

Montana Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition Charter

Purpose and Scope:

Farm to early care and education (ECE) is a group of activities and strategies that include the use of local foods in meals and snacks, gardening opportunities, and food, agriculture, and nutrition-oriented learning activities, implemented with the goals of promoting health and wellness and enhancing the quality of the educational experience. The Montana Farm to ECE Coalition is established with the aim of expanding farm to ECE opportunities to a greater number of Montana children, families, and communities and institutionalizing and embedding farm to ECE into state and local ECE programs and systems. The Montana Farm to ECE Coalition aspires to make Farm to ECE easy for ECE providers to sustainably implement.

Montana Farm to ECE Coalition Goals:

1. Build and continually strengthen the network of leaders and key stakeholders working together to increase awareness of, access to, and participation in farm to ECE initiatives across the state
2. Identify and explore opportunities to institutionalize farm to ECE, including but not limited to:
 - a. Develop a state level farm to ECE coordinator position
 - b. Integrate farm to ECE educational opportunities in state approved professional development systems
 - c. Develop and disseminate farm to ECE resources and support for implementation
 - d. Explore policy levers and potential policy changes that expand farm to early care and education opportunities

Montana Farm to ECE Coalition Objectives June 2021 - June 2022:

* Objectives are updated annually to reflect current steps to reach the broader Farm to ECE Coalition Goals *

1. Continually add new ECE members to the Farm to ECE Coalition based on current ECE Stakeholders
2. Finalize MT Farm to ECE interview project to pinpoint barriers to local food procurement of MT ECE facilities
 - a. Identify funding sources with timeline for an ECE Coalition Coordinator position and add them to the F2S Leadership ECE Working Group Action Plan 2021-22 Excel.
 - b. Assemble a list of professional development opportunities, resources, and ways to promote farm to ECE to add to state approved professional development systems that can best integrate Farm to ECE Trainings.
 - c. Increase the use and implementation of the Harvest of the Month for ECE program within each member's wheel house.

- d. Identify Farm to ECE policy opportunities and add them to the F2S Leadership ECE Working Group Action Plan 2021-22 Excel.

Coalition Structure:

Responsibilities and leadership will be shared amongst Coalition members as outlined in this charter. The primary Coalition contact will support coordination and logistical functions of the group. Members of the Farm to Early Care and Education Working Group, a subgroup of the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team, will provide leadership to the Coalition and act as “steering committee” to help guide Coalition activities and decision making. All Coalition members are encouraged to actively engage in leadership opportunities and provide input and opinions on Coalition activities and decision making.

Participant Expectations:

Participation in the Montana Farm to ECE Coalition is open to any stakeholder with vested interest in expanding farm to ECE access and opportunities across the state. To become a member of the Montana Farm to ECE Coalition, interested parties should contact the primary Coalition contact (Lacy Stephens, lacy@farmtoschool.org) and provide their name, organization, and contact information. The coalition is committed to bringing together participants from diverse sectors in order to strengthen and deepen our reach and influence.

Members of the Montana Farm to ECE Coalition will:

- Actively participate in quarterly Montana Farm to ECE Coalition conference calls
 - Coordinate and lead quarterly conference calls as needed (a maximum of once per year)
 - Facilitate topical discussions as requested (a maximum of once per year)
 - Take the lead on notetaking duties as requested (a maximum of once per year)
 - Support call facilitators with call logistics and content needs
- Leverage individual and organizational relationships and resources to support advancement of Montana Farm to ECE Coalition goals
- Contribute to and support coalition projects (e.g., resource development) and projects of coalition members to the extent to which they directly relate to coalition objectives

Meeting Schedule and Format:

- The Montana Farm to ECE Coalition will hold quarterly conference calls at 10 AM on the 2nd Friday of the month, every three months. Calls will be one hour in length. 2021/22 calls are scheduled for:
 - Friday, July 9th, 2021
 - Friday, October 8th, 2021
 - Friday, January 14th, 2022
 - Friday, April 8th, 2022

- Calls will be lead and facilitated by a rotating schedule of coalition members. The schedule of facilitators will be determined at the beginning of the calendar year. The call leader/facilitator will be responsible for:
 - Planning the call agenda, including “deep dive” and group learning topics
 - Sending reminder email with draft agenda (using established template) to members two weeks before the scheduled call
 - Assigning “deep dive” leader (as necessary) and note taker for the call
 - Acting as facilitator on the call
 - Sending call notes and action items to all coalition members following the call
- Each call will include the following sections (see attached agenda template): participant introductions and updates, objective review and progress reports, “deep dive” or learning opportunity, upcoming events, and wrap up/action items.

Charter Review and Revisions:

The Montana Farm to Early Care and Education Coalition Charter will be reviewed, at minimum, on an annual basis and updated to reflect the changing goals, objectives, and structure of the Coalition. The Charter will be reviewed and agreed upon by a consensus of Coalition members.