

Balancing Budgets and Leveraging Your Local Food System

A tool for maximizing local sourcing and USDA Foods Purchases for impact

How to use this Tool

This tool was created to **help your SFA get the most out of your procurement funds** and help you reach your goals of procuring locally-grown, fresh, delicious food for your community. Use the Table on Page 2 as reference for strategies to use different budget categories to maximize your local purchasing power.

Key Points to Remember

1) **Timing is key**

We recommend you use this tool before you make your entitlement budget allocations in March 2024.

2) **Understand what is “local”**

To know where products are *grown*, ask your food vendors about the source origins of what you are already ordering. [Check out this seasonality chart](#) to see what's grown in Mass.

Ask your current food vendors:

“Please provide me with a velocity report that shows the City and State in which each of our purchased items was grown/raised and the corresponding invoice #”

3) **Use pre-vetted vendors who provide “local”**

To see availability of regional vendors, produce items, and estimated prices, visit the list of [MAPC Northeast Produce RFP awarded vendors](#) and explore which items might fit your menus.

Local items often need preparation

To maximize your success, try menuing recipes that use local items and work with the equipment, training, and capacity of your SFA's foodservice team.

4) **Menuing is key for successful local sourcing**

Consider how your SFA can increase use of whole foods (fresh or frozen)- this will give you more options from local vendors. [Try these recipes!](#)

5) **Ask for help- we're here for you!**

Reach out to the Mass. Farm to School team for support navigating procurement and conversations with local suppliers- we want this to be a seamless process.

Contact Us Anytime!

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A Tool for maximizing NFS and USDA Foods Purchases for local impact

"With  budget..."	... consider buying items like  ..."	... and <u>not</u> items like  .
Food Budget Category	Consider Procuring These Items	Think Twice Before Procuring These Items
USDA Commodity Foods ("Brown Box")	- Staple items that <i>aren't</i> produced regionally - Some grains (dry pasta, rice, cereal, etc.) - Proteins (especially chicken, par-cooked items) - Mozzarella** (also regionally available) - Canned products - Canned 10# beans - Canned fish (tuna) - Liquid eggs - Sunflower seed butter	- Frozen fish (widely available from New England) - Beef (especially ground beef)
USDA Commodity Processed Foods	- Spaghetti sauce** (also regionally available) - Processed proteins (meatballs, franks, etc.)	Frozen fruit** (except Maine blueberries)
USDA DoD Fresh	- Citrus fruits - Melons - Stone fruits (peach, plum, etc.) <u>during winter and spring</u> - Fresh vegetables <u>during winter</u>	Any seasonally available produce items that grow well in New England
General Food Budget Includes New England Food for Schools	- Apples! - Frozen and fresh fish - Ground beef and beef patties - Hearty veggies like squash, carrots, and potatoes (whole or processed) - Dry beans - Bread	High volumes of pantry staple items and canned goods

Don't have time to cook dry beans/raw protein? Brown Box Foods can save staff time and money

If it grows in New England, check regional options before buying with DoD Fresh funds

New England grows the country's *most flavorful apples*- buying the with NFS dollars is an easy boost to you menus

Lean on USDA Foods for these items to maximize your local dollars