Contact:

| Rick ShermanFarm To School Program AnalystOffice of Child Nutrition, Research, Accountability, Fingerprinting and Transportation503-385-6998Rick.sherman@ode.oregon.gov   Oregon Farm to School Website: bit.ly/f2sor | OR F2S  Logo |
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**December 2023 Update**

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

The first round of Mini Grant awards goes to 36 awardees to use nearly $500,000 in state funding for food-, agriculture-, and garden-based educational activities.

Full grants ($15,000-$100,000) will be awarded early next year.

**Salem, OR** This year, school lunch for 12,000 Oregon students is continuing to transform thanks to an infusion of food education. The Oregon Department of Education has announced that 49 awardees are the recipients of competitive Farm to School and School Garden grants for food-, agriculture-, and farm-based education activities totaling $427,521, 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 Winning Entries Farm to School Grant Proposals**

***Mini Grants ($2,000-$15,000)***

**Ashland SD** *Awarded: $15,000 (210 students)*

Established in 1998, Willow Wind Community Learning Center is a K-8 alternative program of the Ashland School District. The Willow Wind property has a large curriculum garden, food forest and greenhouse offering students an opportunity to learn about growing food by engaging in the real work of gardening. The funds from this grant will go towards supporting the material needs of this program and expanding the “Homegrown Lunch” program launched in 2022-23 where students grow, cook and serve nutritious lunches to the school population. With the support of parents, we are working to develop a garden-based culinary program for grades 6-8 to complement the “Homegrown Lunch” program.

**Bandon SD** *Awarded: $10,000 (45 students)*

Bandon Community Youth Center would use these funds to connect with local farms to provide fresh, healthy and locally sourced food for their participants. By purchasing fresh produce, it will ensure children receive nourishing snacks with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables. The BCYC would utilize the funds to enhance the garden at their location, utilizing the green house for possible year-round food sources. In addition, they will use the funds to facilitate educational programs to teach children about the importance of healthy eating and supporting local agriculture. Your investment will instill healthier eating habits, support local farmers, and strengthen their community’s food security.

**Boys & Girls Club of Albany** *Awarded: $15,000 (150 students)*

Boys & Girls Club of Albany’s “Harvesting Youth Potential: Seed to Sustainability” initiative immerses in the full spectrum of food systems, providing youth with hands-on, practical skills in food production, from seed to table, teaching 150 school-aged youth, the intricacies of growing, harvesting, and distributing food through immersive experiences in their enhanced club garden, local farm field trips, and natural waterways for fishing and foraging. By integrating a journey that begins in the dirt of their garden and extends to the workings of area farms to their nutrition center to learn preserving, dehydrating, or culinary skills to utilize Oregon harvest, to the art of fishing, we provide an exciting experiential learning experience. Their project is anchored in clear educational objectives that not only promote healthy food activities but also utilize evidence-based curriculum to ensure impactful learning outcomes. We’re dedicated to intertwining food related skills with science exploration and environmental education, creating a multifaceted approach to wellness and sustainability. Strategic partnerships and collaborations will amplify their reach and effectiveness of the project, fostering a network of support for youth as they grow and learn.

**Boys & Girls Club of SW Oregon, Coos Bay** *Awarded: $14,908 (225 students)*

The Gravity Falls Garden Club is a transformative initiative within the Boys & Girls Club of Southwestern Oregon, aimed at fostering environmental stewardship and healthy eating habits among children. Through hands-on engagement, young participants cultivate an organic garden, sowing a variety of vegetables and fruits. They gain invaluable knowledge about sustainable farming practices, harvest the produce, and acquire essential culinary skills to prepare nutritious meals. Complementing their practical learning, their program incorporates classroom education and opportunities for community partners to share their knowledge on topics related to environmental conservation and nutrition. Furthermore, enriching field trips to local farms enhance their appreciation for agriculture and community connections, creating a holistic educational experience.

**Bridgering the Gap, Elgin** *Awarded: $15,000 (1,500 students)*

Bridgering the Gap was founded to provide learning opportunities for the community to reach higher levels of self-reliance and sustainability. Harvesting and food preservation is essential in this aim, and when we focus on native first foods like wild berries, mushrooms, roots, and game from natural environments, we’re bringing awareness to sacred indigenous knowledge and practices which are vital for preserving delicate ecosystems and ensuring the availability of native first foods for future generations. Harvesting and preserving native first foods is about sustenance, sustainability, and also about preserving the cultural and historical significance of these foods through tribal and shared history guided by Senate Bill 13.

**Butternut Creek Elementary, Aloha**  *Awarded: $15,000 (313 students)*

Butternut Creek Garden Club at Butternut Creek Elementary serves 313 students in the Hillsboro School District with farm to school education, farm visits, growing produce, tasting tables and garden-based common core guideline education. The school partners with Keep Growing Seeds to provide culturally relevant focused activities and expert school garden stewardship throughout the year.

**Central OR Intergov. Council Skills Lab, Bend** Awarded: $10,000 (100 students)

The Deschutes Peace Garden is a classroom-garden located in the Deschutes County Juvenile Detention Center. The garden will serve as a place to access all aspects of a comprehensive eco-literacy educational program for the youth who are in detention. The garden area itself has been determined in that we are transforming a vacant lot adjacent to the detention facility, and we are engaged in the beginning stages of creating the infrastructure for the garden. Thus far, we have installed eight raised garden beds, obtained secure fencing, built an outdoor classroom structure(pergola) and filled the garden beds with soil. We are ready to launch into the next phase of the garden project, including creating a comprehensive composting center, building outdoor seating, purchasing a shed for storage of tools and equipment, and beginning to grow food and flowers. With the completion of this phase of the garden project, the detained youth will start to use and enjoy the Deschutes Peace Garden.

**College Hill HS, Corvallis** *Awarded: $15,000 (100 students)*

A farmer is only as good as their tools. College Hill’s program has been going strong for 9 years. In that time there has been very little equipment replacement. They are in desperate need of a way to breathe new life into their tools of the trade. Their program needs to take inventory and get new gardening/farming tools, shelving, boots and gloves to carry us through the next 10 years of their dynamic program!

**Cove HS** *Awarded: $15,000 (50 students)*

Cove High School will use grant funds to help launch a Farm to Child Program incorporated into the Cove High School Agricultural Facility. Specifically, the main focus areas for the project is to raise meat animals and fall harvested plants at the agricultural facility to be used in their school cafeteria. The goal would be to (1) implement holistic growing practices including utilizing cafeteria waste as animal feed/compost, (2) producing high quality meats, fruits, and vegetables, (3) and providing relevant work experience and education for high school students. Grant funds would be used to pay for student labor, necessary animal equipment, and other associated costs.

**Columbia City Elem, St Helens** *Awarded: $15,000 (200 students)*

Columbia City’s grant proposal aims to transform a vacant area on their school grounds into a vibrant, educational oasis - a pollinator garden featuring native plant species alongside an outdoor classroom. This initiative seeks to engage students, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the unique ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest. In creating a pollinator garden and outdoor classroom, this initiative aspires to cultivate not only a beautiful natural space but also a deep-rooted connection between students and the environment. Through experiential learning and community involvement, they aim to inspire a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship, ensuring a brighter, greener future for the Pacific Northwest.

**Dufur SD** *Awarded: $15,000 (80 students)*

The project overview and goal for this grant is to make necessary repairs to the electrical supply in the existing greenhouse and install an exposed irrigation system inside said greenhouse. These items will help make the existing greenhouse more functional for the use of plant starts by students in the farm to school program. Project also includes revitalization of existing raised beds and installation of new raised garden beds, outside/ by high school Farm to School students/ for the use of elementary students to learn how and to also grow produce for consumption.

**Jefferson County SD** *Awarded: $14,985 (360 students)*

Jefferson County Middle School is dedicated to providing their students with the tools and knowledge needed to create a healthier future for themselves and their community. They are deeply committed to enhancing their agricultural and culinary programs, which play a crucial role in instilling valuable life skills and promoting well-being. Their overarching goals are to encourage independence and provide an education that centers around nutritious food, sustainable farming practices, and culinary education.

**Jewell SD** *Awarded: $15,000 (132 students)*

Jewell School District will replenish their current garden with new compost and amendments. Some additions of berry plants, fruit trees, and seeds would be incorporated. They have an unused courtyard in the middle of their school that is 60x47 feet where they will build 25 raised beds and fill them with food and flowers to make access to the garden a little easier for the elementary students.

**Josephine Co. Food Bank** *Awarded: $15,000 (339 students)*

Josephine county Food Bank supports, revitalizes, and commits to continued partnership with Fleming Middle School’s garden, nutritional tastings, field trips to Raptor Creek Farm and garden to backpack food pantry collaboration.

**Kairos PDX** Awarded: $14,783 (247 students)

This project supports KairosPDX Student Leaders and their families to gain experience and knowledge in planting, harvesting, and cooking healthy foods. Their community, which consists of a majority of Black families, comes from a variety of backgrounds with some living in food deserts and many facing systemic racial barriers to education as well as access to farmland and fresh food. In order to support their community learning about Black-led food systems and the possibilities therein, KairosPDX will offer education and hands-on instruction that demystifies the process of growing food to students and families.

**Ladd Acres Elem, Hillsboro** *Awarded: $15,000 (414 students)*

Ladd Acres Garden Club at Ladd Acres Elementary serves 414 students in the Hillsboro School district with farm to school education, farm visits, grow produce, tasting tables and garden based common core guideline education. The school partners with Keep Growing Seeds to provide culturally relevant focused activities and expert school garden stewardship throughout the year.

**Mosier Community School** *Awarded: $15,000 (160 students)*

The Mosier Community School (MCS) is K-8 public charter school located in the Columbia River Gorge. Their school mission is to foster independent learning and citizenship in partnership with and for the benefit of their community. Students will become global citizens who analyze their world in a critical and equitable manner, while respecting the richness and diversity of all living things. The proposed project will rehabilitate and expand a neglected school garden space to create a rich learning environment for students and teachers and support their school core values of differentiated instruction and multi-disciplinary learning.

**Newby Elem, McMinnville** *Awarded: $14,981 (462 students)*

Newby’s mission is to create a connection between their food and their community. This grant will establish their school garden. With the garden, we have community nights and classes planned for families to participate in their harvest and the establishment of their garden committee.

**Rainier SD** *Awarded: $15,000 (884 students)*

Rainier School District will be working collaboratively across grade levels to support Farm to Child Nutrition Program activities in the classrooms. Their high school Agriculture students will go into elementary classrooms to teach about Farm to Table with lessons from Ag in the Classroom. The high school English department is going to do writing projects about how to plant seeds and a Lawn to Table research project for students to learn about how to grow their own food and giving students an opportunity to learn what works best for growing. At the elementary school level, they will provide books for all students talking about farm to school topics, have cooking demos in classrooms, and some classrooms will hatch chickens. Students will have many Farm to Child Nutrition Program experiences over the course of the two-year grant cycle.

**Rogue Primary, Central Point** Awarded: $12,550 (150 students)

Rogue Primary School prioritizes early education on nutrition and gardening, recognizing the impact on lifelong habits. Their nutrition staff emphasizes locally sourced products for healthy and innovative meals, supporting both students and the community. Farm field trips and a tasting table program provide students with firsthand experiences of local food systems. With this grant, they aim to sustain and grow their garden education and procurement programs, ensuring a continued focus on student health and hands-on learning. Their commitment extends to fostering a connection between students and the broader community through sustainable practices.

**Rose City Elem, Portland** *Awarded: $14,967 (470 students)*

Since 2020, the Rose City Park (RCP) school community has established and maintained a school garden that is thoughtfully integrated into the school’s curriculum and programs. Grow Portland’s monthly garden education program has become an integral part of the school day and now—as home to Oregon’s only Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion elementary school—RCP wants to extend the garden into the lunchroom to foster deeper understanding of Vietnamese culture and language through food. With this grant, the RCP community and partners will kick off a monthly tasting event in the school cafeteria using produce grown in the garden while also working with a Vietnamese-American farmer and local Vietnamese-American chefs to bring culturally relevant produce and cuisine to students. This program will create much-needed representation in the lunchroom, foster a sense of belonging, and nurture a love for nutritious foods as students grow produce and take part in the tasting experience together.

**Russell Elem, Portland** *Awarded: $14,120 (200 students)*

Russell is in the heart of the Parkrose School District and one of the most diverse Title 1 schools in the nation. They have spent years relying on volunteers to build a garden and support teachers, and a year of educating enthusiastic K-5 SUN students in the garden, and have found we need further assistance to take their school garden to the next level and transform it into an engaging outdoor classroom! Once they’ve expanded their garden, they will use hands-on educational activities, community workshops, and work parties to educate and support their school community with student education on fresh food; especially on the fundamentals of growing food and their place in the ecosystem. They will hire qualified and seasoned garden educators with a love for helping kids and the community to thrive through gardening and fresh, healthy food.

**Salem Keizer SD**  *Awarded: $10,000 (140 students)*

The North Salem High School (NSHS) Garden Leadership Project’s goal is to improve and maintain the NSHS Garden by engaging youth in self-directed garden related education and leadership projects. Student leaders will learn how to grow healthy foods and share what they learn about and grow with their family and community.

**Sauvie Island School, Scappoose** Awarded: $15,000 (216 students)

Sauvie Island School (SIS) is a rural charter school located in the middle of an agricultural community that is free to attend for students in a three-county area. SIS utilizes a place-based learning philosophy that is based on using the local environment and community as much as possible. Their small school lacks the capacity to develop a comprehensive Garden/Nutrition Curriculum and conduct strategic outreach to the many farms and agriculture programs who are ready and willing to partner with us. They are seeking financial support for a part-time Nutrition Coordinator who will support expansion of the existing school garden and nutrition curriculum to incorporate healthier foods. The Nutrition Coordinator will incorporate fresh produce from local farms into the school lunch menu, build relationships with local farmers, develop a Nutrition Plan that includes a Harvest Calendar and Recipe Book, and support classroom teachers as they add gardening and nutrition lessons into their daily curriculum.

**Seed to Table OR, Sisters** *Awarded: $15,000 (550 students)*

In collaboration with School District and Sisters Elementary School staff, Seed to Table Oregon will provide 550 second-fifth grade students with hands-on classroom and farm-based experiential education. Classroom education starts with interactive cooking with farm vegetables and transitions to science-based education about growing processes for food production. Students and teachers then participate in two 90-minute farm field trips. At the farm, Seed to Table’s Farm Educators provide a safe and interactive learning environment that engages the student’s interests and fosters an inclusive learning environment. Lessons are based on Next Generation Science Standards to build student experiences that create positive relationships with fresh foods.

**Sitton Elem, Portland** *Awarded: $5,306 (345 students)*

Sitton Elementary School aims to provide school garden-to-classroom experiences for all of their pre-K - 5th graders. They have had one year of successfully growing vegetables, fruits, and herbs in a 100'x30' garden space at the school and have successfully gotten every class out for a garden lesson two to three times. This grant would provide seating, more tools, and better ADA accessibility for garden lessons, supplies to cook the produce in-class, and field trips for one grade level to visit a large, educational farm for a lesson there. The garden will serve as a point of connection for the many diverse groups in their neighborhood that comprise their Sitton community.

**McBride Elem, St Helens** *Awarded: $15,000 (500 students)*

“Muddy Mustangs” is a gardening program that is dedicated to building a self-sustaining school-based garden. Fruits and vegetables will be harvested and enjoyed by students to aid in increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables. The Muddy Mustangs is run by the Structured Intermediate Learning Centers, a self-contained special education classroom at McBride Elementary School. However, the gardens, produce, and pollinators are also shared with classrooms throughout McBride Elementary School. Their goal is to educate students about the joys and benefits of agriculture, gardening and eating home grown healthy foods.

**St Helens HS** *Awarded: $14,700 (1,260 students)*

St Helens High School will improve the capacity and utilization of their greenhouse and school garden. This will be done by purchasing essential supplies and materials for the Horticulture, Culinary, and Natural Resources courses/programs to renovate and revitalize the existing greenhouse and raised garden beds. By putting time, supplies, and care back into these areas that have gone largely unused since COVID, students and faculty will work together to recreate a thriving garden that connects students to the environment, builds their understanding of where their meals come from, and provides food materials for the student culinary program to use in their cooking. By having students participate in the full farm-to-table process with their peers and teachers, they will expand their sense of ownership over their nutrition as well as supporting and being part of a community.

**The Village School, Eugene** *Awarded: $14,981 (225 students)*

This project will provide engaging, evidence-based learning opportunities for all students to learn more about Oregon foods and food production. Their school community will expand its understanding of local agricultural practices and products through gardening classes, farm field trips, local foods presentations and samplings. These experiences will strengthen the connections between local growers and producers and their school community.

**Tiicham Conservation District, Pendleton** *Awarded: $15,000 (120 students)*

The project will provide Early Childhood Education staff professional development opportunities to learn traditional ecological knowledge of identifying, harvesting, and preparation of First Foods. This will provide staff with the experience and exposure to incorporate First Foods into the curriculum at the Nixyaawii Education Center and be shared with the families served through the ECE programs. Emphasis will be placed on critical seasonal rotation and sustainable harvesting practices. The project is intended to expand opportunities for students through 8 years old.

**Trails Outdoor School, Ashland** *Awarded: $13,980 (110 students)*

TRAILS will contract with Rogue Valley Farm to School non-profit. Their mission is to educate children about their food through hands on projects. For Trails this will include tasting tables, field trips to local farms, food preparation. This will also include monthly Evidence Based nutrition/Agricultural curriculum/lessons for students k-5. They will work with the nutrition director to continue to source local ingredients and use recipes provided by RVFM for school lunches.

**Wild Lilac Child Devel Ctr, Portland** *Awarded: $4,593 (120 students)*

This project will seek to further the enrichment of their year-round garden program and its connection to their food program, by renovating a defunct greenhouse into an outdoor classroom space. This will allow them to better support children's continued learning outdoors, deepen the relationships they have to their outdoor environments, and strengthen their involvement with all stages of growing the food they eat at school. Other aspects of this project include revitalizing their old, but functional greenhouse with new planting tables, so that children can more readily take part in seed starting and plant care, purchasing a large capacity food dehydrator for classrooms to take part in food preservation, as well as a more robust inventory of basic but essential, developmentally-appropriate tools that can be made available to children during weekly garden learning groups. The improvement of these spaces and the addition of resources will allow children of all ages to connect more wholeheartedly and creatively and to participate more autonomously in all aspects of the weekly, monthly, seasonal work of maintaining a large seasonal garden habitat, from the basic chores, to the deeper project work, and all the way to the meal tables.

**Willamina SD** *Awarded: $14,642 (875 students)*

Willamina school district will conduct a farmer’s market for kids in the fall and spring on school grounds. Farmer’s markets incorporating local farmers will be created to allow children to purchase food for their families. The markets will be designed to provide students with a unique and invaluable hands-on learning experience. Through the farmer’s market, they not only learn about the importance of local farmers, farming practices and healthy eating habits, but also gain money-handling skills, gardening, cooking and geography skills through the purchase of local foods, cooking demonstrations, planting demonstrations and mapping activities. The fall market will feature fresh, local fruits and vegetables for students to purchase for their families. The spring market will feature spring fruits and vegetables as well as seeds and seedlings for students to purchase and learn to plant at home. All attending students and community members will also receive a garden and cooking based activity book compiled of evidence-based worksheets and activity materials. Students will also receive a tote bag to carry their purchases home in.

**Woodland Charter, Grants Pass** *Awarded: $15,000 (205 students)*

Woodland Charter School will grow its existing gardening program by integrating evidence-based education materials into a spring/fall Friday program for students, and a summer program for students, families, and the greater Woodland community. They will begin year-round garden education and maintenance with these out-of-school time initiatives and develop a comprehensive volunteer program to sustain a vibrant garden into the future. They will purchase supplies to arm their students for, and feed them from, the garden. They will invite local experts from their rural, agricultural valley to provide guidance in food production, permaculture, and regionally specific sustainable practices. This expanded program will empower their students and the greater Woodland community (through partnerships with local farms and their OSU extension service) with a hands-on understanding that nutrient dense, fresh foods are delicious, simple to grow, and vital for the health of their environment and themselves.

**Woodstock School**, **Portland** *Awarded: $15,000 (450 students)*

The Woodstock School will partner with Grow Portland to teach monthly garden-and-food-based lessons to 450 students. The teachers and community have built a beautiful school garden over the last 6 years, and 10 teachers teach in the garden, but hiring a professional garden education through Grow Portland will result in double the number of students learning in the garden. This expansion will include the 5 Chinese Mandarin immersion classrooms to also utilize the garden fully, highlight culturally relevant plants and culinary traditions. All students will be able to taste garden produce in the cafeteria in coordination with Nutrition Services and engage in community service through harvesting for a neighborhood food pantry. With this funding they will ensure that all students will have equitable access to a high-quality garden education that is inclusive, culturally responsive, and hands-on.

**YMCA Walla Walla** *Awarded: $12,809 (70 students)*

The garden project program provides children ages 3-12 with hands-on experiential learning about food and nutrition by engaging them in a STEM-based classroom curriculum coupled with hands-on outdoor gardening activities designed to foster appreciation for the land and nature, while building teamwork and inclusion. Through the garden project students take part in a daily outdoor program where they learn firsthand about fruit and vegetable food origins from seeds and starts, study the seasons and when to plant, learn to soil test, fertilize, and record or share their observations of a root viewing system. Students engage in ongoing gardening activities including transplanting, watering, composting, weed management, pruning, pest management, harvesting and food preparation and tasting. The program includes field trips to farms and farmers markets and guest speakers on nutrition with the goal of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and producing sufficient food to share with families.