



# Growing Lunch

A School Garden Grant Program  
2016 Project Year

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE  
& COMMERCE

Cindy Hyde-Smith, Commissioner

## What is Growing Lunch?

Growing Lunch is a school garden grant program administered through the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce with the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. *Growing Lunch* seeks to enhance Farm to School efforts across the state. It acts as an educational tool to enhance the knowledge of daycare and school-aged children on agriculture, healthy eating and how food arrives on their plate three times a day. As society becomes increasingly removed from agricultural practices and the farm, it remains pertinent to educate students on the origin of their food. MDAC has designated a website for those interested in the Farm to School Program and educational resources and materials for Farm to School Week, [www.farmtoschoolweek.org](http://www.farmtoschoolweek.org). Farm to School provides locally-grown produce to our state's schools and also seeks to educate students on agriculture.

## What is Farm to School?

The Mississippi Farm to School program was introduced to encourage the serving of locally-grown and locally-produced agricultural products in school meals and to recognize the substantial economic and health benefits of serving locally-grown foods.

For more than a decade, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) have worked in conjunction to assist growers wishing to participate in the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This is a statewide purchasing program administered by the two agencies. School districts place orders for products throughout the year, while MDAC works with the growers to ensure the produce is delivered to the appropriate distributor, who then delivers produce to the schools. In recent years, Mississippi farmers have provided over 19 products including bell peppers, blueberries, butterbeans, collard greens, cucumbers, eggplant, satsumas, southern peas, strawberries, and sweet potatoes to schools across the state.

The first full week of October was designated as Mississippi Farm to School Week by the Mississippi Legislature. Schools across the state participate in a variety of farm to school activities and strive to serve produce from local farmers.

## Who is Eligible?

All schools, K-12, and daycares/pre-schools in the State of Mississippi are eligible to apply, although this program is ideally geared towards younger school-aged children. Schools that already have a school garden may apply to further their production. It is encouraged that schools applying have local support, for example, a local extension office or Master Gardeners. This program is on a first come, first serve basis. Only one grant can be awarded per school. Schools must fill out the application and have a dedicated coordinator.

Pre-schools must be registered/licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health.

Schools that have received a *Growing Lunch* grant from MDAC in the past are not eligible to apply for more funds at this time.

## Criteria/Requirements

Schools interested in applying should note that there will be necessary activities in order to achieve results required by MDAC. Schools will administer a pre- and post-survey to students involved in the school garden. In addition, MDAC will also ask that schools fill out an evaluation and informational sheet to include photos of the garden.

The following criteria must be met:

- Garden must be located on school grounds.
- Teacher involvement is mandatory.
- Parents, Extension Service, Master Gardeners, and /or Farm Bureau involvement is strongly encouraged.
- A minimum student interaction of one class, however, more than one class is encouraged.
- The garden grant can only reimburse expenses for specialty crops, see “Allowable Purchases” below.

Produce from gardens may be consumed or used as a teaching tool. If produce is sold, schools must report this to MDAC and reinvest funds into the school garden towards specialty crop production.

## Allowable Purchases/Awarded Grants

Grant funds may be only be used for specialty crop production. Specialty crops are defined in law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.”

Below is a list of allowable purchased through this grant program; supplies not listed below should obtain approval from MDAC before purchasing.

- Seed or plants for fruit, vegetable, herb, and/or flower production
- Soil
- Wood for stakes, raised gardens, etc.
- Tools-rakes, shovels, etc.
- Watering hoses
- Harvesting containers, buckets, etc.
- Gloves
- Fertilizers

MDAC will disperse grant funds on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursements will be made on an as-needed basis, but requests for reimbursements should be made regularly and as soon as possible. A request for reimbursement should include: an invoice to MDAC with the amount requested; list of expenditures; and documentation of the expenditures (paid invoices, receipts, canceled checks, etc.).

Schools awarded garden grants will have until March 2017 to expend their \$500.

## Program Contact

Susan Head  
Market Development Division  
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce

P.O. Box 1609  
Jackson, MS 39215  
601-359-1196  
[susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov)

# Growing Lunch

Garden Grant Application

## School Information

Note: Only one grant can be awarded per school.

Name of school	
Street Address	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Grade(s) Participating	
Projected number of students participating	
Where will garden be located in relation to the school? (brief description)	

## School Garden Coordinator(s) Contact Information

Main Contact (Name)	
Street Address	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Phone	
Best Time to Call	
Email	

## Additional Volunteer(s)

Please provide us with names and contact information of those that will also be helping with the school garden grant and if they are a teacher, parent, extension agent, farmer, etc.

Name 1	
Email/Phone 1	
Name 2	

Email/Phone 2	
Name 3	
Email/Phone 3	
Name 4	
Email/Phone 4	
Name 5	
Email/Phone 5	
Name 6	
Email/Phone 6	

## Agreement and Signature

By submitting this application, I affirm that I am willing to care and maintain the garden throughout the school year, should caretaker duties transfer to someone else; I will notify MDAC of the changes.

Name (printed)	
Signature	
Date	

## Funding Request/Project Plans

Amount of grant money applying for: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please create and provide the plan for the garden, including timeline of the project, crops to be planted, a detailed budget of estimated expenditures, and how this will be used in the classroom to educate students.

### Return Completed Applications to:

Susan Head  
 Market Development Division  
 Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce  
 P.O. Box 1609

Jackson, MS 39215  
601-359-1196  
[susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov)

Example Timeline Template:

Please provide a timeline of activities, including who will be responsible and the dates or months the activity will take place.

Date(s)	Responsible Group	Project Activity

Example Budget Template:

Please provide a detailed list of supplies that will be purchased and a price estimate of each item. It is important that we understand how the budget will be utilized.

Budget Item	School Year(s)	Total
<b>Supplies:</b>		
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
<b>Total</b>	\$	\$

List of specialty crops that will be planted:

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Educational aspect:

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Please provide an explanation how this will enhance the education of the students and what activities will be conducted: