FoodCorps
Healthy School Toolkit
2017–2018 school year
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The FoodCorps Program
WHY SCHOOLS?
We know that healthy food is essential for kids. Good nutrition positively impacts a child’s physical health, their social and emotional health, the number of days they attend school, and their academic achievement. But millions of kids in this country—especially children of color and children from low-income communities—face ongoing barriers to getting the nourishment they need.

- 9 out of 10 children don’t eat enough vegetables¹
- 6 out of 10 children don’t eat enough fruit¹
- 1 out of 3 children—and 1 out of 2 children of color—are on track to develop diabetes in their lifetime²

Schools have an opportunity to help close that nutrition gap. Today, over 50 million kids go to school in the United States. More than 30 million of those students eat school lunch, and more than 14 million eat school breakfast.³ By creating healthy food environments, schools can start all students on a healthy path to success.

WHAT IS FOODCORPS?
Together with communities, FoodCorps serves to connect kids to healthy food in school. We are creating a future in which all our nation’s children—regardless of class, race, or geography—know what healthy food is, care where it comes from, and eat it every day.

OUR MODEL

change
in ALL SCHOOLS, FOR ALL STUDENTS, ACROSS THE COUNTRY

change
in SCHOOL DISTRICTS

change
in INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

change
at STATE & NATIONAL LEVEL

school communities
school districts
community partners
FoodCorps staff

school communities
community partners
organizations
advocates
FoodCorps staff
FoodCorps alumni

school communities
community partners
FoodCorps service members
FoodCorps staff
HOW DOES FOODCORPS WORK WITH SCHOOLS?

We partner with school communities and help create healthy school food environments with staying power.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT?

A healthy school food environment has three things: hands-on learning, healthy school meals, and a schoolwide culture of health.

WHAT IS STAYING POWER?

Staying power means a healthy school food environment stays strong after FoodCorps leaves that school. Staying power is strongest when people from all parts of the school community work together to create a positive food environment for students.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Healthy school food champion & team support
- School administration support
- Food service director/manager support
- Teacher support
- Parent support
- School curriculum connections
The Toolkit
WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is a set of resources designed to:

- Take a snapshot of your current school food environment
- Guide your school community in creating a vision for the future
- Document your action plan for working toward that vision
- Evaluate and celebrate your school community’s history and progress over time

HOW DO I USE IT?

Read the Toolkit Timeline (pp. 10-11) for an overview of the process and follow instructions throughout the toolkit.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Your healthy school team! To learn about who should be a part of your team and how to best work together, read the Build a Team section (p. 13).

A FOUR-PART TOOLKIT

The toolkit has four parts that you and your team will need to complete:

- **PROGRESS REPORT**
  The Progress Report outlines practices in four areas (hands-on learning, healthy school meals, schoolwide culture of health, and community support) that are important parts of a healthy school food environment. Your healthy school team will use this tool to take a snapshot of your current school food environment.

- **ACTION PLAN**
  Based on what you learn from the Progress Report, your healthy school team will use the Action Plan to choose goals for this coming school year. Then you will identify who is leading each goal and create a plan for reaching each goal.

- **SERVICE MEMBER PLAN**
  This is your service plan for the year, combining goals you will lead at the school(s) you serve.

- **SCHOOL & COMMUNITY GUIDE**
  You will use this tool to record important contacts, resources, and partners at each school you serve. This guide ensures that important information is recorded and passed on from year to year.
SERVICE MEMBER REQUIREMENTS AT EACH SCHOOL SERVED

As part of your service plan this year, you must meet the following requirements at each school you serve:

1) In collaboration with your healthy school team, facilitate completion of the Healthy School Toolkit by key deadlines.

2) Teach or co-teach ongoing high-quality, hands-on lessons using FoodCorps Lessons or lesson plans from other curricula. (Note: Across all of your schools, you must teach at least 80 unique students for 10+ hours of instruction.)

3) Have a regular presence in the school cafeteria. You may do so by being a positive role model and supporting a positive cafeteria culture, leading cafeteria taste tests, or supporting cafeteria staff with recipe development and promotions.

4) Create and submit a consistent weekly schedule that reflects your service plan goals.
GET STARTED!
FALL

BUILD YOUR TEAM
FALL

SET SCHOOLWIDE GOALS
& SET FOODCORPS
MEMBER GOALS
FALL

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS
FALL–SPRING

CONSULT, REFERENCE
AND DOCUMENT
SPRING/SUMMER

CELEBRATE SUCCESS
& LOOK FORWARD
SPRING

START BACK
AT STEP 1 NEXT FALL
GET STARTED!

- Identify if your school is a new FoodCorps school or a continuing FoodCorps school. Continuing schools completed a Progress Report last spring.

- If you are at a continuing FoodCorps school, you and your site supervisor should review last year’s Progress Report, Action Plan, and School & Community Guide together.

- School staff will orient you to the school.

  Lay out a timeline for completing Steps 2–4 in September–October.

UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT

- With your school team, use the Progress Report to learn about what is already happening at your school. If you are a continuing FoodCorps school, review last year’s Progress Report. If you are at a new FoodCorps school, complete the Progress Report together with your team and/or by interviewing school community members individually.

  New Schools Only: Complete the Progress Report + submit to FoodCorps by 10/31

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Schedule team meetings throughout the year to review your schoolwide Action Plan.

- Celebrate and share your successes along the way!

- You and your supervisor should regularly revisit the Service Member Plan.

CONSULT, REFERENCE, AND DOCUMENT

- Record key supporters and opportunities.

- Revisit this guide as needed, and review at the end of the year to ensure it is useful for future FoodCorps members and team leaders.

  Complete the School & Community Guide + submit to FoodCorps by 6/30

BUILD YOUR TEAM

- See p. 13 for what makes a great healthy school team.

- See pp. 56-57 for resources on facilitating meetings with your healthy school team.

SET SCHOOLWIDE GOALS

- With your school team, review the most recent Progress Report results to discuss the school's strengths, gaps, and opportunities.

- As a team, choose goals to work on this year, plan out the steps you will take and how you will define success, and decide who will lead and support each project and when/how you will check in throughout the year.

- Find resources for community visioning, goal setting, and action planning on the Toolshed.

  Complete the Action Plan + submit to FoodCorps by 10/31

SET FOODCORPS MEMBER GOALS

- In your Service Member Plan, compile the goals you will lead across all the school(s) you serve.

  Complete the Service Member Plan + submit to FoodCorps by 10/31

CELEBRATE SUCCESS & LOOK FORWARD

- With your school team, document what changes happened over the past year by updating the Progress Report.

- Celebrate your achievements this year!

- Talk about the team’s vision for next year and update the Action Plan.

  Complete the Progress Report and Action Plan + submit to FoodCorps by 5/31
Before Getting Started
Before Getting Started

BUILD A TEAM

Step two of the timeline is to build the team you will work with in your school community. You might be building a new team, or you might be connecting with an existing team like a school wellness committee, farm to school group, or parent-teacher group.

TIPS FOR BUILDING A TEAM

› Include people who are motivated to support a healthy school food environment.

› Engage people who have both new energy and historical knowledge of school practices. Both of these perspectives bring great value.

› Welcome a variety of perspectives, as this will help you to develop an action plan that truly reflects the school community.

› Share decision-making as you build your team so that all participants are invested and responsible for the goals you set together.

› Set clear expectations for participation on the team. For example, “We will have an initial meeting to set goals. We will then meet monthly throughout the school year to check in on our progress and support one another.”

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH AN EXISTING TEAM

› Identify who is leading the team, explain who you are, and listen to what motivates them.

› Do your research: What has the group already accomplished? Understand how they function, what their goals are, and what they have already achieved. Be respectful and honor that.

› Be clear about what you are asking: Do you want to participate in their meetings? On a one-time basis or in an ongoing way? Do you share common goals?

› Highlight your shared goals. Consider how you will work with the group to reach common goals without them getting off track. What can you bring to the group?

› If you decide that joining an existing group isn’t the best strategy, communicate the reasons why. Then continue to engage and build trust with that group so that you are not perceived as competition when you build your own team.

› Try not to ask people who are already involved in an existing group to join your team. People have limited time and energy.

A GREAT SCHOOL TEAM COULD INCLUDE

› A decision-maker from school leadership, like the principal
› Teachers and staff
› Food service staff
› Facilities maintenance staff
› Students
› Parents
› School community members
› FoodCorps service member
› FoodCorps site supervisor
The choices schools can make about their food environment are often governed by policies at many levels: federal, state, district, and school, and these policies can directly influence students’ experiences of and decisions around food in school. These policies may make it easier—or harder—for your school team to make certain changes, so it is important to understand what policies are in place and how you might be able to influence them.

Below is a list of some of the policies that are good to know about before you complete your school’s Progress Report. If you are at a continuing school, you can find answers to these questions completed in last spring’s Progress Report. If you are at a new school, you can find support at your school to answer these questions.

**OPTIONAL WORKSHEET**

**STANDARDS AND PREFERRED CURRICULUM**

1) **Do the state and/or district academic standards include specific standards for nutrition education?**
   - The state has nutrition education standards
   - The district has nutrition education standards
   - No known nutrition education standards

2) **Does the district have a preferred nutrition curriculum, and if so, how is it used?**
   - All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it
   - All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implemented
   - Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially)
   - One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially)
   - Preferred curriculum not used
   - Unknown how much preferred curriculum used
   - No known preferred curriculum

3) **Does the district have a preferred garden education curriculum, and if so, how is it used?**
   - All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it
   - All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implemented
   - Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially)
   - One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially)
   - Preferred curriculum not used
   - Unknown how much preferred curriculum used
   - No known preferred curriculum

**PLEASE REMEMBER**

that you are prohibited from influencing policy change in your role as an Americorps service member. However, you may enact existing policy.
DISTRICT WELLNESS PLAN OR POLICY

4) All school districts are required to have a Wellness Plan or Policy in place. What is the status of the school districts Wellness Plan/Policy?

- Wellness Plan/Policy in place and has been updated in the last 2 years
- Wellness Plan/Policy in place, but has not been updated recently
- No known plan or policy

5) District Wellness Plans/Policies were originally required to be implemented by a Wellness Committee. Is the Wellness Committee in the district active?

- Yes, it meets regularly
- There is still a committee, but it does not have regular meetings
- There is no current committee

6) Does the district wellness plan or policy covers a wide variety of topics related to the school food environment? What content is included?

- Healthy eating and nutrition
- School gardens
- Food policies (e.g., for celebrations, rewards, bake sales, fundraisers)
- Promoting local foods
- Unknown what content was in the policy or plan
- Not applicable, no known policy or plan

LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

7) Do the state and/or school district have a policy about geographic preference for local food procurement? Note: geographic preference provides a competitive advantage to local, minimally processed foods.

- Yes, at the state level
- Yes, at the district level
- No known geographic preference policy

8) Is the state and/or district policy for geographic preference regularly used?

- Products from local growers or distributors are regularly requested or sought out in bids or orders
- Products from local growers or distributors are sometimes requested or sought out in bids or orders
- Local products may be supplied but are not specified in bids or orders
- Policy exists, but is not implemented
- No known geographic preference policy
Progress Report
After you have your healthy school team in place, use this Progress Report to look at everything that is happening across the school food environment. Extra copies can be downloaded from the FoodCorps Toolshed. You may complete the tool together with your team and/or by interviewing team and school community members individually.

**FOR NEW SCHOOLS**

**STEP 1 (FALL)** Fill out the Progress Report based on what happened last school year. Then, use it to set your Action Plan (see pp. 34–37).

**STEP 2 (SPRING)** Update the Progress Report and Action Plan based on what happened during the current school year.

**FOR CONTINUING SCHOOLS**

**STEP 1 (FALL)** Because your school completed a Progress Report last spring, you do not need to fill out the Progress Report in the fall. Do review the report from the spring to help make your Action Plan for the current year.

**STEP 2 (SPRING)** Update the Progress Report and Action Plan based on what happened during the current school year.

**WHERE TO SUBMIT**

FoodCorps members will receive a submission link via email.

**DEADLINES**

October 31, 2017 (new schools only) and May 31, 2018 (all schools)

**KEEP IN MIND**

The Progress Report covers a variety of school food environment areas. It includes:

- General information about the school, service site, and service member.
- Questions about current practices that create a healthy school food environment.
- Questions about key people and practices that help a school to create a culture of health that has staying power.

Don’t try to do it all! The tool includes many practices you can choose to take, but schools aren’t expected to do everything. The important thing is to make lasting improvements over time.

We recommend you complete a paper copy by hand before submitting the online version. After your school team completes the Progress Report in this toolkit, the FoodCorps service member must submit an online version to FoodCorps.

Want to know why the Progress Report is important? Read the Progress Report Background Research overview on pp. 64–75.
## AREA ONE: HANDS-ON LEARNING
- A. **ONGOING COOKING, TASTING & GARDEN-BASED LESSONS**
- B. **FIELD TRIPS AND FARMER & CHEF VISITS**
- C. **SCHOOL GARDEN DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE**

## AREA TWO: HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS
- D. **SALAD BAR & LUNCH LINE DESIGN**
- E. **TASTE TESTS**
- F. **CAFETERIA ROLE MODELING**
- G. **LOCAL SOURCING & RECIPE DEVELOPMENT**
- H. **BREAKFAST & AFTER-SCHOOL MEAL PROMOTION**

## AREA THREE: SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH
- I. **CELEBRATIONS, EVENTS, REWARDS & SNACKS**
- J. **SCHOOLWIDE HEALTHY FOOD PROMOTION**
- K. **FUNDRAISERS**
- L. **FAMILY, STAFF & COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

## AREA FOUR: COMMUNITY SUPPORT
- M. **HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD CHAMPION & TEAM SUPPORT**
- N. **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT**
- O. **FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR/MANAGER SUPPORT**
- P. **TEACHER SUPPORT**
- Q. **PARENT SUPPORT**
- R. **MAKING CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**
SCHOOL INFORMATION

1) School Name

2) School City

3) State

4) Service Member Name

5) Service Site Name

6) # years service site with FoodCorps (including current year)

7) # years school with FoodCorps (including current year)

8) # students enrolled in the school

9) Do students have recess before lunch?
   - All grades
   - Some grades
   - No grades

10) Does your school participate in any of the following programs? (check all that apply)
   - Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program
   - Cooking Matters
   - Coordinated School Health
   - Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP)
   - HealthierUS Schools Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms
   - Team Nutrition
   - USDA Farm to School Grant Program

11) Please list and briefly describe other food, nutrition, gardening, and wellness programs in the school besides FoodCorps in the past year:

12) Who is your healthy school team?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Admin</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Food Service</th>
<th>Other School</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Service Site</th>
<th>Community Partner</th>
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What is their role?
### What was in place over the past year?

<table>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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| 13) Nutrition education standards have school or district support for following them. (check all that apply) | Yes, standards and school district had staff to offer guidance and monitor compliance.  
Yes, standards and school had a teacher or other staff to offer guidance and monitor compliance.  
Yes, standards but no support offered.  
Not applicable, no known nutrition education standards. |
| 14) Nutrition education standards are met by the school. (check all that apply) | Met (fully or mostly) by all grades.  
Met (fully or mostly) by some grades.  
Met (fully or mostly) by one grade.  
Partially met by one or more grades.  
Unknown.  
No way to know if they were met.  
Not applicable, no known nutrition education standards. |
| 15) The school uses the district’s preferred nutrition curriculum. (choose 1 answer) | All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it.  
All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implemented.  
Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially).  
One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially). Preferred curriculum not used.  
Unknown how much preferred curriculum used.  
No known preferred curriculum. |
| 16) The school uses the district’s preferred education curriculum. (choose 1 answer) | All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it.  
All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implemented.  
Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially).  
One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially). Preferred curriculum not used.  
Unknown how much preferred curriculum used.  
No known preferred curriculum. |
Who was it communicated to in the past year? (check all that apply)

- School administrators
- Teachers
- School staff
- Food service workers
- Parents
- Students
- Don’t know or not communicated to anyone
- Not applicable, no known policy or plan

What was in place over the past year?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

17) The district wellness plan or policy is communicated to the full school community.

18) School garden produce is allowed to be used in school meals.

19) Which grades are in the school?

20) How many classrooms are in each grade?

21) Of those classrooms (Question 21), how many of them received nutrition, food-, and garden-based lessons focused on fruits and vegetables over the past school year? Lessons are defined as those at least 20 minutes in length. “Focused” means at least part of the lesson. “Garden-based” means any activities related to growing food.

22) Of those classrooms that received lessons (Question 3), how many lessons did each class get (on average) over the past school year?

* After-school programs are configured differently in each school. Do the best you can of filling in the total number of different after-school “groups” that meet, which may be by grade, clubs, topic area classes, etc.

If the school has split classes or rotating classes, note here how you counted them for Question 22:
**AREA ONE: HANDS-ON LEARNING**

In the classroom, in the garden, before, during, and after school, students grow, cook, and taste new foods, which builds their skills and changes food preferences.

Below, you’ll see a list of best practices and activities that are shown to encourage and support students making healthy food choices. Please read each statement and indicate whether, and/or to what extent, your school or school community did that practice over the past school year.

### A ONGOING COOKING, TASTING & GARDEN-BASED LESSONS

1) This school dedicates a space to food-related activities such as cooking, gardening, and nutrition education.

   - [ ] Devoted indoor space
   - [ ] Devoted outdoor space/garden
   - [ ] None right now

   For all classes that got lessons in the past school year, did the lessons include this practice? (check the box if yes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-K</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
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2) Lessons and activities use best practices in nutrition, food-, and garden-based education.

   - [ ] a. Include opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables through tasting or cooking (e.g., chopping, mixing, adding ingredients).
   - [ ] b. Create positive social norms through activities that make fruits and vegetables “cool” and allow students to share their favorites.
   - [ ] c. Focus on fruits and vegetables that include opportunities to decrease fears of trying new food, such as stories about how kids “tried it and liked it!” or smelling herbs before tasting.
   - [ ] d. Focus on the health benefits of fruits and vegetables (e.g., some help the brain to think better; red ones are good for your heart).
   - [ ] e. Compare the nutritional value of healthful and less healthful snacks (e.g., showing the added fat and sugar in snack foods, or how healthful snacks have more nutrients).
A. **ONGOING COOKING, TASTING & GARDEN-BASED LESSONS (CONT.)**

For all classes that got lessons in the past school year, did the lessons include this practice? (check the box if yes)

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<th>Practice</th>
<th>Pre-K</th>
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<th>After School</th>
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<td>f. Use MyPlate as a visual to encourage students to make half of their plate fruits and vegetables at every meal. If making meals with students, follow MyPlate proportions.</td>
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<td>g. Focus specifically on eating more fruits and vegetables at school lunch, such as where to find fruits and vegetables or how to build a colorful salad at the salad bar.</td>
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<td>h. Focus on setting goals for increasing eating fruits and vegetables.</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Focus on monitoring progress toward the goals of eating more fruits and vegetables.</td>
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<td>j. Share recipes that students can take home and prepare with their families.</td>
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<td>k. Include activities that incorporate appreciation for how certain cultures traditionally cook fruits and vegetables.</td>
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<td>l. Create appreciation for plants, including life cycles and what plants need to grow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>m. Have students work in the garden, doing things like planting, weeding, watering, and nurturing plant growth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. Harvest what is growing in the garden.</td>
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<td>o. Introduce the process of composting and/or provide experiences composting in the garden.</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. Focus on how our “farm to plate” food system works and how eating more locally produced, less processed and less packaged food is good for the natural environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>q. Focus on how some neighborhoods do not have equal access to healthy food and how there are programs and resources to help achieve equity.</td>
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</table>
### B FIELD TRIPS AND FARMER & CHEF VISITS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Did this happen in the past year? (check if yes)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Invite local heroes to dine with students in the cafeteria (e.g., farmers, chefs, politicians, sports heroes, media personalities).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arrange classroom visits with farmers, chefs, and others who work in food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Take field trips to farms, community gardens, farmers markets, composting facilities, or other food-centered businesses.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### C SCHOOL GARDEN DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Did this happen in the past year? (check if yes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have a garden care plan, including during the summertime.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Host regular volunteer work days in the garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Run a garden composting program (e.g., compost school meal waste, families bring scraps from home to school garden compost, compost garden weeds and leftovers).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please share important notes or explanations about these Hands-On Learning practices:
**AREA TWO: HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS**

The cafeteria experience steers students toward the healthiest options and gets them excited to try new healthy foods.

Below, you’ll see a list of best practices and activities that are shown to encourage and support students making healthy food choices. Please read each statement and indicate whether, and/or to what extent, your school or school community did that practice over the past school year.

### SALAD BAR & LUNCH LINE DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did this happen in the past year?</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Most or All Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1)</strong> Make lunch a respected part of the school day by having behavioral expectations consistent with the rest of the school and have teachers and administrators present during lunch.</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2)</strong> Make sure the cafeteria is clean and at a reasonable noise level (e.g., no regular fighting, yelling, or whistle blowing).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3)</strong> Decorate the meal line and cafeteria to make it inviting (e.g., signs on the salad bar or meal line, student artwork, colorful posters, colorful paint on the walls).</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**4)** The school serves lunch to students.

If so, the school can:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did this happen in the past year?</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Most or All Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Set up the meal line so that fruits, vegetables, and meal choices look appealing (e.g., bright, fresh, not wilted).</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Pre-plate vegetables to establish taking and eating them as a social norm.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Display fruit in bowls or baskets that are easy for students to reach.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Make sure that vegetables and fruit are the right size for students to eat (e.g., cut into halves or quarters).</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Highlight fruit and vegetable recipes, menu boards, and signs with creative and appealing names.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D  SALAD BAR & LUNCH LINE DESIGN  (CONT.)

No salad bar  1-2 days/wk  3-4 days/wk  Every Day

5) The school offers a salad bar at lunch.
   
   If so, the school can:
   
   a. Have the salad bar as part of the lunch line so that students do not miss it.
   
   b. Make sure the salad bar is the right height for students to easily put down their tray while taking salad.
   
   c. Fill the salad bar with at least three different fresh fruits and vegetables.
   
   d. Refill the salad bar as needed and keep it tidy and appealing.
   
   e. Make sure that salad bar spoons and tongs are the right size and type for the students using them.

E  TASTE TESTS

1) The school has tastings of the fruits and vegetables that are offered during school meals.
   
   If so, the school can:
   
   a. Set up the taste test in high traffic areas.
   
   b. Have students taste or prepare foods that will be offered in school meals.
   
   c. Hold taste tests with families during events and before or after school.
   
   d. Have principals, teachers, staff, and students serve the foods.
   
   e. Share voting results widely, on posters, bulletin boards, the school website, newsletters, and email.
F CAFETERIA ROLE MODELING

Did this happen in the past year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Most or All Days</th>
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</thead>
</table>

1) Older students act as role models or mentor younger students to eat fruits and vegetables.

2) School staff and food service workers encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables.

3) Adults stand by the salad bar to encourage and help students take salad.

4) Adults model salad bar eating behavior and bring items on a plate around for students to try.

G LOCAL SOURCING & RECIPE DEVELOPMENT

How often did this happen in the past year?
(please do not include milk in these counts)

1) Aim for more local food being served in school lunch.
   “Local food” (in general) does not have a set definition. Some base it on the number of miles, others on state boundaries, etc. Use whatever your school or district defines as “local food.” Please add a comment in the notes section on the next page explaining how your school defines local foods and what local foods were most commonly served.

   - No local food was served
   - Local food was served 1–2 times during the year (e.g., as part of a harvest celebration)
   - Local food was served 3–9 times during the year (e.g., once a week through the harvest season or every day during a week-long harvest celebration)
   - Local food was served about 10–20 times during the school year (e.g., once or twice a month throughout the school year, or many harvest celebrations)
   - Local food was served about 21–39 times during the school year (e.g., several times a month or once a week or more during a long harvest season)
   - Local food was served at least 40 times during the school year (e.g., at least once a week)

2) Add new recipes or items on the full menu that feature local ingredients, school garden produce, and/or student-tested dishes.

   - Never
   - 1 time
   - 2 times
   - 3 times
   - 4 times
**BREAKFAST & AFTER-SCHOOL MEAL PROMOTION**

1) The school has programs to increase school breakfast participation.

   - Breakfast in the classroom
   - School breakfast promotion efforts
   - Grab-and-go breakfast
   - Universal breakfast

2) The school has programs to increase after-school Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal and/or snack participation.

   - CACFP Supper
   - CACFP Snacks
   - Other (please describe):

Please share important notes or explanations about these Healthy School Meals practices:

**AREA THREE: SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH**

As a whole, the school community and environment—from hallways to classrooms to cafeteria to grounds—celebrates healthy food.

Below, you’ll see a list of best practices and activities that are shown to encourage and support students making healthy food choices. Please read each statement and indicate whether, and/or to what extent, your school or school community did that practice over the past school year.

**CELEBRATIONS, EVENTS, REWARDS & SNACKS**

1) Healthy food is the main choice for classroom snacks.

2) Healthy food is the main choice for snacks and meals at schoolwide events.

3) Celebrations and rewards incorporate healthy foods and/or non-food items, such as extra recess or game time.

4) Vending machines have healthy options as the main choice or are not available.
### J SCHOOLWIDE HEALTHY FOOD PROMOTION

1) Announcements by and for students share meal options in exciting/fun ways to promote a respect for healthy eating and knowledge of seasonality or where they come from (e.g., school gardens, a specific farm nearby).

2) Students work with food service staff to give school meal items creative and descriptive names.

3) The school hallways, cafeteria, and display cases feature food- and garden-related work by students and/or promote wellness and healthy eating.

4) Signs around the school and cafeteria advertise what is served at school meals and which foods are sourced locally through the seasons (e.g., Harvest of the Month posters).

### K FUNDRAISERS

1) Fundraisers have healthy foods and/or non-food items as the main choice (including healthier options promoted at bake sales).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did this happen in the past year?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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</table>

### L FAMILY, STAFF & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

1) The school has a dedicated space with resources about food access, cooking, and gardening for the school community and families.

2) Family newsletters and emails feature tips on growing, shopping for, cooking, and serving fruits and vegetables at home and how to access healthy foods in the community.

3) Families and community members have the opportunity to volunteer in the cafeteria, garden, and with food- and garden-based lessons and events.

4) Parent or family workshops cover growing, cooking, and serving fruits and vegetables at home and accessing healthy foods in the community (e.g., cooking, gardening, eating on a budget, healthy eating, sharing food from families’ cultural backgrounds).

5) Staff have the opportunity to learn about growing, cooking, or preparing food (e.g., staff cooking workshops with a guest chef, staff-only garden work day, regular taste tests at staff meetings).

Please share important notes or explanations about these Schoolwide Culture of Health practices:
AREA FOUR: COMMUNITY SUPPORT
People across the school community help create a positive food environment for students.

HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD CHAMPION & TEAM SUPPORT

1) The school has healthy food, nutrition, and gardening “champions” (e.g., a person who promotes healthy food issues and gets others excited to support improvements/changes; it could be teachers, staff, parent, etc.).

- 1 champion
- 2 champions
- 3+ champions

2) School staff members—not including teachers, administrators, and food service staff—support a healthy school food environment and/or the school’s gardening program (e.g., school nurse, office staff, security guards, custodians).

- No, school staff have not shown support in the past year
- Yes, school staff have shown support, but were not actively involved in the past year
- Yes, school staff have shown support and were actively involved in the past year

3) The school has a group devoted to wellness or healthy food topics, like a wellness committee, farm to school team, school garden group, or other healthy school team.

- No known group last year
- Yes, but met irregularly and/or distributes health-related resources (no planning or implementing activities)
- Yes, met regularly to plan and implement healthy food-related activities for the school

4) Wellness committees or other teams have a variety of active members.

Who were the participants in the past year?
(check all that apply)

- Administrators
- Community Partners
- Food Service Staff
- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Other school staff

How many champions did the school have in the past year?
(not counting the FoodCorps member)
### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Did this happen in the past year? (check if yes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Provide professional development time for teachers to learn about leading nutrition, food-, and garden-based activities. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provide support to teachers (e.g., additional pay, class release time, time and support to write grants) for nutrition, food-, and garden-based lesson development and/or school garden maintenance. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Participate in nutrition, food-, and garden-based activities (e.g., visiting classrooms or the garden during lessons). [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Support the food service director in making changes to school lunch (e.g., procuring local food, tweaking line design to nudge students to healthier options). [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide ample staff in the lunchroom for managing students so they focus on eating lunch. [ ]</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Act as a role model in the cafeteria (e.g., encouraging students to eat healthy, eating with students). [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provide resources to teachers and parents about which foods are acceptable for serving in the class and at school events, and which are not. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Enforce serving only healthy foods in the classroom and at school events. [ ]</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Restrict or limit fundraisers from selling unhealthy food (e.g., candy bars). [ ]</td>
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### FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR/ MANAGER SUPPORT

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Did this happen in the past year? (check if yes)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dedicate time and effort to procuring food from local sources. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prepare recipes from scratch for school meal offerings. [ ]</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Avoid use of prepared, processed food items. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Support a salad bar with a wide variety of items. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Support using food grown in the school garden for school meals. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Make changes that will nudge students toward healthy options (e.g., changing line arrangement and placement, decorations, creative names for fruit and vegetable dishes). [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Encourage all food service staff to get students excited about eating healthy school meals (e.g., use the creative names of fruit and vegetable dishes, remind students which foods are local or from the garden, encourage students to try new foods). [ ]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### TEACHER SUPPORT

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<tr>
<th>How many teachers participated in this practice in the past year?</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>A few</th>
<th>Many</th>
<th>Most or all</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Use “prep periods” to plan for teaching nutrition, food-, and garden-based lessons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Make classroom time to teach nutrition, food-, and garden-based lessons.</td>
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<td>3) Share successes, challenges, and strategies with other teachers around conducting nutrition, food-, and garden-based activities (e.g., at grade-level meetings).</td>
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<td>4) Maintain the garden and/or take part in the school garden committee or club.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Remind students what is being served for lunch and encourage them to eat fruits and vegetables.</td>
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<td>6) Ask students about what they tried at or thought of lunch when they return to the classroom.</td>
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<td>7) Spend time with their students during school meals.</td>
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### PARENT SUPPORT

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<tr>
<th>How many parents participated in this practice in the past year?</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>A few</th>
<th>Many</th>
<th>Most or all</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Raise funds to support nutrition, food-, and garden-based education and the school garden.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Encourage administration and teachers to make time for nutrition, food-, and garden-based education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Assist during nutrition, food-, and garden-based activities (during the school day).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Encourage administration and teachers to institutionalize the school garden and its use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Maintain the garden program (e.g., work in the garden, participate in garden committee/club, help when classes are in the garden).</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Work with food service staff on how to create healthy meals (e.g., sit on a nutrition committee, review menus).</td>
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<tr>
<td>7) Volunteer to help during school meals.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In what ways did this happen in the past year? (choose one)

1) Teachers work deliberately to connect nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based learning to the curriculum.

- No nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based education.
- Nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based education not connected to curriculum.
- Actively worked to connect nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based education to the curriculum (but not connected now).
- Nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based education connected to curriculum (but not specifically designed to meet standards).
- Nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based education connected to curriculum and specifically designed to meet standards in one core subject (e.g., National Common Core Standards [English and Math], Next Generation Science Standards, state-level standards, or local “scope and sequence”).
- Nutrition, food-, and/or garden-based education connected to curriculum and specifically designed to meet standards in 2+ core subjects (same examples above).
The school team should create the Action Plan together. Extra copies can be downloaded from the FoodCorps Toolshed.

**STEP 1 (FALL)** Using your Progress Report (completed last spring at continuing schools and this fall at new schools), choose which goals your team would like to achieve this school year. You must choose at least one goal per area.

**STEP 2 (FALL)** Choose goals that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

**STEP 3 (FALL)** For each goal, decide how your team plans to achieve it.

**STEP 4 (FALL)** Choose which individuals or teams that are responsible for working on each goal. Spread lead roles across the team to share the work. Please make special note if the FoodCorps service member is responsible for leading or playing a major role in accomplishing a goal.


**STEP 6 (SPRING)** Submit your Action Plan update along with your spring Progress Report online by May 31, 2018.

**WHERE TO SUBMIT**
FoodCorps members will receive a submission link via email.

**DEADLINES**
October 31, 2017 and May 31, 2018

**KEEP IN MIND**

The Action Plan is designed to:

- Improve the school food environment over time.
- Help your school team set key schoolwide goals.
- Define success for improving the school food environment during the school year.
- Plan the steps your team will take this year and into the future.
- Decide who will be responsible for leading and supporting each project.

It is important to revisit these goals on a regular basis to check progress and make adjustments as necessary. You can record your team updates in the Status column. At the end of the Action Plan, you will find a space to write notes about long-term plans and ideas for sustainability.

We recommend you complete a paper copy by hand before submitting the online version. After your school team completes the Action Plan in this toolkit, the FoodCorps service member must submit an online version to FoodCorps.
## SCHOOL YEAR GOALS

**Reminder:** School teams must choose at least 1 goal per Progress Report Area. You may include service member requirements (found below) in your Action Plan if you find it useful to include all projects taking place in one document.

### SERVICE MEMBER REQUIREMENTS AT EACH SCHOOL SERVED

1) In collaboration with your healthy school team, facilitate completion of the Healthy School Toolkit by key deadlines.

2) Teach or co-teach ongoing high-quality, hands-on lessons using FoodCorps Lessons or lesson plans from other curricula. (Note: Across all of your schools, you must teach at least 80 unique students for 10+ hours of instruction.)

3) Have a regular presence in the school cafeteria. You may do so by being a positive role model and supporting a positive cafeteria culture, leading cafeteria taste tests, or supporting cafeteria staff with recipe development and promotions.

4) Create and submit a consistent weekly schedule that reflects your service plan goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESS REPORT LETTER(S)</th>
<th>GOAL(S)</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS &amp; TIMELINE</th>
<th>ROLES</th>
<th>RESOURCES NEEDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write Progress Report section(s) by letter for each goal.</td>
<td>Choose at least one goal in each Progress Report area. What does success look like?</td>
<td>What needs to be done? What are the key milestones?</td>
<td>Who is the lead for each goal? Who else will be involved?</td>
<td>What contacts, materials, or resources does the team need?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1) HANDS-ON LEARNING

### 2) HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

### 3) SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

### 4) COMMUNITY SUPPORT
**LONG-TERM PLANS**

*Complete in spring.* As you reflect on your progress this year, discuss the vision you see for these projects and activities in the future. Think about the following questions and write your notes below.

1. **Reflecting on this year’s progress, how might you make these projects and activities sustainable long-term in the future? What would it take to get there?**

2. **What other goals/projects/activities would you like to focus on in the future?**

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<th>1) HANDS-ON LEARNING</th>
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<th>4) COMMUNITY SUPPORT</th>
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INSTRUCTIONS

The Service Member Plan is the place where FoodCorps service members write the major goals for the service term. It is different from the Action Plan, which FoodCorps service members create with each of the schools they serve and may cover goals for the school that the service member is not responsible for leading. The Service Member Plan compiles goals that the FoodCorps service member is leading from all the schools they serve into one place. Additional copies can be downloaded from the FoodCorps Toolshed.

STEP 1 Service member and supervisor meet to review the Action Plans from each of the schools the member serves.

STEP 2 Use the goals you are responsible for leading from each Action Plan to complete the Service Term Goals section.

STEP 3 Complete the remaining sections to plan for your own professional development this term, and to set your Vegetable Preference Survey Sample Group and teaching plans.

STEP 4 Submit your Service Member Plan online by October 31, 2017.

WHERE TO SUBMIT
FoodCorps members will receive a submission link via email.

DEADLINES
October 31, 2017

KEEP IN MIND
It is important to revisit these goals on a regular basis to check progress and make adjustments as necessary. Service site supervisors and service members will review progress toward these goals as part of the service member’s Mid-Term Performance Evaluation in February.

Service members are asked to identify the type of professional development they would like to receive. Please review the full Service Member Core Competencies list on the Toolshed!
## SERVICE TERM GOALS

**GOAL**

What progress does the team want to make? What does success look like?

1) Teach and/or co-teach ongoing high-quality, hands-on lessons. *(required)* Create plan for teaching at least 80 unique students for 10+ hours of instruction across all schools below.

   - Check out [FoodCorps Lessons](#) and [Sprout Scouts](#) to support you in this goal!

2) Have a regular presence in the cafeteria being a positive role model and supporting positive cafeteria culture, leading taste tests, and/or supporting staff with recipe development and promotions. *(required)*

3) 

4) 

5)
Please use this template to submit a weekly schedule that reflects your service plan goals. We encourage you to copy this into your FoodCorps Google Calendar once approved by your supervisor.

Please look at p. 9 for a sample week in the life of a service member schedule for a calendar example. Time blocks you may want to include are: ongoing teaching blocks, cafeteria activities, weekly meetings with your supervisor, before or after-school programs or meal support, planning time, breaks, etc.

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<th>WEEKLY SCHEDULE</th>
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<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
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**Before School Activities** (optional)  
**School Day Activities**  
**Cafeteria Presence**  
**School Day Activities**  
**After-School Activities** (optional)
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR SERVICE

Professional Development Goal
(Must be connected to service activities. Refer to Core Competencies for guidance.)

Plan For Meeting Goal

VEGETABLE PREFERENCE SURVEY SAMPLE GROUP DETAILS

With your supervisor, review the instructions included in your Vegetable Preference Survey Packet. After working with your fellow to determine which of your ongoing classes will participate in the survey, record the group name, school or program name, and plan you intend to follow for ensuring that sample group receives at least 10 hours of nutrition-, food-, and garden-based education. Remember that groups should be 2nd grade or above and have stable attendance with the same students each time.

Class/Group Name | School Name | Plan for Reaching 10+ Hours With This Class/Group
How will you arrange to teach multiple ongoing classes for at least 80 students that last for 10 hours of education or more?

### SERVICE MEMBER & SUPERVISOR WEEKLY CHECK-IN SCHEDULE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day of the Week</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Plan for Setting Check-In Agenda</th>
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School & Community Guide
INSTRUCTIONS

Each service member’s School & Community Guide is a Google Sheet that you access through Google Drive. Your FoodCorps Fellow or Field Office Manager/Coordinator will give you access to your Google Sheet at the start of the service term. The guide has an instruction tab, a tab for each of your schools, and a tab for the community or school district.

**STEP 1** In ongoing conversation with your school teams throughout the year, record key people, activities, and resources at your school(s) and in your community in the online Google Sheet. Additional instructions can be found on the first tab of your Google Sheet.

**STEP 2** Finalize your School & Community Guide by June 30, 2018.

**STEP 3** Download copies, save, and send to your healthy school team(s) and your service site during summer 2018.

**WHERE TO SUBMIT**

Complete your School & Community Guide on the Google Sheet found through your Google Drive account.

**DEADLINE**

June 30, 2018

**KEEP IN MIND**

This guide is a living document that gets passed from FoodCorps member to FoodCorps member as schools work with FoodCorps to achieve their healthy school food environment. Be sure to review this guide regularly throughout the year to ensure it is up to date and accurate.
Resources
THE TOOLSHED

WHAT IS THE TOOLSHED?
The FoodCorps Toolshed is an online resource hub. It includes FoodCorps-specific materials and other relevant and time-tested resources from FoodCorps partners. This searchable database is available to service members, fellows, state partners, and service sites.

HOW DO I USE IT WITH THE HEALTHY SCHOOL TOOLKIT?
The Toolshed is searchable based on FoodCorps’ areas of service. Service members can use it to easily find resources that help them achieve their Action Plan goals. For example, if your team sets a goal to develop a taste-testing program, you can search the Toolshed under “Healthy School Meals” using the keyword “taste tests”. You can also mark a resource as a “favorite” to return to later. Reference your Unlocking the Toolshed handout for more information.

FOODCORPS LESSONS

OVERVIEW
FoodCorps Lessons have been developed for service members to use with their ongoing classes to meet the hands-on lessons requirement. Lessons are organized by grade level, essential question, and season (fall, winter, spring). Although service members are not required to use FoodCorps Lessons (some of our sites and schools already have curriculum they prefer to use), we encourage you to reference these lessons often and use them when possible. We are currently piloting our first batch of lessons and will be collecting feedback on them throughout the service year.

There are six essential questions that guide lessons:

- How does healthy food help us live up to our full potential?
- How do you make healthy food choices?
- Where does food come from?
- How do people grow healthy food?
- How do people prepare healthy food?
- How does food tie to culture and community?

You can only access FoodCorps Lessons on the Toolshed. Use the FoodCorps Lessons page on the Toolshed to search lessons by grade, essential question, or season.
WHAT IS THE GUIDE FOR TEACHING HANDS-ON LESSONS?
This guide was developed for service members as an overview of topics that FoodCorps feels are important to understand while leading hands-on nutrition education lessons. It was specifically designed to accompany FoodCorps Lessons. It is also a useful companion to Sprout Scouts activities. All service members are provided with a printed copy of the guide at National Orientation and it can also be downloaded from the Toolshed. Please use the guide as a quick reference and note the recommended resources included within.

Topics included in the guide are:

- **FoodCorps Lessons**: An overview of how the lessons are structured, essential questions, academic connections, and the “5 Es” used for lesson structure.
- **Customizing Lessons To Climate, Culture and Students’ Needs**: Ideas for adapting FoodCorps Lessons to reflect cultural and seasonal relevance.
- **Preparing To Teach**: Tips for food and materials preparation and leading an organized lesson.
- **Teaching Techniques and Considerations**: Tips for building relationships with teachers, teaching multiple modalities, working with students with diverse needs and abilities, and managing group behavior.
- **Tips for Improving Your Personal Teaching Practice**: How to self-assess and define your teaching style.
- **Safety with Students**: Outdoor safety and safety while cooking with kids.
- **Cooking with Students**: Ideas for sourcing food and minimizing mess.
- **Glossary**: Covers terms commonly used in schools.
GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Community engagement is essential for successful service. It is equally important to understand both how the school you are serving functions as well as the dynamics or relationships within the broader community. Members of your school’s broader community are people that you will rely on to volunteer as taste tests supporters, get involved in family cooking nights, and sign their children up for after-school clubs. As referenced in the Progress Report, community members are not only the parents and caregivers of the students you teach, but they are also the people who will support fundraising efforts, represent the school board, deliver that extra load of soil you need to get your garden growing, and help to maintain the garden in the summer.

Remember to reference your School & Community Guide as one of the key tools for understanding the context for where you serve and how to access local resources. This guide includes words of wisdom from previous service members as well as contact information for key supporters. Be sure to review this resource early in service.

You will also learn about your community as you build your school team (step 2 in this Toolkit.) Refer to p. 13 for a reminder on who to include on your team. In addition to sharing who you are and telling your story, remember that one of the keys to success is listening. Also consider how you can create a space to convene all members of the community. Reference the Facilitation Guide on pp. 56–57 for ideas.

Finally, please remember that you are serving within the context of a broader food system in which people of color and low-income families are more likely to experience diet-related disease and have limited access to healthy food. FoodCorps strives to make change that endures beyond an individual service member’s term of service. In order to make change, ownership of this important work must live not with our corps members or our national organization, but with the school communities we partner with and serve. Please refer to the FoodCorps Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in your FoodCorps Handbook for more information on FoodCorps’ commitment in this area, as well as the community engagement strategies outlined in this section for recommendations on how to serve your school and community through a lens of inclusion.
ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

FoodCorps encourages service members to become familiar with Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) strategies. While needs-based community development emphasizes local deficits and looks to outside organizations for resources (a glass “half empty” approach), asset-based community development focuses on leveraging existing strengths within the community (a glass “half full” approach).

This approach was developed by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann and is supported by the Asset Based Community Development Institute. It emphasizes that solutions to community problems already exist within a community’s assets. This Institute highlights the following principles that guide ABCD strategies:

1. It focuses on community assets and strengths rather than problems and needs (strength-based rather than deficit approach).
2. It identifies and mobilizes individual and community assets, skills and passions.
3. It is community driven – “building communities from the inside out.”
4. It is relationship driven.

Service members can play an important role using these strategies to create change in the school food environment. As you develop your school team, keep in mind that all community members bring something to the table. Remember to authentically ask questions and listen to the needs of the community to inform the development of both schoolwide goals and your service goals.

ASSET MAPPING

Creating a community asset map can help your team identify community resources to leverage and individuals to engage while developing your school’s Action Plan. Steps to developing an asset map include:

- Gather and identify community partners (can be a part of Step 2, Build Your Team).
- Define your community boundaries.
- Define what type of assets you will include on your map.
- List the assets of individuals and groups in your community.
- Develop a map with your team that shows the assets in your community.

Asset mapping is a collaborative process that encourages community participation. During group conversation, it can be helpful to have a visual map with assets included on it. However, remember that not all community assets can be added to a map. You will also need to make sure that you have the right people at the table. And you will need to do thorough research to ensure that you are identifying all assets for the purpose of your goals. Refer to the Toolkit for additional resources on this topic.
COMMUNICATION

Communicating effectively and appropriately with people in your community is important to building successful relationships. As you build your school team, consider these tips for being a thoughtful communicator:

› Are there any language barriers that might shift the manner in which you communicate? If you do not speak a community member’s language, how might you find the resources to communicate as best and as thoughtfully as you can?
› Sometimes a school secretary or contacts at the district level can help you to find local resources to communicate across multiple languages.
› Learn the best methods of contacting community members since not all community members will have access to a phone or email. Use in-person conversations to ask the best way to stay in regular contact.
› It is important to speak to community members in a way that respects their narratives and stories. Be mindful to listen, refrain from making assumptions about an individual’s background and needs, and always follow up with thoughtful and respectful questions, if needed.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS AND ACCESS

Understanding the demographics of your community is key to ensuring that you are offering culturally appropriate food in hands-on lessons and thoughtful, accessible resources to your students and their caregivers. Keep in mind that statistics are a one-dimensional method to get to know a community and that in order to learn more, listening to people’s personal accounts is always best. Please refer to resources under the “Culture, Equity and Race” section of the Toolshed to learn more about how institutional racism impacts community members’ access food.

Research the following in order to better understand your community demographics on a broad level:

› Percentage of students who utilize free or reduced school lunch programs
› Average household income
› Transportation access to groceries
› Languages spoken within your community
› Percentage of people in the community who utilize the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
COMMUNITY HISTORY
Take time to understand the history of the community you are serving. If you are serving in a community where you have already lived, are there areas you are not familiar with? Consider the perspective you bring and make an effort to spend time in areas that you don’t know. Reach out to individuals who can share a variety of perspectives. Learn the local narratives that might not be formally documented. How have neighborhoods changed? What are the local gatherings, festivals, and celebrations? Where have people of various cultures traditionally congregated? Is there community trauma that you should learn about and navigate with compassion? Who are the local leaders, elected officials and people with influence? Who are the people who may not have influence but are equally important to engage? It takes time to learn about any community and setting intentions about your strategy for doing this is important.

LOCAL GROCERY AND AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE
Understanding your city or town’s local agriculture context is incredibly helpful to understand what people eat and where they get their food. Tips include:

› What does local food production look like? Are there farms you might visit? What do they grow and sell?
› Are there local farmers markets? Do they accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds, EBT cards, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and offer produce vouchers and rewards that you students’ families might use?
› Explore a variety of places to get food within your city or town. Where do locals go? This can include farmers markets, grocery stores, and corner stores.
As you engage with members of your broader community and school team, remember that building relationships with your school principal, cafeteria staff, and teachers are especially important. Consider the following tips.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRINCIPAL**

The principal is the key decision-maker or “gatekeeper” at every school. This person supervises the school’s instructional program, maintains order and discipline, enforces federal, state, and district rules, policies, and laws, evaluates and supports teachers, and represents the school to parents and the community. It will be important to establish a good relationship with the principal in order to have impact in the classroom and garden. Refer to the Sample Scripts on pp. 58–62 to help guide initial conversations with the principal, and ensure they have a solid understanding of your role during FoodCorps service. Also remember to include the principal as a key person to share successes with, as referenced in the Tips for Celebrating and Sharing Success section on p. 63.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CAFETERIA STAFF**

Building a relationship with cafeteria staff is one of the most important things you can do in the Healthy School Meals area of service. These staff are in charge of navigating child nutrition programs—including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and others—to develop a menu for students, and they have great influence in how students make choices in the cafeteria line. Just as a teacher sets the tone for expectations in the classroom, cafeteria staff influence the tone during meals. Building good relationships with cafeteria staff is key to everything from leading successful taste tests to your ability to borrow equipment such as trays needed for classroom-based cooking lessons. Cafeteria staff are sometimes undervalued within a school’s culture, so it is important to acknowledge their hard work and essential role in student health. Here are some tips for success:

- Spend time in the kitchen to build relationships.
- Collaboratively set expectations for working in the cafeteria.
- Be consistent and reliable with how you show up to help.
- Listen to challenges, ask questions and identify opportunities for your service to support these efforts.
- Give assistance (not demands).
- Be humble, not the expert.
- Acknowledge barriers AND successes.
- Connect and relate personally.
- Eat the food served in the cafeteria.
- Be appreciative!
As you are building your relationships, consider asking these questions:

- How can we stay in touch? (Email? What is the best time to call?)
- What are your important kitchen logistics?
- What foods do you want to serve?
- How do you plan your menu?
- How are contracts and decisions made?
- Are there opportunities for a FoodCorps service member to have a daily presence in the cafeteria? If so, how would this be helpful?

Just as it’s important to understand how learning standards influence classroom curriculum, a key part of “doing your research” when building relationships with cafeteria staff is understanding the National School Lunch Program and National School Breakfast Program. These programs provide the basic structure and parameters under which cafeteria staff operate. Find out more on the Toolshed.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

It is important to get to know the teachers in your school, as you will often be in their classrooms leading hands-on lessons. The more you can develop a partnership and level of trust, the easier it will be to meet your goals. Here are some tips for building relationships with classroom teachers:

- Lead with empathy and remember that every teacher cares about their students. Teachers have a lot on their plate and it is important to recognize their hard work and remember that we are here to help enhance their students’ experience in and out of the classroom.
- What are the “norms” of the classroom and what is their behavior management structure? What strategies and systems does the teacher use to reward positive and redirect inappropriate behaviors, and how can you emulate these practices?
- Spend time in the break room or teacher lounge and chat with teachers during their planning period (although be aware this is valuable teacher time!)
- Ask to observe a lesson. Explain that you’re new at this and eager to learn from an experienced educator. Also ask them to observe you and give critical feedback.
- Understand the daily schedule for teachers. What times are best to meet? Are there grade level or curriculum meetings you could join?
- Understand what guides teachers. What are the broad school goals and curriculum parameters and standards that inform their classroom instruction? How is their performance being evaluated and can you help them succeed?
- What concepts and skills is each teacher particularly passionate about? What is their favorite thing to teach?
- Is the teacher willing to review the lesson you’re thinking of teaching before you do it? Do they have advice on how to ensure it goes smoothly?
What responsibilities does the teacher have besides leading their class? For instance, do they act as a recess monitor or participate on a special school committee? How can you be a resource to teachers during their often maxed-out time?

What are topics the teacher might not feel confident or comfortable teaching? How can you provide support and help them, just as they’re helping you?

What motivates each teacher? What do they enjoy about their students? What can you learn from watching them teach?

How does each teacher prefer to communicate? Do they like to hear from you by email, phone, or dropping by their desk?
GOAL-SETTING MEETINGS
Once you know the group of people who will be working together, consider how you will convene this group or how you will join an existing group to connect with all the right people. This decision is a key part of Step 4a: Set Schoolwide Goals.

YOUR ROLE MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Facilitating or leading a meeting
- Leading a presentation on your role and how to use the FoodCorps Healthy School Toolkit
- Helping to set goals with the group or sharing your ideas with an existing group

MEETING PLANNING TIPS

- Location: Where will you be meeting? How is the room set up?
- Food: Bring food! Well-fed people are happy and engaged people.
- Notes: Consider asking someone in the group to be the note taker so that you can focus on facilitation. How will they take notes? On a flip chart or chalkboard? (Recommendation: Transfer notes to a computer after the meeting.)
- Timing: Start on time and end on time.

MEETING AGENDA TIPS

- Decide on the purpose and outcome of the meeting. Make sure to share them with the group. The purpose is the broad meeting goal, and the outcome is what you hope to get done by the end of the meeting.
- Consider what you will cover during the meeting. Is the goal of the meeting to collect information, have a discussion, make a decision, or all three? How often will the group meet? What can realistically be accomplished within the time you have? Are you completing the Progress Report as a group? Are you going over past Progress Report results and developing an Action Plan?
- If the group doesn’t already know each other, lead a short icebreaker activity. For example, ask participants to share their favorite fruit or veggie, or favorite food memory.
- Use a variety of information-sharing techniques, depending on group size. For example: “Round Robin,” “Think, Pair, Share,” and “Shout Out/Popcorn.”
- Remember to leave time to discuss next steps!

FACILITATING MEETINGS
When you facilitate a meeting, you are the person guiding the conversation. If you are new to facilitation and will be wearing the facilitation “hat” at any point, keep the following tips in mind.
FACILITATION TIPS

› Practice neutrality: let your own opinions take a back seat so that you can take a neutral point of view and guide the conversation according to what other participants think and feel.
› Develop a way for people to participate in the conversation so that everyone’s ideas can be heard.
› Help the group come to an agreement or compromise so that they can make a decision.

ACTION PLANNING GUIDE

Work with your team to complete the FoodCorps Action Plan (see pp. 34–47). This tool is designed to help your group focus on a one-school-year time frame. Refer to the Progress Report as the group develops the Action Plan. What things did you notice the school is doing really well? Where is there room for improvement? What areas are most ripe for change? Where do team members have the most energy? After completing the Action Plan, you can move on to the Service Member Plan.
FOR FOODCORPS MEMBERS TO USE WITH SCHOOL TEAMS THAT HAVE NOT ALREADY COMPLETED THE PROGRESS REPORT

Please refer to this script any time you are introducing the Healthy School Toolkit to a new person or group. Remember to share your broad goals, ask questions, and be open to ways you might work with your school community.

INTRODUCTION

Thanks for meeting with me today! I really appreciate your time and the opportunity to connect with you. I’d like to take a few minutes to share who I am, a little bit about FoodCorps, and how I hope to collaborate with this school team.

WHO AM I?

I’m a FoodCorps service member. I’m part of a nationwide team of AmeriCorps leaders who have committed to spending the next school year bringing positive change to school food environments around the country. I partner closely with the school I serve [IF HOSTED BY A COMMUNITY-BASED NON-PROFIT, ALSO ADD] and along with my local service site. We will work together to outline our specific goals for the year together.

OVERVIEW OF FOODCORPS

FoodCorps’ mission is: “Together with communities, FoodCorps serves to connect kids to healthy food in school.” We do that by partnering with school communities and helping to create healthy school food environments with staying power. Our definition of a healthy school food environment has four things: hands-on learning, healthy school meals, schoolwide culture of health, and community support. Staying power means a healthy school food environment stays strong after FoodCorps leaves that school. As a service member, I’m here to learn from this school community what change you want to make and help meet those goals.

EXPLAIN THE HEALTHY SCHOOL TOOLKIT

[HAVE A PRINTED COPY WITH YOU] Schools that have a FoodCorps service member use the Healthy School Toolkit to work together toward a common vision for creating a healthy school food environment over the years they are with the program.

This toolkit is a process and set of resources designed to:

- Take a snapshot of your current school food environment
- Guide your school community in creating a vision for the future
- Document your action plan for working toward that vision
- Evaluate and celebrate your school community’s history and progress over time
There are several steps to the toolkit that we will follow and refer to throughout the year. Here is an overview of how we will use the toolkit. [READ THE FOLLOWING STEPS AND REMEMBER TO REFER TO A PAPER COPY OF THIS TOOLKIT WHEN EXPLAINING EACH STEP!]

**STEP 1:** Get Started
**STEP 2:** Build Your Team
**STEP 3:** Understand the Current School Food Environment (new schools complete + submit the Progress Report in the fall)
**STEP 4A:** Set Schoolwide Goals (all schools complete + submit the Action Plan)
**STEP 4B:** Set FoodCorps Member Goals (all service members complete + submit the Service Member Plan)
**STEP 5:** Check Your Progress
**STEP 6:** Celebrate Success & Look Forward (all school complete + submit the Progress Report and Action Plan in the spring)

EXPLAIN THE HEALTHY SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT
[REFER TO THE PROGRESS REPORT WITHIN THIS TOOLKIT] I’d like to share more about one key part of the toolkit, the Healthy School Progress Report. The Progress Report outlines practices in four areas (hands-on learning, healthy school meals, schoolwide culture of health, and community support) that are important elements of a healthy school food environment. We will use this tool to take a snapshot of our current school food environment based on what practices we currently do. Once we take this snapshot, we will work together to choose where we want to make improvements and create a yearlong plan for action.

The Progress Report is NOT a test. It is simply a tool to help our school learn and plan. No school is expected to get a “perfect score.” Instead, our goal is to use what we find from the Progress Report to set goals and develop an action plan for the year. We can complete the Progress Report in two different ways: (1) at one time during a meeting with all of the key people who can answer questions that complete the Progress Report, or (2) by having one person connect individually with several key people who can answer questions that complete the Progress Report.

ASK QUESTIONS!
Now that I’ve explained the Healthy School Toolkit, I’d like to explore how I can best support our school and answer any questions you might have.

[CONSIDER ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS]
1) Can we brainstorm who the right people are in this school community that we can work with to complete the Progress Report?
2) What do you think is the best way for us to complete the Progress Report? Should we walk through it in this group? Or, split up the questions so that I or someone else can talk to people one-on-one?

3) My hope is that I can work with this same group to develop an Action Plan that outlines our goals for this school year, and talk about how I can be a part of supporting a team to meet these goals. Our aim when developing the Action Plan will be to set goals in each of the Progress Report key areas and to share responsibility across many members of the team. Once we complete the Progress Report, what do you think is the best way to develop our goals and action plan with all the right people?

LEAVE IN AGREEMENT

Thanks again for talking with me! Here is my understanding of your recommendations. [REPEAT RECOMMENDATIONS BACK TO PARTICIPANTS] Is there anything that you are unclear about that we’ve discussed?
FOR FOODCORPS MEMBERS TO USE WITH SCHOOL TEAMS THAT HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED THE PROGRESS REPORT LAST SPRING

Refer to this script any time you are meeting with a group that completed the toolkit the previous school year. However, remember that this is a new school year! Be open to revisiting previous goals, asking questions, and considering new ways you might work with your school community.

INTRODUCTION

Thanks for meeting with me today! I really appreciate the opportunity to connect with you. I’d like to take some time to think about the upcoming school year and consider how all of our work last year will inform our goals for this year. [IF YOU ARE MEETING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO THE TEAM OR UNFAMILIAR WITH FOODCORPS, COVER THE “WHO AM I?” AND “OVERVIEW OF FOODCORPS” PARTS OF SCRIPT #1]

TOOLKIT REFRESHER

[PROVIDE A REFRESHER ON THE TOOLKIT AND DISCUSS HOW USING IT WENT LAST YEAR. BRING A PRINTED COPY WITH YOU TO SHARE.] You will probably remember that we used the Healthy School Toolkit last year to work together toward a common vision for creating a healthy school food environment. Let’s talk through the steps of the Toolkit. As a team, let’s talk now about what we might do differently this year.

TOOLKIT STEPS

[GO OVER THE TOOLKIT STEPS BELOW WITH THE GROUP. REMEMBER TO REFER TO THE PRINTED COPY AS YOU GO ALONG.]

STEP 1: Get Started (review last year’s Action Plan and School & Community Guide) — I have last year’s Action Plan which was created last fall and updated in the spring. I also have notes about people who were involved in our work last year, events that we did, and key community resources. Let’s review these notes as a refresher on what the school accomplished.

STEP 2: Build Your Team — Let’s discuss who was involved in the team last year. Have any roles shifted? Are there new team members to consider?

STEP 3: Understand the Current School Food Environment (review last year’s Progress Report) — This fall, I’d like to review the Progress Report results from last spring, reflect on where we saw a lot of progress, and talk about areas that could be further supported in our school community. I want to remind our group that the Progress Report is a tool to help our school learn and plan. No school is expected to get a “perfect score.” With that in mind, let’s use the Progress Report results to set goals and develop an Action Plan for this year. We’ll discuss how what happened last year can inform our action planning for this school year.
**STEP 4A: Set Schoolwide Goals** (complete + submit the Action Plan) – We will want to review the Action Plan from last year and consider which goals were achieved, and which goals we want to be included in our new Action Plan this year. A reminder: our aim should be to set goals in each of the Progress Report areas and share responsibility across many members of the team.

**STEP 4B: Set FoodCorps Member Goals** (complete + submit the Service Member Plan) – This is something that I will do together with my [site supervisor].

**STEP 5: Check Your Progress** – Before we go, let’s discuss how often and when we should meet this year. [SET DATES TO CONTINUE TO MEET THROUGHOUT THE YEAR]

**STEP 6: Celebrate Success & Look Forward** (complete + submit the Progress Report and Action Plan) – We will want to be sure to share what we’re doing with the school and community! How should we do this?

**ASK QUESTIONS!**

Now that we’ve reviewed the toolkit, I’d like to explore how I can best support our school and answer any questions you might have.

[CONSIDER ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTION]

My hope is that I can work with this same group to review the Progress Report, develop an Action Plan that outlines our goals for this school year, and talk about how I can be a part of supporting the team to meet these goals. After we review the Progress Report, what do you think is the best way to develop our goals and our Action Plan with all the right people?

**LEAVE IN AGREEMENT**

Thanks again for talking with me! Here is my understanding of your recommendations. [REPEAT RECOMMENDATIONS BACK TO PARTICIPANTS] Is there anything we discussed that you are unclear about?
As you go through each step of the toolkit you will be doing a lot of looking forward: planning, working toward goals, and evaluating progress. Remember to take time to celebrate each success, big or small! It will be important to build in time throughout the school year for your team to take a step back and look at what you have achieved so far. These moments are important for group morale and to promote teamwork. It is also important to share your success with the broader school community. The more you are sharing the positive results of your efforts, the more support you will gain in the long run. Below are some tips:

**CELEBRATE THE SMALL THINGS**

What may seem small is actually big! When you come to a seemingly small milestone, like building the first raised bed, growing the first tomato, or successfully navigating the first cafeteria taste test, share these successes. People will be excited to learn about what you are doing! Take photos, get quotes, and document your milestones. Post updates in the hallways, include them in the school newsletter and morning announcements, and share successes at schoolwide meetings and family events.

**SHARE YOUR STORY**

Once you reach these milestones, connect with the local newspaper, radio, or TV stations. Highlight your success along with your overall goals. Feel-good stories are always popular with local news media, and you never know who may want to lend a hand (or provide a donation) after they learn about your efforts.

**INVOLVE STUDENTS**

It is important for kids to have a sense of ownership and responsibility in building a healthy school food environment. Ask students about what they are proud of and what successes they want to share. They will be the best at representing their personal efforts in the larger team goals. They’re also very popular with local media!
The following pages provide an overview of the four areas of best practices in the Healthy School Progress Report. This summary is followed by the evidence for each practice.

**SCHOOLS AS HEALTHY PLACES**

Making each of our nation’s schools a place that teaches and models healthy eating patterns is an important public health, educational, and societal goal. FoodCorps believes that children should be educated to have the motivation, knowledge, and skills to make food choices that promote health, ecological sustainability, and social justice. Imagine the potential impact if all schools made healthy food the easy and desired choice. And imagine if students learned about food—from how it was grown, to food workers’ rights, to its impact on health. This shift is critical for the next generation to be able to decrease healthcare costs, mitigate climate change, and move toward a more equitable society (Koch, 2016). Schools can accomplish this through creating strong and comprehensive wellness policies. The updated rule for school wellness policies, released in July 2016, call for wellness policies to have specific plans for nutrition education and to have community engagement in developing and implementing school wellness policies. (Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 2016).

**HEALTH ALONGSIDE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

FoodCorps believes every school should be a healthy school, and every child—regardless of race, place or class—deserves to be well nourished, and ready to learn. Over the last decade, schools have demonstrated that programming that promotes academic performance and programming that promotes health can co-exist and be successful. “Concurrent with the increased emphasis on standardized test performance, programs involving school meals, nutrition education, and school gardens have arisen to creatively address health concerns” (Berezowitz et al, 2015 p. 509). The new Federal education policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act, supports increasing academic performance alongside promoting health with suggestions for school policies, practices, and curricula. Despite this national objective, school administrators and teachers often view the addition of health-related programming in opposition to programming that promotes academic achievement (Berezowitz et al, 2015; Leardo, 2016). Thus, we need a greater understanding of the “possible synergies between dietary and academic outcomes resulting from school-based interventions aimed at improving student health” (Berezowitz et al, p. 508). One way to accomplish this goal is through nutrition experts working with school administrators to increase do research that can determine if creating hands-on learning experiences in the classroom and garden, healthy school meals, and a schoolwide culture of health has the potential to enhance, not compromise, academic achievement. (Leardo, 2016). A review of garden education shows that it can improve both health outcomes and academic achievement. (Berezowitz et al, 2015).
FOUR AREAS OF THE HEALTHY SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Hands-on learning in the classroom and garden includes nutrition, food, and garden education that builds excitement and teaches skills about eating well. It includes activities such as classroom lessons, garden activities, cooking sessions, tastings, field trips, and visits from farmers and others who work in the food system.

While FoodCorps is broadly interested in students eating more health-promoting, ecologically sustainable, whole, local, culturally meaningful, and socially just foods, the focus of the Progress Report is on best practices that will specifically help to increase students’ consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Evidence shows that several factors can increase students’ consumption of fruits and vegetables:

- First, the education has to be about fruits and vegetables, such as cooking, growing, and tasting them. As many classes as possible need to receive this education, aiming for the goal of at least 10 sessions in the classroom or garden per class. Fruit and vegetable consumption is also increased when the education:
  - enhances motivation by increasing students’ personal desire to want to eat fruits and vegetables, through teaching about their benefits and creating positive social norms;
  - teaches students knowledge and skills about how to eat more fruits and vegetables (e.g., how to create a colorful salad at school lunch); and
  - creates student action plans that help students plan how they will eat more fruits and vegetables in their day-to-day lives.
- Second, field trips and visits from farmers or chefs that provide exciting, hands-on experience with fruits and vegetables can help students consume more.
- Third, establishing and maintaining a school garden as an educational space can help increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.
HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

School meals are the most consistent experience that students have with food in schools. Students learn a lot about eating, food, meal etiquette, and the value of health during school meals—whether this learning is intentionally planned or not. Many practices can create a cafeteria atmosphere conducive to eating fruits and vegetables. Evidence shows that several factors can promote fruit and vegetable consumption in the school cafeteria setting:

- First, the cafeteria should have a meal line that is set up to make eating fruits and vegetables the easy and default option.
- Second, the cafeteria should have a salad bar.
- Third, the cafeteria atmosphere should be conducive to eating.
- Fourth, the cafeteria should provide opportunities for students to taste fruits and vegetables served in school meals.
- Fifth, the cafeteria should serve and promote local and seasonal foods.

SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

Evidence shows that for students to eat enough fruits and vegetables, they need an environment in which fruits and vegetables, as well as other healthy foods are available, valued, and encouraged.

- First fruits and vegetables should be available at all classroom and school celebrations, and events. They should also be used as snacks and rewards instead of other less healthy foods.
- Second, the school promotes fruits and vegetables through posters, signage, and announcements.
- Third, fundraisers should focus on non-food items or if they do include food, make them healthy options.
- Fourth, educate family, school staff, and community so they encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables. The combination of encouragement from many sources is powerful.

A schoolwide culture of health also needs to decrease access to unhealthy foods. Whenever and wherever food is offered in school, make the healthy choices easy, accessible, celebrated, respected, and normative.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community support is the necessary foundation for a healthy school food environment to have staying power. Staying power means a healthy school food environment stays strong after FoodCorps leaves a school. It is strongest when people from all parts of the school community work together.
**Evidence for Best Practices in the Progress Report**

**HANDS-ON LEARNING**

### A. Ongoing cooking, tasting & garden-based lessons

*Within section A there are 17 best practices (a–q). Evidence for these best practices is divided into 4 groups:*

- **tastings and cooking**
- **enhance motivation**
- **knowledge and skills**
- **action plans**

#### EVIDENCE:

Studies on nutrition education find that classroom lessons that teach children about eating fruits and vegetables have increased consumption of fruits and vegetables (Kann et al, 2007; Contento, 2016; Evans, 2012), as have nutrition education lessons in the garden (McAleese and Ratkin, 2007; Ratcliffe et al 2009; Wright and Rowell 2010; Langellotto and Gupta 2012).

Nutrition education is more effective when it is “behaviorally focused” (Contento, 2016; Roseman et al 2011). This means that what students learn and practice in the class should directly address the behaviors we want them to develop. If we want students to eat more fruits and vegetables, teaching the benefits of eating them, along with actually growing, cooking, and eating fruits and vegetables, has the potential to be more effective than teaching more generally about food groups and a healthy diet.

**More lessons, more behavior change:** Research has found that programs with more total lessons, as well as lessons spaced over a longer period of time (e.g., over most or all of the school year) are more likely to be effective at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (Sobel-Goldberg et al, 2013; Shaya, 2008; Van Cauwenbergh et al, 2010). There also seems to be evidence that garden-based interventions that include more overall visits to the garden are more likely to increase fruit and vegetable consumption (McAleese and Rankin, 2007; Ratcliffe et al, 2009; Wright and Rowell, 2010; Langellotto and Gupta, 2012). [Information on number of lessons is collected in School Information, questions 15–16.]

### tastings and cooking

**a. opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables through tastings or cooking**

Evidence from research has shown that opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables in educational sessions helps students to like fruits and vegetables more as well as eat more of them. Studies have found that **tastings** with fruits and vegetables make students like fruits and vegetables more (Wong et al, 2012; Chu et al, 2013). Other studies have found that **cooking** fruits and vegetables leads to increased consumption (Liquori et al, 1998; Baxter and Thompson, 2002; Cullen et al, 2003; Brug et al, 2008; Di Noia and Byrd-Bredbenner, 2014).

### enhance motivation

**b. positive social norms**
**c. decrease fears of trying new foods**
**d. health benefits**
**e. compare nutritional value**
**k. appreciation of culture**
**l. appreciation of plants**
**p. how our “farm to plate” food system works**
**q. equal access to healthy foods**

Evidence from research has shown that **enhancing motivation**—that is, getting people inspired and excited to change—is important for getting students to eat more fruits and vegetables (Contento, 2016). In most nutrition education research studies, many of these enhance motivation best practices are combined together and studies as a “theory” for changing behavior. One such theory, which has been used extensively in school-based nutrition education, is called “social cognitive theory.” A review that looked at many studies using social cognitive theory found this theory is modestly successful at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in school-aged students (Gaines and Turner, 2009).

Social cognitive theory has also been used specifically in evaluations of farm to school (Roche et al 2012; Berlin et al 2013). The Roche study (2012) found that: 1) decreasing fear of trying new foods (neophobia); 2) increasing perception that it is socially desirable and acceptable to eat vegetables and fruits (social norms); and 3) increasing confidence in abilities to eat fruits and vegetables (self-efficacy) are important for increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables. This study also found that students respond very well to having “food system knowledge” as the base of their nutrition education. The Berlin article (2013) suggests including all of these best practices (from social cognitive theory) in farm to school programming.
**HANDS-ON LEARNING** (cont.)

**enhance motivation (cont.)**
- b. positive social norms
- c. decrease fears of trying new foods
- d. health benefits
- e. compare nutritional value
- k. appreciation of culture
- l. appreciation of plants
- p. how our “farm to plate” food system works
- q. equal access to healthy foods

Additionally, two more recent analyses of many nutrition education programs in schools have suggested that using a combination of these best practices for enhancing motivation would help to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, and they suggest that doing so can increase students’ confidence (also called self-efficacy) in their own ability to eat fruits and vegetables (Di Noia and Bryd-Bredbenner, 2014; Diep et al, 2014).

**knowledge and skills**
- f. make half their plate fruits and vegetables
- g. focus eating more fruits and vegetables at school lunch (where to find them, how to build a colorful salad)
- j. share recipes students can take home and prepare with their families
- m. work in the garden
- n. harvest from the garden
- o. composting

Evidence from research has also shown that providing knowledge (e.g., making half your plate fruits and vegetables can help you be healthy) and procedural skills (how to make a colorful salad from the salad bar) help to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables (Contento, 2016).

One research study that directly linked school lunch to classroom education found that students who prepared vegetable recipes from the school lunch menu in their classrooms were more likely to eat these foods in school lunch than either students who received education about the importance of vegetables but which did not include cooking or students who received no education (Liquori et al, 1998). Another research study found that when students are given recipes to prepare at home, those children who prepared the recipes with their families had positively changed their eating behaviors (Cullen et al, 2007). Additionally, a qualitative evaluation of a kitchen garden program in Australia indicated that when students were involved in kitchen garden activities, their willingness to try new fruits and vegetables increased, and many children reported talking about their in school cooking experiences with their families (Gibbs et al, 2013).

A recent review (Berezowitz C, Bontrager Yoder, & Schoeller, 2015) of 12 well-designed school garden studies found that all 12 studies improved predictors that may lead to students eating more vegetables. Predictors include: willingness to taste, preferences, attitudes, choosing fruit over candy or chips, knowledge. Seven of these studies measured consumption of fruits and vegetables through self-reports, with five of these studies showing improvement. Four studies measured whether garden interventions improved academic achievement, with two showing improvement of science achievement and one showing improvement of math scores. This review provides evidence that gardens may help to improve both academic and health outcomes.

**action plans**
- h. setting goals
- i. monitoring progress toward the goals

Evidence from research has also shown that when students create student action plans, they are more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables (Contento 2016; Armitage 2004; Cullen et al, 2001; Shilts et al, 2004).

Student action plans have been found to be most effective when they have three parts: 1) setting a goal; 2) listing steps for how to achieve the goal; and 3) tracking progress toward the goal (Contento, 2016). For guidance on creating students action plans, see Student Action Plans: Successfully Changing Eating Behavior in the FoodCorps Toolshed.
### HANDS-ON LEARNING (cont.)

| B. Field trips and farmer & chef visits | EVIDENCE: While there is minimal research that specifically examines the benefits of field trips, farmer and chef visits, these activities fit into the best practices of nutrition education because they are inherently motivational, inspirational, and memorable (Contento, 2015). One study concluded that role models who encourage students to eat fruits and vegetable at school lunch can increase intake. (Perry et al, 2004). Additionally, there is one study that examined a combination of Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) and farm to school, operationalized in this study as a tour of a farm. All students received CATCH and some students participated in the farm tour. Self-reported fruit and vegetable intake was the same for students who received the farm tour as those who did not, but a plate waste examination of school lunch showed some evidence that students who received the farm tour were consuming more fruits and vegetables and wasting less food. (Moss et al, 2013). Working with farmers and chefs can also be a way to increase gardening and cooking skills. Additionally, many of the 17 best practices in “A” (above) can be incorporated into field trips to help these experiences lead to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, in addition to being exciting and fun. |
| C. School garden development & maintenance | EVIDENCE: When garden programs are integrated into the core curriculum, it enables teachers to spend more time in the garden (Lineberger, 1998). Only when “teachers perceive school gardens as outdoor classrooms critical to teaching the skills and content they’re responsible for imparting” will students be able to spend classroom time in the garden” (Hirschi, 2012). Research on how school gardens become well-integrated into schools has shown that in order to have a garden woven into the curriculum and become part of the school culture, what must be done first is to establish the resources and support needed for the garden (e.g., networks and partner organizations, budget and funding, administrative support, professional development, and organizational structure), followed by establishing the physical garden (e.g., planning and establishing the garden; determining garden characteristics; having a plan for garden care and upkeep; increasing crop vitality and diversity; and conducting evaluations and collecting feedback) (Burt, et al 2016). |
## HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

### D. Salad bar & lunch line design

**EVIDENCE:** The Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs has conducted numerous studies that led to the creation of a research-based guide for creating lunchrooms where students make healthier choices (Smarter Lunchroom Self Assessment, 2014).

Research has found that students are more likely to take fruit when it is close to the point of check out (Just and Wansink, 2010).

Research on vegetables in school lunch has found that consumption is increased when vegetable are pre-plated trays. Consumption is also increased when students have a choice between two different vegetables (Just and Wansink, 2010). Giving vegetable recipes attractive names and displaying these names on a menu board can help increase students taking and eating vegetables at school lunch (Wansink et al, 2012). Introducing a salad bar in the lunchroom has lead to increased fruit and vegetable intake (Adams, 2005; Slusser et al, 2007). Evidence suggests that schools should place the salad bar as part of the lunch line that student automatically walk by, instead of locating it further from the lunch line where students can mindlessly pass by or miss it (Just and Wansink, 2010).

### E. Taste tests

**EVIDENCE:** In the nutrition education literature, there is evidence that providing tastings of fruits and vegetables can increase preferences and consumption (Baxter and Thompson 2002; Cullen et al 2003; Brug et al, 2008; Di Noia and Byrd-Bredbenner, 2014; Wong et al, 2012; Chu et al. 2013).

### F. Cafeteria role modeling

**EVIDENCE:** One well-designed study on a promotional program based around role modeling (with both people and cartoon characters) found that fruit and vegetable consumption significantly increased above baseline levels over two years (Hoffman et al, 2010). Additionally, having school staff, educators, and school administrators serving as role models "not just in academics but also with regard to lifestyles" is an important part of a comprehensive school wellness policy (Public Health Law Center, 2008). A qualitative study on middle school students found that the role models who have the most influence over which fruits and vegetables the students eat are those role models they can relate to, such as friends, music stars, and athletes (Cullen et al, 2005).

### G. Local sourcing & recipe development

**EVIDENCE:** The foundation of the farm to school movement is to provide students with experiences eating local foods (Taylor and Johnson, 2013). Although there is not much research that directly links serving more local food to increasing fruit and vegetables consumption, tastings of local foods can build increased preferences, which can increase consumption. Local foods can also be used to enhance motivation, making connections with where it was grown to get children excited about eating the food.

### H. Breakfast & after-school meal promotion

**EVIDENCE:** Promoting breakfast has many benefits. “Study after study shows that when children participate in the School Breakfast Program, it leads to improved dietary intake, reduced food insecurity, better test performance, and fewer distractions in the classroom throughout the morning” (FRAC, 2016). Research interventions that promote breakfast to students have found that these interventions can increase the number of days a week that students report eating breakfast (Hoelscher et al, 2016; Pbert et al, 2016). There very limited studies on school breakfast consumption and its relation to fruit and vegetable intake. One study found that students (K–12) who ate school breakfast were more likely than non-participants to consume fruit, albeit primarily 100% fruit juice (Condon, Crepinsek, Fox, 2009).
## SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

| I. Celebrations, events, rewards & snacks | EVIDENCE: The food that is available at classroom and school events can have a powerful influence over students’ eating habits (Briefel, 2009; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program, 2014). Research has show that decreasing how often foods—such as sugar sweetened beverages—are available can decrease intake of these less healthful foods, while simultaneously increasing the availability of fruits and vegetables can increase student intake of these healthier items. |
| J. Schoolwide healthy food promotion | EVIDENCE: Decreasing the marketing and promotion of less healthful foods while promoting healthful foods can help to promote positive eating behaviors (Institute of Medicine, 2005). One study showed that a social marketing campaign could be a method for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (Thompson, 2007). Others have stated that combining social marketing, with creating a positive physical environment, can also be a way to reinforce the education and experiences students have with healthy food. |
| K. Fundraisers |  |
| L. Family, staff & community education | EVIDENCE: A review of what makes nutrition education programs effective at changing behavior found that family involvement, particularly for children in elementary grades was effective at changing behavior (Roseman, 2011). In order to create a culture of health in schools, both administrators and teachers need to be receptive to and embrace a culture of health (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Additionally, administrative and teacher support has been found to be a key factor in developing successful school garden programs (Ozer, 2006). |
### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M. Healthy school food champion &amp; team support</th>
<th>EVIDENCE: Research on 21 schools that had extensive nutrition education concluded that schools are likely to continue programming if they address four key elements (Porter, Koch, Contento, 2013):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. School administration support</td>
<td>1. building motivation, buy-in and interest across all members of the school community through framing the programming as fitting into a whole child approach, using the programming to build school identity and pride and to set the school apart;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Food service director/manager support</td>
<td>2. helping schools choose the right programs that will fit into their school mission, structure, schedules, and resources;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Teacher support</td>
<td>3. expand schools’ capacity for nutrition education through engaging the principal and school community members, developing multiple champions or teams of champions, fit the programs into the school routines, and establish clear roles of who does what; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Parent support</td>
<td>4. help schools legitimize the programming through engaging all school community members in active roles; weaving the programming into the school curriculum; and making certain curriculum, experiences or programs a rite of passage for certain grade students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Making curriculum connections</td>
<td>These are addressed through the community support questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In one study researchers found that issues related to staying power improved food availability in schools. Specifically, this study found that elementary schools with higher nutritional capacity and resources (e.g., number in staff involved in food preparation and management, eating facility, access to nutritionist, access to vendors with healthier food options, opportunities to make healthy food choices at school) had significantly higher availability of fruit and vegetable in the school compared to schools with lower nutritional capacity and resources. However, the study was limited in that it only looked at fruit and vegetable availability and not consumption.
References


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**Citations**


