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Farm to School and School Garden grants continue to transform Oregon school lunch

Twenty-four awardees use nearly \$900,000 in state funding for food-, agriculture-, and garden-based educational opportunities

Salem, Ore., May 11, 2016 – This year, school lunch for nearly 32,000 Oregon students is continuing to transform thanks to an infusion of food education. The Oregon Department of Education has announced that twenty-four awardees are the recipients of competitive Farm to School and School Garden grant for food-, agriculture-, and garden-based education activities totaling \$882,000. The funding goes to school districts, nonprofit entities and commodity commissions or councils across the state – from the Oregon Coast, through the metro regions, to remote Eastern Oregon.

The grant program is the product of Senate Bill 501—the Farm to School & School Garden Bill—passed by the Oregon State Legislature with unanimous support in 2015. There is another portion to the grant that is a non-competitive award (\$3.3 million) available to all Oregon school districts to assist in paying for costs incurred by the school district to purchase Oregon grown or processed food. It might not be enough to simply expose students to fresh, local healthy food by itself without teaching them about it, which is where the competitive educational grant comes in. It's designed to work in harmony with the non-competitive portion to have a greater impact on healthy choices and habits for Oregon students.

This is a continuation of previous grants passed by the Oregon State Legislature. The most recent version of this grant awarded just under \$1.2 million to 22 schools/170,000 students, resulting in a very successful program in which many best sustainable best practices were showcased and replicated across the state.

Highlights and Innovations from the Winning Entries Farm to School Grant Proposals

Condon School District

Awarded: \$31,359 (126 students)

Condon will be able to reintroduce Agriculture education, natural resources and other vital environmental education programs back in the curriculum (lost in budget cuts) by incorporating agricultural based learning experiences into the local school district and community utilizing an indoor and outdoor school garden, age appropriate classroom lessons and a series of related field trips.

Curry Watershed Council, Gold Beach

Awarded: \$40,000 (140 students)

The North Curry and Central Curry School Districts have been without resources for farm to school education. They will now be able to bring local food, Ag and garden based education to the area with this grant by utilizing the Valley Flora Farm education for students and their families, which begins a direct link between farm and the school cafeteria. Riley Creek's School Garden is the main source of local food for the Central District, and much more can be done. A FoodCorps Service Member will be instrumental with institutionalizing these local food procurement challenges in our schools, and will add resources to reach more students, and assist school staff to build systems around local food purchasing and education in our schools.

Food Roots, Tillamook

Awarded: \$26,014 (900 students)

Food Roots' Farm to School programming will be enhanced in Tillamook County by expanding capacity for their Farm to School programming by allowing their Farm to School Coordinator who to implement multiple new Farm to School programming elements, including: A School to Market pilot project; tasting Table events; family garden engagement events; farmer engagement or farm field trip events; and a new summer garden-based educational program.

Glide School District

Awarded: \$23,262 (678 students)

Glide will develop a Farm to School and School Garden project districtwide – educating their students on how to produce, consume and market healthy, local products.

Growing Gardens, Portland

Awarded: \$78,597 (1400 students)

Growing Gardens will develop garden-based learning at three selected schools in Portland to include Harvest of the Month experiences, integrating the garden into core subjects during the day, afterschool garden clubs, farm fieldtrips and the use of the garden as a pathway for engaging diverse school communities.

Jason Lee School, Portland

Awarded: \$12,274 (145 students)

Jason Lee K-8 is a vibrant, richly diverse school community in a low-income neighborhood where many families struggle with food security and access to fresh produce. "Growing Lee Gardeners" (GLG) will expand and deepen the use of the Jason Lee K-8 school garden through garden instruction, healthy food activities, and entrepreneurial garden products sold in the community, utilizing: classroom garden- and nutrition-based lessons tied to the state core science and health standards; preparation of school garden-grown food and promotion of Oregon-grown produce in the school cafeteria and with the OSU Extension Service educator; and a summer middle school program focused on garden maintenance, raising fall crops, and developing garden-based products to market.

Lake County School District, Lakeview*Awarded: \$39,718 (325 students)*

Lake County has been a vastly unrepresented area in the world of farm to school. In fact, Lake County is one of Oregon's biggest and most remote counties, and until very recently they entire county hasn't had one school garden. Lakeview has also the designation of the USDA as being a "food desert." This grant will provide them with the ability to install gardens at local elementary schools. These gardens will be used as an experimental learning space, complete with opportunities to introduce students to utilizing the produce in their cafeteria and sell at farmer's market, teaching them vital social and math skills while providing food for the community of Lakeview. Finally, they have plans to participate in many farm field trips and to utilize the talents of a FoodCorps Service member to assist with instruction.

Lebanon School District*Awarded: \$44,594 (1300 students)*

Lebanon will continue, enhance and expand their long running school garden program. They plan to add a greenhouse to Riverview School, expanding the opportunities available to students on inclement weather days, as well as add more room for students to garden and for teachers to work with their students on gardening days. Other improvements to their existing gardens such as adding cattle panels for teach vertical gardening, raised beds, and creating outdoor accessible garden learning areas. They will also purchase items to enable the students to continue learning with their classroom teacher in absence of the school garden coordinator.

Mazama High School*Awarded: \$10,000 (731 students)*

Mazama will create a program to build life skills, study native biology, empower confidence and self-reliance, keep journals of observations, improve business and interpersonal skills, increase intrapersonal awareness, supplement the local food supply, and diversify educational practices at our school. The Mazama School Garden will primarily serve Biology classes, Agriculture classes, and special needs students in the Bridges and Goals programs. These students have been labeled with intellectual disabilities and are primarily pursuing modified diplomas. Life skills such as gardening and selling the surplus to school and community members would serve as an ideal activity to cultivate and take pride in alternative forms of intelligence which are typically secondary in traditional academic settings.

Oak Grove Academy, Forest Grove/Hillsboro*Awarded: \$3,725 (60 students)*

This grant would benefit all three sites of Oak Grove Academy, a therapeutic day school program, and serves students eligible for special education, grades 6-12, who are currently unable to be successful in less restrictive school placements. The gardens and culinary programs for the three sites of Oak Grove Academy are at different stages of development so this grant will help support the creation, expansion and improvement for all of Oak Grove Academy. The students will help plant and maintain the garden, and harvest and prepare the food. This level of involvement in food production and preparation serves to familiarize the students with healthy lifestyle choices and opens an avenue for them to share their knowledge with the larger community.

Oregon Albacore Commission, Lincoln City*Awarded: \$15,411 (170 students)*

Will Promote Oregon seafood with 5th grade classes in Seaside School District.

**Oregon Human Development Corp
(Supa Fresh Youth Farm), Tigard**

Awarded: \$72,385 (1317 students)

This project will create a year-round food, agriculture and garden-based educational curriculum in order to deliver hands-on, experiential education that will empower low-income, at-risk students in the Tigard-Tualatin School District to increase healthy habits, gain knowledge of food systems, discover Oregon-grown produce, and cultivate intergenerational and intercultural connections in their community. They will utilize farm and garden field trips, and internships that include food, agriculture and garden-based education during the summer farm program.

OSU Extension, Klamath Basin, Klamath Falls

Awarded: \$28,374 (1000 students)

Grain and potato fields surround the communities in the Klamath Basin, yet many youth are disconnected from agriculture, gardening and have limited taste exposure to the variety of foods grown locally and in Oregon. The overall purpose of this grant is to develop a model for farm to school in this region that leverages existing partnerships between SNAP-Ed, Extension, Master Gardeners, Mills Community Garden, City and County Schools and YMCA. The project will use tested tools and strategies along with new experiential learning activities at 4 sites/neighborhoods to increase opportunities for limited resource youth to eat and grow healthy foods while creating connections to local growers and food production practices. As a result of this project over 1000 youth and their families will receive over 8,000 hours of education to enhance their experience of eating, growing and appreciating Oregon-grown and processed foods.

Outgrowing Hunger, Portland

Awarded: \$49,728 (4750 students)

Educators will coordinate with classroom teachers, principals, and SUN staff at 11 low-income schools to deliver 11,250 student-hours of hands-on, academically-supported, in-class and after school programming in each on-site school garden by increasing student understanding of where vegetables come from, how to grow them in a garden setting, how to prepare and eat them, and how garden-grown food impacts their bodies. Through the process of learning about gardening, project staff will both reinforce classroom lessons on science, math, and literacy, and expose students to core elements of conservation and environmental education.

Philomath School District

Awarded: \$35,098 (1585 students)

This grant will allow the Philomath School District to add an outreach and service component to the Philomath High Botany program. This addition will make it possible to share farm fresh food, agricultural history and curriculum resources with the school community.

Pine Eagle School, Halfway

Awarded: \$34,829 (197 students)

The vision for their prekindergarten through twelfth grade school garden program is provide cross-curricular education in food processing, agriculture, horticulture, swine and poultry production by providing relevant hands on experiences at school and in the community.

Planting Communities, Woodburn

Awarded: \$26,289 (2480 students)

The gardens at the Woodburn schools have provided hands on science and nutritional leaning opportunities since 2008. Funds provided will provide additional garden beds, additional tools, outdoor seating for teaching, discussion and note taking, STEM kits for each garden, and staff to expand learning opportunities at an after school garden club.

Reedsport School District*Awarded: \$59,011 (362 students)*

Reedsport's goal is to more closely align the Great Gardens project of Great Afternoons/Oregon Coast Community Action with the Reedsport School District and to mesh their teaching with that of the school day classrooms to enhance their learning experiences and extend them beyond the school day. They will expand the educational aspects of the garden in working directly with the classrooms providing curriculum that can expand course work in math and sciences and increase access to fresh produce for their children.

South Lane School District, Cottage Grove*Awarded: \$37,275 (2584 students)*

South Lane School District would like to grow and strengthen their existing Farm to School and School Garden programming by addressing and filling the garden and food based educational gaps of Expanding the capacity of their students and/or their families to grow, cook, and/or eat more fresh fruits and vegetables; and to increase student connection with where and how food is grown and health benefits of fresh local foods through implementation of classroom to school garden curriculum.

Schoolyard Farms, Milwaukie*Awarded: \$40,607 (707 students)*

The purpose of Schoolyard Farms' proposed project is to increase the health of Clackamas County public school students by providing agriculture, health and nutrition education, and increasing access to Oregon grown produce at three sites.

Serendipity Center, Portland*Awarded: \$24,585 (134 students)*

The program objective is to provide a comprehensive experience where students participate in the process of growing vegetables that they will eventually eat, either straight out of the field or in Serendipity's dining room. The program is built on the philosophy that children who grow vegetables eat vegetables, and children who eat vegetables live longer, healthier lives. Now in the third year of the program, they are expanding that philosophy, to include members of the surrounding community and deepening it with the recognition that people who grow food are more likely to seek out local produce. Hands-on, experiential education and service learning methods are utilized by the full-time garden coordinator in facilitation of all GMG programming.

South Fork John Day Watershed Council*Awarded: \$9,475 (100 students)*

The goal of the South Fork John Day Watershed Council's proposed outdoor education program is to connect elementary school students with local food producers, to teach them the science behind healthy foods in the human body, and to encourage them toward healthy lifestyle choices. Their program is designed to show youth the variety of ways that members of our community produce healthy foods, from small hobby gardens to large-scale ranching ventures. Agriculture and natural resources are the foundation of our communities in Grant County, so the SFJWC and their partners believe it is vital for each generation to understand how healthy food production has looked in the past, how it will progress into the future, and how both effect present day life in Grant County.

Salem Keizer Education Foundation*Awarded: \$63,548 (9925 students)*

SKEF will Provide food, agriculture, and garden-based Farm to School activities to Salem-Keizer students and their families to expand knowledge of gardening, healthy nutrition, and local agriculture; highlight and increase consumption of nutritious Oregon grown or processed foods; and, link students to careers in the food and farm industry.

Willamette Farm & Food Coalition, Eugene

Awarded: \$75,842 (1500 students)

The goals of this project are to: Increase students' knowledge of where their food comes from, how it is grown, and the benefits of eating locally grown food; improve students' and their families' nutrition by increasing their exposure and access to Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables; and connect students to the source of their food by promoting the Oregon-grown foods served in their school meals. Willamette Farm and Food Coalition will partner with the School Garden Project of Lane County and three school districts to provide farm field trips, tasting events, school garden sessions, and nutrition and agriculture education (at the Bethel Farm).

To learn more about the individual grant proposals and grant program details, please visit www.ode.state.or.us/go/f2sgardens, or contact Rick Sherman, Oregon Department of Education, Farm to School and School Garden Coordinator, 503-947-5863, Rick.Sherman@state.or.us.