



Connecting Kids to Healthy Food In School

FoodCorps Overview for District Partners

About FoodCorps



Mission: Together with communities, FoodCorps connects kids to healthy food in school.

Vision: We are creating a future in which all our nation’s children—regardless of race, place, or class—know what healthy food is, care where it comes from, and eat it every day.

Program: FoodCorps partners with high-need school districts to elevate food education and access to nourishing food in school. Our teams of well-trained corps members use high-quality teaching tools, the FoodCorps Healthy School Toolkit, and the FoodCorps School Nutrition Leadership Program to support our partners toward achieving their goals.

The Future We Envision



By 2030, every child benefits from food education and nourishing food in school.

- All students have hands-on experiences growing, cooking, and tasting fresh food;
- All students have access to nourishing food, which means improving meal quality through scratch cooking and local and regenerative sourcing, expanding fruit and vegetable offerings, and culturally responsive menu items.



Areas of Work

Supporting Local
Visions

Investing in Leaders

Advocating for Local &
National Policy
Change

Advancing Equity

Track Record



- **Impact:** Columbia University studied FoodCorps schools and found that our approach increases fruit and vegetable consumption 300%.
- **Trust:** Spark Policy Institute asked school and community stakeholders about our work, and 98% described FoodCorps as “highly valued.”
- **Longevity:** FoodCorps has 1,000+ alumni. In our most recent survey, 96% are staying in mission-advancing careers, including influential roles in food education, school nutrition, and public policy.
- **Influence:** FoodCorps partnered with Senators Cornyn and Booker to introduce the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act (2021), with Collins and Smith to introduce the School Food Modernization Act (2021), and works closely with the USDA, including FoodCorps’ Policy Director, who serves as Senior Nutrition Policy Advisor to the Secretary.
- **Reach:** FoodCorps operates field offices and local programming in 14 states chosen for their mix of need, readiness, and influence.



Scale



200

AMERICORPS
SERVICE MEMBERS



300

SCHOOLS



160

SCHOOL & LOCAL
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS



14+

STATES

Community Impact Example: *Springfield, Massachusetts*



Student feedback program is driving a responsive and culturally-relevant menu as a means to increase school meal participation

- In 2018-19, 3 FoodCorps members offered 43 cafeteria taste tests resulting in new menu items such as sofrito, slow roasted pork, and fresh baked muffins with local fruit.

School gardens are serving as outdoor classrooms and learning laboratories across the district

- In 2018-19, 3 FoodCorps members supported 8 existing school gardens, built 3 new school gardens, and offered 455 hands-on food education lessons.

Family, teacher and district staff outreach builds awareness of meal program investments and shift perceptions of school meals

- In 2019-20, FoodCorps supported the creation and distribution of school newsletters, hundreds of social media posts, and district wide communications through text and video.

Cafeteria culture and look and feel improvements are building welcoming spaces for students to enjoy school meals

- In 2018-19, FoodCorps members redesigned cafeteria flow at the Boland Elementary school to reduce noise and increase salad bar accessibility. In 2021, FoodCorps members are installing murals in the Rebecca Johnson and Boland School cafeterias.



*using 2018-19 data to illustrate impact before school buildings closed due to COVID-19

Service Member *Weekly Schedule example*



The below is an estimate of the cross departmental work that a FoodCorps service member does in East Hartford, CT

School Based Support: Includes teaching hands-on lessons during the school day, staff meetings, school beautification and garden maintenance. (approximately 25 hours/week)

Cafeteria Based Support: Includes food service meetings, supporting school meal service before and during meals, taste-testing menu items, and promoting school breakfast and lunch, collecting feedback about meals and items. (approximately 10 hours/week)

Crossroads Support: Includes activity prep, purchasing materials, and conducting afterschool programming with youth. Approximately 3 hours per week.

Training and reporting: the rest of a service members' time is split between training and reporting requirements (approximately 2 hours/week)



What's possible for your district?



Avenues for Partnership: *Your District here*

- **Strategy:** FoodCorps has a ten years of experience partnering with schools and districts. We bring that expertise to bear as an advisory partner assisting with planning, goal-setting, and assessment.
- **Implementation:** FoodCorps is open to exploring the establishment of your district as a program site, and providing a team of corps members with FoodCorps staff support to advance the goals of this project.
- **Tools and Training:** FoodCorps has developed a strong suite of lessons, evaluation tools, and program resources available to our partners.



Opportunity Assessment: *Getting to know you*



YEAR 1: *District landscape assessment provides a baseline for goal setting and program planning. FoodCorps team maps food education and meal investment activities, programs, and stakeholders to understand current context and opportunities.*

Including but not limited to:

- **Policy review:** Wellness policies, garden to cafeteria policies, minimum meal time blocks.
- **Staff supports:** Teacher professional development for garden and food education, lunch monitor training, staff wellness supports and appreciation events.
- **Community engagement:** Existing community input opportunities that influence meal programs and menus. Connections between students and local farms/food, field trips, farmer visits. Mapping other organizations supporting this work across the district and city.
- **School gardens:** Existing garden infrastructure, roles and responsibilities, mapping who commonly instigates use, opportunities for volunteer engagement, and demand for additional school gardens.
- **Student engagement in the school meals:** Student opportunities to taste test or sample new menu items, feedback systems for student input, existing student advisory councils, student chef competition type events and programs.
- **Food education and curriculum connections:** Current state and district nutrition education standards, curriculum delivery roles & responsibilities, opportunities to connect food education within the core curriculum



Programmatic & Community Partner: *Partnership launch*



YEAR 2 & 3: *Based on YEAR 1 planning and a determination of need for our programming in your district, FoodCorps expands its role to a programmatic and community partner.*

- FoodCorps' **Direct Service Program** supports food education and meal investment strategies by adding service member capacity at the school and district level
- As a **community partner**, FoodCorps takes part in advisory councils, committees, and collective impact efforts to help move local initiatives forward.
- FoodCorps **provides resources and tools** to our partners to collectively advance the local goals. For students, these resources can include FoodCorps' curriculum connected K-5 lessons, the Our Cafeteria project, Tasty Challenge program, Sprout Scouts after school clubs, and more.
- FoodCorps' evaluation tools including our **Healthy School Progress Report** and partnership assessments are shared with stakeholders to ensure all progress to goals is widely shared and celebrated.
- FoodCorps supports **community engagement events** including School Open Houses, School Lunch Hero Day, and locally celebrated traditions.
- FoodCorps supports **family outreach** through newsletters, social media, and school apps that build awareness of the school meal and educational investments taking place.





FoodCorps' Impact Priorities

FoodCorps is currently operationalizing a three-year strategic plan that focuses on the following priorities for impact:

- 1 More kids in racially and economically marginalized communities have access to nourishing meals that are culturally relevant, locally sourced, and/or scratch-cooked.
- 2 More kids in economically and racially disenfranchised communities have access to locally adaptable, culturally-relevant, hands-on food education that supports their academic, health, social and emotional development.
- 3 Driven by local visions that reflect the voices of community stakeholders such as kids, parents, BIPOC farmers and food justice/health advocates, schools and districts where FoodCorps serves will make progress institutionalizing food education and successful school meal programs.
- 4 More local and BIPOC changemakers in communities have access to the resources, opportunities, and connections they need to advance their individual leadership and elevate their collective impact on the fields of food education and school nutrition.
- 5 Working in partnership with local and BIPOC changemakers, FoodCorps' advocacy efforts result in more local, state, and federal policies that support universal access to food education and nourishing food in schools in racially and economically marginalized communities.



Thank you