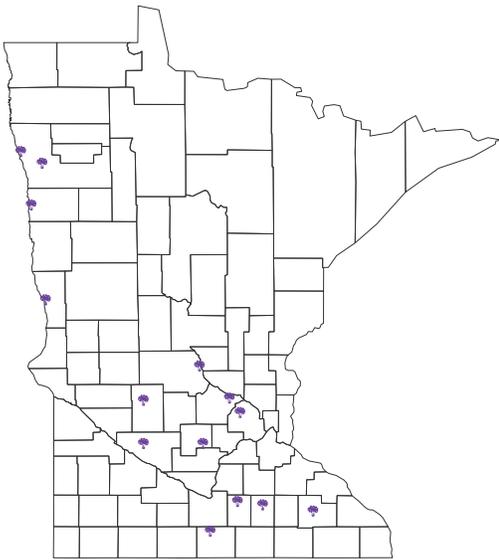


FARM TO HEAD START

TRI-VALLEY

OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAM



17 centers throughout Minnesota



Tri-Valley Opportunity Council operates a unique Head Start program, serving the children of migrant farm workers who travel to Minnesota during the growing season. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) recognized the opportunity to create a meaningful connection for children between their families' deep ties to farming and the foods in their meals through Farm to Head Start activities. Relatively new to her position as Tri-Valley's Nutrition Services Manager, Jami Lee was eager to find new ways to help children develop positive eating habits. She also recognized the potential for Farm to Head Start to help meet that goal, and was enthusiastic about the idea of supporting farmers while teaching children where their food comes from. Both IATP and Tri-Valley saw Farm to Head Start as a chance to highlight the crucial work migrant families do to feed the community.

Expanding Farm to Head Start Success

Since launching the initiative, Jami has expanded some kind of Farm to Head Start activity to each one of Tri-Valley's 17 sites. In terms of purchasing local items, she has requested that their mainline food distributors source local produce when available. She has also added local sourcing (the ability to supply locally grown and raised products) as a selection criteria to her all theher programs' food service contracts, an important step for the long-term sustainability of Tri-Valley's Farm to Head Start work. Some centers have even started visiting local farmers markets to purchase produce for their meals. Recently, Tri-Valley has also started conversations with a farm with season-extending high tunnels, allowing the purchase of locally grown food almost year-round. Jami plans to continue expanding as time goes on. "It would be good for others to know to not be discouraged if the first year is slow," she said. "You have to take baby steps in order for it to be a success."

Tri-Valley has started adding community gardens at some of their centers. In Glencoe, center manager Eliza Tobon coordinates a garden where families can come and learn with their child and even take fresh produce home. For families that can't come to the garden, Eliza sends produce home with the children. Given the relationship many of the centers' families have to farming, Eliza encourages parents to talk with their children about the vital work they do to bring fresh produce to their communities.



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Learn more at iatp.org/farm-to-institution

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A lot of kids' parents work on these farms. Kids learn what their parents do as well. We're eating the same fruits and vegetables that their parents are harvesting.

-Jami Lee, Child Nutrition Services Manager

