



2016 | SC FARM to INSTITUTION 2017 | WORKSITE PILOT





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South Carolina Farm to Institution is a collaborative, multi-agency initiative that aims to facilitate communication, education, and opportunities for farmers, distributors, and institutions to support healthy, locally produced food throughout South Carolina.

In the fall of 2016, South Carolina (SC) Farm to Institution engaged seven pilot worksites in a year-long initiative to implement at least two of following SC Farm to Institution core components:

1. **Purchase and serve at least two South Carolina grown products** in the on-site cafeteria, canteen, or other on-site food service venue monthly.
2. Participate as an associate member of the **Certified SC Grown program**.
3. **Provide education and resources** about eating healthy and where to purchase local food.
4. **Participate in agricultural activities** by establishing an on-site fruit or vegetable garden, farmers' market, or community supported agriculture (CSA) program.

Along with selected core components, the pilot worksites had the opportunity to develop their own component in alignment with SC Farm to Institution's mission. Worksites that were recruited and agreed to participate represented a variety of institutions including private, government, and non-profit organizations. All sites were provided technical assistance, optional funding, and resources. Progress was monitored through three periodic check-ins. After the close of the pilot period, six of the seven worksites were inter-viewed during the winter of 2017/2018 to gather their feedback. This document provides a summary of the worksites' experiences, accomplishments, and recommendations.

Overall, sites that demonstrated the most success utilized existing systems and resources within their organization to implement the SC Farm to Institution components. All sites provided feedback that technical assistance and/or resources provided by SC Farm to Institution were useful. Commonly mentioned benefits from technical assistance included food systems networking, fresh ideas, and accountability. Commonly mentioned resources utilized included SC Farm to Institution recipe cards and produce guides.

Worksite Snapshots

ANMED HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER • Anderson, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

3,000 (employees)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 3) Provide education and resources
- 4) Participate in agricultural activities

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Offered sales of weekly produce boxes from a local distributor.
- Initiated quarterly cooking demonstrations.
- Utilized SC Farm to Institution educational materials and handouts in a staff weight-loss challenge.
- Some staff demonstrated behavior change by preparing cooking demonstration recipes and/or successfully losing weight.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

SC Farm to Institution provided useful technical assistance and print and electronic re-sources to enhance programmatic activities (e.g. SC Farm to Institution recipe cards were included with weekly produce boxes).

ADVICE TO OTHER WORKSITES

- Plan ahead and get started with something small and low cost.
- Consider selling produce boxes if funding support is limited.

"Produce boxes were a hit. People really liked that. It saves them from having to go get produce. And also, they said that they added it up, and it was a cost savings. They would spend more at the grocery store than what they were spending on what they were getting in the box"

-AnMed Health Medical Center

SC Farm to Institution Pilot Worksite

COLONIAL LIFE INSURANCE • Columbia, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

1,000 (employees)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 1) Purchase and serve South Carolina grown products
- 3) Provide education and resources

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Sourced two locally grown products per month in the cafeteria.
- Promoted Certified SC Grown in the cafeteria.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

SC Farm to Institution complemented the local sourcing goals of Colonial Life's cafeteria food service contractor and the SC Farm to Institution ready-made marketing resources and materials to promote local, healthy eating were useful.



Tomatoes, the SC Farm to Institution Palmetto Pick of the Month for September, are promoted on the salad bar at Colonial Life.

Worksite Snapshot

CITY OF FLORENCE FARMERS' MARKET • Florence, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

37,961 (city population)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 2) Participate as an associate member of Certified SC Grown program
- 3) Provide education and resources

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Expanded the city seasonal farmers' market to be year-around and generated city support for continued year-around funding.
- Applied and participated as a member of Certified SC Grown.
- Hosted cooking demonstrations and taste tests at the market, and provided SC Farm to Institution educational materials to patrons and vendors.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

SC Farm to Institution funding allowed the city to pilot the feasibility of a year-around market, ultimately securing city support. Print resources provided were popular with market patrons.

ADVICE TO OTHER WORKSITES

- Have a marketing plan before inviting vendors.
- Contract with an anchor vendor (a premium vendor who is contracted to attend the market consistently).
- Tailor outreach to farmers (email, call, or text—use what works).
- Host and advertise events to attract patrons.

"What we did is we went from a seasonal market, which we had done since the market opened, to a year-round market, and so we're rolling now into our second winter season...[With SC Farm to Institution] we got to run a pilot year-round project. It was successful enough to say, 'Yes, let's keep going.'"

-City of Florence Farmers' Market

Farm to Institution Pilot Worksite



Handouts, including SC Farm to Institution recipe cards and produce guides, are displayed for visitors to collect at the City of Florence Farmers' Market.

Worksite Snapshots

GREENVILLE HEALTH SYSTEMS (GHS) • Greenville, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

3,500 (employees)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 3) Provide education and resources
- 4) Participate in agricultural activities

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Involved key stakeholders and secured hospital system approval to develop a therapeutic, wheelchair accessible, on-site garden including fruits and vegetables.
- Shared SC Farm to Institution educational resources during health and wellness initiatives.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

SC Farm to Institution provided useful network connections and educational materials; particularly recipe cards and produce guides.

ADVICE TO OTHER WORKSITES

- For a large institution, have a plan for garden development and begin the process of seeking approval as early as possible.
- Plan for garden sustainability by engaging multiple stakeholders.

"[Concerning the SC Farm to Institution Recipe Cards and SC Produce Guides] we had quite a bit of people who were like, 'Oh, wow. I didn't know this was in season now' or 'Wow. This is a great way to utilize this vegetable.' Because a lot of people think, 'This is a healthy fruit or vegetable, but what do I do with it?'... So having that educational part to share what's in season, and having a recipe for it was helpful for a lot of the participants."

-Greenville Health Systems
Farm to Institution Pilot Worksite

PARKS, RECREATION & TOURISM (PRT) • Columbia, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

400 (Columbia office and state park employees)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 3) Provide education and resources
- 4) Participate in agricultural activities

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Connected with a local mobile market to provide Columbia office staff access to fresh, local produce on a weekly basis.
- Engaged staff by hosting tasting events, health trainings, and a monthly newsletter.
- Swapped unhealthy treats with fresh produce or healthy snacks for events and meetings.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

Technical assistance provided fresh ideas and useful materials. SC Farm to Institution funding allowed PRT to offer door prizes, or free healthy snacks to increase staff engagement and turnout.

ADVICE TO OTHER WORKSITES

- Plan in advance and be familiar with office regulations concerning marketing and use of funds.
- Make activities as engaging as possible; for example, host a kickoff celebration, offer door prizes, do hands-on activities, and make email newsletters interactive.

Worksite Snapshot

RICHLAND LIBRARY NORTH MAIN • Columbia, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

38,684 (residents in the 29203 zip code)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 3) Provide education and resources
- 4) Participate in agricultural activities

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Planted and maintain a vertical library garden and established a library garden club.
- Added to and enhanced existing programmatic activities through the use of SC Farm to Institution educational materials and participant giveaways.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

Funding allowed the library to purchase equipment for cooking classes and provide incentives for program participation. SC Farm to Institution materials such as the garden toolkit and recipe cards were useful and popular with visitors.

ADVICE TO OTHER WORKSITES

- Engage staff, reach out to local businesses for support, and tap in to online resources—particularly the SC Farm to Institution website.
- Consider vertical gardens if space is limited.
- Call the North Main library branch and ask Dee, Rhonda, or Brian for advice!



TOP A newly planted pallet garden featuring aromatic herbs at Richland Library North Main Branch.

BOTTOM Community members are engaged at Richland Library North Main Branch during a nutrition education class.

Worksite Snapshot

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA (USC) • Columbia, SC

POTENTIAL REACH

30,000 (daily cafeteria meals)

IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS

- 3) Provide education and resources
- 4) Participate in agricultural activities
- (Other) Establish a university food systems strategy committee

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed a University Food Systems Strategy Committee.
- Capitalized on systems-level changes in university policy to support local food purchasing in the cafeteria.
- Maintained or enhanced on-site agricultural activities including a campus farmers' market, student garden plots, and nutrition education events.

ROLE OF SC FARM TO INSTITUTION

Technical assistance provided by SC Farm to Institution facilitated networking and peer learning with partners throughout the local food system and helped USC champions stay accountable to SC Farm to Institution core components and mission.

ADVICE TO OTHER WORKSITES

- Engage leadership in a way that encourages ownership.
- Engage faculty or grant-seeking partners early.
- For continuity, create buy-in for your vision.
- Take initiative and be persistent and patient.
- Connect your activities to the institution's higher mission and purpose.
- Work with distributors to identify local sourcing.

"You have to really be patient for the right timing within the political atmosphere and having the right people at the right table, too. And then, once you have that, you have to steam-roll forward as soon as you have it. So luckily, we have that momentum right now, and so we are rolling [laughter]."

-University of South Carolina

SC Farm to Institution Pilot Worksite



Locally sourced peppers are promoted on the salad bar at USC.

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