



# Building Scalable Organic School Food Systems

## WHY THIS MATTERS

School meals shape children's health, but most systems still rely on highly processed food and procurement models disconnected from local organic agriculture. Conscious Kitchen helps districts make fresh, local, organic food practical within existing budgets and infrastructure.

## HOW WE CREATE CHANGE

- Support school districts to open procurement pathways for local organic purchasing
- Support farmers in becoming "School-Ready Sellers"
- Coordinate schools, distributors, processors, and growers
- Build capacity for organic farm to school, scratch-cooked, and values-aligned meals



## CORE IMPACT

**1,518,768** students reached

**79** school districts engaged

**129** school food leaders involved

**13** organic farm-to-school events hosted

**59** organic farms and farmers engaged

**62** community and implementation partners

# 2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## ORGANIC FARM-TO-SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

8 workshops across the state of California strengthened district capacity across 70 districts serving 1.5M+ students, equipping school nutrition leaders with practical tools that directly increased organic purchasing statewide.

## ORGANIC PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

Aggregated demand across 20 (and growing) districts reaching 500,000+ students, lowering cost and administrative barriers while creating more stable markets for suppliers.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FRESH PARTNERSHIPS

Unlocked 36+ organic produce offerings, growing California's DoD Fresh organic program from zero options in 2020 to nearly \$6M in statewide organic sales benefiting 466 school districts.

## FARMER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Supported 24 small organic farms, generating \$1.18M in procurement and expanding equitable access to institutional school markets.

## PROOF POINT FROM THE FIELD

With Conscious Kitchen's support, Frog Hollow Farm increased school sales from \$204K to \$617K in one year. The DoD Fresh channel became the farm's largest buyer in its 50-year history.

## LONG-TERM VISION

A scalable framework in which organic procurement becomes standard practice across California's six million public school students — and a model that can be replicated nationwide.

## HOW THE MODEL WORKS

**Strengthen district capacity:** Train school nutrition leaders, support menu planning, and build confidence in scratch-cooked, values-aligned meals.

**Expand procurement pathways:** Open practical channels for organic purchasing, including cooperative buying and federal procurement systems.

**Support School-Ready Sellers:** Help farmers navigate food safety, packaging, pricing, branding, and distributor relationships.

**Remove operational barriers:** Coordinate across the supply chain so schools can buy and serve organic food more reliably.

“When I started in 2015, I lost a lot of money because I had to throw away so many strawberries. After working with Conscious Kitchen, everything changed. Now I'm working to sell to as many schools as I can. Things are better because I get a fair price, and kids get to eat organic strawberries. I've been to school events and meetings, and seeing the kids smiling and enjoying the fruit keeps me going. It makes me so happy.”

— Domitila Tapia,  
Owner of Mimi's Organic Farm