

# EMERGING FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARM TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

## FARM TO EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### FAMILIES & CHILDREN

- Cultivation of lifelong healthy eating habits
- Increased knowledge of local agriculture and role of people in the food system
- Increased access to local foods at home



### FARM TO EARLY CARE & EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Creation of sustainable local food procurement models for ECE settings
- Improved and equitable access to healthy and local food



### ECE PROVIDERS

- Improved quality in foods served to young children
- Knowledge of new experiential learning opportunities through nutrition education and gardens
- Awareness of and participation in local food purchasing



### FARMERS

- Diversification of revenue streams
- New market opportunities for small/medium-sized and Black/Brown farmers
- Increased community support



### FOOD & AGRICULTURE (U.S. Department of Agriculture)

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program:  
\$170 Million



### HEALTH & NUTRITION (U.S. Department of Agriculture)

Child and Adult Care Food Program:  
\$42 Billion



Enhanced WIC Produce Benefits:  
\$490 Million



### EARLY CARE & EDUCATION (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)

Child Care Stabilization Funding:  
\$24 Billion



Child Care Assistance Funding:  
\$15 Billion



Head Start & Early Head Start:  
\$1 Billion



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## Early Care & Education

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Child Care Stabilization Funding - \$24 Billion

**Uses:** Immediate relief for ECE providers (centers and family child care) to cover operating expenses, personnel costs, rent, facility improvements, personal protective equipment, mental health supports, and other pandemic-related needs.

**Strategies for Action:**

- Provide input into your [state CCDF agency's](#) process for distributing stabilization funds to support equitable access by ECE providers, particularly those with the greatest level of need.
- Work with state agencies and advocates to ensure ECE providers are allowed and encouraged to use funds in ways that support farm to ECE (e.g., facilities enhancements or as informal mental health supports for children and staff).

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Child Care Assistance Funding - \$15 Billion

**Uses:** Funds flow to states through the Child Care and Development Block Grant program to support the comprehensive needs of families, including the child care needs of essential workers. Funds are flexible and can be used to serve families without regards to income eligibility; any portion can be used to support quality improvement activities or to focus on infants and toddlers.

**Strategies for Action:**

- Reach out to your [state child care agency](#) to share the needs of families and larger community along with strategies that can leverage these resources for quality improvement in the areas of child nutrition, social-emotional health, and professional development for providers.

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Head Start & Early Head Start (HS/EHS) - \$1 Billion

**Uses:** These funds will be allocated to local Head Start agencies in a ratio to the proportion available for allocations as the number of enrolled children served by the Head Start agency by the number of enrolled children served by all Head Start agencies. Programs will receive \$400 more per EHS child and \$300 more per HS child.

**Strategies for Action:**

- Connect directly with HS/EHS grantees in your community about how farm to ECE aligns with their goals for child nutrition, family engagement, and learning in the [Performance Standards](#) and [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#). Learn how farm to ECE supports the goals of Head Start. See: [Supporting Head Start Programs with Farm to ECE Models](#); [Growing Head Start Success with Farm to Early Care and Education](#)
- [Locate HS/EHS grantees](#) in your community and build relationships with your [State Head Start Collaboration Office](#).

## Food & Agriculture

### U.S. Department of Agriculture: Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) - \$170 Million

**Uses:** Funds can be used for innovative projects that support the specialty crop food sector and explore new market opportunities including farm to ECE activities like outreach and TA to farmers and ECE providers on farm to ECE, building ECE gardens, and connecting specialty crop growers to early childhood settings.

**Strategies for Action:**

- Learn more about the [SCBGP](#). Reach out to your [state contact](#) to apply for funding and encourage them to include farm to ECE initiatives in the state plan. View [previously funded SCBGP projects](#) for ideas.

## Health & Nutrition

### U.S. Department of Agriculture: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) - \$42 Billion

**Uses:** CACFP provides reimbursements to child care providers for nutritious meals and snacks. Funds can be used to procure food directly from producers and to purchase gardening items when produce grown is used in a reimbursable meal. State administrative funds can be used to provide technical assistance and coordination of farm to ECE activities.

**Strategies for Action:**

- Learn more about [CACFP](#) and advocate to your [state agency](#) to include farm to ECE in their planned activities.
- Area eligibility for family child care homes has been temporarily [waived](#), which expands CACFP access in rural areas. Work with ECE and CACFP partners to encourage child care providers to [participate in CACFP](#).

### U.S. Department of Agriculture: Enhanced WIC Produce Benefits - \$490 Million

**Uses:** Produce benefits are increasing from \$9/month for children and \$11/month for women to \$35/month each for up to four months. Benefits can be used to purchase produce at any WIC-approved vendor, including farmers markets and roadside stands.

**Strategies for Action:**

- Learn more about the provision and how much your state can benefit with [this guide](#).
- Advocate to your [state WIC agency](#) and other stakeholders to create an outreach plan.
- Work with farmers markets and roadside stands to become WIC-approved vendors, accepting cash value benefits.