



A Call to Action for Our Food System

By 2025, 100% of communities will hold power in a racially just food system.

Our current food system in the U.S. is a legacy of exploitation and racism - land stolen from Native peoples, an agricultural empire built on the backs of enslaved Africans, today's farmworkers being predominantly underpaid immigrant and migrant Latino workers, and many of the school food professionals that feed our kids being women of color who earn less than a living wage. Black, Indigenous, Latino, people of color and immigrants are the backbone of our food system and ensure we can eat. Therefore, we know that **there is no food justice without racial justice.**

Children of color participating in school meal programs have been [publicly shamed](#) when they lack the funds to pay for their meals. Black and Latino youth have [substantially higher rates](#) of obesity than their white peers, as do [Indigenous youth](#). Our national policies do not equitably commit resources to feeding our children, our future. People of color are [disproportionately represented](#) on the frontlines of COVID-19 response and in our food system as essential workers, and are [dying at higher rates](#) due to the prevalence of underlying health conditions - a [direct result of systemic inequities](#) in access to healthy food options, health care and safe working conditions. And in the case of police brutality and murder, people of color are [killed by police at higher per capita rates](#) than white people. Structural racism allows these sobering statistics to become normalized, accepted and perpetuated. **There is no food justice without racial justice.**

All children, parents, families and communities have a right to nutritious food - at schools, early care and education sites, homes, institutions, stores and beyond. The power to make this possible lies in the hands of those who control land access and use, and those who dictate how food is grown, distributed, prepared, supplied, sold and consumed. That's why it's essential that those most impacted within our communities hold power in the food system – though this is not our current reality. We continue to live with a food system both founded in and still perpetuating racism, oppression and exploitation. We cannot move past that legacy without addressing it directly, in food, in education, in health, in the economy, in the environment and in communities. Local food systems alone - solely focused on food miles - will not solve these problems. **We need community-based food systems - centered in relationships - to shift power back to those most impacted and to achieve a racially just food system.** If we don't dismantle systemic racism, we will never achieve a just food system.

Where We've Been

Founded in 2007, the National Farm to School Network has made significant progress in [raising awareness](#) about, [expanding](#) the reach of, and [advocating](#) for farm to school. Today, more children, farmers and communities in [K-12 schools](#) and [early childhood settings](#) reap the myriad [benefits of farm to school](#) thanks to the contributions of more than 20,000 members, 200 partner organizations, advisors and staff.



Where We Need to Go

As we embarked on our 2020 strategic planning process, we started asking ourselves *which communities have benefited from farm to school and who has been left out? Who holds power in our food system, and who does not?* National Farm to School Network envisions a nation in which farm to school programs are an essential component of strong and just local and regional food systems, ensuring the health of all school children, farms, environment, economy and communities. **In order to achieve this vision, we must shift power to those most impacted by our racially unjust food system.** With this in mind, we are issuing a call to action for our food system:

By 2025, 100% of communities will hold power in a racially just food system.

How We're Going to Get There

In 2018, as we began to prepare for our 2020 strategic plan, we knew we wanted to look at our work and world a bit differently. After all, we're a movement building, systems change, and advocacy organization working across sectors towards a bold vision for a just, community-based food system. We began by mapping the system - the structures, functions and relationships - within which farm to school operates. Through a collaborative process with members, partners, supporters, advisors and staff, we narrowed in on the parts of the system that, if pushed, have the greatest potential to move us towards our goal. We collectively landed on *relationships, strategic opportunities, and successful projects* as those places to push:

- **Relationships:** What kinds of relationships - with organizations, individuals, etc. - will move us towards our goal?
- **Strategic opportunities:** What cutting-edge innovating and untapped potential in the food system will move us towards our goal?
- **Successful projects:** What best practices in programming, policy and projects should be explored and elevated to move us towards our goal?

Join Our Call to Action

This goal applies to all people working in and impacted by the food system, not just National Farm to School Network. Stay tuned for more information coming soon about how you can be part of this work with us. In the meantime, check out these other opportunities to get involved and learn more:

- [Learn more about National Farm to School Network](#)
- [Become a member](#) (it's free) to stay updated and connected
- [Read about our commitment to equity](#)
- Stay connected with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)