

# Advancing Farm to School: Lessons from the Field



## Case Studies and Strategies for Successful Farm to School Programs

By Carrie Sedlak, in Collaboration with  
Wisconsin Community Transformation Grant Recipients



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## About this Resource

In 2011, fourteen organizations in Wisconsin received US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding, as distributed through the Wisconsin Clearinghouse, to increase access to healthy food systems in their regions (see italicized section below for more information). Community Transformation Grant recipients were asked to prioritize farm to school as the main strategy for achieving healthy food systems access and obesity prevention. The development of secondary strategies, including community gardens and farmers markets, were also encouraged.

Each of the fourteen communities started work under the Transformation grant in very different places, ranging from having just started farm to school efforts to already having an entire branch of a non-profit devoted to farm to school. Throughout the duration of the grant period, each community built and strengthened their farm to school program in distinct and innovative ways, based on unique community assets and coalitions. This resource attempts to capture and communicate many of the valuable lessons learned throughout this multi-county capacity building process.

The information in this guide was gathered through nearly thirty interviews with grant coordinators and key partners from each county. Each interview was transcribed and then separated and categorized by topic, so that the “lessons learned” portion of the chapters could be informed by the experience of all fourteen communities. Interviews were conducted in the summer and early fall of 2014, and the resource was written and assembled between the summer and spring of 2014-2015.

Each chapter of *Lessons from the Field* contains grantee-focused case studies, a series of distilled “lessons learned”, and a resource section that highlights those tools and resources that were highly recommended by both community members and experts in the field.

This resource was created in fulfillment of a graduate Capstone project in the Departments of Public Health and Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## Supporting Partners:



CENTER for INTEGRATED  
AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS



Cover photo: Edgerton Community Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade students planting raised beds (Rock County Farm to School)

*The Community Transformation Grant, awarded in the fall of 2011 by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, seeks to build community capacity to prevent chronic disease. In Wisconsin, funds are being used to support communities as they pursue evidence-based strategies to prevent obesity through food system work and physical activity, reduce tobacco use, and improve screening for high blood pressure and cholesterol. Wisconsin's initiative focuses in particular on changing systems and policies that create opportunities for all Wisconsinites to make healthy choices easier.*

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The fourteen grantee organizations are as follows:

Columbia County Local Foods Collaboration, re:TH!NK Winnebago's Healthy Living Partnership, Healthy People of Kenosha County, LaCrosse Healthy Living Collaboration, Healthiest Manitowoc County, Marathon County, Live54218, Driftless Wisconsin Grown, REAP Food Group, Monroe County Schools on the Go, Vernon County Farm to School, Central Rivers Farmshed, Transform Rock County, Get Active Wood County

