

New Mexico Farm to Preschool Local Procurement

A HEALTHY KIDS HEALTHY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

What is Farm to Preschool?

Farm to Preschool is a set of activities that increase access to fresh, local foods in preschools across New Mexico (NM) and is a best practice for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Using NM Grown to incorporate local foods into meals and snacks increases the variety available to students while introducing healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

What is NM Grown?

NM Grown is a local food purchasing program for public institutions operating nutrition programs serving preschools, k-12 schools, and senior centers across the state. The program incentivizes the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables grown by our small family farmers and ranchers by providing additional meal reimbursements to nutrition providers operating meal and snack programs, such as CACFP.



Why purchase NM Grown?

Buying locally supports our farmers and food hubs by providing a stable market for their products - this helps strengthen our local food system and keeps farmers farming! Adding local foods to your program increases food quality, which can help increase participation in your meal program and attract more families. It also aligns with CACFP nutrition requirements.

What products can I buy with NM Grown?

As a participating preschool provider, you can purchase NM Grown fruits, vegetables, grains, and herbs. You may also purchase products that are produced and minimally processed in NM, such as cornmeal. A full list of products eligible for reimbursement can be found on the NM Grown Allowable Purchases document.

Getting started with NM Grown

NM Grown foods can be incorporated in many ways, including in meals, snacks, tastings, nutrition education lessons, and family and community engagement events. Here are some tips for getting started!

Start Small

- Celebrate NM Grown week in September.
- Just try it! Incorporating local foods even once per month will help students become familiar with new foods and eager to experience more.
- Find opportunities to substitute products from local farmers.
- Use nutrition education activities to introduce local foods.
- Incorporate locally grown meals and lessons into community and family engagement events.

Build on What Works

- Begin with foods preschoolers know and like.
- Feature foods and recipes that are important to the food traditions of your community.
- Build on existing systems by asking your current vendor if they have local products available.
- Reach out to farmers in your community!
- Connect with nutrition staff at schools and senior centers to find vendors or piggyback on their current deliveries.
- Promote your efforts! Let students know when local foods are being served and use Nuevo Thursdays to celebrate local foods and farmers.



New Mexico GROWN

Develop Relationships with Local Farmers

- Communication is key! Be clear about your purchasing needs, including products you are looking for, how you expect to receive them, cost, and invoicing processes. If you've reached out to a farmer and haven't heard back, give them a call.
- Be Flexible. Exploring new products and varieties provides a learning opportunity for students and staff.
- Remember, selling to preschools may be as new to farmers as buying from them is to you. Take time to learn about each other's operations and build working relationships.

Highlight Your Success

- Take pictures as you prepare and serve local food and share with your families and farmers!
- Get feedback from staff and students to help you identify successful products and create new menus.
- Share your story! You are a Farm to Preschool champion - others will want to learn from your experiences.
- Track your local purchases and save information about successful purchasing relationships for future use.

Local Procurement Resources

- Farm to Preschool Tracker
- NM Grown Allowable Purchases
- Approved Supplier Program list, flyers, and FAQ

If you have any questions about NM Grown and Local Procurement and would like to request more resources, please contact:



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