



LOCAL FOOD *Healthy Kids*

MESSAGING GUIDE

GENERAL INITIATIVE MESSAGING

- ★ The goal of the Local Food, Healthy Kids Initiative is to get more locally-sourced foods into the hands of children across the state.
- ★ The food system in Iowa is currently underdeveloped and insufficiently supported to produce at a scale necessary to realize the economic potential of a local foods industry and increase the supply necessary to address the potential demand.
- ★ Over the past year, more than 100 stakeholders were convened to discuss what policies were needed to improve Iowa's food system and make local foods more accessible to youth. Through these discussions, key barriers for consumers (child care providers, schools and other institutions), suppliers (farmers), and aggregators (food hubs) kept rising to the top. Policy solutions and practices were identified to address and overcome these barriers.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION MESSAGING

- ★ Many young children in Iowa do not have access to healthy fruits and vegetables which can have negative impacts on their academic and health outcomes.
- ★ Because they reach so many children in Iowa, early care and education providers represent a significant opportunity to get healthy food in the hands of thousands of kids.
- ★ Early child care providers have an interest in serving more locally sourced foods to the children in their care; however, challenges with proper product availability, training and budget demands cause the demand to remain low.

FARMER MESSAGING

- ★ Currently, only 5% of all Iowa farms are engaged in local food production even though fresh fruit and vegetable farmers retain more profit on their crops than commodity farmers.
- ★ There is tremendous potential for growth and jobs in Iowa's local food production market; however, without sufficient demand from the onset, it can be too risky and costly for farmers to diversify production or buy land without some incentives in place.
- ★ If Iowa farmers met just half of the existing demand for locally-grown food, it would create \$1.67 billion in annual sales and support 12,000 Iowa jobs.

FOOD HUB MESSAGING

- ★ Food hubs act as the "middle-man" between farmers and institutions like schools and child care centers. Food hubs collect locally-sourced products from various farmers, aggregate them, and distribute out to institutions.
- ★ In order for food hubs to meet increased demand, they need support building infrastructure to store, distribute, and market large quantities of product.
- ★ Food hubs must receive proper support to add processing facilities, or statewide processing facilities must be created.

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