

Creating a Minnesota Thursdays Menu

Access to the entire [Minnesota Thursdays Folder](#)

1. Identify a menu that you would like to transition to local products. Minnesota Thursdays is celebrated on the first Thursday of every month throughout the school year.
2. Reference Minnesota's Farm to School Toolkits to support your buying process.
 - [Food from Farms Toolkit](#) – Aitkin County Public Health, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
 - [Farm to School Toolkit](#) – Minneapolis Public Schools
3. Visit the [Minnesota Thursdays Toolkit – Menu section](#) and [recipe section](#) to browse what other schools are sourcing for their Minnesota Thursdays menus.
4. Conduct a market research by searching the [Minnesota Grown Wholesale Directory](#), the [Minnesota Farmers' Market Association list](#), and the [Farmers' Market Food Hubs Project](#) to get a better understanding of the local products available. Visit the [Minnesota Thursday Toolkit spreadsheet](#) to view local vendors used by other schools across Minnesota. [Find what fresh produce is in season](#).
5. Create a locally-sourced menu based on the foods available in your area, state and region.
6. Decide which [procurement method](#) you will use based on the anticipated value of your purchase.
 - [Decision Tree: How Will You Bring Local Foods into the Cafeteria with Your Next Food Purchase?](#) – USDA Fact Sheet, *Note: The micro purchase threshold is \$10,000, no longer \$3,500 like the fact sheet states. The small purchase threshold for public schools is \$175,000 and the \$250,000 for private schools, which is also the federal small purchase threshold.*
7. Write and document product specifications to target local foods.
 - *Example for apples:* Haralson or local variety, US. Fancy or No. 1, prefer 5 – 185 count boxes per week but willing to consider other pack sizes, delivered within 48 hours of harvest
 - Specification characteristics: name of product, US grade, geographical origin, receiving temperature, type of packaging, size of container, bid unit [weight of container, count]
 - [Opportunities to Target Local Products \[beginning on page 49\]](#) – USDA Procuring Local Foods For Child Nutrition Programs
 - [Food Purchasing Specifications](#) – Minnesota Department of Education
8. Contact local vendors in your area, state and region – provide product specifications to vendors, obtain and document price quotes. Visit the [Minnesota Thursdays Toolkit – Purchasing Documentation section](#) for a micro purchase log and small purchase price quotation worksheet.
9. Select the local vendor that meets your specifications, is responsive and responsible with the best price.
10. Make the purchase, train your staff on the new menu item and any new recipes to be served.
11. Promote Minnesota Thursdays menu to your students, staff, families and community by visiting the [Minneapolis' Minnesota Thursday webpage](#) and [Minnesota Thursdays Toolkit – Promotion section](#).
12. Serve your locally-sourced Minnesota Thursday menu the first Thursday of every month!
13. Track meal participation rates on Minnesota Thursdays and share your story and successes on social media outlets using #MNFarmtoSchool and #MNThursdays.
14. Send any new menu items, recipes, vendors and promotional materials to Samantha.Burington@state.mn.us to be included in future versions of the Minnesota Thursdays Toolkit.

15. Repeat the process!