

Support **FARM TO SCHOOL** and **EARLY CARE** in Minnesota with **SF 1559**



Farm to School and Early Care connect Minnesota farmers and kids by including local food in kids' meals and teaching them about agriculture through hands-on activities. **Purchasing local food supports MN Farmers.** MDA's Farm to School and Early Care grant program reimburses schools and early cares for purchases made from local farmers and supports equipment purchases so more schools can prepare farm fresh whole foods.

SF 1559 adds permissive language to allow MDA to use state Farm to School funds to administer expected incoming federal funding for Farm to School & Early Care.

- MDA's grant program is currently funded at \$1.14M/year in state funding, but **demand for this support is consistently greater than available funding.**
- MDA recently signed a "Local Food for Schools (LFS) Cooperative Agreement with USDA to receive \$13.2M over 3 years, representing a huge increase in funding to MDA's Farm to School & Early Care grant. This funding must be used only for local food purchases for K12 and early care meals, and does not include any percentage for administration.
- SF 1559 adds permissive language that will allow MDA to administer the increased funding. The rest of the funding would support grants.
- **Farmers are scaling up to take advantage of these funds, and increased funding is vital for farmers to rely on this critical market and make their own investments to scale to wholesale markets.** As of September 2024, grantees have used FY23 funds to purchase from 437 producers, including meat, dairy, grain, fruit and vegetable growers around the state.



➔ **Economic impact of FY2021 MDA Farm to School grants in Minnesota:**
Every dollar spent on Farm to School generates an **additional \$1 of economic activity.**¹



"Farm to school is not only great for the students but has become a key part of our business model. ... The best part as a farmer is knowing our healthier meats are helping kids learn, grow and understand what they are eating!"

— Steve Reis, Farmer and Owner of Eden Valley Wagyu

This bill will leverage our existing level of state support to access significant federal support, resulting in a huge increase in funding for MDA's popular Farm to School & Early Care grant without new costs to Minnesota. Farm to School and Early Care initiatives enhance the well-being of Minnesota kids, empower local farmers and create a positive economic impact.

Farm to School & Early Care: good for kids, good for farmers and good for communities.

1. <https://www.iatp.org/documents/mda-farm-school-grant-evaluation>

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Learn more at www.FarmToSchoolMN.org and
www.FarmToEarlyCareMN.org

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