



State of the States in Farm to School

Three State Farm to School Strategies

The farm to school movement has grown from a handful of schools in the late 1990s to over 42,000 schools in all 50 states, D.C., and U.S. Territories, and expanded to 1,516 preschools in school districts across 49 states.¹ Responding to the rapid growth and interest in farm to school, the National Farm to School Network's 2017-2019 Strategic Plan prioritizes building the capacity of its partners to advance farm to school at the state² level through three complementary strategies:

State farm to school networks

State farm to school positions

State farm to school policies

These three strategies mirror demonstrated strategies of successful growth at the national level, and are tailored to the state level.

Resources for Implementing the State Strategies

To support these efforts, the National Farm to School Network (NFSN) has developed an accompanying resource for each of the three strategies:

- [State Farm to School Networks Toolkit](#) (updated March 2019)
- [State Farm to School Positions Guide](#) (updated February 2019)
- [State Farm to School Policy Handbook](#) (updated April 2019)

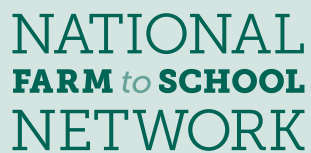
Additionally, during 2017-2019, NFSN is supporting 13 states and 1 territory – collectively “Level 2” states³ – to design and implement Strategic Action Plans with goals targeted at implementing one, two, or all three of the strategies.

Two years into the current NFSN Strategic Plan, NFSN presents the **State of the States in Farm to School**: a look at states' progress towards implementing the three strategies.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). The Farm to School Census. Retrieved March 22, 2018, from <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/>

² The National Farm to School Network includes states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Whenever the term “state” is used generically, it is intended to include the 50 states, D.C., and the territories.

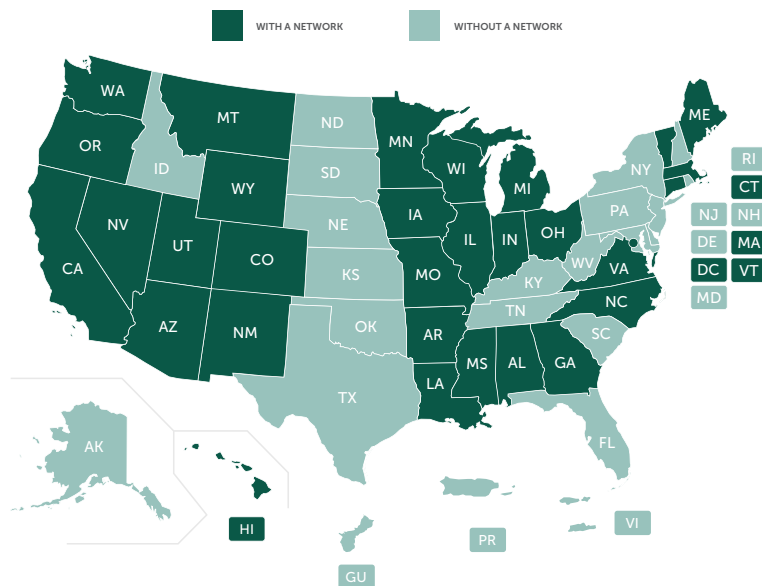
³ NFSN's 2017-2019 “Level 2” states are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, South Dakota, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Wyoming.



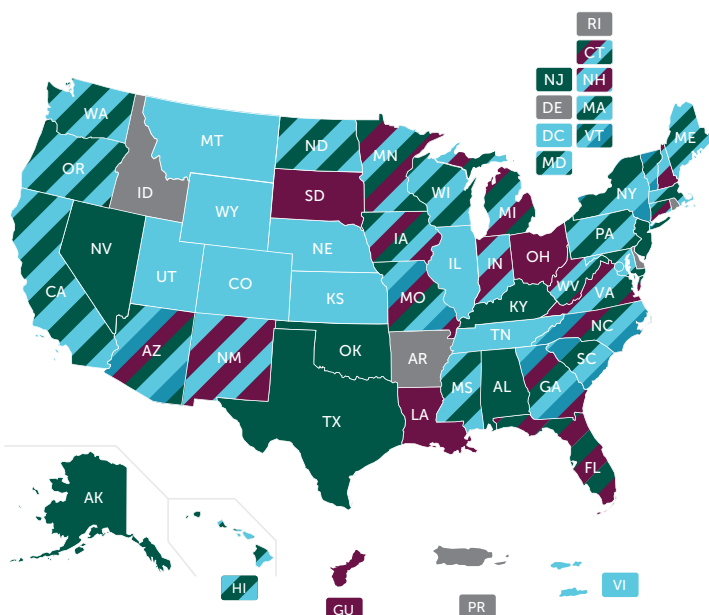
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Mirroring NFSN's success in growing the farm to school movement at the national level through collaborative network building, farm to school networks have been vital to the growth and institutionalization of farm to school at the state level. State farm to school networks are key to bringing together diverse sectors and stakeholders and creating a united voice and set of priorities to propel the movement. In states across the country, farm to school networks leverage membership to create awareness about and interest in farm to school, spearhead advocacy to advance farm to school legislation, and secure funding for farm to school positions and activities. From coast to coast, state networks are building momentum for farm to school and expanding farm to school activities. As of April 2019, 31 states have a farm to school network.

WITH A NETWORK WITHOUT A NETWORK



DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE	DEPT. OF HEALTH	DEPT. OF EDUCATION	UNIVERSITY EXTENSION	NO KNOWN STATE AGENCY OR UNIVERSITY EXTENSION POSITIONS
1	1	1	1	1



As the farm to school movement has grown, so too has the need and opportunity for increased leadership and coordination that state agency and university Extension engagement can offer. In response to this growing demand for farm to school guidance and direction setting, many states have created coordinator positions – housed in state agencies or university Extension offices – to support farm to school activities and relationships, and to guide statewide movement building.

In addition to offering state level leadership and coordination, many state agency and Extension positions provide training, technical assistance, and non-formal educational programs to facilitate farm to school implementation. With a devoted position and committed staff time, farm to school activities and statewide network development can flourish.



State Farm to School Positions, continued

Established positions make farm to school initiatives more visible, prevalent, and cohesive across a state. Many positions provide multi-level support, not only growing state level capacity and commitment to farm to school but also offering programming and resources for ground level implementation. State farm to school positions can also be key in propelling forward other state level approaches by providing support for state level advocacy and spearheading state farm to school networks.

In total, across the U.S., there are 155 farm to school positions (part-time and full-time), 96 in state agencies and 59 in university Extension offices. Of the 155 farm to school positions:

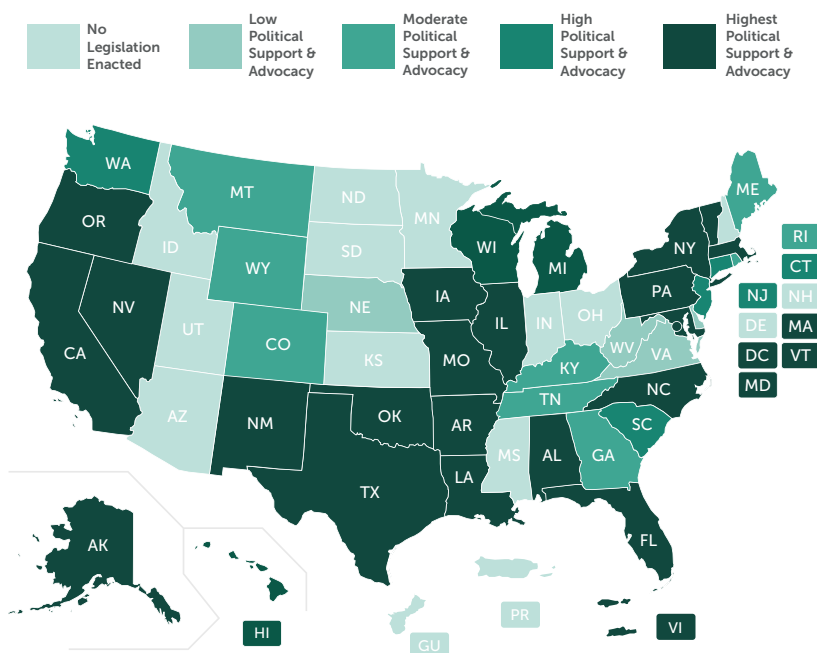
- 40 (25.80%) are in Departments of Agriculture,
- 38 (24.51%) are in Departments of Education,
- 14 (9.03%) are in Departments of Health,
- 2 (1.29%) are in Departments of Social/Human Services,
- 1 (0.64%) is in a Department of Children and Families,
- 1 (0.64%) is in a Department of Environmental Conservation, and
- 59 (38.06%) are in university Extension offices.

Of the agency positions, 29 are full-time farm to school and of the university Extension positions, 19 are full-time farm to school.

State Farm to School Policies

Various federal policies support farm to school. This support is limited, however, and thus it is important to know about opportunities for states to create additional policies to strengthen farm to school efforts. Lawmakers recognize the myriad benefits of farm to school, and the overall increase in state farm to school legislation has bolstered the expansion of farm to school activity across the country. In 2012, a [study](#) published in the Journal of School Health concluded that there is a causal relationship between the rise in state laws requiring or encouraging farm to school and the rise in state farm to school programs. Simply put, strong laws facilitate strong programs.

Map of State Farm to School Policies





State Farm to School Policies, continued

Different types of farm to school legislation require varying levels of political support and advocacy to pass successfully. Each jurisdiction is unique in terms of the social, fiscal, and political factors that may impact the relative ease or difficulty with which a bill may pass. However, bills that authorize an expenditure of funds generally require more political support (and therefore greater advocacy efforts) to pass. Within funding bills, those that appropriate funding annually may be easier to generate support for than those that authorize permanent funding year after year. These permanently funded programs are the gold standard for farm to school policy. As of December 2018, 46 states, D.C., and two U.S. territories have passed laws supporting farm to school activities, and of those 25 states have passed comprehensive farm to school legislation, which means the legislation includes funded grant programs, funded coordinator positions, or funded local procurement incentives.

State of the States in Farm to School

While advancement in any one of these strategies is a strong step toward state level farm to school advancement, the three strategies work synergistically for the most impactful growth. A select number of states have fully implemented all three strategies:

- The state has a farm to school network,
- The state has at least one full-time farm to school position (state agency or university Extension), and
- The state has at least one funded farm to school policy for a grant program, coordinator position, or incentive program.

The following states have successfully done so, and are celebrated and elevated for these accomplishments:

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Hawai'i
- Iowa
- Michigan
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- Oregon
- Washington, D.C.
- Wisconsin

Map of States Successfully Implementing the Three Strategies

