

Obion County School District Awarded Grant, Community Input Needed

October is Farm to School Month. The Obion County School District is ready for action through their recent award of \$46,259 for a Farm to School Turnkey Planning Grant involving 7 schools in the county. There were only one of two USDA Farm to School grants awarded across the state of Tennessee this year. These awards, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), will help bring fresh, local foods into schools, increase agricultural and nutrition education opportunities, and foster economic opportunity for America's farmers over the next school year.



Obion County

“Obion County is a community with history is deeply rooted in agriculture,” stated Tim Watkins, Director of Schools, Obion County Schools. “We are excited about the opportunity the Farm to School Grant provides us to further incorporate our local agriculture into the Obion County Schools. We look forward to working with the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network as our partner.”

The Obion County Farm to School planning project is collaborating with the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network, a local nonprofit organization, to support the creation of a unified vision and implementation framework via the development of an Obion County Farm to School Action Plan. Affecting over 3,000 students, the Obion County Farm to School planning team is kicking off Farm to School month by encouraging community stakeholders to learn more about Farm to School and encouraging Parents, Teachers, and Administrators in Obion to take 3-5 minute surveys => visit nwtlnfn.org/programs/farm-to-school.

“Creating more robust Farm to School programming in our region benefits students, teachers, farmers, families, food processors, distributors and the region at large,” stated Samantha Goyret, Executive Director of the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network (LFN). “The LFN team is very excited to partner with Obion County Schools, to identify Farm to School opportunities and foster partnerships that will aid in supporting our children, schools and their communities while increasing access to local foods.”

Farm to School grants support a wide range of activities that increase the amount of local foods served in child nutrition programs and teach children about food and agriculture. Giffin Farms is planning to source their USDA processed beef into 7 schools as a “Local Food Taste-test” during Farm to School month in October.

“Not only will these grants give children more nutritious food options in school, it supports local agriculture economies, while connecting them to the farms and farmers that grow the food we all depend on,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Farm to school efforts introduce more locally grown produce into school cafeterias and expose children to agriculture and nutrition education through hands-on learning. They also provide reliable revenue for American farmers, directly boosting the local economy.

Since 2019, the NWTN Local Food Network has been working with 6 school districts in Gibson and Weakley Counties supporting the development of Farm to School planning. Visit nwtlnfn.org/programs/farm-to-school for more information.

The Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network's mission is to catalyze actions that are increasing access to locally grown and produced foods. Parents, Teachers, and Administrators! Take the short Farm to School surveys at nwtlnfn.org/programs/farm-to-school.

Read USDA's press release here:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/usda-0158.21>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs>