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**March 2024 Update**

**Farm to School and School Garden grants continue to transform Oregon school lunch**

The second round of Full Grant awards goes to 27 awardees to use nearly $2,502,479.04 in state funding for food-, agriculture-, and garden-based educational activities.

Mini Grants ($2,000-15,000) were awarded in December 2023.

**Salem, OR** This year, school lunch for ~26,765 Oregon students is continuing to transform thanks to an infusion of food education. The Oregon Department of Education has announced that 27 awardees are the recipients of competitive Farm to School and School Garden grants for food-, agriculture-, and farm-based education activities totaling $2,502,479.04, which will provide countless hours of farm to school educational programming. The funding was available to school districts, Sponsors of Child and Adult Care Food Programs, Educational Service Districts, nonprofit entities, commodity commissions or councils, watershed councils, Oregon Food Producers and Tribal organizations across the state – from the Oregon Coast, through the metro regions, to remote Eastern Oregon.

The grant program is the product of House Bill 2579—the Farm to School & School Garden Bill—passed by the Oregon State Legislature with unanimous support in 2019. There are other portions to the grant as well, the largest portion being a non-competitive award available to all Oregon school districts and child and adult food care programs to assist in paying for costs incurred by the school district to purchase Oregon grown or processed food. It may not be enough to simply expose students to fresh, local healthy food by itself without teaching them about it, which is where the competitive educational grant comes in. It is designed to work in harmony with the non-competitive portion to have a greater impact on healthy choices and habits for Oregon students.

**Highlights and Innovations from the Awarded Farm to School Grant Proposals**

***Full Grants ($15,000-$100,000)***

**Bethel SD** *Awarded: $98,243 (539 students)*

The Bethel Farm to School Project aims to enrich educational opportunities across all grade levels within the Bethel School District on the Bethel Farm. Kalapuya High School students will take the lead in organizing engaging spring and fall field trips, assuming roles as farm leaders while guiding elementary students through various agricultural activities. Both Willamette and Kalapuya students will actively oversee the apiary and farm year-round, with opportunities to secure paid summer agricultural internships. Families will have the chance to partake in farm-related activities, attend community cooking and nutrition classes, and participate in multicultural events in collaboration with Huerto de la Familia, all of which will be hosted on the farm.

**Boys & Girls Club of Salem, Marion & Polk Counites** *Awarded: $46,165 (760 students)*

Over the grant period, the Boys & Girls Club of Salem, Marion & Polk County will hire a Garden Coordinator who will provide opportunities for 760 disadvantaged youth to gain an in-depth understanding of gardening, including hands-on experiences and classroom learning.

**Capaces Leadership Institute** *Awarded: $100,000 (400 students)*

The Anahuac Farm, a program at the Capaces Leadership Institute, is a seed-to-table, culturally specific agriculture and culinary educational program targeted at Indigenous migrant children, youth and their families in the Salem-Keizer Public Schools. Participants and their families will learn and put into practice basic farming, production, processing, and culinary knowledge from Indigenous Mexico (Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, P’urépecha, etc.), with an emphasis on healthy and sustainable traditional techniques. Lessons will take place on our teaching farm in Turner, OR.

**Central Point SD** *Awarded: $99,742 (2,005 students)*

Central Point School District has been a dedicated advocate and early adopter of garden and nutrition education programs, recognizing that healthy habits begin early in life. Committed to the health of their students, community, and local economy, Central Point SD’s school nutrition staff utilizes locally grown and produced products to create nutritious, palatable, and innovative meals. Additionally, through weekly hands-on garden time, farm field trips, and a robust tasting table program, they offer students an immersive look at their local food systems. Through this grant, Central Point SD seeks to continue their garden education and procurement programs to uphold their commitment to their student's health while providing innovative, hands-on learning experiences.

**Corvallis Environmental Center** *Awarded: $98,626 (1,550 students)*

Growing Healthy Communities: Connecting Students to the Food System in Benton and Linn Counties will support Farm to School programming at the four Corvallis Title 1 elementary schools, grow the Farm to School activities in Greater Albany Public School by adding additional classes, and harnessing existing momentum with Central Linn Farm to School priorities. Corvallis Environmental Center is excited to encourage more children and families in urban and rural schools to make healthy food choices, utilize outdoor learning spaces like school gardens and local farms, and support regional farms and producers. Corvallis Environmental Center’s vision is a comprehensive, culturally diverse, and multifaceted Farm to School program for the mid-Willamette region that integrates food, garden, and agriculture experiences into the fabric of the schools and the lives of its students and their communities.

**Duniway Middle School** *Awarded: $94,268 (800 students)*

The proposal introduces a middle school garden designed to integrate hands-on learning experiences across various curriculum areas, such as science, mathematics, and art. By cultivating a garden, students will gain practical knowledge in plant biology, ecosystem dynamics, and the mathematical skills needed for planting and spacing. Incorporating native plants into the garden will provide students with the opportunity to learn about the region's ecological importance and delve into local cultural ties, appreciating the deep-rooted connections between the land and community traditions. Additionally, the garden will foster a deeper understanding of healthy eating by producing fresh vegetables and fruits, allowing students to make direct connections between the food they grow and the nutritional benefits they provide. Through this initiative, students will not only enhance their academic achievements but also develop a lifelong appreciation for sustainable agriculture and healthy food choices, encouraging creativity and critical thinking.

**Food Roots** *Awarded: $99,315 (1,413 students)*

This project will increase the health, nutrition, and well-being of children in Tillamook County by expanding and enhancing Food Roots’ Farm to School programming in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, serving over 1,400 students in six schools. This project will connect students in grades pre-k through 8th grade with direct food systems and nutrition education, farmer engagement opportunities and school-wide local food tasting events. In addition, this project aims to boost local food procurement in the cafeteria and ensure long-term sustainability of Farm to School education in the classroom by building a professional learning community for teachers.

**Grow Portland** *Awarded: $96,790 (3,983 students)*

Grow Portland partners with primarily low-income schools to engage students in its hands-on, food-based Garden School program. Grow Portland is committed to increasing equitable access to inclusive programming and healthy food for every student, including special education students. Garden Educators teach scientific concepts to all classes through hands-on activities and outdoor exploration as students grow their own food right outside school doors. In addition to actively tasting fresh vegetables during garden sessions, extra produce is placed in cafeterias or sent home with students.

**Growing Gardens** *Awarded: $99,912 (1,943 students)*

Growing Gardens Youth Grow Program uses the experience of growing, preparing and sharing food in schools with kids ages 18 months-18+ years to cultivate healthy and equitable communities. Growing Gardens offers comprehensive and culturally responsive farm to school programming to inspire kids to learn more about and celebrate foods special to them, explore new foods that are special to their classmates or indigenous to the area. The program intentionally teaches gardening skills, aligns with academic learning standards, supports social emotional skill building and promotes a positive sense of self and community. Growing Gardens intentionally focuses the resources it gathers to support school communities in Multnomah County’s lowest income neighborhoods. With this grant funding Growing Gardens will work collaboratively with parents, staff and students in 6 East Portland schools (preK-12) to shape and offer culturally responsive farm to school educational opportunities.

**Impact NW’s Supa Fresh Youth Farm** *Awarded: $99,750 (245 students)*

Supa Fresh Youth Farm seeks to strengthen school and community relationships, increase student’s knowledge of healthy food choices, highlight Oregon-grown foods, and cultivate student’s academic, vocational and life skills while addressing food system inequities among students at Creekside Community High School. Through student leadership operating the Supa Fresh Youth Farm, onsite Cafe and food pantry, culturally conscious and connected food and garden education, community engagement, and experiential skill building, Supa Fresh Youth Farm will support a student-led initiative to bring their community together through a variety of projects centered around experiential learning through growing and sharing food.

**Joseph SD** *Awarded: $99,974 (292 students)*

The Joseph School District will be developing a ½ acre pumpkin patch to benefit not only students but the community of Joseph as a whole. The patch will directly involve students of Joseph School District, InterMountain ESD, and Imnaha Bridge School from planting to harvest. The patch will be utilized in hands-on agricultural education, the community pumpkin carving contest, fall festival days, the school Harvest Feast, monthly tasting tables as well as provide produce such as zucchini, squash and carrots to be utilized in the school’s Child Nutrition Program. Students will learn the basics of gardening, production, packaging, farming, cooking, and preserving. Competitive paid summer internships will also be available for students to maintain the pumpkin patch.

**Kids Unlimited of Oregon** *Awarded: $100,000 (914 students)*

Kids Unlimited of Oregon (KU) will enhance its garden program to foster a culture of health and well-being via nutrition education and hands-on garden activities. KU’s full-time garden educator will continue providing more than 1,600 hours of instruction annually while strengthening and expanding garden infrastructure at Kids Unlimited Academies (KUA) at Medford and White City. KU also will offer farm field trips and culinary enrichment experiences for KUA students and KU afterschool participants with support from Rogue Valley Farm to School and OSU SNAP ED. Serving nearly 640 KUA students and KU's afterschool program, as well as participants in KU camps, the project additionally benefits families through outreach, volunteering and special events.

**Kinnaman Elementary** *Awarded: $95,000 (800+ students)*

Kinnaman and Fir Grove Elementary schools are two schools with tremendous diversity and tremendous needs. Both are the recent recipients of grants allowing them to create beautiful and accessible garden areas. Unfortunately, the schools do not have the staffing to properly utilize these areas in a way which is most impactful for the students. Kinnaman Elementary is seeking funds to hire a part time educator who will use standards-based curriculum, innovative instructional techniques, and culturally responsive practices in order to connect the garden to its students, teachers, and community.

**Latino Network** *Awarded: $100,000 (~270 students)*

Latino Network’s *Sustaining SUN Gardens* will result in maintaining six school garden programs that are centered on equity and multilingual/multicultural perspectives in order to continue nourishing the minds and bodies of students and families. Funds will support garden infrastructure and related programming at Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community Schools: Scott, Cesar Chavez, Kelly, Hartley, and Rigler Elementaries and Kellogg Middle School. Each school’s comprehensive garden program will collaborate with program partners (Growing Gardens & FoodCorps), volunteers, PTAs, Garden Committees, teachers, admin, and students to experience the power of growing food and staying happy and healthy.

**Lincoln County SD** *Awarded: $67,873 (589 students)*

This Lincoln County School District project will provide supplies to initiate new school garden programs at Toledo Elementary School and Toledo High School. Funds will enable the district to expand its K-12 garden and nutrition program with a focus on growing food to be served in its cafeterias. Support from community partner Grow Lincoln County will enable the district to effectively identify additional needs at any participating school- including review of sustainability plans, creation of garden committees, needs for professional development, ongoing planning, reporting, and evaluation. A district provided School Garden Coordinator will support new schools with site development and curriculum integration.

**Luckiamute Valley Charter School** *Awarded: $75,310 (~200 students)*

Farm to school funding will allow Luckiamute Valley Charter School to provide weekly gardening classes to all students in grades K-5 throughout the whole school year. Students will create garden spaces, plant, maintain, harvest, and process food on school property to eat and prepare into meals. The program will extend into the community through collaborations with local farmers through field trips and purchases, building raised beds in family homes, and hosting cooking/eating activities. A program coordinator and teaching assistant will work with children to maintain some 10,000 ft2 of edible and interpretive areas for hands on education, offer food tasting activities during and outside of regular meals, coordinate parent volunteers and set up summer maintenance and irrigation plans for year-round production.

**Mt. Hood Community College – Head Start** *Awarded: $100,000 (1178 students)*

MHCC Head Start is a comprehensive school readiness program that supports children from pregnancy to age 5 years. School readiness is more than academics - it means supporting diverse children, families, and communities to ensure that children are healthy and have access to health care and nutrition. This project expands comprehensive farm to school programming to increase health and nutritional outcomes. In partnership with Growing Gardens, who will provide an Early Childhood Educator and Garden Coordinator, Mt. Hood Community College – Head Startwill increase school garden activities at its childcare sites, engage families in garden and harvest activities, enhance classroom curriculum, and provide professional development and classroom support for its staff. These grant-funded activities seek to deepen experiences and impact healthy food attitudes, improve diet and health outcomes, increase fresh food access for children and families, enhance culturally nourishing produce options, and cultivate the future generation of food and nutrition experts and leaders.

**Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)** *Awarded: $99,946 (~220 students)*

NAYA has grown an Indigenous food sovereignty project at the edge of the Columbia Slough, what was historically the Neerchokikoo Chinook Tribal trading village. In honor of the sites’ history and NAYA’s mission to serve Portland’s urban Native community, we have created space for NAYA participants to (re)connect(ion) to the land to heal from historic and ongoing colonization. This healing centers on accessing healthy food, traditional foods, and plant medicines as well as the ability to learn skills, build community, and contribute to healing the land. The next stage for the project is to hire a Youth Garden Educator utilizing these funds to build educational capacity, where NAYA youth learn Indigenous Traditional Ecological and Cultural Knowledge (ITECK) using place-based curriculum within a garden environment.

**Phoenix School of Roseburg** *Awarded: $86,181 (500+ students)*

Phoenix School continues to build capacity as a food-based, agriculture career-technical education, and production learning garden-based Center. Their purpose is bringing together Youth, Families, and Community (especially traditionally under-served, low-income, and disconnected populations) in promoting awareness, access, and consumption of fresh, locally produced foods. Phoenix School of Roseburg is building and sustaining a school culture that braids instruction, agriculture-based career-technical education, and work experience programming to help unite and support Farm to Child Nutrition Program efforts across food systems in greater Douglas County.

**Phoenix-Talent SD** *Awarded: $98,993 (1,087 students)*

The Phoenix-Talent School District has long championed and embraced garden and nutrition education programs, understanding the pivotal role they play in creating healthy citizens. Devoted to the well-being of its students, community, and local economy, its classroom teachers, garden educators, and school nutrition team work collaboratively to bring local food system and nutrition education to life. In addition to consistent hands-on garden classes, farm excursions, and a dynamic tasting table program, Phoenix-Talent SD strives to immerse students in a comprehensive understanding of their regional food systems and the importance of proper nutrition. With this grant, Phoenix-Talent SD will sustain and enhance its garden education initiatives, upholding its unwavering commitment to the health of its students while providing them with innovative, experiential learning opportunities.

**Rogue Valley Farm to School** *Awarded: $99,032 (761 students)*

Rogue Valley Farm to School transforms schools into vibrant hubs of food education. They deliver weekly garden and nutrition classes, fostering hands-on learning experiences across multiple schools. Their procurement programs ensure that cafeterias are enriched with locally produced foods, promoting healthy eating habits. Farm field trips and monthly tasting tables further deepen its impact. Rogue Valley Farm to School is committed to creating a thriving community by instilling a love for fresh food, clean air, and healthy soil among children.

**Serendipity Center** *Awarded: $99,960 (~180 students)* Serendipity is a unique therapeutic school that provides integrated education and mental health support for children and families who have nowhere else to turn. The Center offers a supportive school community where children affected by disability and trauma can heal, learn and thrive. This grant would support Serendipity's Wellness Program, which includes a synergistic partnership between its Growing Minds Garden (GMG) and Food Services programs. The GMG is a half-acre school garden where students develop life skills, grow sustainable vegetables for school meals and take-home, and benefit from therapeutic gardening. Working in collaboration with its Food Services Program, Serendipity Center prepares school meals that are made primarily from scratch, include a daily salad bar, and incorporate fresh, sustainably grown produce from the school garden and small, local farms.

**Springfield SD** *Awarded: $100,000 (1,650 students)*

Springfield Public School District will build robust partnerships between its Youth and Community Transition Programs (YTP and CTP), Nutrition Services and Special Programs, to weave the Transition Garden Project (TGP) into the fabric of the district. Specifically, through these efforts, Springfield SD will develop the Springfield School District Farm-to­Cafeteria program. They will start by reviving and restructuring their 2-acre farm (TGP), focusing on growing vegetables for their schools' cafeterias. This begins with hiring a Farm­to-Cafeteria Coordinator (0.5 FTE) who will build their capacity to provide student-grown produce to Nutrition Services while increasing the educational reach of TGP. They will further strengthen their Farm-to-Cafeteria Program's ability to provide their students with nutritional resources and educational opportunities by rekindling established partnerships and exploring new ones.

**Sustainable Living Center** *Awarded: $92,517 (840 students)*

Walla Walla Valley Farm to School (WWVF2S), a program of the Sustainable Living Center, will provide and coordinate farm and garden-based education activities for Athena-Weston and Milton-Freewater Unified School District schools. WWVF2S will support nutrition services efforts and education via tasting events and support for procurement and promotion of local foods in school meals. WWVF2S will support community building at the schools and in the garden spaces by hosting student and family events, such as garden club and family engagement events, and supporting school sponsored events. WWVF2S will offer training opportunities for teachers to support or independently use the garden spaces to teach science, math, and reading concepts. WWVF2S will support additional educational efforts as identified via teacher, administration, parent, and student surveys, convening garden and agriculture stakeholders, and integrating other feedback and goals. WWVF2S will coordinate and oversee planting, care and harvest of produce in the school gardens and its use in education and community building efforts.

**Umpqua Valley Farm to School** *Awarded: $100,000 (2600 students)*

Umpqua Valley Farm to School is expanding access to education with their farm to school and school garden programs. By providing support to all districts and schools in Douglas County, and direct education to over 2000 students, UVF2S strives to provide equitable, inclusive programming by including cultural lessons relating to the diverse communities it serves. UVF2S believes in its mission of providing food-community connections while strengthening Douglas County’s people and economy.

**White Oak Farm and Education Center** *Awarded: $100,000 (500 students)*

White Oak Farm and Education Center’s School Partnership Project will provide students in four rural Applegate Valley schools with school garden, classroom and cafeteria-based education programs, as well as farm field trips and tasting tables featuring local organic produce. Activities will emphasize diverse foods, cultures, and learning styles, and will empower all students to develop skills and knowledge to help them make healthy lifelong choices. Their programs will feature a grade-appropriate experiential garden, nutrition, arts and ecology curriculum; and will strive to create multi-year connections between students and the Farm. Through this integrated K-12 program they will educate and empower students to improve and deepen their relationships with food, farming, health, and well-being.

**Willamette Elementary: McMinnville SD** *Awarded: $54,883 (~546 students)*

Expanding the elementary school courtyard garden is an exciting opportunity to foster a hands-on learning experience around growing and eating healthy foods for the school’s students. This project will introduce raised beds for cultivating an array of fruits and vegetables, allowing children to explore the magic of growth and nurture a lifelong connection to healthy, homegrown food. Compost production will teach sustainability, emphasizing the importance of reducing waste and replenishing the Earth. The addition of a dedicated digging and science discovery area tailored for their pre-K students will spark their curiosity and fascination with the natural world. Moreover, this project will create a canvas for student artwork, transforming the garden into an artistic oasis that nurtures both creativity and eco-consciousness as well as builds a sustainable garden to benefit Willamette Elementary students and families for years to come.