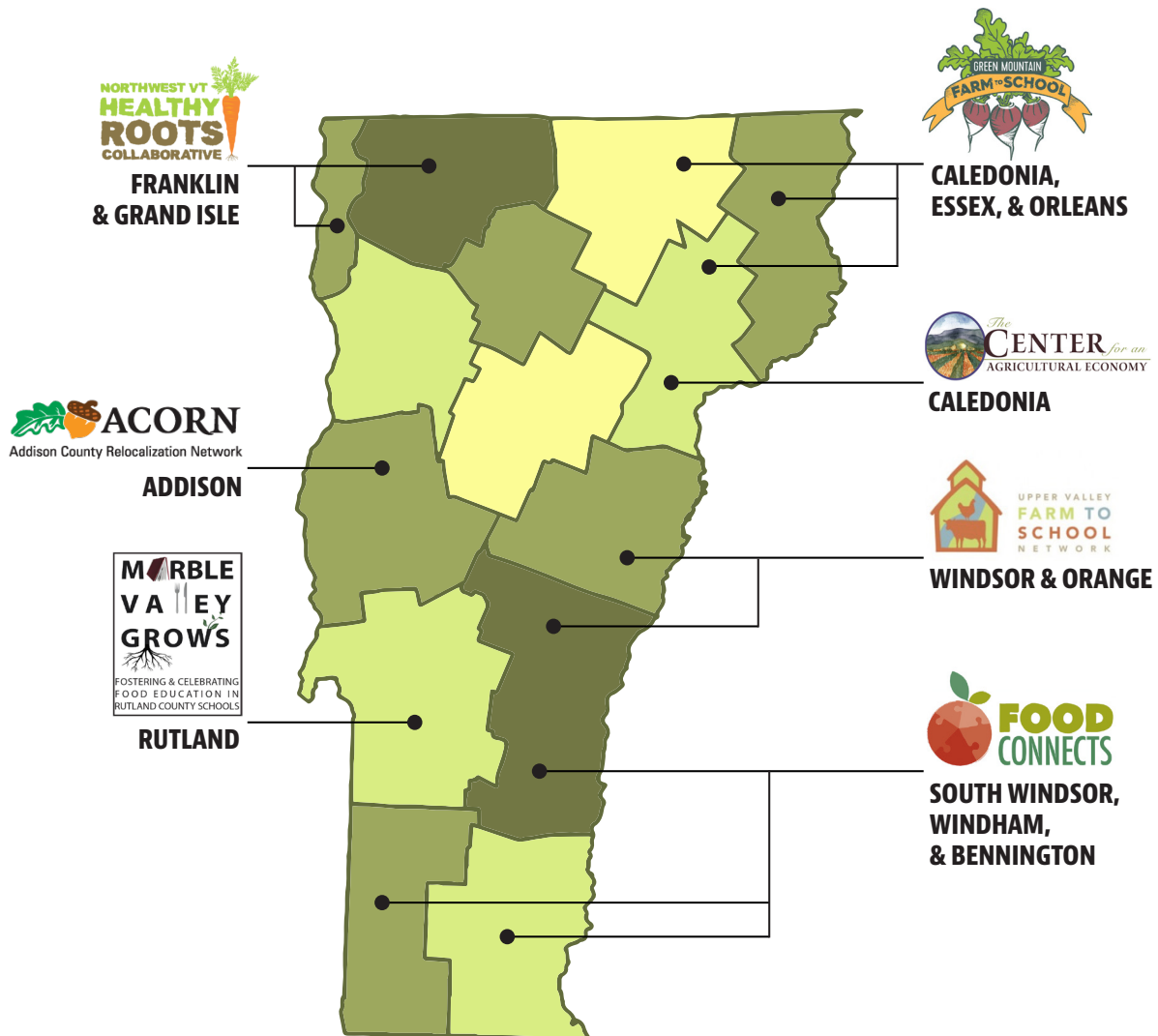
STEP 1 FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW IN YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Contact your school chef and principal to learn what efforts might already be underway in your school or school district. Join an existing FTS Committee or, if you don't have one, help start one with our support!

STEP 2 CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

There is a strong network of regional organizations that can help answer your questions, connect you to the appropriate resources, and support you in:

- Building the capacity of your school kitchen, cafeteria, school gardens, and classrooms by providing technical assistance and professional development opportunities.
- Navigating complex regulations, streamlining operations, and customizing solutions for federal child nutrition programs.
- Integrating food, farm and nutrition education into the classroom.
- Procuring local food direct from farms to your school cafeteria.



If you don't have regional support in your area, please contact VT FEED (Food Education Every Day), our statewide Farm to School organization at info@vtfeed.org.



Photo courtesy of USDA

STEP 3

REACH OUT TO A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY FOR MORE HELP, FINANCIAL SUPPORT, OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The following organizations work in various capacities to support farm to school programming throughout Vermont. For up-to-date resources and funding opportunities for your Farm to School program, please visit the Vermont Farm to School Network website at www.vermontfarmtoschool.org.



VT FEED is a statewide Farm to School program that offers professional development services and resources to teachers and school food service, provides

technical assistance to farmers and school professionals, and connects youth with agriculture and healthy food through such events as Jr IRON CHEF VT. A partnership project of Shelburne Farms and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont.



UVM Extension integrates higher education, research and outreach to help Vermonters put knowledge to work in their families and homes, farms and

businesses, towns and the natural environment. These include 4-H clubs and short-term or in-school programs; the Master Gardeners hotline; the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, and more.



Hunger Free VT provides local communities with tools and education to create sustainable food programs that ensure access to nutritious food for all.

They customize strategies for expanding school meal program participation.



Vermont Community Garden Network supports and connects the state's community and school gardens, offering technical assistance and consulting for garden development and community engagement; training, workshops, and networking opportunities for garden leaders; and small grants, free seeds, and other resources for garden groups.

State Agencies and Departments provide critical support for Farm to School throughout Vermont, including the **Agency of Education's Child Nutrition Program**, **Agency of Natural Resources' Department of Environmental Conservation**, and the **Agency of Human Services' Department of Health**. A special nod is owed to the **Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets**, which has administered Vermont's Farm to School Grants Program since its inception in 2007, the first publicly-funded program of its kind in the nation!

PHASES OF FARM TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Farm to School implementation is a process that deepens over time. This chart is meant to help you better understand where your school or district is in developing a FTS program, and to be a useful reference when working with FTS organizations. Please note that schools don't often grow in every area at the same pace.

	EMERGED Prepared to take action	DEVELOPED Have begun to take action	DEEPEINED Increased activities in depth, breadth, & frequency	THRIVED Well integrated in the school	SUSTAINED Embedded in the school culture & systems
School Staff, Faculty	A few staff and key school leaders are interested in beginning to organize their efforts. They're considering data about current meal program access, participation, and finances.	Some staff and school leaders are involved in FTS. They've explored ways to leverage the meal program to help fulfill FTS goals. Efforts to expand meal access and participation have begun.	There's growing engagement and commitment to coordinating FTS activities, with FTS leaders emerging in all staff sectors. A plan for continuing to expand the meal program to reach all students exists.	The majority of staff feel that they may easily and frequently be involved in FTS activities, and the meal program is understood to be an integral part of the FTS educational mission.	Engaging, recruiting and retaining involvement in FTS activities in the cafeteria, classroom and community is embedded in the school culture and systems.
Infrastructure Kitchen equipment, school garden tools, etc...	Infrastructure needs have been identified.	Some infrastructure upgrades have been completed, and others proposed, to plan/budget.	There is adequate infrastructure for some program elements, but not all.	There is adequate infrastructure for FTS programming.	Ongoing evaluation of infrastructure is embedded in the school culture and systems.
Cafeteria	Possibilities for local purchasing, expanding meal program participation, and increasing meal program finances have been identified.	Small amounts of local foods are occasionally purchased, mostly for special events. The meal program is starting to change to increase participation and improve program finances.	Local food is occasionally purchased and highlighted on menus. Meal program expansion and menu changes continue.	Local food is regularly purchased following proper procurement practices and has improved the school meal program menu. Participation in the meal program is strong.	Local food is purchased consistently, and students and staff are regularly engaged in the school meal program.
Classroom	A few teachers are interested and integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum.	Some teachers are integrating FTS into curriculum and others are interested in doing so.	A growing number of teachers are integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum. Some FTS professional learning opportunities are available to faculty.	The majority of teachers are integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum. FTS professional learning occurs on a continual basis.	All classrooms are offered opportunities and support for FTS activities. FTS is embedded in the school culture and systems.
Community	The larger community is interested in FTS activities and events, but aren't currently involved.	The larger community is involved a few times per year in FTS activities.	The larger community is frequently involved in FTS activities and events.	Community partners have made FTS a part of their agenda.	Engaging, recruiting, and retaining community involvement in FTS is embedded in the community culture.

Adapted from the VT FEED Farm to School Rubric and the VT Farm to School Network Growth Chart