

Farm to School is a powerful connector of nutrition, personal growth, and local foods to empower children to thrive.

Farm to School provides children with access to healthy produce. These positive, hands-on experiences help children try and eat healthy foods. Children learn valuable skills of gardening, cooking, and making healthy food choices. Farm to School connects children and families to the community.



Programs need additional staff, funding, and school & community coordination for long lasting success!

Stakeholders talked about challenges maintaining the garden, finding regular volunteers, and making time for Farm to School education. Stakeholders said that staff members are needed to make sure the garden is maintained and used, organize educational activities, and strengthen community connections.

Farm to School is Expanding in Connecticut with Opportunities for Growth

Program Expansion & Successes⁵

High participation: 84% of school food authorities participate in Farm to School.

Recent expansion: 44% of programs are less than 3 years old.

High local food access: 79% of programs serve local foods.

Advancing policy: Established CT Grown Week, local food incentive program, and CT Grown for CT Kids Grant opportunities.

Need for Quality Farm to School Programs⁵

Consistent education: Only 58% of programs provide food, nutrition, or agricultural education. Farm to School Programs need to grow partnerships for consistent education.

Garden access for hands-on experiences: Only 23% of programs have gardens. Successful gardens require funding, staff, and community support.

Agricultural exposure: Only 20% of programs have farm field trips. Only 16% bring farmers to visit. Staff are needed to coordinate and strengthen farm connections.

CT Farm to School Policy Highlights

2006: CT Grown Week Established

2021: CT Grown for CT Kids Program & Grant Established

2023: Local Food Incentive Program Established

Proposed: Increased Program Access, Funding & District Resources, and School Meals Access

Empower Connecticut children to thrive by supporting high-quality Farm to School program access, district resources, & school meals

This research supports policy that:

- **Expands access to Farm to School** programs and extends benefits to more children.
- **Increases district-level resources** for Farm to School programs through funding, incentive programs for local purchases, and designated staff to increase coordinated education, hands-on experiences, and access to local produce.
- **Increases access to school meals programs, such as no cost meals for all students.** The more students that participate in school meals, the more funds that schools have available for to purchase high quality, locally grown food – which ultimately supports Connecticut's economy.

References:

1. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2021-2022 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved 11/21/24 from www.childhealthdata.org/. 2. Prescott MP, Cleary R, Bonanno A, Costanigro M, Jablonski BBR, Long AB. Farm to School Activities and Student Outcomes: A Systematic Review. Adv Nutr. 2020;11(2):357-374. doi: 10.1093/advances/nmz094. 3. Kane D, Kruse S, Markesteyn Ratcliffe M, Sobell S, Tessman NT. The Impact of Seven Cents. Ecotrust. 2011. 4. What is Farm to School & Early Childhood? <https://vtfed.org/what-farm-school-early-childhood/>. Accessed 11/21/24. 5. US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS). Farm to School Census. Washington, DC: USDA Food and Nutrition Service; 2014. Available at: <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/census-results/states/ct>. Accessed 11/19/24. Policies: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22-38d: Dedicated an annual week for the celebration of farm to school. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-215l: Created grant opportunities for schools, early child care centers, nonprofits, and farms for farm to school activities. Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-215m: Provides schools with reimbursement for locally grown and regional products.

The Harms and Benefits Inventory

Jennifer Dineen and Kerri Raissian (UConn)
A Brief prepared by the UConn ARMS Center
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Successful uptake of firearm policy requires citizen-informed understanding of gun users' perceptions.

Researchers from the UConn Center for Advancing Research, Methods, and Scholarship in Gun Injury Prevention (**ARMS**) have developed the **Harms and Benefits Inventory (HBI)**¹ to assist policymakers and advocates in considering citizens' firearm policy perspectives. HBI data will soon be publicly available!

The successful implementation of policy often depends on citizens' behavior change. Evidence suggests that policies such as background checks², permitting³, waiting periods⁴, and Child Access Prevention Laws (CAP)⁵ reduce firearm injury and death. However, these policies require compliance by gun owners (e.g., willingness to register guns, use federally licensed dealers, secure storage). broad citizen support and depend on gun users' willingness to modify behavior to comply.

Background

In 2022, researchers from UConn ARMS and Johns Hopkins developed the Harms and Benefits Inventory (HBI), a policy-neutral measure that facilitates (1) assessment and understanding of citizens' perceptions of and anticipated policy positions on, firearm-related policies and practices aimed at improving uptake, and (2) assess perceived harms and benefits of specific policies or practices in a direct manner.

In 2024, two years after the [New York State Rifle & Pistol Assn, Inc. v. Bruen](#) (Bruen) decision, the UConn ARMS team collected a second wave of data to assess if, and to what extent, Americans perceptions of firearm policy outcomes as harmful or beneficial changed.

Method

- Data for wave 1 of the HBI is a nationally representative group of 2,004 Adults in the U.S. using the Social Science Research Solutions probability-based panel. The survey was administered online and by phone when requested from April 21 – May 15, 2022.
- Data for HBI wave 2 is a nationally representative sample of 3,086 U.S. Adults from Gallup's probability-based panel. The survey was administered online from October 28 – November 5, 2024. Both samples include both gun owners and non-owners.

- The surveys included the 21 item HBI measure, and questions about gun ownership, firearm-related behaviors, demographics, and experiences with violence and victimization. (See Table 1)
- The 2024 survey added measures of fear to proximal and distal events and a measure of policy support for increasing access to AR-15 style firearms.

TABLE 1 THE FINAL 21-ITEM HARMS AND BENEFITS INVENTORY SURVEY

1. Increases the cost of ammunition	12. Requires a permit to purchase a gun
2. Increases the cost to purchase a gun	13. Makes it easier to purchase a gun without a permit
3. Reduces the number of available licensed gun dealers	14. Requires gun users to receive continuing education around gun safety
4. Makes it more difficult to drive across state lines with a gun	15. Requires new gun owners to demonstrate knowledge of gun safety
5. Increases the time it takes a person to get to and ready a gun in their home	16. Allows a person with a history of violent behavior to obtain a gun
6. Increases government regulation of how guns are handled	17. Allows a person with a domestic violence conviction to obtain a gun
7. Makes it more difficult for a person convicted of violent misdemeanors, such as simple assault to own a gun	18. Allows a person with serious mental health problems to obtain a gun
8. Makes it more difficult for a person with minor, non-violent legal offenses to own a gun	19. Allows a person with a felony conviction to obtain a gun
9. Makes it more difficult for a person convicted of domestic violence to own a gun	20. Makes it easier to participate in hobbies such as gun collection and restoration
10. Makes it more difficult for a person with serious mental health problems to own a gun	21. Makes it easier to participate in shooting sports
11. Makes it more difficult for a person with mild mental health problems to own a gun	

Key Findings

- **Reports of gun ownership increase.** As CT reports issuing record numbers of firearm permits, the HBI surveys shows US adults reporting increased firearm ownership. The 2022 survey found 9% of gun owners report becoming a first time owner between 2020 and 2022. In 2024, that number is 4%. In addition to seeing ownership increase among 18-39 yr olds, 8% report becoming owners within the last 2 years, women (6%) are more likely than men (3%) to report becoming gun owners. Reports of new ownership were higher for Hispanic (9%) and Black (7%) respondents than for their White counterparts (2%). This trend is similar to 2022 data.
- **2022 and 2024 studies show similar levels of support for policies** requiring secure storage, allowing open carry, and that promote allowing any American to own a gun. In both studies, respondents in gun households were more likely to agree that any American can own a gun and that people legal gun owners should be able to open carry. These respondents are less likely to agree that people should be required to store guns securely.