

Farm to School Innovator Series: Formal Purchases for School Nutrition Programs

May 6, 2026

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Spork Food Hub and Fiery Ginger Farm
Co-Founder



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Live Interpretation Community Language Cooperative

The Community Language Cooperative (CLC) provides interpretation services, focus groups, and inclusivity/diversity training to make community, academic and governmental events more accessible for all. We help remove barriers and broaden opportunities for participation and community engagement by non-English speakers and train organizations on implementation of inclusivity practices.



Agenda

- Welcome + Updates
- Formal Purchases for School Nutrition Programs
- Guest Panel
- Q+A
- Farm to School Poll
- Regional Breakouts
- Resources
- Closing





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171

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

40

COUNTIES

Farm to School Innovator Series

The Farm to School Innovator Series provides virtual gatherings for farm to school leaders focused on building resilient school food systems in California. Live interpretation into Spanish will be provided for the event series.



Formal Purchases for School Nutrition Programs



Formal Purchases: *Important Terms for Farmers to Know*

Procurement: the process of buying and selling. AKA, how a school buys fruits and vegetables!

RFP or Request for Proposal: the process schools use to buy from vendors for sales over \$350k

Food Service Director (FSD): the person at a school district who is responsible for procurement



Procurement Methods Overview

Micro-purchase: used for purchases under \$50,000 (with school district self-certification), flexible choice of vendor

Simplified acquisition: between \$50,000 and \$350,000, based on at least two quotes and vendor selected for lowest price

Formal Purchase: used for purchases over \$350,000, vendor selected through RFP process





*Using **Formal Purchases** to support **Farm to School***



Local Geographic Preference: include the term “local” in RFP specifications



Evaluation Criteria: include criteria such as traceability, delivery within 4 days of harvest, diversified production, harvest of the month, and local geographic preference



Great for deepening partnerships with farms and food hubs that you have reached the micro-purchase threshold with

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Guest Panel Discussion

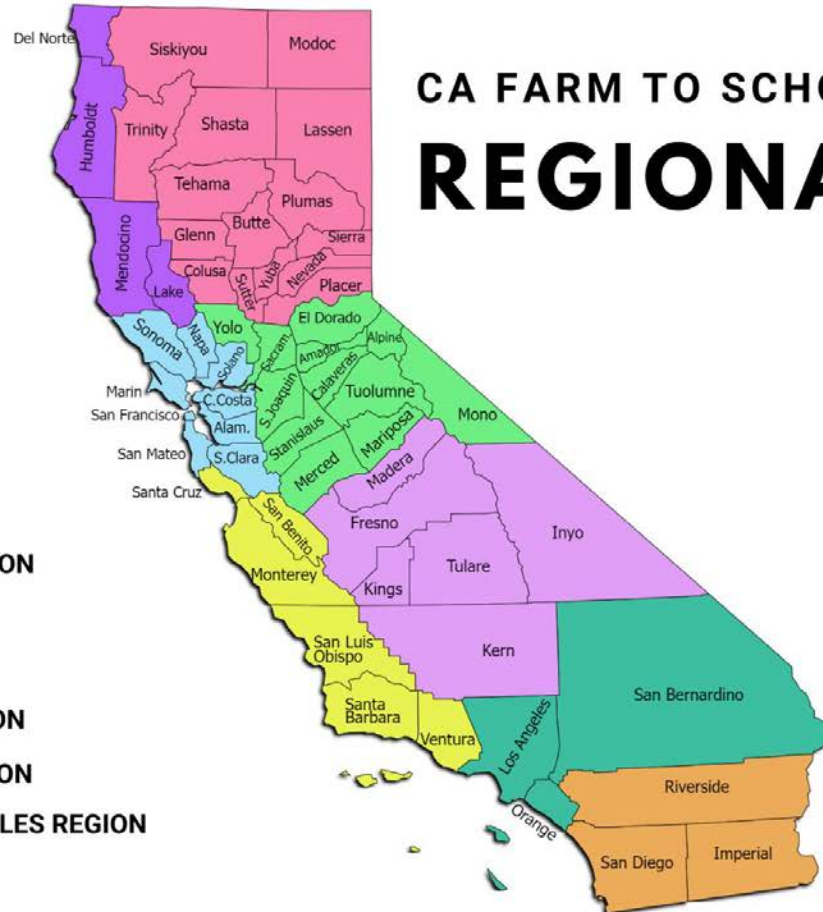
Farm to School Poll

Regional Breakouts

CA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

REGIONAL MAP

-  SUPERIOR REGION
-  NORTH COAST REGION
-  BAY AREA REGION
-  CENTRAL REGION
-  SAN JOAQUIN REGION
-  SOUTH COAST REGION
-  GREATER LOS ANGELES REGION
-  SOUTHERN REGION



Resources

Center for Ecoliteracy Resources

- [Farm to School Procurement Checklist](#)
- [Growing for Schools: A Farmer's Guide for Exploring New Markets](#)
- [California Flavors, Sabores de California](#)
- [Nourishing Students Resources](#)
- [Fresh from California](#)
- [Farm to School Innovator Series Archive](#)
- [Center for Ecoliteracy Newsletter](#)

Join the California Food for California Kids Network

California Food for California Kids is an initiative of the Center for Ecoliteracy that builds the capacity and commitment of public school districts to provide all students with fresh, locally-grown school meals and develop connections between the cafeteria, classroom, and garden.



Partner Organization Resources

California Department of Food and Agriculture

- [Office of Farm to Fork California Farm to School Program](#)
- [CDFA Office of Farm to Fork: CA Farm to School Network Call](#) – *June 25*

Community Alliance with Family Farmers

- [Bid Generator](#)
- [Farm to School Procurement Guide](#)
- [Selling to Schools Checklist](#)

LunchAssist

- [The Lunch Break Webinar](#) – *ongoing through October 2026*

Cultivating Farm to School Leaders

Funding for the Cultivating Farm to School Leaders project is made possible by the 2023 Farm to School Incubator Grant through the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork's Farm to School Program.



Thank you!



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