AFSC New Mexico’s Farm to School project is an effort to create a replicable model for school food procurement that supports local producers for sourcing fresh, healthy produce for school children.

This project was initiated to direct public funds to schools to purchase food produced by local farmers, prioritizing beginner farmers in training.

**OUR MOTTO:**

Kids win when farmers and schools **work together**

**The Farm to School program** is essential because without resources specifically set aside for locally sourced produce, schools would not be able to afford to provide fresh, and often culturally appropriate, food for students.

**FOR SCHOOLS**

While many schools want to provide fresh produce grown by local farmers—often in their own community and by parents and grandparents of students—schools have very limited budgets and cannot afford the true cost of fresh food. Instead, they must rely on heavily subsidized industrial agricultural product for their students.

**FOR FARMS**

Additionally, when farmers have an institutional market they can rely on, they have better chances of remaining economically viable, especially during the off season, when schools are in session. These benefits were especially needed for beginner farmers in training, who are prioritized in this funding.

**FARMER TESTIMONIAL**

I grew up in beautiful small town located in Northern New Mexico, Chamisal. My family has been here for nine generations. Years ago, I was fortunate to be picked by AFSC to learn farming...They taught all the basics of farming, like how to till, transplant, harvest, and make sales. Through the years AFSC has been great at finding funds for local schools to purchase organic, traditional, and local food from farmers. We sold to Española elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as Taos. They bought a variety of things.

When school is in season we do plant things that they need. I think it’s a big help to the cafeteria workers as well. They were always pleased and excited to see fresh produce that’s great in quality. Working with them was always very delightful and easy.

[afsc.org/FarmtoSchool]
The importance of continuing our program

In 2015, AFSC successfully advocated for our state legislature to allot monies to the “Expand New Mexico-Grown Produce in School Lunches” program. The school districts involved purchase locally-grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and traditional foods. The majority of the 30,000 students in these districts qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs, and the majority are students of color.

It is important for AFSC and the farmers we work with to make food accessible to all people, not just those who can afford local, organic food. The USDA has long offered subsidies to agribusinesses growing corn and soy with unsustainable practices, but there are far fewer subsidies for small organic farmers. We are proud of the New Mexico state government for making it possible for local farmers to get their fresh, nourishing crops to local school kids. Not only does this program support nutrition, local economies, and food system resiliency, it also supports the food culture of New Mexico.

In addition to fresh produce, the only processed foods that the schools can buy through the program are traditional foods such as frozen green chile, red chile powder, pinto beans, and blue cornmeal. These are crops that have been grown here for centuries. The name of the AFSC New Mexico program is People of the Land, and these crops are essential to that land. As more of these crops are grown in Mexico or elsewhere, supporting our local farms is vital to keeping our food culture alive and place-based.

Where we connect farms to schools

We have worked with a total of seven school districts in six counties.

**SCHOOLS**

1. **Taos County**
   - Taos Municipal Schools

2. **Mora County**
   - Wagon Mound Public Schools

3. **Sandoval County**
   - San Diego Riverside Charter School, Jemez Pueblo

4. **Rio Arriba County**
   - Española Public Schools

5. **Bernalillo County**
   - Mark Armijo Academy
   - South Valley Preparatory School

6. **Doña Ana County**
   - Las Cruces Public Schools

**FARMS & SMALL FARMER CO-OPERATIVES**

7. **Chamisal**
8. **Espanola**
9. **Albuquerque**
10. **Anthony**
11. **Las Cruces**
12. **Deming**
13. **Velarde**
For the first time we are able to provide our families with healthy, fresh, organic, fruits and vegetables. Crops purchased this spring included beets, turnips, butterhead lettuce, chive onions, carrots, asparagus, radishes, cilantro, basil, and parsley. Students’ favorites included carrots, turnips, and beets. The quality of food was excellent; the families commented and the students were amazed at the size of some items. There were no issues reaching farmers; as a school we would like to expand our vendors to other farmers in northern NM as well as surrounding areas. They were always pleased and excited to see fresh produce that’s great in quality. Working with AFSC was always very delightful and easy.

—DANA FLORES
Mark Armijo Academy

How to support our program

To learn more about ways to support us please visit

afsc.org/FarmtoSchool

About us

Started in 1976, AFSC’s New Mexico People of the Land Program works to revitalize small, sustainable farms throughout the state, thereby protecting culture, natural land, water resources, and jobs, while improving the health of New Mexico’s children and their communities. We provided farmer to farmer training programs in Albuquerque, Espanola, and Anthony, NM. We build infrastructure for small family farms around the state, including 35 passive solar coldframes and five walk-in coolers. We also incubate farmer cooperatives and have built a network of small-scale family farms across the state and tribes.

As part of our motto “Kids win when farmers and schools work together,” we have managed a Farm to School program for seven years and a Farm to Early Childhood Education Center for six years.