



Food System Economic Partnership

“ FSEP exists to catalyze change that results in vibrant and sustainable food economies in communities across southeast Michigan.”

Technical Assistance – Farm to Table Programs

Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP) provides technical assistance to farmers and institutional buyers in southeast Michigan. As part of our work, we build partnerships between urban and rural communities that promote economic development opportunities for farmers and support healthy environments for residents of the communities we serve and their families. Our technical assistance for farm to table programs in the region includes the following:

In the Cafeteria

- Work with food service directors to identify the barriers, challenges and opportunities to starting farm to school programs or farm to table programs.
- Work with food service directors to develop a district specific farm to table program that meets their needs and abilities within the kitchen, budget and institutional environment.
- Assist food service directors in connecting to farmers in their region who will be able to supply the type of produce they desire to purchase.
- Facilitate relationship development between food service directors and farmers and continue to foster and support sustainable partnerships.
- Create mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships between school districts, institutions, food service directors, producers, processors and distributors of locally grown food.
- Work with food service director to develop a system for local food procurement that can be self maintaining and sustainable.
- Work with school food service director to develop relationships within the school district and broader community to develop a support structure for a farm to school program.
- Develop outreach materials for farm to table programs that include: posters depicting the farmers and information about the farmers; posters depicting the fruit or vegetable highlighted on local food day and information about the produce item, typical availability, etc.; posters promoting farm to table program; table tents that share information on the farm to table program; website development and support; etc.
- Assist food service director in developing programming that will increase consumption of fresh, healthy foods through the cafeteria meals program. Work with food service director to increase awareness of local food and agriculture by providing supportive materials and outreach.

In the Community

- Work with farmers to identify challenges, barriers and opportunities to participating in a farm to table program in their community.
- Work with farmers to develop and expand their current operation to meet the demands of institutional buyers for farm to table programs.
- Develop local food systems that allow for the production, distribution and consumption of locally grown foods.
- Create and host workshops on various aspects of selling to institutions and buying from farmers.
- Outreach and engage parents, teachers, students, community members and organizations in farm to table project goals and objectives.
- Facilitate the development of partnerships between community organizations and the institutional buyer to support farm to table programs.
- Outreach to community to develop cadre of volunteers that will work to support farm to school programs in the school district.
- Promote institutional buyers farm to table efforts by writing newsletters, posting on blog sites, distributing press releases, sharing information via listserves and outreaching at events in the community.

In the Classroom

- Facilitate educational activities and promotions associated with the farm to school programs in the classroom at all grade levels.
- Work with teachers and parent groups to organize and support farmer/chef classroom visit programs for K-12.
- Provide educational programming that highlights local foods served in farm to table meals and makes connections between local food, agriculture, and health of our students, environment and community.
- Provide information on school garden development and programming to interested teachers, parents and community members.
- Utilize existing communication methods such as parent newsletters, student communications, announcements, etc. to raise awareness of farm to table program.
- Identify existing programming and community groups working within the classroom/school setting and encourage the inclusion of local food lessons, discussions on seasonality and foster support of farm to school program through various avenues.