



Farmer Connections

How to Start the Conversation

Serving local foods through CACFP is a powerful way to support children's nutrition while strengthening your community. Building relationships with farmers may feel unfamiliar at first, but it doesn't have to be complicated. Before you get started, make sure you prepare for outreach and understand how to start conversations with farmers. Remember, you don't need to have everything figured out to begin. Starting small and building connections is what matters most.

Understand Your Needs

Before you reach out to a local farmer, you should first figure out what the needs of your program are and your staff's capacity to handle local foods.

Know Your Program Needs

- » What foods are you looking for?
- » How much do you need? Small weekly orders or larger bulk purchases?
- » How often do you want deliveries or pickups?
- » How much do you have in your budget that can go towards local purchasing?

Assess Your Capacity

- » How much storage space do you have? How can you store food (refrigeration, freezer, dry storage)?
- » Does your staff have time to prepare local foods?
- » Does your staff have the skills to prepare local foods or is more training needed?
- » Is pick-up required? If so, consider timing and order size.



Find a Local Farmer

Small farms can be a great fit for CACFP operators because they typically offer smaller order sizes, more flexibility, and work directly with you to meet your needs.

You can find your local farmer at localharvest.org.

