

FARM TO SCHOOL INCUBATOR GRANT PROGRAM

2024 REPORT TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE
BUDGET COMMITTEE

2021-22 BUDGET PACKAGE, ITEM 8570-102-0001

PREPARED OCTOBER 2023

CONTACT INFORMATION:
RACHAEL O'BRIEN
DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Report Overview	3
Program Overview	4
Funding History.....	4
Grant Program Overview	4
Funding Priorities	4
Grant Awards to Date	5
Support for Farm to School Network and Grantees	6
Farm to School Regional Staff	6
Section 1: Grant Cohort 1 (2021 Awardees)	6
Summary of Cohort 1 Activities	6
Summary of Economic Analysis for Cohort 1	8
Section 2: Grant Cohort 2 (2022 Awardees) Investments and Reach	12
Funding and Reach of Cohort 2 (Overview)	12
How Applicants and Grantees in Tracks 1, 2, and 3 Align With Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Funding Priorities in Cohort 2.....	14
Representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Producers – Grant Applicants and Awardees in Cohort 2.....	15
How Producer Applicants and Grantees Align With Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Funding Priorities in Cohort 2.....	16
Section 3: Activities Overview for Cohort 2	17
K-12 Procurement and Education Grants (Track 1).....	18
Partnership Grants (Track 2).....	19
Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grants (Track 3).....	20
Producer Grants (Track 4)	22
Section 4: Demographics and Characteristics of Those Served by Cohort 2 Grantees	23
School Districts, Schools, and Students Served	23
Producers Served.....	24
Section 5: A Preliminary Look at Economic Impacts from Cohort 2	26
How grantees plan to spend grant funds	26
Section 6: Looking Ahead	27
Cross-Cutting Impacts of Farm to School.....	27
Upcoming Milestones: January through December 2024 (Cohorts 2 and 3)	27
Future Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Reporting and Data Analysis: Outcomes and Priorities.....	28
Schools and Early Care & Education (ECE).....	28
Partnerships	28
Economic Analysis	29
Environmental Analysis	29
Grant Implementation Analysis.....	29

2024 REPORT TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Prepared October 2023

Executive Summary

Since 2020, California has led the nation through its investments in farm to school efforts, allocating a total of \$100 million one-time funding from the General Fund for the California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork (CDFA-F2F) to establish, sustain, and expand the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, as well as \$4.5 million in ongoing funds for staff to support and expand the California Farm to School Network.

The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program has thus far funded two cohorts, beginning June 1, 2021 with Cohort 1 and continuing through March 31, 2025 with Cohort 2. The grant program has funded K-12 school districts, regional and statewide partnerships, food producers, food hubs, and early care and education (ECE) organizations through four funding tracks. In total, Cohorts 1 and 2 have received awards totaling \$34 million. Cohort 3 will receive approximately \$60 million in 2024. Cohort 3 will likewise offer four funding tracks, and the term will be 2024 through 2026. The CDFA-F2F has also hired and trained 16 new staff positions. These regional staff provide support and technical assistance for the California Farm to School Network (CFSN), which includes Farm to School Incubator Grant Program grantees and school districts, early care and education centers, farmers and ranchers, food hubs and cooperatives, and farm to school support organizations that are not yet participating in the grant program.

The Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is meeting its funding goals and is in alignment with the California Farm to School Roadmap, which focuses on cultivating equity, nurturing students, building climate resilience, and creating scalable and sustainable food systems change.

Student Reach and Alignment with Goals

- Most Cohort 2 school district grantees are located among priority populations that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and engage students from underserved communities.
- Of 64 schools being served directly, 84% are Title I schools.
- 71% of students served by the grant program are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- More than one in five of California's 5.9 million public school students will be served by Cohort 2 K-12 Procurement and Education projects.

This grant program continues to generate local economic activity. Preliminary purchasing data for Cohort 1 shows that school districts are using their procurement funds primarily to purchase whole or minimally processed California grown fruits and vegetables. As of January 2023, school districts spent \$530,756 (70%) on fruits and vegetables of \$760,833 total food purchases submitted for reimbursement. Fruits and vegetables represented the greatest share of purchases by school district grantees nearly everywhere in the state. While purchasing data for Cohort 2 are not yet

available, grantee application budgets for Cohort 2 (whose terms began April 1, 2023 and run through March 31, 2025) reveal that overall, projects plan to spend the largest portion of grant funds on infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies (27%). This category includes expenses like school district or ECE food processing, cooking, storage, and distribution equipment; farm to school educational materials like garden equipment and cooking tools; and on-farm infrastructure and supplies that increase the producer's ability to sell to schools, establish or enhance climate smart practices and production systems, and expand educational opportunities. Those expenditures are followed by staff and labor costs (25%), and contractual fees (20%). Staff and labor budgets alone fund at least 360 positions, both new and existing, which include full and part time salaries, hourly wages, and stipend payments for activities such as professional development. Grantee applications budgeted 18% of project funds to cover the cost of procuring California grown or produced whole or minimally processed foods.

Grantees in each track across both cohorts are required to report on the types of grant-funded activities they implement, which are tailored to the communities and people they serve. For example, grantees in Cohort 1, Track 2 (Partnership Grants) built out a farmer-led food hub to aggregate produce from local growers and supply produce to local school meal programs. Grantees in Cohort 1, Track 1 (Innovation Grants) engaged K-12 students in taste tests, cooking classes, and mock farmers markets that featured California grown, whole or minimally processed fruits and vegetables. This report includes a comprehensive overview of activities, along with past and anticipated spending.

While data on impacts from this grant program are forthcoming, the value of farm to school programs to children's health and wellness, nutrition security, and local economies is well established through published research described in the California Farm to School Roadmap. Farm to school has been shown to have positive educational outcomes like enhanced academic achievement, improved test scores, and support for whole-child development. Farm to school programs increase economic resilience within communities through direct investments in the local economy, such as locally-grown food purchases from agricultural regions, and are aligned with the state's forward-looking goals that center climate smart production in California's agricultural sector to be part of the climate solution. The CDFA-F2F and California Farm to School Evaluation Team will report initial data on impacts and outcomes from the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program in 2024.

Food Producer Grantee Reach and Alignment with Goals

- 42% of Cohort 2 producer grantees are at least 50% owned by people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and 62% are at least 50% owned by women.
- 94% percent of Cohort 2 food producer grantees are small to midsize.
- All food producers funded by the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program report that they use or plan to use climate smart agricultural practices on their operations during the grant period.

Report Overview

This report provides an update to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) on the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. The report was developed in collaboration with the [California Farm to School Evaluation Team](#), which is an independent research team funded by the CDFA-F2F and the State of California and composed of researchers from the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), UC Berkeley, UC Berkeley Food Institute, Food Insight Group, and the US Department of Agriculture. The report summarizes data that the CDFA-F2F collected from 2021 to present and includes information from Cohort 1 (2021-2023) and Cohort 2 (2023-2025) applications. Data also include summaries of notes from CDFA-F2F staff, as well as preliminary data on food procurement from Cohort 1.

Program Overview provides an overview of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, and the staff and activities of the CDFA-F2F.

Section 1 provides an overview of the investments and experiences of Cohort 1 grantees (2021-2023).

Section 2 provides an overview of the investments and reach of Cohort 2 applicants and grantees (2023-2025), including an analysis of grantee participation and distribution of awards in relation to California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program priorities.

Section 3 provides a summary of activities for Cohort 2, as reported in grant applications.

Section 4 provides an overview of the demographics and characteristics of schools, students, and food producers served and engaged within Cohort 2.

Section 5 contains a preliminary look at the anticipated economic activity that Cohort 2 will generate based on original submitted application budgets.

Section 6 describes cross-cutting impacts of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, upcoming key milestones for the CDFA-F2F, and a summary of priorities and outcomes that the California Farm to School Evaluation Team will measure and report.

Program Overview

The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program awards competitive grants to support projects that cultivate equity, nurture students, build climate resilience, and create scalable and sustainable change.¹ The program's funding history, priorities, and application process reflect these values.

Funding History

The California Budget Acts of 2020, 2021, and 2022 included nation-leading investments in farm to school programs, allocating a total of \$100 million one-time funding from the General Fund for the California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork (CDFA-F2F) to establish, sustain, and expand the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. Additionally, the Budget Act of 2020 allocated \$1.5 million of ongoing funding for the CDFA-F2F to provide ongoing support for the California Farm to School Network, and the Budget Act of 2022 allocated \$3 million in ongoing funds to expand the California Farm to School Network by adding 16 new regional staff positions at the CDFA-F2F.

Grant Program Overview

While individual farm to school programs vary based on their unique vision, community, and geographic region, the CDFA-F2F broadly considers farm to school programs as consisting of:

1. Schools and early care and education programs buying California grown or produced foods from California food producers for school meal programs.
2. Educational activities that connect classroom learning with cafeteria meals.
3. Hands-on food education opportunities in school gardens, on farms, in culinary classes, in settings that celebrate traditional foodways and cultivate food sovereignty, and through other experiential learning pathways. Programs may also include forest-to-school, river-to-school, and ocean-to-school procurement and/or learning activities.

The Farm to School Incubator Grant Program takes a holistic, systems-based approach, supporting both the demand side of farm to school – through grants and support for school food buyers to assist them with procuring from local, climate smart farms – as well as the supply side – through grants for food producers and food aggregators that sell to schools to fund activities like food production, processing, and distribution.

Funding Priorities

The 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program awarded additional points during the grant review process for projects that were in alignment with the following priorities, the latter three of which are from the California Farm to School Roadmap:

- Engaging students from underserved communities.

¹ 2022 California Incubator Grant Program Request for Applications. https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/caf2sgrant/docs/2022_request_for_applications.pdf

- Serving schools located among priority populations that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- Including small to midsize California food producers.
- Including veteran California food producers, socially disadvantaged California food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households in California.
- Including California food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices, climate smart agriculture production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies that increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of communities and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil.

Grant Awards to Date

COHORT 1

The 2021 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program awarded \$8.5 million to 60 projects throughout the state. The grant term was June 1, 2021 – March 31, 2023.

Cohort 1 includes:

- **FARM TO SCHOOL INNOVATION GRANTS (TRACK 1):** 46 local educational agencies (i.e., school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools)
- **FARM TO SCHOOL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS GRANTS (TRACK 2):** 14 regional farm to school partnerships

COHORT 2

The 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program awarded \$25.5 million to 120 projects throughout the state. The CDFA is utilizing the remaining \$4.5 million of the \$30 million budget allocation for grant administration and evaluation. The grant term is April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2025.

Cohort 2 includes:

- **K-12 PROCUREMENT AND EDUCATION GRANTS (TRACK 1):** 53 local educational agencies
- **PARTNERSHIP GRANTS (TRACK 2):** 11 regional or statewide farm to school partnerships
- **FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION GRANTS (TRACK 3):** 1 child care center and 5 organizations that support farm to early care and education (ECE) efforts
- **PRODUCER GRANTS (TRACK 4):** 50 food producers

COHORT 3

The estimated timeline for the 2023 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program application period is fall 2023. The budget allocation for Cohort 3 is \$60 million, a small portion of which the CDFA-F2F will utilize for grant administration and evaluation. The estimated grant term is 2024 – 2026. Cohort 3 includes similar funding tracks to Cohort 2.

Support for Farm to School Network and Grantees

The CDFA-F2F hosts the California Farm to School Network (CFSN), which serves as a hub for communication, resource sharing, conferences, and peer-to-peer learning.² Farm to School Incubator Grant Program grantees are a part of the CFSN, along with school nutrition staff, food producers, advocates, educators, and more. The CDFA-F2F, supported by statewide and regional farm to school staff, strives to offer numerous opportunities for collaboration and support to complement grant funding, including:

- **Grantee onboarding calls:** these calls welcome grant recipients to the program and provide information about the grant program processes.
- **Optional statewide office hours:** these informal calls, which occur approximately twice each month, are an opportunity for grant recipients to check in with CDFA-F2F staff and engage in peer-learning with fellow grant recipients.
- **Virtual and in-person meetings:** one-on-one meetings with farm to school practitioners to assist with farm to school efforts (farm to school practitioners include, but are not limited to, school nutrition professionals, educators, food producers, and community organizations).
- **Hosting regional convenings:** meetings and convenings to cultivate regional collaboration and peer-to-peer learning among farm to school practitioners.
- **Procurement assistance:** supporting school nutrition departments with procuring California grown foods and assisting producers with accessing school food markets.
- **Technical assistance:** sharing resources and information with farm to school practitioners, including funding and event opportunities and other applicable resources tailored to individual needs and interests.

Farm to School Regional Staff

Ten of the 16 regional staff members began their roles in April 2023. CDFA-F2F will hire the remaining regional staff by the end of 2023.

Section 1: Grant Cohort 1 (2021 Awardees)

This section summarizes activities and purchasing data for Cohort 1, including characteristics of food producers that schools purchased from, how purchases were made (market channels), types of food purchased and how it was used.

Summary of Cohort 1 Activities

CDFA-F2F staff conducted exit interviews with Cohort 1 Farm to School Incubator Grant Program grantees at the conclusion of their grant projects. Below is a summary of the information from exit

² CDFA Office of Farm to Fork - California Farm to School Network (CFSN). <https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/CaFarmtoSchoolProgram.htm>

interviews that took place between January and July 2023. Interviews with Cohort 1 grantees were largely positive and indicated interest in future programming. The majority of Cohort 1 grantees (41 of 60) applied for another 2 years of funding.³ The summary of exit interviews below includes some highlights and challenges.

CALIFORNIA FARM TO SCHOOL INNOVATION GRANTS (TRACK 1)

- Grantees reported engaging students in hands-on food education activities like taste tests, student-operated farm stands, cooking classes, and mock farmers markets.
- Grantees reported that grant funds allowed them to build new partnerships with local farms and introduce new local food items to students, while noting that the logistics involved in finding local growers and navigating procurement requirements were challenging.
- Grantees reported using funds to purchase equipment that enabled them to serve fresh produce to students and enhance hands-on educational programming. Grantees also reported that funds enabled them to strengthen partnerships with external organizations to develop and implement farm to school programming.
- Grantees shared that collaboration among project team members was important, and they also emphasized that staff shortages and limited capacity in school nutrition departments and among teachers sometimes made implementation of grant projects difficult. This emphasis on the importance of dedicated farm to school staff time aligns with the California Farm to School Roadmap's recommendation to establish full-time farm to school staff members at the school district, county office of education, and early care and education levels.

Cohort 1 Grantee Highlight

One grantee's farmer-led food hub facilitated relationships between local producers and schools by aggregating produce from local growers and distributing to schools for their meal.

CALIFORNIA FARM TO SCHOOL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS GRANTS (TRACK 2)

- Grantees were successful in convening farm to school partners to facilitate relationships between local food producers and school districts. They described staff transitions and limited capacity within partner organizations or partner school districts as limiting factors that prevented even more collaboration with peers from happening.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and supply chain shortages also impacted this round of grantees, and many pivoted to find other ways to connect students to farm to school experiences despite limitations. For example, when field trips to local farms were not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions and scheduling challenges, one grantee pivoted to working with a videographer to compile three years'

³ Twenty-eight grantees from Cohort 1 were awarded grants in Cohort 2. On average, repeat grantees received at least 50 percent more grant funding in Cohort 2 than they did in Cohort 1. (Source: January 2023 Farm to School Evaluation Team Status Update - <https://californiafarmtoschooleval.org/recent-reports/january-2023-report/>)

worth of videos featuring local farmers and local produce that teachers can now use on an ongoing basis.

Summary of Economic Analysis for Cohort 1

Schools and school districts funded in Cohort 1 Farm to School Innovation Grants (Track 1) received reimbursement for California grown, whole or minimally processed foods that were purchased as part of their grant project activities. The paragraphs and charts below describe the characteristics of these purchases. The California Farm to School Evaluation Team analyzed data by California Farm to School Network regions (Figure 1). The data used in the analysis were provided by grantees when submitting their requests for reimbursement to the CDFA-F2F. The analysis includes all approved reimbursement requests for California food procurement costs that Cohort 1 grantees submitted through January 2023. Additional reimbursement requests that grantees submitted after that date are not included. A total of 1,808 requests for reimbursement were submitted, totaling \$760,833.

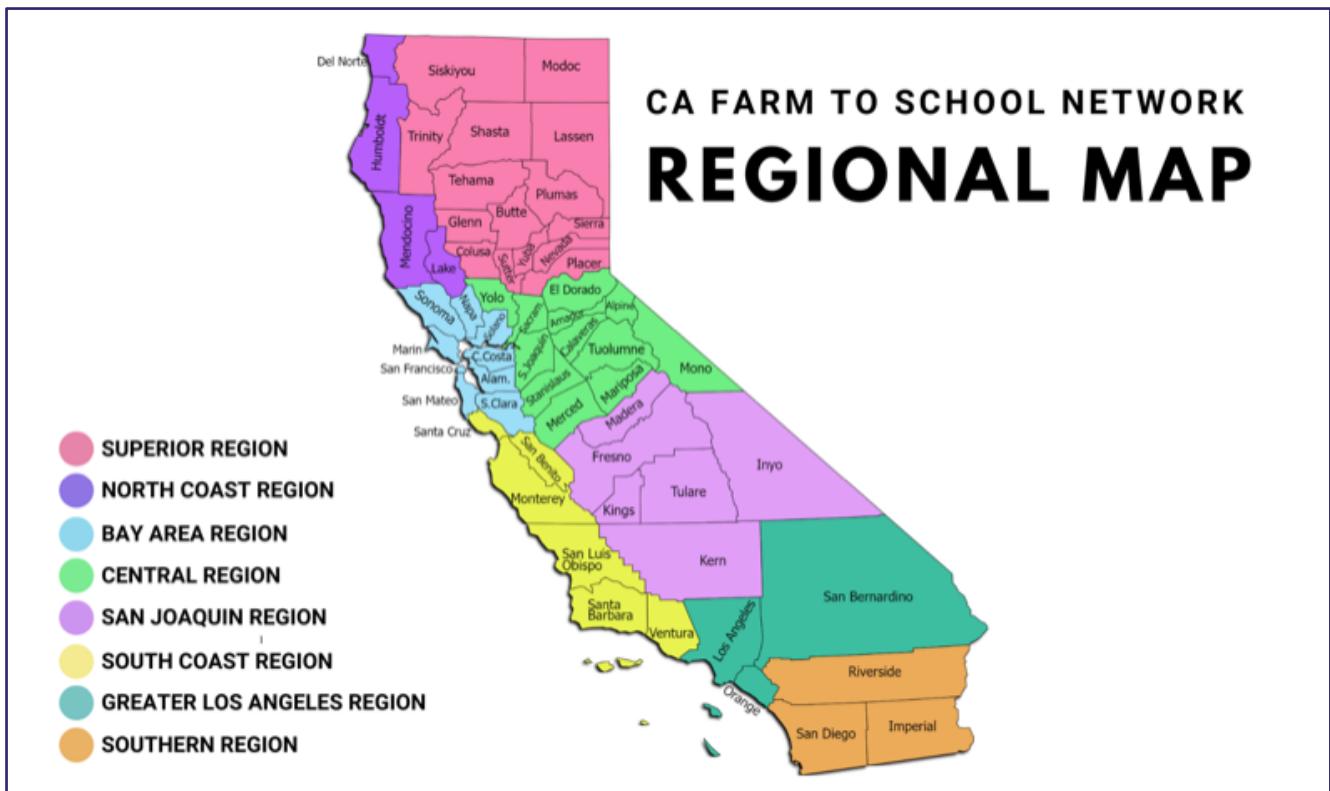


Figure 1. Map of the California Farm to School Network's regions and counties.

SCHOOL DISTRICT PURCHASES FOR COHORT 1

As of January 2023, reimbursement requests that grantees submitted to the CDFA-F2F show that fruit and vegetable purchases totaled \$530,756 (70% of approved reimbursement requests) and accounted for the majority of expenditures in all regions except the Central and Bay Area regions. The next largest food category was meat and poultry at \$212,789 (28% of reimbursement requests). Grains accounted for

\$12,789 (2%) of reimbursement requests, eggs \$2,819, and finally fish and seafood at \$1,680 (Figure 2). All purchases were California grown or produced, whole or minimally processed foods, pursuant to grant program requirements.

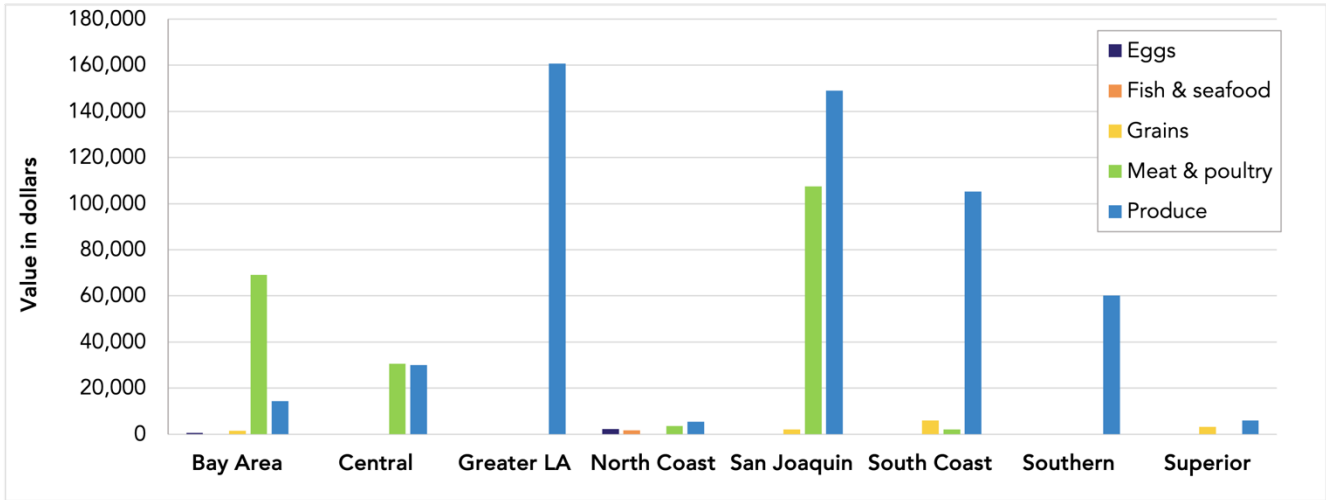


Figure 2. Total value of grant-funded purchases of California produced foods by food category and region.

HOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS MADE PURCHASES (MARKET CHANNELS) FOR COHORT 1

Direct farm purchases, valued at \$347,243, accounted for the largest share of total purchases of California produced food (46%). Purchases that grantees made from distributors were valued at \$332,273 (44% of total purchases of California produced food). Purchases from food hubs were valued at \$79,122 (10%), and purchases from district school gardens or school farms were \$2,196 (<1%) (Figure 3).

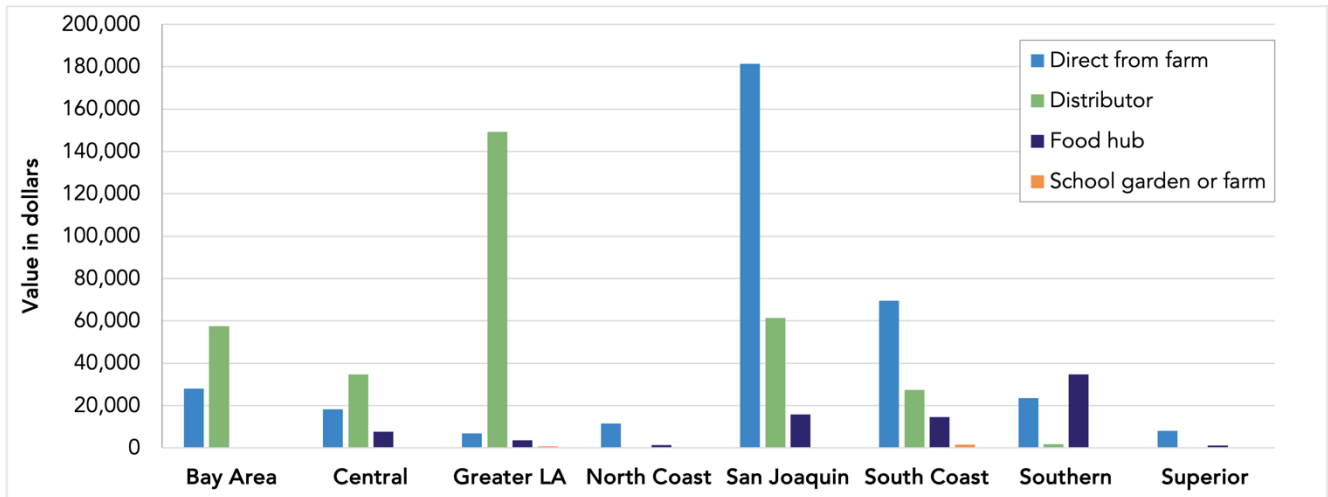


Figure 3. Total value of grant-funded school purchases of California produced foods by marketing channel and region.

HOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS USED PURCHASES FOR COHORT 1

Schools and school districts used the California produced food purchased with grant funds in a variety of ways, including in school meals and grant-supported educational activities. Figure 4 illustrates the proportion of purchases grantees made in each category. Grantees used 84% of food purchases for school meals, including breakfast and lunch. Within these meals, grantees used the purchases in main courses and as side dishes of fruits or vegetables. Grantees used 15% of food purchases for educational purposes. These activities included tastings for programs like Harvest of Month and other fruit and vegetable nutrition education programs, cooking demonstrations, and farm stands (Figure 5). Grantees used 1% of food purchases for other, unspecified program activities.

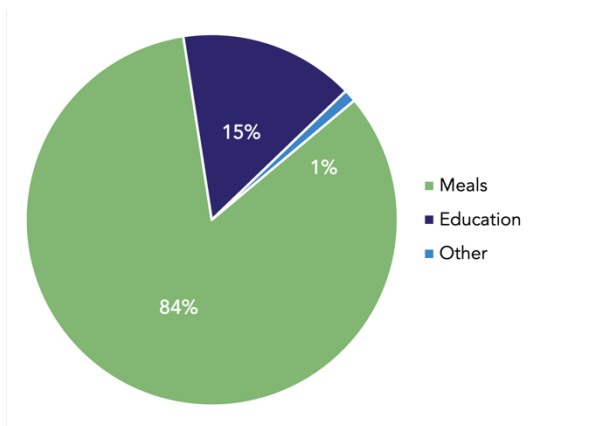


Figure 4. Proportion of purchases of California produced foods that schools and school districts used for different activities (n = 1,757).

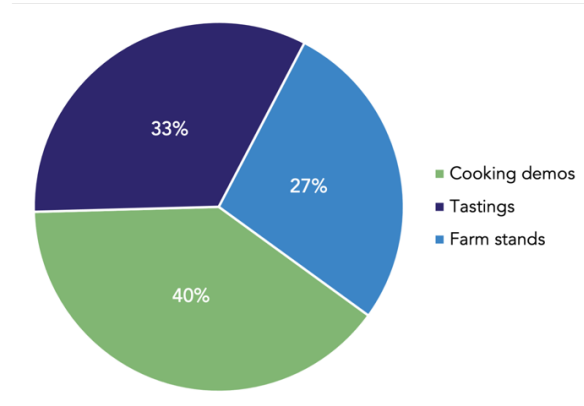


Figure 5. Types of educational activities that incorporated purchases of California produced foods (n = 278).

DEMOGRAPHICS AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES OF FOOD PRODUCERS FROM WHOM SCHOOL DISTRICTS MADE PURCHASES FOR COHORT 1

“Leveraging school buying power to support California producers and incentivize agricultural practices that promote climate smart resilience and environmental sustainability, including organic systems” is a high-level goal of the California Farm to School Roadmap. However, most school districts in Cohort 1 did not know the agricultural practices of the grower(s) from whom they made grant-funded purchases. For approximately 78% of the purchases of California produced food that grantees made, schools or school districts responded “Unknown” or “No” when asked if they selected the food producer in part because the producer uses climate smart agriculture practices (Figure 6).

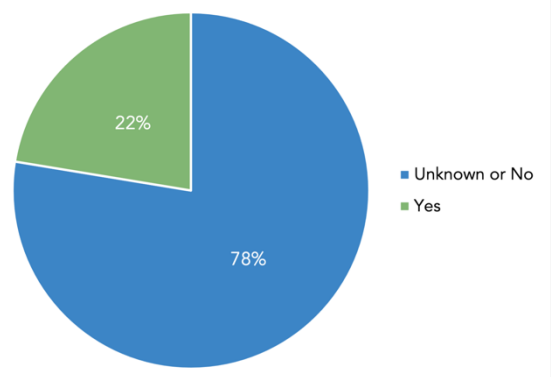


Figure 6. Proportion of purchases of California produced foods where schools and school districts reported that they selected the food producer in part because the producer uses climate smart agriculture practices (n = 1808).

Based on feedback from select interviews and focus groups, many grantees knew whether the farm was organic but were not familiar with specific crop production methods like cover cropping. Similarly, most funded schools and school districts did not know the demographic characteristics of the food producers from whom they purchased (Figure 7). In cases where demographic information was available, schools were most likely to report that they know whether the food producer was a small or midsize producer, followed by whether the producer was a woman, and then whether a producer identifies as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color. This information is significant because it highlights that most school food buyers, even the ones committed to buying local food, do not have time or capacity to understand the intricacies of climate smart or organic agricultural production. Based on this information gathered during Cohort 1, CDFA-F2F staff shifted program priorities, hired staff to "translate" between the language of agricultural production and school food, and expanded services to deepen relationships between school district purchasers and food producers for Cohort 2.

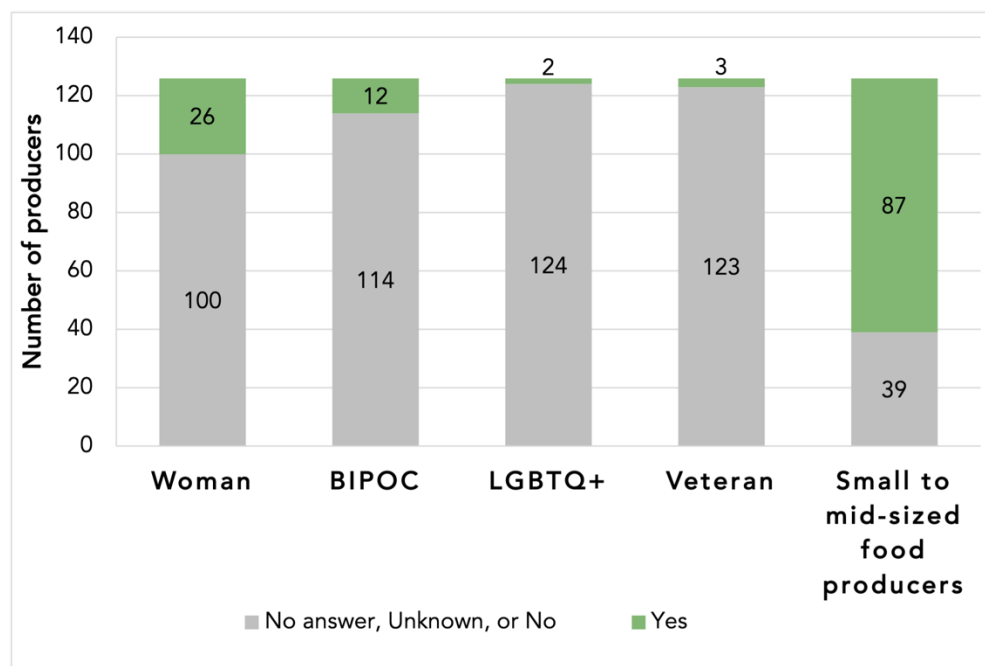


Figure 7. Demographic characteristics of California food producers from whom school districts purchased foods using grant funds, as reported by school district grantees (n = 126).

VOLUME OF PURCHASING THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS DIRECTED TOWARD PRIORITY PRODUCERS FOR COHORT 1

A high-level goal of the California Farm to School Roadmap is to expand and create increased market access for underrepresented farmers and small to midsize food producers. Figure 8 shows the volume of purchases from underrepresented and small to midsize producers, based on the producer characteristics that school district grantees reported to the CDFA-F2F regarding the California food producers from whom they purchased food with grant funds. The total value of purchases from small to midsize food producers that grantees reported to the CDFA-F2F as of January 2023 was \$319,933, equivalent to about 42% of the total value of all grant-funded purchases of California produced food that school districts made through January 2023. In contrast, 69% of all producers from whom school districts purchased

California produced food were small to midsize producers (Figure 7). Women accounted for 21% of all known producers and received 23% of all purchases. Known Black, Indigenous, and People of Color producers were about 10% of all producers and received 2.6% of all purchases. Both known LGBTQ+ and Veteran producers accounted for less than 1.0% of all purchases. However, these numbers are potentially underreported because in some cases, school district grantees reported “Unknown” regarding specific producer characteristics, which indicates that additional follow-up could help to understand the characteristics of producers included in the “Unknown” category.

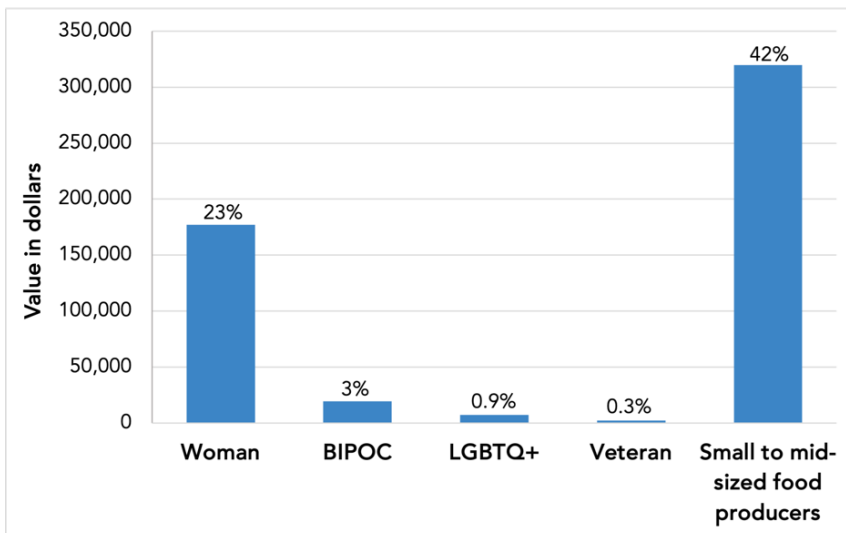


Figure 8. Value of purchases school districts made from select producer groups, including the percentage as a value of all purchases.

Section 2: Grant Cohort 2 (2022 Awardees)

Investments and Reach

This section summarizes grants that the CDFA-F2F awarded to Cohort 2 and the alignment of Cohort 2 grant projects with Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funding priorities and goals.

Funding and Reach of Cohort 2 (Overview)

The Farm to School Incubator Grant Program continues to be oversubscribed. Demand for the program for Cohort 2 exceeded grant funds by 128%. For K-12 Procurement and Education Grants (Track 1), funds requested were one and a half the amount of funds available and awarded (\$20.3 million requested vs. \$12.9 million awarded). For Partnership Grants (Track 2), funds requested were nearly five times the amount of funds available and awarded (\$22.5 million requested vs. \$4.6 million awarded). For Farm to Early Care and Education Grants (Track 3), funds requested were nearly five times the amount of funds available and awarded (\$5.6 million

Cohort 2 Grantee Highlight

Riverside Unified School District will start up its "Farmers Market" salad bars, which have been on hiatus since the start of the pandemic, at all 30 of its elementary schools. Funding will also support a staff person to source local produce from BIPOC farmers who use climate smart growing practices and are Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified. Through this project, the district aims to increase sales from local farmers from \$700,000 to \$1.5 million.

requested vs. \$1.2 million awarded). For Producer Grants (Track 4), funds requested were nearly one and a half times the amount of funds available and awarded (\$9.6 million requested vs. \$6.8 million awarded). The California Farm to School Evaluation Team included additional details in Table 2 of the January 2023 Status Update.⁴

Within Cohort 2, the grant awards represent 42 counties (72% of counties in California), with 23 of those counties receiving three or more awards. At the legislative district level, California has 40 Senate Districts and 80 Assembly Districts. For Cohort 2, 35 Senate Districts (88%) received at least one award and 60 Assembly Districts (75%) received at least one award. Tracking grant awards at the county and legislative district levels helps to capture reach and distribution of funds.⁵ Figure 9 provides a high-level overview of Cohort 2 grant awards by county, Senate District, and Assembly District.

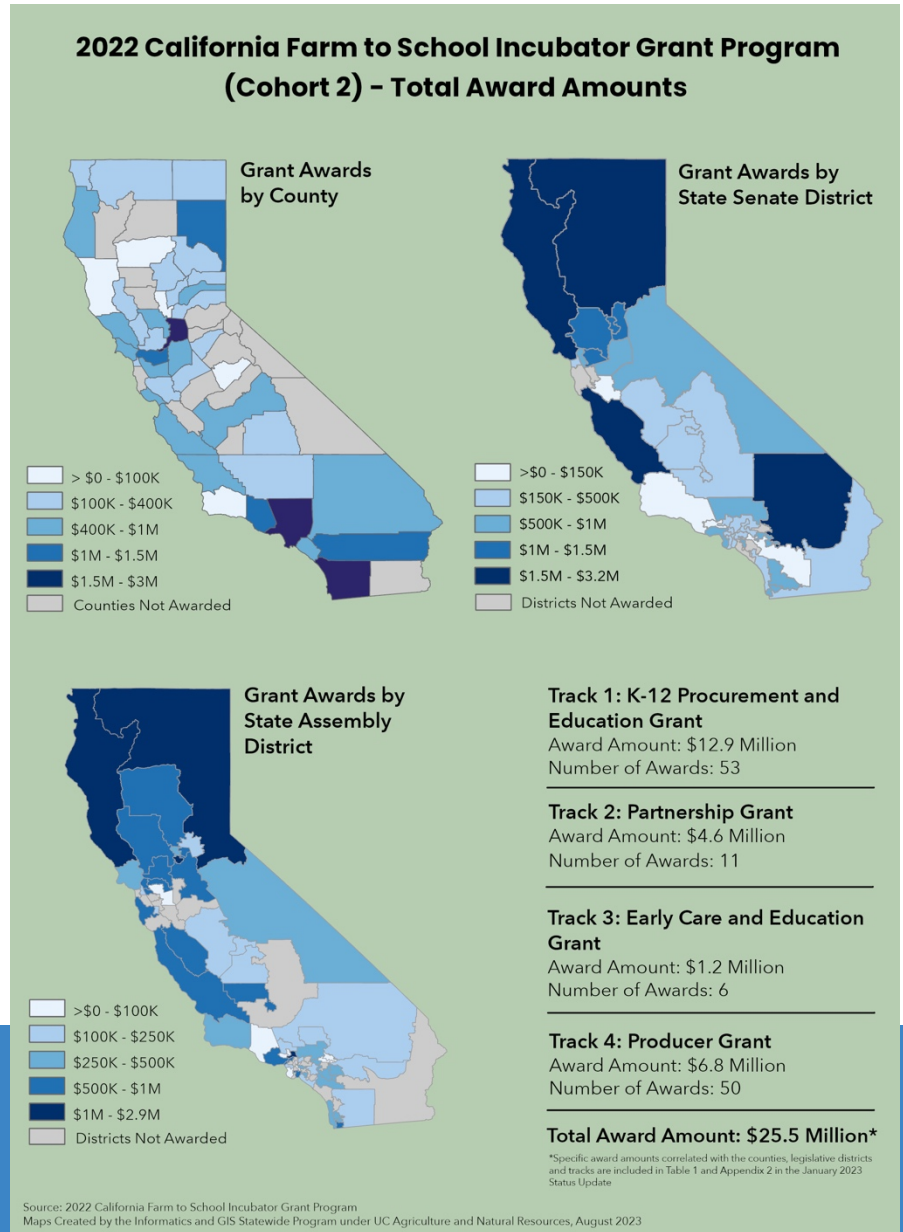


Figure 9. Maps showing an overview of Cohort 2 grant awards by county (upper left), Senate District (upper right), and Assembly District (lower left).

⁴ January 2023 Farm to School Evaluation Team Status Update - <https://californiafarmtoschooleval.org/recent-reports/january-2023-report/>

⁵ A breakdown of award amounts for Cohort 2, including the amount of the awards for Tracks 1 through 4, are captured and represented in detail in a [digital dashboard](#) created by the California Farm to School Evaluation Team. (Navigation instructions are included in the dashboard). Award amounts can be filtered by Assembly District, Senate District, and county.

How Applicants and Grantees in Tracks 1, 2, and 3 Align With Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Funding Priorities in Cohort 2

Cohort 2 applicants received additional points during the grant review process for projects that aligned with the following funding priorities: engaging students from underserved communities, serving schools located among priority populations, and including priority producers.

Figure 10 depicts how the students that school districts in Track 1, farm to school support organizations in Track 2, and ECE sites in Track 3 align with the grant program’s funding priorities. Of the 194 applications across Tracks 1, 2, and 3 for Cohort 2, 163 applicants requested \$42,821,123 to do work that would involve schools located among priority populations.⁶ Overall, 112 K-12 School District (Track 1), Partnership (Track 2), and Early Care and Education (Track 3) applicants requested \$33,421,326 for work with schools in Opportunity Zones, which are low-income communities based on poverty status and median family income.⁷ Collectively, this indicates that there is a high demand for farm to school in communities of high priority.

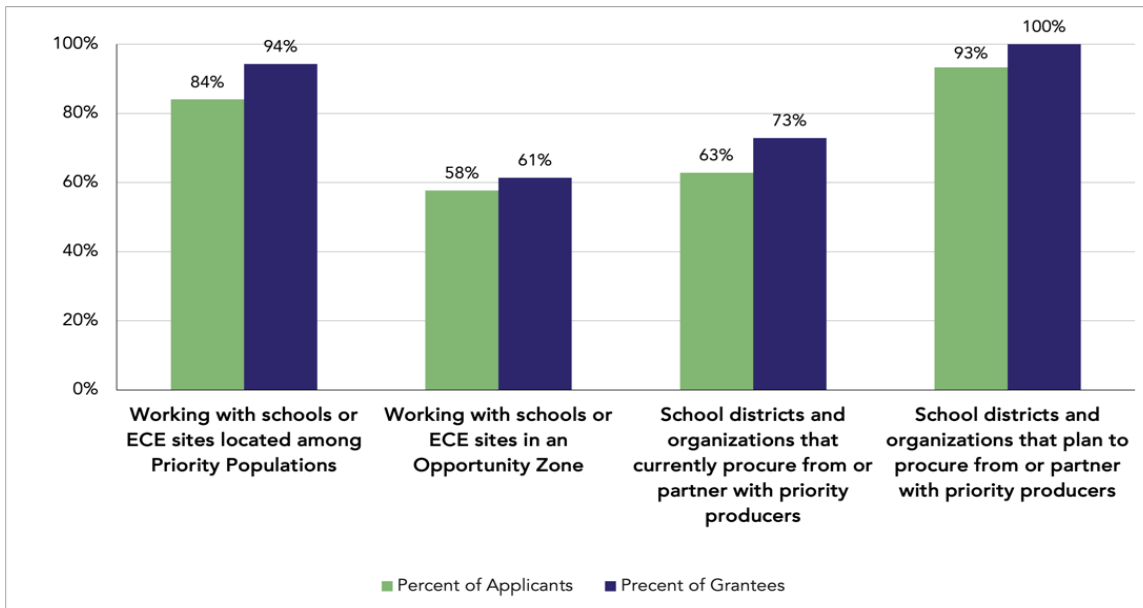


Figure 10. How Track 1, 2, and 3 applicants and grantees align with Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funding priorities for applicants (n = 194) and grantees (n = 70).

⁶ Per the California Air Resources Board’s California Climate Investments Priority Populations map, priority populations refer to those that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and include disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households. In May 2022, using CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and the American Indian Areas Related National Geodatabase, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) identified the list of disadvantaged community census tracts and land areas available at CalEPA Climate Investments to Benefit Disadvantaged Communities webpage. Low-income communities and households are defined as the census tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80% of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development’s (HCD) Revised 2016 State Income Limits.

⁷ About Opportunity Zones - <https://economicdevelopment.business.ca.gov/place-based-strategies/opportunity-zones/#:~:text=Opportunity%20Zones%20are%20census%20tracts,poverty%20and%20median%20family%20income>

The CDFA-F2F not only solicited applications from high priority areas, but also awarded grants to these areas. The CDFA-F2F awarded \$14,508,522 to K-12 School District (Track 1), Partnership (Track 2), and Early Care and Education (Track 3) projects doing work with schools in Opportunity Zones and awarded \$18,092,974 to Track 1, 2, and 3 projects doing work with schools located among priority populations.⁸ Approximately 27% of Track 1, 2, and 3 grantees did not procure from or partner with priority producers⁹ at the time of application; however, 100% of grantees indicated that they planned to do so as part of their grant-funded projects (Figure 10).

Representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Producers – Grant Applicants and Awardees in Cohort 2¹⁰

CDFA's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program saw significant interest from applicants identifying as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. The proportion of applications from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color producers is higher than the representation of those producers in California, indicating that the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program reached Black, Indigenous, and People of Color audiences at proportionally higher rates than they exist statewide (Figure 11). For example, although only 0.34% of producers statewide are African American, 13% of producer applicants to this grant program were African American. Overall, the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program received 70 producer applications. Thirty applications came from operations where at least 50% or more of the owners identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

A comparison of the percent of producer applicants to grantees reveals that overall, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color producers received grants at a similar rate to which they applied. For example, 26% of both producer applicants and grantees were operations whose owners included people who identify as Hispanic.

While the program saw significant growth for Black and Hispanic producers, Native and Indigenous producers received grants at a lower rate than they applied. Based on this data, CDFA is restructuring year-round technical assistance and the Cohort 3 application review process to better support Native and Indigenous communities. Specifically, CDFA staff will participate in year-round support for Native and Indigenous farm to school projects, and set aside funds within the next grant cycle for eligible tribal projects.

⁸ These numbers are from the 2022 Application. The amounts reflected are total amounts requested by schools working with these populations. For Grantees serving more than one school site it is possible that not all of the requested funds will go to these populations.

⁹ For this grant program, "priority producers" include small to midsize food producers; veteran food producers; socially disadvantaged food producers; limited-resource farm households; and food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices, climate smart agriculture production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies. In accordance with California's Farmer Equity Act of 2017 (Assembly Bill (AB) 1348, Chapter 620, Statutes of 2017), "socially disadvantaged" food producers include all of the following: African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. In addition, the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program includes women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people as socially disadvantaged food producers.

¹⁰ Source: Statewide data are from the USDA Census of Agriculture (2017), Source: Applicant and awarded grantee data are self-reported information from the 2022 Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Applications. Applicants indicated whether the operation was "at least 50% owned by producer(s) who belong to one or more of the following groups." As such, these numbers could be referring to one or more people (owners). Applicants could also select multiple categories, so columns do not sum to 100% or the total # of applicants (single or multiple owners) or grantees.

Figure 11 presents the race and ethnicity of all producers statewide, producer applicants to this grant program, and producer grantees, illustrating the degree to which this grant program is succeeding in reaching out to diverse producers, a stated goal of the California Farm to School Roadmap, and the degree to which those applicants are awarded grants.

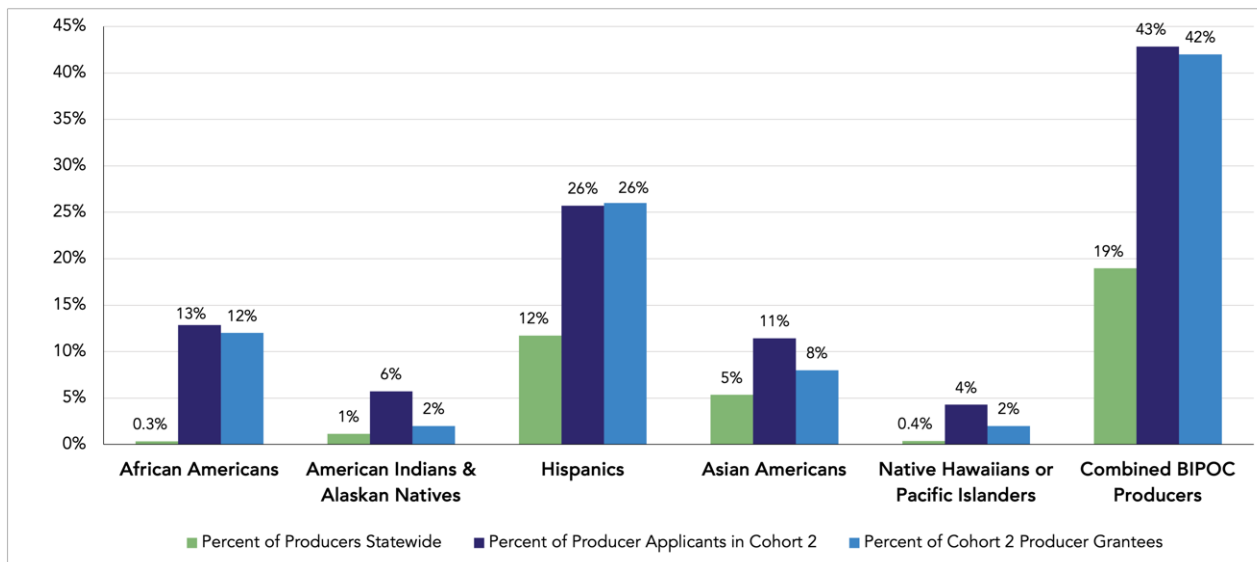


Figure 11. Race and ethnicity demographics of all producers statewide (green), of producer applicants to this grant program (dark blue/purple), and of producer grantees (light blue).

How Producer Applicants and Grantees Align With Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Funding Priorities in Cohort 2

Producer applicants from Cohort 2 consistently reflected priority groups for the program (Figure 12). For this grant program, “priority producers” include small to midsize food producers; veteran food producers; socially disadvantaged food producers; limited-resource farm households; and food producers who utilize climate smart agriculture practices, climate smart agriculture production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies. In accordance with California’s Farmer Equity Act of 2017 (Assembly Bill (AB) 1348, Chapter 620, Statutes of 2017), “socially disadvantaged” food producers include all of the following: African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.¹¹ In addition, the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program includes women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people as socially disadvantaged food producers.¹² The majority of producers who applied to this program in Cohort 2, as well as 98% of producers who received an award, were from the small to midsize, veteran, socially disadvantaged, women, LGBTQ+, and/or limited-resource priority groups. These

¹¹ AB 1348. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1348

¹² 2022 California Incubator Grant Program Request for Applications. https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/caf2sgrant/docs/2022_request_for_applications.pdf

findings indicate that the program has successfully reached out to and awarded grants to producers in priority groups.¹³

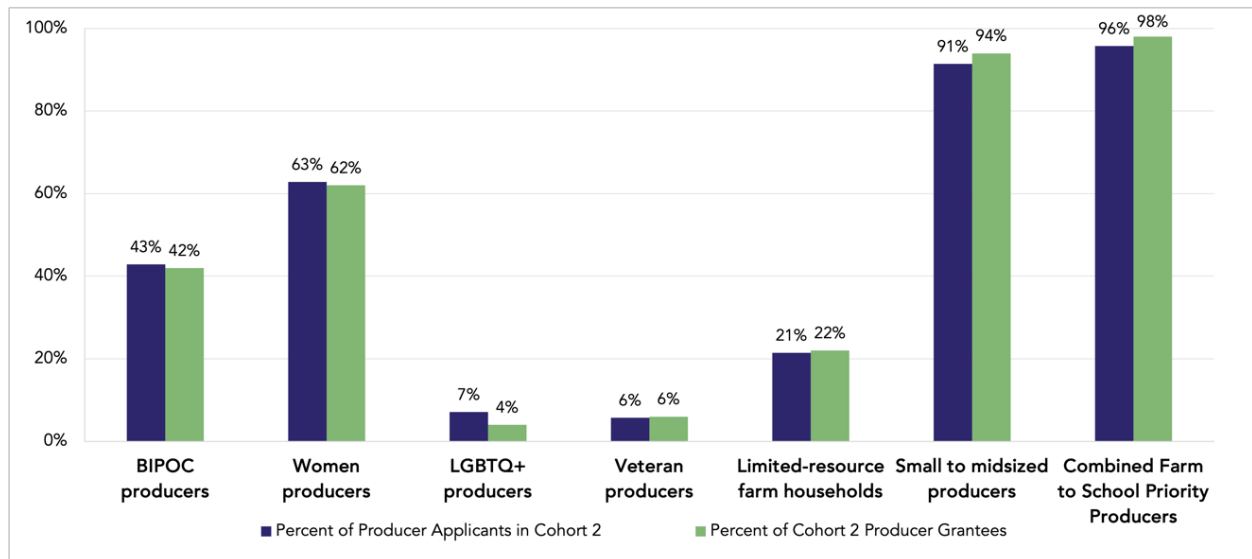


Figure 12. Percentage of Cohort 2 producer applicants (dark blue) and grantees (green) belonging to the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program’s priority producer groups.

Section 3: Activities Overview for Cohort 2

This section provides an overview of key project activities that Cohort 2 grantees proposed in their grant applications. Types of activities vary by grant track and type of applicant, which includes school districts, farmers and ranchers, farm to school support organizations, food hubs, and more. Activity data reflect how grantees will use grant funds and how these investments will reach their intended beneficiaries, including K-12 students, 0- through 5-year-olds, California food producers, school district nutrition departments, and the multitude of workers in California's food system economy.



¹³ Section 4 under “Producers Served” includes an overview of whether the grant includes California food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices and climate smart agriculture production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic (which is also a funding priority for the program).

K-12 Procurement and Education Grants (Track 1)

Track 1 of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funds projects to coordinate school nutrition service programs with educational opportunities for students in cafeterias, classrooms, and/or outdoor learning spaces. It also funds projects to procure California grown or produced foods that are whole or minimally processed for incorporation into school meals, especially foods that are culturally relevant and from priority producers. The prioritization of foods from priority producers aims to create and expand access to the school food market for underrepresented food producers, small to midsize food producers, and food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices and systems. Figure 13 summarizes common Track 1 activities.

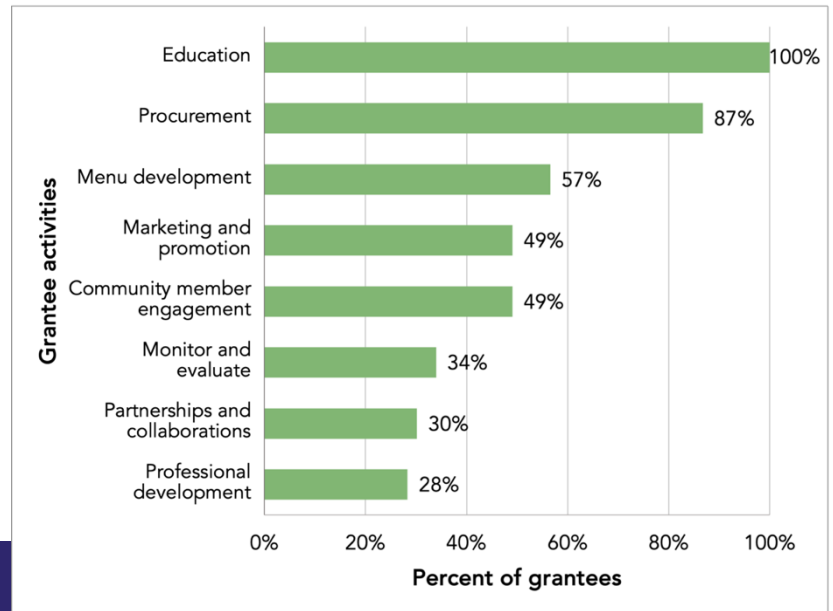


Figure 13. Common activities that Track 1 K-12 grantees proposed in their applications (n = 53). All applications proposed more than one activity.

Activities include:

- **Student education:** A grantee in Fresno County will teach 190 high school students “the fundamentals of planting, growing, harvesting, and operating a sustainable fruit orchard.” Students will learn from community members by visiting local growers and hearing from guest speakers on key topics like water management and environmental sustainability. By the end of the project, they will “harvest fruit for school cafeterias, nutrition education, and sale.”
- **Food procurement:** A grantee in Riverside County will purchase more foods from local farmers for their district’s salad bar program, with tandem goals of increasing sales by local farmers from \$700,000 to \$1.5 million and increasing the number of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color farmers supplying produce to their district from 12 to 20.
- **Menu development:** A grantee in Sacramento County will engage high school culinary students to “develop school cafeteria recipes using hydroponically grown herbs and microgreens as well as rice from local farms.” The students will develop culturally relevant dishes using multiple varieties of locally grown brown rice and test them with fellow students during lunch before incorporating the new recipes into their National School Lunch Program menu.

Partnership Grants (Track 2)

Track 2 of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funds regional and statewide farm to school partnerships aimed at one or more of three key capacity-building goals. The first goal includes implementation of farm to school procurement and/or education strategies that feed into a larger regional or statewide food system development plan. The second goal is to increase regional or statewide collaboration between California food producers and school nutrition service departments, consistent with creating and expanding increased access to the school food market for underrepresented food producers, small to midsize food producers, and food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices and systems. The final goal is to provide technical assistance or capacity-building support to school districts, county offices of education, or charter schools that are implementing farm to school programs, some of whom also applied to and received funding in Track 1. Figure 14 summarizes common Track 2 activities.

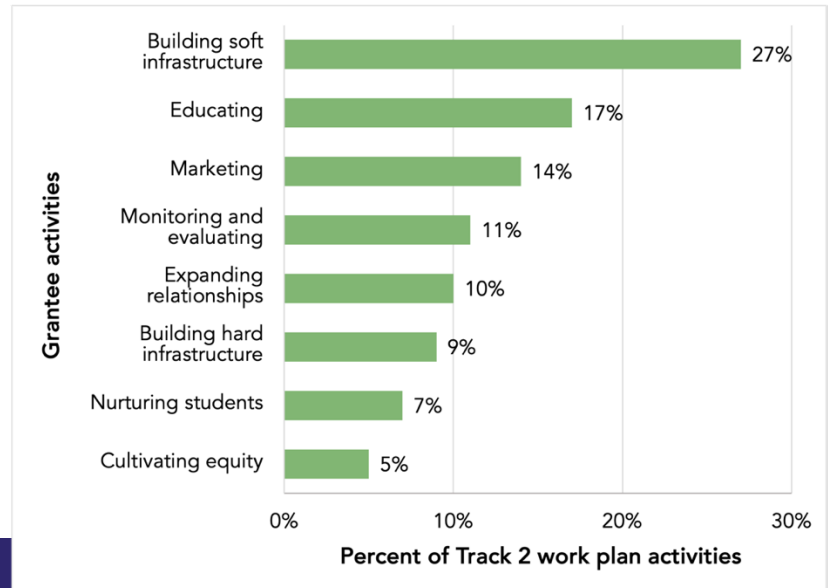


Figure 14. Common activities that Track 2 partnership grantees proposed in their applications (n = 11).

Activities include:

- **Expanding relationships:** A grantee in Nevada County will cultivate relationships between food producers and school food operations by attending "three California producer tours to meet potential procurement partners, discuss partnership logistics, and work through procurement and distribution obstacles."
- **Building soft infrastructure:** A grantee in San Luis Obispo County will support countywide coordination by generating a master schedule for annual farm to school workflow and activities, while a grantee in Yolo County is hiring and training a Farm to School Liaison, Sales Manager, and Operations Manager. A grantee in Marin County is providing ongoing technical assistance to school nutrition service teams on local farm to school procurement.
- **Education and training:** A grantee in Contra Costa County is in the process of planning, coordinating, and hosting two cross-sector farm to school day-long summits at a farm/ranch with school leaders, producers, processors, and nonprofit partners.
- **Resource development:** A grantee in Alameda County plans to develop and share a web page titled "Climate-Friendly School Food: From Farm to Table," featuring profiles of school district food service leadership and farmer partners.
- **Nurturing students:** A grantee in Alameda County plans to implement one culinary training for each school district food service team in their project partnership, including student ambassadors and staff, with an aim of creating a more personal and professional connection with local farmer produce.

Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Grants (Track 3)

Track 3 of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program focuses on funding child care centers and organizations that support them to establish or expand farm to early care and education (ECE) programs that do all three of the following activities:

1. Coordinate hands-on learning and play opportunities related to food and gardening for young children and sometimes their families.
2. Procure California grown or produced foods that are whole or minimally processed for incorporation into student meals, snacks, taste tests, or food boxes, especially foods that are culturally relevant and from priority producers. Consistent with Tracks 1 and 2, the prioritization of foods from priority producers aims to create and expand access to the school food market for underrepresented food producers, small to midsize food producers, and food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices and systems.
3. Offer technical assistance to and/or facilitate peer learning spaces for ECE staff, teachers, and/or families. Where possible and appropriate, the grant program encourages grantees to incorporate parent and family engagement and to build connections with K-12 institutions and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which provides nutritious snacks to children and adults in similar settings using state and federal funding.

Figure 15 summarizes common Track 3 activities.

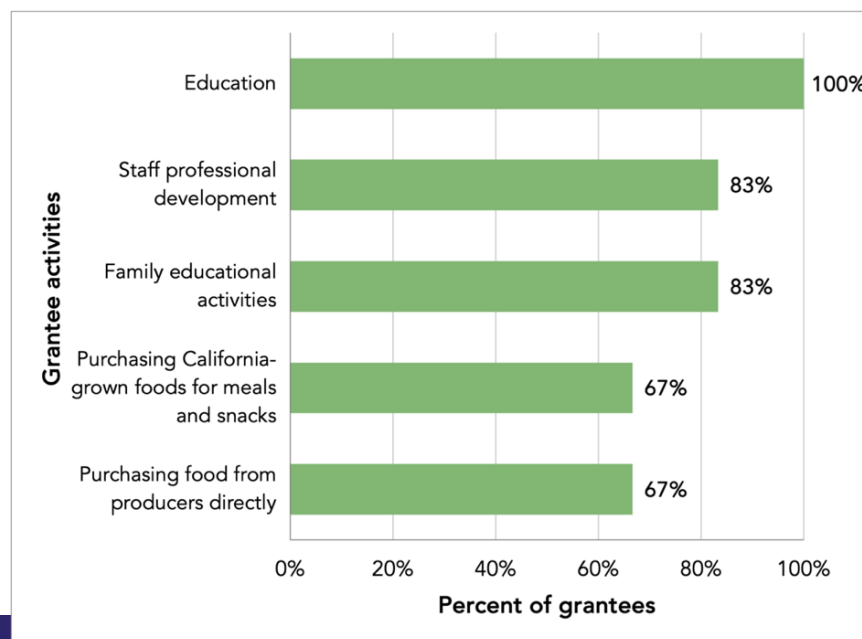


Figure 15. Common activities that Track 3 ECE grantees proposed in their applications (n = 6). All applications proposed more than one activity.

Activities include:

- **Education (often through taste testing, garden education, and field trips):** A grantee in Butte County will collaborate with a farmers market, farm, and plant nursery to coordinate three field trip opportunities per year for ECE students, staff, and families.
- **ECE staff professional development:** A grantee in Del Norte County will “provide training to teachers and staff at the ECE sites annually to build their knowledge and capacity to incorporate evidence-based nutrition and garden education into their curriculum.”
- **Family educational activities:** The same grantee from Del Norte County plans to “distribute [a] Harvest of the Month resource kit to the families monthly. The Harvest of the Month resource kit includes [a] locally grown or sourced seasonal fruit or vegetable of the month procured through various methods, including the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, local farmers' markets, or school/community gardens. The kit will also include food assistance, a resource guide, parent newsletters, and educational resources and materials promoting nutrition and gardening.”
- **Purchasing California grown foods for meals and snacks:** A grantee operating in Lake and Mendocino Counties aims to “procure locally at least 20% of food used for meals, snacks, and taste tests.” They are doing this by meeting with ECE staff to determine local sourcing priorities, notifying food producer partners of this ECE market opportunity, and purchasing food through a food hub.
- **Sourcing food directly from producers:** A grantee in Los Angeles County is facilitating meetings between farmers of color and food service directors at two ECE sites with the goal of “sourcing culturally relevant produce for incorporation into pre-school meals.”



Students at Riverview Middle School in Bay Point, CA harvest fresh vegetables grown in the school garden.

©2021 Photo supplied to CDFA by CA Farm to School Incubator Grantees

Producer Grants (Track 4)

Track 4 of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funds California food producers to increase production, processing, and/or distribution of whole or minimally processed foods for the school food market and to provide hands-on educational opportunities for youth that complement the foods they are selling or donating to schools. To be eligible, producers must have at least one established relationship with a school nutrition services department. Track 4 prioritized the following producers for funding: small to midsize food producers (based on revenue, not acreage); veteran food producers, socially disadvantaged food producers, and/or limited-resource farm households; and food producers using climate smart agriculture practices, climate smart agriculture production systems like certified organic or transitioning to certified organic, or other regenerative strategies.

Eligible uses of funding include: upgrading infrastructure and equipment and purchasing supplies that will help increase production, processing, and/or distribution capacity; making upgrades and purchases to help establish or enhance the use of climate smart agriculture practices, production systems, and/or other regenerative strategies; staffing costs dedicated to farm to school work; pursuing licensure, certification, and/or insurance that will enable them to sell or donate whole or minimally processed food to schools; and establishing new or expanding existing hands-on educational opportunities that engage students from partner schools. Figure 16 summarizes common Track 4 activities.

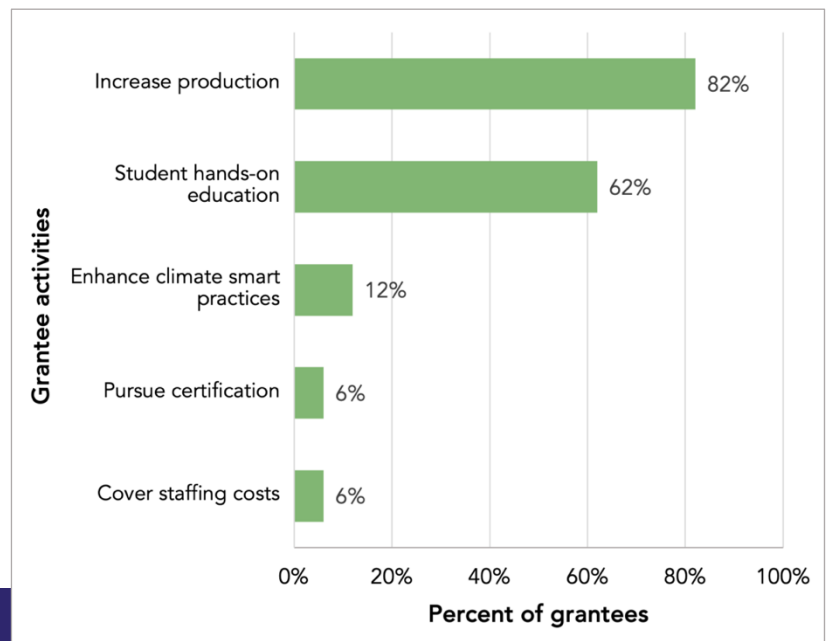


Figure 16. Common activities that Track 4 producer grantees proposed in their applications (n = 50). Some applications proposed more than one activity.

Activities include:

- **Increasing production:** A grantee in Humboldt County is purchasing equipment and facilities to more efficiently handle and sort the apples from their orchard. A grantee in Lassen County is increasing production capacity of cattle ranching operations through the construction of a feedlot and purchase of tractor equipment.
- **Enhancing climate smart practices:** A grantee in Mariposa County is starting a compost collection and waste reduction program with local restaurants to begin onsite vermicomposting at the farm where it aims to grow food for local schools, while a grantee in San Bernardino County is incorporating grazers into its crop production system.
- **Hands on education for students:** A grantee in Sonoma County is hosting students on field trips to its ranch and providing hands-on experiences and educational opportunities for students to learn about environmentally beneficial and climate smart ranching practices and agriculture.
- **Pursuing certification:** A grantee in San Diego County is pursuing Good Agricultural Practices food safety certification, and a grantee in Ventura County is writing a food safety plan and resubmitting their organic certification.

Section 4: Demographics and Characteristics of Those Served by Cohort 2 Grantees

School Districts, Schools, and Students Served

Collectively, the grant program’s K-12 Procurement and Education projects (Track 1) will serve more than one in five (23%) public school students. This reflects more than 1.3 million of California’s 5.9 million public school students. The other three grant program tracks engage additional students through early care and education programming, producer partnerships (including farm field trips), and partnership grants (including collaborations between school districts and farm to school non-profit organizations).

Of the 53 K-12 Procurement and Education grants (Track 1), 41 grantees intend for their projects to have districtwide reach. Twelve grantees are focusing their projects on specific schools within their districts. The majority (84%) of directly served schools are Title I schools.^{14,15} Grantees that are operating districtwide projects will reach additional Title I schools.

K-12 Procurement and Education grant projects (Track 1) will reach a diverse audience, serving disproportionately more Hispanic/Latino students (65% project-wide compared to 56% statewide population) and non-white students (89% project-wide compared to 80% statewide population). Additionally, 71% of students served by the grant program are eligible for free or reduced price meals compared to 60% of students statewide (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographics of Students that K-12 Procurement and Education Grant Projects (Track 1) will serve.

Demographic Category	Cohort 2, Track 1 Reach	California Statewide Data
Race & Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	64.6%	56.1%
White (not Hispanic)	10.8%	20.1%
Asian	6.5%	9.5%
African American (not Hispanic)	6.1%	4.7%
Two or More Races (not Hispanic)	3.2%	4.3%
Filipino	1.9%	2.2%
Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.4%
American Indian	0.2%	0.4%
Race/Ethnicity Not Reported	6.2%	2.2%
Additional Characteristics		
Free or Reduced Price Meal Eligible	71.4%	59.9%
English Language Learner	22.3%	19.0%

Source: Grant project reach combines grant application data on service area with CDE school enrollment data (School Year 2022–23). California statewide data are from CDE, School Year 2022–23.

¹⁴ Schools receiving Title 1 designation receive federal funding to support disadvantaged students in meeting state academic content and performance standards (Source: CDE data, School Year 2021–22).

¹⁵ School characteristics and demographic data are from the CDE, School Year 2021–22. Some schools or characteristics may be missing or appear differently than the 2022–23 school year arrangements. School communities and grantees may also count schools differently than they appear in state datasets. For example, a middle school and high school might appear in the state dataset as one school, while the grantee and school community consider them two schools.

Producers Served

The 50 producers (farms, ranches, and other food producers) who received a grant in Cohort 2 show a strong commitment to climate smart agriculture. First, all producers plan to use climate smart agriculture practices on their operations during the grant period, and all but one were already using some form of these practices at the time of application.¹⁶ A majority of producers identified strongly with climate smart principles and built their operations on those values.

“We are already implementing about a dozen climate smart agriculture and production practices and will continue to do so as it is an integrated part of my farm.”

~Producer Grantee, Salinas, CA

“Yes, we are fully committed to climate smart agriculture practices. It is the only way we have ever farmed and we continue to research and implement new practices as we learn.”

~Producer Grantee, Los Angeles, CA

A minority of producers (12%; Figure 16) plan to use grant funds to expand or adopt new climate smart practices and education.

“We will expand our growing areas by 15%, and will implement no-till, hedgerow planting, and compost applications in this new space.”

~Producer Grantee, San Luis Obispo, CA

“As our network expands to additional schools, we will train farmers newly joining our network in our best practices as needed, while learning from ecologically resilient traditional systems of farming that they are already skilled in.”

~Producer Grantee, Pinole, CA

Given the commitment to climate smart practices that all producer grantees demonstrated, grant activities may support these practices by virtue of supporting these producers (see Figure 16 for proposed grant activities).

The majority of Cohort 2 producers (76%) are not certified or registered organic (Figure 17), none are participating in transition to organic programs, and few are enrolled in programs operated by the

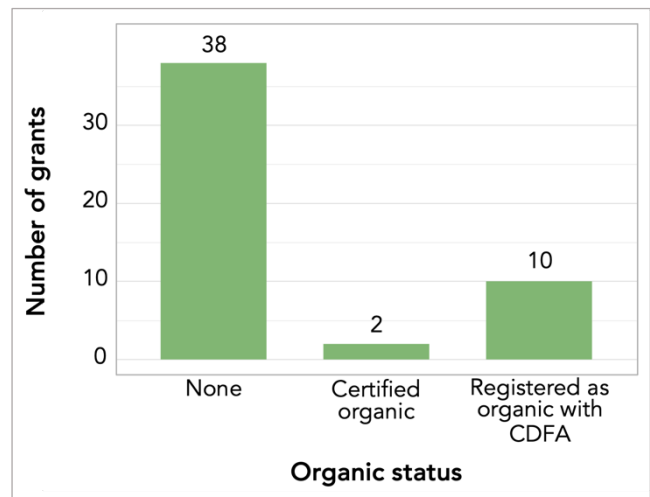


Figure 17. Organic status of Track 4 producer grantees at time of Cohort 2 application (n = 50).

¹⁶ The Farm to School Incubator Grant Program defines Climate Smart Agriculture Practices, Climate Smart Agriculture Production Systems, and Other Regenerative Strategies as follows: Climate smart agriculture practices include those defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) and those identified by the CDFA Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation via the Healthy Soils Program (HSP), Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP), and State Water Enhancement and Efficiency Program (SWEPP), including but not limited to cover cropping, no or reduced till, hedgerow plantings, compost application, and prescribed grazing. Climate smart agriculture production systems include certified organic or transitioning to certified organic. Other regenerative strategies include those that increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of communities and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the CDFA Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation's (OEFI) Climate Smart Agriculture Programs (Figures 18 and 19). The majority of producers (80%) had not sought out technical assistance in these areas in the year prior to submitting an application (Figure 20).¹⁷ This is an opportunity for increased collaboration and outreach between CDFA departments (e.g., the CDFA-F2F and the OEFI) and USDA-funded programs for Cohort 3.

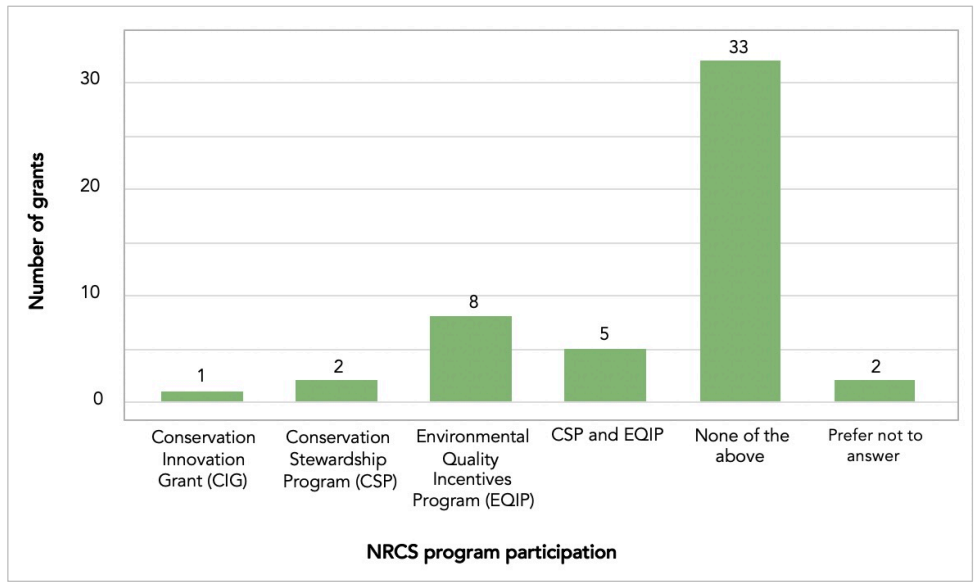


Figure 18. Producer grantee participation in USDA NRCS programs at time of application (n = 50).

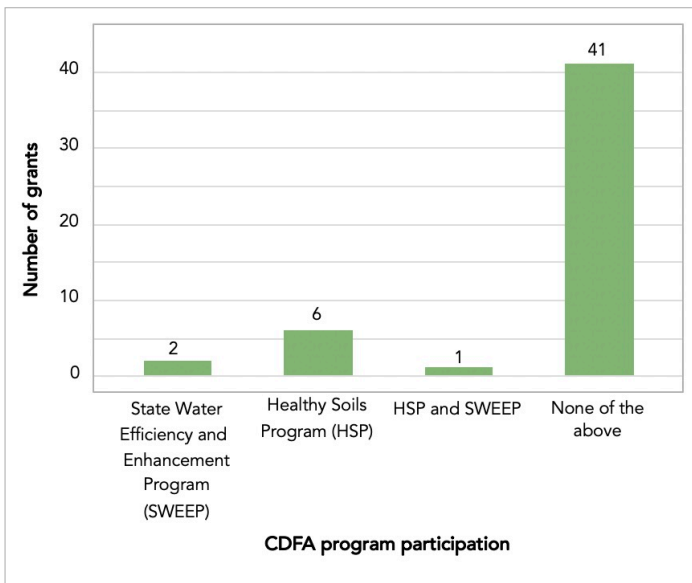


Figure 19. Producer grantee participation in CDFA programs at time of application (n = 50).

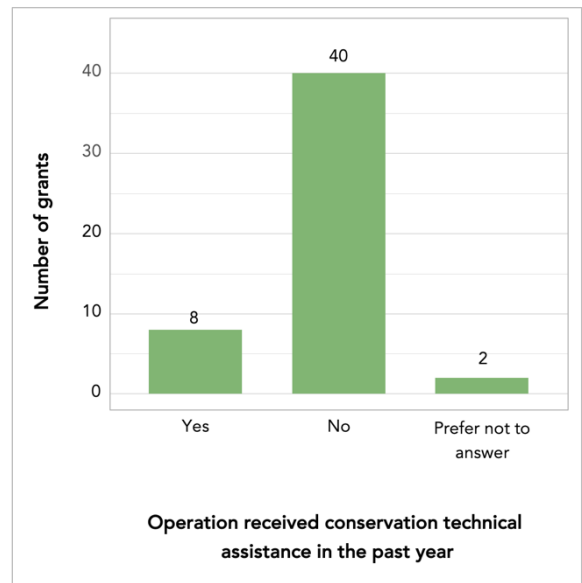


Figure 20. Producer grantees consulting with conservation technical assistance providers in the year before application (n = 50).

¹⁷ Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), including but not limited to a UC Cooperative Extension office, Resource Conservation District, NRCS Office, or other CTA provider, to implement Climate Smart Agriculture practices or other regenerative strategies.

Section 5: A Preliminary Look at Economic Impacts from Cohort 2

The following section summarizes anticipated spending by Cohort 2.¹⁸ These data reflect proposed project budgets that grantees submitted in their original grant applications and that correspond with their proposed project work plans.¹⁹ Analysis of funds spent and associated outputs and impacts will be summarized in future reports.

How grantees plan to spend grant funds

Analysis of Cohort 2 grantees' application budgets reveals that they plan to spend the largest portion of grant funds on infrastructure, equipment, materials, and supplies (27%). This category includes expenses like school district or ECE food processing, cooking, storage, and distribution equipment; farm to school educational materials like garden equipment and cooking tools; and on-farm infrastructure and supplies that increase the producer's ability to sell to schools, establish or enhance climate smart practices and production systems, and expand educational opportunities. Those expenditures are followed by staff and labor costs (25%) and contractual costs (20%) (Figure 21). Staff and labor budgets alone fund at least 360 positions, both new and existing, which include full- and part-time salaries, hourly wages, and stipend payments for activities such as professional development. Contractual fees fund a range of contractor positions that support farm to school projects, from electricians and mechanics required for garden and equipment installations, to farm to school coordinators who will implement local food procurement and hands-on food education in schools. Grantees budgeted nearly one fifth (18%) of project funds to cover the cost of procuring California grown or produced whole or minimally processed foods.

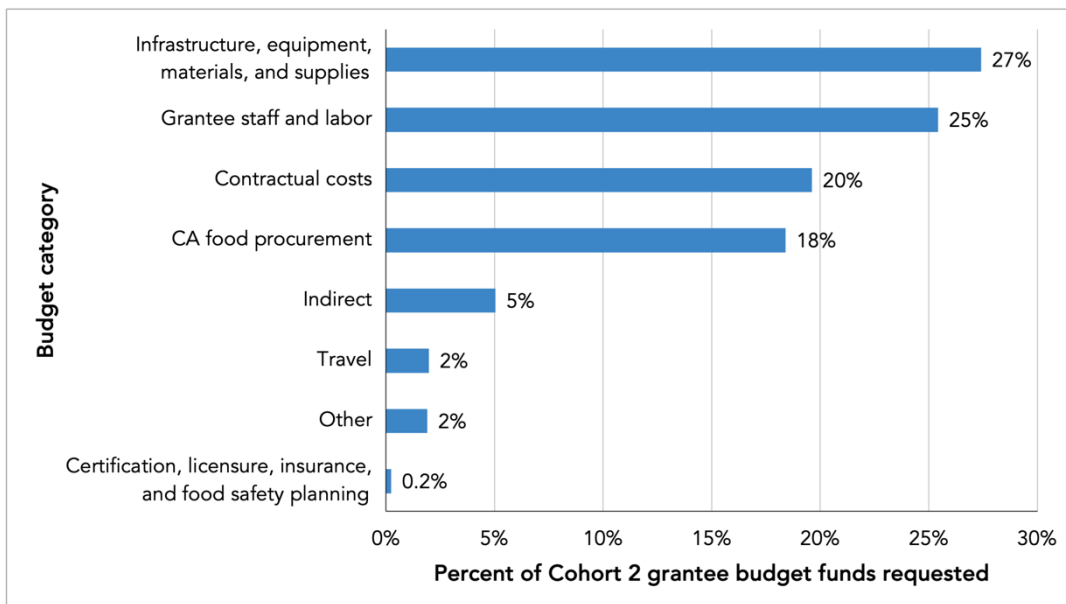


Figure 21. Preliminary analysis of Cohort 2 grantee budget allocations by category. Not all budget categories apply to all four grant tracks.

¹⁸ Reimbursement data for Cohort 2 are not available for analysis as of the publication of this report; thus, an analysis of economic activity associated with procurement for Cohort 2 is not included but should be available for review by summer 2024.

¹⁹ Some of these expenditures have been updated since application submission.

Section 6: Looking Ahead

Cross-Cutting Impacts of Farm to School

As of January 2024, the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is nine months into the two-year Cohort 2 grant period. K-12 students, school district nutrition departments and educators, farmers and ranchers, school support organizations, food hubs, and additional partners are working on deepening their relationships while contributing to the well-being and nourishment of California’s future generations.

The importance and value of farm to school programs to health, nutrition security, climate resilience, and agricultural economies is well established and well described by the California Farm to School Roadmap.²⁰ Research indicates that farm to school programs generate positive educational outcomes like enhanced academic achievement, improved test scores, and support for whole-child development.²¹ By increasing local procurement, farm to school programs increase economic resilience within communities, including through investments in labor and workforce development. By incentivizing procurement from food producers who use climate smart agriculture practices and production systems, farm to school is aligned with the state’s bold goals for California’s agricultural sector to be part of the climate solution.²²

Upcoming Milestones: January through December 2024 (Cohorts 2 and 3)

The following identifies and describes key milestones that the CDFA-F2F will be working toward during 2024:

- In August and September 2023, the CDFA-F2F posted the six remaining regional farm to school staff positions on CalHR’s website to begin the process of hiring these remaining regional staff roles. During 2024, the CDFA-F2F will continue to onboard regional farm to school staff.
- Grant recipients of the 2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program (Cohort 2) will continue implementing their grant projects.
- Following the application period and subsequent review period for the 2023 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program (Cohort 3), the CDFA-F2F will announce the Cohort 3 grant recipients and onboard the new cohort.
- The CDFA-F2F will continue to facilitate statewide office hour calls for grantees, and regional farm to school staff will continue to provide one-on-one support to grantees.
- The CDFA-F2F will continue to coordinate the California Farm to School Network by cultivating collaboration and peer-learning among farm to school practitioners throughout the state (including school nutrition professionals, educators, food producers, and community organizations), building connections between food producers and school nutrition departments throughout the state, and sharing farm to school resources and information statewide.

²⁰ California Farm to School Roadmap, pp. 8–12.

²¹ Ibid., p.10.

²² California Air Resources Board (CARB) Final 2022 Scoping Plan. CARB’s 2022 Scoping Plan included in its targets a new goal that 20 percent of California’s cultivated land be farmed organically by 2045, or about 65,000 acres annually.

- Regional farm to school staff will continue to expand the California Farm to School Network by providing one-on-one support and technical assistance to farm to school practitioners throughout their respective regions, bringing these partners together through meetings and regional convenings to cultivate regional collaboration and peer-learning, building connections between food producers and school nutrition departments throughout their respective regions, and sharing farm to school resources and information regionally.

Future Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Reporting and Data Analysis: Outcomes and Priorities

This report summarizes data from Cohort 1 exit interviews, Cohort 1 procurement data, Cohort 2 grant applications (including work plans and budgets), and Cohort 2 awards. As further data collection and analysis of grantee reporting occurs, future reports will communicate outcomes, impacts, and observations from grant-funded projects. Below is a summary of the priorities and outcomes that the California Farm to School Evaluation Team will track.

Schools and Early Care & Education (ECE)

The evaluation team will assess the following outputs and outcomes related to schools' and ECE providers' grant-funded activities:

- How grantees facilitate and sustain a focus on increasing **food education and culturally relevant meals** as part of their farm to school efforts, including the role of student input and leadership
- **Types and variety of foods** that grantees purchase using grant funds.
- The extent to which **school food buyers are purchasing food from producers that the grant program prioritizes**, including producers using climate smart agriculture practices and production systems.
- The extent to which the **farm source** is identifiable for foods that grantees purchase using grant funds.
- The extent to which school districts and ECE providers influence or support climate smart agriculture practices and production systems among small to midsize farms.
- The purchasing pathways and **systemic changes that allow for scalability and sustainability** of these procurement practices and priorities.

Partnerships

The evaluation will analyze farm to school partnerships using a qualitative comparative approach across farm to school supply chains through 20 initial and 10 in-depth case studies. The case studies will:

- Describe how and why farm to school outcomes vary across different social, environmental, and political-economic contexts.
- Identify and explore enabling conditions and barriers that affect whether and to what extent farm to school programs succeed or struggle.
- Seek to uncover and examine power asymmetries and racial disparities that hinder or facilitate successful implementation of farm to school programs.

Economic Analysis

The evaluation team will assess economic outcomes and impacts of the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program through an analysis of the following:

- How prices that producers receive for their farm goods, transaction costs, and agricultural production practices **affect the supply of the farm goods that producers sell to schools.**
- How preferences, budgets, and costs affect schools' and school districts' demand for farm goods.
- **How marketing channels** available to school food buyers (e.g., micro purchases and direct farm sales vs. large purchases through broadline distributors) are used in farm to school programs and how they **affect schools' purchasing decisions.**
- The extent to which Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funding and/or the expansion of social networks resulting from this program influence the **adoption of climate smart agriculture practices.**
- **What is needed** for food producers, regional distributors, food hubs, and other aggregators/distributors **to participate in farm to school programs profitably.**

Environmental Analysis

The evaluation team will analyze the environmental impact of grant-related farm to school food production through surveys, interviews, and secondary data sources. This analysis will explore the following:

- Do these grants **support the viability of farms and ranches** using **more climate smart agriculture practices** or production systems than is typical in California, and how does the persistence of these operations shift the environmental impact (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions, water use, nutrient leaching) of agriculture in the state?
- To what degree do producers adopt **climate smart agriculture practices** as a result of this program?
- To what extent is **on-farm food waste reduced** by providing markets for otherwise unmarketable products?
- Does receiving this grant lead to changes in crop acreages, and what are the environmental outcomes associated with growing a different portfolio of crops?

Grant Implementation Analysis

The evaluation team will analyze the ability of the CDFA-F2F to successfully award and maintain grantees that are in alignment with the grant program's funding priorities and the California Farm to School Roadmap's high-level goals and priorities. This analysis will explore:

- The extent to which the CDFA-F2F has **developed a grant process that is accessible** to historically excluded groups and priority populations within California.
- The ways in which the CDFA-F2F provided grant program implementation, support, and technical assistance that were inclusive and equitable.
- The degree to which **the CDFA-F2F refined the program in response to feedback** to better engage priority applicant and grantee populations.

- How agency, state, and federal policies and processes help or hinder the implementation of this grant.
- How the above factors affect the engagement of priority groups that the CDFA-F2F seeks to engage as applicants.
- How the above factors affect the ability of grantees from priority groups to achieve their desired outcomes.