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READI Program Proposals

Have you consulted with the local economic development office in the county in which the project or program is located? Yes

Project or Program Contact Information

Project/Program Name Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program

Project/Program Contact Janet Katz

Project/Program Contact Email Janet@NEIfood.org

Project/Program Contact Phone (260) 241-2260

Relationship to Project/Program Founding Director of Northeast Indiana Local Food Network

Project or Program Location

Address 3819 Eggeman Road
Fort Wayne, IN 46814

County Allen

Project or Program Details

What type of project/program? Programming

What is the duration of the project/program? July 2021 - December 2023 and beyond

Is this a hybrid project and program? No

Select project/program focus areas. (You can select multiple) Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Share a description of the project/program.

On July 15, 2021, the Northeast Indiana Local Food Network, under fiscal sponsorship by Wells County Revitalization, was awarded a \$130,539 USDA Farm to School Implementation grant, in collaboration with grant partners, Parkview Health and Purdue Extension.

The proposed Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program will enable the Northeast Indiana Local Food Network to expand the number of regional schools and early childhood education (ECE) programs from the 11 schools/programs that will participate in the program funded through this USDA grant award, to 18 schools/programs.

This Farm to School program will improve access to local food in eligible schools/programs across Northeast Indiana by developing agricultural education resources and building relationships between these schools/programs and local food producers with the goal to establish a robust local food procurement program.

While children and their schools/programs are the intended target of this Farm to School program, there's no doubt this project will create market opportunities for our region's fruit and vegetable producers, enhance a wider understanding of local food access, and promote increased health outcomes for educators, school food staff, administrators, parents and the community, as well.

The program includes the following activities:

- 1) Production of 24 Harvest of the Month Farm videos on 24 different farms across NE Indiana
- 2) Deliver training and on-going technical and agricultural consultations for school tower gardens, raised bed gardens and/or greenhouse gardens.
- 3) Convene a Farm to School Curriculum Committee to create curriculum resources to integrate agricultural education and taste test activities into relevant early childhood foundations and K-5 standards; and translate the curriculum into Spanish and Burmese.
- 4) Organize taste tests of 24 Harvest of the Month products at participating schools/programs to encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and begin to build relationships between schools and local food producers to promote local food procurement.
- 5) Organize educational and networking events at the Northeast Indiana Local Food Forum & Expo for school food service staff and local food producers to increase Farm to School awareness and involvement, raise understanding of best practices and promote existing regional training opportunities.
- 6) Plan and lead agricultural education activities on farms hosting farm tours during Local Food Week during September 2022 and 2023 through collaboration with host farmers and educational partners.
- 7) Convene bimonthly meetings to support and expand the NE Indiana Farm to School Team by encouraging collaboration and sharing agricultural education and local food procurement successes and resources.

Our program partners each bring significant relevant experience and strong regional relationships to implement these activities.

Why is this project/program regionally significant?

The Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program will promote Farm to School activities and build relationships between local schools/ECE programs and local produce farms all across Northeast Indiana.

The 11 schools and ECE programs who are participating in this program under the USDA Farm to School grant are Lakeland School Corp., Prairie Heights School Corp., MSD of Steuben County, East Allen County Schools, Fort Wayne Community Schools, NW Allen Community Schools, Garrett-Keyser-Butler Schools, DeKalb Central Schools, Manchester Community Schools, Bluffton-Harrison MSD, and Early Childhood Alliance. This proposal seeks additional funding to expand this list and add more participating classrooms within each school and district.

Through this program, each of these regional schools and programs will raise their awareness of, and build relationships with, produce farms across our region. Through our Harvest of the Month farm video filmed on 24 different rural and urban farms across our region, students will not only learn about where these fruits and vegetables come from, but they will develop a greater appreciation for the diversity of our region's farms and farmers. To date we have produced two Harvest of the Month videos: Apples filmed at Orchard Hill Farm in Noble County (<https://www.neifood.org/news/ne-indiana-farm-to-school-team>) and Strawberries at BroxonBerry in Wells County (<https://www.neifood.org/news/ne-indiana-farm-to-school-team-hb3r9>).

This Farm to School program will also encourage multi-farm collaboration among our regional farms to collectively serve the demand for produce by our regional schools and ECE programs.

The key grant partners, Northeast Indiana Local Food Network, Parkview Health and Purdue Extension, all have a strong presence across the region.

How does this project/program relate to the identified focus area(s)?

Implementing a robust Farm to School program in Northeast Indiana will create new markets for our region's diversified produce farms. This new local food procurement by schools and ECE programs will also create business opportunities for local food entrepreneurs who seek to participate in our region's new Farm to School local food procurement value chain as a producer, processor, aggregator or distributor of fresh and/or value-added local food products. These new opportunities will require innovative solutions to improve efficiencies within these local supply chains.

This new Farm to School marketplace will spur the growth of our local food economy and increase the economic resilience of the participating local food farms and businesses. A robust local food economy will enhance the local food culture in Northeast Indiana, which in turn, will contribute to the quality of place in cities and rural communities across our region.

What is the project/program timeline?

The two-year grant period of the USDA Farm to School Implementation grant that was recently awarded to Wells County Revitalization is from July 2021 through July 2023. The program activities funded through this USDA grant will be completed during this period. Our grant partners are prepared to commence with this program immediately.

The additional funding requested in this proposal will allow the grant partners to implement this Farm to School program in more schools over a two year period that will extend for at least 6 months beyond the USDA grant period.

List the partners involved in this project/program.

1) Northeast Indiana Local Food Network, Inc. - a nonprofit organization (currently under fiscal sponsorship by Wells County Revitalization, but seeking its own tax-exempt status). The mission of the organization is to support the growth of a vibrant local food marketplace across Northeast Indiana, by increasing the visibility and economic opportunities for our region's local food producers and businesses, so they can expand their sales both locally and beyond.

2) Parkview Health - the Youth Well-being Team at Parkview works to improve health and inspire well-being of youth in the communities Parkview serves. Their work helps to address student nutrition habits, increase easy access to fruits and vegetables, improve household food security, enhance overall academic achievement, and even support positive changes in the diets and lifestyles of school teachers and staff.

3) Purdue Extension - extension provides educational programs and practical, research-based information from its deep connections within our urban and rural communities. Through their agricultural education programs they will provide needed technical assistance to regional farmers participating in Farm to School programs. Through Extension's knowledge of drone video recording and video editing, Extension Educators will assist in the production of our Harvest of the Month video

4) Northeast Indiana Farm to School Team - a group of regional educators, school administrator, food service staff members, local food producers, and youth nutrition experts co-led by Parkview Health and Northeast Indiana Local Food Network. This dedicated team was formed in 2019 to develop and support a comprehensive, regional Farm to School plan for Northeast Indiana.

Project or Program Finances

What is the total amount of READI program funds requested?

\$32,600

Upload a file with project/program finances.

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10991392032>

What is the sustainability of the project/program? Share your 3-year plan.

The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network and Parkview Hospital, are committed to continuing their relationships with participating schools and ECE providers and cultivating new ones, after the conclusion of this project period. In order to sustain these Farm to School initiatives, participating schools and ECE programs have a goal to include Farm to School activities in their annual budgets and/or school wellness policies/guidelines.

The Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program creates agricultural education resources that will help support the expansion of Farm to School initiatives in our region for years to come. The resources that will be promoted by our Northeast Indiana Farm to School Team and will be accessible on the both the Northeast Indiana Local Food Network and Parkview websites include: Harvest of the Month farm and cooking videos, Farm to School curriculum resources, tower and raised bed garden training videos, and Farm to School success stories and lessons learned by regional schools and local food producers.

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network will continue to host the Local Food Forum & Expo and organize a Farm to School breakout session as an ongoing part of this annual event. The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network will build relationships with an expanding group of educational partners to provide a variety of educational activities on farms during Local Food Week each year.

In order to develop robust local food procurement programs in NE Indiana, our region must develop the regional partnerships and value chains needed to effectively expand the availability, aggregation and distribution of locally grown fruits, vegetables and other foods across our region. The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network recently collaborated with 10 other public and private local food entities and organizations across Indiana to jointly apply for a three-year USDA Regional Food System Partnerships implementation grant. This grant funding will support the expansion of a statewide network of Local Food Coordinators to facilitate the creation of a robust local food value chain for local food producers and wholesale buyers across Indiana.

Parkview Well-being staff has secured funding for raised beds and tower gardens through Kids Gardening and the PNC Charitable Trust to utilize at schools participating in the Farm to School Planning Grant process. Seeking additional funding from public and private sources will continue.

The two-year grant period of the USDA Farm to School Implementation grant that was awarded to Wells County Revitalization runs from July 2021 through July 2023.

The additional funding requested in this proposal will allow the grant partners to implement this Farm to School program in more schools over a two year period that will extend at least 6 months beyond the USDA grant period.

Describe the return on investment for this project/program.

The Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program will utilize the following metrics to gauge the impact of our program.

- 1) Number of Harvest of the Month videos created, the number of views the videos receive and the feedback we receive from viewers and participating farmers
- 2) Number of regional farmers and school food service staff who participate in Farm to School learning and networking events. Participants feedback and the number and value of Farm to School contacts made.
- 3) Number of schools, staff members and volunteers who receive training on installing and maintaining school gardens
- 4) Variety and weight of produce harvested from school gardens, and perception questionnaires from participating students and staff
- 5) Number of Farm to School curriculum resources created
- 6) Number of students participating in Harvest of the Month taste tests
- 7) Weight of local Harvest of the Month produce that is purchased for use in taste tests.
- 8) Number of Local Food Week regional farm tours, number of farm tour educational activities offered and number of farm tour participants
- 9) Number of participants in Local Food Forum & Expo Farm to School educational and networking events, participant feedback on what they learned and value of contacts made
- 10) Assessment of well-being changes in Farm to School activity participants using behavior questionnaires.
- 11) Overall evaluation of Farm to School related efforts in a school through Farm to School building assessment.

Project or Program Assets

Share an image of the project/program. (Option 1) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10991392035>

Share an image of the project/program. (Option 2) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10991392036>

Share an image of the project/program. (Option 3) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10991392037>

LOCAL FOOD WEEK



Our
Land.

Our
Tables.



Friday 9/11 -
Sunday 9/20

Check out tours
and events at:

NEIfood.org

9/11

9/20



CONNECT WITH FOOD & FARMS YOU LOVE
OUTDOORS - SMALL GROUPS - VIRTUALLY

TOUR • MEET • TASTE
LOCAL FARMS YOUR FARMERS LOCAL FOOD

See NEIfood.org
for a complete list
of Tours & Events



Most events are FREE
but require Pre-registration

Thank you to
our Sponsors:







Project Cost/Budget – Construction Projects (if applicable)							
Description		Cost – Fiscal Year 2021	Cost – Fiscal Year 2022	Cost – Fiscal Year 2023	Cost – Fiscal Year 2024	Totals Per Category	% of Total Expense
Acquisition/Rights-of-Way Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Design/Inspection Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Legal/Financial Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Infrastructure Construction Cost		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Building Construction Cost		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Other Construction Costs		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Project Construction Expenses Totals per year		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
Total Construction Expenses Project Cost (all fiscal years)		\$ -					
Project Cost/Budget – Programs (if applicable)							
The Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program will improve access to local food in eligible schools and ECE programs across Northeast Indiana by developing agricultural education resources and building relationships between these schools/ECE programs and local food producers. Through this expanded funding, this program will expand the number of participating schools from 11 to 18.		Cost – Fiscal Year 2021	Cost – Fiscal Year 2022	Cost – Fiscal Year 2023	Cost – Fiscal Year 2024	Totals Per Category	% of Total Expense
NE Indiana Local Food Network	Contract staffing, mileage, events, printing	\$ 10,600	\$ 21,200	\$ 21,850	\$ -	\$ 53,650	33%
Purdue Extension	Personnel salary and fringe benefits	\$ 2,950	\$ 5,900	\$ 2,950	\$ -	\$ 11,800	7%
Parkview Health	Personnel salary, fringe benefits, mileage, supplies	\$ 19,075	\$ 38,150	\$ 40,425	\$ -	\$ 97,650	60%
		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Project Program Expense Totals per year		\$ 32,625	\$ 65,250	\$ 65,225	\$ -		
Total Program Expenses Project Cost (all fiscal years)		\$ 163,100					
Funding Source							
The Expanded Implementation of Northeast Indiana Farm to School Program will be funded through the USDA Farm to School Implementation grant award which includes approximately \$97,000 of grant fund and \$33,000 of Cost Share from Northeast Indiana Local Food Network, Parkview Health and Purdue Extension. The additional 20% READI funds will allow us to expand the number of participating schools from 11 to 18.		Cost – Fiscal Year 2021	Cost – Fiscal Year 2022	Cost – Fiscal Year 2023	Cost – Fiscal Year 2024	Totals Per Category	% of Total Expense
READI	20% additional funding to expand program participation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32,600	\$ -	\$ 32,600	20%
Other Funds \$		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Private/Philanthropic Funds \$	USDA Farm to School grant award (USDA funds + Cost Share)	\$ 32,600	\$ 65,300	\$ 32,600	\$ -	\$ 130,500	80%
Local Government Funds \$		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Project Income Totals per year		\$ 32,600	\$ 65,300	\$ 65,200	\$ -	\$ 163,100	
Total Project Income (all fiscal years)		\$ 163,100.00					
Total Project Cost (all fiscal years; Construction Expenses + Program Expenses)		\$ 163,100.00					