



Farm to School Canada Grants

FOR
2026-2028
ACTIVITIES

IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH



GRANT GUIDELINES

About the Guidelines

This document provides guidelines to those who are considering applying for a Farm to School Canada Grant for the September 2026 – June 2028 grant cycle. These grants are provided by Farm to Cafeteria Canada in partnership with Whole Kids, a pillar of Whole Foods Market Foundation.

We will host [informational webinars](#) to share tips on preparing successful grant applications and to allow time for live Q & A.

Funds available

Farm to Cafeteria Canada will award one-time grants, of **up to \$10,000 each**, to an estimated **20 schools** across the country.

Eligibility

Applications are open to **all schools** (kindergarten to grade 12) in Canada. This includes schools in rural, remote and urban settings. We encourage Indigenous*, public, private and independent schools to apply.

Schools that have only received a previous Farm to Cafeteria Canada seed grant are still eligible to apply. Schools that have previously received a Farm to School Canada Grant are **eligible to apply if they received funding before 2022**.

Note: Schools that identify as Indigenous may also wish to check out our Indigenous Food and Foodways in Schools grant stream [here](#).

Definitions

We refer to a number of terms throughout the grant guidelines including “healthy food”, “farm to school”, “sustainably produced food”. To understand how we are defining these terms, please visit our [Glossary](#).

What are the Farm to School Canada Grants?

Farm to School Canada Grants provide funds for school communities to advance the [farm to school approach](#) at their school. A key part of the grant deliverables is to serve healthy, local food in a meal service.

Note: The term “Local food to school” can be used instead of “farm to school.” This term is preferred in some regions and Indigenous communities. It reflects the diversity of local and traditional foods that can be enjoyed in schools from coast to coast to coast, many of which are not sourced from a farm.

The farm to school approach is about bringing healthy, local food into schools, strengthening the local food system and enhancing school and community connectedness while providing students with hands-on learning opportunities that foster food literacy.

Schools that receive a Farm to School Canada Grant will commit to advancing the farm to school approach by:

- Establishing a new meal service or enhancing their existing school meal service so that it serves as much healthy, local food as possible.
- Aiming to increase student consumption of healthy, seasonal foods each year that are locally sourced whenever possible. This can include vegetables, fruits as well as Indigenous or other foods that are culturally relevant to the school community.
- Setting local food procurement targets and aiming to increase the amount of local foods procured and served each year.
- Developing and implementing an education strategy to engage students in experiential and classroom learning around growing, harvesting, preparing, serving, and eating healthy local foods.

Successful grantees will join a growing community of [419 previous](#) grant recipients and receive resources, training and on-going technical support from the Farm to Cafeteria Canada team and its regional partners.

Application Process and Timeline	
March 5, 2026	Grant application window OPENS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● April 8, 3 pm ET (in English) - register here ● April 9, 3 pm ET (in French) - register here 	Join a virtual conversation to connect with us, hear more about the grants, and brainstorm your ideas (optional)
May 8, 2026 11:59 pm ET	Grant application window CLOSES
August 17, 2026	Grant applicants notified
September 5, 2026	Grant recipient contracts completed and initial funds issued. Schools commence their programs
June 30, 2028	Program deliverables complete

Use of funds

YES, the grant funds can be used for:

Capacity building

- ✓ Partnerships - bringing community partners together to support program planning, implementation and/or delivery
- ✓ Honouraria - nominal, one-time recognition for community partners who provide support in project initiation, food service preparation or connecting students to the local food system
- ✓ Promotional materials
- ✓ Educational supplies and field trip costs
- ✓ Training - for school-based project team members. *These funds can be used toward training events hosted by F2CC and/or its regional partners, conferences, symposia, courses/ certifications (such as food safe certification), etc. including costs such as release time and travel.*

Equipment & space modifications

- ✓ Kitchen equipment to support student meal service. This may include the purchase of a service station (such as a salad bar unit), appliances, pots and pans, reusable dishes, utensils, etc.
- ✓ Equipment and material costs for growing, foraging or harvesting food.
- ✓ Minor costs for food service space modifications.

Local and/or celebratory food costs

- ✓ Grant funds can be used toward purchasing food that is 1) locally sourced and supports relationship development with local farmers or other food providers or 2) for an initial celebratory meal service or a combination of the two. Schools may allocate **a maximum of 20% or up to \$2,000 toward purchasing food**. Grant funds cannot be used for food costs beyond this.

NO, the grant funds *cannot* be used for:

- Sustained food costs to supply the school meal service. Beyond local food and/or celebratory food service described above, food costs must be recovered through other means. Applicants will be asked to outline plans to economically sustain their food service and related activities in their proposals.
- School staff salaries. Paid positions or contracts to coordinate and administer the proposed meal service or food literacy activities.

Please note: we typically do **not** provide grants to school boards, though we understand that in some cases, school boards must administer funds on behalf of a successful applicant school. In this case, 100% of grant funds must be provided directly to the school.

Additional considerations for applications

- All applications will require a **Lead Applicant** (the school Principal or Vice-Principal) and must illustrate **support or partnerships with community members**.
 - Community members provide knowledge, expertise and support to help realize the vision and goals of the grant program. *Examples of community-based partners include experienced gardeners, farmers (and other local food providers), chefs, Elders, public health dietitians or nurses, independent consultants and no-profit organizations whose work is rooted in sustainable food systems and/or food literacy.*

- Meal services must be offered a **minimum of 8 times in year one** (consideration will be given for planning and initiation of the service) and **20 times in year two**.
- The meal service **must model Canada's Food Guide** and provide at least 5 options for students to choose from to make a customized, balanced meal.
- The meal service **must be available to all students** who wish to participate, regardless of means. Plans to ensure the access is equitable for all students should be clearly defined in the application.
- The food served must be **as healthy, culturally appropriate, locally and sustainably sourced as possible**.
- The proposed program must **reflect and celebrate the diversity** of the student population.
- Creative meal service models are encouraged. Over the past several years F2CC has encouraged the Salad Bar model, providing students a variety of vegetables and fruits as well as protein and grain options to choose from. **Variations on the Salad Bar will be accepted** (soup bar, sandwich bar, wrap bar, stew bar, etc.) as long as they provide students choices to build their own bowls or create their own plates, demonstrate an effort to source locally where possible, and reflect the local context. If you would like more details and inspiration for developing a successful salad bar, please refer to our [Salad Bar](#) page*
- If the school has an existing meal service, the proposed meal service **must be integrated** with that service, and plans to do so should be defined in the application.
- Successful applicants' proposed meal services **must be approved** by local public health officials (i.e. public health inspectors or environmental health officers) prior to implementation.
- Reporting requirements for grant recipients will include a mid-term and final progress report survey; and the submission of at least one short story and supporting imagery (or video) that demonstrate the grant in action at each school. Full details will be provided to grant recipient schools.

How will applications be selected?

- Eligible applications will be pooled according to 6 geographic regions:
 - British Columbia
 - Prairies (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba)
 - Territories (Yukon, Nunavut, Northwest Territories)
 - Ontario
 - Quebec
 - Atlantic provinces
- Grants will be selected from the eligible pool of applicants and equitably distributed across the 6 regions.
- A review committee will validate the selected applications to confirm eligibility according to the criteria outlined above.

Successful applications will clearly articulate plans to meet the following criteria, which we encourage you to use as a checklist when preparing your application:

- ✓ **The proposed program reflects the local context:** Farm to School is an [approach](#) that looks different in every community. Applicants should consider and speak to the unique geographic, social and cultural contexts of their school community and how these will be honoured, respected and reflected in their meal service and related food literacy programming.
- ✓ **The proposed program has clearly defined goals, will have a strong impact on the school community, and contributes to Farm to Cafeteria Canada's** mission to transform how food is

experienced, learned and celebrated in all schools across Canada.

- ✓ **The proposed program meaningfully engages multiple, diverse partners within the school and broader community:** a school-based team has been established to guide and support the project. Roles of team members should be clearly defined, and the proposal should reflect plans to meaningfully engage all team members.

Minimally, the team should include:

- the school Principal or Vice Principal
- community partners (at least one)
- lead person who will oversee the meal service (this should be the existing food service manager, if the school has an existing meal program)

Optimally, the team should include one or more of the following:

- one or more teachers
 - one or more parents
 - one or more students
 - representation from the parent advisory / school council
 - community Elders or traditional knowledge keepers
 - local farmer or other food producer (fisher, harvester, etc.)
 - local chef or culinary instructor
 - environmental / public health officer
 - community dietitian or public health nurse
- ✓ **The proposed program builds on existing food literacy, food access, local food procurement and food service activities already underway at the school:** these existing efforts should be clearly defined and the application should outline how the grant funds will help to advance this work using a [Farm to School Approach](#).
 - ✓ The proposed program establishes or enhances the existing school meal service so that it serves as much healthy, local food as possible.
 - ✓ The proposed program aims to increase student consumption of healthy, local vegetables, fruits or other healthy foods, including culturally relevant foods, each year.
 - ✓ The proposed program aims to increase the amount of local foods procured and served.
 - ✓ The program works to engage students in experiential and classroom learning around growing, harvesting, preparing, serving and eating healthy local foods.
 - ✓ There is a plan to make the meal service available to all students who wish to participate, regardless of means.
 - ✓ The program will promote and work to advance environmentally friendly practices such as composting and using reusable plateware.
 - ✓ There is a plan to sustain the program after the end of the grant term.
 - ✓ **The proposed program is feasible,** this is shown through achievable and realistic proposed activities and budget.
 - ✓ **The proposed program is innovative:** Offering healthy, local foods in Canada during the school year can be a challenge. Successful applications will identify existing school and community assets, and how they may be built upon to develop a successful meal service supporting farm to school food literacy activities. Successful applications will identify anticipated barriers, and propose innovative, realistic

solutions by which they may be overcome.

- ✓ F2CC has been [working within our own team](#) to envision how our mandate, operations and institution can better include, reflect, honour and amplify Indigenous voices, perspectives, values, and ways of knowing. Applications are more likely to be considered strong when they **reflect and increase knowledge** among school community members about **Indigenous lands and food systems**, as well as support relationships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers and other Indigenous community members in appropriate ways.

Get Inspired!

Looking for ideas on how the grants can be implemented in your school community?

- Browse through our grantee school stories [here](#)
- And be sure to check out our farm to school [Resource Centre](#)!

Questions?

Need help with your grant application or have questions about the application process?

Email us at grants@farmtocafeteriacanada.ca.