

INCENTIVIZING LOCAL PURCHASING IN SCHOOL MEALS

A TRIPLE WIN

Utah schools and childcare centers serve over 88 million meals and snacks to our children each year. Why don't more of those meals contain Utah-grown fruits, vegetables, or meat? Cost is one of the most common barriers cited by both schools and farmers—schools cannot afford to pay the prices small farmers need to charge in order to be profitable.

Eight states have developed incentive programs that encourage school nutrition programs to purchase locally produced food by rewarding them for these purchases, helping districts and producers overcome this barrier. These states have seen large increases in the amount of local food purchased and served by participating schools.

We are requesting \$275,000 for a one-year pilot of a Utah-grown incentive program.

(\$245,000 will go into local grants. \$30,000 will be used for program administration by UDAF and USBE)

The pilot will be administered as a grant program by the Utah State Board of Education's Child Nutrition Programs. Their preliminary plan for how the program will function includes the following guidelines:



- Schools will be required to apply to participate in the program.
- Additional reimbursement will be available for unprocessed Utah-grown fruit, vegetables, eggs, and meat (including fish and poultry).
- Food must be served as part of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack, At-Risk Afterschool Meals Programs, Seamless Summer Option, or any CACFP meals or snacks that are claimed for reimbursement.
 - Schools will submit invoices showing local purchases that qualify for the additional reimbursement.
 - A maximum of 20 grants will be awarded, to ensure each applicant receives enough funding to make meaningful local purchases.

Incentivizing the purchase of local foods is a win-win-win for our farmers and food producers, our students, and our local economy.



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A Win for Utah's Children


- Serving local food in school meals promotes equity within our food system by ensuring that all children are able to enjoy Utah-grown produce and meat, not just those whose parents have time and money to purchase and prepare food from farm stands or farmer's markets.
- Cafeteria managers in states with similar programs have reported decreased food waste and increased fruit and vegetable consumption among students.
- Additional funding allows schools to plan for consistent farm to school programming, as opposed to occasional events, increasing demand for locally produced food.
- Farm to school programs are associated with better health outcomes and increased nutritional knowledge.

A Win for Utah's Farmers

- Providing financial incentives for local purchases allows schools to pay market rate for high quality local produce.
- Schools provide a large, consistent market for local farmers—over 88 million meals each year.
- Children who eat local food grow up understanding the importance of agriculture and support Utah farms.

A Win for Utah's Economy

- Farm to school programming typically has a 2 to 1 return on investment. A \$250,000 pilot program can be expected to return \$500,000 to Utah's economy.
- Local reimbursement programs leverage Federal funding. Schools receive Federal funding to run their Child Nutrition programs. Adding a small amount of state funding that specifically incentivizes local purchases can ensure that more of those Federal dollars remain in Utah.
Example: If carrots from California cost 65 cents per pound and Utah carrots are 80 cents per pound, schools would typically buy the California carrots-- and that 65 cents per pound goes to California farmers. With state reimbursement to make up the difference, schools can afford to spend 80 cents and keep that money in Utah.
- The farm to school relationship sparks stronger bonds between schools and farmers: states with these incentive programs typically see participating schools spend more on local produce than the amount that they are reimbursed.



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