



# Farm to Summer Campaign Toolkit

Created by the Iowa Farm to School  
and Early Care Coalition  
**April 2022**

# Overview of Toolkit Resources



## **Iowa's Farm to Summer Campaign Overview**

Coalition partners in Iowa hosted an annual farm to summer campaign from 2018-2022. History regarding the project and partners is shared in this section.

## **Downloadable Campaign Resources**

Five years of Farm to Summer Campaign resources – posters, banners, and community newsletters are available for reference and download in this section.

## **Recommended Community Partnerships**

Based on learning throughout Iowa's five farm to summer campaigns (years 2018-2022), partnership recommendations for a strong campaign are offered in this section.

## **Statewide Campaign Planning & Timeline**

Resources and recommendations for sequencing annual campaign activities for statewide organizers are explained in this section.

## **For Sites: Campaign Planning & Timeline**

Resources and recommendations for sequencing annual campaign activities for community-based campaign hosts are explained in this section.

## **Best Practices: Local Procurement for Summer Meals**

Best practices for sourcing local food, finding technical assistance to support local food procurement, and considerations for purchasing local products are listed here.

## **Evaluation Resources**

This section provides links to evaluation templates and evaluation reports from Iowa's Farm to Summer Campaigns (years 2018-2022).

# Iowa's Farm to Summer Campaign Overview

## History of Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign

The Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign has been in operation since 2018. Offering funding, technical assistance for local procurement, consultation for hands-on food education, and promotional materials, this program supports engagement and partnership development between community organizations, schools, early care and education organizations, and local farmers by way of summer meal programs. Five years of partnership with summer meal sites participating in the statewide campaign has facilitated great and growing interest in local food initiatives during summer months, and beyond. As of 2022, five years of campaign materials exist and will be utilized on an annual, rotating basis.



## Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign Partners

Behind the scenes, five statewide organizations – all members of the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition- have partnered to operate the program, each holding unique roles and responsibilities. Through collaboration and adaptive contribution, partners have been responsive to participant feedback and have consistently improved program offerings.

Annually, partners learn and define the scope of the Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign immediately following the previous campaign. Attention to community needs, local food procurement practices and farmer partnerships are prioritized. There is shared recognition across partners of the need to institutionalize the Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign and develop a sustainable fundraising model to support campaign participants consistently and annually.

## Enhanced Participation and Community Impact

The number of applications submitted across the state has increased annually since 2018. With this, partners collaborate annually to find additional funding to support more sites. The table to the left shows the number of participating sites and dollars awarded annually.

Through annual post-campaign evaluations, Iowa partners have identified several positive outcomes of the statewide campaign, including:

- Increased participation and retention of youth
- New and innovative local partnerships
- Enhanced support for local food education and procurement
- Increased market opportunities for local farmers

## Annual Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign Figures

Campaign Year	Number of Participating Sites	Dollars Awarded	Youth Reached
2018	13 sites	\$1,950	760
2019	25 sites	\$3,750	1,850
2020	43 sites	\$6,2500	13,083
2021	85 sites	\$14,800	9,047
2022	Goal: 150 sites	Goal: \$30,000	Goal: 20,000

# Downloadable Campaign Resources

Click on the links below to download Iowa's Farm to Summer Campaign promotional materials- banners, posters, info pages.

## "Root with Radishes!"

2018 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2018 campaign resources here](#)



## "Snap into Snap Peas!"

2019 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2019 campaign resources here](#)



## "Crunch into Cucumbers!"

2020 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2020 campaign resources here](#)



## "Kick it with Carrots!"

2021 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2021 campaign resources here](#)



## "Let Us Eat Lettuce!"

[Link to 2022 campaign resources here](#)





# Recommended Community Partnerships

Whether you're a Summer Food Service Sponsor (SFSP) or providing summer meals as a community partner, partnerships are essential to hosting a successful farm to summer campaign. As has been reported every year in the Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign evaluation reports, new partnerships are a major outcome of participating in the campaigns, as site organizers look toward the broader community and innovative programming to enhance the summer meal site experience. The following list identifies recommended community partners with examples from Iowa.

## State Agencies

With a statewide audience, state agencies can support promotion directly to schools, summer nutrition program coordinators, and program-funded educators. State agencies may also serve as funders for annual mini-grants and promotional materials to local meal sites and organizers.

### Examples from Iowa

- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship: Farm to School, Specialty Crop Block Grant Programs
- Iowa Department of Education: Summer Food Service Program
- Iowa Department of Public Health: SNAP-Education, Pick A Better Snack

## Extension and Outreach

County Extension offices often hold existing relationships and connections to local schools and other programs supporting youth and families throughout the summer months. Many Extension agents (ex: County Youth Coordinators and 4H Program Coordinators) are trained lead agricultural lessons with youth, making them ideal partners for planning and leading local food education at summer meal sites. Additionally, Extension agents can often provide technical assistance for sourcing local food, a challenge identified by many participants in the Iowa Farm to Summer campaigns.

### Examples from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach:

- Local Food Coordinators and Local Food Coaches
- Human Sciences Specialists, Health and Nutrition
- Horticultural and Agricultural Educators



## Local Farmers, Markets, and Distributors

These folks are essential partners, for obvious reasons. Whether they're a source for local food, visiting a summer meal site to support education, or hosting youth for summer field trips, farmers put the 'farm' in a farm to summer campaign. In the summer, local food is in abundance and more affordable than other times of the year. This timing makes for great opportunities to pilot new recipes, distribution systems, and partnerships with local growers.

### Examples from Iowa

- Local Farmers Markets: Food for the summer meal site and associated programming can be purchased directly throughout the week or weekends from farmers at markets
- Food Hubs: Aggregators of food from many local farms, food hub coordinators make local procurement efficient and cost effective as they negotiate prices and manage delivery for both producers and buyers
- Partnerships with Individual Farmers: A great strategy for accessing a specialty crop, especially for smaller summer meal sites



## Summer Meal Site Sponsors

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) at the Federal level. State education agencies commonly administer the program at the state level, and partner with sponsors who manage food service programs on a local level. Sponsors- public or private schools, nonprofit organizations, camps, or local government bodies- are responsible for coordinating all financial and administrative duties and following FNS regulations. Partnerships with summer meal site sponsor staff are essential for local farm to summer campaigns, as they set service hours, purchase and prepare meals, coordinate volunteers, and hold relationships with meal site attendees.

### Examples from Iowa

- Postville Community School District
- Clarinda Community School District
- Urbandale Community School District

## Community and Nonprofit Partners

Service organizations, mission-based nonprofits and other community partners can provide valuable support for a wide-range of campaign needs. Programs like AmeriCorps offer opportunities to partner with skilled human resources who may provide direct education during summer meal service or help coordinate the systems and resources that make the campaign happen. From planning and leading hands-on activities, coordinating supplies, creating marketing materials, canvassing neighborhoods, to finding local food, the talents of community partners are vast.

### Examples from Iowa

- FoodCorps Iowa: Participated in campaign visioning and designed promotional graphics
- Eat Greater Des Moines: Led bike blender taste test activities at meal sites in Waukee, IA
- Produce in the Park: Hosted taste tests and scavenger hunts weekly at the farmers market in Atlantic, Iowa

# Statewide Campaign Planning & Timeline

The planning process and timeline for a farm to summer campaign varies based on partnerships and state context. The recommended seasonal planning timeline, outlined below, is intentionally broad and offers key opportunities for training, planning, promotion, and partnership development. Organized from the perspective of an agency or organization with statewide reach, this farm to summer campaign planning timeline operates year-round.

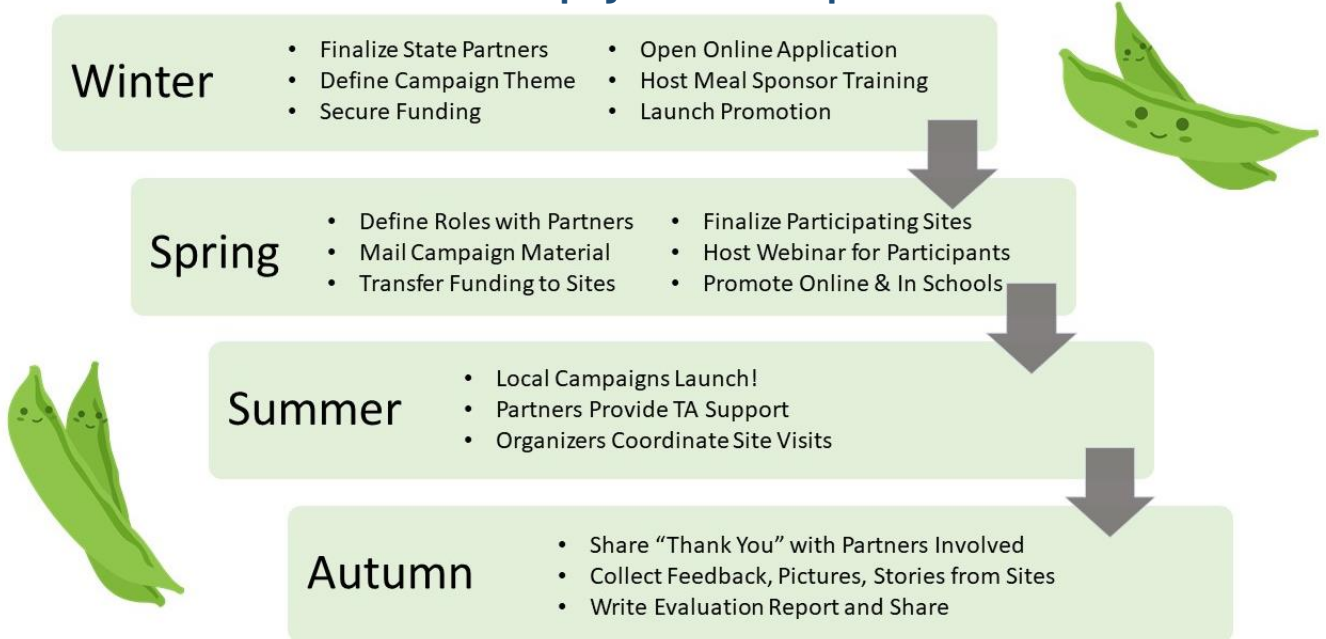
Defining the theme, securing funds- for printing and mailing promotional materials and for mini-grants- and finalizing state partners should take place mid-winter, with guidance from the previous summer's evaluation. Opening the online application for sites to learn more and apply happens alongside promotional launch and meal sponsor training in late winter.

Spring and summer months are busy with running campaigns from both the state and local levels. Well before school dismisses for the summer, participating sites should be finalized, funded, and outfitted with promotional campaign materials. A spring webinar for participants offers partnership and programming ideas.

When campaigns conclude, collect feedback from sites through an electronic survey and develop an evaluation report to share with partners, informing future campaign development. See the last section of this toolkit to review survey templates and findings from Iowa's campaigns.



## Farm to Summer Campaign Timeline: Adapt as Needed!





# For Sites: Campaign Planning & Timeline



At the local level, campaign planning and promotion begins late winter or early spring. It is effective to have defined well before the end of the school year.

Consider opportunities to share meal site details (times, locations, campaign activities) with students and families via existing electronic or printed communications. Questions to consider around hosting the campaign include the frequency of local food activities, methods for promoting the campaign and broader meal program, funding for local food and supplies, and potential partnerships.

The graphic below is a planning guide, with examples from a summer meal sponsor hosting “Snap for Snap Peas!” activities once per week throughout June. Several locations and organizers are included, the focus on local food is present in cooking and other food-based activities and a community newsletter is shared weekly to bring attention to hands-on lessons and activities hosted by the meal site.

## Farm to Summer Campaign Planning Guide: Adapt as Needed!

DATE	DAY	SITE	RECIPE	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS	LEAD ORGANIZER	NOTES
June 8	Friday, 12pm	Sweet Pea Splash Pad	Snap Pea Bites with Lemon Dressing	Plant & Take Home Pea Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snap Pea Banner, Posters</li> <li>Local peas, gloves, cutting boards, plastic knives, lemon, oil pepper</li> <li>Soil, seeds, paper cups, markers</li> </ul>	Mr. Kale (Extension Educator)	Share community newsletter 1 week prior
June 15	Friday, 12pm	Legume Public Library	Snap Pea Salsa	Make Recipe Cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snap Pea Banner, Posters</li> <li>Local peas, black beans, garlic, tomatoes, cilantro, pepper, tortilla chips, bowls, gloves</li> <li>Markers, notecards, stickers</li> </ul>	Ms. Pepper (Meal Site Manager)	Share community newsletter 1 week prior
June 22	Friday, 12pm	Sugar Snap Elementary	Roasted Garlic Snaps	Harvest & Scavenger Hunt in School Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snap Pea Banner, Posters</li> <li>Skillet, spatula, oil, local peas, minced garlic, lemon, gloves, cups, harvest basket</li> <li>Printed scavenger hunts, pens, stickers</li> </ul>	Food Dude (FoodCorps Service Member)	Share community newsletter 1 week prior
June 26	Tuesday, 12pm	Pea Sprout Park	Snap Pea Slaw	Snap Pea Relay Races	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snap Pea Banner, Posters</li> <li>Local peas, purple cabbage, lemon juice, oil, honey, fresh mint and basil, grater, bowl, mixing spoon, cups</li> <li>Rope, pool noodles</li> </ul>	Miss Mater (Parks and Rec Volunteer)	Share community newsletter 1 week prior



# Best Practices: Local Procurement for Summer Meals

Sourcing local foods offers opportunity to include high-quality, flavorful products into a summer meals. As the context of local food systems and available resources are diverse and community-based, procurement plans vary across areas. The best practices listed below serve as considerations that may not be applicable in all communities.

## Sourcing Local Food

A multitude of local food sources exist, including farmers, farmers markets, school gardens, food hubs, or grocery stores. In our 2021 evaluation of the “Kick it with Carrots!” Iowa farm to summer campaign, we found that most participating summer meal sites sourced local food from farmers markets and food hubs and served this local food once per week.

### Example from Iowa: Food Hubs

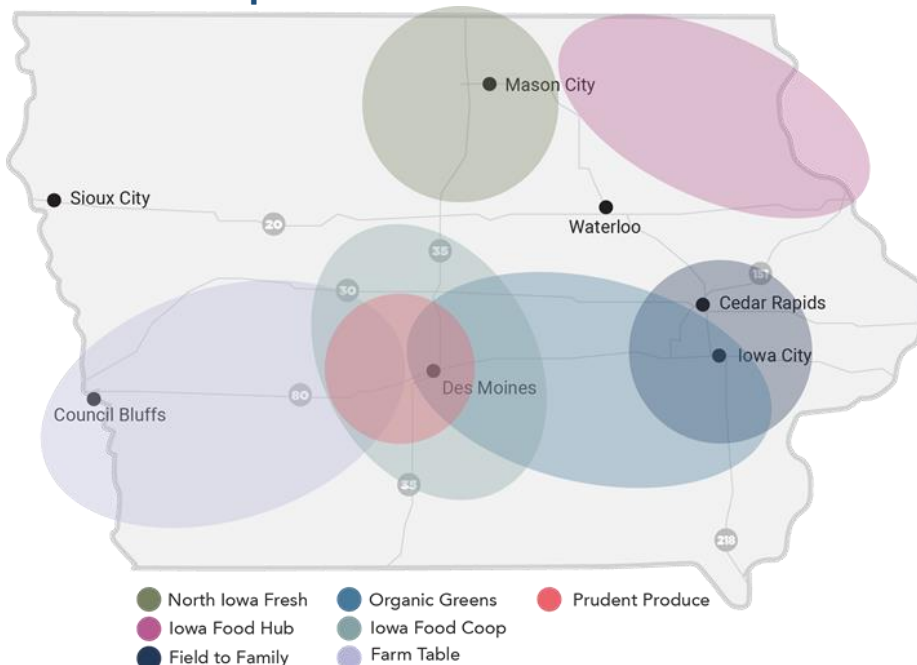
USDA defines a food hub as, “a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.” Food hubs provide important services for small and mid-sized farmers by marketing local products, brokering volume sales, coordinating distribution logistics, and helping producers meet industry requirements in areas such as food safety and packaging.

Food hub partnerships are a great option for sites serving summer meals at a high volume (i.e. larger school districts or community organizations). The Iowa Food Hub Managers Working Group brings together Iowa’s food hub partners to coordinate product delivery and strategy.

The [Iowa Food Hub Directory](#) is a useful resource for connecting with food hubs in several service areas.



## 2021 Map of Food Hub Service Area Across Iowa



## Technical Assistance

A thriving farm to summer program can require extra effort, a challenge as staff time at local meal sites is often limited. Consider technical assistance resources for finding local food to efficiently procure the freshest, most affordable local products for meals and tasting activities. An online search for farmers market listings, county Extension offices, local food directories, or other local food-focused organizations and programs can reveal potential connections and valuable procurement resources.

### Example from Iowa: Local Food Coordinators and Local Procurement Coaches

Regionally organized across the state, Iowa's Local Food Coordinators and Local Procurement Coaches work for varying organizations and offer place-based understanding of regional and local food systems. Coordinators and coaches can research and share information about farmers and producers, specific products, and local markets. In Iowa, Local Food Coordinators and Procurement Coaches have been great assets for supporting organizations to develop longer-term local procurement plans, purchasing local beyond the summer.



### Example from Iowa: "Finding Local Food" Guides

Resources for Finding Local Food:		Osage			
<b>Food Hub Contacts</b>					
Food Hub Name: North Iowa Fresh					
Name: Andrea Evelsizer					
Address: 1200 N 9th St. W, Clear Lake, Iowa 50428					
Phone: (319) 325-4222					
Email: sales@northiowafresh.net					
Website: <a href="https://northiowafresh.localfoodmarketplace.com/">https://northiowafresh.localfoodmarketplace.com/</a>					
Counties Served: Serves Cerro Gordo and surrounding counties.					
Products sold: Fruits and vegetables, meat, bread, honey.					
<b>Local Farmer Contacts</b>					
Farm Name	Link to Farm Website	Farmer Name(s)	Cities Served	Available Products	Farmer Contacts
Maple Grove Farm	<a href="https://www.healthyharvestni.com/producer/maple-grove-farm/">https://www.healthyharvestni.com/producer/maple-grove-farm/</a>	Mary Jane Newswanger	In Nora Springs	Vegetables	Nora Springs, IA 50458 (641) 715-4130 (641) 395-2387
Log Cabin Produce	<a href="http://www.healthyharvestni.com/producer/log-cabin-produce/">http://www.healthyharvestni.com/producer/log-cabin-produce/</a>	Leroy & Marlene Zimmerman	In Orchard	Fruits, Vegetables	(641) 982-4866
Fertile Valley Garden	<a href="https://www.healthyharvestni.com/producer/fertile-valley-gardens/">https://www.healthyharvestni.com/producer/fertile-valley-gardens/</a>	Ronald Rachut	In Fertile	Vegetables	(641) 420-6555 (641) 797-2811 ronreb@wclatel.net
Twisted River Farm	<a href="https://www.twistedriverfarm.com/">https://www.twistedriverfarm.com/</a>	Steve Strasheim	In Mitchell	Salad greens, roots, herbs	(641) 903-1942 twistedriverfarm@gmail.com
Stillwater Greenhouse	<a href="http://stillwatergreenhouse.com/">http://stillwatergreenhouse.com/</a>	Daniel Zimmerman	In Orchard	Vegetables	(507) 319-7336 (641) 732-3252 stillwatergreenhouse@gmail.com
<b>2020 Authorized Local Farmers Markets (NOTE: Information may shift with COVID-19 developments)</b>					
Market Name and Website	Address	City	Dates	Days and Times	Market Manager and Contact
<a href="#">Osage Farmers Market</a>	7th Street	Osage	May 7, 2020 - October 15, 2020	[Thu 03:00 PM - 06:00 PM]	Osage Chamber of Commerce 641-732-3163 chamber@osage.net
<b>County Local Food Coordinator- Contact for Support!</b>					
Organization Name: Healthy Harvest of North Iowa					
Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Floyd, Franklin, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, Worth, Wright					
Staff: Marie Boyd					
Contact: <a href="mailto:marie@healthyharvestni.com">marie@healthyharvestni.com</a> , 515-337-2445					
Website: <a href="http://www.healthyharvestni.com">www.healthyharvestni.com</a>					

Annually, one of the most effective resources supporting sites to find and purchase local food is the Iowa campaign's "Funding Local Food" Guides. Campaign organizers search several statewide local food directories and send local meal site organizers a PDF that lists contact information for local food coordinators and procurement coaches, locations and times of local farmers markets, and relevant food hub information, applicable. An example of a "Finding Local Food" Guide is shown here.

## Product Considerations

It is essential to be aware of what is in season, preparation time and average cost of products when considering local food to purchase and feature in a summer meal site campaign. Growing local food on-site as a demonstration and learning opportunity for participating youth is an interactive way to showcase a particular product and will encourage youth to try it. Remember that time builds traction. Annual program offerings are more likely to result in higher participation numbers, deeper partnerships, and localized best practices.

### Example from Iowa: Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar

The timing of summer meal site operations vary across locations but typically operate throughout the months of June and July. Using a harvest calendar, such as this example from IDALS, can clarify product availability and help inform menu or tasting development at a meal site. In Iowa, radishes, snap peas, cucumbers, carrots, and lettuces are accessible throughout the months of June and July.



## Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar

Produce	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Apples						
Apricots						
Asparagus						
Beans						
Blueberries						
Broccoli						
Cabbage						
Cantaloupe						
Carrots						
Cauliflower						
Cherries						
Cucumbers						
Eggplant						
Grapes						
Kohlrabi						
Leeks						
Lettuce						
Okra						
Onions						

Produce	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Peaches						
Pears						
Peppers						
Plums						
Potatoes						
Pumpkins						
Radishes						
Raspberries						
Rhubarb						
Rutabaga						
Spinach						
Squash						
Strawberries						
Sweet Corn						
Sweet Potato						
Tomatoes						
Turnips						
Watermelons						
Zucchini						



Funds for IDALS Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar were provided by a USDA Specialty Crops Grant

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  
Wallace State Office Building Ph: 515-281-7657  
502 East 9th Street Fax: 515-281-6178  
Des Moines, IA 50319 www.iowaagriculture.gov





# Evaluation Resources

## “Root with Radishes!”

2018 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2018 program evaluation here](#)



## “Snap into Snap Peas!”

2019 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2019 program evaluation here](#)  
[Link to 2019 Summer Site Visits and Photos](#)



## “Crunch into Cucumbers!”

2020 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2020 program evaluation here](#)



## “Kick it with Carrots!”

2021 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
[Link to 2021 program evaluation here](#)



## “Let us eat Lettuce!”

2022 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign  
To be included Fall 2022





# SAMPLE TEMPLATE | Farm to Summer Campaign: Application

**Description of Campaign:** In this section, detail all pertinent farm to summer campaign information, including campaign offerings (mini-grants, promotional materials and technical assistance available to sites), application timeline, notice of awards timeline, and campaign coordinator contact information for applicant questions.

## 1. Application Information

Name  
Email Address  
Phone Number  
Complete Mailing Address: street, city, zip code  
Job Title and Organization

## 2. Summer Meal Site Connections

Have you or your organization participated in the Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign before?

- Yes (offer an option for each campaign year)
- This is our first time

What is your current connection to summer meal programming?

- I am a summer meal sponsor
- I am a community partner

What is the estimated number of students you will serve through your farm to summer campaign activities?

(multiple choice options: 1-1000+ students daily)

## 3. Mini-Grants and Promotional Materials

Are you applying for the \$200 mini-grant funding?

- Yes or No

If you selected YES, please sign your name in agreement that you will use the funding solely for the purchase of local food:

8x15 Inch Posters: how many would you like?  
(multiple choice, 0-10 posters)

3x5 Foot Banners: how many would you like?  
(multiple choice, 0-5 banners)

Would you like to receive take-home resources to be included in Grab-N-Go meals? (Ex: seed packets, recipes, home gardening tools, etc.)

- Yes or No

## 4. Technical Assistance

Are you interested in receiving a county-specific guide for finding local food (i.e. a document listing farmers, food hubs, farmers market information, local food coordinator or coach contact information)?

- Yes or No

## 5. Your Farm to Summer Campaign Plan

Please describe ideas for how you will incorporate local food into your Farm to Summer Campaign:

(open response)

Farmer Support: Please share ideas for how your program will benefit local farmers and producers:

(open response)

## 6. Community Goals

Please select your goals and motivations for participating in this year's Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign:

- Supporting access to local food in our community
- Supporting local farmers and producers in our community
- Increasing youth participation rates at our summer meal site(s)
- Increase youth retention rates at our summer meal site(s)
- Enhancing local food education in our community
- Increasing support for serving local foods in our meal program

## 7. Questions

Do you have any questions regarding the Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign?

(open response)

# SAMPLE TEMPLATE | Farm to Summer Campaign: Post-Campaign Evaluation

## 1. Participant Information

Name  
Email Address  
Job Title and Organization

## 2. Promotional Materials

How useful were the [Campaign Theme] promotional materials?  
Matrix Format Response (Rows: Banners, Posters; Columns: Very Useful, Somewhat Useful, Not Useful)

Please select any resources you used from the website:

- Campaign Outreach Toolkit (language for newsletters, social media, thematic campaign images)
- "Finding Local Food" Guide
- Food Education Resources (recipes, videos, etc.)
- Tips for Take Home Taste Tests
- Coloring Page
- N/A, I did not use any resources from the campaign website

## 3. Mini-Grants Funding

Was the \$200 award amount adequate to support your local food purchases and farm to summer campaign activities?  
 Yes or No

Request additional resources or support here: (open response)

## 4. Local Food Purchases

Please select the types of local food you purchases using the campaign funding:

- Local vegetables and fruit
- Local dairy (cheese, yogurt)
- Local protein (meat, beans)
- Local grain
- Not listed (please describe here):

From whom did you purchase local products?

- Individual local farmers/producers
- Food hub
- Farmer's market
- Grocery store
- Not listed (please describe here):

How did you find local food providers?

- "Finding Local Food" guide (provided by the campaign)
- From a friend/colleague/community member
- Online directory

Did you serve more or less local food than last summer?

- More than last summer
- About the same amount
- Less than last summer

## 5. Technical Assistance

Did you contact any partners for technical assistance

- Yes or No

What type(s) of technical assistance did you request?

- Finding local food
- Promoting our meal site and the campaign
- Processing and serving local food
- Planning and sharing education with youth

Please share a short overview your campaign activities: (open response)

## 6. Successes and Challenges

Are you interested in participating next summer?

- Yes, Maybe, or No

Did you observe any outcomes from participating in the [Campaign Theme] Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign?

- Increased participation numbers at our meal site
- Increased retention of attendees at our meal site
- New partnerships
- Increased support for local food education
- Increased support for local farmers and producers
- Enhanced food access
- Not listed (please describe here):

Please select any barriers to implementing aspects of this campaign or other local food initiatives in your community:

- Limited funding
- Limited staff time
- Limited planning time
- Challenges in finding local food
- Limited staff/administrative interest
- Not listed (please describe here):

Reflecting on this summer, what's one thing you learned through participating in the [Campaign Theme]? (open response)

Upload pictures you have permission to share here!

# The Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign is possible with support from these coalition partners:



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE &  
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Extension and Outreach

**Farm, Food and Enterprise Development**

**iaaeyc**

Iowa Association for the  
Education of Young Children

