

A photograph of several children's hands holding freshly harvested red radishes with green leaves. The children are wearing various clothing, including a blue t-shirt with a cartoon character, a blue and white striped shirt, and a green hoodie. The background shows more green foliage, likely from the garden where the radishes were grown.

DEFINING LOCAL

Strategies for Procurement



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FORK **FOOD**
ALLIANCE

Our Approach

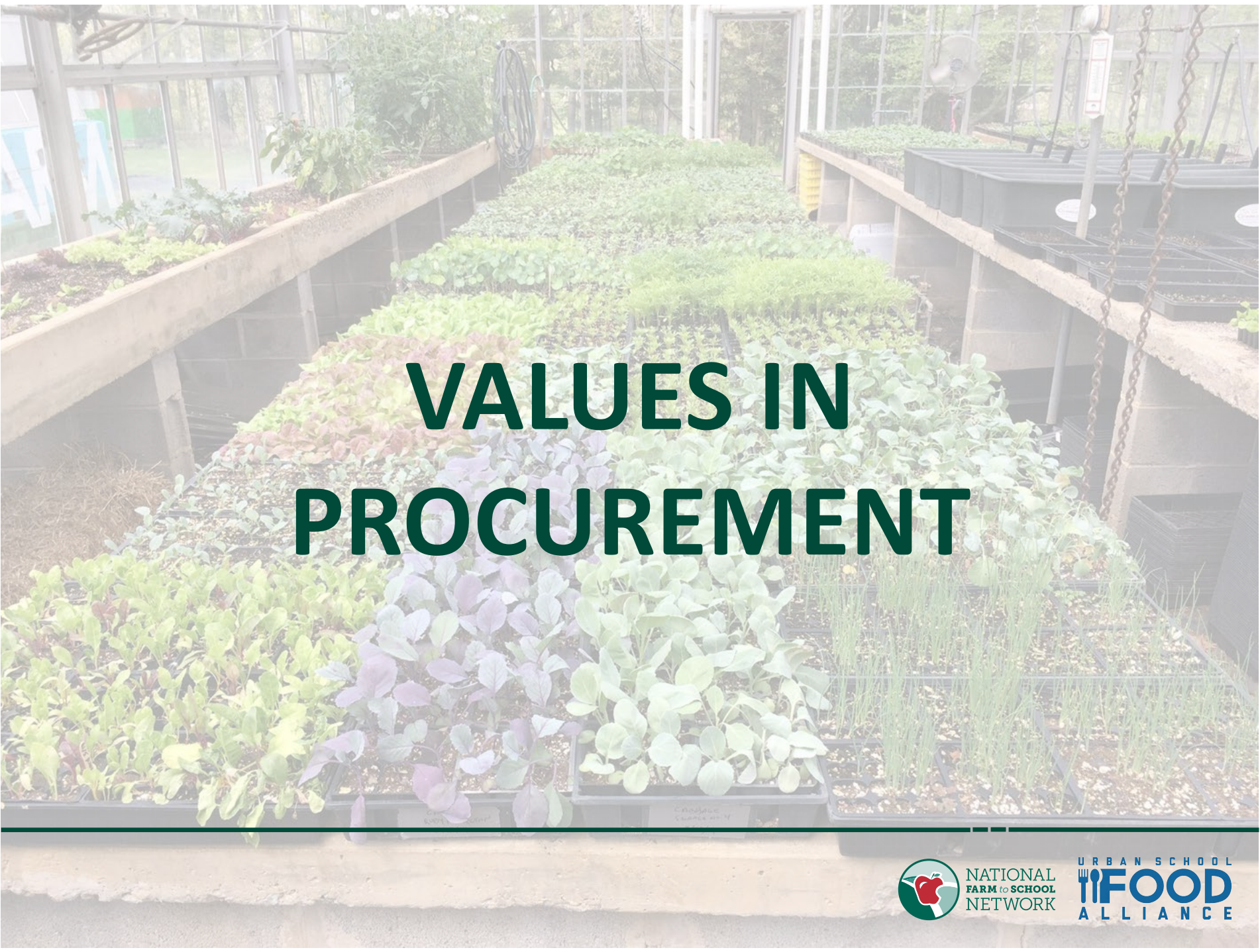
Leveraging the collective voice of school procurement to promote a food system that:

Prioritizes health

Promotes racial and economic equity

Elevates environmental justice and stewardship





VALUES IN PROCUREMENT



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

Why does local matter to you?



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

Different definitions, same goals

USDA sets no fixed definition of "local"

Geographically
local is in
context for
each
community

Your state may
have its own
definition

In setting one
for your
district,
consider a
range of local
options

Local reflects
more than just
miles



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

Different definitions, same goals

USDA sets no fixed definition of "local"

In-state or a
mile radius
from your
district

Owned,
grown,
processed --
one or all of
these

Expanded
radius for
winter
season or
more scarce
products

Consider
producers'
alignment
with values
of equity and
sustainability



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

Values in local purchasing



Local
ownership

Sustainable
growing
practices

Educational
opportunities

Employment
practices

Community
engagement

Commitment
to racial equity



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

Strategies to shift purchasing

Start Small

- Consider purchases below formal procurement threshold
- Work with existing suppliers by asking questions or requesting transparency
- Consider values important to you and the school community

Use a Variety of Tools

- Target product specifications to local
- Consider incremental improvements or “tiers” rather than a binary in evaluation criteria
- Use existing resources to find USDA-approved criteria
- Consider imperfect or “seconds” produce for cooking



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

Factors to consider

Local market

Are there enough vendors in your area for a competitive process among local producers?

Available tools

Does your state have a farm to school coordinator, a directory of producers, or other existing ways of making connections with vendors?

Purchase size

Do you need a formal procurement process or not?

Building a team

Who in your school community can commit to help with and promote your efforts?



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

EXAMPLE: New York City



Start with questions:

Ask vendors to provide sourcing information – over time, can preference transparency without limiting competition as more vendors track that data



Champions outside procurement:

- 11 NYC agencies tracking local purchases
- Strong nonprofit partners like NY Farmland Trust who can advocate
- Educator champions incorporate into classroom



Revise definitions as needed:

- NYC started with a radius (250-500 miles).
- Simpler to define by state (NY state, neighboring states, etc) for tracking, reporting economic impact, and building support



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
TIFOOD
ALLIANCE

EXAMPLE: Baltimore



Milk as a key local item:

\$2.6m in purchases in SY 18-19

Able to incorporate into SY 19-20 service (\$2.1m)



Leverage USDA DoD Fresh purchases:

\$142k purchases in SY 18-19 was able to increase to \$266k in SY 19-20



Extensive engagement and promotion:

- Great Kids Farm field trips and taste tests
- Veggie & herb seedling distribution
- Take-home recipes aligned with seasonal menu items



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

EXAMPLE: Orange County, FL



Foster staff collaboration:
Procurement and menu planning staff closely coordinate with monthly meetings to review plans and challenges, ideas for menu themes featuring local.



Use existing channels:
OCPS incorporates the requirement for local purchases through mainline distributor and produce contracts and DoD purchases.



Flexibility as needed:
Contract prioritizes sourcing from surrounding states (AL, GA, SC) if not available in Florida.



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

USDA resources



Basics fact
sheets



Procurement
decision tree



Full local
procurement
training



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE

State and peer resources



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE