# Introduction

This semi-structured questionnaire is a tool to support assessment of school nutrition programs to identify opportunities and challenges for increasing the use of seasonal, fresh, Washington-grown foods in meals and snack programs. It may be used to guide an interview with the Nutrition Services director or other key personnel in the decision-making process, such as a dietitian, menu planner, and/or purchaser. It may also be useful for self-assessment of a school nutrition program by the Nutrition Services Director. However the questionnaire is used, responses can aid the strategic planning process and guide development of a farm to school program in the school district.

The questionnaire will provide prompts for your district nutrition services program to consider current operations and your vision for starting or expanding a farm to school program. Topics include: current meal service operation, procurement, facilities, menu planning, staff beliefs and attitude, student food preference, and school environment.

# Questionnaire

## Vision & Goals

### The first step is to consider the big picture of where the district wants to go. It is important to consider the various perspectives of those who will need to partner to make farm to school a success in your district.

##### Nutrition Services Department (NS) vision and goals

##### Vision of the district administration

##### NS director’s vision for a farm to school program

##### Why you want to do farm to school?

## Current Operation System

### Starting a farm to school program involves taking small steps and identifying where there are opportunities in your current meal service to add more fresh, seasonal produce or other new items to the production process. Identifying current space, equipment, capacity and skills assets and challenges, will start to make clear where you have capacity to increase use of fresh product or more scratch cooking as you start farm to school activities.

### Overview of Meal Service Operation

##### Number of meals served per day

##### Free/Reduced-priced meal participation

##### Student demographics

### Type of kitchen(s)

##### Central kitchen?

##### Kitchen(s) with full cooking capacities?

##### Kitchen(s) with limited cooking capacities?

##### Kitchen(s) with minimal cooking/preparation capacities?

##### Other?

### Facility and Equipment

##### How much food can you store?

###### Refrigerator

###### Freezer

###### Dry storage

##### Do you have a central warehouse? Do you have a system in place to distribute to schools or kitchens (i.e. trucks)?

##### How much scratch cooking do you do? Or can your kitchen(s) do?

###### Processing equipment

###### Cooking equipment

##### Other equipment

##### Is there a need for additional processing equipment?

##### Is there a need for additional storage space/equipment?

### Kitchen and Production Processes

##### Food preparation and kitchen processing

##### Food packaging – bulk, individual, etc.

### Meal Service at School Sites

##### Elementary school

##### Secondary school

##### Time for lunch

### Food Purchasing

##### Food budget, broken out by type

###### Produce

###### USDA Foods

###### Bread

###### Dairy

###### Others (e.g. Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program etc.)

##### USDA Food process and strategies

##### Distribution system

###### Does your district have delivery trucks?

###### Is there a need for delivery to multiple school sites?

###### Day/time of deliveries

##### Current suppliers

###### Who do you work with for produce, dairy, bread, and other foods?

###### What local food items are you buying already?

###### Do you know what local food items are currently available through your vendors?

###### Do you have a system for identifying local foods available from your vendor? (for purchase and for highlighting for students)

### Menu Planning

##### Who plans the menu?

##### Do you use cycle menu? Does it change with the seasons? Describe the cycle.

##### What drives the menu planning process?

##### Current food use – typical menu items, a la carte items

##### Is there any consideration of seasonality?

##### Do you serve any foods specific to the ethnic mix of students in your school district?

##### What do you do with the leftovers?

### Food Service Staff

##### Current practice – skills, food preparation process involved, etc.

##### Staff attitude and beliefs

##### Can your staff process local unprocessed food items?

##### Is there a need for additional staff or staff time to accommodate local unprocessed food in the kitchen?

### Students Food Preferences / Consumption Pattern

##### Perceived students likes & dislikes

##### Students food preferences determined by sales

##### Students food preferences determined by observed waste

### Other Factors

##### Nutrition or food-based education in the district (environmental study, culinary art, core curriculum, school garden activities etc.)

##### Competitive food (student stores, fundraising, in-class parties with food etc.)

##### Food/nutrition education materials on school campus (bulletin boards, posters, etc.)

##### Existing communication channels (district-, school- and community-level)

##### Perceived teachers support (norms, practice in schools, for meal programs/Nutrition Services in general)

##### Existing school community partners (clubs, student organizations, PTA, individual champions, etc.)

##### Labor union – Describe relationship, opportunities and challenges that may affect efforts to initiate farm to school

# Identifying Perceived Assets, Challenges, and Ideas for Supporting a Positive Change Process

### Given the information you’ve gathered about your meal program, what are some areas where you might be able to make some changes within the parameters of your current operation?

### Some examples: If you have enough refrigerator capacity, you could start ordering more fresh produce right away. If you have extra freezer capacity, there may be an opportunity to chop and freeze local produce items when they are in season and affordable, and then use throughout the school year. If you have trucks to deliver to each school, then single delivery of farm to school foods can be made to a central location, making it easier on farmers or other small distributors. For next steps and ideas, visit WSDA’s [Farm to School Start-Up Kit](http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Content/Documents/WSDA_Farm_to_School_StartUp_Kit.pdf). Or check other sections of the WSDA Farm to School Toolkit ([www.wafarmtoschool.org](http://www.wafarmtoschool.org)).