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

First round of awards go to twenty-four awardees to use nearly $2.6 million in state funding for food-, agriculture-, and garden-based educational activities

**Salem, Ore., January 2020** – This year, school lunch for nearly 34,000 Oregon students is continuing to transform thanks to an infusion of food education. The Oregon Department of Education has announced that twenty awardees are the recipients of competitive Farm to School and School Garden grant for food-, agriculture-, and garden-based education activities totaling $2,557,686, which will provide over 237,000 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 ($11 million) 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’s designed to work in harmony with the non-competitive portion to have a greater impact on healthy choices and habits for Oregon students. This is the first round of education grant awards. The second round will encompass mini-grants for farm to school educational activities as well, but will range in smaller awards to approximately 20 recipients.

This is a continuation of previous grants passed by the Oregon State Legislature. The most recent version of this grant awarded $4.5 million to 131 school districts and 22 organizations, resulting in a very successful program in which many best sustainable best practices were showcased and replicated across the state.

**Highlights and Innovations from the Winning Entries Farm to School Grant Proposals**

**Brookings Harbor School District** *Awarded: $68,677 (1,563 students)*

BHSD's vision is to be a "Salad Basket of the South Coast," a region designated "frontier" due to poor access to healthy food choices. They're growing more locally sourced options while engaging 100% of their students in hands-on garden education to understand the connections between food, health, culture, the economy, and the environment. Their student- and community-built gardens deliver food to cafeterias; the free summer meals program and dine-on bus; tasting tables; food bank; soup kitchen; local restaurants; and school-based businesses via value-added products created by students. Their "Monarch School USA" makes an impact to conserve this key pollinator species.

**Corvallis Environmental Center** *Awarded: $128,396 (1,920 students)*

Planting the Seed: Connecting Youth and Food in Benton County will expand the Corvallis Farm to School program within the Corvallis School District and to surrounding rural communities to encourage children to make healthy food choices, promote outdoor learning utilizing school gardens, and support regional farms and producers. Their vision is a comprehensive, culturally diverse, and multifaceted Farm to School program that integrates food, garden and agriculture experiences into the fabric of their schools and the lives of their students and their families.

**Environmental Center of Bend** *Awarded $69,280 (1,420 students)*

The Environmental Center’s Garden for Every School program seeks to enhance student’s academic, physical, and emotional experience through opportunities to connect to nature through food and garden-based educational activities. This grant supports and expands nutrition and garden-based education to 4 schools, creates monthly tasting table opportunities in partnership with local School District Nutrition Services Departments, supports garden-based summertime programming and tasting in partnership with Bend-La Pine’s summer school lunch sites, and initiates a new full-cycle farm field trip to give students the opportunity to plant and then harvest a crop for October Farm to School Month Tasting Table events.

**Family Nurturing Center** *Awarded: $150,000 (81 students)*

The Family Nurturing Center’s (FNC) Farm and Food Program will be integrating gardening and nutrition education into their pre-school curriculum. We cultivate 4 acres of diversified vegetables at their farm and provide produce and experiential learning opportunities for their pre-k students and their families. The FNC’s focus on holistic early intervention helps their farm become a living part of their childcare center. Funds will support nutrition and gardening education in classrooms, increase family access to local produce, and increase family field trips, cooking, and gardening skills education out on the farm!

**Food Roots** *Awarded: $61,319 (916 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 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, serving over 1,000 students in five schools. This project will provide high quality, hands-on Farm to School educational activities related to agriculture, food and health and aligned with Next Generation Science Standards content; increase local food procurement in schools; and increase the capacity and long-term sustainability of Farm to School education throughout Tillamook County by providing teacher training through a Farm to School professional learning community.

**Grow Portland** *Awarded: $126,301 (3,493 students)*

Since 2015, Grow Portland has engaged over 10,000 students in their garden school program, primarily serving low-income schools. Twenty school communities have improved garden sites and integrated experiential and culturally responsive environmental stewardship education into the school day. Their program grows fresh vegetables in their partner gardens and places them in cafeterias to promote healthy eating choices. Each month of the school year, their professional Garden Educators make scientific concepts come alive through hands-on activities and outdoor exploration as students discover and interact with the living world right outside school doors.

**Growing Gardens** *Awarded: $199,956 (2,520 students)*

Growing Gardens aims to develop a continuum of in-depth pre-K through high school garden-based education program that is culturally relevant and age appropriate. We will engage over 3400 students in garden and food-based education at 8 elementary schools and 1 high school through school day lessons, Harvest of the Month cafeteria activities, afterschool and summer garden clubs, leadership opportunities, and community involvement. The curriculum connects food and gardening to the Next Generation Science Standards and a cultural exploration of Food Traditions. School garden coordinators, rooted in the school community and trained Garden Educators make a dynamic team to offer a multi-faceted garden programing at underserved schools in East Portland.

**Lincoln County School District** *Awarded: $128,122 (1,455 students)*

Yaquina View Elementary and Newport Middle School, both in Newport, Oregon, will develop pilot garden programs with educational activities highlighted in the garden and in the classroom. This program will be supported by a School Garden Education Coordinator. In addition to school garden programs both schools will learn from food tastings, farm field trips, and new community events highlighting the gardens.

**Lebanon School District** *Awarded: $62,487 (1,233 students)*

Lebanon Community School District has a long history of supporting school garden programs. We feel it is important to empower students with the knowledge of where their food comes from and how to grow it. This promotes healthy eating habits and contributes to healthy eating patterns for life. While instilling students with this knowledge, we are also embedding lessons in math, science and history. Working in the gardens allows students therapeutic time to refresh their minds before returning to the classroom. Lebanon Schools greatly value their garden program.

**Neighbors For Kids** *Awarded: $67,518 (450 students)*

Neighbors For Kids (NFK) has developed the “Healthy Coastal Kids” Project to engage local youth in activities promoting healthy food choices, gardening skills and agriculture within the state of Oregon. The project will serve up to 450 students in grades Pre-K - 12 from Lincoln County, Oregon. They will take part in educational enrichment, hands-on culinary lessons and outdoor gardening projects, plus various field trips to farms and businesses in the region where Oregon’s food is grown, harvested and processed.

**Oregon Human Development Corp.** *Awarded: $183,750 (1,428 students)*

Supa Fresh Youth Farm seeks to strengthen school and community relationships, increase knowledge of healthy food choices, highlight Oregon-grown foods, and cultivate students’ academic, vocational and life skills while addressing food system inequities at three schools in the Tigard Tualatin School District. Through student leadership, culturally and age-appropriate elementary and secondary food and garden education, community engagement, intergenerational learning, 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 growing and sharing food.

**Oregon Beef Council** *Awarded: $197,607 (2,320 students)*

This project will grow the successful Oregon Harvest for Schools (OH4S) campaign. OH4S supports procurement of Oregon foods by school food services with tools that can be used 1) to promote Oregon products in the cafeteria, classroom and community, and 2) provide food, agriculture, and garden-based education in the classroom, school garden and community. OH4S-A will result in (1) twenty-six 1-minute educational videos, (2) a toolkit for a new featured Oregon product, and (3) an innovative youth-driven promotional component for extending the reach of OH4S to every county in Oregon.

**OSU Extension Columbia Co.** *Awarded: $59,617 (469 students)*

The Exploring Oregon’s First Foods project in St. Helens, Oregon is a collaborative, comprehensive farm to school project that will engage youth at Lewis & Clark Elementary School in exploring native food resources of the Lower Columbia region. This project will build upon their existing 8 year partnership between the Oregon State University Extension Service and Lewis & Clark Elementary School, connecting youth in grades k to 5 to their local food system by cultivating the edible flora and fauna indigenous to their area, learning about pollinator health, and incorporating garden-based nutrition education through the SNAP Ed Food Hero project.

**OSU Extension Josephine Co.** *Awarded: $120,289 (1,125 students)*

Cultivating Connections: Josephine Farm to School is a comprehensive and integrated farm to school program for elementary students in Josephine County. Utilizing five distinct but inter-related programs including Jr. Master Gardener Afterschool, Ag. in the Classroom, Seed to Supper for Families, Farm to Cafeteria Education Program / Oregon Harvest campaign, and Planting the Seeds for the Future at the Food Bank. Students will increase knowledge of where food comes from and how it is grown, understand how food choices affect personal health and the health of the environment and community, and show a willingness to try new Oregon Grown foods. (1,125 youth engaged in direct education, 2,696 receive indirect through OR Harvest Campaign in cafeterias and schools)

**OSU Extension Klamath Co.** *Awarded: $102,152 (580 students)*

OSU KBREC partners with 21 schools in Klamath County and City School Districts to educate youth about, and provide access to, Oregon grown foods. Youth learn about featured foods in cafeteria lines, harvest tasting tables, libraries and classrooms; they meet the farmers that grow their food and select a Klamath-focused recipe for the menu. 580 students receive in-depth education in cooking and plant science, participate in growing greens and hatching eggs and attend Ag Field Day at an enhanced school farm. Youth and families participate in community-wide events to include cooking challenges, crunch-at-once, art contests and leadership development.

**OSU Extension Marion Co.** *Awarded: $78,234 (1,233 students)*

Marion County OSU Extension is partnering with 3 low-income elementary schools to increase knowledge and consumption of Oregon fruits and vegetables by facilitating monthly school health team workshops to develop and carry out a 2-year school garden action plan. Youth and school staff will participate in healthy celebrations featuring Oregon grown produce. Educational workshops will include hands-on, experiential garden and nutrition programs through after-school clubs, summer lunch programs, Food Hero tastings, farm field trips and other agricultural experiences. Through these activities, the school community will focus on sustained school garden involvement and education.

**Rogue Valley Farm to School** *Awarded: $198,950 (900 students)*

The Rogue Valley Farm to School Digging Deeper School Partnership Program collaborates with two school districts in the Rogue Valley: Central Point School District and Phoenix Talent School District. The goal is to build a culture of health in collaboration with all eight elementary schools in the two districts as well as one high school, providing weekly garden education programs, on-farm field trips, monthly Tasting Tables, quarterly teacher development workshops and procurement support throughout the year. The program will serve nearly 4,000 students and provide 50 hours of hands-on education to more than 900 students.

**Sauvie Island Center** *Awarded: $54,469 (600 students)*

Seasonal STEM: Hands-on, Culturally-Relevant Learning on a Working Farm, provides two full-day field trips to a working farm and two winter classroom visits to 24 classes from nine Title 1 schools. Approximately 375 children will participate in 8 hours of hands-on, farm-based education and 2 additional hours of complementary classroom activities designed to reinforce lessons learned on the farm. The same students and their families are invited to participate in 2 Family Farm Days. Their curriculum is aligned with Next Generation Science Standards and has recently been updated to improve cultural relevance to the Title 1 school children we serve.

**School Garden Project** *Awarded: $40,250 (3,051 students)*

School Garden Project of Lane County (SGP) helps Lane County schools develop onsite vegetable gardens where we teach children standards-based science and the basics of growing food, using the garden as an outdoor laboratory.

SGP’s main goals and objectives are to increase children's science knowledge, to assist children in making healthy eating choices, to teach children to be good stewards of the earth, and to strengthen their confidence through collaboration and cooperation with their fellow students. SGP’s lessons are designed to encourage learning while having fun!

**Serendipity Center** *Awarded: $148,734 (135 students)*

Serendipity is a unique school that provides integrated education and mental health support for children and families who have known repeated school failures. We offer a supportive school community where children affected by disability and trauma can heal, learn and thrive. Our Growing Minds Garden is a therapeutic school garden program where students develop life skills, grow organic vegetables for school meals and take-home, and benefit from therapeutic gardening. This request would increase capacity of the GMG and aid development of our new “Farm-to-Community” senior project in which garden produce is donated by students to local food banks.

**Sustainable Living Center** *Awarded: $73,990 (850 students)*

The purpose of their project is to expand Farm to School activities into the Milton-Freewater and Athena-Weston School Districts and to strengthen relationships with, and between, OSU Agriculture Extension SNAP-Ed, and Master Gardeners, local producers, The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and school communities. Garden Education Managers will focus primarily on maximizing meaningful use of school gardens to enhance class curriculum as well as coordinating and overseeing agricultural, food, and additional school garden education to inspire students and families to explore the world around them in new ways and to instill knowledge and pride about their regional farmers.

**Village School Eugene** *Awarded: $20,497 (222 students)*

Their project aims to expand student awareness of Oregon agriculture and agricultural production, through visits to local farms and food productions sites, monthly samplings of local foods and expanded garden instruction for middle school students. Their students regularly work in their garden (grades K-6) and their scratch kitchen (grades 3-8) that uses mostly local and organic ingredients. All students at the Village School will benefit from exposure to farming and food production in the area, and from learning and understanding more about the food they are served. Through these experiences, they hope to encourage their students to consider farming and food production in Oregon as potential sources of employment and research.

**White Oak Farm and Education Center** *Awarded: $77,468 (550 students)*

Through their School Partnership Project, White Oak Farm & Education Center will provide students in the Applegate Valley and Three Rivers School District with classroom and school garden-based education programs, as well as farm field trips and tasting/cooking tables featuring local organic produce. Their programs will feature a grade-appropriate experiential garden/nutrition/arts/ecology curriculum; and will strive to create multi-year connections between students and the Farm. These experiences will culminate with a 2-night farm-stay and cob-oven pizza party for graduating classes.

**Zenger Farm** *Awarded: $139,623 (4,440 students)*

The project is an expansive partnership between David Douglas School District (DDSD) and Zenger Farm, an urban non-profit farm that is located within its district. Together we provide the racially and ethnically diverse community of outer East Portland with hands-on food, agriculture, garden, and nutrition-based educational activities for youth. With the rich diversity of their neighborhood comes deep knowledge and multifaceted connections to food and farming. By building on this diversity, programming will provide opportunities for youth and their families to actively engage with their cultures and communities.

**To learn more about the individual grant proposals and grant program details, please visit the** [**Oregon Farm to School website**](http://www.bit.ly/orf2s)**, or contact Rick Sherman, Oregon Department of Education, Farm to School and School Garden Coordinator, 503-947-5863,** **Rick.Sherman@state.or.us****.**